

**'FOR ALL SORTS AND CONDITIONS OF WOMEN':
AN ANALYSIS OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF MEANING
AND IDENTITY IN *WOMAN* MAGAZINE, 1890-1910.**

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ABSTRACT

This study draws together a range of critical models in order to explore the ways in which the periodical functions as a particular cultural practice, both shaping and being shaped by the society in which it was produced. Focusing upon single women's magazine, *Woman*, across its entire publication span from 1890 to 1910, the study seeks to contribute a deeper understanding of the periodical text by situating it within its specific social and historical context. Through this comprehensive diachronic approach the study accounts for the changes occurring within a long-lived periodical which does not have one identity but several. The study also explores the complex web of relations between the text, its producers and its consumers, and the function of each in the creation and negotiation of meanings. The fragmentation of the periodical text into separate areas of writing, as well as its multiple points of production (from proprietors, publishers and editors to the many professional and amateur contributors), renders the magazine's construction of a stable textual identity problematic. A central question in the study, therefore, has been how to develop a critical model with which to address the plurality of a text in which genres and voices collide within an overarching editorial framework.

The study also aims to redress the balance of existing critiques of the women's periodical press which have tended to marginalise the role of the reader both in the production of the text itself and in its interpretations. While the study explores the ways in which the genres of feature articles and editorials, competitions, correspondence and fiction in *Woman* functioned within the editorial framework as well as in response to circulating discourses, the central focus of the study is the interaction between consumers and producers in the construction of the text, and the ways readers absorbed, appropriated or resisted dominant modes of editorial discourse.

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CHAPTER ONE

Reading *Woman* Magazine: Context, Criticism and Methodology.

This study draws together a range of critical models in an exploration of the ways in which the periodical functions as a particular cultural practice, both shaping and being shaped by the society in which it was produced. Focusing on a single women's magazine, *Woman*, across its entire publication span from 1890 to 1910, the study seeks to contribute to an understanding of the periodical text, situating it within its specific social and cultural context.¹ This study also explores the complex web of relations between the text, its producers and its consumers, and the function of each in the creation and negotiation of meanings. The fragmentation of the periodical text into separate areas of writing, as well as its multiple points of production (from proprietors, publishers and editors to the many professional and amateur contributors), renders the magazine's construction of a stable textual identity problematic. One of the central questions of my research, therefore, has been how to develop a critical model with which to address the plurality of a text in which genres and voices collide within an overarching editorial framework.

The study also seeks to redress the balance of existing critiques of women's magazines which have tended to marginalize the role of the reader both in the production of the text itself and in its interpretations. Previous analyses of the women's press have focused on its ideological function in presenting models of femininity to the 'reader' as implied in the editorially-produced text. They have not, however, addressed the extent to which the actual reader absorbed or resisted such discourses. Thus, while such studies are concerned with the normative properties of the women's press, they have paid little attention to whether or in what ways readers responded to these norms. My reading of *Woman* takes issue with those critiques of women's magazines which portray the reader as passive and simply receptive. While the study explores the ways in which the genres of feature articles and editorials, competitions, correspondence and fiction in *Woman* magazine functioned within the editorial framework as well as in response to circulating discourses, the central focus of the study is the interaction between consumers and producers in the construction of the text. Accordingly, while I discuss *Woman's* dominant modes of editorial discourse this is intended to provide a necessary foundation for an analysis of the ways readers absorbed, appropriated, or resisted such discourses.

The object of the study, *Woman*, was a popular penny weekly magazine. According to its introductory editorial *Woman* claimed as its readership 'womanly

women of average intelligence and of all classes',² although, as will become apparent, the target audience was largely located within the middle-classes.

While I base much of my arguments regarding the nature of *Woman's* readership on my reading of the text, the publication of the names and addresses of readers participating in the magazine's competitions offers valuable supporting evidence. Although the information gleaned from these lists is necessarily partial (a point considered in the discussion of the magazine's coupon system for reader-participation provided in Chapter Four), it nevertheless provides some indication of the social class and geographical location of one section of the magazine's readership. A list was compiled of the names and addresses published in the magazine from January to June for 1894 and 1904. This list was checked against Postal Directories for the periods that provided information on authenticity as well as giving some indication of occupation and social class. The addresses also provided a picture of the geographic profile of the readership (See Appendix 1:2).

From this analysis it is possible to state the following: readers' contributions appear to be largely genuine and, particularly in 1894, the product of a loyal readership (See Table 1:3). In 1894 *Woman's* circulation centred on the more affluent areas of London as well as the Home Counties and the South West, while in 1904 the readership was much more geographically dispersed (see Table 1:4). By 1904, however, the location and class of the readership has shifted. While it is much more geographically dispersed it also appears to belong to a lower social class. London addresses are no longer located in the wealthy areas but have moved South of the Thames and to less prosperous neighbourhoods. Similarly, the occupations cited in the Postal Directories that in 1894 included the professions, the military and those of independent means have, by 1904, shifted towards lower class employment. Such readers were more likely to work in shops, schools, and offices while the rise in 'care of' addresses also suggests those readers were in some form of domestic service.

Published from 1890 to 1910, *Woman* adopted a cautiously progressive editorial policy in its formative years, exemplified by its motto, 'Forward! But not too fast.' *Woman's* claim to being progressive did not extend to an unequivocal espousal of women's rights: while it tended to dismiss politics as outside the remit of the 'true' woman, education and employment were regarded as crucial to female progress. An editorial in 1891 argued that:

... when women have shown themselves to be equal with men in the more remunerative trades and professions, it will be time enough for them to agitate for equality in other respects.³

In fact, *Woman* continued to locate the source of female equality within the sphere of employment throughout the 1890s, with feature series such as 'Where Girls Grow Wise'⁴, 'The World of Breadwinners'⁵, and 'How Women May Make Money'.⁶ The focus upon paid labour owed a great deal to the campaigns of earlier feminists, particularly the Langham Place Group whose publication, *The Englishwoman's Review* (1866-1910) promoted equality of opportunity in the labour market. It was not until the emergence of the more militant feminist groups in the 1900s that *Woman* began to take female politics at all seriously, although even then the issue did not occupy a significant proportion of the text.

A single issue of *Woman* consisted of, on average, twenty-eight pages of feature articles, fiction, readers' correspondence, readers' competitions, and reviews of literature and the arts. A regular column offering editorial comment on topical matters gave way, after three years, to a gossip column, 'D'You Know?', detailing mainly society news, and a regular series, 'Notes on Notables' provided illustrated interviews focusing mainly upon individuals from Society, literature and the arts. While *Woman* initially attempted to depart from the fashion-plate journalism of the conventional ladies' papers, this attempt was largely abandoned after the first year of publication. Regular columns such as 'Snuggery Smalltalk',⁷ for example, consisted of diverse paragraphs detailing the latest fashions in clothing and furnishings as well as the odd recipe, while other columns, such as 'Jeanne Jardine's Chats with Young Housewives'⁸ and 'Mrs Hope's Household Management',⁹ offered discussions of various domestic topics.

In addition to the feature articles, gossip, fiction and domestic columns, *Woman* also ran regular prize competitions. From the outset the magazine also provided space for readers' correspondence, generally in order to obtain advice on selected areas such as health, dress, and domestic subjects. The opportunities *Woman* provided for reader-participation through corresponding, taking part in competitions, and contributing text, were also crucial in creating spaces in which the dominant discourses of femininity could be discussed and, occasionally, contested. The magazine's repeated invitations for readers to contribute text, as well as its established correspondence columns and essay competitions, implicitly encouraged a sense that writing was an acceptable and viable occupation for women. And while the magazine tried to shape the form and content of readers' contributions, nevertheless

along with the more conventional reader contributions, it did publish material that challenged the dominant editorial discourse. Indeed, it is in the publication of readers' letters and prize essays that one finds the clearest evidence of the various interpretative strategies adopted by the readership.

In order to construct a recognizable textual identity for itself *Woman* distanced itself from existing journalistic forms. In its introductory editorial, for example, *Woman* asserted its intention to provide:

... something more than the 'lady's' or 'society' paper or cookery book, and something less than the ponderous daily 'leader' and parliamentary reports, or the academic weekly or monthly review.¹⁰

To a great extent *Woman's* claim to being progressive was located both in its incorporation of what it called the 'best elements of the New Journalism ...'¹¹ and also in its attempt to construct a textual identity distinct from the established women's press. While *Woman* was part of a long tradition of periodical publication for women, it is not the intention of this study to offer a detailed history of the women's periodical press.¹² However, it will be useful to consider briefly the context of periodical publication within which *Woman* made its first appearance.

Developments within the periodical press, from improved production processes to shifts within journalistic practice which led to a surge in publishing, had a significant effect upon the women's press. Technical innovations throughout the nineteenth century had lowered the cost and improved the efficiency of production.¹³ Similarly, the repeal of stamp duty in 1855, and of paper tax in 1861 and, perhaps most significantly for the women's press, the gradual reduction and eventual abolition of advertising tax in 1853, made publishing a much more attractive commercial prospect, resulting in an immediate expansion in the press.¹⁴

The 1870 Education Act, which provided universal elementary education, also contributed to the growth of the press, with editors and publishers vying with each other to appeal to what they saw as a new section of the reading public.¹⁵ For example, George Newnes' *Tit-Bits* (1881), Alfred Harmsworth's *Answers to Correspondents* (1888), and C. Arthur Pearson's *Pearson's Weekly* (1890) were directed at this new generation of readers for whom such papers filled the boredom of the daily journey to work. The lively 'tit-bitty' format of such magazines which offered short articles, jokes, puzzles and competitions, and gossip and inquiry columns, was instrumental in attracting a mass readership, although some critics feared that the

more sedate approach of established journalistic practice would be cheapened and degraded by this 'New Journalism.' The term 'New Journalism' is attributed to Matthew Arnold, who used it in an article in the *Nineteenth Century* in which he alluded to W. T. Stead's *Pall Mall Gazette*:

We have had the opportunity of observing a New Journalism which a clever and energetic man has lately invented. It has much to recommend it; it is full of ability, novelty, variety, sensation, sympathy, generous instincts; its one great fault is that it is feather-brained.¹⁶

One of Arnold's concerns about the New Journalism was that in pandering to the tastes of the masses, it abandoned disinterested analysis in favour of unreliable sensationalism.¹⁷

In contrast to Arnold's fears over what he saw as the trivialization of the press, T. P. O'Connor praised 'the more personal tone of the more modern methods'¹⁸ which he compared with the impersonality of the established journalistic practice in which 'any allusion to the personal appearance, the habits, the clothes, or the home and social life of any person would have been resented as an impertinence and almost as an indecency.'¹⁹ W. T. Stead's use of the interview exemplified this shift in practice. Rather than interviewing powerful and influential figures and using the traditional reported speech, Stead focused upon the 'man in the street' and used language much closer to everyday speech to create a personal and more subjective tone than the impersonal and authoritative approach of established patterns of journalism.²⁰

The expansion in the women's press was not only founded upon the New Journalism but also fuelled by a perception that women's status was shifting. Just as the New Journalism represented the redefinition of an established journalistic mode so too did the figure of the 'New Woman'. While demands for greater educational and employment opportunities had been gaining momentum from the mid-nineteenth century with, for example, the Campaign against the Contagious Diseases Acts and the activities of campaigners such as Lydia Becker in *The Englishwoman's Review*, the 1880s and 1890s brought a new intensity of discussion. To a great extent the press itself played a significant part in the public perception of women's position. As one contemporary noted in 1894,

The career, the claims, the character of her whom *Punch*, with a lapse from his habitual gallantry, styles 'the irrepressible she,' meets us at every turn in modern life, and perhaps the multiplication and development of newspapers

devoted to her special interests, is not the least significant token of her vitality.²¹

Such papers were not, however, concerned with the advancement of women's rights in the way Lydia Becker had been in *The Englishwoman's Review*. As Margaret Beetham points out, the new magazines, of which *Woman* was one, 'were in large part concerned with asserting "True Woman" against the various deviant femininities subsumed under the labels "new" or "modern"'.²²

While the latter half of the century witnessed several attempts to develop a commercial feminist press, such ventures were relatively short-lived. The Langham Place Group who produced *The Englishwoman's Journal* (1858-1864), *The Englishwoman's Review* (1866-1910) and *Victoria Magazine* (1863-80) was one of the most successful feminist publishers. These periodicals were produced entirely by and for women, a practice which Solveig Robinson claims caused them to be marginalized by readers.²³ This is not to suggest that they did not have any impact upon the reading public or, indeed, within the press itself. Despite Jane Rendall's assertion that journals such as those published by the Langham Place Group made little impression outside their own limited circulation,²⁴ it seems likely that *Woman* was not unaware of developments within the feminist press. The declaration in its introductory editorial that

The tastes of what may be termed the 'Anti-Man' or the 'Self-Defence' School of women have been catered for during the past year by a penny paper under the auspices of a lady, for whose energy and perseverance we have profound respect.²⁵

contains a clear reference to the *Women's Penny Paper* edited by Helena B. Temple (Henrietta Muller).

Temple's paper was, according to Doughan and Sanchez, a 'vigorously feminist' paper produced, like the Langham Place publications, entirely for and by women.²⁶ In its introductory editorial the *Women's Penny Paper* observed that

Women's papers hitherto ... seem to run in a mechanical way along the old lines ... thus we find the most advanced and radical notions treated with timidity and hesitation. There appears to be as yet no bold and fearless exponent of the women's cause in the Press.²⁷

The magazine offered features and advice on women's rights, reports on various women's organizations and interviews with notable feminists. Its wholehearted support for women's rights marked it out from other, more traditional women's magazines. As a penny paper itself, *Woman* was evidently anxious to distance itself from the feminist politics of Temple's brand of journalism, an anxiety which manifested itself in *Woman's* general uneasiness about how to define its readers as 'modern' without endorsing the more radical figure of the 'advanced' woman.

Of course, *Woman* was not alone in attempting to negotiate the contradictions between addressing the 'modern' woman while at the same time avoiding any direct engagement with gender politics. As Ballaster *et al* point out, while the figure of the advanced or 'New Woman' was hotly debated throughout the 1880s and 1890s, the majority of magazines launched in this period avoided addressing such women.²⁸ Indeed, the 'New Woman' represented a particular threat to established notions of gender, challenging previously held assumptions about femininity and masculinity. Paradoxically, even the feminist *Women's Penny Paper* had trouble reconciling its radical agenda with the need to appear respectable. Despite the paper's spirited support for women's suffrage it also felt compelled to add that 'the special contention of the advocates of Woman Suffrage is the value of *womanliness*' (their italics).²⁹ In a style redolent of *Punch's* 'New Woman' caricatures, the paper also ridiculed the 'manly woman' with 'her hair cut short' and 'her billy hat'.³⁰

As Lynn Pykett has pointed out, 'The New Woman' (and the moral panic which surrounded her) was yet another example of the way in which, in the latter half of the nineteenth century, femininity became a spectacle.³¹ Certainly, the significance of representing the New Woman in terms of her mannish appearance should not be underestimated in a women's press in which, as one contemporary noted, 'appearance is more constantly dwelt upon and its influence is more widely recognized'.³² Dress, as this comment demonstrates, occupied a central position in the majority of women's magazines and their constructions of femininity. The New Woman's apparent rejection of conventional modes of feminine dress and appearance then signified a disturbing transgression of gender boundaries as well as posing a challenge to women's journalism.

While the majority of the mainstream women's papers dealt with dress to greater or lesser degrees, this was not their sole topic; and while they reviled or ridiculed the figure of the New Woman, women's changing role within society did receive some acknowledgment. One of the most well-established weekly papers on the market at *Woman's* inception was Samuel Beeton's *Queen* (1861-1970). As a sixpenny

illustrated weekly, *Queen* was evidently addressed to the more affluent reader. With its mixture of fashion, royal and court gossip and items on the home that stressed the ornamental rather than the utilitarian, *Queen* assumed its readers to have, or aspire to have, an upper-middle class lifestyle.³³ However, while it stated that 'politics are, by the very nature of the constitution of our journal excluded from its columns',³⁴ the paper did attempt to engage with women's changing status in 'What Women Are Doing', which reported on education, employment and political issues, and also offered reports on the National Society for Women's Suffrage.³⁵

While *Queen* led the field of weekly women's papers throughout the 1860s and 1870s, the transformations in the press gave rise to several rivals from the 1880s onwards. *Queen's* only real rival up to this point had been *The Ladies* (1872-1873), a sixpenny monthly which openly sympathized with the women's movement, arguing that

We are heartily and earnestly at one with those who claim for women many rightful, political, and social privileges from which they are now unfairly excluded.³⁶

Although *The Ladies* was in all other respects a conventional upper-class ladies' paper, Cynthia White suggests that its espousal of women's rights was largely the reason for its demise. Margaret Beetham, on the other hand, cites *The Ladies'* explanation that it was 'still difficult for ladies' papers to be accepted as "real" newspapers.'³⁷ However, with the emergence of the New Journalism it would appear that the women's weekly press gained a new momentum. *The Lady's Pictorial* (1881-1921) was one of the first of the weekly papers to adopt some of the features of the New Journalism, particularly in its use of the illustrated interview or biographical article. Other women's weeklies which soon followed included: the *Lady* (1885-); *Lady's World* (1886-1887, continuing under the editorship of Oscar Wilde as *Women's World* until 1890), and *Gentlewoman* (1890-1926).

Although the New Journalism was, to an extent, directed at the new generation of elementary educated readers, papers such as the above were more concerned with addressing the upper- and upper-middle-class reader. Ballaster *et al* argue that papers such as *Queen* and *Gentlewoman* 'defined women in terms of their leisure rather than their domestic skills.'³⁸ Of course, there were inherent contradictions in this definition; as I have already mentioned, *Queen* also offered reports on various women's organizations, and *Gentlewoman* had polled its readers on the subject of women's suffrage. While these papers certainly foregrounded the home as an

expression of individual status and taste, and dress as an expression of individual beauty, they also, according to Margaret Beetham, stressed the 'commonality of gender which in certain cases could transcend distinctions of class.'³⁹

The magazines which appeared in the years immediately following *Woman's* appearance in 1890 tended to move away from the gentility of these upper-class papers, and were largely directed towards a more middle-class audience. Their domestic orientation was signalled in their titles, such as: *Hearth and Home* (1891-1914); *Woman at Home* (1893-1920); *Home Notes* (1894-1900); *Home Chat* (1895-1958), and *Woman's Life* (1895-1934, continuing as *Woman's Own* to the present day). *Hearth and Home* was part of the Beeton Publishing Company's stable of publications to which *Woman* and *Myra's Journal* (1875-1912) also belonged. *Hearth and Home*, a threepenny monthly, was the particular project of Charlotte Talbot Coke,⁴⁰ one of Beeton's directors, who had made her name in journalism with her columns on home-furnishing in *Queen*, and was intended to address the 'educated' woman for whom the everyday press did not adequately cater.⁴¹

Woman at Home employed many techniques of the New Journalism, being inspired by George Newnes' *Strand Magazine*, one of the foremost exponents of that genre. Profusely illustrated and printed on glossy paper, *Woman at Home* was visually arresting. Edited by the popular novelist Annie S. Swan, its mixture of domestic features and fiction proved very successful, with its first print run of 100,000 copies selling out.⁴² The magazine was aimed at the middle-class reader, as an editorial in 1893 made clear:

I have no hesitation in saying that it is the middle class woman who is the reader of today among her sex. She is less harassed by the claims of fashions ... and therefore has more leisure than her wealthier sisters to devote to the mental culture.⁴³

While *Hearth and Home* and *Woman at Home* were both directed towards the domestic, they nevertheless both dealt with issues of female employment. Beetham suggests it was the readers who, in the main, instigated discussions of work through the magazines' correspondence columns although, as she points out, 'by the 1880s and 1890s demands for women's economic independence were persistent enough to threaten the dominant discourse of even the most thoroughgoing of the domestic magazines.'⁴⁴

As Beetham observes, the threepenny and sixpenny monthlies such as *Hearth and Home* and *Woman at Home* 'renegotiated the meaning of the English Domestic Woman in terms of the New Journalism and the era of the New Woman'.⁴⁵ However, the later penny weeklies, such as *Home Notes*, *Home Chat* and *Woman's Life*, constituted the most significant transformation of the women's domestic magazine. These latter magazines were not unique in terms of their price; indeed cheap and increasingly specialized women's magazines proliferated throughout the 1890s. However, as the products of the publishing houses of, respectively, Arthur Pearson, Alfred Harmsworth and George Newnes, *Home Notes*, *Home Chat* and *Woman's Life* benefitted from a solid financial base and aggressive marketing techniques. Pearson, Harmsworth and Newnes, as key figures in the New Journalism, were expert at identifying and exploiting new mass-markets.

