

FEMINIZING THE NEWS: *THE LADY'S NEWSPAPER, THE TIMES,*
AND THE GREAT EXHIBITION OF 1851

THESIS

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by

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INTRODUCTION

In the broadest sense, this thesis explores the ways in which the mid-century periodical, *The Lady's Newspaper*, functioned within the masculine discourses of the newspaper press, yet translated current events of the period through a uniquely feminine lens. Although the visual layout and the title of the *Lady's Newspaper* indicated its strong association with political news and masculine discourses, its priorities confirmed its engagement in predominantly feminine discourses. These competing discourses, while interacting and reacting within the very pages of the paper, often caused textual instabilities that reveal deep ideological contradictions. Even while adopting the three-column broadsheet format of political newspapers, the *Lady's Newspaper's* commitment to domestic news consistently overshadowed any hints at the public, political issues of the period. The paper's insistence on using the visual format of political newspapers illustrates the paradoxical conflicting codes working through the paper's own discourses, as it repeatedly feminized the news for its readers in thematic and linguistic ways that maintained and reinforced traditional domestic ideology

While functioning within the masculine discourses of the newspaper press, the *Lady's Newspaper* found ways to interject its own variety of femininity—a variety that displayed articles and illustrations that were appropriate for middle-class women. Even when borrowing extensively from the *Times*, the *Lady's Newspaper* omitted and added details that were safe and non-threatening for its women readers. There are, however,

frequent inconsistencies and textual disruptions when reading the paper, evidenced primarily through abrupt shifts in tone and subject matter. These shifting discourses, which inevitably help create new meanings and multiple interpretations, nearly always worked towards confirming Victorian separate spheres ideology. Politics was only incorporated successfully into the *Lady's Newspaper* insofar as it pertained to social news and events. While the first editor, Charles Dance, set the tone for the paper's first issue by infusing it with a masculine persona, the domestic priorities in the paper undercut this masculine voice, and in a few short years which included the reportage of the Great Exhibition of 1851, this persona was almost missing from the paper. Instead of a masculine, gentlemanly persona, we see hints of the feminine pen, hints of Hélène Cixous's *écriture féminine* (feminine writing). Cixous believed that *écriture féminine* would incorporate "open, extravagant subjectivity" (Cixous 109); the very use of this feminine writing theoretically challenges patriarchal prescriptions by throwing off the hegemonic chains of language. Cixous's theories about feminine language are relevant in the study of women's periodicals because examples of *écriture féminine* are present in the *Lady's Newspaper*, but they are missing Cixous's component of rebellion. When the paper evinced examples of feminine language, it did so without being ideologically subversive; instead of challenging patriarchy, it often confirmed traditional domestic ideology by honoring femininity, beauty, and domesticity.

Chapter One works as a foundational chapter, establishing some of the conventional practices of the nineteenth-century periodical press in order to contextualize the *Lady's Newspaper's* unique brand of femininity. The press consisted of various genres, including literary annuals, newspapers, and magazines, all of which varied further

in regard to seriality, visual format, and content. While my focus concentrates on two newspapers, examples from other periodicals in the century help situate the papers within their own publication history. This chapter indicates some of the difficulties that periodical scholars face in trying to identify the readers, writers, and editors participating in the cultural exchange of the press. Mary Ruth Hiller estimates that between 1824 and 1900 close to seventy-five percent of the articles and stories published in monthlies and quarterlies were anonymous or pseudonymous; undoubtedly the figure would be much higher if weeklies were included” (124). In a century when anonymity and pseudonymity prevailed over the press, it is problematic to locate the real, historical readers, writers, and editors of the *Lady's Newspaper*. However, this thesis attempts to use the paper's own language, evinced in its articles and announcements, to theorize about its readership and authorship. Furthermore, this chapter summarizes the important role that advertising plays in determining a paper's intended readership and its goals for the paper's content. By understanding how periodicals such as the *Lady's Newspaper* used its advertisement pages, one may gain insights into the gendered priorities of its readership.

Most importantly, Chapter One establishes the methodological framework that I will be working within throughout this thesis. Using an approach suggested by periodical scholar Lyn Pykett, I adopt an interdisciplinary methodology that encompasses issues of gender, language, text, and identity as they mediate the prioritized gender issues in the *Lady's Newspaper* and in the *Times*. The papers were marketed to vastly different gendered readerships that demanded different kinds of stories and priorities. Issues of gender must be explored in these periodicals because language, by its very nature, is ideological. In the *Lady's Newspaper*, in particular, there is a dynamic, unstable

interplay among discourses, making Michel Foucault's theoretical work on discursive exchange useful and pertinent. Because these discourses interact through language, Jacques Derrida's post-structuralist theory of language can also be useful here as we try to understand when and how the *Lady's Newspaper* shifts between its conflicting discourses. Lastly, Hélène Cixous's theory about feminine language, known by literary theorists as *écriture féminine*, will form the cornerstone of my work on the gendered language present in the *Lady's Newspaper*. Because language is ideological, the way in which the *Lady's Newspaper* is constructed, even at a linguistic level, may elucidate its commitment to or against traditional nineteenth-century domestic ideology.

Chapter Two takes a deeper look into the elements that make up the *Lady's Newspaper* by establishing its publication history, its earliest mission, and its commitment to feminine news. This chapter questions the very nature of news and concludes that political components can only be appropriated for women's periodicals such as *Lady's Newspaper* when domestic issues provide the focus. The paper's title implies public, political news, but its editor insists that the subject matter will be consistent with domestic interests of the private sphere. To complicate these matters, the inaugural issue of the paper explicitly states that the paper will adopt a masculine persona. This injection of a masculine voice is jarring and confusing, especially since the paper proposes to address women's issues and interests. These seeming contradictions in purpose and voice present a dilemma for both reader and editor. A close reading of four specific examples in the *Lady's Newspaper* demonstrates the unstable negotiations that result from the coupling of a masculine persona and an inherently feminine content. These negotiations provide strong evidence that the *Lady's Newspaper* supported and

subscribed to traditional domestic ideology in spite of its politically suggestive title and visual layout.

How differences in journalistic priority create conflicts about the nature of masculine and feminine news is evidenced in the wide reportage of the Great Exhibition of 1851. Chapter Three uses three primary examples from the *Times* and the *Lady's Newspaper* in its exploration of the Great Exhibition reportage. This thorough survey of various stages of Great Exhibition news will demonstrate that politics can only be incorporated successfully into the feminine sphere when domestic news is prioritized. Also, the *Lady's Newspaper* evinces *écriture féminine*, but it does so without challenging patriarchal prescriptions by using language that confirms traditional gender ideology. Essentially, the Great Exhibition reportage acts as a case study for exploration into the gender issues that are embedded in the pages of the *Lady's Newspaper* and the *Times*.

Trying to uncover specific examples of feminine writing in the *Lady's Newspaper* is, nonetheless, difficult. As Cixous writes in "Sorties," "At the present time, defining a feminine practice of writing is impossible with an impossibility that will continue; for this practice will never be able to be *theorised*, enclosed, coded, which does not mean it does not exist" (109). However, Cixous believes that one must try to verbalize the elements of feminine writing: "But one can begin to speak. Begin to point out some effects, some elements of unconscious drives, some relations of the feminine imaginary to the real, to writing" (109). This thesis reveals evidence of *écriture féminine* in the *Lady's Newspaper* and discusses the meaning of these traces in relation to Victorian ideological practices. Shifting discourses and inherent thematic instabilities in the gendered *Lady's Newspaper* cause constant oscillation between the masculine realm of

the newspaper press and the feminine realm of the domestic press, while persistently remaining within traditional middle-class domestic ideology.

CHAPTER 1

GENDER AND THE VICTORIAN PERIODICAL PRESS

In a London Debating Society meeting on 16 November 1827, John Stuart Mill delivered a speech titled “The Present State of Literature,” throughout which he examined the influence of the periodical press on Britain’s burgeoning reading public, both on the literati and on the working class:

The present age is very remarkably distinguished from all other ages by the number of persons who can read, and what is of more consequence by the number who do. Our working classes have learned to read, and our idle classes have learned to find pleasure in reading, and to devote a part of that time to it, which they formerly spent in amusements of a grosser kind. (22)

As Mill will go on to express throughout his speech, journalism and the periodical press were the primary instruments for promoting the country’s growing literacy rates. The press had a pervasive presence in the century, intimately involved in reporting such diverse issues as the latest parliamentary news, world fashions, royal events, special events such as the Great Exhibition of 1851, foreign conquests, cookery techniques, advances in floriculture, needlepoint patterns, calls for philanthropy, and many other varied stories. For Victorian scholars today, periodical literature, whether daily or annual, magazine or newspaper, constitutes “the largest single source of Victorian

material available to us, and the most comprehensive” (North 3). As Fraser, Green, and Johnston astutely write, the periodical press remained “the most significant organ for disseminating knowledge, information and social attitudes” (xi). Even early writers in the period sensed the ubiquitous influence of the press, as evidenced by the introduction to the 1820 periodical, *Retrospective Review*: “the British public are almost solely occupied by the productions which daily issue from the press; newspapers, reviews, pamphlets, magazines, the popular poetry, the fashionable romances, together with new voyages and travels, occupy the reading time, and fix the attention of the people” (“Introduction to the *Retrospective Review*” 163). By the mid-century, the women’s periodical press was involved in occupying the reading time and fixing the attention of Britain’s women readers, a task that the *Lady’s Newspaper* took up as it feminized the news appropriately for its middle-class readers. Reading the pages of nineteenth-century periodicals such as the *Lady’s Newspaper* helps us to get closer historically to the nineteenth-century; it draws us into the period as we pick up the same pages that a Victorian read so that we may better understand who the British public was, what values they held, and to what cultural practices they subscribed.

The term “periodical press” encompasses many different forms of journalism and, for the sake of this thesis, it is important to briefly mention some of these formats. While we generally think of the press as newspapers, the press actually made up such diverse compositions as the literary annual, the newspaper, and the magazine, varying widely in regard to seriality, visual format, and authorial voice. The literary annuals were a popular form, especially in the early part of the century. These small books were often given as gifts because of their steel-plate engravings, their devotion to fiction and poetry, and

because they were a fashion among the middle class. Kathryn Ledbetter writes that the annual was a “cherished commodity to middle-class readers” (*Tennyson* 26), and while annuals were concurrently competitive with magazines, by the 1850s newspapers and magazines finally won out. Most magazines such as the *Englishwoman’s Domestic Magazine*, *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, and *Cornhill Magazine* were published monthly, varying significantly in subject matter and tone. Furthermore, each publication promoted a unique brand personality and the journal’s house style became its dominant discourse, although some scholars such as Laurel Brake warn against simplifying a periodical’s discourse to a top down approach (from the position of the editor). While an editor’s selections for a paper are important to consider when analyzing a paper’s discourses, especially because of an editor’s influence in producing the paper, authors and readers alike are crucial to the multiplicity of discourses that each journal constructs.

Until 1855, weekly journals and newspapers were liable to a newspaper tax, which may be one of the reasons why so many monthly magazines surfaced early in the century. London’s leading paper was the *Times*, which was published daily with the most significant political headlines. Because the *Times* was so powerful during the century, demonstrating one scholar’s assertion that “the discovery and transmission of news could be so well organized that again and again the *Times* was ahead of the Government itself” (Kellett 17), most other newspapers depended on the *Times* for its news content. The *Lady’s Newspaper* was one of these dependents, publishing its issues weekly from 1847 until it merged with the *Queen* in 1863. Read side-by-side with the *Times*, the *Lady’s Newspaper* feminized the news for its women readers by providing safe, non-threatening content and tones. Its shifting discourses and feminine language do not challenge

hegemonic prescriptions, but they repeatedly work towards confirming nineteenth-century separate spheres ideology.

Gender and Journalism: Reader, Writer, and Editor

The success of any given periodical depends largely on the motivations and demands of three separate entities: the reader, the writer, and the editor. These form an interdependent triangular relationship that shapes a paper's brand personality. By examining the elements of this triangular relationship, we can interpret the goals, priorities, and discursive practices of the *Lady's Newspaper* to prove its linguistic and thematic commitment to traditional nineteenth-century domestic ideology.

Identifying readerships of periodicals can be problematic for scholars today. One may find that the *Times* circulated 18,350,000 copies in 1855 (Chapman 350), but this statistic does not give researchers any real idea about who is actually reading the newspaper. In fact, inaccuracies in the circulation numbers are still increasingly troublesome, making it nearly impossible to determine readership. Eugenia Palmegiano claims that after the stamp tax ended in 1855, there was about a fifty-year gap in periodical figures because there was no requirement to report circulation numbers ("Conundrum"). As the *Waterloo Directory* maintains, "Circulation figures suggest the extent of readership, although these figures are seldom reliable. Readers ought to remember that editors may have inflated circulation figures for advertising purposes" (*Waterloo*). Neither circulation figures nor the publisher's targeted audience reveal the real historical reader of a periodical. One may read in Charles Dickens's 1850 preface to *Household Words* that the readership shall be made up of "both sexes, and of all ages and

conditions” (Dickens 1), but how does one really know who was fingering the journal? Furthermore, even if scholars had a record of who purchased the magazine, still it does not prove that one actually read the paper, nor does it confirm *how* one read it. Even though an editor may have particular goals and intentions for a paper’s readership, the task is daunting for the periodical scholar in trying to determine who the real historical readers were.

