1

PM-1 3 1/2" x 4" PHOTOGRAPHIC MICROCOPY TARGET
NBS 1010a ANSI/ISO #2 EQUIVALENT

National Library
of Canada

Acquisitions and
Bibliographic Services Branch

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0N4

Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada

Direction des acquisitions et
des services bibliographiques

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa (Ontario)
K1A 0N4

Your file Votre référence

Our file Notre référence

NOTICE

The quality of this microform is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original thesis submitted for microfilming. Every effort has been made to ensure the highest quality of reproduction possible.

If pages are missing, contact the university which granted the degree.

Some pages may have indistinct print especially if the original pages were typed with a poor typewriter ribbon or if the university sent us an inferior photocopy.

Reproduction in full or in part of this microform is governed by the Canadian Copyright Act, R.S.C. 1970, c. C-30, and subsequent amendments.

AVIS

La qualité de cette microforme dépend grandement de la qualité de la thèse soumise au microfilmage. Nous avons tout fait pour assurer une qualité supérieure de reproduction.

S'il manque des pages, veuillez communiquer avec l'université qui a conféré le grade.

La qualité d'impression de certaines pages peut laisser à désirer, surtout si les pages originales ont été dactylographiées à l'aide d'un ruban usé ou si l'université nous a fait parvenir une photocopie de qualité inférieure.

La reproduction, même partielle, de cette microforme est soumise à la Loi canadienne sur le droit d'auteur, SRC 1970, c. C-30, et ses amendements subséquents.

"The Reproduction of Gender in the Girl's Own Paper"

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

Department of English
© Carleton University 1993

National Library
of Canada

Acquisitions and
Bibliographic Services Branch

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0N4

Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada

Direction des acquisitions et
des services bibliographiques

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa (Ontario)
K1A 0N4

Your file Votre référence

Our file Notre référence

The author has granted an irrevocable non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of his/her thesis by any means and in any form or format, making this thesis available to interested persons.

L'auteur a accordé une licence irrévocable et non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de sa thèse de quelque manière et sous quelque forme que ce soit pour mettre des exemplaires de cette thèse à la disposition des personnes intéressées.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in his/her thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without his/her permission.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège sa thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

ISBN 0-315-84061-7

Canada

The undersigned recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies acceptance of the thesis, "The Reproduction of Gender in the Girl's Own Paper," submitted by Robyn Loughrey, B.A., in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

Robyn Loughrey

Thesis Supervisor

H. E. Loughrey

Chairperson, Department of English

Carleton University
January 1993

Abstract

During the final decades of the nineteenth century dominant conceptions of the female shifted from the convention of "angel in the house" to that of the "new woman" or the "modern girl." Yet these new definitions of femininity did not eradicate more traditional images of girls and women, producing often contradictory discourses which existed side by side. The fact that conflicting discourses are manifest in popular literature for girls produced in late Victorian years reveals that attitudes about femininity were in flux.

This thesis is an investigation of various conceptions of girlhood found in one popular Victorian periodical, the Girl's Own Paper. The tensions and contradictions in the text show that the contours of gender were changing but also meeting strong resistance.

This project would not have been possible without a great deal of help from various people. I thank the librarians at the Osborne Collection of Early Children's Books for all of their assistance. In addition, I thank Professor Deborah Gorham and Professor Robin Macdonald for being so generous with their knowledge and their time. Most especially, I thank my thesis supervisor, Professor Barbara Gabriel, for her valuable insights, challenging questions, patience and humour.

To Phil, who has never asked me to be an angel.

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
Separate-Sex Literature.....	10
The <u>Boy's Own Paper</u>	13
The <u>Girl's Own Paper</u> and the Myth of Femininity.....	27
Contradictions in the <u>Girl's Own Paper</u>	51
Reading and "Cross-reading".....	66
Conclusion.....	74
Notes.....	77
Appendix A.....	79
Appendix B.....	81
Appendix C.....	82
Appendix D.....	83
Works Cited.....	84

List of Illustrations

Title Page of the <u>Boy's Own Annual</u>	26
Logotypes of the <u>Boy's Own Paper</u> and the <u>Girl's Own Paper</u>	50
"A skating scene".....	65

INTRODUCTION

"From her earliest years the young princess was taught to live simply, to practice self-denial, to cultivate her natural abilities by study, and to put her trust in God."

("The Princess Victoria," Girl's Own Paper 1: 5)

This description of Queen Victoria's "exemplary" girlhood illustrates some of the feminine ideals of nineteenth-century England. Although this essay was published during the final decades of the century when the convention of the self-sacrificing "angel in the house" was being challenged by the discernible struggle of the nascent women's movement, such social changes were slow to be reflected in popular culture. This was especially true of books and magazines for children, essential sites for the reproduction of gender ideology. It is my intention to examine the gender ideology inscribed in one popular Victorian periodical, the Girl's Own Paper (1880 - 1900), in order to investigate the conception of "girlhood" that dominated during the final decades of the Victorian era.¹

One of the fundamental assumptions of this thesis is that the term "girlhood" is not a fixed concept, but one whose meaning is always in flux. This is, of course, because it belongs to the wider category of "gender" which is itself continually negotiated through changing power relationships. The working definition of "gender" used here is derived from Gayle Rubin's use of the term "sex/gender system," to refer to the "set of arrangements by which society transforms biological sexuality into products of human activity, and in

which these transformed sexual needs are satisfied" (159). In other words, "the representation of biological sexuality, the definition of sexual difference, the social organization of sexual relations are social, not natural phenomena" (Poovey 2).

If gender does not belong to nature, however, why have social norms been mistaken as innate sex traits for centuries? This is possible because gender is an ideological production, and it is the role of ideology to make individuals social subjects who internalize an appropriate picture of the social world and their place in it. In this sense, ideology does not refer to a comprehensive set of doctrines or a coherent system of beliefs that is consciously adopted or rejected; rather it refers to "a complex set of representations by which people are inserted as individual subjects into the social formation" (Boumelha 5). It is the role of ideology to construct people as "willing subjects" and to encode relations of power (Belsey 58). Although meaning is socially constructed, it is inscribed in our signifying systems (primarily language, of course, which is also a social construction) in such a way that it is generally perceived as "natural," "universal," and "unalterable" (Belsey 42). Therefore, individuals mistake what is produced by a society for an "always-already there." In this sense, ideology operates in a way

that Roland Barthes has called "myth." For Barthes, this is the process which "transforms history into nature" (140).

By investigating the reproduction of gender ideology in the Girl's Own Paper, I intend to destabilize ideology, that is, to turn myth back into history.² The primary aim of this thesis is to reveal how specific economic, political, and social pressures, particularly capitalism and the empire, operated on gender ideology to give it its particular shape. These pressures, articulated largely in the strict demarcation of public and private life, also reveal the relational condition of gender.

All meanings are produced in a relation of difference, as illustrated by linguist Ferdinand de Saussure. In Saussurean linguistics, signs do not simply name things that already exist, but rather they make up "a system of difference with no positive terms;" thus "[s]igns are defined by their difference from each other in the network of signs which is the signifying system" (Belsey 40). This is particularly important in the study of gender ideology. While the signifier "girl" is generally understood to indicate a young female (though this is not the only meaning signified by the word "girl") we understand all the meanings attached to "girl" less through our perception of the biological constitution of this subject, than through the relative place of this subject to other signs, particularly to that of "boy." Although my focus will be on the

reproduction of "girlhood," it must be understood that in my argument "boyhood" is the absent other, always implied.

The Victorian social order imposed a system of differences on biological sex in the form of pervasive binary opposition (Poovey 6); therefore, it is impossible to investigate the conception of "girlhood" without recognizing its correlative relationship to definitions of "boyhood," and how the interdependence of the two supported the prevailing economic, political and social formations of nineteenth-century England. "So much depended on maintaining the oppositional, gendered organization of social relations...that challenges to it seemed to threaten the most fundamental principles of the social and natural orders" (Poovey 199).

Boys and girls were believed to be radically different not only in body, but in temperament as well, and thus destined for two utterly different spheres of life. Men were expected to operate in the public world of commerce and politics, while women were expected to inhabit the private, domestic world of "home and hearth." The effects of childhood conditioning and preparation for these roles were momentous; because of social circumstances male and female were really two cultures and their life experiences were utterly different (Millet 31).

Of course, many nineteenth-century gender myths were perpetuated by separate education for boys and girls

according to their "natural" differences. Ruskin's Sesame and Lilies, for instance, advocated the necessity of divergent education for boys and girls due to their separate characters, and by extension, their separate societal functions. He claimed that "[t]he man's power is active, progressive, defensive. He is eminently the doer, the creator, the discoverer, the defender;" thus "[h]is intellect is for speculation and invention" (135). Conversely, Ruskin believed that "the woman's power is for rule, not for battle, - and her intellect is not for invention or creation, but for sweet ordering [in the domestic setting]...Her great function is Praise" (135).

The widespread assumption of these gender differences ensured the distinct demarcation between public and private life, or the ubiquitous tradition of "separate spheres." The world of business and politics and the world of domesticity were two separate arenas with decidedly different sets of rules. "Having produced industrial capitalism, the Victorians sought refuge from it...By locating Christian values in the home and capitalist values in the public world of commerce, the Victorians were able to achieve an efficient moral balance" (Gorham 4).

Thus the home became an important site; in the diametrical structure of "separate spheres," it provided a shelter for religious values, a spiritual refuge from the harsh public world. Of course, this idealized notion of the

domestic sphere was largely contingent on the woman who presided there. Ideally, she was an embodiment of Christian doctrine herself - innocent, pure, gentle, self-sacrificing, and untiringly submissive.

Yet, while the ideal woman was required to be submissive, the sexes were not generally recognized as competing forces. This basic contradiction was masked by the assumption that the ideal women had a "natural" preference for the confines of the home, just as the ideal man had a "natural" affinity for public life. These differences were supposed to complement, indeed support, each other. Although the ideal woman was required to be continually subordinate, the conception of "separate spheres" provided the facade of an equilibrium, by vesting her with emotional and spiritual superiority over the other sex.

These dual gender images were reinforced by Coventry Patmore's popular poem, the "Angel in the House" in which woman's special "crown" is "love," while man's is "truth." The ideal woman, epitomized by his character "Honoraria," is actually depicted as the more content of the two, despite - or perhaps because of - her lack of ambition and self-interest. According to Patmore's widely influential poem,

...love is substance, truth the form;
 Truth without love were less than nought
 But blindest love is sweet and warm,
 And full of truth not shaped by thought;
 And therefore in herself she stands
 Adorn'd with undeficient grace,
 Her happy virtues taking hands,

Each smiling in another's face.
 So dancing round the Tree of Life,
 They make an Eden in her breast,
 While his, disjointed and at strife,
 Proud-thoughted, do not bring him rest. (30)

This poetic model of binary opposition "socially realized in separate but supposedly equal "spheres," under-wrote an entire system of institutional practices and conventions... ranging from a sexual division of labour to a sexual division of economic and political right" (Poovey 8-9).

Nevertheless, while there was a clear division between male and female territory, within the domestic sphere females were presented with a variety of ideals and expectations. This is as evident in the Girl's Own Paper as it is in contemporary magazines for girls and women.

A glance at a women's magazine...reveals a range of often competing subject positions offered to women readers, from career woman to romantic heroine, from successful wife and mother to irresistible sexual object. These different positions which magazines construct in their various features, advertising and fiction are part of the battle to determine the day to day practices of family life, education, work and leisure. (Weedon 26)

Accordingly, the model of power here is a discursive one in which power does not proceed from a unitary site. It actually works in a way that is multiple and contradictory; opposing discourses often exist side by side in a state of flux and are, therefore, open to resistance.³

These conflicting discourses are an important indication of the temporal position of subjectivity and, by extension, of gender ideology. Subjectivity is "precarious,

contradictory and in process, constantly being reconstituted in discourse each time we think or speak" (Weedon 33). The contradictions in the Girl's Own Paper then are important testimony to the shifts in the cultural landscape around gender during the final decades of the nineteenth century. The co-existence of oppositional discourses reveals that attitudes about femininity were in transition; "the middle class ideology we most often associate with the Victorian period was both contested and always under construction; because it was always in the making, it was always open to revision, dispute and the emergence of oppositional formulations" (Poovey 3).