The new penny weeklies were directed at women who, though they may have employed servants, were also at least partly responsible for their own domestic work. Readers were offered dressmaking patterns (rather than merely fashion illustrations), cookery pages, and advice on household management as well as the rather more conventional ingredients of fiction and gossip. Advertising, which had been important in subsidising production costs since the abolition of advertising tax, assumed even greater significance in these magazines. By integrating advertisements into the main body of the text and by the introduction of the 'advertorial' (in which advertisements took on the appearance and language of editorial matter), it has been argued that the model of femininity constructed in the new penny magazines became increasingly commodified.⁴⁶

It is important to consider existing critical work on women's magazines and the construction of femininity. Feminist analyses have consistently regarded the women's press as inextricably linked to models of femininity, from the epistolary journals of the eighteenth-century to the fashion and domestic magazines of the nineteenth century and on to the 'career girl' magazines of today. In many senses the internal structure of women's magazines have not altered in any significant way since the mid-nineteenth century. They still include sections on dress, home, fashion and cookery. They still provide spaces for readers to participate, whether in correspondence columns or through entering competitions. The twentieth-century magazine, like its counterpart in the last century, continues to represent femininity in and through its presentation, format and content.

Magazines are, of course, very much enmeshed in the social and cultural moment of their production. Critical models developed to engage with contemporary concerns

may blind us to the entire field of discursive operations of a text produced within a different social and historical context, leading us to concentrate upon areas which seem most relevant to present day interests. It is, therefore, crucial to recognize the particular context of production and interpretation of the periodical press when considering the relevance of contemporary critical models to a text from which we are distanced in both time and culture. Nevertheless, I have found that the existing criticism of twentieth-century periodicals, and of the women's press in particular, has been helpful in providing a starting point for thinking both about the relationship between producers and readers and about the construction of models of femininity.

As Lynn Pykett has pointed out, there are real difficulties attached to 'the double problem of defining the object of study, and devising an appropriate methodological framework within which to conduct that study.'⁴⁷ Before discussing the methodological framework I have developed in order to pursue my analysis of *Woman*, it is necessary to explore the 'double problem' to which Pykett refers. To this end I shall consider the methodologies employed by existing work in the area of periodicals research, and the women's press in particular. It is worth noting at this point that scholarly interest in the nineteenth-century periodical press as a discrete academic area is relatively recent. The founding of *The Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals* in 1966 and the *Victorian Periodicals Newsletter* in 1968 marked the beginning of a sustained bibliographic study of the press. As recently as 1982, Joanne Shattock and Michael Wolff observed that a 'systematic and general study' of the Victorian press had 'hardly begun'.⁴⁸ The relative absence of a consistent theoretical approach to reading the periodical is partly attributable to the sheer size of the field of nineteenth-century periodicals, and partly due to the complexity of the periodical as a textual form.

The fact that periodicals are produced regularly across time and must, therefore, construct a coherent and unified textual identity to ensure readers recognize each issue as part of a continuous series is complicated by the necessity for each issue to also stand as an individual text which, while similar in pattern to previous issues, is nevertheless a 'text' in its own right. As Margaret Beetham has observed, 'this means that each number must function both as part of a series and as a free-standing unit which makes sense to the reader of the single issue.'⁴⁹ Clearly, this raises problems in defining the text of *Woman* as an object of study - whether as a single issue or as a series of issues.

A 'text', then, could be identified as a single issue or a run of issues over a week, a month, a year, or even the entire span of publication. Similarly, the magazine's multiple points of production (from proprietor and editor to illustrator and journalist),

means that it is possible to define the text according to the issue(s) produced by, or including, certain editors or authors and so on. Lynn Pykett proposes looking at the text as a 'Barthesian methodological field'⁵⁰ which, she argues, not only embraces the 'concepts of discourse and discursive communities...', but also locates the press as a significant cultural practice within both history and writing.⁵¹ The adoption of such an approach obviates the flaws of the earlier and cruder reflectionist model by taking into account all aspects of magazine production and reception, including the role of the reader in the construction of meaning.

To date, much of the existing work on the nineteenth-century women's magazine has provided a diachronic analysis of the general range and trends of this section of the periodical market. Cynthia White, in *Women's Magazines* (1970) for example, offers a broad narrative history of the women's press from 1693 to 1968. Similarly, Alison Adburgham's *Women in Print: Writing Women and Women's Magazines from the Restoration to the Accession of Queen Victoria* (1972), although employing a somewhat narrower historical focus, nevertheless is concerned with offering a broad overview of the entire market of women's periodicals. Both White and Adburgham are concerned with surveying the history of the magazine industry and its production processes, rather than with the structure and development of individual titles. What, then, emerges from these studies is an historical account of general trends in the publication of women's magazines and the construction of editorial appeal to their imagined readership.

Early work on the women's magazine, such as that offered by White and Adburgham, was largely concerned with offering narrative histories of the women's press. Both accounts give prominence to the production and internal structures of the magazine rather than to the possible range of interpretative strategies of the readership. White's intention in charting the development of the women's magazine is not so much concerned with the ways in which readers may have read those texts, but rather seeks to explain 'the nature and extent of the influence of the women's press ...'⁵² For White, the women's magazine operates ideologically, and her interest focuses upon the construction of an editorial address which shapes the reader in response to the needs of the dominant system of values and beliefs. Readers only figure insofar as they are constructed by the magazine; they are implied rather than the actual readers.

White's history of the women's press originated largely in response to a series of mergers in the publishing industry which, by 1961, had resulted in a virtual monopoly in production when the world's largest magazine publishers, Odhams Press, was

taken over by the International Publishing Corporation.⁵³ Her account, therefore, attempts to read back through the history of the women's magazine in order to provide 'lessons' for the present.⁵⁴ As such, the theoretical stance adopted in her study is very much linked to contemporaneous feminist critiques of the twentieth-century women's press as ideologically oppressive. In her conclusion White argues that:

... women's magazines are far from being the innocuous purveyors of light entertainment that they are often made out to be: they are the nation's most powerful sales force to women, not merely of consumer goods but of a feminine image and desirable standards of female achievement.⁵⁵

In tracing the development of the women's press, then, White is looking for the conditions of production that created and consolidated the position of the periodical as a vehicle for constructions of femininity that support dominant interests. Having expressed her concern over the influential power of modern magazines, White provides a framework for tracing this power backwards through history.

In her exploration of the nineteenth-century magazine, White is mainly concerned with establishing patterns in editorial attempts to appeal to specific imagined readerships and to respond both to shifts in production processes as well as societal change. Such an approach provides a useful overview of the developing market in periodicals for women during the century. However, there is an absence of any real sense of dynamic between the press and the society in which it was produced. Instead, the reader is offered a picture of the periodical press as a mirror of that society in which the structure and address of the women's magazine reflects dominant social systems of belief.

A similar reflectionist model was employed by other feminist critics of the twentieth-century women's press throughout the 1970s and early 1980s. During this period, feminist concern with the media saw representational practices as imposing gender inequalities and oppressive ideological systems upon an unsuspecting audience. Joy Leman, discussing twentieth-century women's magazines, offers a typical criticism in her claim that:

As media products women's magazine are part of an ideological apparatus presenting a view of the world which as at most points locked into the economic and political interests of the capitalist system.⁵⁶

Leman suggests that the tone of the magazine itself seeks to naturalize and reinforce dominant assumptions about femininity. Describing how 'incantations of false intimacy are foregrounded - a discourse of friendliness, reassuring and relocating women in an identity of oppression and a position of exploitation'⁵⁷ Leman argues that the magazine both reflects and naturalizes conventionally held notions of femininity and feminine roles. Thus, for critics such as Leman, the women's press assumes a normative function, seeking to guide women as passive readers into specific feminine roles.

While not disputing the presence of intimacy and friendliness in the editorial address, I would argue that what is missing from Leman's account is any sense of interaction between reader and text. In common with many critics, Leman privileges the editorially produced text.⁵⁸ Rather than seeing it as a network of significations, with readers and producers implicated in a complex relationship, she offers an account which posits the women's magazine as an ideological tool, a mirror reflecting the interests of capitalism and dominant modes of gender division. The women's magazine in this model functions to promote traditional feminine roles, to 'naturalize' a particular feminine discourse, and to elide the values and ideologies underpinning them.

Women's Worlds, published by Ballaster, Beetham, Frazer & Hebron in 1991, represents a significant move away from the reflectionist model employed by the earlier critics of the women's press. Moreover, Ballaster *et al* acknowledge the importance of the 'real', or historical, reader to a full understanding of the way women's magazines operate. As they point out, their approach

... attempts to theorize both the activity of [the] social reader, a knowing and aware subject, and the complexity of the range of texts and discourses which constitute the social world we inhabit, and of which the magazine is only a part.⁵⁹

Such an approach clearly engages with the women's press as an active part of the social system rather than as a passive reflection of the dominant interests. Moreover, in seeking to address the reader as 'a knowing and aware subject' Ballaster *et al* move away from regarding the reader as passively absorbing the dominant ideology of the editorial text.

However, this is not to suggest that Ballaster *et al* do not engage with the ideological functions of the women's magazine. While they point out that ideology cannot merely be seen as '...an all-enveloping and determining force, which shapes

people's beliefs, values and actions into the form that best serves the interest of a dominant class⁶⁰ they also suggest that magazines do play a part in the construction of a discourse of femininity which, they argue, is normative.⁶¹ Their analysis of the nineteenth-century women's press explores the way in which these texts sought to establish a discourse of gender difference which became concretized over time.

Ballaster *et al* moved beyond the more narrative approach of both White and Adburgham by arguing for the importance of the historical reader in approaching women's magazines. However, their inquiry, like those of the earlier accounts, also takes a general comparative approach. Their study concentrates upon the ideological effects of the women's press across a period of three centuries; such a broad canvas necessitates a somewhat synoptic approach to the individual periodicals discussed. The study is divided into separate chapters, each covering a century of magazine production: an approach which clearly obviates an engagement with the particular production processes of individual magazines.

Margaret Beetham's *A Magazine of Her Own? Domesticity and Desire in the Woman's Magazine 1800-1914*, published in 1996, admits the importance of the reader in the production of the text. Covering a fairly broad historical period, from 1800 to 1914, Beetham combines a theoretical engagement with the nature of the periodical text with detailed case-studies of individual magazines. Focusing on a selection of women's magazines which she considers significant or representative, Beetham offers a more detailed approach than those provided in the early comparative studies. Identifying key theoretical issues at stake in the analysis of the periodical as a methodological field, Beetham uses specific magazines as case-studies through which to extend her discussion. Such an approach provides a clearer idea of the nature of individual magazines and the ways in which they responded to shifts in society and journalistic practice as well as the various ways in which they sought to construct and appeal to their imagined audiences.

While Beetham offers a more detailed analysis of the cultural practice of producing and reading the women's press, the case-study method she employs does have drawbacks. Her methodology provides a clearer picture of the workings of individual magazines than the earlier narrative histories of the women's press; exploring those magazines which she identifies as representative of key shifts within the periodical market for women. Beetham thus offers a textual analysis of specific magazines which she situates within a broader consideration of the evolution of the women's press. There remains, however, a degree of imprecision in the way she characterizes the magazines under discussion. This relates again to definitions of the

'text': whether to address individual issues; those produced over a certain period of time; by editorial control; across the entire publication span, and so on - a question which Beetham acknowledges as fraught with difficulty.

Beetham's method of using an individual magazine as a basis for exploring shifts within society and periodical production assumes a stability within the periodical that does not bear close examination. Although periodicals construct an identity which is intended to provide continuity across time (the 'corporate identity'), and seek to establish a consistency in the way issues are produced and read, such identities are subject to such a large number of variables that, in reality, their identity is quite unstable. Beetham's sampling combines scanning a range of periodicals with a closer reading of her selected magazines at three or six monthly intervals according to frequency.⁶² However, her discussion of *Woman* is confined to the 1890s rather than encompassing the later years of publication.

Changes in editorial and proprietorial control, shifts in reader-demographics, and social or cultural developments all impinge upon the format, content and tone of a magazine. An issue of *Woman* produced in 1890 under the editorial control of Fitzroy Gardner, with a largely upper-middle class readership, is very different from that produced under later editors and in response to external pressures. Apart from the overarching 'corporate identity' provided by the magazine's title, the text itself is significantly altered in many respects. It is only through a thorough investigation of *Woman* across its entire publication span that shifts in production, readership and interpretation become apparent. Beetham's analysis of *Woman*, therefore, is a partial account.

The publication in 1994 of Helen Damon-Moore's *Magazines for the Millions*⁶³ provided a sustained diachronic analysis of two related journals, paying particular attention to the process by which her chosen magazines commercialized notions of gender. Damon-Moore's approach combines analysis of the text with an account of its producers and the social context within which it was produced. Damon-Moore's interest in the formation of a gendered consumerist discourse leads her to focus specifically on the ways in which this can be deduced both from the text and from research into the practices of the magazines' producers. Such a focus, while offering a sustained critique of the shifts in production of texts and meanings, nevertheless tends to position readers as relatively powerless in terms of interpretative strategies and raises certain questions. Were all readers always drawn into the ideology of consumerism which she identifies from the text? There are, of course, difficulties in establishing the nature of readers' interpretations of texts when there is such a wide

historical distance between the researcher and the objects of study. Nevertheless, the reader occupies an important position in the way in which magazines, and the meanings generated from them, are produced; my own analysis of *Woman* will make these processes a central focus.

Recent work in the field of media and gender studies has taken issue with formulations of the popular audience as merely passive consumers. Michel de Certeau argues that the assumption the media is able to shape its readers is founded upon a misunderstanding:

This misunderstanding assumes that 'assimilating' necessarily means 'becoming similar to' what one absorbs, and not 'making something similar' to what one is, making it one's own, appropriating or re-appropriating it.⁶⁴

Rather than focusing upon the ways in which texts condition readers,⁶⁵ it is more productive to adopt an approach which acknowledges that readers may resist dominant discourses, as well as develop their individual interpretative strategies. Although I will deal with the participating reader in more detail later, it is important to note that readers' contributions to *Woman's* competitions and, to a lesser extent, the correspondence column, offer strong evidence that readers were capable of resisting the dominant discourse of the editorial text. While participating readers represent only one section of the magazine's entire readership, the appearance in the text of resisting voices nevertheless undermines claims that readers were uniformly interpellated by a dominant editorial address.

Instead of focusing upon, for example, the strategies through which texts condition readers, work in audience research has argued for a more complex approach which acknowledges the role of readers in resisting dominant discourses, and in developing their own interpretative strategies. Janice Radway's important study of the readers of romantic fiction is useful in demonstrating the ways in which readers of texts which are conventionally supposed to reinforce dominant patriarchal discourse, might actually be subverting and appropriating those very discourses.⁶⁶ Radway's combination of ethnography with textual analysis is designed to address the relationship between the text and its audience, through a focus upon reading as a 'social event'. As Radway asserts:

In thus recalling the interactive character of operations like reading, we restore time, process, and action to our account of human endeavor and therefore increase the possibility of doing justice to its essential complexity

and ambiguity as practice. We also increase our chances of sorting out or articulating the difference between the repressive imposition of ideology and oppositional practices that, though limited in their scope and effect, at least dispute or contest the control of ideological forms.⁶⁶

The methodology employed by Radway revealed a complexity about the interpretive processes of romance readers that not only questioned the normative properties of romantic fiction, but also engaged with the readers' own notions of pleasure.

By focusing upon pleasure the interpretative processes of the reader are foregrounded. The notion of the text as an instrument of ideology is thus problematized. Again the work of Michel de Certeau is helpful in developing a concept of pleasure which endows the reader with some form of power. Pleasure for de Certeau is found in taking time off from one's obligations, of 'stealing' time for illicit pleasure.⁶⁷ Everyday practices, like television viewing or magazine reading, because of their transient nature, are seen by de Certeau as ways of resisting dominant forms of knowledge. The notion of stealing time from one's obligations is rendered more complex in the case of the women's magazine in which the reading matter so often crosses over into the space of domesticity - of cooking and cleaning, child-care and soft-furnishing. The conflation of leisure - of reading in one's spare moments - and of being instructed in the chores of the housewife and mother means that this pleasure is often intertwined with those obligations which have been escaped for the moment.

Joke Hermes, whose work draws upon that of both Radway and de Certeau, has criticized existing feminist studies of women's magazines as being either '...too concerned or too optimistic' to be totally convincing.⁶⁸ Hermes' approach towards twentieth-century women's magazines eschews textual analysis entirely in favour of a reader-centred model in which she claims to

... have tried to reconstruct the diffuse genre or set of genres that is called women's magazines and how they become meaningful exclusively through the perception of their readers.⁶⁹

In privileging the reader over the text, Hermes aims to explore the ways in which real readers themselves, rather than feminists or academics, generate meanings from their everyday readings. Attempting to pay 'respect' to the real reader, Hermes offers a series of interviews with a range of readers which take the place of any critical or textual analysis. Such an approach, which adds an extra dimension to the existing corpus of work on women's magazines, is clearly outside the realms of possibility for

the researcher of the nineteenth-century magazine. *Woman's* historical reader is no longer available to comment upon her reading practices. However, part of her remains in letters and prize essays and in the discernible dialogues between reader and producer embedded within the text. Such a reader, as I shall show, is something more than the *implied* reader, that reader which is implicit in the magazine's editorial text and in the construction of the dominant editorial discourse. Moreover, the reader who appears in *Woman* is not simply the passive figure of earlier critiques.

There is, as this thesis will demonstrate, ample evidence that *Woman's* readers were active in producing their own meanings, often presenting a radical challenge to the dominant discourse of the editorial text. *Woman* cannot be regarded as an autonomous, unified text absorbed uncritically by a passive and inert readership. While it is indeed possible that, as Margaret Beetham has suggested, 'For many - perhaps most - readers the desire to be confirmed in the generally accepted or dominant discourse may be more powerful than the dream of a different future'⁷⁰ it would be dangerous to assume either that this desire is shaped solely by the dominant discourse of the magazine or that it represents the sum total of the readers' desires or an adequate explanation of their interpretative strategies.

As I shall demonstrate, the dominant socializing discourses of the magazine were not uncontested; a critical perspective which focuses only upon the socializing function of such texts oversimplifies the process of reception and interpretation. It assumes a homogeneous readership which, moreover, passively accepts the dominant messages of the text, rather than taking into account what is, in reality, a disparate and dispersed readership with a multiplicity of reading positions. In fact, the popular magazine allows a quite extraordinary degree of reader/producer interaction, even where the distinctions between these roles were being constantly undercut and erased.