According to Palmegiano, editors often published based on who they *thought* readers were. Editors and publishers could format their periodicals to focus on a classified readership, but there is little way of knowing who the real readers were, although titles, purchasing costs, and content reveal that periodicals often tried to target members of specific economic classes. Some periodicals such as the *Gentlewoman (and Modern Life)* or the *Edinburgh Review* would have aimed for an upper-class or intellectual readership, while other periodicals may have consciously advertised its product for working-class readers. Gender and class are both inflected by and bound up in the discourses surrounding the periodical and this becomes increasingly evident as the century continues, especially with the ongoing debates surrounding the “woman question.” A famous example of this convergence of gender and class in periodicals is with the late nineteenth-century magazine, the *Lady’s World*. In 1887, Oscar Wilde agreed to take the editorship only if the paper’s name would be changed to *Woman’s World*. This change is indicative of the changes occurring in gender ideology by the 1880s. Wilde markets his magazine to Woman, an independent intellectual person that is very different from the upper-class domestic “lady” of the *Lady’s World*. Brake writes succinctly about the connotations of these two terms “lady” and “woman”:

The name change, suggested to Wilde by Dinah Craik, implied a significant move from the world of the 'lady' to that of 'woman', a word associated at the time with 'commonness', suffrage and higher education, and a move between two kinds of gendered discourse. (*Subjugated Knowledges* 128)

The title itself, *Woman's World*, implies the constructed readership that Wilde desires; he wanted a Woman, not a lady. Similarly, the *Lady's Newspaper* enforces its duality of ideology in its very title: it is a paper for a lady, which connotes both gender and class. The term "lady" suggests a specific class distinction, particularly, the middle class for the Victorians. "Lady" is also linked to the feminine and suggests light news appropriate to domesticity and the hearth, while the term "newspaper" suggests masculine, political reports. The title, the *Lady's Newspaper*, is therefore an elision of two disparate spheres, implying that this paper will be for middle-class women readers, but it will blend issues of femininity with public events. Throughout its reportage, however, its commitment to domestic news overshadowed any hints at the public, political issues of the period, it becomes, in effect, a product of the women's domestic press, not the political press, as its title suggests. Readership is therefore important, especially with the *Lady's Newspaper*, because by holding purchasing power, the readers choreographed and indirectly controlled the feminized content of the paper.

Knowing the targeted readership allows one to get closer to the marketing strategies and commitments of the publishers and editors. John Stuart Mill writes in 1827 concerning the power of the reader, "Assuming [] as an indisputable truth that the writers of every age are for the most part what the readers make them, it becomes

important to the present question to consider who formed the reading public formerly, and who compose it now” (22). Despite its aims towards a universal readership, the *Times* targeted to a specific audience, one that is overwhelmingly masculine. The news that the *Times* reported would be steeped in the masculine world of politics, as evidenced from its earliest mission. The editor addresses his public in the inaugural issue of the *Times* (first named *The Daily Universal Register*) on 1 January 1785 and promises that his product will offer something for everyone:

A News-Paper, conducted on the true and natural principles of such a publication, ought to be the Register of the times, and faithful recorder of every species of intelligence; it ought not to be engrossed by any particular object; but, like a well covered table, it should contain something suited to every palate: observations on the dispositions of our own and foreign courts should be provided for the political reader; debates should be reported for the amusement or information of those who may be particularly fond of them; and a due attention should be paid to the interests of trade, which are so greatly promoted by advertisements.—A paper that should blend all these advantages, and by steering clear of extremes, hit the happy medium, has long been expected by the public.

(“To the Public” 1)

While John Walter, the paper’s first editor, had the broad mission to bring news that would suit every palate, it is clear within these lines that his aim was to merely suit the male palate. He promises reports of foreign courts, records of debates, and information about trades and financials, leaving no room for the types of feminine news that will suit

a lady's palate. There will be no lengthy stories about the queen's clothing, no recipes or leaders about the mission of the London philanthropic society. In 1864, one-time *English Woman's Journal* editor Emily Davies offers a telling observation about the extent to which the *Times* appealed to women writing, "When the *Times* is offered to a lady, the sheet containing the advertisements, and the births, deaths and marriages, is considerably selected" (qtd. in Tusan 33). Clearly, the *Times* assumed and delivered a firm definition of news, one that Lucy Brown defines as "serious reports of public affairs, local and national. Social events might be reported, but in a subordinate way: the standpoint of the reader was assumed to be that of someone with a serious concern for the affairs of a world power" (111). From the pen of the founding *Times* editor, John Walter, to the mouth of the mid-nineteenth century female editor Emily Davies, the *Times* would provide political news to an implied masculine readership.

The *Lady's Newspaper* was also written for a specific readership: middle-class ladies. While the title of the periodical may suggest political, public affairs, this paper adopted the term broadly to encompass such things as social events, fashion advice, and popular literature. Brown writes that a good rule of thumb for reporting news is that it "must also, somehow or other, by the artistry of its presentation, or by constant repetition and explanation, if not by its intrinsic qualities, establish a link with the reader's experience and interests" (96). The *Lady's Newspaper* established a connection with its readers by providing stories and headlines that its editors believed would be consistent with the experiences of its female readers. If we, therefore, adopt Brown's rigid definition of a newspaper, then the *Lady's Newspaper* cannot really be a newspaper at all. In the paper, the social events are not subordinate to the bulk of the issue; rather, they

make up the majority of the paper. In this way, the *Lady's Newspaper* proposes an “apolitical reader,” as defined by Tusan:

Publications written for but not necessary by women had long helped constitute women into a community of consumers who shared common interests linked to the issues of household management, dress, and entertaining. Scholarly studies of commercially driven domestic women's magazines run mainly by men for women have demonstrated the ways in which domestic women's magazines constituted an apolitical female reader. (25)

Because of its commitment to social events and feminine issues, the *Lady's Newspaper* cannot really claim to be a part of the political press (however political the title may suggest), but instead it participated in the tradition of the women's domestic press and participated in promoting traditional domestic ideology of the nineteenth century.

Because periodicals marketed to specific readerships, the thematic trends seen in the pages of the advertisements elucidate the interests of the readers (or at least what the editors thought the readers wanted to buy). The nature of these advertisements, “while by no means straightforward, could offer clues to the circulation and readership of individual papers,” affirms Brown in *Victorian News and Newspapers* (17). It is often difficult to know precisely how much of the paper was devoted to advertisements because these marketing cash cows were often stripped before the periodicals were bound. Sometimes, however, periodical scholars today strike gold by finding bound periodicals complete with full sheets of advertisements. E. E. Kellett reports that “in May 1853 a single issue of *The Times* contained 2,575 advertisements” (10). Beetham and Boardman have

suggested that in the mid 1880s, the *Queen* devoted half of its magazine to advertisements (160). The bound volumes of the *Lady's Newspaper* with which I have been working have two pages of advertisements at the end of each issue. As the century continued, advertisements became more and more important, both to the paper's financial survival and for its commercial appeal. Later in the century, New Journalism and updated printing practices brought greater demands for visual news through illustrated journalism. This progressive commitment to advertising and fashion, which is fully exhibited in later *fin de siècle* journalism, had its early beginnings with such women's periodicals as the *Lady's Newspaper* and the *Queen*, especially in its unique portrayal of feminine news.

In James Joyce's twentieth-century masterpiece, *Ulysses*, advertiser Leopold Bloom halts behind the typesetter of the *Freeman's Journal* office and ponders, "It's the ads and side features sell a weekly, not the stale news in the official gazette" (98). What was true regarding advertising in journals in Bloom's day was true for players in the mid-nineteenth-century press. Like many periodicals in the period, the *Lady's Newspaper* relied on advertisements to keep the paper running, and for researchers today, advertisements offer clues into a periodical's target readership. Envisioned as a faster, more efficient method for dispersing news, the development of the periodical press nearly single-handedly informed and shaped the commodity culture of the nineteenth-century. In many women's periodicals of the mid and late century, advertisements began to intrude upon the written page, interacting with the news stories and feature articles in ways that allowed for multiple meanings. In her 1894 *Fortnightly Review* article, "Women's Newspapers," Evelyn March-Phillips confirms the periodical's financial need for advertisements: "These papers live mainly by their advertisements. A shilling would

scarcely cover the cost of production of those which are sold for sixpence, much less make them pay. It is from the high prices charged for advertising space that the harvest is reaped” (368). Not only did the advertisements provide monetary sustenance for the papers, but also they worked with and through the paper’s own discourses and messages. In *Victorian Women’s Magazines*, Margaret Beetham and Kay Boardman use the term “advertorial” to refer to the strong relationship between the editorial and the advertisement (15). This means that the articles themselves would often mention or recommend the very products that are marketed in the advertisement sections of the paper.

Laurel Brake, who has done much work in the field of nineteenth-century book history and journalism, phrases it slightly differently than Beetham and Boardman. In her article “Writing, Cultural Production, and the Periodical Press in the Nineteenth Century,” Brake writes that the periodical format made the editorial matter a “*commodified text*” (55) because of its close link with the commercial business of journalism. According to Brake, “most Victorian periodicals, unlike books, carried a substantial ‘wrapper’ or ‘supplement’ of advertisements, adverts for products which often had no relation other than commercial with the editorial contents of the journal” (55). The *Lady’s Newspaper* exemplifies Brake’s theory of the commodified text in its own advertisements pages. In the 14 June 1851 issue, the advertisements feature such products as Parr’s Life-Pills and Rimmel’s Toilet Vinegar without one mention of these things in the editorial; these are references to products that have no explicit relation to the news. The *Lady’s Newspaper*, like many periodicals, became a commodified text because the reader was both a consumer of the periodical and a consumer of its

advertised products. In order to convince the woman of the house to buy their products, advertisers collaborated with editors in such ways that influenced readers and bound them into a “culture of capital” (Beetham, *A Magazine of Her Own* 7). Using the seductive language of romance, Michelle Elizabeth Tusan likens the advertiser to an eager beau: “At the same time, publishers and advertisers courted the female reader, starting at the turn of the century, because of her status as primary household consumer” (14). This pervasive push for readers to be buyers, too, transformed the periodical into an organ for consumer consumption, and the commodified text, along with the advertisements, allow scholars to get closer to the intended readership for papers such as the *Lady's Newspaper*.

No less difficult than detecting the real readers of the journals is identifying the writers of periodical literature. All who work on periodicals, especially women's periodicals, must deal with the frustration of the lack of archival evidence for authors and editors. Of course, authors of mainstream papers can be easily found in such databases as the *Wellesley Index* or the *Waterloo Directory*, but contributors to women's papers are scarcely found. Scholars interested in the *Lady's Newspaper* are at a double disadvantage when it comes to knowing the paper's authorship because it was both a women's periodical and a newspaper. Most newspapers in this period operated under authorial anonymity, so it is nearly impossible to know whether women or men were writing for the *Lady's Newspaper*. While Hiller believes that anonymity was observed because of the long-standing tradition of anonymous authorship encouraged by John Milton (124), many periodical scholars today believe that anonymity was often the best way for women to make it in the masculine world of journalism (Easley 7). Because the press was still dominated by men throughout the century, women such as Marian Evans and Harriet

Martineau often cloaked their female identities with *noms de plume* or with *noms de guerre*. Alexis Easley titles her book about Victorian women writers *First-Person Anonymous* because to be a woman author in the nineteenth century often meant the writer was anonymous. Virginia Woolf posits in 1929 that “Anon, who wrote so many poems without signing them, was often a woman” (51). Some women, Barbara Onslow notes, assumed male personas to fit into the male periodical environment. While the *Lady’s Newspaper* offers little to no authorial recognition, the absence of contributors’ names does invite some theorizing about who was writing the columns and who was reading them.

Another component to consider in the reader—writer—editor triangle of periodical publication is the presence of the editor. In the competitive environment of the press, wherein each journal or newspaper was competing for top circulation figures, the editor’s name, reputation, and presence in the periodical often played a key role in keeping buyers coming back. Some periodicals recruited authors and celebrity figures for editorial positions: *Cornhill Magazine*’s publisher George Smith enlisted renowned novelist William Makepeace Thackeray when he launched his magazine in 1860, in 1887, *The Lady’s World* publishers appealed to Oscar Wilde to help sell their magazines, and with Wilde’s celebrity on the cover, he changed the face of the magazine, both in name and in aesthetic content. Other periodicals hired educated male editors who would infuse their papers with the editorial “we.” Palmegiano has remarked that in the 1850s and 60s, people generally trusted both the editorial “we” and especially the *Times*. In the case of the *Times* and the *Lady’s Newspaper*, the editorial “we” promoted a persona that is admittedly gendered male—an interesting editorial decision, especially in the case of

the feminine newspaper. The *Lady's Newspaper* employed a masculine persona and a three-column newspaper format to mimic the visual layout of the *Times*, but its content promised to be marketed to women readers. This was a marketing decision to satiate the appetites of its women readers with domestic news while offering its readers just a taste of public, political events. Evidence from its pages show that it feminized the news from the *Times*, but its commitment to political news was slight and overshadowed by domestic priorities. News of the public sphere was only successfully incorporated into the *Lady's Newspaper* when it took the form of social or court news.