While gender ideology is inscribed in the literary features of the Girl's Own Paper, it is important to realize it is inscribed in all of the features of the magazine, including the illustrations, and that the relationship between these various features in the text are of crucial importance to this study. Recent directions in literary and cultural studies conceive of the category of literature as closely connected with other cultural sites.⁴ In this respect, a novel by Dickens is not unrelated to bank and stock crises, imperial adventures and gender ideology in the period, all of which are spoken in periodicals, papers, etc. The Girl's Own Paper offers a particularly privileged site for exploring this expanded definition of text insofar as we can read gender ideology in various discursive sites,

including short stories, serialized fiction, music, poetry, essays, domestic guides, and correspondence columns, as well as in graphic representations which accompany the text. Contradictions within the Girl's Own Paper itself, often revealed in the discrepancies between one feature and another, are perhaps the most revealing indication that gender belongs to history and not to nature.

SEPARATE-SEX LITERATURE

During the nineteenth century, English social and economic structures demanded a distinct demarcation between the public world of business and politics governed by men and the private domestic world of "home and hearth" tended to by women. These "separate spheres" dictated gender-specific roles and duties. So deeply instilled was this concept in Victorian consciousness that it affected almost every aspect of education from school policies to domestic rituals. It also resulted in much scrutiny and moral criticism of children's books and magazines, essential sites for the reproduction of gender ideology.

The production of divergent literature for boys and girls, especially in the final decades of the century, was one of many phenomena that can be attributed to the ubiquitous tradition of "separate spheres." A pervasive belief in segregating the sexes as a necessary means of education undoubtedly affected the relatively recent market of children's literature, and the production of books and magazines specifically for one sex was customary.

Typical examples of separate-sex literature are the Boy's Own Paper, and its counterpart, the Girl's Own Paper, introduced by the Religious Tract Society in 1879 and 1880, respectively. The two magazines were similar in format; both were sixteen page "weeklies"⁵, featuring short stories, serial stories, informative articles, songs, anecdotes, a

correspondence column and illustrations; both dedicated approximately half of every issue to fiction; both included practical pages comprised of a characteristically late-Victorian mixture of facts, curiosities and do-it-yourself activities, supplemented by reports of great figures from history (Reynolds 87); and both magazines were designed primarily to offer children "pure" yet lively entertainment.

Nonetheless, the end products were very different: the boys read adventure stories and learned how to care for pets, play chess, make machines, etc., while girls were given recipes, sewing patterns, features on the domestic life of girls in foreign lands, and didactic essays about the "true nature of women." This demarcation of the sexes into separate fields of interest, operation and behaviour, testimony to the ideological production of gender, reflects the normative values of the period.

However, while the demarcation of public and private life was inextricably tied to gender-specific roles and duties, the organization of both worlds, in fact, focused primarily on the desires of males. While the home was under the stewardship of women, it was established as a place of solace for men, a refuge offering physical comfort and spiritual renewal after their work in the harsh commercial world. As social historian Deborah Gorham notes, it was through the role of father's daughters and brother's sisters

"that the Victorian idealization of girlhood was most fully expressed" (38).

In the twentieth century, Simone De Beauvoir identified this phenomenon, explaining that, "[w]oman...is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her; she is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the Subject, he is the Absolute--she is the Other" (xvi).

Therefore, an investigation of the feminine ideal posed by the Girl's Own Paper should begin with the corresponding masculine ideal articulated in its predecessor and counterpart, the Boy's Own Paper (1879 - 1900).⁶

THE BOY'S OWN PAPER

The history of the Boy's Own Paper, the changing tone of its contents and its decline in circulation at the turn of the century, provides an interesting study of the shifts in culturally contingent conceptions of "masculinity." Within patriarchal formations, power resides within an image of manhood, but this iconography, in turn, is inscribed in a whole range of cultural representations, subject to conflict and change. "Masculinity," therefore is often experienced as tenuous; conceptions of "masculinity," like conceptions of "femininity" are always in flux.

For instance, the Boy's Own Paper has been described as "...a giant which straggled across six reigns, survived two major wars and inculcated into several generations a belief in the value of wholesome adventure, cold baths and Christianity" (Cadogan and Craig 73). While this description of the Boy's Own Paper suggests that it was a rather pious magazine, and it was increasingly regarded that way by the turn of the century, in 1879 "this [wholesome] version of the manly code was very much in the mainstream of evangelical practice" (Macdonald, "Reproducing the Middle Class Boy" 523). In fact, to many parents and teachers it was a welcome change from the corruption of the "penny dreadfuls."

The "dreadfuls" were popular children's magazines that flourished during the last half of the century, notoriously

insubordinate in tone and coloured with violence. Obviously, they were a source of concern to many adults who worried about the affects these papers would have on a young audience. For instance, Edward J. Salmon, a nineteenth-century critic of juvenile literature, spoke of "the disastrous effects of the "dreadfuls" on the minds of our boys and girls," citing the following examples:

a boy shot his father after reading one tale; another made fireworks after reading a "dreadful" and a bad explosion resulted; finally, a third read about Ned Kelly and immediately stole a horse from a Clapham stable and by riding bareback at night caused much danger (qtd. in Musgrave 113).

It is not surprising then that the Religious Tract Society determined to introduce a "wholesome" magazine for boys, in response to the "dreadfuls," or that the resulting Boy's Own Paper was so well received. It was also priced at one penny, and was considered by many as "the only real antidote for these poisonous sheets" (Salmon qtd. in Reynolds 82).

However, while the Boy's Own Paper was generally admired for its morally upright tone, there were actually divisions in the Religious Tract Society regarding the content of the magazine. The general committee of the society had many lengthy debates regarding the secularization of some of the children's material published during the last decades of the century, and some members of the society did not think that the material in the Boy's Own Paper was sufficiently "Christian."

Publishing accessible Christian literature had been the mandate of the Religious Tract Society from the time that it was established in 1799 by a "group of men who represent a cross-section of Evangelical society" (Bratton 32). Although the initial aim of this ecumenical society was to publish inexpensive religious tracts for adults, the society began commissioning literature for young readers in 1803 (Dunae 131); despite the growing Sunday school movement, the society believed that there was not enough suitable material available for children.

The earliest children's narratives produced by the Religious Tract Society were modeled after a leading book in puritanical circles, Janeway's Joyful Deaths of several Young Children (1672); the preface of which illustrates a gruesome Calvinistic approach to the young, asking "Did you never hear of a little child that died? And if other children die, why may you not lie sick and die? And what will you do then, child, if you should have no Grace in your Heart, and be found like other naughty children?" (qtd. in Bratton 34).

During the 1870s the Society's stories for children became more secular, however, and historians attribute this to various factors such as the increased literacy rate, the education reforms that took teaching out of the hands of the Sunday schools, and the emergence of humanistic values in society. This shift towards the secular in children's

literature did not go unchallenged, though, and there were often debates at Religious Tract Society meetings, particularly in regard to the subject of fiction. Certainly, this was the prevailing debate around the inception of the Boy's Own Paper.

While some members of the Religious Tract Society wanted a vigorously Christian paper, G. A. Hutchinson, the first editor of the magazine, did not believe that overtly evangelical tracts would attract a young audience. He preferred tales with a strong Christian tone rather than overt preaching. In addition to the fiction in these papers, there were other examples of the editor's controversial secular marketing strategy. For instance the Boy's Own Paper (and later the Girl's Own Paper) was published without the imprint of the society. Instead, the title page read, "The Leisure Hour Office."

In the midst of this moral debate, the most influential factor may have been economic. The Boy's Own Paper was extremely successful, and less than two months after its debut, a message from the editor proudly declared, "We are now printing nearly two hundred thousand copies of each number" (1: 112). At the time, the Religious Tract Society was badly in need of money to support overseas missionary work, and it could not afford to lose readers of the enormously successful magazine. Ironically, the "secular" magazine began to finance the Society's more orthodox work,

and this undoubtedly strengthened the editor's position to sustain the level of fiction in the paper (Reynolds 84).

Thus while the paper was born out of a Non-Conformist Christian publishing tradition, it was obviously tempered by economics and the concerns of the empire. Indeed the rise of the empire had a considerable impact on the tone of boys' magazines generally. In order to compete with other magazines Hutchinson deliberately moved away from a single-minded style of relating the gospels to "lively" but morally upright tales, after Charles Kingsley's conception of "muscular Christianity" (Musgrave 154). The origin of the term "muscular Christianity" is unknown but the concept was made popular by writer Charles Kingsley, both in his own works and in his influence on Thomas Hughes, author of Tom Brown's School Days. As religious belief and morality are so closely linked in the Christian faith, particularly since the start of the Puritan tradition, "Kingsley's Christianity translated easily into the moral code of duty to the Queen and Britain" (Musgrave 154). This conception of Christianity realized through physical battle was preponderant in boys' stories during the final decades of the nineteenth century, when the rising imperial mission and fervour of nationalism shaped dominant discourses of masculinity. Although this imperialist zeal grew out of various historical factors, scholars of Victorian imperial discourse have generally noted that "after the Second Reform Bill of 1867...a self-

conscious drum-beating jingoism began to emerge in British culture" (Brantlinger 4), and that this affected masculine images in literature; there was a strong link between masculinity and a moral code of "duty." This code is explicitly dictated in the Boy's Own Paper; young readers are advised to "[l]ive clean, be straight, do your duty, act the man" (qtd. in Macdonald, "Reproducing the Middle-class Boy" 522).

Apparently, there was little differentiation between the ideals of boyhood and manhood during this period. Both depended on strong "character," that is, physical endurance, truthfulness, and "honour." While the empire was expanding boys were trained to be dutiful, and through sports and athletics to think like soldiers. Indeed from the 1860s until the 1880s, England experienced the systematic national organization of games, abetted by the changing reforms to and growth of the public school system. The end of the century was decidedly marked by "the popular rage for manliness, athletics and belligerent imperialism" (Newsome qtd. in Musgrave 164). In contrast to the early evangelical tracts, masculinity was no longer supposed to manifest itself in earnest piety, but rather in physical pursuits and jocularity.

This masculine ideal is manifested in boys' stories of the era in tales of action and adventure. In direct contrast with girls' stories from the same period, they did not

shelter the young audience from the hardships and "evil" of the world. As boys were expected to be prepared for life in the public sphere, very likely in the military, they had to learn to withstand corrupting forces. Charlotte Yonge, a popular writer for children and well respected in the Christian publishing community, claimed that "boys should not have childish tales with weak morality or "washy" piety; but should have heroism and nobleness kept before their eyes...true manhood needs, above all earthy qualities, to be impressed upon them," (qtd. in Reynolds 36-37).

Victorian notions of "heroism" and nobility often implied the domination of other races as the military forces and missionaries of England were commissioned to impose their own national culture on countries around the world. In the context of colonization, notions of "masculinity" are produced not only in relation to notions of "femininity" but also according to perceptions of other men. "Understanding gender in relational terms is...important because, as a number of writers have pointed out, dominant or "hegemonic" masculinities function by asserting their superiority over the "other" whether that be gay men, younger men, women, or subordinate ethnic groups" (Roper and Tosh 13). This is illustrated in the numerous Victorian boys' stories centred on heroes travelling to distant and exotic lands to assert their manhood in an imperial framework.

The dominance of other races was not necessarily perceived as brutal activity, but rather some imperialist strategies were championed as "mission-work." Men of England were called to bring civilization to the rest of the world! To conquer other races was to save them from their own ignorance and sin, and thus Victorian heroes travelled to distant lands, spreading the gospels of both Jesus Christ and Adam Smith:

"Savages" who did not "develop" their land and its resources were often viewed as having no right of possession and the task of "civilizing" them - provided it was deemed possible - was defined in terms of conversion both to Christianity and to "productive labour" or "industry." In an 1856 review of a book on Paraguay and Brazil, Charles Kingsley wrote: "Each people should either develop the capabilities of their own country, or make room for those who will develop them. If they accept that duty, they have their reward in the renovation of blood, which commerce, and its companion, colonization, are certain to bring." (Brantlinger 25).

Of course, the exoticism and adventure of foreign stories made for exciting literature, and the idea of action dominated boys' books and magazines. Indeed, this emphasis on action is apparent in all of the discursive modes of the Boy's Own Paper. For instance, the motto of the paper is, "Whatever is of interest to boys forms the subject of this book" (4: 304), and this maxim is accompanied by the depiction of sporting equipment or boys having adventures. The title page of most early issues of the Boy's Own Paper depicts an outdoor setting with athletic equipment and a sportsman's retriever in the foreground.