While adopting a diachronic model of analysis I cannot, of course, claim to cover the text exhaustively; the sheer volume of material in a weekly magazine produced over twenty years is too unwieldy to cover in its entirety. In order to provide a systematic study I have focused upon certain key modes of writing within the magazine, comprising: feature and editorial articles, correspondence, competitions and fiction; whilst leaving to one side other features of the magazine. Even within the selected categories of writing a complete reading was not feasible - sampling strategies were devised each of which was specific to the characteristics of the form of writing under investigation. Taken as a whole these sampling strategies combined 'scanning' or 'surveying' of the whole run of the magazine (undertaken several times

to identify significant changes in the pattern of publication of regular features, or the appearance of new, unique, or especially important items); and systematic 'structured sampling' designed to identify important features of the magazine's ongoing publication practice, and to investigate them in greater depth. As a result of these scanning and sampling procedures particular items within the selected modes of writing (feature and editorial articles, feature series, short stories and serial fictions, as well as prize competitions and readers' correspondence) were identified for detailed analysis by close reading. The details of the scanning and sampling procedures adopted for each mode of writing are given in the text of the relevant chapter; and are supported where appropriate by appendices giving fuller details of both methodology and findings.

While acknowledging the value of synoptic accounts of a broad range of the women's press over decades or centuries to a general understanding of the periodical, I would also argue for the importance of the in-depth study of a single title over the whole span of its production. Such an investigation fills in gaps in existing accounts by revealing the complex and shifting nature of the text, its producers and its readers. My own interest in the periodical centres around the relationship between the producers and the readers in the creation of the text and the meanings generated. Accordingly, my own methodological approach seeks to incorporate analysis of the ways the magazine's producers attempt to construct a coherent textual identity with examination of the intervention and interpretative strategies of its readership. Such an approach necessarily demands that attention be paid not only to the individual issue, but also to the overarching corporate identity of the magazine which, as I have suggested, is subject to change over time.

Woman was, as has been seen, part of a vast network of periodical publications which informed its production. As Brian Maidment has remarked, knowledge of the diversity of the periodical market provides important extra-textual information on the possible ways of reading and interpreting texts.⁷¹ Readers approaching any newsstand would be able to make inferences about the nature of individual magazines based upon their knowledge of the entire range of periodicals on offer. Magazines and papers were themselves, moreover, sensitive to what was going on in the press; even in *Woman* references were frequently made to other magazines and the magazine was, as I discuss in Chapter Two, founded as much in response to shifts in journalistic practices as to a perceived gap in the women's press.

Obviously, periodicals and their readers were shaped, to an extent, by their knowledge of other periodicals. However, to limit the range of influences on the text

and its reader simply to the field of periodicals is to ignore the much broader range of circulating discourses within society. To engage fully with the host of possible discourses one would need to look beyond those contained in the periodical press. In moving away from a comparative approach this study is less concerned with the ways in which *Woman* responded to, or was informed by, other women's magazines than with its construction of a textual identity both for itself and its readership and that readership's response to these constructions. Although I refer to the wider field of the women's press, I focus on the processes of signification at work within the individual text. In doing so, I draw upon Lynn Pykett's desire to 'argue the case for the importance to periodicals study of the close reading of the text.'⁷² The findings of this focused study must, of course, be read in the context of broader surveys of women's magazines in the period carried out by Beetham, Ballaster *et al*, Adburgham, Shevelow and White. The detailed research in this thesis, however, both offers the opportunity for close reading/analysis of a range of different modes of writing and allows the significance of minor but particular shifts in editors, editorial policy and commercial considerations to be taken into account.

Because of the unfeasible amount of work entailed in reading and analyzing twenty years' publication of a weekly magazine in their totality, my approach has been necessarily selective, focusing upon a specific genre of writing in each chapter. In part this has been a deliberate response to the problems of applying theoretical models to quite distinct forms of writing; the approach demanded by a reading of fiction, for example, is quite different to that required for the correspondence column. Different modes of reading demanded by each writing genre also raised difficulties in constructing a theoretical framework that could engage fully with the varied reading processes. Although my initial impulse was to search for one particular theoretical model from which to explore the magazine in its entirety, it soon became evident that the different genres of writing, representational practices, and blurring of the reader/producer boundaries, made the consistent application of a single existing critical model highly problematic. In order to address these various issues, it was necessary to develop a mode of reading that incorporated elements from several critical models.

While *Woman* attempted to construct a recognizable textual identity for itself in order to establish a sense of continuity and coherence, it was not a unified and stable text. The fractured nature of its internal structure and its multiple points of production constantly render its textual identity problematic. Within the overarching and largely invisible editorial framework (the 'corporate identity' of *Woman*), the text is divided into a series of different genres - the gossip column, the letter page, the editorial and

feature article, fiction, advertisements, illustrations and so on - all of which were encoded in separate and often distinct ways.

In addition to this fragmented and heterogeneous text, we are confronted with a marked heterogeneity of authorship. As Margaret Beetham has noted:

One way of identifying a text has traditionally been to situate it in the *œuvre* of a particular author. However, the concept of authorship becomes problematic in relation to the periodical where typically even one number involves several writers, the editor, perhaps the proprietor, perhaps artist or engraver and the printer.⁷³

Although the multiple points of production are apparently contained within an overarching editorial framework, it would be a mistake, as Beetham also points out, to locate the source of the text in the editor. The nature of an 'editorial voice' as a unifying drive is an important factor in the creation and maintenance of a consistent textual identity but it is not the point at which the text itself is either produced or controlled. The locus of power in controlling the text, then, is diffused amongst a number of groups and is, moreover, subject to constant re-positioning. It is impossible to specify the apportioning of power at any point, but it is important to note that the production of meaning in the periodical is contingent upon multiple and shifting groups.

Woman did not always name its writers; the older journalistic practice of anonymity and use of pseudonyms was still largely in force despite the magazine's assumption of many of the features of the New Journalism. Where writers were named they were more likely to be well-known journalistic or literary figures. However, *Woman's* approach to naming its contributors does not seem to have been applied in consistent manner, and named writers also employ initials and pseudonyms and office signatures. Obviously, when certain authors are named and are already known to the reader in some way, this knowledge has an impact upon the way that the writing is received. Moreover, the actual form in which the writing is produced can be of significance to its interpretation. If we consider the magazine as a field of textual production, in which the various writing forms constitute separately defined spaces for expression of different discourses (the regular departments for practical domestic guidance, or the correspondence columns for readers' personal narratives for example), then it becomes clear that not only are some spaces endowed with certain properties, but that they are also selective in terms of who is allowed to speak within them. Pierre Bourdieu has suggested that:

Among the most effective and best concealed censorships are all those which consist in excluding certain agents from communication by excluding them from the groups which speak or the places which allow one to speak with authority.⁷⁴

Woman's provision of spaces in which readers were able to participate was not unambiguous. Although readers did contribute editorial material and fiction, their status as readers was only explicitly acknowledged within the parameters of the correspondence column or competition page. The authority which was attached to editorials and feature articles, for example, was largely missing from those spaces given over to reader-participation, spaces which were, moreover, flanked by editorial comment and criticism. Additionally, the internal conventions of the different forms of writing impacted upon their range of possible meanings. Bourdieu argues that the structure of the discursive field in which communication is produced functions as a form of metaphorical censorship. His statement that '...it is the structure of the field itself which governs expression by governing both access to expression and the form of expression...'⁷⁵ emphasizes the importance of looking at each writing genre within the magazine in order to obtain a deeper understanding of the power structures at work within each genre and across the magazine as a whole.

For example, *Woman* operated sanctions against potentially transgressive contributors by exhibiting regular notices requiring them to study the tone and format of its writing. Readers, too, were regulated by editorial comment such as that which admonished a reader for criticizing typographical and grammatical errors in the magazine.⁷⁶ Moreover, the various genres of writing within the magazine each contain their own forms of 'censorship', with certain areas being marked off for discussing certain subjects and demanding the use of particular registers. The significance of this process will become apparent in subsequent chapters dealing with specific writing forms within *Woman*.

In this study I concentrate upon feature and editorial articles, reader-participation as exemplified in the forms of competitions and correspondence, and fiction. I am aware that a consequence of this process of selection might be a dangerous privileging of certain forms of writing over others; for instance, I do not deal in any detail with *Woman's* domestic advice, nor with its children's page. By this I do not wish to suggest that these forms were any less significant to the textual field of the magazine. Obviously each fragment of the text contributes to an overall textual

identity and will affect the readers' response. However, as Margaret Beetham has pointed out:

The average reader will ... select and read only a fraction of the whole. The periodical, therefore, is a form which openly offers readers the chance to construct their own texts.⁷⁷

While each piece of text contributes to meanings generated by surrounding text and by the magazine as a whole, the way the reader encounters and interprets the text is also subject to the way in which she selects and orders her reading. My selection of features, editorials, competitions, correspondence and fiction is intended to provide a focus for analysis of the ways in which the editorial voice and the voice of the reader interacted in the production of meaning. These elements are, of course, also influenced by the surrounding text and, where it is appropriate, I include them in my discussion. Other elements of the magazine, such as advertising, while not receiving a sustained exposition, have nevertheless provided a background to my reading.

Chapter Two offers a general introduction to and outline of *Woman* magazine, its format and production history, establishing the empirical and material details of the magazine itself. It is notoriously difficult to establish the precise publishing history of the more popular and ephemeral section of the periodicals market. With the abolition of stamp duty, which provided researchers with some regular empirical data, it becomes necessary to look for company or publishers' archives for information. Unfortunately, such records were often not considered important enough to preserve. This would certainly seem to be the case with *Woman*. In fact, one of the major difficulties with researching this aspect of the magazine has been the apparent reluctance of those involved with its production to acknowledge their role. Thus, for example, Mrs Charlotte Talbot Coke, whose husband bought a controlling share in the business, is better known for her contributions to the home furnishing section of *Queen* - a magazine with which she had less significant financial and proprietary ties than those she had with *Woman*. Fortunately, Major Talbot Coke kept a diary in which are noted various dealings with *Woman* as well as its stable-mates, *Hearth and Home* and *Myra's Journal*. Other figures involved with *Woman* were, however, less reticent. Fitzroy Gardner, the founding editor of the magazine, and Arnold Bennett his assistant and later editor, both offered accounts of their involvement with *Woman*.

Chapter Three examines the extent to which the feature article and the editorial constitute the clearest expression of the magazine's 'voice'. The chapter draws upon,

Chapter Three examines the extent to which the feature article and the editorial constitute the clearest expression of the magazine's 'voice'. The chapter draws upon, and questions, existing critiques of the ideological work of the women's press. The editorial 'voice', which seeks to privilege a particular discourse of femininity, has been seen as proof of the normative function of the women's press. This editorial 'voice', however, cannot be regarded as wholly unified; its multi-vocal, multi-authored status makes stable, homogeneous discourse impossible. While the magazine attempts to construct a coherent textual identity for itself and its readers through its editorially-sanctioned material, the resulting gaps and competing discursive 'threads' offer a variety of reading positions. Moreover, the magazine itself implicitly encouraged readers to intervene in the production of the text. As I shall demonstrate in this chapter, the 'voice' of the reader was often inserted into the editorial and feature, rendering the authority of the editorial 'voice' doubly unstable.

As a popular periodical, however, *Woman* did not consist entirely of editorially-produced text; readers themselves were invited to contribute to the magazine and so were complicit in its production. Chapters Four and Five examine in detail the two prevalent forms of reader-participation in *Woman*; the essay competition and readers' correspondence. The two forms of participation feature the voices of readers and producers to different degrees, and with different effects. However, the space provided for participation is crucial to an understanding of the ways in which readers may have interpreted the dominant discourse of the magazine. While, for example, *Woman* repeatedly represented marriage as the ideal feminine vocation, the readers' response to a competition asking for their views on the desirability of a husband reveals a much more ambivalent attitude. Similarly, readers' choice of *The Heavenly Twins*, a New Woman novel which questioned conventional marriage arrangements, as the 'best novel of 1893' was attacked despite its outright popularity. Given *Woman's* professed dislike of the 'New Woman', this demonstrates that readers were not necessarily absorbing the dominant editorial discourse. *Woman's* correspondence columns also provide a revealing insight into the ways in which both producers and readers attempted to construct identities for themselves and each other within the text. One of the defining characteristics of the popular periodical is the way in which it seeks to close the distance between the reader and the text. The figure of the reader in the correspondence column not only helps to bridge this distance, but also functions to concretize the relations among a reading community which is often dispersed both geographically and socially. As I discuss in Chapter Five, the correspondence column offers a site within which the imagined community of the magazine is consolidated and maintained.

Chapter Six looks at *Woman's* fiction. In common with most popular magazines of the period, *Woman* offered its readers regular short stories or serials. The majority of such fiction was romantic, with mysteries also being quite popular. The formulaic nature of the bulk of *Woman's* fiction is interesting in its reproduction of certain dominant discursive elements evident elsewhere in the magazine. However, the presence of what I define as 'odd' stories - narratives which play with both literary conventions and topical social issues - provides a further instance of the contradictory nature of the magazine's engagement with the changes in women's roles during the period.

Readers were themselves also active in the production of fiction for *Woman*. Their writing, mainly located within the space of the fiction competition, offers an insight into the ways in which magazine fiction may have been read, absorbed and interpreted. Indeed, the narratives offered by competing readers often provide a challenge to the dominant values represented in the more formulaic and conventional fiction supplied by *Woman*. As I shall discuss, readers demonstrate a sound knowledge of the narrative structure of the dominant magazine fiction and are able to reproduce similar narratives with ease. However, the fact that other readers appropriate the dominant discursive structures in order to challenge the dominant ideological content of *Woman's* fiction points to a more critical and active readership than has been hitherto attributed to the popular women's press.

- ¹ For a bibliography of women's magazines in circulation during *Woman's* publication see Appendix 1:1.
- ² *Woman* 19.06.1890, p. 2.
- ³ *Woman* 01.01.1891, p. 4.
- ⁴ 'Where Girls Grow Wise', *Woman* 02.11.1892-14.02.1894:
 Unsigned, 'The Royal College of Music', 02.11.1892, pp. 3-4.
 Unsigned, "Bedford College", 09.11.1892, pp. 3-4.
 Unsigned, "A School of Dressmaking", 23.11.1892, pp. 4-5.
 Unsigned, "Cheltenham Ladies' College", 14.12.1892, pp. 3-4.
 'Denzil Vane, The Schools of Music at Milan', 28.12.1892, pp. 3-4.
 H.L.P., 'The National Training School for Cookery', 18.01.1893, pp. 3-4.
 Vera, 'Newnham College, Cambridge', 08.02.1893, pp. 3-4.
 U, 'Mrs Jopling's School of Art', 01.03.1893, pp. 3-4.
 Unsigned, "The Guildhall School of Music", 15.03.1893, p. 4.
 Unsigned, 'In a French Convent', 29.03.1893, pp. 3-4.
 Aesculapia Victrix, 'At the London School of Medicine for Women', 12.04.1893, pp. 3-4.
 Unsigned, "Somerville Hall, 26.04.1893, pp. 3-4.
 Unsigned, "Queen's College, London", 24.05.1893, pp. 3-4.
 Unsigned, 'The Datchelor Collegiate School', 26.07.1893, pp. 3-4.
 M.E.G., 'The Horticultural College, Swanley, 13.09.1893, p. 3.
 M.E.G., 'Queen Margaret's College, Glasgow', 04.10.1893, p. 3.
 Unsigned, 'Royal Holloway College', 14.02.1894, pp. 3-4.
- ⁵ 'The World of Breadwinners', *Woman*, 03.01.1890-21.08.1890:
 Unsigned, 'Surrey Pantomime Girls', 03.01.1890, pp. 3-4.
 Eve, 'A Lady Decorator', 11.01.1890, p. 6.
 Push-Push 'A Lady Laundress', 25.01.1890, pp. 3-4.
 Letty Lind, 'Stage Dancing', 01.02.1890, pp. 3-4.
 Louise Jopling, 'Artist's Models', 08.02.1890, pp. 3-4.
 Unsigned, 'A Match-Girl Queen', 22.02.1890, pp. 2-3.
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 Mary Frances Billington, 'The Special Correspondent', 22.03.1890, p.3.
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 M C, 'The Lady Clerk in Clover', 26.04.1890, p. 2.
 M A B, 'The 'Lady' Cook', 10.05.1890, pp. 2-3.
 Lady Granville Gordon, 'Lady Shopkeepers', 17.05.1890, p. 3.
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By One Who Has Tried It, 'Card Painters', 06.02.1892, p. 21.

⁶ 'How Women May Make Money', *Woman* 23.10.1895-22.04.1896:

Unsigned, 'Preliminary Observations. By the Editor' 23.10.1895, pp. 8-9.

Unsigned, 'As Teachers of Technical Art Classes', 30.10.1895, p. 8.

Ubiquiteuse, 'Miss Hopkins on Women Gardeners', 06.11.1895, p. 8.

F G, 'As Secretaries and Clerks', 13.11.1895, p. 8.

F G, 'Managing Hotels', 20.11.1895, p. 8.

Unsigned, 'As Dressmakers', 04.12.1895, p. 8.

M Greenwood, 'Indexing', 18.12.1895, pp. 8-9.

A M R, 'Sanitary Inspectors', 01.01.1896, p. 9.

A M R, 'As Architects', 15.01.1896, pp. 8-9.

Sarah Volatile, 'Journalism', 05.02.1896, p. 8.

A M R, 'As Lecturers', 19.02.1896, pp. 8-9.

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A M R, 'As Librarians', 01.04.1896, p. 8.

A M R, 'As Teachers of Athletics', 22.04.1896, p. 8.

⁷ See, for example, *Woman* 14.02.1894, p. 14.

⁸ See, for example, *Woman* 10.01.1894, pp. 9-10.

⁹ See, for example, *Woman* 03.02.1904, p. 9.

¹⁰ *Woman* 03.01.1890, p. 3.

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Business Press, 1988); Kathryn Shevelow, *Women and Print Culture: The Construction of Femininity in the Early Periodical* (New York: Routledge, 1989). Unless otherwise indicated the place of publication is London.

¹³ White, *op. cit.* pp. 60-2.

¹⁴ Richard Altick, *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1957), p. 363.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Matthew Arnold, 'Up to Easter', *Nineteenth Century* XXI (May, 1887), pp. 629-43.

¹⁷ Stead's crusading series of articles, 'The Maiden Tribute of Babylon', which appeared in 1885, drew considerable criticism and resulted in his imprisonment, although it also had the desired effect of raising the age of consent from 13 to 16.

¹⁸ T. P. O'Connor, 'The New Journalism', *New Review*, Oct. 1889 Vol. 1, p. 423.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Nick Nuttall, *The New Woman and New Journalism: Gender and Sexuality in the Fin-de-Siècle Press Media Arts Working Papers No. 2* (Media Arts Research Centre: Southampton Institute, no date), p. 7.

²¹ Evelyn March-Phillips, 'Women's Newspapers', *Fortnightly Review* N.S. LVI (1894), p. 661.

²² Beetham, *A Magazine of Her Own*, p. 119.

²³ Solveig Robinson, "'Amazed at Our Success": The Langham Place Editors and the Emergence of a Feminist Critical Tradition.', *Victorian Periodicals Review* 29:2 Summer 1996, p. 160.

²⁴ Jane Rendall, 'A Moral Engine'? Feminism, Liberalism and the *Englishwoman's Journal*', in Jane Rendall (ed.), *Equal or Different: Women's Politics 1800-1914* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987), pp. 112-38.

²⁵ *Woman*, 03.01.1890, p. 3.

²⁶ David Doughan and Denise Sanchez, *Feminist Periodicals, 1855-1984: An Annotated Bibliography of British, Irish and Commonwealth Titles* (Brighton: Harvester, 1987), p. 13.