Relatively few high-profile periodicals made space for leading female editors, but as Barbara Onslow writes, many women did find editorial positions despite social circumstances:

Whatever the ideal requirements of successful editorship, achieving it at all depended on factors which were the reverse of women's usual condition. Their education was all too often inadequate, political sophistication was discouraged and their personal expectations and ambitions modest. In such circumstances it is perhaps more surprising that so many, rather than so few, reached the editorial chair. (106)

Surprisingly, the list is long for Victorian women editors—a list which Abigail Burnham Bloom synthesizes broadly in *Nineteenth-Century British Women Writers*:

Isabella Mary Beeton edited *The Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* and *The Young Englishwoman*; George Eliot edited the *Westminster Review* before beginning her career in fiction writing; Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna edited the *Christian Lady's Magazine* for many years, along with several

other journals as well. Charlotte Mary Yonge edited *The Monthly Packet*, a magazine for young adults, for almost forty years. Political activist Clementina Black edited *Common Cause*, while Josephine Butler edited several different journals. Eliza Cook started her own magazine, *Eliza Cook's Journal*, a journal that inspired the feminists Bessie Rayner Parkes and Matilda Hays. (6)

Because of the scarcity of publication information for women's papers, it is difficult to determine if the *Lady's Newspaper* had any female editors. In 2003, the *Waterloo Directory of English Newspapers and Periodicals* listed Mr Montague as editor with Robert Palmer being the first publisher; however, the 1847 inaugural issue introduced Mr. Charles Dance as editor of the paper. Since 2003, the *Waterloo Directory* has updated its website, listing Charles Dance as the rightful 1847 editor, but even these slight inconsistencies between the paper's address and the Waterloo Directory represent the types of problems that researchers encounter with periodical history. Although the *Lady's Newspaper* claimed only male editors, my argument is that the paper does indicate a feminine voice in its articles. There is no real way to know who wrote and edited all of the pieces, but the language often smacks of the feminine, evincing, as it were, Hélène Cixous's theory of *écriture féminine*.

The readers' interests, the writer's language, and the editor's publishing choices all create the discourses that are embedded in any given periodical. The *Lady's Newspaper* wrote for a female readership, and although it introduced a male editor and persona, it evinced feminine language that confirmed traditional domestic ideology.

Politics can only be successfully appropriated for its readers when its language is largely inflected with domestic concerns and feminine priorities.

Interdisciplinary Methodology

As Lyn Pykett suggests in her article on reading the periodical text, it is not enough to think of periodicals as merely reflectors of culture; that is, reading Victorian periodicals is not as simple as adopting the reflective/constructive paradigm that scholars promoted decades ago. “Far from being a mirror of Victorian culture,” writes Pykett, “the periodicals have come to be seen as a central component of that culture—an ‘active and integral part,’ and they can only be read and understood as part of that culture and society, and in the context of other knowledges about them” (102). The way to read and understand the diversity and multifariousness of periodicals is through the “multidisciplinary terrains of cultural and media studies” (105). Because of the nature of their intertextuality, periodicals demand to be read using a variety of theoretical and cultural approaches. In this thesis, my theoretical framework will encompass the issues of gender, language, text, and identity by adopting and adapting elements of post-structuralism and feminism as they mediate the fundamental and prioritized gender issues evident in the *Lady’s Newspaper* and the *Times*.

One way that recent scholars have read and approached Victorian periodicals is by thinking of them as a medium for social discourse. Nowhere in Victorian historiography is one likely to see so many voices and opinions being expressed than in the overwhelming number of periodicals that materialized in this century. Indeed, one of the most fascinating components of periodicals is this quality of multivocality. The very

word “magazine” denotes a storehouse or repository and is closely allied in the nineteenth century with “museum.” Many early women’s magazines adopted both of these terms, “magazine” and “museum,” to describe the heterogeneous quality of its content. The *Lady’s Magazine* merged with the *Lady’s Museum* to constitute the *Lady’s Magazine and Museum*, and the *Lady’s Monthly Museum* is listed as well in the bibliography of Beetham’s foundational work *A Magazine of Her Own?: Domesticity and Desire in the Woman’s Magazine, 1900-1914*. Beetham also states that the periodical was marketed by radical heterogeneity; it refused a single authorial voice (12). By their very natures, periodicals have a plurality of voices, evidenced from the early mixed genre periodicals to the mid-century proliferation of miscellanies to the late-century rise in tit-bits and the “Conversazione” of the *Englishwoman’s Domestic Magazine*. The genre attests to the multivocality in the journals and as Gérard Genette proposes in his work on paratexts, the text depends strongly on the material space around it. In essence, all of the components that make up a single issue interact with one another in ways that allow for conflicted meanings.

Because the periodical allows for such diversity in tone and content, there is a discernible exchange of ideas through the discourses that the periodical culture produces. Bound up in the very nature of the periodical is this tendency towards discursive exchange. In this Foucauldian and Bakhtinian way, each component of the periodical issue participates in a system of exchange as it competes within its own particular discursive formation. As Lois Tyson writes concerning Foucault’s theories:

For there is no *monolithic* (single, unified, universal) spirit of an age, and there is no adequate *totalizing* explanation of history (an explanation that

provides a single key to all aspects of a given culture). There is, instead, a dynamic, unstable interplay among discourses: they are always in a state of flux, overlapping and competing with one another (or, to use new historical terminology, *negotiating* exchanges of power) in any number of ways at any given point in time. (285)

In short, the periodical allows for negotiations between its various discourses, which ultimately provides us with ways of re-seeing and re-viewing the periodical's heterogeneous parts.

The ways in which each part of the periodical participates in the paper's own discursive formations is through language. Jacques Derrida's post-structuralist theory of language is useful here as we try to understand the intricacies of periodical literature. For Derrida, language mediates one's experience of both oneself and of the world. While some believe language to be fixed, stable, and precise, Derrida understands language to be fluid, ambiguous, and unstable as it reveals and distinguishes between conflicting ideologies. Furthermore, Tyson notes that "Changes in tone of voice and emphasis can further reveal the slippery quality of language," (250) and this allowance for alternate tones and voices will be explored fuller in regards to the *Lady's Newspaper*.

In some ways, the rhetorical theories of French feminist Hélène Cixous align closely with Derrida's post-structuralist philosophies. In her decisive work, "Sorties," Cixous outlines her theory about feminine language, known by literary theorists as *écriture féminine*. In this work, Cixous analyzes women's relationship to masculine discourse and reveals that patriarchal society views the body (which is associated with Woman) as inferior to mind and reason (which is associated with Man). Issues of gender

must be explored in periodicals because language, by its very nature, is ideological. The closest way of understanding the ideologies of the past is through language, and an application of Cixous's theories about feminine language may help us explore in greater detail the nuances of language in the *Lady's Newspaper*.

Many writers and scholars of the twentieth century have explored the fact that women often function within man's discourse. This is especially the case with women writers. In her landmark feminist work, *A Room of One's Own*, Virginia Woolf writes about the lack of Woman in male discourse and her own weariness of male discourse's pervading presence (1929):

Indeed, it was delightful to read a man's writing again. It was so direct, so straightforward after the writing of women. It indicated such freedom of mind, such liberty of person, such confidence in himself. One had a sense of physical well-being in the presence of this well-nourished, well-educated, free mind, which had never been thwarted or opposed, but had had full liberty from birth to stretch itself in whatever way it liked. All this was admirable. But after reading a chapter or two a shadow seemed to lie across the page. It was a straight dark bar, a shadow shaped something like the letter "I" One began dodging this way and that to catch a glimpse of the landscape behind it. Whether that was indeed a tree or a woman walking I was not quite sure. Back one was always hailed to the letter "I" One began to be tired of "I" (103)

Adrienne Rich also tired of the conventional male discourse and implores women to write, not by “convention and propriety,” but by an internalized female experience, in effect, practicing Cixous’s call that “woman must write her body” (113):

No male writer has written primarily or even largely for women, or with the sense of women’s criticism as a consideration when he choose his materials, his theme, his language. But to a lesser or great extent, every woman writer has written for men even when, like Virginia Woolf, she was supposed to be addressing women. If we have come to the point when this balance might begin to change, when women can stop being haunted, not only by “convention and propriety” but by internalized fears of being and saying themselves, then it is an extraordinary moment for the woman writer—and reader. (272)

These modern theories of Woolf, Rich, and Cixous can help us understand older literature and can enrich our understanding of feminine language. I am interested in exploring whether the *Lady’s Newspaper* exhibited characteristics of *écriture féminine*, the fluidly organized and freely associative resistance to patriarchal modes of thinking and writing. Because language is ideological, the ways in which the women’s papers are constructed, even at a linguistic level, elucidates its commitment to or reaction against traditional nineteenth-century domestic ideology. Did the *Lady’s Newspaper* challenge patriarchal prescriptions of language or did it merely adopt the discursive practices of masculine journalism? My chapters on the *Lady’s Newspaper* and the *Times* will show that while exhibiting hints of *écriture féminine*, the *Lady’s Newspaper* was not ideologically subversive or rebellious; it constantly confirmed the legitimacy of domesticity even while

adopting the three-column broadsheet format of political newspapers. The paper's insistence upon using the visual format of political newspapers illustrates the paradoxical conflicting codes working through the paper's own discourses. Pykett admits that "Students of the Victorian periodical press have persistently confronted the double problem of defining the object of study, and devising an appropriate methodological framework within which to conduct that study" (100). The theories of post-structuralism and feminism alongside one another are an appropriate and useful methodological framework to adopt when delving into the unique gender issues disclosed in the *Lady's Newspaper*.

CHAPTER 2

THE LADY'S NEWSPAPER AND FEMININE NEWS

In the 2 January 1847 inaugural issue of the *Lady's Newspaper*, a woman is quoted in the first entry of the Correspondence column praising the novelty of a “Lady’s” newspaper:

Mr. Editor.—Will you permit me to offer you my sincere thanks for the periodical which you have signified your intention of publishing. I greatly admire your consideration for the Ladies, a newspaper devoted exclusively to them is a thing they have long desired, for we have not, like the Gentlemen, had a newspaper before, so no doubt you will find yours sincerely appreciated (Anonymous 5)

Indeed, the very concept of a lady’s newspaper seems rather paradoxical and even contrary to the nature of women’s periodicals, for “the periodical without ‘news’ emerged as an appropriate medium for the domestic woman” writes Margaret Beetham (24). The *Lady's Newspaper* begins its 1847 address to the reader with a moralizing mission—“Our purpose is, to teach you ‘what’ (morally) ‘to Eat, Drink, and Avoid’” (Dance 2) Its emphasis on news promised to be slight and unencumbered by long, tedious articles. Furthermore, the editors frequently united this moral agenda with illustrations of bonnets and morning dresses in casual reportage that clearly shows they were not sure what news was proper for its women readers. But one thing they and

nearly every other women's periodical in the mid-century could count on was promoting an agenda that taught readers how to better clothe themselves both physically and morally, for this is the *Lady's Newspaper's* unending mission through its seventeen-year run before it merged with the *Queen* in 1863. This chapter questions the very nature of news and speculates whether its political components can be appropriated for women's periodicals such as the *Lady's Newspaper*. By its very title, the *Lady's Newspaper* is situated within a nebulous categorization, offering the strange mixture of a male persona with feminine content in order to present a lady's (denoting social class) newspaper (suggesting political news). Crucial to this discussion is whether news, a predominantly public and political product, can be incorporated into a domestic feminine sphere. I will focus mainly on the *Lady's Newspaper's* early mission as published by the editor in its debut issue and demonstrate how the editor's self-infused masculine persona is undercut by the domestic priorities lying within its pages.

The problematic position of the *Lady's Newspaper* comes with its attempts to publish news for ladies. What kind of news is appropriate and of interest to a Victorian lady? This is the question that the very title of the periodical begs and one that the male editor tries to elucidate in his opening address. Fraser, Green, and Johnson write that the best place to start when trying to understand the mission of a periodical is in its prefatory statement:

Thus in the first instance, it is usually the contents, the kinds of articles, stories, poems and so on, which will signal to any prospective reader a journal's editorial position, but a surer indicator is the tone and content of the prefatory statement. The prefatory statement becomes the primary

means of establishing any journal's ideological position regarding any number of issues: politics, class, gender and so on. (86)

By analyzing the 1847 introductory words from the editor of the *Lady's Newspaper*, we can learn about the paper's persona and tone, who the intended readers will include, what kind of news it will offer, and its commitment to traditional nineteenth-century domestic ideology. In the inaugural issue, editor Charles Dance begins his prefatory remarks with the leader, "Good News for the Ladies!" (2), an apt title, because its very language suggests both a special announcement *and* the paper's agenda, that is, bringing the ladies news that is good for them.

In a curious thematic maneuver, Dance genders the paper and classifies the paper's persona as masculine:

As you have addressed us as 'Sir,' we will try and typify our paper in the person of a man, and although we, the paper, never can be exactly that, either as regards our plurality or our being a compound of rags and ink, it shall be our aim to speak as if we were not only a man, but a gentleman. I see that you smile; but let me tell you that a newspaper *can* be gentlemanly whatever you may think to the contrary (Dance 2)

We see here a male editor offering a paper for England's women—a paper featuring the latest stories on floriculture, fashion, and all of women's accomplishments, while consciously and deliberately infusing a male authoritative, and even condescending, voice. Dance personifies the paper as a gentleman, a figure in Victorian Britain that "stood as the foremost ideal of manliness" (Savage 325). Girouard writes about the Victorian gentleman: "He was faithful to God, reverent to women, courteous in his

language, modest in his demeanor, lacking in arrogance to his inferiors, and a shield and support to his tenantry” (13). If the news of the paper would be mostly made up of feminine pursuits, why would Mr. Dance insist on a gentlemanly editorial voice? The *Lady's Newspaper* had to have a masculine persona because the paper's very title suggests political news—news that would have been traditionally assigned to the male sphere. The very term “news” is associated with public concerns and current events and it is often separated from the more private, domestic affairs of women. “The fundamental problem of defining women’s news,” writes Beetham, “was that the category ‘news’ must involve politics” (92). The *Lady's Newspaper* is committed to bringing “Good News to the Ladies,” but the news it offers will be different from the *Times*; it will be “an omnibus of information—a public vehicle of advancement” (Dance 2), offering information about domestic concerns and paths to social advancement. Dance originally infuses the paper with a gentlemanly voice because this would have been acceptable for a paper professing to report news. Through the years of its run, however, its mission evolved into predominantly domestic reportage, and as it did this, the paper's voice shifted towards the feminine. There is no archival evidence to confirm whether the editor changed in the 1850 and 1851 issues, but the paper’s visual layout and thematic priorities change, making it harder for one to hear the paper’s gentlemanly tone as it is refashioned with a sympathetic and moralizing feminine character.