Typically, the inaugural issue began with an illustrated "adventure" story by the very popular Talbot Baines Reed, entitled "My First Football Match by an Old Boy." (Reed's famous story, Fifth Form at St. Dominics also appeared in the Boy's Own Paper in October 1881.) The Boy's Own Paper was known for its high standards in writing and contributors included many popular writers for boys at the time such as Ballantyne, Henty, Algernon Blackwood, Conan Doyle, W.H.G. Kingston, Gunby Hadath, H. de Vere Stacpoole and Jules Verne (Quigley 255). Even in areas of non-fiction, the editor could boast of the quality of the paper, for most contributors were well-known experts in their fields. According to editorial statement in the Boy's Own Paper, "both writers and artists occupy the highest place in public estimation, and are recognised authorities on the subjects with which they respectively deal" (qtd. in Reynolds 82).

Although the magazine was essentially middle-class in tone, it openly addressed itself to all classes.

Correspondents wrote to the BOP of the nature of its readership. In 1879 a letter came from a branch of the Technical Department of the Post Office in Scotland, saying that out of 84 lads on the staff 63 took the BOP weekly and 5 monthly. At a Birmingham Grammar School "quite half the boys" took the BOP and at a private school in Folestone, "Some fifty copies came into my school - by no means a large one- every week (13 December 1879). One letter came from Wellington College, telling of the good reception of the BOP there. Thus, as well as school boys at all types of secondary schools, apprentices were reading this paper. ...By 1881 the editor commented that the BOP was being used as a reading book in many schools. Further more, the BOP was "so well thought of in

high places that the fourth volume was dedicated by special permission to two of its readers, Prince Edward and Prince George of Wales." (Musgrave 142-143)

Although most readers of the Boy's Own Paper were boys in their teen years, this magazine, like most children's literature, was designed for a dual audience. The correspondence column reveals that many adult readers,

saw themselves as watchdogs, scrutinising each number to be sure that all of the information, ideas and ideals conveyed were of the right sort. Teachers, clergymen and parents regularly engaged in pedantic correspondence with the editors over mistakes in spelling, grammar, syntax, Latin, theology and fact. (Reynolds 87)

Another indication of readership is the diverse collection of advertisements sometimes found at the back of the magazines. For instance, advertisements for domestic products imply that some women must have read the paper. Also, the paper was so popular that competitors tried to advertise their own magazines in the back pages. According to Salmon, "the proprietors of penny dreadfuls tried to induce booksellers to insert advertisement slips of their own rubbish into copies sold of The Boy's Own Paper. This nuisance has at times been so great that legal action has had to be threatened" (Salmon qtd. in Musgrave 143). Indeed, the correspondence writers themselves made reference to this problem of unsavory advertisements in the back pages of their magazines. Apparently they had little control over the matter, but urged readers to take issue with the booksellers who supplied them, writing, "(n)o advertising circulars are

in the Boy's Own Paper when sent from the office. The circulars complained of are inserted between the pages by the scamp agents of scamp publishers, who deserve to be prosecuted" (1: 256).

As champions of a Christian image of boyhood, the Religious Tract Society clearly perceived such advertisements as a violation of the magazine. Boys were not thought of as incorruptible, and "[f]or The Boys Own Paper, at the heart of this image of fallible boyhood was purity. "Being pure" was essentially the task of avoiding smut or bad language, putting aside sexual thoughts and, most importantly, being idealistic rather than cynical" (Macdonald 522).

Although purity is generally considered a passive virtue, in boys' stories of the period it was usually incorporated with the virtue of courage and made manifest in tales of adventure (Macdonald 522). Lessons of moral conduct were thus enclosed in fiction, and repeated in articles, anecdotes and "talks to the boys," but they were condensed and made most explicit in verse. For instance, the verse entitled "True Courage, Boys" claims that "True Courage, my lads, in unselfishness lies," and also says that boys should follow example set by Christ and "stick to the right for the sake of the right" (qtd. in Macdonald "Reproducing the Middle-Class Boy" 523). By the turn of the century such overt claims of Christianity and expressions of sentiment

were regarded as weak, and even effeminate, however. Coupled with the pacifist position of the Religious Tract Society against the Boer War, these claims may have led to the ultimate decline of readership at the turn of the century.

Military force is often a subtheme of imperial chauvinism, but it is one that the Religious Tract Society refuted. "The Boy's Own Paper, in the early years of its life, gave only a modest space to things military, beyond including the army or the navy in its general encyclopedic view of the English world...Its editors preferred the heroism of missionaries to that of generals" and, in fact, "many of the magazine's illustrations made the point explicitly that war was cruel, futile and uncivilized" (Macdonald, "Reproducing the Middle-Class Boy" 527-8). Consequently, during the Second Boer War, "the Boy's Own Paper lost circulation as a consequence of its refusal to run military stories" (Dunae, "Boy's Literature" 115).

As the century came to a close, the imperial mission was increasingly shaping the dominant discourses around masculinity, and though the Religious Tract Society continued to publish the Boy's Own Paper until 1967, it suffered a loss in readership for a short time as it would not advocate military dominance. Nonetheless, there is strong evidence in this magazine of another side of imperialism. As Macdonald notes,

[i]n the Boy's Own Paper...the richness of a colour plate or sea shells or the flags of all the

nations, the compilation of athletic records, cricket averages, the Boat Race statistics, the encyclopaedic accumulation of information on every "appropriate" topic, all testified to the creation of a world centered on English Bourgeois possession, in which the fact itself became a symbol of confident authority.

("The Language of the Empire" 1)

In other words, the Boy's Own Paper, despite its pacifist stand during the Boer War, displays another kind of imperialist zeal. It produces a chauvinistic English world view, thereby providing young readers with "an education in the ideology of power" (Macdonald, "The Language of Empire" 1).

Quicquid agunt patres nostri farrago libelli.

26

THE
BOY'S OWN ANNUAL

AN ILLUSTRATED VOLUME

OF

PURE AND ENTERTAINING READING.

EDITED BY JAMES MACAULAY, M.A., M.D.

2

LONDON:

CHANCERY LANE OFFICE, 31 PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.

Fig. 1 Title Page of an issue of the Boy's Own Paper

Reproduced with special permission from the librarians at the
Osborne Collection of Early Children's Books, Toronto Public
Library.

THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER AND THE MYTH OF FEMININITY

During the final decades of the nineteenth century, literature was the primary apparatus for the dissemination of ideas about femininity. Since both girls and women were known to be voracious readers, the images of gender in fiction and advice literature of the period must be recognized as a particularly significant medium for the inculcation of gender ideology; and the recent advent of separate-sex literature, especially in the area of children's literature, effectively reproduced dominant conceptions of "girlhood."

The Girl's Own Paper is a prime example. One of the most popular girls' magazines of the 1880s, it consistently reinforced dominant myths of femininity, even while imparting contradictory information about new career and academic opportunities for young women. In fact, the circumstances around the inception of the Girl's Own Paper reveal the prevalence of certain gender myths as well as the ensuing preoccupation with separating information into gender categories. For instance, there is evidence that in the first year of its circulation, the large readership of the Boy's Own Paper included a vast female audience: girls both entered the essay writing contests and wrote into the correspondence column. Indeed, one response in the correspondence column of the Boy's Own Paper relates that:

[s]everal letters [from readers] express gratification at the permission for girls to join

in the prize competitions of the Boy's Own Paper until there is a Girl's Own Paper also. One lady, however, writing from Brighton, strongly objects to girls being encouraged to engage in literary work as "tending to increase the inordinate love of display and admiration, so repulsive in the present day." (1: 240)

As this response suggests, the girls' magazine was created to fill a vacuum in the literary market. Obviously, the Boy's Own Paper had a large female audience but paradoxically, as the "lady from Brighton" illustrates, there was also a perceived need for the production of more "suitable" material for girls. In fact, once the Girl's Own Paper was published, girls were no longer allowed to enter contests promoted by the Boy's Own Paper.

From the first issue, it was obvious that the Girl's Own Paper was very different from the Boy's Own Paper. In perpetuating myths of femininity, the Girl's Own Paper assumed a vastly different tone - indeed a different function - than did its counterpart. The Girl's Own Paper did not compete with the Boy's Own Paper, but was considered a complement to the original magazine, just as the sexes were perceived to complement each other.

Nonetheless, the Girl's Own Paper was an enormously successful magazine in its own right. By the mid 1880s it had reached a higher circulation than its counterpart and predecessor, the Boy's Own Paper, and had become the most popular girls' magazine in England (Cadogan and Craig 75). Thus, the Girl's Own Paper, with its various features such

as stories, domestic literature, advice columns, etc., must be seen as an important ideological force.

As indicated by its title, the dominant discourses of the paper operate to establish a universal, ideal "girl" who is educated yet self-sacrificing, passive, religious, modest and highly accomplished in the domestic sphere. These meanings attached to the signifier "girl" must be recognized as the production of concrete historical circumstance. For instance, this idealized image of femininity, unmistakably middle class, was critical at the time to the construction of the national image of England:

the domestic ideal helped depoliticize class relations...partly by translating class difference into psychological or moral difference, partly by setting limits to competition, and partly by helping to subsume individuals of different classes into a representative Englishman, with whom everyone could identify, even if one's interests were thereby obliterated and not served.
(Poovey 9)

Thus, while references to class distinctions are made in the Girl's Own Paper, the title implies a homogeneity, masking economic and cultural differences, and producing a predominantly middle-class ideal of femininity. There are articles in the magazine such as "How I Keep House on £250 a Year" (6: 9) and "Etiquette for All Classes," (3: 90) that recognize a following from the working class, yet most images of femininity in the paper, especially in the fiction and iconography, operate to support the hegemony of the bourgeoisie.

Also, the paper asserts its authority over the audience, claiming that "[a]ll girls, at home and abroad, we regard as 'Our Girls,' whether they are correspondents or not." (7: 64). In other words, the Girl's Own Paper effectively reproduced the dominant gender ideology of Victorian England, shaping normative values in various parts of the world by concealing the imperialist relation between Britain and its colonies. Writers for the magazine claim to address "young and old, rich and poor, British or foreign, all alike, without partiality" (6: 112).

In turn, assuming a universality among its readers, the paper promises to be "counsellor, playmate, guardian, instructor, companion, and friend" to the audience (1: 516). The aim of the paper, announced in one of the early issues, is to help "to prepare...readers for the responsibility of womanhood and for a heavenly home..." (1: 516) Of course, the presumption is that the magazine can respond to the needs of all its readers, but in fact it operates to reinforce traditional middle-class notions of femininity.

Yet while the magazine clearly indicates that its audience is female and works in a way that masks class differences, the category of "girlhood" does not imply a distinct age group. Thus many of the "girls" who read the paper were actually adult women, often married, and the broad range of subjects addressed by the paper reflects the attempt to cater to children and adults simultaneously. The

result was a formulaic pattern of extended serial stories, short stories, articles on sewing or dress making, instruction in cookery, essays and sermons, poems and songs, anecdotes, articles on botany, and "Answers to Correspondents." There is slightly less space devoted to fiction than in the boys' paper, and, in the early years, much of the magazine is dedicated to domestic advice, sometimes thinly disguised in the form of a short story.

Still, this emphasis on the domestic in the Girl's Own Paper indicates the general expectations for girls in Victorian England. Indeed, the most important gender ideology of Victorian England was hinged on the construction of "separate spheres," a structure that dictated the demarcation of the public arena inhabited by men and the private, domestic sphere occupied by women. Even the titles of the Boy's Own Paper and the Girl's Own Paper denote the absolute separation of sex roles. Also, while the Boy's Own Paper declined in circulation because of its apparent pacifist principles in the face of the Boer War, the Girl's Own Paper was thriving, as the feminine ideal had such a small role in that particular theatre of struggle.

One of the fundamental differences between the Victorian conception of male and female then, was that the first was regarded as the protector, while the second was regarded as the protected. Although the female was responsible for creating a domestic refuge for her family,

she was also supposed to remain sheltered there herself. This sanctioned arena was a fortress of sorts, guarding her most esteemed quality, her "purity," a term that embodied various conceptions including asexuality and moral righteousness.