²⁷ *Women's Penny Paper*, 27.10.1888, p. 1 cited Nuttall, *op. cit.* p. 10.

²⁸ Ros Ballaster, Margaret Beetham, Elizabeth Frazer & Sandra Hebron, *Women's Worlds: Ideology, Femininity and the Woman's Magazine* (Macmillan, 1991), p. 85.

²⁹ *Woman's Penny Paper*, 26.01.1889, p. 5 cited Nuttall, *op. cit.* p. 5.

³⁰ *Woman's Penny Paper*, 22.03.1890, p. 258 cited Nuttall, *op. cit.* p. 5.

- 31 Lynn Pykett, *The Improper Feminine: The Women's Sensation Novel and the New Woman Writing* (Routledge, 1992), p. 138.
- 32 Evelyn March-Phillips, 'Women's Newspapers', *Fortnightly Review* N.S. LVI (1894), p. 662.
- 33 Beetham, *A Magazine of Her Own*, p. 90.
- 34 *Queen*, LVIII, 1875, p. 105 cited Beetham, *ibid.* p. 92.
- 35 *ibid.* pp. 93-94.
- 36 *The Ladies*, 1872, preface to launch issue, cited in White, *op. cit.* p. 49.
- 37 *The Ladies*, 1872, p. 110 cited in Beetham, *A Magazine of Her Own*, pp. 91-92.
- 38 Ballaster *et al*, *op. cit.* p. 94.
- 39 Beetham, *A Magazine of Her Own*, p. 93.
- 40 Charlotte Talbot Coke (1843-1922), married John Talbot Coke in 1867 and from 1887 contributed home decoration articles to *Queen* and *Ladies' Field: Who Was Who*, Vol. II 1916-1928 (A & C Black, 1929), p. 212. See also 'Ubiquiteuse', 'Notes on Notables', *Woman*, 07.12.1892, p. 4 for a profile and portrait of Mrs Talbot Coke which refers to her work on *Queen*, *Myra's Journal* and *Hearth and Home*.
- 41 White, *op. cit.* p. 72.
- 42 Ballaster *et al*, *op. cit.* p. 100.
- 43 *Woman at Home*, Vol. I 1893, p. 62 cited in Beetham, *A Magazine of Her Own*, p. 158.
- 44 Beetham, *A Magazine of Her Own*, p. 140.
- 45 *ibid.* p. 157.
- 46 Ballaster *et al*, *op. cit.* p. 104; Beetham, *A Magazine of Her Own*, pp. 193-94.
- 47 Lynn Pykett, 'Reading the Periodical Press' in Laurel Brake, Aled Jones and Lionel Madden (eds.), *Investigating Victorian Journalism* (Macmillan, 1990), pp. 3-16.
- 48 Joanne Shattock & Michael Wolff (eds.), *The Victorian Press: Samplings and Soundings* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1982), p. xiii.
- 49 Margaret Beetham, 'Towards a Theory of the Periodical as a Publishing Genre' in Laurel Brake, Aled Jones and Lionel Madden (eds.), *Investigating Victorian Journalism* (Macmillan, 1990), p. 29.
- 50 Pykett, 'Reading the Periodical Press', p. 16.
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- 52 White, *op. cit.* p. 17.
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- 56 Joy Leman, 'The Advice of a Real Friend'. Codes of Intimacy in Women's Magazines 1937-1955', in Helen Baehr (ed.), *Women and Media* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1980), p. 64.
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- 58 See also Janice Winship, *Inside Women's Magazines* (Pandora Press, 1978); Marjorie Ferguson, *Forever Feminine: Women's Magazines and the Cult of Femininity* (Heinemann, 1983).
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- 62 Beetham, *A Magazine of Her Own*, p. 210 fn. 3.
- 63 Helen Damon Moore, *Magazines for the Millions: Gender and Commerce in the Ladies' Home Journal and the Saturday Evening Post, 1880-1910*, (New York: State University of New York Press, 1994).
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- 65 Janice Radway, *Reading the Romance* (Verso, 1987).
- 66 *Ibid.* pp. 221-222.
- 67 Michel de Certeau, *op. cit.* pp. 36-7.
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- 69 *Ibid.* p. 6.
- 70 Margaret Beetham, 'Towards a Theory of the Periodical as a Publishing Genre', p. 30.
- 71 B. E. Maidment, 'Victorian Periodicals and Academic Discourse', in Brake, Jones, & Madden, *op. cit.* pp. 143-54.
- 72 Pykett, 'Reading the Periodical Press', p. 16.
- 73 Beetham, 'Towards a Theory of the Periodical as a Publishing Genre', p. 25.
- 74 Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), p. 138.
- 75 *Ibid.* p. 138
- 76 *Woman* 22.11.1893, p. 7. For a further discussion of *Woman's* treatment of Mrs Jenny Rose see Chapter Five.
- 77 Beetham, 'Towards a Theory of the Periodical as a Publishing Genre', p. 26.

CHAPTER TWO

'For All Sorts And Conditions Of Women': The Production of *Woman*, 1890-1910.

Woman was founded and, for the first six years, edited by Fitzroy Gardner.¹ The magazine was published in London from January 3rd, 1890 to August 7th, 1912. The last complete issue was No. 1080 for October 7th, 1910, while subsequent issues consisted of a cover giving date and issue number and one or two other pages (contents more or less repeated) up to No. 1180 for August 7th, 1912.² *Woman* was Gardner's second attempt at starting a magazine. His first, the *Arrow*, which he co-founded with H. T. Anstruther (with H. Greville Montgomery as assistant editor) did not, according to Francis Gribble³, an erstwhile contributor to the *Arrow* 'supply any want of which the public was conscious, [and] it soon ceased to appear.'⁴ Gardner himself felt that despite his magazine lasting only ten issues, he was '...compensated to some extent by a very pleasant association with several public men and eminent writers ...'⁵ Indeed, when he later founded *Woman*, Gardner was able to draw upon the writing skills of the wives of some of these men, most notably those of John St. Loe Strachey and Sir Charles Dilke, as well as the help of Anstruther, who was by then a Liberal Unionist Whip.

After the collapse of the *Arrow*, Gardner spent some time in Ireland as Special Correspondent for the *Daily Chronicle*, before returning to England with fresh ideas for starting another paper. If he had failed to find a market for the *Arrow*, Gardner felt confident that this time 'It seemed that there was an opening for a women's weekly journal which did not devote itself entirely to fashions, furniture and flummery of all sorts.'⁶ Accordingly, he founded *Woman* the first issue of which, he wrote thirty years later, 'caught on; practically every copy was sold. From then on, for two years, our circulation rose from week to week.'⁷

In his attempt to distinguish *Woman* from the existing range of women's periodicals Gardner embraced the idea of the 'modern' - not only in his appeal to 'modern womanly women', but also in the incorporation of what he claimed as the 'best' elements of the New Journalism.⁸ As well as its bright and chatty tone, its interviews and attention to personal details, *Woman* also adopted an explicitly commercial approach. The 'desire to take advantage of a lucrative commercial opportunity' was, according to Kate Jackson, a significant motivating force for many magazines of the New Journalism period.⁹ George Newnes, for example, whose penny journal *Tit-Bits* was one of the most successful of the New Journalistic

magazines, was particularly aware of the benefits of advertising. Newnes used advertising and a range of promotional stunts, such as offering insurance against accidents to railway passengers carrying a copy of the magazine¹⁰, to create what Jackson refers to as a 'sense of communality' among the readers of *Tit-Bits*.¹¹ Newnes' promotions would seem to have created a strong response amongst some readers, to the extent that one enthusiastic reader actually painted the word 'Tit-Bits' on the rock face at Llandudno.¹² Thus, advertising was not only incorporated into the text of the magazine in order to underwrite production costs, but was also mobilized as a means of creating a particularly popular appeal.

While Newnes perfected the art of promotion, such commercial awareness had a wider currency amongst practitioners of the New Journalism. Writing about the New Journalism in 1895, Evelyn March-Phillips observed

... a certain readiness to adopt all sorts of methods, including some that have hitherto been confined to cheap shops, so that, ere long, we shall not be surprised to find even *The Times* giving away the equivalent of a screw of tea or tobacco with every copy sold.¹³

Gardner was not a stranger to commercial enterprise, instituting weekly competitions offering prizes ranging from gloves and hosiery to cash prizes of between £1 and £5. The inclusion of prize competitions was not, however, particularly revolutionary - such competitions were a common feature of many women's magazines having been popularized by, amongst others, Samuel Beeton's *The Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* in the 1850s. What was rather more in keeping with the commercial activities of the New Journalism was Gardner's attempts to move beyond the boundaries of the text to promote the magazine.

In the second volume of his autobiography, he describes an attempt to publicize *Woman* that was very much in keeping with the 'readiness to adopt all sorts of methods' to which March-Phillips refers and which clearly owed a debt to Newnes' form of promotional activity. According to Gardner, in the early 1890s, Louis Tussaud had just set up an exhibition which rivalled that of his great-aunt, Madame Tussaud, the most conspicuous model being that of Queen Victoria;

It occurred to our business manager, Lawrence Turnbull ... that Louis Tussaud's Queen Victoria might just as well be holding a copy of *Woman* in her hand, with the title page conspicuously shown, instead of a dummy document. He came to an arrangement with Tussaud for carrying out the

scheme, but the day before our paper was to be fixed in one of Her Majesty's hands the place caught fire and was burnt out ...¹⁴

Gardner's decision to hijack the figure of Queen Victoria in order to obtain publicity for *Woman* hints at a certain irreverence which one might also connect to the growing democratization of the period. This was, however, largely absent from *Woman's* gossip column, 'D'You Know?', which gave detailed accounts of court and society events. Despite his initial failure, Gardner went on to organize an exhibition of women's handicrafts¹⁵ which, he claimed, was equally effective at promoting the magazine.¹⁶

Gardner's earlier association with 'public men and eminent writers' had clearly stood him in good stead, and his list of contributors to *Woman* contained some of those men's wives, as well as other writers Gardner had associated with prior to commencing the magazine.

Among the many well-known writers who contributed to the success of *Woman*, I recall the following: Mrs Lynn Linton, who wrote the introductory article in our first number, the Honourable Mrs Anstruther (Eva Anstruther) and Lady Constance Lytton, who wrote our book-reviews, and Mrs Robins-Pennell, our Art critic. Mrs Jack May was our sartorial expert, and the Honourable Mrs Fitzroy Stewart¹⁷ contributed chatty, always interesting, and never unpleasant items of Society news. Among occasional contributors we had Alice Livingstone (now Mrs C N Williamson), Clara Grant-Duff, Francis Gribble, the (then) Duchess of Abercorn, Marie Belloc (now Mrs Belloc-Lowndes), Lady Alice Egerton, Marie Corelli, Mrs St. Loe Strachey, and that brilliantly intellectual novelist and charming woman, 'John Oliver Hobbes' (Mrs Craigie)... Flora Annie Steel, Frankfort Moore, G B Burgin, Eden Phillpotts¹⁸, and Jeanette Duncan were among many who wrote our short stories. Lewis Baumer, long before he was known to *Punch* readers, John Gulich, and Frederick Townsend did some of our illustrations, and in Constance Hoare (whose work afterwards was well known to readers of the *Lady's Field*), and Rose Le Quesne *Woman* discovered the possibility of fashion drawings which represented real women and girls.¹⁹

The detailed nature of this list of named contributors which emphasizes their professional and literary successes provides a stark contrast with Arnold Bennett's subsequent dismissive attitude towards both the paper and those associated with it.²⁰ In stressing the later affiliations of journalists and illustrators, Gardner also positions

Woman within the wider sphere of the periodical press, whereas Bennett tends to judge the magazine upon artistic rather than journalistic values. Gardner's account of *Woman's* fashion illustrations, with their representations of 'real women and girls' is, for example, at odds with that of Bennett, who claimed that:

Fashion artists were not supposed to be able to draw. They were supposed to know by heart the curves of a certain stock figure and to reproduce the said figure in the only two attitudes permitted by the existing cast-iron traditions of journalism for ladies - standing and seated.²¹

Bennett was not, he declared, 'troubled by the extraordinary unlikeness of the figures to any human being created by heaven',²² although he was rather less sanguine about the quality of the writing in the magazine.

Gardner lists as assistant editors Edgar Preston (later of the *Morning Post*), Blanche Oram (the popular novelist 'Roma White'), Mrs Stepney Rawson (probably the Maud Rawson who conducted 'Home Work and How to Make it Pay' amongst other features), and Arthur Girdlestone, as well as Arnold Bennett.²³ It is typical of *Woman's* inconsistent approach to naming its contributors that none of these individuals are mentioned in the two birthday editorials detailing the work and staff of *Woman*. In the birthday editorial of 1891, for example, the reader was offered four photographic portraits, two of which, 'Rose' and 'Ethel', seem to be merely empty office signatures - even the accompanying portraits are insubstantial. In contrast the portraits of Miss M. F. Billington²⁴ and Miss M. A. Belloc,²⁵ both professional journalists, not only provide the reader with more realistic photographs, but also supply the individual's names.²⁶ However, it is worth noting that while *Woman* perpetuated the notion that for respectable women, writing for a magazine necessitated anonymity, its simultaneous affirmation of the acceptability of a woman advertising her professional status typified the magazine's ambivalence towards women's changing roles.

It has already been noted that the booming periodicals market made it necessary for editors and proprietors to tailor their new ventures to appeal to specific groups of readers. The introductory editorial in the very first issue of *Woman*, offered a detailed discussion of its intended audience.

We shall appeal not only to the student of fashion plates, and cosmetic recipes, the 'blue-stocking,' the political fanatic, the housewife, or to the advocate of 'Woman's Rights.' but to all classes of women who want

something more than the 'lady's' or 'society' paper or cookery book, and something less than the ponderous daily 'leader' and parliamentary reports, or the academic weekly or monthly review. Our raison d'être is neither politics, dress, the doings of 'society' of reality or imagination, the ventilation of imaginary grievances of the sex, the school of sickly sentimentality, nor the advertisement of vice and the vicious, but simply to inform and entertain modern woman - not as she might be, but as we find her ... While adopting some of the best features of 'new journalism' in our efforts to make our paper readable, we shall avoid pandering to unwholesome palates or appealing to those who are 'women' in name only.²⁷

The figure of 'modern woman - 'not as she might be, but as we find her' - was sufficiently open-ended to allow *Woman* to define the reader in a variety of ways. The editorial material in *Woman* was able to exploit, consciously or otherwise, the flexibility of its definitions. As I shall demonstrate in Chapter Three, this is particularly noticeable in the feature articles because of their multi-vocal and heterogeneous nature.

A comparison between the language and ideas expressed in *Woman* and an editorial from *Shafts*, a progressive and non-commercial women's magazine published around the same time as *Woman*, reveals an interesting relationship between these two 'progressive' papers:

... remember that *Shafts* is not a newspaper, not a dealer in gossip of any kind, has no fashion plate, gives out no patterns of dressmaking, etc., makes no pretense of being an 'entertaining monthly', or of filling its columns with smart whisperings, questionable jokes, or meaningless tales. Everything contained in *Shafts* is with a purpose; to help women in their onward-going, in their uprising; to give them an opportunity of expressing their opinions, desires, and especially their determinations anent all conditions of things; as they have been, as they are, and as they (women) mean them to be, in a happily reformed future. This future shall be of woman's making, she has designed it through her years of long-suffering; she will carry it out.²⁸

Like *Woman's* introductory editorial, *Shafts* begins its address to the reader by constructing a textual identity for itself based upon a series of negative assertions which are, in turn, founded upon a knowledge of the prevalent periodical market. *Shafts* identifies itself against the main types of magazine or paper the reader would be likely to have encountered. However, once *Shafts* had established its difference

from existing periodical forms, it is much clearer about its gendered appeal. While *Woman's* construction of modern woman 'not as she might be, but as we find her' dismisses the notion of advancement, *Shafts* uses this discourse of feminine progress as a framework for its text and reader-appeal.

Given the number of magazines vying for reader attention in the booming periodicals market of the 1890s, one must ask how these publications sought to persuade the reader to choose one rather than another from the crowded shelves of the railway bookstall or newsvendor. In the first instance the cover of the magazine functioned as an enticement to buy. The editorial of January 1st, 1891 demonstrates that the magazine was well aware of the importance of an attention-grabbing cover.

As regards the colour of WOMAN'S wrapper an explanation is due. In these days of competition prominence is essential. With a view to prominence on the bookstalls and counters of newsagents we were at first obliged to take an original and conspicuous colour. This we shall tone down by degrees, and by March or April we hope to be able to produce something more artistically attractive.²⁹

Barthes' suggestion that the very title of a magazine or paper will '...in an abstract, but no less informative way'³⁰ influence the reading of the material contained within it provides a useful starting point for looking at the way in which *Woman* set out to construct its readership. Women's magazines, which are aimed at a very sex-specific market, have tended to use their titles to signal their status as 'a gender-genre apart from all other media'.³¹ While it may appear to be an obvious assertion that the choice of gendered titles is an integral part of the code of the woman's magazine, the act of choosing a specific title can, in fact, reflect the historically constructed values of the society in which it is produced.

Prior to 1875 the titles of the women's magazines tended to consist of variations on the term 'Lady' rather than 'Woman'.³² This began to change in the latter decades of the century, as Margaret Beetham observes: 'That country dance of meanings in which the words "lady" and "woman" changed places was in full swing in the feminine press of the 1880s and 1890s.'³³ That 'woman' become an acceptable term for magazines does not necessarily mean that it had been embraced wholesale - other magazines still traded on more honorific terms such as 'Lady' and 'Queen'. Cynthia White's extensive bibliography of women's magazines notes only 12 out of 120 published during 1800 and 1900 containing the word 'woman' (and 10 of these were launched after 1887).³⁴ Beetham suggests that the term 'woman' was part of a wider

shift in attitudes whereby it became 'a positive term for "all classes", not least in the magazine entitled *Woman*.⁶⁵ Certainly, one may regard the use of the term as a means of erasing class difference: *Woman's* initial appeal was ostensibly founded upon a notion of femininity transcending class difference. However, such an appeal was largely illusory. As I shall discuss in more detail in Chapter Three, *Woman* itself published articles by writers such as Marie Corelli and Eliza Lynn Linton, lamenting the debasement of the term 'lady', and questioning the current definitions of 'woman' - arguments which were particularly informed by class difference.³⁶

Woman's subtitle - 'For All Sorts And Conditions Of Women' - which implied the erasure of class difference was clearly derived from the 1882 novel by Walter Besant, *All Sorts and Conditions of Men*.³⁷ This work, a bestseller of its day, would have been instantly recognizable to the middle-class reader in 1890. Indeed, when the magazine ran a competition asking the readers to vote for the book which had the 'most lasting and healthy influence' on them, Besant's novel came a close second, with Edna Lyall's *Donovan* just pipping him to the post.³⁸ Paradoxically, the subtitle offers one of the stronger indications that the magazine was NOT intended for all sorts and conditions of women. Besant's novel, concerning the activities of Angela Messenger,³⁹ an heiress who disguises herself as a dressmaker to go amongst the people who live in her houses and work in her brewery, chronicles the various ways in which she seeks to improve both them and their situation. The novel operates using two distinct and basically contradictory discourses; the assertion that all men are equal is undercut by a discourse which holds that without the intervention of the middle class, the working classes were not only helpless but in a state of ignorance and inertia.