While Dance assigns a masculine persona for the paper, he begins his address to his readers, the “Ladies of England,” in a way that is anything but masculine:

Ahem! Excuse the little nervous cough; it is induced partly by the awkwardness of having to introduce *ourselves* to your notice, and partly,

having done so, by a wish to use any legitimate means to gain time, that we may collect our scattered thoughts, and avoid committing ourselves in any way except—to paper. (2)

It seems unusual that a male writer would begin the paper's opening address in this hesitant and emotive way; but maybe when thinking of his audience, it was the conscious decision that he sound less authoritarian and more feminine. It is as if Dance is adopting a feminine language, one that, as Hélène Cixous writes, "makes allowances for superabundance and uselessness while slashing the exchange value that keeps the spoken words on its track. That is why writing is good, letting the tongue try itself out" ("Sorties" 111). In other words, Dance is trying to use a more feminine kind of language in order to make his female audience feel at ease and to warm up to him. Some have suggested that this hesitant tone would have been necessary in Victorian times in order for a male editor to enter into a relationship with a female reader. Indeed, this may play a role in Dance's nervous language, but regardless of potential social conventions, Dance does adopt a tone of femininity when introducing the masculine persona of the *Lady's Newspaper*. No doubt the editor of a paper such as the *Times*, with its marketing geared towards a more general audience, would have been sneered at had he started his debut issue with such diffident and unassertive language.

If his beginning paragraph achieves something of the *écriture féminine* of Cixous, then his speech quickly dissolves into nothing other than authoritative, linear, and censored language. "Rare are the men," writes Cixous, "able to venture onto the brink where writing, freed from law, unencumbered by moderation, exceeds phallic authority, and where the subjectivity inscribing its effects becomes feminine" (106). What begins

as feminine locution in his opening paragraph soon shifts into the masculine return of editorial authority. The multivocality which is embedded in Dance's opening address finds its shift from feminine discourse to a masculine one in a specific place in this text, and this place is worth noting. Dance's "nervous cough" and "scattered thoughts" occur when he humbles himself to address his potential female buyers; however, when potential threats are voiced, Dance puts on his military cap and quashes the voice of opposition. Dance hears dissension ringing from that "regiment of blues":

The ear of our imagination already hears one lady amongst you, a little less patient than the rest, and perhaps (may she pardon the impertinence) half conscious of some slight failings which she does not care to see in print, explain—"and pray who are you, Sir, who thus propose to play Mentor to our Telemachus—to settle our studies for us—to control our amusements—to regulate our manners—to teach us our duty to our husbands—and the right method of managing our children [. . .]. Who are you, I repeat, and what are your qualifications for the *rather* difficult task you undertake?" (2)

This voice of defiance elicits an "Ahem! Ahem!" from the paper's gentlemanly persona and it must "take two coughs this time, for the interruption is somewhat sudden, and the attack somewhat sharp" (2). The editor now stands on the defensive and strikes hard against his opposition from that bluestocking group, giving a lengthy disquisition about the way in which a man of good-breeding enters unpunctually to a Prince's dinner party. Half of the first column of Dance's address is devoted to this digression, for an anecdote of George the Fourth and a late-coming gentleman will exemplify the type of manners

that this naysaying bluestocking woman should have when approaching a newspaper for the first time. Dance's defensive tone, linearly constructed and authoritatively executed, carries with it masculine directives for proper behavior in social situations. He is adopting here a masculine voice in order to give women moral guidance; ironically, doing the very thing that makes the one from the "regiment of blues" skeptical—infusing a male voice to direct female actions and to address domestic issues. Still, this linguistic shift back to the masculine presents a clue into the ideological position that the *Lady's Newspaper* is staking out. Dance is showing here that defiance of separate spheres ideology and deviance from conservative social behavior will not be tolerated. These early glimpses into the paper's commitment to traditional domestic ideology will foreshadow its future reportage of feminine news.

Another reason for Dance's homiletic and didactic tone is that it is a periodical that does, after all, emphasize moral prescriptions. Fraser, Green, and Johnston assert that male editors frequently adopted authoritative personas in the periodical press (78). Even women editors and writers often assumed tones of ascendancy and moral superiority. While Dance's prescriptive tones may be expected in a paper targeted for women readers, the startling thing is that he deliberately chooses a male persona for the lady's newspaper. Like the doubts expressed by Dance's bluestocking skeptic, we can wonder why a male persona should moderate a discussion on female accomplishments. Since the *Lady's Newspaper's* early commitment is prioritized for the domestic issues concerning floriculture, cookery, archery, and needlepoint, one does wonder why a male persona would be appropriate and whether the paper's commitment to news will be evidenced within its pages. Later in the century, Evelyn March-Phillips publishes an

article titled “Women’s Newspapers” in the *Fortnightly Review* commenting on the proliferation of male editors in women’s periodicals:

It is a deplorable fact that almost all these journals are edited by men. One would think women should know best what will please women, but as editors we are told they are deficient in the capacity which grasps a business situation and comes to a quick and definite judgement on financial matters, while they seem wholly unable to master the intricacies of the law of libel. (369)

While March-Phillips wonders why the editor of a women’s magazine would need to be male, especially when addressing domestic issues, my argument here is why the *persona* of a women’s paper would need to be masculine. During the mid-century, the majority of editors were men for precisely the reasons March-Phillips gives—economic and business understanding—but Dance’s decision to detach himself from the paper and create a masculine plural persona for the paper is an unexpected and unsettling measure

Dance specifies the paper’s target audience: “first—the English Grandmothers,” second, “the true and still-young English Mother;” and lastly, “To the rising generation of females we shall hope to make our paper especially attractive—to those sweet young girls” (2). Dance targets his publication towards middle-class Victorian women, prescribing throughout the proper cures for moral deviance. After introducing the gentlemanly voice of the paper and specifying his target audience, Dance spends only the last column expounding on the type of news the paper will offer. He never uses the word “news,” but he reminds the future buyer that it is the study of the *Lady’s Newspaper* “to find both instruction and amusement” and to “make you acquainted with all the leading

events of the day, without fatiguing or disgusting you with lengthy disquisitions” (2). He continues further, “We can tell you that a battle has been won or lost, without shocking your sensibilities by its painful details. We can inform you that a minister has resigned, and yet omit the long dull speeches which preceded his doing so” (2). Evidently, the *Lady’s Newspaper* promises that it will be concerned with political news, but its details will be abridged in order to avoid shocking one’s sensibilities, and frankly, to avoid boring its female readers. As Kathryn Ledbetter writes in her article on imperialism in the *Lady’s Newspaper*, “If shocking one’s sensibilities with painful details was to be avoided, the *Lady’s Newspaper* consistently overlooked its mission” (253) as it often describes graphic murders, railroad accidents, foreign battles, and other sensational events. The *Lady’s Newspaper* did occasionally depict and describe sensational events, perhaps to whet the appetites of its readers, but the overwhelming tone and content of the paper confirms and endorses separate spheres ideology. Dance’s address claims that the emphasis of the paper’s reportage will be concentrated in “every branch of female accomplishment and pursuit” (2); this does, indeed, seem to be the type of news to which the *Lady’s Newspaper* predominantly subscribes. In other words, it does not seek to intrude into the masculine world of politics as its title may suggest, but rather to dabble in current events while fully immersing itself in the feminine world of the domestic. The masculine persona of the paper often undercuts the domestic priorities lying within its pages and as a survey of the paper’s issues through the 1850s shows, the voice and tone of the paper shifted dramatically towards a more feminine discourse as the editors developed a better understanding of their readership and its demands. The *Lady’s Newspaper’s* attempt at giving political news was unsuccessful, as its reportage of the

events occurring in the masculine world of politics is increasingly superceded by social matters and domestic affairs of the feminine sphere.

If the *Lady's Newspaper* is, as some have suggested, one of the first women's newspapers, then this social experiment quickly evolved into nothing other than another women's magazine or miscellany. The *Lady's Newspaper* claimed from the beginning that it was interested in news, and to a large extent, its three-column broadsheet format visually attested to this, but the evidence from the paper suggests otherwise. For the first year of its production, the *Lady's Newspaper's* fourteen-page spread visually displayed prioritized subtitles that reveal traditional newspaper headlines, beginning with the categories "Foreign Intelligence" and "Home News." Curiously, the subtitles and their sequential order changed drastically within just three years, suggesting the prioritized placement of feminine news. (Tab. 1)

Table 1 Headings for 1847 and 1850 issues of the *Lady's Newspaper*

<i>The Lady's Newspaper 1847</i>	<i>The Lady's Newspaper 1850</i>
Foreign Intelligence	Headline
Home News	Court and Fashion
Library of English Fiction	Correspondence
The Toilet	Table Talk
Court	The London and Paris Fashions
Correspondence	News of the Week
Library of Foreign Fiction	⇒ Foreign and Colonial Intelligence
The Work Table	⇒ Metropolitan
Domestic Economy	⇒ Provincial
Literature	⇒ Accidents and Offences
⇒ Our Library Chair	⇒ Ireland
⇒ Spirit of the Age	The Work Table/Illustrations
⇒ La Dance	The Arts
⇒ Railway v Poetry	⇒ Literature
⇒ The Drama	⇒ Drama
The Paris and London Fashions	⇒ Musical and Theatrical
	⇒ Fine Arts
	⇒ Serialized Story
	Miscellaneous
	Advertisements

Because the power of the periodical press resides in the readers, these major shifts suggest one of two things: either the readership was demanding increasingly domestic stories, or Dance misjudged his readers' desire for news and potential for market in the realm of politics. Either way, the shifts in the paper's headlines, as evidenced from the heading and subtitles from 1847 to 1850, signify a commitment to traditional domestic ideology, which is clearly marked with the 1847 leader "Home News" being displaced by "Court and Fashion" in 1850. Perhaps this 1850 headline shift in the *Lady's Newspaper* indicates the moment in mid-Victorian history where high domesticity takes over, for Beeton's *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine*, the prototypical domestic periodical in the period, is founded just two years later in 1852. Another visual piece of evidence to suggest further separation between the paper's domestic priorities and those of the political environment is depicted in the masthead of the *Lady's Newspaper*. This masthead depicts a banner beneath a young Queen Victoria with these words: "Literature, Accomplishments, Duties, Amusements, News" (Fig. 2.1). While all of these issues are featured in every issue of the paper, the last, and the least prioritized, is news. By 1851, fashion headlines supersede the paper's original commitment to news. When the paper says goodbye to the year 1850 and welcomes in the new year of 1851, the editor's address to the reader makes mention of and defends the paper's obvious lack of political and business substance:

And now, in conclusion, let us say, that, if we have kept aloof from any show of virulence in the great political and polemical strifes of the day, we have not the less firmly, consistently, and most conscientiously kept our onward path as defenders of RELIGIOUS and MORAL TRUTH, stripped

of the disguises wherewith men, for mere mundane objects, would too often envelop it. (“Address”)

Apparently, the *Lady's Newspaper* did not satisfy its readers with strife of the mundane business world and here readjusts its function as a harbinger of religious and moral truth. Its news is not of a political nature, but a domestic one, undermining throughout its politically oriented title.



Figure 2.1 Title Page of *The Lady's Newspaper* 3 May 1851. Image property of and reproduced by permission of Kathryn Ledbetter.

The *Lady's Newspaper* does devote a few columns to political events, but the arrangement of its political news with domestic issues offers readers a curious juxtaposition that inevitably shapes and forms one's reading experience. Genette sets out the nature of such text, which he names paratext:

And although we do not always know whether these productions are to be regarded as belonging to the text, in any case they surround it and extend

it, precisely in order to *present* it, in the usual sense of this verb but also in the strongest sense: to *make present*, to ensure the text's presence in the world, its "reception" and consumption." (1)

Between articles, advertisements, headlines, and pictures in a periodical is contextual affiliation and one's reading can be disrupted and altered when varying messages are presented. The following four examples locate specifically where the masculine persona of the paper is undercut by the domestic priorities lying within its pages. In all of these examples, the *Lady's Newspaper* feminizes the news, borrowing stories from papers such as the *Times* and revising them for its women readers in a way that endorses its participation in nineteenth-century separate spheres ideology.