Even in the closing decades of the century, when the struggle of the nascent womens' movement was apparent, women who "worked" risked suffering a loss of caste. While matrimony was no longer considered the only goal for a young woman, it was still generally considered the highest ideal, explicitly stated in numerous issues of the Girl's Own Paper. Since the public domain was regarded as harsh, hard and corrupting, most women who worked were motivated by economic necessity. In turn, it was the duty of men in the family to guard their female charges from the public domain if possible, acting as custodians of feminine virtue. Auguste Comte, the French philosopher whose theories found their way into much nineteenth-century thought, described the reciprocal duties of the sexes in terms that will be familiar to readers of Victorian novels. Typically, it is the function of the Victorian heroine to operate as an agent of conversion in a narrative which is itself informed by conservative Christianity. According to Comte it is the "mission of women to save man from the corruption to which he is exposed to in his life of action and thought," while it is the duty of men, on the other hand, to "relieve the

loving sex from every anxiety which can interrupt the force of those affections" (qtd. in Dijkstra 14).

Even as girls, Victorian females were ideally contained within the "walled garden of domesticity", an apt metaphor as their "purity" was often represented by floral imagery (Dijkstra 14). This walled garden is idealized as a safe haven, impenetrable by corrupting forces, unlike the masculine sphere which was described as a dangerous, indeed volatile place. Ruskin describes the juxtaposition of the two spheres in lyrical terms:

This is wonderful - oh, wonderful! - to see her with every innocent feeling fresh within her, go out in the morning into the garden to play with the fringes of its guarded flowers, and lift their heads when they are drooping, with her happy smile upon her face, and no cloud upon her brow, because there is a little wall around her place of peace: and yet she knows, in her heart, if she would look for its knowledge, that outside of that little rose-covered wall, the wild grass, to the horizon, is torn up by the agony of men, and beat level by the drift of their life-blood.

(Ruskin 173-174)

While males were expected to maintain their "purity" in the face of evil, females were believed to be highly impressionable as well as too fragile for exposure to public life, again, a concept mythologized in the encoding of woman as Flora. "In her very essence, her fragility, her physical beauty, her passivity and lack of aptitude for practical matters, woman was virtually a flower herself" (Dijkstra 15.) Indeed, the depiction of woman as Flora was so frequent that "[i]n the second half of the nineteenth century it was

virtually impossible for a "pure" woman to stir without finding herself up to her neck in flowers" (Dijkstra 15), and of course, one of the most famous literary heroines, not to mention incessantly kind and long-suffering, is Dickens' Florence in Dombey and Son.

The "pure" woman was regarded as a flower not only in her attributes, but also in the way that she needed a watchful eye over her growth:

The "pure" woman, the woman who, with her passive, submissive, tractable qualities, seemed to share with the flowers all the features characteristic of the plant life of the domestic garden, thus she came very generally to be seen as a flower herself, and to be cultivated in very much the same way a flower ought to be cultivated in order to thrive. (Dijkstra 16)

Of course, this emphasis on guardianship reveals a fundamental contradiction in Victorian thought. Despite a female's "natural" piety, she was generally considered a weak, vulnerable creature, easily influenced and thus at risk of moral corruption.

As girls were taught to be gentler than boys, "the literature written to assist this teaching was different in its tone and content" (Musgrave 41). Some of the differences between the boys' paper and the girls' paper manifested themselves in the presumption that males are active and adventuresome, while females are docile and content to remain in the realm of home and hearth. There was more information about the expanding British empire in the Boy's Own Paper, for example, and questions about emigration and

the colonies frequently appeared in the correspondence columns. Although the Girl's Own Paper received some letters from girls in the colonies there was not nearly as much information imparted on the subject of emigration and certainly any histories or illustrations of military figures from the past were restricted to the boys' magazines.

It was a general concern that girls should be prohibited from reading any "suggestible" material; that is, parents and guardians were careful not to expose them to any knowledge outside of the prevailing feminine discourses. The emphatic attempts to filter the knowledge that entered the domestic sphere, manifested in the censorship of girl's and women's reading, chaperonage, the "medicalization" of the female body,⁷ and the legal representation of women, should be recognized as references to the Victorian preoccupation with chastity. Gender myths of the nineteenth century coupled independence and aptitude for life in the public sector with immodesty. Sexual purity, on the other hand, belonged to the familial home and hearth.

Victorian ethics dictated that all well-bred females, regardless of age, and even marital status, had to be sexually modest. Thus the graphic elements of the Girl's Own Paper always perpetuate the nineteenth-century norm of asexuality. Heroines are always dressed in a conservative middle-class style, and usually they are portrayed with hands clasped and eyes averted as they day-dream, often

holding a book or a bouquet, with flowers looming large in the background. In short, the heroines in the magazine typified Victorian literary heroines, as they were always girls or women who made "no outward show of appeal" (Welsh 69).

In the non-fiction features of the Girl's Own Paper, such as essays, anecdotes and advice columns, writers continually emphasize decorous behaviour, both explicitly in moralizing essays and conduct literature, and implicitly in advice on "appropriate" activities for girls. This "appropriate" female behaviour, or moral conduct, can be translated into class differences. It was a common Victorian myth that the middle class is "naturally" modest, especially as compared to the licentious lower classes. Under the title of "Etiquette for all Classes," one article dictates appropriate behaviour, that is, behaviour belonging to the code of the middle class, to girls of all classes:

In common with others I have been amused, yet even more shocked, with the strange questions raised as to the conduct of young girls and women with reference to young men. Hitherto an extraordinary amount of freedom, and reckless want of caution, as well as of self-respect, has been winked at by the parents of respectable girls of the middle and lower classes, simply because many of them were brought up, or, as I have heard it graphically described, "dragged up, " in the same utter disregard or ignorance of the risks run, by infringing the common law of female self-restraint, tact and propriety...I know, from information obtained from domestic servants of my own family, that it is permissible in their class to allow a man to address them without any introduction; and, if found agreeable with the

girl, she consents to his "keeping company" with her, should he desire it.

Now, to you, my young friends who belong to this class, I more especially address myself, and tell you that of which you are now quite unaware—that etiquette forbids any young man presuming to introduce himself to you...(3: 90)

Although the writer posits a correlation between social position and virtuous behaviour, she advocates universal moral standards. In addition, she makes reference to the connection between inappropriate sexual conduct and loss of caste, advocating the belief that social status is largely contingent on a woman's relationship to a male, that is to say, marriage. The writer asks,

Should respectable women be so cheap and common as this? Turn over, I pray you, a new leaf. Etiquette requires the introduction of a man to a woman, whether she be what is called a "lady" or a working girl. Your characters, the comfort of your future homes, and the happiness of your own lives mainly depend on the acquaintance you form with the persons of the opposite sex. (3: 91)

Yet another example of the norm of asexuality generated by the magazine is the Puritanical belief in self-abnegation. Girls who read the Girl's Own Paper were advised not to think of their own looks, or to be concerned with people looking at them. In fact, there is a complaint in the magazine against correspondents who "possess an undue anxiety as to their personal appearance, as, for instance, questions on the complexion, figure, colour of the hair, etc." The writer makes clear that "[s]uch questions will, for the future, remain unanswered, as being contrary to the

example, another reply to a correspondent of the paper says: "We cannot give you any recipe for making your hair grow dark, nor for "getting rid of a double chin." Be thankful that you have got any hair or chin at all, and that the hair you complain of does not grow on your chin" (qtd. in Reynolds 141). Furthermore, girls who wrote into the correspondence column to ask for help with their tendency to blush were always reprimanded, for this understood as physiological proof of self-interest.

This consistently severe criticism of self-interest found in the Girl's Own Paper is of the utmost importance. While scholastic and employment opportunities for women were increasing, this paper continued to reproduce traditional and dominant discourses of femininity, reaffirming the importance of selflessness, passivity, duty and humility, generally set in an idealized domestic sphere. Girls and women alike were portrayed as embodying a pure and unchanging spiritual purity and exhaustive benevolence. In addition, the Victorian discourse of "home and hearth" tended to blur feminine roles, so that the domestic feminine ideal functions not only as "daughter," "sister," "mother," or "wife" but as all of those things together, an "eternal" as well as a "universal" female figure. Indeed, Dickens wrote of the "same face and figure - often the fairest and slightest of them all...never growing old or changing..." (qtd. in Welsh 157). The blurring of age distinctions and

familial relationships, possible in conjunction with the feminine norm of asexuality, "was not necessarily to substitutes one [female] for another, but ideally to enjoy [all female relations] in the enclosure of the hearth" (Welsh 157). This is extremely significant in revealing how ideology works to create feminine ideals that in fact could never be produced by the actual conditions of the subjects who aspire to them. This myth actually worked to create a feminine ideal that could transcend age and other mundane obstacles.

For in Victorian male fantasy, the female was cast in the role of the "essence of unearthly purity" (Dijkstra 13), or the "angel in the house," a term made popular by Coventry Patmore's poem of the same title. As an angel, she had redemptive powers, compensating for the family males who were forced into the harsh, commercial world of business.

Additionally, as "angels" women were seriously regarded as being closer to God, and this image of feminine purity was actually reflected in the physical ideal: "Proper angels were weak, helpless, ill" (Dijkstra 26); thus physical frailty, representing purity, actually came to be seen as a sign of good breeding. Commenting on the ubiquitous presence of this celebrated image, Dijkstra observes that,

throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, parents, sisters, daughters, and loving friends were kept busy on canvasses everywhere, anxiously nursing wan, hollow-eyed beauties who were on the verge of death. For many a Victorian husband his wife's physical weakness came to be

evidence to the world and to God of her physical and mental purity - that precious commodity which would ultimately secure for him spiritual succour from the world of sordid business affairs and rescue his soul from perdition. (25)

Therefore, while the Girl's Own Paper advocates moderate exercise and consistently advises against dieting, claiming that "[a] thin little girl is a pitiful sight!" (1: 320), most illustrations depict passive, helpless, dreamy creatures. The romantic cult of the invalid is also present; this lingering discourse is manifest in the many characters, usually mothers, who are portrayed as being delicate or infirm, if not already dead, real "angels." Also, the "joyful death" story was not entirely out of fashion in girls' literature, and though it was now somewhat romanticized compared to Janeway's Calvinistic archetype, it continued to reinforce the fusion between the concepts of spirituality and the feminine ideal. To cite a typical example, the story "Margaret" is a melodramatic tale of a sweet, fresh, pretty, but (alas!) consumptive girl, who cares for a sickly family and pines for her own kin during her last dying days. After her death, another character emotionally says that Heaven "was made for such as her" (1: 94-95); for her angelic spirit shone through, inspiring others, even in her earthly life.

With the formidable role of spiritual guardians for the family, girls had to be impressed with the importance of their rectitude from an early age. Therefore, the Girl's Own

Paper was more open in its preaching than was its counterpart the Boy's Own Paper. Unencumbered by the masculine code that judged any display of sentimental feeling as weakness, the girls' magazine made emotional appeals in all of its features, asking its audience to attend to the needs of others in the name of Christian duty and humility. Many essays in the Girl's Own Paper consist of lengthy Biblical conjecture, and conclude that womens' "work" is the influence of other for good. One such article makes this impassioned plea to readers:

Should we not, then, strive to realise each one to herself what it is to hold in possession a power for good or evil in relation to others?...Should we not hold such a power with trembling watchfulness, and consecrate it to the service and glory of Him who gave it, seeking the indwelling and abiding presence of His Holy Spirit...(5: 240)

With this end in mind, the magazine includes guides to studying the scriptures, recommends Sunday school teaching as a noble pursuit, urges those who are able to do philanthropic work, and suggests that girls continually ask themselves, "how can I help my mother?...what do I teach my younger brothers and sisters?...what can I do to brighten my father's life?" (15: 4).

This indicates another important aspect of the feminine code. As "pure" or "angelic," the Victorian female was cast in the role of servant and her "mission" was designed according to the needs and desires of others. However, this servitude was generally masked by cliches about the

genuine "nature" of womanhood. As "angel in the house" she was frequently described as embodying the spirit of "truth and love," for example, and such conveniently imprecise virtues constituted a malleable feminine ideal of a girl who was faithful, devoted and self-sacrificing. In short, she was defined solely through her relationships with others. Ruskin's feminine ideal, for example, is one in which the "angel" is cherished for her exhaustive servitude rather than for her personal accomplishments:

So far as she rules, all must be right or nothing is. She must be enduringly, incorruptibly good; instinctively, infallibly wise - wise, not for self-development, but for self-renunciation: wise, not that she may set herself above her husband, but that she may never fail from his side: wise, not with the narrowness of insolent and loveless pride, but with the passionate gentleness of an infinitely variable, because infinitely applicable, modesty of service - the true changefulness of women. (139)

The feminine discourses constituting Ruskin's ideal woman pervade much fictitious Victorian literature as well. For instance, in Dickens' novels, "love and truth are sounded as the slogan of domestic trials...love and truth are identified with the heroine or some other angelic figure..." (Welsh 165).