Besant's novel does not assign any valid culture or belief system to the working classes, who are portrayed as being too easily carried away by the rhetoric of organizations seeking to mould them to their own ends. That middle-class intervention was seen as not only acceptable but desirable is exemplified in the speech of one of the working-class characters, who muses:

Sometimes I think...that the working man's best friends would be the swells, if they could be got hold of... They're well brought up too, most of them, civil in their manner, and disposed to be friendly if you're neither standoffish nor familiar, but know yourself and talk according.⁴⁰

Much is made of the theme of class and individual potential. Lord Jocelyn de Breton adopts a working-class child as an 'experiment' to bring him up in the 'all the culture, the tastes, the ideas...' of the upper classes and then to return him to his people as a

'prophet' to preach discontent with the working-class lot and extol the values of the upper class. Lord Jocelyn de Breton confides that while he supposes there are all sorts and conditions of men "...to me, and to men brought up like you and me, I do not understand how there can be any but one sort and one condition".⁴²

It is precisely this inability to conceive of alternative class positions that is mirrored in *Woman* throughout its early years. The magazine, while asserting its universal appeal, clearly found it difficult to break away from the conventional representations of middle-class femininity offered in the established ladies' press. If it was aiming to cater to all sorts and conditions of women, they were nevertheless largely absent from its pages. Moreover, Besant's novel represents the feminine influence exercised by Angela as entirely dependent upon male inspiration and guidance. While Angela spends her inheritance freely, it is her lover Harry's idea to build a 'Palace of Delight' (which was generally supposed to have inspired the People's Palace in Whitechapel⁴³). As she asks herself,

"Who would have thought of the Palace, except - him? Could I - could any woman? I could have given away money; that is all: I could have been robbed and cheated: but such an idea, so grand, so simple - it is a man's, not a woman's."⁴⁴

Angela's belief in masculine originality and endeavour as opposed to a derivative and dependent femininity was also echoed throughout the pages of *Woman*, in both its editorial material and in readers' own contributions.⁴⁵ *Woman* acknowledged other feminine roles, notably those of the 'advanced' woman and the 'educated' woman or 'bluestocking'. However, such individuals were invariably held up for contempt or ridicule. Thus, in the first few years of its publication, *Woman* projected the desirability of a certain kind of woman:

The women whose good-will we value are those who are content and proud to be women, and to set a noble example to husbands, sons, and brothers, encouraging and inspiring them in private and public life, not by striving - and so often failing - to get ahead of them in every sphere, but, as far as they are fitted to do so, by working with them, earning the respect, and not the ridicule, of all men whose respect is worth having, and thus ennobling the world in which Providence has called upon them to play an important part.⁴⁶

By March 1896 the subtitle changed to 'For Up-to-date Womankind'. While clearly reflecting the fact that by this period woman's position was undergoing profound

changes (a fact that any 'progressive' magazine could hardly afford to ignore), the precise nature of what constituted this modernity was not made entirely clear.

The motto 'Forward! But Not Too Fast' appeared in all issues of *Woman* throughout the 1890s and was printed in the form of a quotation. Although I have been unable to trace the origins of the motto, it is possible that it may have emanated from Annie Besant, as this comment from the magazine's 'Birthday Editorial' of 1891 suggests:

'Forward but not too fast' is our motto, and we agree with Mrs Besant that when women have shown themselves to be equal with men in the more remunerative trades and professions it will be time enough for them to agitate for equality in other respects.⁴⁷

The use of the quotation marks in the motto invested it with an authority it might not otherwise have had had it been presented merely as part of the magazine's captions. As a self-styled 'progressive' magazine, *Woman* needed to acknowledge the changing position of women and the arguments surrounding this. The tone of the magazine was, however, ambivalent about the nature of woman's status. By presenting the motto as a quotation it managed to at once espouse the cause of progress and militate against it. It was able to appeal to a greater number of women by not actually saying anything anyone could object to, and thereby managed to say nothing. As Bennett recounts, the motto was intended to 'indicate an editorial belief that the status and activities of women ought to be raised and enlarged.'⁴⁸ This did not, however, mean that the magazine embraced the idea of women's advancement unambiguously. Bennett describes how

... we were so determined to offend the feelings of nobody that our columns almost never indicated in what direction progress ought to be made. No downright opinion on any really controversial topic affecting the relations of the sexes was ever expressed.⁴⁹

Bennett's comments reveal an awareness of the need to temper new ideas with a more anodyne editorial approach to avoid alienating readers. With a mass-readership, *Woman* could not hope to please everyone unless it adopted a cautious editorial line. Moreover, as a commercial magazine, *Woman* was itself part of the dominant social order which demands for women's rights threatened to disrupt.

Clearly, the need for caution posed difficulties for *Woman* which professed to embrace the idea of feminine progress. While the magazine certainly did not ignore social and cultural developments, its treatment of them was often highly ambivalent.⁵⁰ Indeed, one of *Woman's* defining characteristics is the plurality of discursive threads, whereby even within a single article dealing with, for example, female employment, it is possible to identify several different and conflicting positions. As John Stokes has pointed out in his discussion of New Journalism's response to the 'New Woman' literature of the 1890s,

It made good commercial and political sense for a liberal paper to show interest in this 'advanced' work, to borrow its sensational aspects, to capture the minority readership, while sometimes repudiating it in a show of egalitarian inquiry.⁵¹

This double-edged approach, at once embracing and repudiating new ideas, should not be seen merely as a cynical commercial ploy on the part of the producers; readers, too, might well have found the shifts in society contradictory. While Bennett said in his journals that 'To edit a Lady's paper, even a relatively advanced one is to foster conventionality and hinder progress regularly once a week',⁵² it was precisely this conventionality that many of the magazine's readers found so reassuring. As I demonstrate in Chapter Three, the 1890s was a period of intense social change, not least for women, and this often resulted in deeply ambiguous feelings towards feminine 'advancement' which, for *Woman*, was frequently linked with women's entry into the labour market. Moreover, from the middle of the nineteenth century the women's magazine had fulfilled the role of advisor to the newly created and socially aspirational lower-middle classes. Such a readership relied upon their magazines to provide them with the social knowledge to adapt to their newly acquired status. They were neither confident nor secure enough to think about altering the status quo. Any overt attempt on the part of the magazine to introduce radical change into such a newly acquired position could only be viewed with suspicion and dismay.

In its birthday editorial of 1891, *Woman* abandoned its earlier attempt to construct a broad appeal to 'all sorts of women', claiming to have enjoyed great success following on from its discovery of 'a large class of young women of the middle and upper classes ...'⁵³ By 1903, *Woman* asserted that

It is great satisfaction to us to know that we possess a subscription list containing the names of the most prominent ladies in the kingdom, thus showing that the paper has a right to hold a place in every home.⁵⁴

Such constructions of class-specific readership were not, as I shall demonstrate in Chapter Four, an entirely accurate representation of the actual readership. In fact, while *Woman's* address was predominantly aimed at a broadly upper- to upper-middle-class reader, it was not exclusive. There is evidence within both the editorial text and in readers' responses that the magazine drew its readership from a more diverse social background than the dominant editorial address would suggest.

Despite claims to high and broad readerships, all women's magazines were, in fact, targeting a much narrower band of women than they claimed, as Evelyn March-Phillips pointed out;

Women's newspapers, as a matter of fact, have no very large circulation among those of wide social opportunity, who gather their fashions from dressmakers, supplying their own exclusive information, and who hear the gossip of the society papers at first hand; nor among others, thoughtful and cultivated, helping to do the graver work of the world, who pass them by, so that while a polite fiction prevails that every reader is on the tip-top pinnacle of fashion, the mass is mainly drawn from the more mediocre of the middle and upper-middle classes, who perhaps possess fewer natural means of widening and educating their minds.⁵⁵

March-Phillips' analysis of the market for women's magazines suggests a readership situated in the social group most likely to be socially mobile, aspirational, and therefore least likely to want to challenge the status quo. Moreover, this is the class of women for whom technological and social improvements had meant a marked increase in leisure, but for whom there was little to fill the resulting void. Indeed, as Dorothy Thompson has pointed out, while there was considerable expansion in the opportunities for women to enter the public sphere of employment, many women of the middle-classes were concerned that the shift in feminine roles would compromise their domestic position.⁵⁶

In the second volume of his autobiography Fitzroy Gardner maintained that the magazine was 'not a feminist organ ... but at one time, if I may say so, distinguished for its originality and enterprise, and widely quoted.'⁵⁷ For Gardner, then, any 'progressive' element in *Woman* was located in the originality of its contents rather than in any espousal of female advancement. Indeed, as Margaret Beetham has pointed out:

Since it refused the feminist analysis of women's rights, *Woman* rejected the journalistic models offered by the small feminist press. Instead it drew on the contradictions endemic in the periodical discourses of ladyship to construct its version of the 'intelligent but womanly woman.'⁵⁸

Of course, as *Woman* was at pains to assert, the magazine was a commercial venture⁵⁹, and as such could not afford to take up the 'journalistic models offered by the small feminist press.' The 'more mediocre of the middle and upper-middle classes' were not likely to be attracted to overtly feminist periodicals, as Evelyn March-Phillips commented in 1894:

Those publications which eliminate the frivolous and the homely, and exist for the advancement of a 'cause,' are read by suffragists and teetotalers, but are as Greek and Hebrew to the general public. Nor do they pay, because from the nature of their being, they fail to attract the indispensable advertisers.⁶⁰

One of the main arguments of this study is that *Woman* was under considerable commercial pressure to please investors, advertisers and readers, and that this inevitably resulted in tensions within the text. A paragraph which appeared in 1894, under the heading 'THE TIMES' and Lady-Journalism', indignantly refuted the newspaper's imputation that 'certain ladies' journals' were being run solely in the interests of their advertisers.⁶¹ However, there is ample evidence of conflicting discourses both between, and even within, individual articles.

Evelyn March-Phillips' assessment of the typical audience for mass-produced women's magazines, an audience, moreover, spread across both social and geographical boundaries, underlines the difficulties inherent in constructing an appeal that could both be broad and addressed to 'intelligent womanly woman', as well as combining a recognition of 'the progressive tendency of the age'⁶² with the need to avoid alienating a readership drawn from the more conservative of the social groups. Given the problems faced by a self-professed commercial paper in negotiating these needs, it is surprising that *Woman* contained as many 'progressive' features as it did. In the concluding section of this chapter, therefore, I consider whether this means that we should reconsider the parameters of what we define as a progressive woman's paper.

The inclusivity of *Woman's* introductory editorial gave way, a year later, to a more negative form of address. Instead of defining its ideal reader *Woman* described a stereotypical 'unwomanly woman', who had been pilloried elsewhere in its columns

and who hardly needed to be put forward as the type of reader for whom *Woman* was not intended:

The aggressive type of strong-minded woman who insists upon doing everything that men do and displays a morbid love of discovering grievances and disadvantages - frequently imaginary and occasionally real - under which women exist is, we are told disgusted with us ... For her we have never intended and never wish to cater.⁶³

Margaret Beetham has suggested that 'Positively defining the female reader for this new kind of magazine proved much more difficult.'⁶⁴ Just as *Woman* had difficulty in positively defining its readership, so it also defined itself in opposition to other, undesirable, journalistic writing. In the same editorial, the magazine was at pains to disassociate itself from certain other periodicals which, it claimed, made

... a *specialité* of pruriency or vulgarity, or both, by publishing, under pretense of social reform, articles setting forth some new doctrine or new grievance in intentionally and unnecessarily plain and indelicate language; paragraphs professing to give details of scandals in the private life of members of the Royal Family and the aristocracy, emanating without an atom of foundation from the fertile brains of discharged footmen or gutter-journalists, or adaptations from the scum of French literature.⁶⁵

In a crowded market, *Woman* needed to distinguish itself from its rivals. This was as great a consideration as finding a new audience. The quotation demonstrates that in its early years *Woman* constructed its textual identity, as well as that of its intended readership, by setting itself and its readership up in opposition to existing forms of writing and types of femininity. Such an approach was clearly necessary in finding and establishing a niche within the periodicals market as well as a stable readership.

Going beyond an account of textual changes to establish the business history of *Woman* is, as for many other popular magazines of the past, particularly difficult. The absence of company records, subscriber lists, and archive material of any substance serves to underline the ephemeral nature of such periodicals.⁶⁶ Even individuals intimately linked with *Woman* - such as its director Mrs Charlotte Talbot Coke who, along with two of her daughters and her son-in-law, was also closely involved in its text and production - are not credited with the association in reference works like *Who Was Who*, although Talbot Coke's association with the more up-market journals,

Queen and *The Ladies' Field*, is acknowledged.⁶⁷ Although *Woman* was not an unsuccessful paper, its status as a popular penny weekly was not, it seems, sufficiently significant for those connected with it, whether as producers or readers, to acknowledge it.

Unlike the Talbot Cokes, *Woman's* founding editor, Fitzroy Gardner, was not reticent about his involvement with the magazine. Gardner's editorship contains two distinct sub-periods: the first of these lasted roughly four years (1890-3), during which time *Woman* was at its most interesting and diverse. The second sub-period (1894-6), coinciding with a financial crisis which I discuss further on, consisted of a rather half-hearted attempt to adapt the magazine to the challenge of rival magazines.⁶⁸

From January 3rd, to July 17th, 1890 *Woman* was published by James McDonald. From July 24th, 1890 it was published by the 'WOMAN' PUBLISHING CO. from the same address. Shortly after the changeover had been made, a notice appeared towards the back of the magazine:

TO OUR READERS

Several friends of WOMAN having noticed that the paper has recently been taken over by a Company, have written to ask whether any shares can be purchased. The Directors of the 'WOMAN' PUBLISHING COMPANY, LIMITED, have decided to reserve for a few weeks one-fourth of the total number of shares for those of our readers who may wish to participate in the future profits of what promises to be a very profitable undertaking. The shares are one pound each ...⁶⁹

A few weeks later the magazine warned would-be investors that 'Applications for less than ten shares should arrive at the Office of the Company ... not later than 10th September. After that date no applications can be considered for such small numbers.'⁷⁰ Interest in the new venture seems to have been tempered with caution, as the final notice which appeared in the issue dated September 18th suggests:

SHARES IN THE 'WOMAN' PUBLISHING COMPANY, LIMITED

The Directors cannot make any more allotments of less than *five one pound shares* each, but will reserve a few hundred more for those who, desirous of participating in the venture, may send in applications during the present month for five or more shares. The directors hope by thus giving a certain number of readers a proprietary interest in the journal to increase the staff of

voluntary workers that is so actively and considerately engaged in making *WOMAN* known far and wide, and thus increasing the circulation.⁷¹

The price, of £1 per share, of which readers were expected to purchase five or more, offers some indication of the sort of readers *Woman* imagined, or hoped, it was attracting. Of course, it is impossible to tell to what extent the share flotation appealed to the readership. Certainly, from the stated intention not to make any more allotments of five pounds *or less*, it would seem likely that the smaller investor was more prevalent. This notice is also particularly interesting for the manner in which it appealed to investors - by linking it specifically to notions of voluntary work and patronage, and by assuming a common interest in increasing the circulation. While it is difficult to assess the extent to which *Woman* was successful in its appeal to the readership, it is certainly the case that the share flotation enabled Arnold Bennett to purchase a position on the staff of the paper.

As well as allowing Bennett to buy a position on the paper, the flotation of the 'Woman' Publishing Company also brought in the Talbot Cokes. According to his great-grandson, Colonel John Talbot Coke⁷² purchased controlling interests in several women's newspapers in order to please his wife, Charlotte, who was already an established journalist, writing a column on 'Home Decoration' in *Queen*. Mrs C. S. Peel, who later edited *Woman*, and was also Charlotte's cousin, described how

Her articles were read all over the world. Wherever English women were, there were decorative schemes chosen for them by Mrs Talbot Coke.⁷³

According to his grandson, David Coke Steel, it was well known in the family that Talbot Coke never ceased to regret his decision, as the magazines absorbed large amounts of his capital, with an uncertain return. However, when they began, some time in 1890 or 1891, Talbot Coke seems to have been reasonably optimistic. In 1891 he wrote in his personal diary that:

... We have a very important venture now on in starting a new paper called 'Hearth and Home'⁷⁴ in connection with Beeton's 'Myra' Publications - capital is £10,000; most of which I shall have to find.- £5,000 is paid for the three 'Myra' Publications on to which the new one will be grafted.⁷⁵ Mayson M. Beeton and Charlotte will be the ruling spirits.⁷⁶

It would appear that Talbot Coke and his wife were already involved as directors of *Woman* - a photographic portrait of Charlotte Talbot Coke appeared in the 'Birthday

Editorial' of January that year in which she was identified as one of the directors of the 'WOMAN' Publishing Co. Ltd.⁷⁷

The other major member of the group which owned controlling interests in *Woman* was Mayson Moss Beeton.⁷⁸ Mayson Beeton's parents were Isabella and Samuel Beeton, who together had made such a pioneering success of *The Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine*. In 1866, after the crash of the banking house Overend, Gurney, Samuel Beeton became licensee in bankruptcy to Ward, Lock and Tyler, a rival publishing firm.⁷⁹ Ward, Lock and Tyler took on Beeton's liabilities as well as his assets, which meant that all existing copyrights, all magazines and the use of his name became the property of the publishing firm. Beeton never used his own name in his subsequent publishing ventures. The association with Ward, Lock and Tyler ended acrimoniously in 1875-76 after Beeton had attacked the firm in *Jon Duan*, Beeton's Annual of 1874. The 'Myra' publications to which Talbot Coke refers are most certainly linked to Samuel Beeton; in fact, a notice advertising the arrival of *Myra's Journal of Dress and Fashion* appeared in *Jon Duan*.⁸⁰

The business of publishing women's magazines was not cheap, as Talbot Coke's entry for November 1891 demonstrates:

C. came back from London, having been very busy with her journalistic work. Her chief paper 'Hearth and Home' is progressing and appears to be more hopeful. Though we have spent our £10,000 Capital, and have to issue an additional £3,000.⁸¹

In September 1895, Talbot Coke noted that the competition from several new magazines, which he leaves unnamed, was having some effect upon profits, although they were still able to pay out a dividend.⁸² Up to this point *Woman* was still a separate concern from the 'Myra' publications of Beeton and Co. However, it too had been suffering from the competition that Talbot Coke had noted earlier, and in December 1896 he wrote that:

Beeton and Co. have had considerable losses; ... 'Woman' has got to the end of its capital and can be carried on no longer. We are arranging for its amalgamation with Beeton and Co.⁸³

Woman's more 'advanced' approach clearly not only made it more vulnerable to the competition of the popular domestic magazines of Harmsworth and Pearson, but also marked it off from the other papers under the control of Beeton and the Talbot Cokes.