In the Saturday 21 June 1851 issue of the *Lady's Newspaper*, the "News of the Week" offers varying accounts of both political and domestic reportage, and this collocation of interests works towards destabilizing the paper's thematic harmony and the reader's interpretation. Six pages into this issue lies the major headline "News of the Week," below which are specific subheadings. The first subheading is "Imperial Parliament," which devotes thirty-seven lines to the goings on at the House of Lords and the House of Commons. This section gives three days' accounts of parliamentary business, including such diverse things as the agricultural distress in Lincolnshire, the repeal of the navigation laws, and an address to Queen Victoria to direct the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to open up peaceful lines of communication with France. The second subheading is titled "Foreign and Colonial Intelligence," which is made up of various news accounts of Hamburg, the United States, California, the West Indies, India and China, Ceylon, and Canton. These news stories are serious in tone and subject

matter, mimicking the news of the masculine world of politics and business that the *Times* reports daily; however, the *Lady's Newspaper* merely dabbles in these types of stories, giving them only three-fourths of a column on the page and leaving them undeveloped and generalized. What the *Lady's Newspaper* fully immerses itself in is the fashion and court news of the week. Following “Imperial Parliament” and “Foreign and Colonial Intelligence” is a subheading that, at first glance, suggests political news—“Metropolitan.” From this heading title and its situation behind the other political news stories, the reader would perhaps extrapolate that similar London political stories would be featured like the ones that came before it on the page. On the contrary, the “Metropolitan” section deviates from the other news stories and provides a four-column spread that textually disrupts and undermines the news that preceded it.

The single article written under the “Metropolitan” news category is titled “The Queen’s Grand State Bal Costumé,” and it begins by stating what an opulent costume ball it was. The reporter then spends twenty-six lines (just eleven lines less than the entire report of parliamentary news) describing the suite of state rooms that have been opened for such a magnificent event, making special mention of the throne erected for Victoria and Albert and described in lengthy detail:

The throne was surmounted by a square canopy of crimson velvet, bearing a gilt cornice, from the velvet depended a double row of gold bullion fringe, the outer draperies were of crimson velvet with gold fringe; the inner draperies of muslin, worked in coloured flowers, and trimmed with silver. The interior of the throne and canopy was lined with white and coloured satin, and barred with silver fringe. The chairs of state were

placed on a haut-pas, which was covered with crimson, the chairs themselves being of crimson satin and gold. Some of the choicest and most beautiful flowering plants were placed behind and around the chairs of state. (342)

This exhaustive description of the thrones alone are given more lines of detail than the three lines reported just before on the cholera epidemic in the West Indies. This extensive account of the thrones is partially due to the fact that readers are given no photographs of them, but instead are given lengthy verbal descriptions that allow them to imagine the opulence. Nevertheless, the commitment to ballroom details certainly detaches the reader from the political news that came just one column before. The article continues in this labyrinthine pace, including the names and types of dress of her Majesty's body guard (all six of them), the Queen's and King's ladies and gentlemen in waiting, and the persons involved in "The English Quadrille," "The Scottish Quadrille," "The French Quadrille," and the "Spanish Quadrille," each followed with a chronological list of participants and attendants. The reporter is meticulous in recording for the reader the exact order in which the guests approached Her Majesty and the dress of each. Not only does the article list all the Ladies who had the honor of receiving invitations, but also their names are listed by rank and they make up an entire column of text. An entire column was not even given to cover all of the political news of the day: the invitation list for the Queen's ball alone is more developed than that. This preference for the Queen's costume ball and its attendants overshadow the paper's commitment to news of the political sphere, subverting throughout its masculine gentlemanly persona and replacing it with the sophistication of feminine taste.

Not only does the invitation list of the Queen's Bal Costumé get maximum attention in this "News of the Week" article, but also the descriptions of the costumes are protracted in excruciating detail. His Royal Highness the Prince Albert is described from head to toe: from his "coat of rich orange satin, brocaded with gold, and with green sprig" to his "stockings of lavender silk" (342). The Duke of Cambridge and the Duke of Wellington are given similar portrayals, but they pale in comparison with the scrupulous attention to detail of the women's attire. Naturally, Queen Victoria's dress is described first in all of its ornamentation of gold and silver; afterwards, the editors regret that the space is limited and they cannot give more than the following examples, among which include almost an entire column comprised of the clothing descriptions of twelve ladies. The Duchess of Somerset has twenty-one lines of text devoted to her attire, complete with commentary on her robe of white satin and

sleeves, of rich India muslin, embroidered, were full, and descending no further than the half-arm: they were trimmed with gold lace and pearls, and looped up to the shoulders with agraffes of sapphires and diamonds; the mantle was of sky-blue satin, in the Spanish form, and hung gracefully from the shoulders. (343)

The paper's commitment to reporting the minute details of the atmosphere and attire at the Queen's ball is partially due to the fact that the *Times* reported such details. The *Lady's Newspaper* frequently relied on others' reports and newspapers for its stories and this article on the Queen's ball is no exception. The *Lady's Newspaper* brings us its report on 28 June 1851, over a week after the ball took place, giving its writers just enough time to republish the account from other papers. In fact, this report on the

Queen's ball is nearly a word-for-word reprint from the article that appeared in the *Times* on Saturday 14 June 1851, just one day after the ball. Titled "Her Majesty's State Ball," the *Times* article is responsible for writing that long description of the throne that is quoted above. The difference is that the *Lady's Newspaper* took the guest list and nearly everything else wholesale, while consciously expanding on the Ladies' attire. The *Times* offers lengthy descriptions of the gentlemen's' clothing; the *Lady's Newspaper* omits all but three gentlemen's' clothing and instead focuses on the minute details of the ladies' dress. Both the *Times* and the *Lady's Newspaper* are catering to the demand of their readers: the attention given to describing male attire suggests that the *Times* writes for a predominantly male audience; likewise, the *Lady's Newspaper's* appropriation of the *Times* report with the emphasis on ladies' dress suggests that it is writing for a female readership—a readership that is constantly bombarded with inconsistent messages, such as the placement of political news stories juxtaposed with the domestic concerns of women's fashion. In effect, the *Lady's Newspaper* is feminizing the news, taking stories from a newspaper with a predominantly masculine readership and revising it for the tastes of its own feminine readers.

Concluding that lengthy report on the Queen's ball, the reader is displaced once again into the world of politics and economics. Immediately following Miss MacDonald's description of her "satin petticoat, trimmed all round with bordure of silver and perles" (343) is a thin line below which is written "Census of Great Britain." A table comparing the census of 1841 and the census of 1851 is thrown in to finish the second column of the page in a way that temporarily jars the reader and disrupts the reading. Other Metropolitan news follows, as well as Provincial news and the sensational

descriptions of accidents and offences. While the masculine world of politics and public concerns bookends the account of the Queen's costume ball, the feminine interests in fashion and the ball overshadow the other news of the week. The domestic interests evident in the Queen's ball reportage not only overshadow the political news that surrounds it, but also undercut the gentlemanly persona of the paper with its added attention to ladies' concerns. In the end, these domestic priorities win out, for a major two-page illustration of the Queen's ball occurs just after the "News of the Week," depicting Her Majesty and Her guests and embedding throughout its commitment to fashion and social etiquette.

Another instance where the masculine persona of the paper is undercut by the domestic priorities lying within the paper is in an account of public nurseries in the 9 November 1850 issue of the *Lady's Newspaper*. This Saturday issue opens with a half-page article about nurseries, followed by an illustration of the public nursery of the Middlesex Hospital on Nassau Street. The opening article describes the good works accomplished by the Middlesex nursery and announces to readers that "it opens a field for the noblest and most practical exertions of a Christian disposition" ("Public Nurseries" 250). On the third page of the issue lies a second leader about public nurseries, but it is in this article that one may see suggestions of the paper's moralizing masculine persona that Dance adopted in the inaugural issue. The contributor of this article writes,

We have never wished to put a check upon the innocent—if frivolous—occupations in which the youth of the gentler sex spend so much of their time, and enlist so much interest. But we should certainly desire to see a

nobler element enter into the system of their education than it contains at present. It is the peculiarity of women that their charitable sensibilities are apt to be touched and yet retain impression, which is not the characteristic of susceptibility in general. [. . .] This is the part which women are designed by nature to play in the great drama of life, not only to foster the kindly feelings of nature within the sanctuary of home, but to extend them beyond the fireside, and let them radiate a comforting influence over the distresses of the poor. (“Public Nurseries” 251)

The pluralized tone of the paper is, indeed, teaching its readers what “(morally) to eat, drink, and avoid,” as the debut issue claimed it would (Dance 2). The message in this article seems similar to the paper’s early goal for its young subscribers, to “try to win them to the right way by good advice, and not by holding them up to ridicule” (Dance 2). While the language in this article on public nurseries is condescending in tone and matches, to a large extent, the tone of Dance’s gentlemanly persona, this voice is undercut by the article’s feminine subject matter. While Dance’s didacticism is still evident by 1850, the article’s sentimentalized plea for female support of public nurseries threatens the strength of the masculine directive. Even though a masculine gentlemanly voice lurks throughout the printing house, the content of the paper is feminized with domestic concerns and philanthropic pleading.

The paper’s content undermines the political associations of its name time and again as the publication continues through the decade and this compromise of its news commitment is displayed visually through its illustrations. The third example of the paper’s unprioritized placement of political news is illustrated in the Saturday 28 June

1851 issue. The cover page displays four views of the great fire near London Bridge. This all-inclusive title page would intimate that a large news article would follow on the reverse page. To the contrary, the next page introduces the weekly Parisian news and the Court Fashions, leaving the headline news story, the one that likely urged the buyer to purchase the paper in the first place, five pages into this fourteen-page issue. It seems to be the case that even the most urgent and historic news finds its hook on the title page while the real news story is buried deep within the paper. What is not buried, however, is the paper's commitment to court fashions and illustrations from places such as the Great Exhibition. This unprioritized placement of political news and announcements deep within the paper suggests that domestic news was becoming more and more desired as the *Lady's Newspaper* persisted. While the paper began its 1847 issue with opening sections titled "Foreign Intelligence" and "Home News," by the 1850s the headings "Court and Fashion" and "Correspondence" have taken over on the newspaper's visual presentation. As Beetham writes in *A Magazine of Her Own?* concerning ladies' papers such as *The Queen*,

Public politics never formed more than a small element of the diet of 'news' in these journals. There was, however, another kind of public space which the lady did inhabit. Against the masculine world of politics the social world of entertaining, leisure and cultural events was completely feminised. (94)

Indeed, while the *Lady's Newspaper's* overarching mission began with the intent on bringing news to the ladies, as the issues continue throughout the decade, this goal is reconstructed into the similar domestic concerns of other magazines and journals.

Lastly, evidence of the *Lady's Newspaper's* commitment to domestic news rather than political news comes from the 21 June 1851 subheading, "Table Talk." In this section of the paper, the editor includes small paragraphs or sentences of miscellaneous subjects. For example, a paragraph stating that pineapples are now remarkably cheap and in fine condition is right above a paragraph offering a reward for a gold-dust robbery. These comments in "Table Talk" are variously arranged as it infuses tidbits with short, public affairs. In one of these paragraphs, the editor praises the success of the *Lady's Newspaper* abroad:

We have received at a late hour an account of the important efforts of the Board of Irish Manufacture and Industry, Dublin, of which Mr. Thomas Mooney is secretary, in reference to the introduction of manufactures into the workhouses—a truly invaluable proceeding. We are grateful for the following allusion: --“To have bonnet-makers you must receive regularly the LADY’S NEWSPAPER, and teach the girls to study fashions and fashion’s laws; to study complexions, air, shape, expression, for all these go to make up a good bonnet-maker.” (339)

For the Board of Irish Manufacture and Industry, the real prize lying within the *Lady's Newspaper* is not its short articles on state affairs or even its slight mention of foreign news, but rather, its value lies, at least for some buyers, in its fashion illustrations, its needlepoint patterns, and its embroidery how-tos. Especially in the later years, the paper's section "The Work Table" featured a two-page spread with detailed instructions that allowed a lady to bring those court fashions into her own home. Through and through, the *Lady's Newspaper* emphasizes fashion, correspondence, cookery, reportage

of balls and court news, and philanthropy and, through the years of its run, the editors continually increase these sections, while decreasing its amount of political news. Because of the ever-changing demands of the reading public, periodicals often had to change, shift, and alter their methods of presentation in order to entice their buyers. The pastiche nature of the *Lady's Newspaper* and its evolving format through the mid-century may help us think about whether the paper's readership really wanted news of the public political sphere or rather it demanded a feminine type of news with practical suggestions for being a wife, mother, or daughter. As one columnist writes in the 28 June 1851 issue, it is "the razor-seller's maxim of producing something marketable!" ("Literature" 360) that affects the final product. The paper's continual shift towards these domestic priorities seems to suggest that these are the issues and stories the readership really demanded.

As the inaugural issue announces, the *Lady's Newspaper* would "blend the useful with the agreeable" (2), and with its articles on ladies' accomplishments, its subsequent issues achieve just this. The goal of the *Lady's Newspaper* was to better clothe its readers, and the character of the paper was revealed through its very subheadings: "The London and the Paris Fashions" and "The Work Table" would help readers to better clothe themselves physically; the "Literature" and serialized fiction sections would allow readers to better clothe themselves mentally; "Court Fashion," "Correspondence," and "News of the Week" would assist the readers in clothing themselves socially; and lastly, the paper's ongoing advocacy for philanthropy would help readers to properly clothe themselves morally. If the readers were given political news at all, it was intimately bound with court news or the proper public responsibilities of women, such as

philanthropy. In the 28 June 1851 issue alone, nearly every headline has a call for more charitable works from women. “From the start,” write Margaret Beetham and Kay Boardman, “the ladies’ papers had specifically addressed women’s public role alongside their role in society” (58). These appeals urging women to give succor in public typify the kind of mission that the *Lady’s Newspaper* frequently advocated. Women could participate in the public sphere through activities of philanthropy. Jan Marsh writes,

Typically operating at local level, often through Church structures, these activities might today be classified as ‘social work’: they included distributing clothes, food and medicines; teaching literacy, home care and religion; and ‘parish visiting’ of the poor and infirm. As the century progress, such roles were increasingly professionalised, through local and central government institutions, which in time offered recognised occupations for able women. (102)

While the *Lady’s Newspaper* features frequent stories urging its readers to donate time and money to local asylums, philanthropic societies, and schools, these public interests are not enough to justify its politically oriented title. As the *Lady’s Newspaper* attests, it is “devoted to the interest of women”—interests that are contrary to the very title of the paper and interests that seem to evade any serious discussion of political news. Still, a case study comparing the Great Exhibition reportage of the *Times* to that of the *Lady’s Newspaper* may give some specific insights into whether politics can, indeed, be successfully incorporated into the feminine sphere.