It is significant then that the iconography of Joseph Edward's sculpture, "The Spirit of Truth and Love" provides the logotype of the Girl's Own Paper. Explaining this choice, one writer for the magazine notes that,

[t]he figure at the head of our paper is not the copy of a picture or portrait, but of a statue. It

is not the custom in art to put eyes on statues of pure white marble. In the latter and lower periods of Greek sculpture statues were sometimes coloured, but no one now expects white marble to have eyes like dolls or wax figures. The statue of which our heading is a copy has been greatly admired. It was called by the sculptor "The Spirit of Truth and Love," and we think this is a good motto for our paper...(1: 208)

Thus, no matter what academic and career opportunities are advertised in the magazine, the subliminal presence of the domestic angel is ever constant.

Utilizing the elusive qualities of love and truth in daily life was problematic for Victorian females, though. How were passive human "angels" supposed to exercise their power, their saving grace? One article in the Girl's Own Paper advises that

[one] of a wife's most high and holy duties is the duty of gaining a firm yet sweet and modest influence for good over the man who is her husband. This influence will never be reached by sharp, bitter words, or by fits of sullen pride, or by the assumption of masterful airs, or by dictatorial lecturing. Nothing is more distasteful and abhorrent to a man than any of these things in a woman; nothing so quickly as any of these things will snatch all power in her home out of her hands: it will be won by gracious looks, by tender little acts of love, by soft, persuasive words, by gentle, hardly perceptible leading. It is often the case that women have deeper and loftier religious convictions than men, and it is a glorious task, in truth, for a Christian wife to make the life of her husband more spiritual. (3: 607)

Of course, there is little pragmatic advice for influencing others for good, except to teach by example, by increasing one's own service to other people. Thus there is a great

housekeeping. The exhaustive supply of domestic tips includes advice on cooking, cleaning and sewing, under the regular features entitled "Our Cookery Class," "My Work Basket" (instruction for sewing and other needle work) and "Useful Hints" (a combination of advice on cooking, sewing, cleaning, and "home remedies"). Additionally, the "Answers to Correspondents" column includes categories such as "Dress," "Needlework," "Cookery," and "Housekeeping." Even some of the "stories" have domestic work as their themes, such as the short story, "What to do on Holiday Afternoons," a mixture of fiction and instruction that reinforced the dominant Protestant work ethic (1: 214-215). The same sentiment is expressed in the article "On the Use of Time" (1: 247). Victorian girls and women were frequently cautioned to spend their time wisely and to attend to their duties as ministering angels diligently.⁸

It is important to realize that the Victorian cult of domesticity was an extraordinary power in shaping normative values, and that the stringent demands on the "angel in the house" extended far beyond cooking and cleaning, although these, too, were major preoccupations. In this respect, one of the most revealing features of the magazine is the correspondence column. After the inauguration of the Girl's Own Paper the feature entitled "Answers to Correspondents" soon swelled to make up almost one-eighth of every issue, and it covered topics from music and history to employment and

education; it was abundant in housekeeping information; and it also offered rather didactic personal advice, even about family relationships, courtship and marriage. One response in the correspondence column, for instance, goes so far as to prohibit certain marriages, claiming that, "(c)ertainly it would be very wrong for a believer in Christ to marry an infidel" (6: 15).

The density of these correspondence columns illustrates the extensive expectations placed on the Victorian girl. Not only is she supposed to be an expert cook, dress-maker, household manager and skilled at rearing children, but she is also expected to master many rules of etiquette, be accomplished at some drawing room skills - music or painting, for example - and to be sufficiently educated that she will be an interesting conversationalist. In one correspondence column of the Girl's Own Paper, the information imparted includes a description of the zither, names of leading philosophers, the history of the Shakers, a chemical explanation of the colour of the sea, some Latin translations, geographical information, instructions for drying flowers, suggestion for cleaning pearls, and a guide to studying the Bible (6: 175).

Certainly, the prescriptive function of the magazine seems more weighty than that of our own contemporary magazines for adolescent girls and women. One critic who has made a detailed study of the leisurely pace of girls'

magazines today has concluded that they are more of an entertainment commodity: "[t]he dominance of the visual level which is maintained throughout the [contemporary] magazine, reinforces this notion of leisure. It is to be glanced through, looked at and only finally read" (McRobbie 269). Conversely, the Girl's Own Paper is dense with information, and somewhat esoteric in comparison to twentieth-century reading for adolescents.

But how was the ideal feminine subject posed by the Girl's Own Paper made appealing to young female readers who may have resisted the images of banal domesticity? Certainly, the cult of the "romantic heroine" must have played an important role in mythologizing the importance of domestic life. Indeed, many stories in the Girl's Own Paper were typical feminine "romance" stories, focusing on the marriage plot in which closure depends on the heroine becoming a wife and chatelaine. The "realism" of such tales makes ordinary life seem important by attaching it to "romance fiction;" in other words, its very structure fuses contemporary ideals of housekeeping with potentially erotic dreams and fantasies, and effectively operates to guide a variety of readers towards a single aspiration. As Rachel Brownstein notes, "[t]he marriage plot...is about finding validation of one's uniqueness and importance by being singled out among all other women by a man" and thus it

makes actual conditions of servitude and submission desirable (xv).

The implications of the marriage plot are far-reaching because they pose questions about,

how the sexual is bound up with the moral life, about the coexistence of intimacy and identity, about how very odd it is to choose another so as to choose a self, and whether one can be who one is while living a generic woman's life, about the possibility of managing and shaping and comprehending the point of a determined female destiny. (Brownstein xvii)

Additionally, in relation to the concept of "separate spheres," the marriage plot is also about completion, and becoming a domestic subject assumes a mutual achievement of intimacy and identity. As the heroine finds a mate, she is essentially appropriating an "Other's" identity; paradoxically, therefore, choosing a partner becomes a way of choosing a "self."

Yet, despite these problematic questions, the marriage plot was an essential instrument of Victorian gender ideology, operating to preserve the hegemony of the English middle class. "The cornerstone of Victorian society was the family; the perfect lady's sole function was marriage and procreation (the two, needless to say, were considered as one)" (Vicinus x). In the Girl's Own Paper, familial responsibility is constantly advocated. Nonetheless, while the heroines in the fiction of the Girl's Own Paper are acutely aware of their own familial responsibilities, they

are not generally given much family guidance. It is not unusual for romantic heroines to be portrayed as solitary figures, left to their own devices due to absent or inept parents. Romantic heroines are, therefore, responsible for their own behaviour and their own choices, and are rewarded or punished accordingly.

The fantastic idea that a young girl can so ingeniously take control of her own life becomes commonplace in Victorian literature. As Peter Coveney notes in his study of the child in nineteenth-century literature, "[t]he Romantic reaction against the moralizing, utilitarian literature for children was part of its reaction against the child of the associationist eighteenth century" (14). Yet he also points out that the cult of the Romantic child is in opposition to the evangelical tractarian portrayal of children - the kind of portrayal found in many nineteenth-century publications of the Religious Tract Society. By and large, the romance fiction found in the Girl's Own Paper is a clumsy mixture of the two traditions; most of the stories incorporate some romantic elements, such as leaving the heroine to her own devices, with moralizing didactic elements, such as punishing the heroine for marrying against the will of her parents. Indeed, many of the romance stories focus on family obligations, while other stories centre on the angelic sister or daughter, mixing portrayals of independence and self-sufficiency with notions of duty.

No doubt, these stories had a significant impact on their readers. According to Brownstein, "young women like to read about heroines "so as to rehearse possible lines and to imagine a woman's life as important"" (xxiv). The romantic discourse, then, despite its many contradictions and generally far-fetched circumstances, was an essential instrument in mythologizing the domestic subject.

FIG. 2. Mastheads of the Boy's Own Paper and the Girl's Own Paper.

Reproduced with special permission from the Librarians at the Osborn Collection of Early Children's Books, Toronto Public Library.

CONTRADICTIONS IN THE TEXT

As we have seen, gender belongs to history and not to nature. Therefore, the concept of femininity is neither stable nor unvarying, and the precarious position of gender ideology is evident in literary texts, articulated in their silences and contradictions. Here in the Girl's Own Paper fissures and contradictions in contemporary gender ideology are even more explicit, due to the fact that each issue typically displays a wide range of discursive "sites." At any time, they could affirm norms which were implicitly in tension with the wider social field, or even in conflict with other values advocated in the text itself. It is essential, therefore, to examine the contradictions in the Girl's Own Paper in order to unmask some of the myths constituted in the popular conception of "girlhood" at the end of the nineteenth century.

Indeed, the most precarious discourses of femininity are revealed in the contradictions around the demarcation of the public sector and private sector, often in the tension between the area of gainful employment and that of domestic work. In Kate Millett's essay entitled, "The Debate Over Women," she compares two of the "central documents of sexual politics" in the Victorian period - Mill's Subjection of Women and Ruskin's "Of Queen's Gardens" - to illustrate contention around the concept of the domestic ideal.

In Mill one encounters the realism of sexual politics, in Ruskin its romance and the benign

aspect of its myth...If Mill's essay is commendable for its lucid statement of an actual situation, Ruskin's lecture is significant as one of the most complete insights obtainable into that compulsive masculine fantasy one might call the official Victorian attitude. (121-122)

The Ruskinian ideal - a glorified, spiritual house-keeper who "naturally" prefers domestic life - obviously worked to keep females in a subordinate position in society. As Millett points out, "[i]t was precisely to avoid the danger of sexual equality within this or any other class, that he and his fellows invented the doctrine of the separate spheres and proclaimed it "Nature." (125) Mill, on the other hand, notes that throughout history, those of the "ruling class" have justified their mastery by citing "natural" differences.

What Mill has to say on the subject is directly at odds with [Ruskin's treatise]. While in the lower classes the ethic of male supremacy may take the form of brutality, in the middle classes it tends toward the rankest hypocrisy. Among the educated "the inequality is kept as much as possible out of sight; above all out of sight of the children," with "the compensations of the chivalrous feeling being made prominent, while the servitude which requires them is kept in the background.

(Millett 134)

Mill also pointed out that all aspects of the chivalric code, including marriage, are feudal.

Despite Mill's articulate feminist statements, the domestic ideal had a strong hold on the popular imagination. For instance, the phenomenon of the "new woman" portrayed in some adult literature of the period, such as Rhoda Nunn in George Gissing's The Odd Women, had little place in the

girls' books and magazines; even as the changing roles of women slowly shifted normative values, the domestic angel did not disappear, but was incorporated into depictions of girlhood. While offering information about employment and education, for example, the Girl's Own Paper continued to advocate that girls,

[k]eep to women's kingdom; it is a domain large enough for any queen. Men may pretend to admire the loud talking, the slang phrases and the forward manner of "mannish" girls, but it is not among them that honest sensible men desire to find their wives. (1: 3)

This reference, of course, alludes to matrimony as the foremost ideal of girls. It was continually put forward as their most "noble" aspiration, and the most likely channel of improving their social status. Of course, this effectively worked to undermine most "advancements" made by women in the public sphere, and to perpetuate myths regarding the "angel in the house."