The financial set-back, which had affected all the papers in the group, was used as an excuse to bring *Woman* more into line with the domestic note that characterized *Hearth and Home* and *Myra's Journal*. Fitzroy Gardner describes how those in control of the magazine refused to consider investing further:

It was, and still is, my opinion that with addition of capital we could easily have survived the crisis. Others did not agree with me and were in favour of making it more 'popular,' which meant appealing to another class of reader. I gradually relinquished control of the paper in favour of Arnold Bennett,⁸⁴ who had for some time been my very able assistant, as well as contributor of some of the best reading matter, and who took over the entire control on my disposing of my interest.⁸⁵

Indeed, Gardner's 'gradual relinquishing' of *Woman* marked the second sub-period of his editorship during which the magazine ceased to be as lively and diverse. The period immediately leading up to his departure seems to have been one of some tension; Bennett's journal entry for November 17th, 1896 suggests:

[It was] a fortnight of secret conclaves suddenly hushed at the sound of a door opening; of poring over figures and lists of names and correspondence; of devising schemes, each one superseded by a better, a more perfect one; of planning and counter-planning ...⁸⁶

While Gardner suggests that his resignation was a voluntary one, based upon his disagreement with the proposed changes to the magazine, Bennett's letter to George Sturt offers a somewhat different version of events:

Since Gardner's departure for *Amerique*, facts have transpired to the effect that he has through sheer carelessness played hell financially with the paper. It is, however, a fine property when he has done his worst. He has been forced to offer his resignation, and the people who own a controlling interest in *Woman* and in two other women's papers are going to make one big company which is going to be a big success ...⁸⁷

Although there is no way of establishing which account is correct, it would appear that Bennett submitted to the demands placed on him by *Woman's* directors.⁸⁸ Indeed, he embarked upon his new career as editor with enthusiasm; writing again to Sturt, Bennett boasted that, 'Touching *Woman*, I do trust to make a much better thing of it.'⁸⁹

Bennett had been assistant editor, either from 'the very end of 1893', according to Anita Miller,⁹⁰ or from January 1st, 1894, according to James Hepburn,⁹¹ after he had persuaded his father to invest £300⁹² in the company.⁹³ Bennett refers, quite unashamedly, to the financial transaction which secured him his position:

I had not bombarded the paper, from the shelter of a pseudonym, with articles of unexampled brilliance. The editor had not invited his mysterious and talented contributor into the editorial sanctum, and there informed him that his exclusive services, at a generous salary, were deemed absolutely essential to the future welfare of the organ which he had hitherto assisted only on occasion. I had never written a line for the paper, not for any ladies' paper. I obtained the situation by 'influence,' and that of the grossest kind.⁹⁴

Fitzroy Gardner does not reveal this aspect of Bennett's employment, claiming instead that he joined 'in consequence of my advertisement for an assistant editor.'⁹⁵ Bennett's apparent honesty seems rather disingenuous when he goes on to describe how he showed the editor (Gardner) samples of his work and a list of papers he had worked on, and how;

These specimens proved rather more than satisfactory. The editor adored smartness; smartness was the 'note' of his paper; and he discovered several varieties of smartness in my productions.⁹⁶

Bennett leaves the reader with the impression that even if his father had failed to put up the money for the position, his literary skill would have won it for him. Of course, writing his autobiography in 1902, only a couple of years after leaving *Woman* to pursue his ambitions to be a novelist, Bennett seems to have felt the need to insist on his literary talent. Some years later, after he was well established as a literary figure, Bennett simply states that

... I succeeded, after a very few years, to the editorship, simply because the editor wished to retire and there was no one else handy to take his place. Merit or talent had little or nothing to with my sensational rise in the world.⁹⁷

Gardner seems to have been more impressed by Bennett's capacity for work; 'After we had worked together for a week or two I was convinced that he was a man of no ordinary mental capacity; and his industry was an inspiration.'⁹⁸

Bennett had found his position as assistant editor much easier than he did the duties of editor. His description of the onerous task of editing *Woman* offers a picture of the responsibilities he took on when accepting the editorship:

But to devise the contents of an issue, to plan them, to balance them; to sail with this wind and tack against that; to keep a sensitive finger on the faintly beating pulse of the terrible many-headed patron to walk in a straight line through a forest black as midnight; to guess the riddle of the circulation-book week by week; to know by instinct why Smiths sent in a repeat order, or why Simpkins was ten quires less; to keep one eye on the majestic march of the world, and the other on the vagaries of a bazaar-reporter who has forgotten the law of libel: these things, and seventy-seven others, are the real journalism. It is these things that make editors sardonic, grey, unapproachable.⁹⁹

Distinguishing between what he termed the 'executive' duties of writing and directing other writers which he had performed as assistant editor, and the 'legislative' responsibilities of the editor, Bennett suggested that while he no longer had a peaceful existence (he was paid £150 p.a. for one full day and four half days as an assistant editor¹⁰⁰), this was compensated by the power he now wielded.

Under Bennett's editorship *Woman* became increasingly domestic in tone. The diversity which marked the magazine's feature articles and competitions under Gardner's control was much less apparent, presumably in response to the competition posed by the domestic weeklies published by Newnes and Harmsworth. The narrowing of focus which occurred under Bennett's editorship would appear to have been reinforced by his willingness to cater to his investors who were clearly anxious that *Woman* should emulate the success of the new magazines. It seems unlikely that Bennett had many scruples about changing the magazine. Advising the would-be female journalist in his *Journalism for Women*, which he published in 1898 (while still editing *Woman*), Bennett claims that 'The Editor'

...has no interest in you [the woman journalist]. What interests him is his circulation, his influence, his advertisement department.¹⁰¹

It is interesting to note, at this point, the myth that seems to have built up around Bennett's editorship of *Woman*. Margaret Drabble, for one, regarded Bennett's involvement with the paper as a high point in *Woman's* 'advanced' journalism.¹⁰² Certainly, she is not alone in thinking this - Bennett's journals and letters suggest that

he, too, was under the impression that he was an innovative editor. Clotilde De Stasio offers an image of Bennett as proto-feminist which is based more upon Bennett's own novels and journal entries, and Drabble's rather unreliable biography, than upon a sustained reading of the magazine itself.¹⁰³ For example, De Stasio's statement that

When Bennett took up the editorship, he set out to improve the standard of the paper, meeting the proprietors' request for 'certain modification in the existing policy.'¹⁰⁴

is based on claims made in Bennett's autobiography *The Truth about an Author*, which John Wain has described as '...less a biography than a swaggering anonymous manifesto'.¹⁰⁵ De Stasio implies that Bennett raised the standard of *Woman* to one which appealed to more educated readers, supporting her contention by quoting Drabble's assertion that there were '...fewer purely domestic pieces and more short fiction'.¹⁰⁶ From my own quantitative research into the space given over to various categories of writing in *Woman* I would argue that De Stasio and Drabble are mistaken in their analysis. As the analysis of writing forms in Appendix 2:1 shows, *Woman's* domestic content, which had begun to increase following the appearance of the new penny weeklies in 1893 and 1894, expanded further under Bennett's editorship. Feature articles which under Gardner's auspices dealt with a diverse array of topics, were subsumed by weekly practical and domestic columns. Moreover, there is no substantial evidence that fiction increased under Bennett's control.¹⁰⁷

Sometime during February or March of 1894 Bennett had taken over the literary review column 'Book Chat' under the pseudonym 'Barbara'.¹⁰⁸ Bennett's attitude towards his reviewing reveals much about his attitude towards the readership. According to his biographer Margaret Drabble, he 'boasted that his reviews, even if they were over the heads of most of his readers, attracted the attention of the literary world'.¹⁰⁹ Whether this was, in fact, the case is highly doubtful. Margaret Beetham suggests that Bennett's claims to be too highbrow for his readers are not substantiated by close reading of the reviews. Rather, she argues, 'Barbara's' reviews 'were not the disruptive presence he describes'.¹¹⁰ However, the reviews do seem to have been well-received. In a letter to his friend, George Sturt, in 1895, Bennett wrote:

In the next ten days I have thirty-five books to review. When I began to be 'Barbara' eighteen months ago the difficulty was to get publishers to send books; the difficulty now is to make them understand that *Woman* can't review every blessed book issued, in a thousand word weekly article!¹¹¹

Moreover, it was Bennett's reviews that prompted one contemporary commentator to praise *Woman's* attempts to 'lead literary opinion among its readers.'¹¹²

At this time Bennett also became *Woman's* drama critic which, he complained, meant 'two nights a week, subsequent fatigue next day, and the labour of doing the criticism.'¹¹³ Bennett was also contributing under a variety of pseudonyms, some of which were his personal inventions, such as Sarah or Sal Volatile (an obvious journalistic joke, and the pseudonym he used when reviewing books in *Hearth & Home*), EAB, and Aunt Pen (on *Woman's* children's page). Other names were composite or office signatures, such as 'Marjorie', 'Cecile' and 'Lady Vain' which he shared with other members of the editorial team. The scholarly confusion over Bennett's pseudonyms is indicative of one of the major problems in researching such popular periodicals.¹¹⁴

Ida Meller¹¹⁵ had previously contributed to *Woman*, and her work, according to Bennett, had caught his eye. Following his promotion to editorship Bennett approached her with a view to hiring her as Sub-Editor. On December 4th, 1896 Bennett wrote to ask

Are you open to consider the offer of a regular engagement here in the capacity of Sub-editor? I should require your services about two and a half days in the week. Perhaps you will let me have a reply at once, as I find it necessary to make an arrangement instantly.

I have, of course, had no personal experience of yourself, and I should like you to know that my offer is made solely on the strength of the small paragraphs that you send us from time to time. I have gathered from the way in which these are done that you would be likely to suit me.¹¹⁶

Meller accordingly joined *Woman's* staff and, indeed, succeeded Bennett as editor of the paper.

As Bennett's career as an author and reviewer began to take off, he felt constrained by the limitations imposed by his position. Writing to Thomas Lloyd Humberstone¹¹⁷ in 1899, Bennett remarked that

Just now I am consumed with a fever to chuck up women's journalism utterly and go in for fiction and criticism only. ... Not that I object to editing a woman's paper and looking after nursery notes. It is not that. I am in editorial

control of my paper, but it is only one of several belonging to a company, and I can't tolerate working for a company unless I am managing director or God almighty or something of that kind.¹¹⁸

Within twelve months Bennett had resigned, being succeeded by his sub-editor Ida Meller in October, 1900. Little information is available on Meller: according to James Hepburn, Ida Meller's niece described her as 'a very capable woman whose shyness precluded any startling success as a journalist.'¹¹⁹ During her year as editor, Meller made a few significant changes to the format of the magazine. She made alterations to the presentation of correspondence, which are detailed in Chapter Four, reintroduced competitions and doubled the proportion of fiction (see Appendix 2:1).

Similarly, little information exists for C Hall Fielden, who was *Woman's* editor from September 18th, 1901, to April, 1903. As well as editing the magazine, Hall Fielden also collaborated with Herbert Sweetland in producing several serial fictions for the magazine. Hall Fielden had a fairly profound effect upon the format of the magazine. Following his assumption of editorial control *Woman's* pages were broken up into busier, much chattier, layouts. Overall, the tone of the magazine became increasingly frivolous, and articles focused more heavily on dress and appearance than they had done under the previous editors. The chatty note was introduced by an editorial, entitled 'A Great Surprise', which appeared in what was probably the first issue of *Woman* under his editorship:

When you open this issue of your favourite paper you will of course be struck by the many innovations. You will probably think *Why these changes when everything in WOMAN was so good?* Now I'm going to ask you a favour, and that is, look right through the paper, and don't pass judgment until you have come to the last page. Then criticize as hard as you like and I do not fear the result.¹²⁰

In fact, as I discuss in Chapter Three, the changes did not meet with unanimous approbation. Hall Fielden's editorial control ceased in April 1903 when he was succeeded by Charlotte Talbot Coke's cousin, Dorothy Peel.¹²¹

According to her autobiography, Mrs Peel's first encounter with *Woman* was as a reader and participant in one of the magazine's regular competitions. Mrs Peel's experience offers a useful illustration of the peculiar relationship between producers and consumers of such magazines, and her account of it is worth quoting in full:

Now, on the way to stay with friends, I had bought at a railway bookstall a clever little paper called *Woman*, which later on was edited by Mr Arnold Bennett. A prize was offered for a Dress Article. I opened my travelling-bag, found pen, ink, and paper (there were no fountain pens then), wrote an article, and won the prize. A week or so later I received a letter asking if I would care to call on the Editor with a view to writing further articles. From that time, except that I still lived at home and was boarded and lodged, I became financially independent.¹²²

Although I have been unable to locate Mrs Peel's winning article, this does not invalidate her claim, as many if not all early competitions figured pseudonymic entries, and the lists of winners' names and addresses cannot be regarded as complete. Around 1895 Mrs Peel worked in the offices of *Hearth & Home*, although she also contributed to various other women's magazines, *Queen* and *Woman* among them.

She became editor of *Woman* on, or about, April 29th, 1903, that issue being the first to feature her name as editor on the cover, and to contain an editorial over her own signature. Prior to this date no editor had been named, let alone explicitly advertised on the front cover. No doubt this departure from *Woman's* usual practice of editorial anonymity was due to Mrs Peel's enormous success as the author of *10s a Head for House Books*, which was composed largely from a series of articles already published by her in her columns for *Hearth & Home*.¹²³ This rather oddly-titled book offered a detailed account of catering for a family on an allowance of 10s. per person per week¹²⁴, and was in continuous publication until the outbreak of the First World War rendered her accounts obsolete. Having advertised Mrs Peel's involvement on *Woman's* front cover it was, perhaps, inevitable that the magazine's contents should shift towards the domestic. Certainly, Mrs Peel altered the magazine's general tone and layout so that it not only focused more upon practical matters, but also became less fragmented than it had under Hall Fielden. Taking a more serious approach, *Woman* began to move away from discussions of marriage and appearance in favour of stressing the advantages of reader communality by encouraging readers to share their own experiences of both work and home life.

Mrs Peel was not only editor and managing director of *Woman* for three years from 1903, but also held these posts in connection with *Hearth & Home* and *Myra's Journal*. Mrs Peel claims her connection with the papers ended when, 'owing to the death of General Talbot Coke, the chief proprietor, the papers were closed down and I retired into private life...'¹²⁵ which seems to imply that the magazines ceased publication in 1906. This was certainly not the case; *Woman* and *Myra's Journal*

carried on until 1910, while *Hearth & Home* merged with *Vanity Fair* in 1914. Mrs Peel's reluctance to be more specific about her departure from the magazines may have had something to do with the manner in which she left them. Although it is frustratingly meagre, an entry in John Talbot Coke's diary for July 1905 hints at a less than amicable conclusion to their association:

... Had some long meetings of Beeton and Co. in the endeavour of arranging affairs after the very heavy losses sustained during Mrs Peel's editorship.¹²⁶

Unfortunately, there is no evidence to show why Peel's editorship was so unsuccessful. Her own explanation for leaving the magazine - the death of Talbot Coke - seems deliberately misleading. It was not the first time that Talbot Coke had suffered a financial set-back as a result of employing his relatives as editors and managers. His son-in-law, Langton Bayly,¹²⁷ who had previously edited two of the papers, had, according to Talbot Coke, 'completely broken down, and consequently lost us much money'.¹²⁸ Entries in his diary for January and February 1903, the year Mrs Peel took up her post, reveal that Talbot Coke visited London several times in his attempt to engage a new editor.

If there had been problems with Mrs Peel, the next editor seems to have been rather more successful. James J Nolan¹²⁹ had been assistant editor of *Hearth & Home* in 1897, before editing both it and *Woman* from 1906 to 1912.¹³⁰ Nolan was evidently an accomplished journalist, later becoming a Fellow of the Institute of Journalists. However, I have been able to find very little information about him. It is clear that under his control *Woman* became a much livelier paper and, insofar as its contents became more varied, resembles the early 1890s version of the magazine. Although retaining its domestic flavour, the magazine increased its general features and also espoused women's rights in a way that Mrs Peel had never really done.

In summary, then, *Woman's* history consisted of three main phases. The first, under Gardner's editorship, lasted for roughly the first four years when the magazine was somewhat progressive and feature-oriented. The appearance of new domestic penny weeklies clearly posed a challenge. Accordingly, in the later years of Gardner's editorship from around 1894, the magazine moved into its second, more domestic phase which was consolidated in 1897 when Bennett took on full editorial responsibilities, and continued under Meller's editorship. From 1901, when Hall Fielden assumed control, the domestic tone of the magazine not only intensified but also became more chatty. Mrs Peel persevered with the domestic format, albeit in a less fragmented and more serious format. The third phase in *Woman's* history

occurred under James Nolan's editorship, when the magazine returned to a more varied format. Of course, throughout its publication *Woman* attempted to maintain a consistent textual identity which means that although it is possible to identify shifts in the general character of the magazine such changes as I have described occurred gradually.

This history of *Woman's* editorial control provides a useful point of departure for exploring the magazine in more depth. Certainly, the role of the editor is a significant one, and as will be apparent from my discussion of shifts in the various writing forms in *Woman* across time, changes in editorial control often coincided with modifications to the magazine's form and content. However, I would not suggest that the editor forms the locus for the generation of meanings within the magazine: the magazine's multiple points of production - from publisher, printer and proprietor to editor, staff and freelance writers, and contributing or corresponding readers - renders it impossible to identify a single source of meaning within the text. As Margaret Beetham points out, 'It is true that the editor or proprietor may have tried to enforce a certain consistency, but the tight editorial control and policy which Dickens followed in *Household Words* was and is exceptional.'¹³¹ As will become apparent throughout this study, just as there were multiple points of production so there were also multiple reading positions within the text. Readers, moreover, were often active in developing their own interpretations of the text.

- ¹ Major Fitzroy Gardner OBE (1856 - 1936). Son of William Henry Gardner FRCS. Educated: Cheam, Rugby, Germany. Clerk to Court of Exchequer, later of Supreme Court. On the staff of the *Daily Chronicle*. Contributed articles to the *Pall Mall Gazette & Daily News* before he was 19. Edited *Woman* up to 1896. Went on to become manager to Beerbohm Tree and was connected with several other theatrical managements. Later in life he enlisted for the War aged 59. Obtained a commission and appointed Assistant Provost Marshall. Served in the Upper Rhine Army and Inter-allied Police in Upper Silesia. See *Who Was Who* Vol. III (Adam & Charles Black, 1947), p. 493.
- ² Harvester suggest that this was done in order to preserve the Registered title.
- ³ Francis Gribble (15.07.1862-10.10.1946). Educated privately and at Exeter College Oxford where he received a BA 1st class in Humanities in 1884. Went to London in 1887 to write for the newspapers. Original editor of *Phil May's Annual* and contributor to the *Fortnightly Review* etc. See *Who Was Who*, Vol. IV (Adam & Charles Black, 1952), p. 470.
- ⁴ Francis Gribble, *Seen in Passing: A Volume of Personal Reminiscences* (Ernest Benn, 1929), p. 101.
- ⁵ Fitzroy Gardner, *Days and Ways of an Old Bohemian* (John Murray, 1921), p. 96.
- ⁶ *Ibid.* p. 100.
- ⁷ *Ibid.* p. 100.
- ⁸ 'An Apology', *Woman* 03.01.1890, p. 3.
- ⁹ Kate Jackson, 'The *Tit-Bits* Phenomenon: George Newnes, New Journalism and the Periodical Texts', *Victorian Periodicals Review* 30:3 (Fall 1997), p. 208.
- ¹⁰ *Woman* also offered similar insurance schemes - although their insurance against railway accidents did not appear in the magazine until 1902. See, for example, *Woman* 05.02.1902, p. 3.
- ¹¹ Kate Jackson, *op. cit.* p. 211.
- ¹² *Ibid.* p. 211.
- ¹³ Evelyn March-Phillips, 'The New Journalism', *The New Review*, XIII (1895), p. 182.
- ¹⁴ Fitzroy Gardner, *More Reminiscences of an Old Bohemian* (Hutchinson, 1926), p. 86.
- ¹⁵ The exhibition took place in 1891, with profits to be divided between the Distressed Irish Ladies' Fund (one of *Woman's* favourite charities throughout

the early 1890s) and the establishment of a 'Stitch in Time' holiday home for '...poor working women who are not fit cases for ordinary Convalescent Hospitals'; see, for example, the advertisement in *Woman* 02.10.1890, p. ii.

¹⁶ Gardner, *More Reminiscences of an Old Bohemian*, p. 86.

¹⁷ In fact, Mrs Fitzroy Stewart also featured in the magazine's lists of competition entrants, see for example, *Woman*: 28.03.1894, p.1 and 30.05.1894, p. 1.