CHAPTER 3
SUITING EVERY PALATE: GENDERED REPORTAGE OF THE GREAT
EXHIBITION OF 1851

Initiated and organized by Prince Albert, the Great Exhibition became the first world's fair, featuring 13,000 objects represented by over forty countries around the globe. England had "all the world going to see the Great Exhibition of 1851" (Wilson 145), a display located in the Crystal Palace which was made out of manufactured glass and steel. In many ways, the 902 panes of glass it took to build Joseph Paxton's "Palace of Glass" reflected the urbanization and mass production of the era. With its long, horizontal design, visitors could stand at one end of the Crystal Palace and look down to the other, as if it were a straight pathway underneath these reflective panes of glass. The building itself was a monument to British industry, as it displayed English glass and ironworks at its best. In an article titled "The Great Exhibition of 1851," published in the 1851 volume of the *New Monthly Magazine*, the author contemplates the defining moment that the Great Exhibition presents for England and for her posterity:

[. .] and when, in after ages, we shall be as the city of Nimrod, and other people shall discover works of art in our tombs, the periods of our modern history will be by them divided into two distinct epochs—that preceding the Great Exhibition of 1851, and that when our manufactures show the

visible improvements introduced by the exertions of the most enlightened and generous philanthropist of our age and our industry. (126)

The Great Exhibition was, in large degree, a distinguishing moment, “an aspect of both memory and popular culture, a national icon embedded with meanings,” (Auerbach 3) but Jeffrey A. Auerbach reminds us that while the event assembled the people of Britain under the roof of the Crystal Palace, it also reinforced class and gender divisions.

Auerbach writes,

The organizers of the Great Exhibition sought to bring together all sectors of British society under one roof. Yet, at the same time, the arrangement of exhibits, admission prices, patterns of attendance, and latent fears of the working classes reflected and reinforced hierarchies and divisions within Victorian society. (128)

These gender divisions are reinforced distinctly in the periodicals of the mid-century, especially within the pages of the *Lady's Newspaper* and the *Times*. Both papers appropriate and prescribe news that promotes traditional gender ideology. The *Times* showcases special stories on the latest machinery, while the *Lady's Newspaper* frequently examines the fabrics and jewels of the Great Exhibition in ways that maintain the values of middle-class domesticity and the interests of women protecting the hearth and home.

Because of the extraordinary nature of such a project, nearly every periodical in the mid-century reported on this national event, often publishing supplemental articles, issues, and illustrations about the exhibition's specific compartments. From the day when the Great Exhibition opened on 1 May 1851, most news stories revolved around the events at the Crystal Palace. For weeks, the *Times* printed daily reviews about Paxton's

Industrial Palace; *Punch* published an array of satirical poetry and cartoons about the exhibition throughout its issues; the *Illustrated London News* even included a weekly special supplement with the decorative title piece, “Exhibition Supplement” (Fig. 3.1); and the *Lady’s Newspaper* devoted large sections of its pages to Exhibition reportage. The Great Exhibition gave the periodical press a deluge of material to report for most of 1851, but the ways in which the material is reported vary tremendously.



Figure 3.1 Title Page of the “Exhibition Supplement,” *Illustrated London News*: 3 May 1851. Image property of the University of Texas-Austin.

The *Times* and the *Lady’s Newspaper* both report the events of this “Great Congress of Industry” (“The Opening of the Great Exhibition,” *Illustrated London News* 348), but its reportage shows disparity in thematic priority as these two contemporary newspapers offer varying gendered accounts of the event. Both papers prioritize their news content for their specific readership, but while the *Lady’s Newspaper* feminizes the news for its readers, it does so innocuously, maintaining the values of traditional domestic ideology through its journalistic discursive practices. This lady’s paper does indicate small traces

of Cixous' *écriture féminine*, but its use of feminine language refuses to challenge patriarchal prescriptions as it presents conventional feminine interests and concerns. This chapter places the *Times* and the *Lady's Newspaper* side-by-side, analyzing their varying gendered languages to show the *Lady's Newspaper's* own commitment to Victorian ideology.

This chapter uses three examples from the *Times* and the *Lady's Newspaper* in its exploration of the Great Exhibition reportage: the first example analyzes the report of a banquet for Prince Albert and the mayors of England six months before the Exhibition opened; the second example showcases Queen Victoria's and Prince Albert's exclusive tour of the Crystal Palace the day before it opened to the public; and the third example highlights the opening day reports of the Exhibition. This thorough survey of various stages of Great Exhibition news demonstrates that politics can only be incorporated successfully into the *Lady's Newspaper* when it is reworked and feminized with the ornamental language and interests of female accomplishments. The *Lady's Newspaper* evinces *écriture féminine*, but its language is non-threatening, refusing to challenge patriarchal prescriptions. Furthermore, its reportage of the Great Exhibition, when read side-by-side with the *Times*, affirms that the masculine persona of the *Lady's Newspaper* paper is undercut by its own domestic priorities—priorities which confirm traditional domestic ideology in the nineteenth century

On Saturday 26 October 1850, over six months before the doors of the Crystal Palace would officially open, Prince Albert arrived at a banquet hall in York to encourage the mayors and principal magistrates of England to support the efforts of the Royal Commission in undertaking the project of 1851. The intricate details of this grand

banquet were published by both the *Times* and the *Lady's Newspaper*, but while each news account is strikingly similar, their differences in content and in the language used to report the story cannot be overlooked. The *Times* story, titled "The Banquet at York," involves a four-and-a-half-column spread, including such details as the Lord Mayor of London's arrival time, the architectural design of the fifteenth-century mansion-house, the entire guest list, and Prince Albert's speech in full. The *Times* adopts a tone that is serious and straightforward with minute particulars of the event. Its language is certainly linear, too, especially as the reporter dryly explains how this banquet was established:

It was but natural that this example should be followed by the great corporations of the empire, and, after some correspondence on the subject, the motion which originated with the Lord Mayor of York of giving a return banquet was considered and discussed at a meeting of the mayors and other civic authorities at Derby, when it was resolved that a subscription should be entered into for the purpose of enabling the Lord Mayor of York, in junction with the municipalities of the United Kingdom, to receive the Prince Consort and the Lord Mayor of London on a scale of becoming magnificence. (5)

The writer here spends eleven lines explaining the inception of the banquet, using elevated, formal language in a newspaper that frequently adopts such unswervingly masculine kinds of reportage. In a famous essay titled "The Periodical Press," William Hazlitt recognizes the seriousness and dryness which is characteristic of the *Times*: "It is elaborate, but heavy; full, but not readable: it is stuffed up with official documents, with matter-of-fact details" (363). While it is impossible to know for sure the writer of the

Times report, I would speculate that this reporter is a male, functioning within the masculine discourses of the newspaper environment. He employs authoritative, serious language, refusing to use any traces of feminine discourses in this report. Its passive tones, in particular, distance the reader from both writer and event. In the *Times* excerpt, an example of a banquet feast was followed by the Mayor of York, a motion for a banquet was considered, and the subscription was entered into. The passive forms, along with the formal quality of the writing style, are masculine in tone. While newspaper writers in the period often operated under the net of anonymity, Lucy Brown claims that proprietors and editors, especially those of the *Times*, often showed a preference for university-educated men as writers and reporters (78). Of course, it is impossible to claim that only men worked for the *Times*, but this piece of writing, along with a survey of its Great Exhibition reportage and the *Times*' own accounts of contributions records, show strong indication that this newspaper giant hired male reporters to participate in the kind of masculine writing that is characteristic of nineteenth-century newspapers.

A week following the banquet, the *Lady's Newspaper* publishes its account of the event, although the account can hardly be called its own. This lady's paper prints almost word-for-word the same account that the *Times* put out a week earlier. This near-copy of the *Times* report is telling: first of all, it reveals the widespread tendency of news-borrowing among papers. Brown asserts that "It was common for whole columns of printed matter to be used in different publications" (116). Before the days of copyright laws, papers and periodicals were borrowing from one another, and because the *Times* was the major organ for disseminating news, it was their columns that were often lifted. In this 2 November 1850 issue of the *Lady's Newspaper*, the editors have taken nearly

wholesale the article in the *Times* and pasted it into their own publication, demonstrating this uncensored practice of plagiarism among printing presses. Secondly and most importantly, this account does offer some interesting insights into the feminine discursive practices of the *Lady's Newspaper* because of its omissions from and additions to the *Times* article. We can glean much from a close reading of these two reports because what has been left out or added to the *Lady's Newspaper* provides hints about what women readers were interested in and how the paper rewrites news for a feminine readership.

Visually, the two articles differ in length. The *Times* consumes four and a half columns of its news spread, while the *Lady's Newspaper* devotes less than two columns to its report. Perhaps the *Lady's Newspaper* omits so much of the *Times* article because it has only two columns to work with and it must pick and choose the most important information to convey to its readers. This is the most plausible explanation, but it is worth noting and speculating about exactly what was omitted. First of all, the *Lady's Newspaper* cuts out the entire guest list except the most prominent names, those that most middle-class readers would have recognized and which would have been most familiar to them. Also, it has rearranged the Bill of Fare and put it at the end of their article, while it was originally buried within the lengthy *Times* account. The *Lady's Newspaper* was sure to include the meal list because, after all, the women readers would have been interested in all of the courses served. Every issue of the *Lady's Newspaper* includes recipes and hints for cooking, so keeping the banquet bill of fare would have been consistent with the paper's brand personality. The *Lady's Newspaper* omits all of the long, dull speeches of the banquet speakers, as the editor said it would in his inaugural address in 1847, but it

does include part of Prince Albert's speech. Two omissions are especially telling as they elucidate some of the exclusively feminine priorities of the *Lady's Newspaper's* readership.

First of all, the *Lady's Newspaper* omits an entire twenty-one line history of the ancient city of York. Either because it did not have the space to include this information or because it was not interested in the historical facts about York, one thing is certain: the paper's editors did not believe that the York history would pique the interest of its female readers. The *Times* explication of historical York is told, once more, in the masculine discourse of empire:

York, the home of the Roman Emperors, when London was comparatively neglected by the masters of the ancient world, made a display worthy of the far-famed city which gave a grave to Severus and to Constantine Chlorus, and afforded a rallying cry to the haughty factions which fought for the English throne, and well was she represented by her chief magistrate. ("Banquet at York" 5)

The *Lady's Newspaper* omits this historical reference entirely and skips to the interior decorations of the mansion-house at York. Its "golden lions regilt, its paint renewed, and fresh as when, some hundred, years ago, the architect gave it the finishing touch" ("The Grand Banquet at York" 245) are the descriptions that take the place of the graves of ancient Severus and Constantine. This description is followed by details of the extravagant expense of each dinner plate, "one dish, to which turtle, ortolans, and other rich denizens of land and sea had contributed, cost not less than £100" (245). While borrowing the language of the *Times*, this passage does not exhibit specifically feminine

language, but it does show that the *Lady's Newspaper* is interested in the womanly and domestic sections of the news. In this way, its prioritized reportage presents and confirms domestic ideology, without challenging patriarchal prescriptions of language. It does not change the *Times*' language to present its own interests; it merely edits the existing content by using a cut-and-paste method in order to gratify its own gendered readership.

Another example of the *Lady's Newspaper*'s commitment to the domestic press and traditional gender ideology is revealed in its treatment of Prince Albert's speech at the York banquet. While the *Times* quotes the Prince's speech in full, the *Lady's Newspaper* includes only the last half of the speech—the half that would inspire and encourage the women of England. The first part of the speech includes both Prince Albert's words of gratitude for being invited within such a collection of men and a lengthy summary of the great nature of the Great Exhibition. The following is a curious and potentially dangerous remark which is omitted in the *Lady's Newspaper*'s report, but which the *Times* prints in full:

Although we perceive in some countries an apprehension that the advantages to be derived from the exhibition will be mainly reaped by England, and a consequent distrust in the effects of our scheme upon their own interests, we must, at the same time, freely and gratefully acknowledge that our invitation has been received by all nations with whom communication was possible in that spirit of liberality and friendship in which it was tendered, and that they are making great

exertions and incurring great expenses in order to meet our plans. (“The Banquet at York” 5)

Prince Albert alludes to some distrust that has disseminated from other nations. These whispers of doubt are only printed in the *Times* report; the *Lady’s Newspaper* omits them entirely and instead focuses its content on Prince Albert’s emotional eulogy for Sir R. Peel and his praise of the character of the English people. His nationalistic zeal is reprinted in the lady’s paper, without the tedious business matters specific to the Great Exhibition. The *Lady’s Newspaper* is sure to include Prince Albert’s admiration of the great people of England:

It is owing to these national qualities that this favoured land, whilst constantly progressing, has still preserved the integrity of her constitution from the earliest times, and has been protect from wild schemes, whose chief charm lies in their novelty whilst around us we have seen, unfortunately, whole nations distracted, and the very fabric of society endangered from the levity with which the result of the experience of generations, the growth of ages, has been thrown away to give place to temporarily favourite ideas. (“The Grand Banquet at York” 245)

The Prince praises the steadfast character of the English people and his patriotism is surely included for the women readers of the *Lady’s Newspaper*. While omitting the doubt and skepticism of other nations, the *Lady’s Newspaper* prints reaffirming contents of the report to satisfy its readership. Its own version of the news, cut and edited for its readership, provides safe, non-threatening reading for female readers, while still maintaining its comfortable version of domestic ideology.