Paradoxically, despite all the domestic demands to which the Victorian girl was subjected, and the idealized notion that the separate spheres of activity for males and females were different but not unequal, the domestic sphere was undoubtedly devalued in the gender dialectic. In reading the Girls' Own Paper, the audience was inculcated with the notion that the feminine ideal must be unquestioningly subordinate to her male counter-part. Readers are taught that "[w]hen a woman marries, it is her duty at once to weld

her whole life and being into the life and being of her husband" (3: 607). The public arena was regarded as the more serious of the two spheres, and there was an assumption of male superiority as men alone had an aptitude for managing business and politics. For instance in one essay, the Rev. C. H. Grungy M.A. makes the statement that:

...the problem with young wives is that they do not realize the difference between their husband and themselves...she cannot estimate the value of his time; she cannot see the necessity for his glancing through the Times in the morning instead of talking to her...She has no idea of the relative importance of different things - a bit of ribbon and a political speech are equally important in her eyes, or rather the first is more important than the second. (15: 75)

Yet at the same time that such disparaging comments are made about household affairs, girls are taught not to shirk menial tasks; for, if acted in right sentiment, that is, to serve others, all work was considered "noble" work. This notion was presented in highly idealized language, of course, such as in Alice King's article entitle "Womanhood:"

When our girls step out of girlhood into womanhood they must not forget to keep the Christian maidenhead with them; indeed, the attributes of maidenhood, something of its radiance, something of its sweetness clings to the purest and highest type of Christian woman throughout her whole life, and makes a halo and a perfume around her. Still, when she is wife and mother, womanhood must never lay aside her white robe, even when she is treading the most commonplace paths of daily life...We want our girls to blossom into highly-educated women, into refined women, into high-souled, high minded women; but we want them, at the same time to be thoroughly practical women, whose characters and dispositions will wear well in daily life. If our girls merely develop into women who can talk well in drawing rooms about the

duties and privileges of their sex, they will entirely fail to do womanhood's mission in the world. (3: 606-607)

Here, the exalted language is used to valorize notions of physical servitude, as does the pervasive conception of Christian duty and humility, key in supporting domestic myths of femininity. Writers for the Girl's Own Paper consistently maintained that "[a]ll work is ladylike in its best sense when honestly performed and in the fear of God" (6: 160).

This is not to say that increasing academic and career opportunities for young women were ignored or condemned by the paper. On the contrary, many articles in the Girl's Own Paper, both fictional and otherwise, actually combine traditional images of femininity with reports of new opportunities for women in the public sector. The magazine printed articles celebrating the new academic avenues open to girls as well as articles featuring famous women and their scholastic achievements, but still these were tempered by statements such as the following, from an essay entitled "School life": "Girls are meant for practical daily life even more than boys; girls, even more than boys, must have an education of the heart as well as of the head, because for women's hearts there is quite as much good, brave work to do in the world as for women's brains (Alice King, 3: 123).

This, in fact, reflects one of the central questions around the conception of femininity in the Victorian era was: To what end should women be educated?

Education for females was a territory under contestation, again, exemplified by the debate between Ruskin and Mill.

Because he understand how conditioning produces a sexual temperament appropriate to sexual role, Mill is in an excellent position to understand how woman is the product of the system which oppresses her: how all her education, formal and informal, is dedicated to perpetuating it. He also believes "the mental differences supposed to exist between women and men are but the natural effects of the differences in their education and circumstances, and indicate no radical differences, far less radical inferiority of nature." Mill's description of the education assigned to woman tallies exactly with Ruskin's. There is however, one alarming difference: Ruskin finds it a very good thing, whereas Mill despises it...(Millet 127-128)

The Ruskinian ideal that had presided for most of the century, was in stark opposition to developing opportunities for girls and women, though conservative gender ideology was often cited in arguments for developing scholastic opportunities for girls. The role of wife, the role of pleasing men and responding to their desires, was, by and large, considered to be the primary goal of education for females. Again, the reciprocal roles of the two sexes was a favourite argument in debates regarding education. The Girl's Own Paper often quotes the work of well-known philosophers, and on this subject, it cites Rousseau's statement that, "(m)en will always be what women make them:

if, therefore you would have men great and virtuous, impress upon the minds of women what great and virtuous are" (15: 76). Likewise, John Ruskin's commentary on the roles of girls and women was a favourite source for the Girl's Own Paper, and of course, his views on education both typified dominant Victorian ideals and reinforced them. He claimed that:

All such knowledge should be given her [the ideal girl] as may enable her to understand, and even aid, the work of men: and yet it should be given, not as knowledge, - not as if it were, or could be, for her an object to know; but only to feel, and to judge, It is of no moment, as a matter of pride of perfectness in herself, whether she knows many languages or one; but it is of the utmost that she should be able to show kindness to a stranger, and to understand the sweetness of a stranger's tongue. ("Sesame and Lilies" 144)

For girls' education, both formal and informal, was designed primarily to teach "womanly" skills for a non-remunerative life at home. Even the famous headmistresses, Frances Mary Buss and Dorothea Beale, as witnesses before the Schools Inquiry Commission of the late 1860s, acknowledge that girls ought to be taught domestic skills. Although they advocated some radical education reforms, their arguments were generally based on economic necessity-many middle class girls would eventually have to support themselves - and for the most part, their arguments reflected dominant ideology of the day. They argued, for example, that "educated women made better wives and mothers than those who were poorly educated," reinforcing the

general expectation that girls would fulfill the traditional role of wife and mother, sequestered in the domestic arena (Gorham "The Ideology of Femininity" 25). In fact, Buss regularly read her girls passages from Coventry Patmore's "Angel in the House."

This tension between the new academic and career avenues open to girls and the contradictory emphasis on life in the private sphere is highly evident in the Girl's Own Paper. In its first year of publication, the magazine included an extensive guide to "Our Colleges" offering information regarding the age requirements, scholastic prerequisites, and cost of entering national colleges. This was followed by a thorough list of programs open to women:

There are over thirty professors whose lectures at Cambridge are open to women, indeed women may derive benefit from almost the entire teaching staff of the University. The subjects of these lectures are: astronomy, botany, archaeology, law, moral philosophy, pure mathematics, civil law, fine art, Sanskrit, natural experiment at philosophy, political economy, international law, geology, anatomy, Hebrew, Greek, medicine, chemistry, Latin, mineralogy, Arabic, modern history, Anglo Saxon, mechanism, applied mechanics, and Divinity...Women are now admitted to all degrees at London University without exception. This is under a supplemental charter, granted on the 14th of May, 1878. The degrees obtainable are those of Bachelor and Master of Arts, Bachelor and doctor of medicine, Bachelor and Master of Laws, Bachelor and doctor of Science, Bachelor and Master of Surgery, Bachelor and doctor of Music and doctor of Literature (1: 502).

Yet in the same issue of the Girl's Own Paper, the "Varieties" column advises, "NEVER despise humble services,

When large ships run aground, little boats may pull them off" (1: 510). Yet another "Varieties" column celebrates "WIFEHOOD" but also quotes Charlotte Bronte saying, "marriage is not the one aim in a girl's training" (1:59). One of the best examples of the paper blending contradictory discourses is found in the article "University Hoods and How to Make Them." This article begins with some bold assertions regarding women's right to higher education, implying that the wearing of these hoods is a possibility for readers, but it soon changes tone and becomes an article on sewing, supplying instructions for making these hoods. The author claims that these make a "most useful gift [for] father, brother, or cousin" and the accompanying illustration features a young man sporting a university hood (qtd. in Gorham "The Ideology of Femininity" 51). The idea of glorifying father and brother, after the fashion of the stereotypical household angel, was consistently advocated as a girl's "duty." In both fiction and non-fiction articles, the Girl's Own Paper stresses the concept of family obligation, particularly in their responsibility to father and brother; the ideal girl is to "stimulate [their] energy" by her "tenderness, and unselfish love which gives [them] firmness and strength" (5: 340). There are numerous examples of such "unselfish love" in the fiction written for the Girl's Own Paper; for instance, many stories are about girls who sacrifice their own future hopes, be they educational or

matrimonial aspirations, in order to somehow serve their brothers or fathers. Moreover, in the "Answers to Correspondents" column, one reader is told that:

Your happiness at home much depends on your own good temper, thoughtfulness, unselfishness, and tact. Reflect a little and ascertain whether the blame rest in any degree on your own disposition or conduct. Perhaps you are a dreary companion, or fretful and touchy, ready to see the black side of everything. Nothing could excuse your brother's grossly unbrotherly remark; yet at the same time, you may have made yourself a nuisance from exhibitions of jealousy in reference to your mother's preference for him. He is evidently spoilt but you should not show that you see it...accept the natural home God has provided for you, and...bear your present cross with patience and wisdom. (3: 287)

During a period when women and children were so disempowered and there was growing anxiety among early feminists about the widespread practice of domestic violence (Levine 143), this kind of instruction must be seen as potentially and significantly destructive. As Mill explained it, "[t]he home is the centre of a system which defines [woman] as "domestic slave" (Millet 131). Nonetheless, grandiose notions of feminine spirituality, perpetuated by widespread religious instruction, acted as an essential component supporting the hegemony of the Victorian gender dialectic. "Religion played a central role in placing the ideal of family, and the hierarchical order of authority within it at the centre of society" (Rowbotham 54).

The prescribed submission of the "angel in the house" was also reproduced in the graphic representations of the

nineteenth century which always portray her as passive and demure. This is certainly the case with the illustrations in the Girl's Own Paper. Yet at the same time, the magazine reflects the growing acceptance of girls' participation in sports, and various articles advise moderate walking, skating, and rowing, for example. Of course, the paper prohibits anything as extreme as riding a bicycle. (Although the magazine offers no explanation for this, it is likely considered not only too strenuous an activity, but also an immodest one, considering the new fashions required for it, not to mention the vigorous leg movement!)

Despite the magazine's encouragement that girls engage in some physical recreation, the iconography never reflects the feminine ideal in motion. In fact, even stories or articles that describe girls engaged in physical activity are accompanied by illustrations that depict them as passive and languid. For example, one issue featured the North London Collegiate School for Girls, along with an accompanying illustration of one of Miss Buss's "gymnasium teas" (3: 32). The contrast between the depiction of the girls posed delicately, with drooping eyes and fluid body lines, and the strenuous gymnasium activities in which they are supposed to be engaging, illustrates the fundamental contradiction between explicit advice given to readers and the subliminal influence of the illustrations. Again, this passivity reproduces the notion that the ideal girl must be

modest in behaviour, particularly in physical behaviour, which could be interpreted as a display of sexuality. Another example can be found in one of the fashion articles. The regular features on sewing and dress-making were often accompanied by fashion plates, and in the feature that offers instruction in making skating dresses, the plates are imposed on an outdoor scene, with skaters in the background. The overall effect is rather ridiculous, as the fashion plates are wearing the skating dress and imposed on a picture of a rink, but their pose is physiologically incongruous with the implied action. The fashion plate is obviously a codified gesture, belonging to the domestic sphere.

While the magazine creates a distinct physical ideal, correspondents are constantly reproved for their personal vanity. Again, this is contradicted by the advice in the paper on fashion and "health" that establish a physical ideal. One such article is entitled "How Can I Look My Best," (1: 180) although it is subtitled "by a medical man," implying that this subject is a matter of physical well-being, all vanity aside. This is hardly the case, however, since the Girl's Own Paper included regular features on "fashion", attesting to the fact that girls were inculcated with the notion that they should dress a certain way, follow specific forms of hair dressing, etc. Indeed the heavy

emphasis on sewing reveals nothing less than a fascination with clothing.

Other cracks in the ideological surface are apparent in the paper's attempts to form a solidarity among the readers by creating an ideal and universal "girl." Actually, the Girl's Own Paper was a nationalistic paper, reeking with the complacent tone of English superiority, and this is perhaps most evident in the semi-regular features on "Girls from foreign lands." One such article begins by claiming that it is "universally acknowledged that the Chinese are a peculiar race;" (2: 48) another describes Japanese school children as unruly and insubordinate, and is even accompanied by an illustration of the naughty little students as an assurance of Western authority (1: 14). On the other hand, the improving relations between England and France are evident in the amiable tone of the article "French Girls." Upon describing life in a convent, this Protestant publication cautiously says that "[w]e will not...enter here upon differences of faith, but confine ourselves to mere education" (6: 106).

English relations with other nations were, of course, filtered through the perspective of evangelical Christianity. The magazine consistently advocates Christian practice as an effective agent of change, able to transcend mere economic and political obstacles. For according to the Girl's Own Paper,

Time] revolutionises manners and customs as politics do governments. Steam is as revolutionary as time, and by annihilating space tends to bring people of different nationalities together, and to prove how much they all have in common. Christianity is the greatest revolutionist of all, and would unite peoples of various races and tongues in the bonds of a common brotherhood. It is as Christians, then, that we should approach foreigners, and whether they be young or old, male or female, strive to reconcile differences, and promote union in the spirit of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Anne Beale 6: 105)

By appealing to the readers' "highest ideals," the magazine works to assimilate a widespread and diverse audience. Just as the gender dialectic glosses over the notion of "ruler" and "ruled" in inflated language, the nationalistic discourse operates to mask the imperialistic relationship between Britain and various other countries. In other words, the ideal girl is not only educated, submissive, passive and spiritual, but she is also British.