¹⁸ Eden Philpotts (1862-1960) author and dramatist, was a friend of Arnold Bennett from 1897 and collaborated with him on several plays and sensation novels between 1900 and 1907. See James Hepburn (ed.), *Letters of Arnold Bennett Volume I: Letters to J. B. Pinker* (Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 38fn.

¹⁹ Gardner, *Days and Ways of an Old Bohemian*, p. 101.

²⁰ Arnold Bennett, 'Editing a Woman's Paper', *The Savour of Life: Essays in Gusto* (Cassell & Co., 1928), p. 142.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Gardner, *Days and Ways of an Old Bohemian*, pp. 101-2.

²⁴ Mary Frances Billington (died 27.08.1925), professional journalist, later president of the Society of Women Journalists between 1913 and 1919: see *Who Was Who* Vol. II 1916-1928 (A & C Black, 1929), p. 92. Published *Women in Journalism* in 1903. She is also the subject of an article in *Woman's* interview series, 'Notes on Notables' entitled 'A Successful Woman Journalist', 11.12.1890, pp. 4-5.

²⁵ Marie Adelaide Belloc, later Mrs Belloc Lowndes (1868-1947) daughter of Louis Belloc and Bessie Parkes and sister of Hilaire. A professional writer and journalist, Belloc was a close friend of Arnold Bennett: James Hepburn (ed.), *Letters of Arnold Bennett Vol. I. Letters to J. B. Pinker* (Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 125 fn 88. See also *Who Was Who* Vol. IV 1941-1950 (A & C Black, 1952), p. 84. For an example of Belloc's fiction see 'A Nihilist Lover', *Woman*, 08.10.1891, pp. 14-16.

²⁶ 'The Progress of "Woman"' in *Woman* 01.01.1891, pp. 3-5.

²⁷ *Woman*, 03.01.1890, p. 2.

²⁸ Margaret Sibthorp Shurmer, 'What the Editor Means' - prefaced with lengthy quote from Edith Ward's *Modern Society* (1892), in *Shafts* vol. III No. 1 (April 1895).

²⁹ *Woman* 01.01.1891, p. 4.

³⁰ Roland Barthes, *Image Music Text* (Fontana, 1977), p. 15.

31 Marjorie Ferguson, 'Imagery & Ideology: The Cover Photographs of Traditional Women's Magazines' in Gaye Tuchman, A K Daniels and J Benet (eds.), *Hearth and Home: Images of Women in the Mass Media* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 97.

32 I have been able to identify only four magazines using 'woman' as part of the title prior to *Woman's* publication: *The Englishwoman's Magazine* and *Christian Mother's Miscellany*; *Beeton's Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine*; *The Englishwoman's Review* and the *Englishwoman's Journal*.

33 Beetham, *A Magazine of Her Own*, p. 178.

34 Cynthia White, *Women's Magazines 1693-1968* (Michael Joseph, 1970) White's bibliography cites the following titles:

<i>Woman's World</i> (1866-1891)	<i>The Young Woman</i> (1892-1915)
<i>Woman's Gazette</i> (1875-1890)	<i>Woman at Home</i> (1893-1920)
<i>Woman's Gazette</i>	<i>Woman's Life</i> (1895-1934)
<i>& Weekly News</i> (1888-1891)	<i>Womanhood</i> (1898-1907)
<i>Woman's Penny Paper</i> (1888-1890)	<i>Woman's Weekly</i> (1898-1900)
<i>Woman</i> (1890-1912)	<i>Woman World</i> (1898-?)
<i>Woman's Herald</i> (1891-1893).	

35 Beetham, *A Magazine of Her Own*, p. 178.

36 Mrs Lynn Linton, 'An Ideal', *Woman*, 03.01.1890, p. 3 and 'Woman or Lady', *Woman*, 09.10.1890, p. 3. Marie Corelli, 'The Portrait of a Lady', *Woman*, 18.01.1890, pp. 2-4.

37 Walter Besant: *All Sorts & Conditions of Men* (Chatto & Windus: 1882; 1908 edition).

38 *Woman*, 05.04.1890, p. 3.

39 The name of Besant's heroine, who, like an angelic messenger descends to spread the message of reform, is a significant device.

40 Besant, *op. cit.* p. 313.

41 *Ibid.* p. 16.

42 *Ibid.* p. 18.

43 See, for example, Peter Keating *The Haunted Study: A Social History of the English Novel 1875-1914*, (Martin Secker and Warburg, 1989), pp. 28-9.

44 *Ibid.* p. 322.

45 See, for example, my discussion of the editorial comment on female employment in Chapter Three and readers' contributions to *Woman's* competitions in Chapter Four.

46 *Woman*, 01.01.1891, pp. 3-4.

47 *Ibid.*

48 Arnold Bennett, *The Truth about an Author* (Methuen, 1903: 3rd edn. 1928), p. 143.

49 *Ibid.* pp. 143-44.

50 For a detailed discussion of *Woman's* treatment of employment see Chapter Three.

51 John Stokes, *In the Nineties* (Hemel Hempstead;Herts: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1989), p. 22.

52 Entry for Sept. 12th 1898 in *Flowers*, *op. cit.* p. 80.

53 'The Progress of "Woman"' *Woman*, 01.01.1891, p. 3.

54 *Woman*, 14.01.1903, p. 3.

55 March-Phillips 'Women's Newspapers', *Fortnightly Review*, N.S. LVI (1894), p. 669.

56 Dorothy Thompson, 'Women, Work & Politics in Nineteenth-Century England: The Problem of Authority' in Jane Rendall (ed.), *Equal or Different: Women's Politics 1800-1900* (Basil Blackwell, 1987), pp. 57-81.

57 Gardner, *More Reminiscences of an Old Bohemian*, p.86.

58 Beetham, *A Magazine of Her Own*, p. 183.

59 Advertising, which occupied less than a fifth of the magazine's columns in its founding year in 1890, rose to fill wo-fifths of its space in 1891. It remained at this level throughout Gardner's editorship; but thereafter declined gradually (with a brief and limited recovery under Hall Fielden and Peel) to around a quarter of the magazine (See Appendix 2:1). The bare statistics conceal the extent of the crisis in the later years, when many of the columns categorized as advertising in fact consisted of *Woman's* self-advertising.

60 March-Phillips, 'Women's Newspapers', pp. 669-70.

61 *Woman*, 17.01.1894, p. 5.

62 *Woman*, 03.01.1890, p. 1.

63 *Woman* 01.01.1891, p. 1.

64 Beetham, *A Magazine of Her Own*, p. 178.

65 *Woman*, 03.01.1890, p. 1.

66 See Reginald Pound, *Arnold Bennett: A Biography* (William Heinemann, 1952), p. 96 for his comments upon the impossibility of tracing company records for *Woman* which he ascribes to 'the less strict company laws of the period, though the name [of the Woman Publishing Company] is given in Kelly's Directories.

67 *Who Was Who*, Vol. I 1897-1916 (A & C Black, 1920), p. 146.

68 Quantitative indications of the change in character of *Woman* during this second sub-period of Gardner's editorship include: firstly, the fall in the proportion of General Interest features as a sub-category of feature articles from an average of 49% during 1890-3 to 36% during 1894-6 (see Appendix 3:1), inaugurating a longer-term shift to a more domestic focus for features (discussed further in Chapter Three); secondly, the beginning of a decline in the space given to reviews (see Appendix 2:1, discussed further in Chapter Six); and thirdly, the disappearance of editorials after 1893 (see Appendix 2:1).

69 *Woman*, 14.08.1890, p. 16.

70 *Woman* 04.09.1890, p. 16.

71 *Woman* 18.09.1890, p. 12.

72 Major-General John Talbot Coke (1841- 1912), as well as his interest in *Woman* Talbot Coke also commanded the 10th Brigade Natal Field Force in South Africa 1899-1901: *Who Was Who*, Vol. I (A & C Black, 1920), p. 146.

73 Mrs C S Peel, O.B.E., *Life's Enchanted Cup. An Autobiography: 1872-1933* (John Lane The Bodley Head, 1933), p. 64.

74 1891-1914 (merged with *Vanity Fair*).

75 Of these three "Myra" publications, one is *Myra's Journal*, one was eventually *Hearth & Home*, and the third is possibly *The Ladies' Magazine* as the following in *Irish Society* 03.02.1894 suggests: 'Messrs. Beeton and Co.'s publications maintain their well-earned reputations of being the leading fashion journals in England. *Hearth and Home* still continues to be popular, by reason of its careful editing and cheapness. *The Ladies' Magazine*, for February, is exhaustive in its information of the fashionable world...' (clipping contained in JTC scrapbook, no page number).

76 From the unpublished personal diary of Major General John Talbot Coke; courtesy of David Coke Steel Esq., Trusley Old Hall, Trusley, Derbyshire (Referred to as JTC Diary), 07.02.1891.

77 *Woman* 01.01.1891. A portrait of Colonel Talbot Coke appeared in the 'Birthday Editorial' of 1893 simply captioned 'Our Managing Director'.

78 Sir Mayson Moss Beeton (KBE 1920) 29.01.1865-24.06.1947. Son of Samuel Orchard and Isabella Beeton. Married Louie Swiney. *Who Was Who* Vol. IV (Adam & Charles Black, 1952) details Beeton's Special Commission to West Indies for *Daily Mail* in 1896, and assistance in Anti-Bounty League (securing abolition of sugar bounty system) between 1897-1902, as well as Presidency of Anglo-Newfoundland Development Co. of Grand Falls, Newfoundland 1903-13, but does not mention any involvement in women's journalism.

79 Nancy Spain, *The Beeton Story* (Ward, Lock & Co., 1956), p. 172.

80 *Myra's Journal* was initially run by Mrs Matilda Browne, a close friend of Beeton's who had edited his *The Young Englishwoman* under the pseudonym 'Myra'. Cynthia White suggests that in running *Myra's Journal*, Mrs Browne '...received a good deal of help from Beeton who advised her on many technical and financial matters and even arranged for Weldon's to publish it.' The fact that Samuel Beeton's son should be involved with the 'Myra' publications seventeen years later suggests that Beeton's involvement may have been more than that of friendly advisor, especially as the terms of his bankruptcy precluded him from trading on his own name, although, of course, this cannot be substantiated.

81 JTC diary 3.11.1891.

82 "Hearth and Home" has had much opposition from new papers, and the receipts have fallen off a bit. Yet we have been able to make a start by paying a dividend of 3, per cent on our Preference shares. JTC diary entry for 17.09.1895.

83 JTC diary 31.12.1896.

84 Assistant Editor 01.01.1894. Editor 1896 (Unofficially edited Dec. 1896, became official editor 6.1.97), resigned September 1900.

85 Gardner, *Days and Ways of an Old Bohemian*, p. 104.

86 Arnold Bennett, Entry for Tuesday, November 17th, 1896, Newman Flowers (ed.), *The Journals of Arnold Bennett 1896-1910* (Cassell, 1932), p. 24.

87 Letter to George Sturt, 18.11.1896, in James Hepburn (ed.), *Letters of Arnold Bennett Vol. II 1889-1915* (Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 69.

88 See Bennett (1903), *op. cit.* p. 85.

89 Letter to George Sturt, 02.12.1896, Hepburn, *op. cit.* p. 70.

90 Anita Miller, *Arnold Bennett, An Annotated Bibliography 1887-1932* (Garland Publishing, 1977), p. xxviii-xxix.

91 Hepburn, *op. cit.* p. 11fn.

92 Beetham, *A Magazine of Her Own*, p. 188.

93 It is, perhaps, mere coincidence that Bennett joined the magazine at roughly the same time that Gardner's editorship went into its second, more domestic, phase. Certainly, there is no direct evidence to suggest that Bennett himself was in any way responsible for *Woman's* changing tone.

94 Arnold Bennett, *The Truth about an Author* (Methuen, 1903: 3rd edn. 1928), pp. 51-52.

95 Gardner, *Days and Ways of an Old Bohemian*, p. 104.

96 Bennett (1903), *op. cit.* p. 52.

97 Arnold Bennett, 'Editing a Woman's Paper' in *The Savour of Life*, (Cassell, 1928), p. 141.

98 Gardner, *Days and Ways of an Old Bohemian*, p. 104.

99 Bennett, *The Truth about an Author*, pp. 85-86.

100 *Ibid.* p. 88.

101 E. A. Bennett, *Journalism for Women. A Practical Guide* (John Lane, The Bodley Head, 1898), p. 74.

102 Margaret Drabble, *Arnold Bennett* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1985).

103 For a more detailed discussion of the way in which various writers have misrepresented Bennett and his involvement with *Woman* see the Introduction to Anita Miller's *Arnold Bennett: An Annotated Bibliography* pp. xxii-xci.

104 Clotilde De Stasio, 'Arnold Bennett and Late-Victorian *Woman*', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 28:1 (Spring 1995), p. 40.

105 John Wain, *Arnold Bennett*, Columbia Essays on Modern Writers No. 23 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), p. 14 cited in Anita Miller, *Arnold Bennett: An Annotated Bibliography*, p. xxiv.

106 Margaret Drabble, *op. cit.* p. 56 and cited De Stasio *op. cit.* p. 41. Although Anita Miller notes that 'By 1897 a somewhat stronger domestic note enters the weekly...' Miller, *op. cit.* p. xxxi.

107 Fiction averaged 6% under Gardner, rising only slightly to 8% under Bennett (see Appendix 2:1).

108 'Barbara' was an established pseudonym in *Woman* by the time Bennett joined the staff.

109 Margaret Drabble, *Arnold Bennett: An Autobiography* (Trinity Press, 1974), p. 59.

110 Beetham, *A Magazine of Her Own?*, p. 189.

111 Letter to George Sturt, 11.12.1895 in Hepburn *op. cit.* p. 31.

112 March-Phillips, 'Women's Newspapers', *op. cit.* p. 668.

113 Letter to George Sturt, 29.10.1895 in Hepburn *op. cit.* p. 24.

114 Anita Miller outlines the history of this confusion and error in her exhaustive annotated bibliography, *op. cit.* esp. pp. xxvi-xxviii.

115 Ida Meller (1864-1934) Assistant Editor January 1897; she assumed editorial control on October 10, 1900 and continued in that position until September 11, 1901.

116 Letter to Ida Meller, 04.12.1896 Hepburn *op. cit.* p. 71.

- ¹¹⁷ 'Thomas Lloyd Humberstone (d. 1957) was a would-be journalist and author, A few years later he began editing an education year-book for the publisher Swann Sonnenschein, and for a time he was on the administrative staff of the University of London. Over the course of many years he wrote or edited a dozen books and pamphlets mainly concerned with education.' Hepburn *op. cit.* p. 138 fn.
- ¹¹⁸ Letter to Thomas Lloyd Humberstone 17.12.1899 in Hepburn *op. cit.* p. 127.
- ¹¹⁹ Hepburn, *op. cit.* p. 71 fn.
- ¹²⁰ 'A Great Surprise', *Woman* 18.09.1901, p. 3.
- ¹²¹ Mrs C S Peel (died 1934), daughter of Captain Richard Lane Bayliff. Edited *Hearth & Home* and *Woman* and from 1903 to 1906 was Managing Director of Beeton & Co. Mrs Peel went on to become Department Head at *Queen* and was Director of Women's Service in the Ministry of Food 1917-1918. She was a Department Editor on the *Daily Mail* 1918 and later served on committees in: Ministry of Reconstruction; Ministry of Food; Ministry of Health; Town Planning and Garden Cities Association; Women's Pioneer Housing; Vice-President British Housewives' Association. She received an O.B.E. in 1919. See *Who Was Who* Vol. III 1929-1940 (A & C Black, 1947), p. 1060. The family connection to the Talbot Cokes is referred to in Peel, *Life's Enchanted Cup*, pp. 61-2.
- ¹²² Peel, *Life's Enchanted Cup*, p. 62.
- ¹²³ See preface to 1902 edition of *10s a Head for House Books* 4th edn. (Archibald Constable, 1902), p. xv 'My thanks are due to Mrs Langton Bayly, [Charlotte Talbot-Coke's daughter], who has allowed me to make use of articles and recipes contributed by me to *Hearth & Home* during the last four or five years.'
- ¹²⁴ According to Mrs Peel 10s. per head for food per week provided for 'nice living', whereas 8s. 6d. allowed for 'plain but sufficient living'. For 'very good living' she calculated 17s. 6d. to £1, per head was required. See Mrs C. S. Peel, *How to Keep House* (Archibald Constable, 1902), p. 14.
- ¹²⁵ Peel, *Life's Enchanted Cup*, p. 129.
- ¹²⁶ JTC diary 13.7.1905.
- ¹²⁷ Langton George Bayly (died 10.05.1908) only child of Captain Vere Bayly. Married Isabel Harriot Joan Talbot Coke 29.05.1895. Bayly managed *Woman* and *Hearth & Home*; although it is difficult to specify dates for his involvement, Bayly was certainly manager of *Woman* in 1899 as an entry in Bennett's

journals suggest: see entry dated October 18th 1899 in Flower, *op. cit.* pp. 94-5.

¹²⁸ JTC diary 14 to 16.1.1903: 12 and 13.2.03.

¹²⁹ Born in Limerick 07.1905.1869. On editorial staff of *Black and White* 1903-1912. Assistant Editor *Hearth and Home* 1897; Editor 1906 - 1912 (resigned on sale of paper). Editor of *Woman* 1906 - 1910. Later editor of *The Citizen*. Assistant Editor *Canada* 1912-14. Editor *Rangoon Times* 1915-20. Publications: *Professions for Boys and How to Enter Them* (ND) See *Who Was Who* Vol. III (Adam & Charles Black, 1947), p. 1006.

¹³⁰ I date Nolan's succession as editor from 11.07.1906 - when the first issue of *Woman* to omit Mrs Peel's name from the front cover was published.

¹³¹ Margaret Beetham, 'Open and Closed: the Periodical as a Publishing Genre', in *Victorian Periodicals Review*, Vol. 22 No. 4 (Fall 1989), p. 97.

CHAPTER THREE

'Woman to Women': Editorials and Feature Articles

Woman's editorials and feature articles were the writing forms over which the magazine exerted most control, being either produced by the editorial team or selected by the editor. Correspondence and competitions, while shaped by the formal constraints imposed upon them by the magazine and commented upon by the editorial team, foregrounded the figure, if not always the voice, of the reader. Despite the magazine's attempts to control readers' contributions in these areas it was not always successful.¹ Other genres of writing, such as the domestic departments and fiction, reveal ways in which the magazine constructed both its own identity and that of its imagined audience, but were also governed by pre-existing conventions of the women's press; their content and internal structure, therefore, were determined by wider practices.

While *Woman* struggled to contain the voice of the reader in its correspondence and competition pages, and had little room for experimenting with the conventional structures and codes of domestic advice or fiction, it was able to be much more flexible with the form and content of the editorial and feature article. Indeed, the shifts in production and presentation of *Woman's* editorials and features across time, more notable than those in other writing forms in the magazine, suggest that they were particularly sensitive to variations in editorial policy. One might expect to see the clearest expression of the magazine's construction of its textual identity within its editorials and features. Nevertheless, the multi-vocal and fragmented nature of the periodical still renders the construction of a unified discourse problematical. Moreover, for a commercial periodical the need both to appeal to a broad readership and also to cater to the demands of investors and advertisers creates conflict within the text that is not easily resolved. In this chapter I will look at the extent to which editorial and feature articles were able to present a unified sense of the magazine's identity. I will also explore the ways in which the discourses within the feature article addressed the readership, whether through a process of interpellation or by creating spaces for readers to insert their own meanings.