While the *Lady's Newspaper's* report of the banquet at York is linguistically and topically similar to that of the *Times*, with slight variations which invite interesting theories of gendered readership, its account of Queen Victoria's and Prince Albert's private tour of the Crystal Palace on the eve of its opening differs drastically from that of the *Times*. On 30 April 1851, the day before the inauguration of the Great Exhibition, Queen Victoria and Prince Albert visited the Crystal Palace and both the *Times* and the *Lady's Newspaper* print reports of the event. The *Times* gives this story a brief mention in its section, "Court Circular," but the occasion is given minimal attention. In fact, the royal exclusive tour is given almost no priority as it is imbedded within stories about the Queen's court at Buckingham Palace and the Queen's grand ball. The 30 April 1851 *Times* article writes this about the monarch's visit: "Her Majesty and his Royal Highness Prince Albert visited the Exhibition Building in Hyde-park yesterday morning, attended by Hon. Mary F. Seymour, Colonel Buckley, and Lieutenant-Colonel Francis Hugh Seymour" ("Court Circular" 5). In the following column of the *Times* page is one more account of the Queen's visit: "Her Majesty and Prince Albert visited the Exhibition yesterday at an early hour, and remained for a long time examining with interest the collections in the different compartments" ("The Great Exhibition" 5). This second reference to the visit is overshadowed, still, by various intruding accounts. Sandwiched between three general bulleted rules for visitors to observe while visiting the Great Exhibition, much talk of boilers, pipes, and other articles in the machinery department of the Crystal Palace, and comments of the violent hailstorm that descended upon the panes of the Palace that day is the short statement concerning the Queen's visit. In both columns of the paper where the Queen's visit is reported, the visit is regarded as an

inconsiderable news story, both by its exiguous subject matter and by its unprioritized textual placement between eclipsing stories.

The *Lady's Newspaper*, however, devotes a full article to the Queen's visit, and this is especially significant when considering the paper's publication schedule. Because the *Lady's Newspaper* is a weekly paper, appearing every Saturday, it must wait until the weekend to print its news of the week. The *Times* could have committed much space to the Queen's visit on the eve of the Exhibition opening, but it was not important enough to get more than a line or two. The *Lady's Newspaper* finds the space and the commitment to this report, even within the much-anticipated Great Exhibition issue. The *Lady's Newspaper's* 3 May 1851 issue is the first chance that the publishers have to report on the impressive opening of the world's fair, and still, the editors thought the Queen's early visit important enough to print the story in full as the first article of the issue. Not only this, but the paper chooses as its cover piece a full-page illustration of the Queen and Prince Albert taking their private tour. Of all the marvelous articles to choose from within the Great Exhibition, this preliminary viewing gets priority on the opening page (Fig. 3.2). The article begins with the dry, serious tone of the *Times* as it introduces Queen Victoria's visit. The reporter writes, "Her Majesty the Queen, accompanied by his Royal Highness Prince Albert and suite, paid a visit to the Great Exhibition at an early hour on Tuesday morning" ("The Queen and the Prince Albert at the Private View of the Great Exhibition" 240). This matter-of-fact reportage is characteristic of the masculine discourses circulating the newspaper milieu. As Brown affirms, "solidity and seriousness can be sensed in the reporting of the period" (102), and this is certainly the case with the *Times* report of the Queen's early visit to the Exhibition Hall.

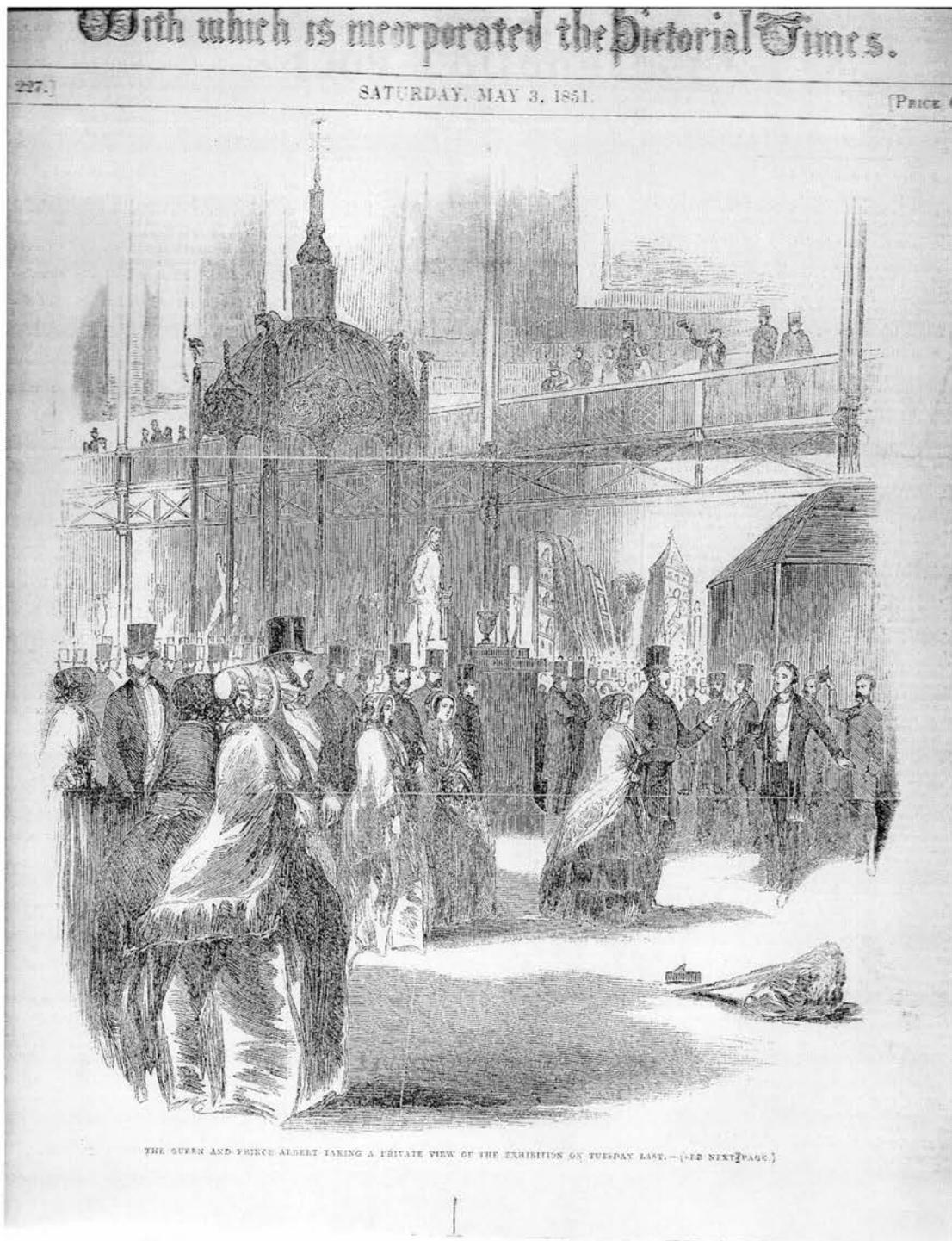


Fig. 3.2. "The Queen and Prince Albert Taking a Private View of the Exhibition on Tuesday Last." *The Lady's Newspaper* 3 May 1851. Image property of and reproduced by permission of Kathryn Ledbetter.

The *Lady's Newspaper*, however, breaks from this language pattern in the following paragraph as it describes in detail the various preparations taking place on Tuesday. The writer adopts an air of femininity, both in content and tone, as the writer pens, "The display of carpets suspended from the cross-beams over the galleries (among which Messrs. Lapworth's productions are especially beautiful) added very much to the effect of the interior of the building" (240). Usually when a comment is set off by parentheses, readers understand the information to be unessential to the main point of the sentence. In this example, the writer's personal opinion about Messrs. Lapworth's carpets is embedded within parenthesis, but while it is bound by a mark of insignificance, the fact that the writer would feel strong enough to voice his or her opinion so freely is intriguing. There is no way of knowing the gender of the writer of this article, especially because, as we have seen, papers frequently borrowed materials from one another, but the voice in this second half of the article smacks of a feminine pen. Hélène Cixous's theories of *écriture féminine* designate voice as one sign of femininity in writing when she writes, "a privilege of *voice: writing and voice* are entwined and interwoven and writing's continuity/voice's rhythm take each other's breath away through interchanging, make the text gasp or form it out of suspenses and silences, make it lose its voice or rend it with cries" (Cixous 110). In this passage from the *Lady's Newspaper*, the parenthetical phrase allows the writer to inject the privilege of voice into the article. The text gasps here, to borrow Cixous' phrase, as it rejects the sterile language of masculine discourse in favor of an emotional, personal opinion from the writer. Although the feminine voice is bound by restrictive punctuation marks, it still, nonetheless, reaches the eyes of the reader. This example of *écriture féminine* does not go so far as to seriously challenge

patriarchal prescriptions or traditional gender ideology, however, because of its safe content. While operating outside masculine norms of language, the tone of this comment is not really threatening of authority or linguistic censors because it is presented in restrictive parentheses, which suggests insignificance, and because it is expressed merely as an aside of personal opinion. The textual placement and tone of this comment, which is suggestive of the feminine, is ultimately safely embedded within traditional gender norms.

If the parenthetical remark yielded the voice of a feminine authoress, the lines following revert back to an authoritative, masculine discourse. After remarking that Turkey has finished its contributions to the exhibition but Russia still lacked in finishing, the writer says, “In the transept, the comparative solitude of the subjects by which it was hitherto occupied began to be most agreeably relieved by a profusion of evergreens and flowers” (240). These words do not describe the “open, extravagant subjectivity” (Cixous 109) of *écriture féminine*. If this is the pen of a female writer, then she has returned to linear, rigid, and multisyllabic language. The masculine persona which editor Charles Dance adopted for the paper can be heard in these lines, even if the subject matter rests on feminine interests. The masculine persona once again undercuts the domestic priorities of the paper’s reportage. The rest of the article continues painting a picture of the pre-opening preparations: “azaleas in full blooms, and rhododendrons budding into vernal beauty,” while seamstresses are seen “plying the needle on the carpets which would clothe the hall floors or veil the pedestals” (240). The final note in the article is interesting for women readers, as it mentions a special visit from Mrs. Chisholm:

Mrs. Chisholm, the great patroness and guide of emigration, interested herself on behalf of the departing curiosity of a number of British emigrants, amounting to nearly 200, who visited the building in the morning, and seemed deeply impressed with the wonders of art which they witnessed. (240)

It is not surprising that the *Lady's Newspaper* would mention the appearance of Caroline Chisholm at the Crystal Palace; after all, Mrs. Chisholm is featured regularly in this lady's paper—a paper which promises in its 1847 Poetical Appeal to plead the cause of charity: “Or, it may be that Charity's appeal / Urges the cause of Woe with God-like zeal” (“Poetical Appeal” 47-8). For a paper concerned with women's issues such as charity, philanthropy, and humanitarian efforts, it is not unusual to see frequent references to her activities and causes. This final reference to Chisholm helps, once more, to firmly fix the *Lady's Newspaper's* readership in the domestic realm of lady's reading, while also recycling its text for commodification. The *Times* makes no mention of Chisholm's visit, nor does it report the flowers blooming or the seamstresses plying at the Exhibition Hall. Its focus is on the political or courtly news, adapted for a general audience that looks more and more like a masculine audience as its content is analyzed beside that of the *Lady's Newspaper*.

This masculine character of the *Times* is strongly evident in the opening day reports of the Great Exhibition. The 2 May 1851 leading article, “The Opening of the Great Exhibition,” appeared in full form the day following the event. In this colossal three-page report, the author unveils his difficult mission in writing such a piece: “Written words are powerless and weak in the presence of that great muster of worldly

magnificence—that stupendous act of homage to industry and the peaceful arts. Yet the task must be attempted” (5). The significance of this Great Exhibition and the powerlessness of written words, however, do not prevent the writer from spending thirteen columns detailing both the minutiae of opening day processions and the unabridged details of the articles lying within the Exhibit, all of which are told from a predominantly male perspective. The employment of the masculine perspective, martial metaphors, technical diagrams, and political concerns all give the *Times* account of the event a decidedly male twist, as opposed to the feminine treatment given by the *Lady’s Newspaper*.