DRESS: IN SEASON AND IN REASON.

15. A. I. NOV 1961 9 1111

"The first of these is the
  

Fur certainly is a luxury item, but it is a luxury that many of our neighbors find it difficult to give up. The fur industry is a multi-billion dollar industry, and it is one that is growing rapidly. The industry is responsible for the production of millions of fur coats, hats, and accessories each year. The industry is also responsible for the production of millions of fur garments, such as fur-trimmed coats and fur-trimmed hats. The industry is also responsible for the production of millions of fur accessories, such as fur gloves and fur scarves. The industry is also responsible for the production of millions of fur garments, such as fur-trimmed coats and fur-trimmed hats. The industry is also responsible for the production of millions of fur accessories, such as fur gloves and fur scarves.

[illegible]

05

1000

 

READING AND "CROSS-READING"

Judging by the sales figures alone, it is obvious that the Girl's Own Paper was a powerful ideological force; the discourses of femininity inscribed in the paper reached subjects of all economic classes, differing education levels, and even various nations. In this regard, it must be recognized that gender meanings are produced at a wide range of sites. Since the Girl's Own Paper reached a vast spectrum of readers - the paper simultaneously offers advice to "working" girls and presents philanthropic projects to occupy middle-class girls - the magazine obviously spoke to people who had very different life experiences. The educational, economic and geographic disparity among the audience, along with unquantifiable variables such as familial relationships, and the influence of governesses, teachers, employers, etc. makes it difficult to assess the impact of the magazine across subject categories. We do not know if readers adopted all of the axioms of the Girl's Own Paper unquestioningly.

In fact, historians agree that Victorian girls were voracious readers who generally read a variety of books and magazines, despite the conscious attempts of many parents and educators to prohibit "suggestive" material from the libraries of their charges. Many adults actually considered it subversive for a girl to read literature intended for another audience, and the attempts to define "appropriate"

reading material for girls became a public issue. This sense of propriety is apparent in the Girls' Own Paper, both covertly in its fiction and iconography, and explicitly in its essays and advice columns. For example, one subscriber to the paper is advised that "your reading should be regulated by your mother or a female guardian," (1: 16) while another is told that "[t]he novels you name are not suitable for girls" (7: 15). Unfortunately, since the letters to the paper are not themselves published, we cannot determine from the answers alone which particular novels were deemed unacceptable. Nonetheless, certain principles about what was considered suitable reading for girls remains clear enough. One column is explicit:

We are also politely informed by this very superior young person that she wishes the tales in the "G.O.P." had a little more "go" in them, as nearly all she read are different from Ouida and many more "dashing" authors. We do not profess to supply our girls with "go" literature nor tales by writers, of whose books a reviewer in the Times lately said "the characters seem to plan and to do whatever he or she ought not to do!" (6:432)

Given the use of this colloquial term, "go literature," there is a strong implication that literary material deemed appropriate for a Victorian female audience is that that advocates passivity. In addition, as Ouida is the author cited, there seems to be a connection between the notion of action and that of sexuality. Indeed, Ouida's works would have been considered far too provocative for any respectable Victorian girl! Yet it was this desire for "go literature,"

- if not sexually daring, at least stimulating action/adventure stories - that caused many girls to turn to their brothers' bookshelves to supplement their own literary diets.

How was this possible given the widespread censorship of girls' reading material? At least part of this paradox can be understood in the naivety among some educators, and their mistaken perceptions of girlhood experience. The disparity between the feminine ideal, content to stay sequestered in the realm of the home, and the actual activity of many girls was denied by some literary critics. They projected their own notions of girlhood on actual subjects who strayed from the Ruskinian ideal. For instance, Salmon's Juvenile Literature as it is (1888) includes the results of a reading survey that he conducted in schools. This survey shows that girls listed as some of their favourite authors Dickens, Scott, Kingsley, Shakespeare, Eliot and Lord Lytton.

Salmon concludes that these authors were chosen, not because girls genuinely liked or had read their works, but because they were associated with or known from school and were therefore thought to be the right names to put forward. He also suggests that these names were well known and easily remembered while the names of those who wrote fiction regarded as more appropriate for girls were less easily recalled.

(Reynolds 102-103)

On the other hand, Salmon accepted and printed the boys' answers unreservedly.

There is, in fact, tangible evidence that girls were reading literature intended for other audiences. There is ample evidence that the Boy's Own Paper had a large female following, even after the advent of the Girl's Own Paper, for example. Salmon claimed that girls read the Boy's Own because their own paper "lacked stirring stories with lively plots" (Musgrave 41). Curiously, there is also evidence, particularly in the correspondence columns, that some boys read the Girl's Own Paper.

This practice of reading material across sanctioned gender categories must be addressed. It can be compared to the practice of "cross-dressing" both in that it is an activity that traverses tacitly accepted boundaries defining gender, and that it is the female encodings that are considered transgressive. As with cross-dressing, it is the male's entry into the female sphere that is considered shameful and subversive; on the other hand, the female's entry into the male arena, although sometimes criticized, is more widely accepted. The same response to "cross-reading" is evident in editorial comments made in the Boy's Own Paper and the Girl's Own Paper, for example. Apparently, the editors of the Girl's Own Paper accepted and even encouraged this phenomenon. It is important to qualify this point by noting that the language and imagery around gender did not change from one magazine to the other. The Boy's Own Paper, in its attempts to preserve the "purity" of its readers,

made little reference to sexual knowledge. "Females were sisters, or occasionally, mothers" (Macdonald, "Reproducing the Middle-class Boy" 524). In other words, although female characters were fairly scarce in the Boy's Own Paper, any depiction of them would pertain to the modest, gentle, asexual, self-sacrificing ideal. Again, this worked in ways to subvert the changing roles of girls and women. "Significantly, both boys' fiction and the domestic adventure studiously ignore changes and challenges to established notions of femininity and the role of women. In boys' books, women are notable by their absence" (Reynolds 94). (Mention of males was much more frequent in the girls' paper, though, particularly in the fiction, which was generally made up of conventional "marriage plots," obviously requiring the presence of male characters.)

While editors of both the Girl's Own Paper and Boy's Own Paper made little attempt to prevent cross-reading, it is clear that it was regarded as more transgressive for boys to read girls' literature. For example, while these magazines set out the specific field of inquiry suitable to each sex, testimony to the social construction of gender, editorial comments reveal more toleration of girls exploring boys' subjects than the reverse. One poor child asked the editors of the Boys' Own Paper a question about cooking only to receive this reply: "Any cookery-book will tell you how to make puff-pastry. The question is one for the girls, not

the boys. There is a solidity about the generality of boys' pastry efforts which is somewhat uninviting. They never do puff satisfactorily!" (5: 416). However, when girls wrote into the Boys' Own Paper, they could anticipate a response if the subject matter was considered "suitable" by the editors of the magazine. For instance, the following preamble was printed before some advice about caring for a pet dog: "STELLA.-We are just as pleased, Stella, to give you advice as if you were a boy, and glad you like to read our paper" (5: 432). Other such examples are abundant in the Girl's Own Paper, such as "[t]he subject of taxidermy is hardly one for us; it belongs more especially to boys, and we believe you will find it treated in last year's Boy's Own Paper," (7: 224) or simply, "[s]end your question to the Boy's Own Paper, as we do not pretend to know anything on the subject" (3: 656).

One of the most significant differences between the two magazines is that boys were restricted from asking personal questions, a violation of the late Victorian code of manliness. This may have been the reason that the Boy's Own Paper had a much shorter correspondence column than its sister magazine; readers were clearly instructed not to bother submitting any personal inquiries. For instance, one indignant editorial response in the correspondence column of the Boy's Own Paper asks:

What interest can there be to our readers in our opinion of your handwriting? If you did not think

it exquisite you would not send it to us to admire. The information in these columns is not for the sole benefit of the questioner, but for that of our readers in general (5: 35).

Obviously, this is one example of the boys' magazine operating to establish a general norm, in which both personal vanity and "feminine" interests were regarded as weak, or "girlish."

The editors of the Girl's Own Paper, on the other hand, were quite accommodating about judging handwriting, an important feminine skill. Many of the answers to correspondents in the Girl's Own Paper were quite personal, and indeed some were too cryptic to be shared by the audience at large. Such intimate interaction between writer and reader reveals a personal relationship that had no part in the male world, the public world.

Of course, it was acceptable for men to take an interest in the Girl's Own Paper if they were reading it in the role of literary and moral arbitrator. Indeed, Ruskin read the magazine and expressed his admiration of it. Also, there is some evidence that husbands read their wives' copies of the magazine, as illustrated by this reply in the correspondence column: "APPRECIATIVE FRIEND.-All under twenty-three years of age are invited to join in our competitions. Your being married does not render you ineligible. We are glad to hear that you and your husband read our paper with interest" (7: 384). While the strict demarcation between "male" and "female" territory governed

the information imparted in both the Boy's Own Paper and the Girl's Own Paper, men were continually encouraged to take on a supervisory role, in this case, to act as censors. Though they were not perceived as occupying feminine territory, they were encouraged to oversee and guard it.

CONCLUSION

As I have maintained throughout this thesis, the conception of "girlhood" belongs to history. It is, therefore, subject to change according to social, economic and political pressures. At the same time, gender ideology operates in a way that, in Barthes' sense, mythologizes or "naturalizes" history. Thus the feminine ideal advocated by the Girl's Own Paper must be seen as a culturally produced image, although it is presented in such a way that it appears both "universal" and "unalterable."

A close investigation of the Girl's Own Paper has revealed some of the historically-specific conditions that precipitated the feminine ideal(s) of late Victorian England. Certainly, there is evidence of both a national and a middle-class bias, which in turn, can be traced through the rise of industry and capitalism in nineteenth-century England. These conditions also reinforced the pervasive tradition of "separate spheres," which produced a submissive, domestic ideal of woman. In addition, the tenacity of this domesticated feminine ideal is illustrated by the very resistance to the changing roles of women at the turn of the century.

It is significant to remember that the feminine ideal produced by the Girl's Own Paper was shaped largely by editorial decisions made by a religious publishing house; these representations of femininity must be recognized as

part of an evangelical Christian literary tradition. As we have seen the ideal girl represented by the Girl's Own Paper was generally passive, self-sacrificing, spiritual and capable - but also sheltered - in the domestic sphere. These qualities are both projected and affirmed in the wide range of discursive sites that the periodical traverses: stories, essays, correspondence columns, and domestic instruction, as well as in graphic representations. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the ideal girl of this magazine is defined in relation to and against the ideal boy, whose corresponding images of masculinity are to be found in the Boy's Own Paper. Although the Girl's Own Paper tends to gloss over class and national distinctions among its audience, it is primarily a magazine that establishes differences between the sexes, generally in the form of an implied binary opposition.

The issues surrounding the acquisition of sexual identities through sex-typed literatures is an important one, and constitute an area that requires further study. Although this thesis is centered on one particular periodical, published in England during the final decades of the nineteenth century, the practice of producing separate-sex literature continues, inflected in new ways, and at a range of cultural sites in our own contemporary society. But the very binary implicit in the titles of the Boy's Own Paper and Girl's Own Paper lays bare the ideological

structures which inform our own gendered culture, and points to old as well as new ways of reading it.

Notes

1. The Girl's Own Paper was published for over five decades - from 1880 to 1956 under the name of Heiress (Cadogan and Craig 73) - and correspondingly changed in tone and format. This paper will contain examples from issues between 1880, the year of the inception of the magazine, and 1900 only; it is my intention to be historically specific.

2. As this is a literary project, it is important to consider how ideologies bear upon the literary text: "the text does not "express" ideology; rather, it produces, reproduces and transforms elements of ideology into its own literary effects. The "history" of the text is not a reflection or a doubling of real history, but it represents an ideologically constituted experience of real history" (Boumelha 6).

3. "Texts can create not only knowledge but also the very reality they appear to describe. In time, such knowledge and reality produce a tradition, or what Michel Foucault calls a discourse, whose material presence or weight, not the originality of a given author, is really responsible for the texts produced out of it" (Said 94).