“Every variety of beard, moustache, hat, coat, and trouser was permitted for the day” (“The Opening of the Great Exhibition” 4). These are the gendered, class-denoting metaphors used by the *Times* author in describing the crowd on 1 May 1851. While, no doubt, many well-dressed ladies were present at the opening, occupying the nave and its galleries, the groups that the writer identifies primarily are those men who would be buying and reading the paper the next day. The writer of the *Times* article continues making his point that every class and every nationality was respected at the affair:

The tramp of men, with wives and daughters on their arms, resounded from the pavement as they all trudged westwards with contented and happy faces. Those honest English workmen, in their round fustian jackets and glazed caps, felt they had a right to take part in the honours of the day [. . .]. There was a dearth of Turks and turbans, and even Fez caps were not common, but the supply of beard, imperial, sallow faces, and eccentric head-gear was liberal, though not unlimited (4)

Throughout the entire three-page report, the writer describes the account of the Great Exhibition from a limiting gendered perspective, hindering the paper from delivering news that will really suit every palate. Further evidence of this narrow perspective of the event can be seen in the description of the Queen's attire. In a telling line, the author reveals his inexperience with feminine interests: "He [Prince Albert] wore a field-marshal's uniform, and the Prince of Wales the Highland dress. Her Majesty was magnificently attired, but we are not learned enough in such matters to describe her toilet" (5). While the author's lack of fashion knowledge may be excused, his attempts at appealing to the interests of his female readers cannot be so easily absolved. The overwhelmingly male perspective of the *Times* report identifies the real interests of its buyers.

Not only does the author write the article with the Exhibition's male visitors in mind, but also he employs martial metaphors to illustrate the unmatched quality of the event:

The struggles of great nations in battle, the levies of whole races, never called forth such an array as thronged the streets of London on the 1st of May. When swarms of people poured from the loins of the north in a fierce migration, or when all the hosts of Asia were spread broadcast over the plains of Europe, their largest masses were not more numerous than the peaceful crowds who congregated around the great Temple of Industry and the avenues which commanded a view of a new Royal procession. (5)

The conglomerate of people attending the Great Exhibition were gathered in a way that reminded one of a battlefield, although as the writer points out, this London collection

united in peace instead of rivalry. While the “march of conquerors, and all the ceremonials that men have delighted to honour, left something bitter behind them in a many a heart,” this fair left participants in “most zealous good humour” (5). A contributing component to this masculine perspective is the masculine discourse underlining the article. While the language evinces at times a touch of sentimentalism when describing the enduring significance of the fair, much more often it is steeped in the language of warlike triumph and industrial achievement. Complimenting these masculine discursive practices is the *Times* commitment of six full columns to diagramming the content within the Crystal Palace. In an extensive explanation, the *Times* divides the articles on display at the Exhibition into four principal classes before publishing its synopsis of individual articles. Included in this six-column spread is an impressive itemized diagram of the Palace, comparative to a museum map one finds today while visiting an exhibit. In publishing such a list and diagram, the *Times* not only remains consistent with its other stories in printing an article that is serious in tone and visual display, but also it commodifies itself, becoming both a source of news and a product that the buyer can use when visiting the Great Exhibition. The martial metaphors and the publication of a technical, comprehensive diagram of the Crystal Palace give this newspaper a masculine appeal, which no doubt suits the palate of a very specific class of readers.

Lastly, the *Times* report is sure to leave room for political concerns involving the Great Exhibition. The writer believes that “Nothing could exceed the goodhumour and disposition to be pleased visible over every part of the building. Republicans and anarchists may be made monarchical by such influences as the ceremony of yesterday

exerts, but there seems little prospect of any political movement in the opposite direction”

(5). Even in a report that has little to do with factions, party lines, or parliament, the writer is conscious of his readership and illustrates the spirit of the event by using language that unites political interests. The gendered language that the writer adopts in this *Times* article unites a masculine perspective with martial metaphors, technical diagrams, and political concerns, and as we will see with the *Lady's Newspaper*, this prioritized discourse differs widely from a feminine perspective of the same event.

The *Lady's Newspaper* publishes three separate stories about opening day at the Great Exhibition: the first is a highly sentimentalized encomium to the Queen; the second is a two-page illustration of specific articles to be seen at the palace; and the third is an account of the Queen's public part in the opening ceremonies. Each of these reports is consistent with the type of feminized news to which the *Lady's Newspaper* frequently subscribes, and the paper often evinces evidence of feminine language that is not ideologically subversive. While the *Times* report demonstrates a masculine perspective of the events at the Crystal Palace, the *Lady's Newspaper* adopts an overwhelmingly feminine perspective, both in the content and in the language used. This first account of the exhibition is published in the article, “The Opening of the Exhibition,” and like the *Times*, this account offers a martial metaphor in describing the solidity of purpose on this historic day: “An army of loyal subjects such as Monarch never saw before thronged in multitudes to greet her on her royal progress to the most noble temple that human love and industry ever reared” (241). While both papers apply metaphors of battle, the *Lady's Newspaper* uses a martial metaphor that is sentimental, compassionate, and maternalistic in tone. The *Times* describes the “struggles of great nations in battle,” “swarms of people

poured from the loins of the north in a fierce migration,” and “the march of conquerors” (4) with a certain familiarity of battle. Even diction such as “struggles,” “loins,” and “fierce” stand in stark contrast to the lady’s paper’s feminine variety of battle, which uses the phrases “loyal subjects,” “most noble temple,” “love and industry ever reared” (241) in a romanticized fashion.

Another strikingly feminine use of language is with the authorial “we” and “our” that pervades all three *Lady’s Newspaper* articles. The *Times* rarely infuses its Exhibition report with this kind of subjectivity, but the *Lady’s Newspaper* does it in a way that broadcasts its womanly persona (although the first editor, Charles Dance, promised the paper a male persona) and invites readers to share in the exhibition experience. The *Times* gives a detailed account of the event, allowing the reader to *imagine* the display, but the *Lady’s Newspaper* invites the reader to participate in the festivities by using this editorial “we.” The author of the article writes in regard to Victoria’s influence,

The world might be taught something through her influence. Something might be done to disseminate the germs of English happiness, and perhaps to institute a new era in this earthly world of ours, showing how the mighty thews of our industry work; and, by inspiring an ambition to approach us, to withdraw the energies of mankind from internecine strife and hopeless dreaming after imaginary constitutions. (241)

Here, the reader is allowed to be an active participant in the industry and ambitions of England, even if she is not physically present at the Great Exhibition. The relationship established between this lady’s paper’s persona and the reader is one of intimacy and unity. In “Sorties: Out and Out: Attacks/Ways Out/Forays,” Hélène Cixous writes

concerning feminine writing, “And there is a link between the economy of femininity—the open, extravagant subjectivity, that relationship to the other in which the gift doesn’t calculate its influence—and the possibility of love” (109). As Cixous acknowledges, it is impossible to define with certainty feminine writing, but I believe that it is possible to discern certain characteristics of nineteenth-century feminine writing. The *Lady’s Newspaper*, while working within the discursive practices of professional journalism, still evinces glimpses of *écriture féminine*, although its use is not defiant of traditional domestic ideologies. In its curious, seemingly contradictory combination of *écriture féminine* and submissiveness to traditional ideology the *Lady’s Newspaper* works to confirm gender norms while valorizing a domesticity that is consistent with patriarchal and hegemonic social systems.

Replacing the martial metaphors of the *Times*, the *Lady’s Newspaper* establishes maternal metaphors in its account of the events of 1 May 1851. “Even the mob was touched with the humanizing spirit of the event,” writes the reporter, “and carried itself with a sort of gentlemanly bearing as if it was really made up of civilized beings, and all went as it should have gone, joyfully and harmoniously, without rioting exuberance of spirit” (241). Instead of “pour[ing] from the loins of the north in a fierce migration,” (*Times* 2 May 1851) the people are united here with a “humanizing spirit” and a “gentlemanly bearing.” All three of the Great Exhibition articles from the *Lady’s Newspaper* revolve around the Queen as she represents the harbinger of hope, industry, and worldly unity. The language of maternity is a recurring theme in this issue, especially as it describes England’s momentous achievements. The “gentle influence of her own womanly and noble nature” (241) inspires this hospitality towards other nations,

not the imperialistic ambitions of the times, but motives suggesting solidarity and concord. In a series of exclamatory sentences, the writer continues explaining Queen Victoria's matriarchal influence on the event, "What a great thought! to see our glorious country opening her hospitable ports to the utmost limits of the earth, proclaiming hospitality and peace, and words and acts of human fellowship to the whole wide world; and, crowning this picture, the gentle Monarch of a prosperous land presiding over the industrial banquet!" (241). These articles are steeped in the sentimental, not the martial or journalistic seriousness of the *Times*.

While drawing readers in with intimate pronouns and maternal metaphors, the *Lady's Newspaper* continues to feminize the news by its commitment to fashion and women's issues. The *Times* author acknowledged that he knew little about women's fashion while failing to describe the Queen's toilet on opening day, but the reporter of the *Lady's Newspaper* is much too familiar with her readers' desires to leave out such important details. In the third article of the Great Exhibition coverage in the 3 May 1851 issue, titled "The Opening of the Exhibition By Her Majesty," the reporter describes the Queen's dress: "Her Majesty was attired in a dress of pink silk and gold, and wore in her hair a tiara and ornaments of diamonds" (244). The reporter even describes Prince Albert's "white lace dress and wreath of pink geraniums" and the Prince of Wales's "royal tartan" (244). The *Lady's Newspaper* is interested in bring its female readers details that would appeal to them. This commitment to fashion is consistent with other sections of the paper, for every issue of the *Lady's Newspaper* features the categories "Paris and Court Fashion" and "Fashions and the Work Table." The various accounts of

the Great Exhibition follow this pattern, planting in both its columns and its reports information about the latest fashions.

While the *Times* printed a technical diagram outlining the interior configuration of the Crystal Palace, the *Lady's Newspaper* offers illustrations “for the delectation of [its] subscribers,” (242) too; although, these illustrations offer something that will whet the appetite of its specific class of female readers. Forming a two-page spread, detailed illustrations of certain articles to be seen at the Exhibition are featured prominently in this post-Exhibition issue. An inventory of these articles reveals much about the priorities of this paper:

A Lady's Dressing-Table

Porcelain Vase (Rococo)

Lady's Work-Table

Lady's Writing-Table

Enamel Vase (Silver Gilt)

Enamel Claret-Jug (Blue and Silver) (242-43)

Three of the seven articles illustrated in this Exhibition issue are directly related to women's lives, while the other four are items that would be of interest to women as consumers, at least indirectly. Thomas Richards comments on the purchasing power of women as they buy goods on behalf of men (206-7): “One particular moment of spectacle—the Great Exhibition of 1851—helped to shape the way advertisers represented commodities for the rest of the century and to define the most familiar imperatives of modern commodity culture” (21). These illustrations lying on the pages of the *Lady's Newspaper* are consistently feminine—they represent articles that would be of

direct interest to women's lives and they act as commodities that women could consume on the page, at the Exhibition, and in local shops. The *Times* includes one diagram that describes the layout of the Industrial Palace; the *Lady's Newspaper* features seven illustrations that appeal directly to its female subscribers.

The feminine perspective evinced in the 3 May 1851 issue of the *Lady's Newspaper* comes close to *écriture féminine*, but once again, it is regulated by the hegemonic ideologies of the nineteenth century. The language, content, and voice are all too feminine, but while Cixous suggests that feminine writing is rebellious by its very nature, the message delivered by the *Lady's Newspaper* does not challenge the period's gender norms or patriarchal prescriptions. It valorizes femininity, beauty, and domesticity in a safe way, incorporating feminized news that confirms, rather than challenges, domestic ideology, and in doing so, it participates in the domestic press, not the political press, which its very title suggests.

CONCLUSION

The study of this research has been to show that nineteenth-century periodicals such as the *Times* and the *Lady's Newspaper* wrote in gender-specific ways, prioritizing their news content to reach their respective readerships. By using the conventions of language, we can analyze the ideological values manifested in the pages of the *Lady's Newspaper* in order to situate it within Victorian domestic ideology. While functioning within the masculine discourses of the newspaper press, the *Lady's Newspaper* found ways to interject its own variety of femininity—a variety that displays articles and illustrations that are appropriate for middle-class women. Even when borrowing extensively from the *Times*, the *Lady's Newspaper* omits and adds details that are safe and non-threatening for its women readers.

There are, however, frequent inconsistencies and textual disruptions when reading the paper that are evidenced through abrupt shifts in tone and subject matter. These shifting discourses, which inevitably help create new meanings and multiple interpretations, nearly always work towards confirming separate spheres ideology. Politics can only be incorporated successfully into the *Lady's Newspaper* insofar as it pertains to social news and events. While the first editor, Charles Dance, began the paper by infusing it with a masculine persona, the domestic priorities in the paper undercut this masculine voice, and within the few short years between its founding and the report of the Great Exhibition of 1851, this persona is almost missing from the paper.

Instead of a masculine gentlemanly persona, we see hints of the feminine pen, hints of *écriture féminine*. Although Cixous believed that the very use of *écriture féminine* would challenge patriarchal prescriptions, examples of *écriture féminine* in the *Lady's Newspaper* is missing Cixous's component of subversion, often confirming traditional domestic ideology by honoring beauty, femininity, and domesticity.

The *Lady's Newspaper* began with an ambitious mission: to bring news to the ladies of England. There is no escaping the fact that the word "newspaper" connotes political news and this association makes one wonder why the *Lady's Newspaper* would adopt this title when their undertaking nearly always rejected reportage of political import. Maybe the paper would have been better off with a title similar to the *Lady's Magazine* or the *Englishwoman's Magazine*; on the other hand, perhaps it was the novel title and original idea of having a newspaper for women that convinced people to buy the periodical. Obviously, the lack of serious political news did not deter buyers, for it enjoyed a seventeen-year-run before merging with the *Queen*. Instead of the paper's title being an egregious misnomer, maybe it was an ingenious marketing strategy, employed to give the ladies something new in the broadsheet format of the *Times* while imbedded within its pages lurked just another weekly women's magazine.

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