4. "The art and literature of a society are aspects of its culture: and culture is understood as the crucial meaning and values which distinguish the "way of life" of one particular society from that of another" (Culture, Language and Media 229).

5. The Girl's Own Paper was originally fourteen pages in length compared to the sixteen page Boy's Own Paper, but this difference was short lived, undoubtedly due to the enormous popularity of the girls' magazine.

6. The Boy's Own Paper ran from 1879 until 1967, and was a success for most of its life. For the purpose of this thesis, however, examples are drawn only from issues published between 1879 and 1900.

7. The female body became - quite literally - contested territory in the organization of gender in the nineteenth century. For further discussion of the medical treatment of women, see Mary Poovey's Uneven Developments.

8. "One might argue that industrialism and capitalism had sufficient incentive to bring about such a revolution - to moralize, socialize, educate, and acculturate the working classes so as to maximize their productivity and stability. But it was in fact the evangelicals who did this, who delivered sermons, built the schools, set the example - and

evangelicals who were not necessarily themselves industrialists or capitalist, and for whom the industrialist and capitalist ethic would not by itself have been sufficient inspiration" (Himmelfarb 284-5).

Evangelized utilitarianism translated happiness into virtue, so that the best educated, most useful person is the happiest person.

Appendix A: "Education"

- 1848 Queen's College founded
- 1849 Bedford College founded
- 1850 North London Collegiate School founded
- 1852 Portman Hall School founded
- 1854 Cheltenham Ladies' College founded
- 1861 Clarendon Commission on Public Schools founded
- 1864 Schools Inquiry Commission set up (the Taunton Commission)
- Working Women's College founded
- 1865 Cambridge Local Examinations opened to women
- 1866 Durham Local Examinations opened to women
- 1867 North of England Council for Promoting the Higher Education of Women founded
- 1868 Report of Schools Inquiry Commission published
- 1869 Hitchin (later Girton) College opened
- Endowment Schools Act
- First women medical students at Edinburgh University
- Lectures for women established at University of Cambridge
- 1870 Elementary Education Act
- Merton Hall opened
- 1871 Camden School founded
- College for working women founded
- National Union for Improving the Education of Women of All Classes (Women's Education Union) founded

1872 Girton College, Cambridge incorporated

1873 Girls Public Day School Company founded

Journal of Women's Education Union founded

Bishop Otter Memorial Training College for
Schoolmistresses founded

1874 London School of Medicine for Women founded

1875 Newnham Hall, Cambridge established

1876 Manchester New College opened to women

1877 Trinity College, London opened musical examinations to
women

Royal Free Hospital admits women to clinical
instruction

1878 New Charter of the University of London admits women

Association for the Higher Education of Women in Oxford
founded

1881 University of Cambridge admits women to Honours
examinations, though granting them certificates of
proficiency and not degrees

1885 Hughes Hall, Cambridge (teacher training) founded

1893 Oxford University abolishes chaperonage for women
attending lectures

Source: Levine Victorian Feminism 54-6.

Appendix B: "Employment and Professions"

- 1841 Governesses' Benevolent Institution established
- 1859 Society for Promoting the Employment of Women
established
- 1860 Nightingale Fund School of Nursing founded, St.
Thomas's Hospital, London
- 1862 Female Middle Class Emigration Society established
- Female Medical College (for midwives) established
- 1864 Alexandra Magazine begins publication
- 1865 Ladies' Medical College (for midwives) established
- 1866 Englishwoman's Review begins publication
- 1874 Women and Work begins publication
- Headmistresses' Association founded by Frances BUss
- 1875 Women clerks introduced, National Savings Bank
- Women's Gazette begins publication
- 1876 Women's clerical branch of Post Office introduced
- 1880 Work and Leisure replaces Women's Gazette
- 1881 New Civil Service grade of woman clerk introduced

Source: Levine Victorian Feminism 103-4.

Appendix C: "Marriage and Morality"

- 1861 Abolition of death penalty for sodomy
- 1864 Contagious Diseases Act passed
- 1866 Contagious Diseases Act passed
- 1869 Ladies' National Association for the Repeal of the
Contagious Diseases Acts formed
- 1872 Bastardy Law Amendment Act passed
- 1873 Social Purity Alliance founded (by men)
- 1875 Age of consent was raised from 12 to 13
- 1878 Matrimonial Causes Act passed
- 1879 Association for the Improvement of Public Morals
founded
- 1881 Moral Reform Union founded
- 1884 Matrimonial Causes Act passed
- 1886 Maintenance of Wives Act passed
Contagious Diseases Acts repealed
- 1889 Incest Bill

Source: Levine, Victorian Feminism

Appendix D: "Women's suffrage societies 1850-1900"

- 1865 "Kensington" Committee London, to gather signatures for
petition
- 1866 Women's Suffrage Provisional Committee, London
- 1867 A Society for Women's Suffrage set up in Manchester,
London, and Edinburgh
- 1868 Society for Women's Suffrage in Bristol and Birmingham
- 1872 Central Committee, National Society for Women's
Suffrage
- 1877 Central Committee, National Society for Women's
Suffrage
- 1888 National Central Society for Women's Suffrage
Central Committee National Society for Women's Suffrage
- 1892 National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies
- 1889 Women's Franchise League
- 1892 Women's Emancipation Union

Source: Levine Victorian Feminism

Works Cited

- "Answers to Correspondents." Boy's Own Paper 1 (1879-80): 112.
- "Answers to Correspondents." Boy's Own Paper 1 (1879-80): 240.
- "Answers to Correspondents." Boy's Own Paper 1 (1879-80): 256.
- "Answers to Correspondents." Boy's Own Paper 4 (1882-3): 304.
- "Answers to Correspondents." Boy's Own Paper 5 (1883-4): 35.
- "Answers to Correspondents." Boy's Own Paper 5 (1883-4): 416.
- "Answers to Correspondents." Girl's Own Paper 1 (1880): 16.
- "Answers to Correspondents." Girl's Own Paper 1 (1880): 94-95.
- "Answers to Correspondents." Girl's Own Paper 1 (1880): 208.
- "Answers to Correspondents." Girl's Own Paper 1 (1880): 320.
- "Answers to Correspondents." Girl's Own Paper 1 (1880): 516.
- "Answers to Correspondents." Girl's Own Paper 3 (1881-2): 287.
- "Answers to Correspondents." Girl's Own Paper 3 (1881-2): 656.
- "Answers to Correspondents." Girl's Own Paper 5 (1883-4): 432.
- "Answers to Correspondents." Girl's Own Paper 6 (1884-5): 15.
- "Answers to Correspondents." Girl's Own Paper 6 (1884-5): 112.
- "Answers to Correspondents." Girl's Own Paper 6 (1884-5): 287.
- "Answers to Correspondents." Girl's Own Paper 6 (1884-5): 432.

- "Answers to Correspondents." Girl's Own Paper 7 (1885-6): 15.
- "Answers to Correspondents." Girl's Own Paper 7 (1885-6): 64.
- "Answers to Correspondents." Girl's Own Paper 7 (1885-6): 224.
- "Answers to Correspondents." Girl's Own Paper 7 (1885-6): 384.
- Barthes, Roland. Mythologies. London: Paladin Grafton Books, 1989.
- Beale, Ann. "French Girls." Girl's Own Paper 6 (1884-5): 105-6.
- Belsey, Catherine. Critical Practice. New York: Routledge, 1989.
- Boumelha, Penny. Thomas Hardy and Women. Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1980.
- Bratton, J.S. The Impact of Victorian Children's Fiction. New Jersey: Barnes and Noble, 1981.
- Brantlinger, Patrick. Rule of Darkness. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988.
- Brownstein, Rachel M. Becoming a Heroine. New York: Viking Press, 1982.
- Cadogan, Mary and Patricia Craig. You're a Brick Angela. London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1976.
- "The Chinese." Girl's Own Paper. 2 (1881): 48.
- Coveney, Peter. Poor Monkey. Suffolk: Richard Clay and Company, 1957.
- DeBeauvoir, Simone. The Second Sex. Toronto: Bantam Books, 1970.
- Dijkstra, Bram. Idols of Perversity. New York: Oxford UP, 1986.
- Dunae, Patrick. "B.O.P. Origins and Editorial Policies," in Private Library 9 (1976), 123-58.
- Dunae, Patrick. "Boys' literature and the ideal of Empire,

"Etiquette for all Classes." Girl's Own Paper 3 (1881-2): 90-91.

Gorham, Deborah. "The Ideology of Femininity and Reading for Girls," in Lessons for Life. ed. Felicity Hunt. New York: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1987.

Gorham, Deborah. The Victorian Girl and the Feminine Ideal. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982.

Grundy, Rev. C.H. "The Ideal Daughter." Girl's Own Paper 3 (1881-2): 75.

Himmelfarb, Gertrude. Victorian Minds. New York: Alfred A. Knopf Inc., 1968.

"How I Keep House on \$250 a Year." Girl's Own Paper 6 (1884-5): 9

"How Can I Look My Best." Girl's Own Paper 1 (1880): 180.

King, Alice. "School life." Girl's Own Paper 3 (1881-2): 123.

King, Alice. "Womanhood." Girl's Own Paper 3 (1881-2): 606-607.

Leach, E.B. "Woman: What is her appointed position and work?" Girl's Own Paper 5 (1883-4): 339-40.

Levine, Phillipa. Victorian Feminism 1850-1900. England: Century Hutchinson Ltd., 1987.

"Literature/society: mapping the field." Culture, Media, Language. ed. Stuart Hall, Dorothy Hobson, Andrew Lowe and Paul Willis. London: Hutchinson and Co., 1980.

"Margaret." Girl's Own Paper 1 (1880): 94-95.

McRobbie, Angela. "Jackie: An Ideology of Adolescent Femininity," in Popular Culture: Past and Present. Ed. Bernard Waites, Tony Bennett and Graham Martin. London: Croom Helm, 1983.

Macdonald, Robert H. "The Language of Empire: myths and metaphors of popular imperialism, 1880-1918." Manuscript of a book to be published by Manchester University Press.

---. "Reproducing the Middle-class Boy: From Purity to Patriotism in the Boys' Magazines, 1892-1914." Journal

of Contemporary History. 24 (1989) 519-539. London:
SAGE

Millett, Kate. Sexual Politics. New York: Avon Books, 1969.

Millett, Kate. "The Debate Over Women: Ruskin versus Mill"
in Suffer and Be Still. Ed. Martha Vicinus.
Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973.

Musgrave, Peter William. From Brown to Bunter. London:
Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985.

"On the Use of Time." Girl's Own Paper 1 (1880): 247.

"Our Colleges." Girl's Own Paper 1 (1880): 502.

Patmore, Coventry. The Angel in the House. London: C. Bell,
1896. Seventh edition.

"A Peep in Japan." Girl's Own Paper 1 (1880): 18.

Poovey, Mary. Uneven Developments. Chicago: University of
Chicago Press, 1988.

"The Princess Victoria." Girl's Own Paper 1 (1880): 5.

Quigley, Isabel. The Heirs of Tom Brown. London: Chatto &
Windus, 1982.

Reynolds, Kimberly. Girls' Only? Hertfordshire: Harvester
Wheatsheaf, 1990.

Roper, Michael and John Tosh. "Introduction" to Manful
Assertions. London: Routledge, 1991.

Rowbotham, Judith. Good Girls Make Good Wives. New York:
Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1989.

Rubin, Gayle. "The Traffic in Women," in Toward an
Anthropology of Women. Ed. Rayna R. Reiter. New York:
Monthly Review Press, 1975. (157-210).

Ruskin, John. Sesame and Lilies. London: George Allen, 1891.

Said, Edward. Orientalism. Toronto: Random House of Canada,
1978.

"Varieties." Girl's Own Paper 1 (1880): 59.

"Varieties." Girl's Own Paper 1 (1880): 510.

"Varieties." Girl's Own Paper 6 (1884-5): 160.

Vicinus, Martha. "The Debate Over Women," in Suffer and Be Still. Ed. Martha Vicinus. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973.

Weedon, Chris. Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory. New York: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1987.

Welsh, Alexander. City of Dickens. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971.

"What to do on Holiday Afternoons." Girl's Own Paper 1 (1880): 214-215.

2 OF 2

PM-1 3 1/2" x 4" PHOTOGRAPHIC MICROCOPY TARGET
NBS 1010a ANSI/ISO #2 EQUIVALENT

END

15-1 2-93

FIN