Before I go on to discuss the methodology developed to account for the particular textual and production processes of features and editorials it will be useful to define what I mean by 'feature article' and 'editorial'. As with so much in the magazine, dividing lines are often blurred and so the definitions I offer are intended to provide a general framework for the subsequent discussion. Unlike the regular 'service'

departments which dealt with particular aspects of domestic management, such as pages dealing with cookery, or home-furnishings, *Woman's* features, and its early editorial comment columns, dealt with a broad range of topics. Subjects as diverse as Theosophy, female dipsomaniacs, and Japanese social customs were discussed in both writing forms. The major difference between these forms was that the editorial was always represented as the work of one individual, the 'editor', while feature articles were the product of a wide diversity of different authors. It should also be noted, though, that editorials were often the work of other writers than the editor; while the use of office signatures, pseudonyms and initials also gave a more heterogeneous appearance to the authorship of editorials than was the actual case. However, as the two forms of writing were intended to be seen as distinct from each other I have divided my discussion accordingly.

Feature articles were dissimilar from the regular 'service' departments in their temporal status. The individual feature article was a free-standing unit in the text, end-stopped and self-contained. In the case of a feature *series* this self-containment was modified by the reference, in the title, to past and future articles in the series. However, there is a greater sense of closure in the feature series than might be found in other extended forms (such as the cookery or fashion page). This is achieved by the magazine's practice of numbering articles and offering an umbrella title for the series. Although indicating an article's numerical position in a series created a sense of continuity by linking it backwards and forwards within that series, the use of numbering also creates an anticipation of closure, of a final number, whereas regular departments, which appear over an indefinitely extended period, are not numbered.

Editorial articles took two main textual forms in *Woman*. The first of these was the informative editorial notice which appeared sporadically across the entire publication span of *Woman*. This type of editorial was mainly concerned with providing the reader with news about innovative features or changes in the magazine. The second type of editorial was the editorial comment column, which appeared under the title 'The Week' and subsequently as 'Woman to Women' from 1890 to 1893. The editorial comment column covered a broad range of topics, from gas strikes to a proposed tax on bachelors, but always from a feminine perspective. The nature of the editorial address to readers, and the readers' response, offers a useful way of both exploring *Woman's* construction of a textual identity for itself, and the extent to which this identity was taken up, or resisted, by the reader.

As I have suggested, *Woman's* feature articles and editorials share many common characteristics, not least of which is their assumed proximity to the core

identity of the magazine. This is particularly the case with the unsigned editorial feature, 'Woman to Women', which, as I shall demonstrate, assumed the voice of *Woman* itself. Feature articles lacked that sense of a shared identity between different articles or series, and proximity to the editorial voice, being the work of disparate individuals, many of whom may have been known to the reader in other capacities. However, the feature was the foundation of the magazine's textual identity. More than any other writing form in the text, the feature article was used to sell the magazine. This is particularly apparent in regular advertisements for back copies of *Woman*, which were sold on the strength of their feature articles.² Although the voices of both the editorial and the feature often adopted a personal and intimate manner, I would resist Margaret Beetham's description of *Woman's* tone as 'relentlessly chatty'.³ Rather these voices were often invested with an authority that precludes mere 'chattiness'. In many articles there is a didactic element at work in the text which suggests that the authors of the editorials and features assumed a degree of power in their relationship with the readership. Of course, this did not prevent them from claiming an intimacy with the reader, and this is particularly evident in the ventriloquized female voice of the early editorials, discussed in detail later in this chapter.

Having considered ways of defining both feature articles and editorials I shall now turn to a discussion of the methodology I employed in reading these forms. As suggested, feature articles were distinct from other editorially produced text in *Woman* for a number of reasons, not least of which (for the purposes of establishing a methodology) was their relationship to time. While the regular departments, such as the fashion or cookery page, appeared relatively unchanging in general subject matter and in presentation, the feature article was much more heterogeneous. Features covered a range of subjects, were written by diverse authors, were more flexible in terms of their length and their location in the text, and could be either self-contained or part of a series of related articles.

Systematic scanning of all issues of *Woman*, covering the period from January 1890 to December 1909, was intended to provide a general picture of shifts in the form and content of the magazine. This scanning suggested that the feature article was the most heterogeneous of all *Woman's* writing forms, responding to shifts in editorial control as well as to wider societal changes. In order to offer solid empirical support for this hypothesis I undertook a structured sampling exercise. The sampling consisted of identifying all forms of writing from the first two weeks of February for each full year of publication (1890-1909). Analysis of the resulting sample produced statistics for column space given over to all writing forms in *Woman* as well as a more

detailed breakdown of the main types, length and content of feature articles. These statistics, which can be found in Appendixes 2:1 and 3:1, provided a clearer insight into shifts in subject matter according to changes in editorial control and over time.⁴ In the first year of publication, features filled over a quarter of *Woman's* columns (partly, perhaps, a result of the relative lack of advertising). Thereafter (though with more marked fluctuations in later years) they occupied just over a fifth of its space (see Appendix 2:1). Editorials appeared only during the first four years of Gardner's editorship.

Having defined my terms and outlined the methodology of sampling, I will consider three main areas in the remainder of the chapter. First, drawing upon the sample analysis, I consider the changing structure of *Woman's* editorials and feature articles across time and according to changes in editorial control. In the next section I explore issues of authorship and authorial voice, mainly focusing upon an analysis of the construction of a 'cross-gendered' editorial voice and the attempts made to establish an intimate address to the reader. Such an address, as I shall demonstrate, sought to position the reader within the dominant discourse of the editorial; although, as will become apparent, some readers resisted this positioning. The final section of the chapter provides a case-study of *Woman's* treatment of employment across several series of feature articles. As *Woman* frequently cited women's entry into the labour market as a symbol of real or potential progress, this section explores the extent to which its representation of female employment upheld notions of female advancement.

Woman's first year of publication, under the control of its founding editor, Fitzroy Gardner, saw the highest proportion of feature articles in the 1890s. In fact, the first five years of *Woman's* publication were the most diverse in terms of feature content; they ranged from discussions of Chinese 'Blue-stockings' and women's trades unionism, to a condemnation of the democratizing of 'ladyhood', and a continuing debate around the 'New Woman' and the advancement of women in general. 'Notes on Notables' provided illustrated interviews with a wide range of individuals and ran intermittently throughout *Woman's* publication.⁵

The 1890s was also the decade in which *Woman* ran a number of significant series of articles on women and employment. These included 'World of Breadwinners'⁶ which appeared in 1890, and 'What Women May Do'⁷ in 1892 which were largely directed at the upper-middle-class woman of leisure. 'How Women May Make Money',⁸ was published in 1895 and was notably more practical in tone. 'Where Girls Grow Wise', a series which appeared during 1892 and 1894, featured articles on

a variety of scholastic institutions, including Swanley Horticultural College, Somerville Hall and the London School of Medicine.⁹ *Woman's* continued interest in the education and employment of women provides a clear example of the ways in which it engaged with the changing status of women, although its treatment of these areas was not uncomplicated.

From August 1893 to April 1894 *Woman* published a series entitled 'Our Readers' Friends' which offered potted biographies and portraits of various women. The first article in the series featured a Liverpool 'hostess and benefactress', a member of 'Society', and announced the marriage of the president of the 'College by Post'. A postscript announced it as the first in a series intended to:

... introduce to our readers, not 'celebrities,' but women and girls who, although not famous in the ordinary sense, are in the opinions of many of their friends unostentatiously making their mark, locally or otherwise, in various spheres - in practical philanthropy, literature, art, music, any form of healthy sport, as amateur actresses, as well as in lucrative fields of employment that require more power of originating and organizing than is usually accredited to the sex. Special attention will be devoted to the rising generation, but we shall abstain from encouraging among girls a desire for mere publicity for its own sake.¹⁰

This series is an important example of the way in which the magazine sought to shape its readership, not only defining the readership quite specifically as upper-middle-class, but also limiting the areas of acceptable femininity. Subsequent articles in the series featured a welter of 'charming hostesses' and amateur artists and performers, many of them also identified as *Woman* readers and contributors.¹¹ By explicitly linking the women featured in the series to *Woman*, either as 'friends' of its readers or, indeed, as readers themselves, this series not only conveyed the dominant cultural values espoused by the magazine but also connected these values with its definition of the readership. The women featured thus symbolized the magazine's construction of its 'ideal' reader, as well as indicating a more general development of the magazine's definition of femininity.

In addition to offering diverse feature articles during the early 1890s, *Woman* also provided an editorial comment column. Initially entitled 'The Week', the column provided comment on topical issues. The editorial appeared on the first page of text, usually positioned next to a feature article. Although it was never signed, its status as editorial was signalled by the specific address to the reader and by its title, which in

May 1890 became 'Woman to Women'. The column was a feature only during the first half of Fitzroy Gardner's editorship, and dealt with a variety of topical issues, from discussion of a recent gas strike to criticism of the undignified exuberance of female spectators at a strong man show in the Lyric Club to a discussion of 'Mr Parnell and the Land Purchase Question'. 'Woman to Women' appeared for the final time in the issue for August 23rd 1893.

For the first few years of *Woman's* publication the content of feature articles was diverse, with relatively little space given over to the conventional components of the women's magazine. However, as I pointed out in Chapter Two, *Woman's* overall tone began to change from about 1894 when competition from other magazines, financial difficulties and dissension between Gardner and the proprietors clearly took their toll. The appearance of new penny weeklies, such as *Home Notes* and *Home Chat*, forced *Woman* to include more domestic articles in order to compete. When Bennett assumed editorial control in 1896 this shift towards the domestic was consolidated: the percentage of general features decreased markedly, while the length and frequency of practical features on cookery, housework and fashion become proportionally greater. Not only were the features dealing with topics of more general interest declining, but even those offering practical advice and domestic hints were subsumed into regular departments and so lost the element of autonomy possessed by the earlier feature articles. As I have suggested, these changes were undoubtedly linked to financial and commercial pressures. However it is interesting to compare the shift from a more diverse paper in the first half of the 1890s to a narrower, more homogeneous one in the later years with Richard Ellman's comment that 'The Nineties began in 1889 and ended in 1895.'¹²

The first Literary Supplement, in 1894,¹³ coincided with Bennett's first year as assistant editor and it may be that this fact has contributed to Drabble's and De Stasio's insistence on his innovative editorial approach which I discussed in the previous chapter. In her eagerness to present him as an innovative editor, De Stasio argues that Bennett introduced 'a new feature ... the personal interview'. This claim ignores the fact that 'Notes on Notables' had regularly offered personal interviews from the earliest issues of the magazine and so Bennett could hardly be regarded as innovative in this. Similarly De Stasio's observation that 'Bennett adopted a mildly feminist outlook so that the new opportunities of education and work for women were mentioned side by side with the traditional domestic activities such as dressing, cooking etc.'¹⁴ seems to imply that this mild feminism did not exist in earlier issues. This was emphatically not the case, and much of the 'mild feminism' attributed to

Bennett by De Stasio and Drabble is, in fact, a legacy of the earlier issues under Gardner's editorship.

As Bennett's editorship wore on, the magazine became increasingly oriented towards the domestic, with the introduction of regular features on gardening and a children's page which seemed to be largely concerned with criticizing the spelling and handwriting of the letters sent in to 'Aunt Pen' (another of Bennett's pseudonyms). One of the few series of feature articles which appeared during Bennett's editorship which dealt seriously with subjects outside the kitchen or nursery was 'Women Under Victoria', appearing in 1897 and written by the feminist Clementina Black.¹⁵ From April to August 1900 Bennett introduced a series of twenty-one articles under the title 'The Week's War',¹⁶ which formed the greater part of 'A Pictorial Diary of the War', a centrally positioned supplement, charting events in the Boer War, as well as providing photographs and potted biographies of various officers involved in the conflict.

After Bennett's resignation in 1900 his successor, Ida Meller, did little to alter the provision of feature articles. While Meller made some significant changes to the correspondence columns, *Woman's* overall tone remained fairly unchanged. However, when C Hall Fielden took over from Meller he did make some important alterations. As I have noted in Chapter Two, Hall Fielden broke *Woman's* format into smaller, busier fragments, with many articles consisting of just one or two paragraphs. Articles were generally unattributed and appeared under umbrella titles, suggesting the presence of a magazine within a magazine. A typical example of this occurs on page 11 of the issue for February 26th 1902. Under the umbrella title 'Woman's Magazine' were included 'Fortune-Telling Teacup', 'Would You Keep Young?', 'To Make a Happy Home', and 'How to Lie When Sleeping'.¹⁷ Moreover, the overall tone of the magazine under Hall Fielden became much more informal. This, with its enforced jauntiness, intimate address and colloquialism as well as its lack of engagement with any issue, has a curiously de-personalizing effect. While the range of appeal appears to have been deliberately broadened, the 'ideal' reader seems a much more shadowy figure than in the early years of the magazine.

With Mrs C S Peel's accession to the editorship in 1903 the frivolous tone and busy pages were modified. Not surprisingly, given Mrs Peel's background as author of the best-selling housekeeping book *10s a Head for House Book*, the magazine became heavily oriented towards practical domesticity rather than the more frivolously feminine tone it employed during Hall Fielden's editorship. Mrs Peel also introduced the readers' debate and offered a series of forums in which the reader was exhorted to share her experiences in order to educate her fellow readers. This reliance upon

practical advice columns and reader interaction left little space for feature articles and those that appeared were more likely to have a practical or educational flavour to them.

The proportion of feature writing increased under the final editor, James J Nolan. Nolan was an experienced journalist unlike Mrs Peel who, as Chapter One suggested, was not an entirely successful editor. Nolan offered the reader a magazine which was, if not as strikingly innovative as that of the early 1890s, at least a closer approximation to that broader range of appeal. Nolan also devoted more features to the issue of woman's suffrage - although it is hard to see how he could have avoided doing so. While earlier writing in the magazine had largely dismissed the idea of votes for women, under Nolan *Woman* explicitly advocated women's suffrage, often in the face of apparent resistance on the part of the readership.¹⁸

Many of *Woman's* features were unsigned, initialled, or printed under or over an office signature or pseudonym. Those few that were signed were likely to be either by well-known writers (male or female), or by titled women. I suggested earlier that the feature article was used to construct a specific appeal to the readership, as the advertisement for back numbers demonstrated. The fact that the overall majority of the articles advertised were attributed to named writers also reveals that the identity of these writers contributed to the construction of *Woman's* appeal. This is a significant factor, as the defining characteristic of both the feature article and the editorial is the sense of authority and alignment with the magazine. Providing the identity of the author is a key contribution to establishing authority and has subtle but powerful effects upon the readers' reception of the text and its values as I shall discuss below. Before doing this, it is worth pausing to consider the way in which *Woman* treated feature articles contributed by readers.

Significantly, while readers were clearly complicit in the production of *Woman's* feature articles, their identity as *readers* was never flagged in the text. Even where readers were acknowledged as contributors in 'Our Readers' Friends' their actual contributions were not signalled as the work of a reader. Instead, the work of readers as readers was confined to the clearly marked off spaces of the prize essay competition and the correspondence column. It would seem that while *Woman* actively encouraged readers to participate in the text, and repeatedly held out the desirability of writing as a female profession, it remained reticent about the extent to which its readers were active in the more 'professionalized' production of feature articles rather than amateur participation in essay competitions or correspondence.

Features were not the work of any readily-identifiable group, neither solely the work of the editorial team nor of outside writers, and so constitute the most multi-vocal genre within the magazine. While the correspondence column, for example, foregrounded the figure of the reader as 'author' (even where her voice was absent), the feature article could be the work of staff writers, freelance journalists or other professional writers, or even of famous figures not normally associated with print journalism: several articles in the 1890s were attributed to the popular stage performer, Letty Lind. Readers, too, were also active contributors - a fact that the readership would be aware of even where the actual provenance of their articles was unacknowledged.

Feature articles, as I have indicated, was generally either anonymous or pseudonymous although some articles were attributed to the actual writer. Naming was more likely to occur if the writer did not belong to the editorial staff, as an editorial in 1893 indicates:

In accordance with the rule we have observed throughout, we preserve our anonymity. We have never believed in the success of a paper depending upon the individual and personal trumpet-blasts of the editor or of any particular members of staff. The most influential and successful newspaper in the world, *The Times*, has risen to its present position without publishing the name or particulars of the personal appearance or petty incidents in the domestic history of the editor or any of the staff.¹⁹

Of course, the practice of anonymity was very useful in maintaining a feminine address to the reader particularly when, as was the case in 1893, the editor was male. As well as sustaining the feminine voice of the magazine, the general practice of anonymity was a means of reinforcing the authority of the editorial voice; as Walter Besant's *The Pen and the Book* suggests, signed articles were

... like placing a banquet of carefully-reasoned opinions before the reader, and leaving to his judgment the selection of what dishes suit his palate and digestion; whereas with anonymous journalism he is ostentatiously directed to what he should eat.²⁰

I would suggest, however, that the inclusion of contributors' names, at least in the early issues of the magazine, was directing the readers to read in a certain way, and was almost certainly a fundamental part of the construction of a general textual

identity on the part of the magazine. Initial issues of the magazine regularly featured lists of contributors on the inner cover.²¹

While practising the general rule of anonymity for editorial staff, the publication of lists of named writers helped to shape readers' expectations. A comparison between two lists of contributors to *Woman* reveals subtle shifts in the way in which the magazine used contributors' names to construct an appeal to the readership, and a textual identity for itself. A notice in the first issue stated:

The following, among many well-known writers, will contribute to the columns of WOMAN MRS LYNN LINTON, MRS OSCAR BERINGER, MABEL COLLINS, MRS HENRY FAWCETT, BLANCHE ROOSEVELDT, LOUISE JOPLING, MARIE CORELLI, MAY CROMMELIN, WINIFRED EMERY, ETHEL JOHNSON, LETTY LIND, and SMEDLEY YATES.²²

The range of positions occupied by the writers spans the anti-feminism of Lynn Linton and Corelli to the more radical political stance of Mrs Fawcett as well as including established journalists, and practitioners of the popular arts.

The initial list was supplemented three months later by a list of women whose appeal was, perhaps, contained more within their titles than their literary fame, although these women were not new to journalism. However, the fact that they were referred to as 'Ladies' rather than 'well-known writers' reveals a shift in *Woman's* approach from emphasizing individual talent to stressing social position:

The following Ladies, among many others, have promised to contribute to our columns: The Duchess of ABERCORN. Lady WILLIAM LENNOX. Lady VICTORIA FULLER. Lady VIOLET GREVILLE.²³ The Hon. Mrs GREVILLE-NUGENT ...²⁴

This sudden shift towards titled contributors suggests that *Woman* was still in the process of fine-tuning its appeal to its implied readers. Having initially addressed the 'intelligent womanly woman', the magazine's inclusion of a list of 'Ladies' helped to broaden its address. That women's magazines tended to cater to what Evelyn March-Phillips described as the more 'mediocre' of the middle classes²⁵ suggests that *Woman's* shift towards foregrounding its more aristocratic contributors was an attempt to construct an appeal to the social aspirations of its readership.

Knowledge of the actual identity of *Woman's* feature writers clearly had some effect upon the way in which readers may have approached the text, although this is dependent upon the readers having either some prior knowledge of the individuals involved or a desire to be associated with 'Society'. In the case of the editorial feature, however, no such prior knowledge was required. Rather than existing in the external world, the figure of the editor was a textual device for the transmission of *Woman's* 'voice'.

At this point it is worth considering the construction of this editorial 'voice', and its function as a means of bridging the gap between the magazine and its readers. The editorial comment column 'Woman to Women' adopted an explicitly feminine voice, despite appearing during the editorship of Fitzroy Gardner. It is possible, of course, that the column was the work of several writers, although this seems unlikely as the overall tone and subject matter of the columns seem congruent with other articles written by Gardner elsewhere in the magazine. Throughout the first year of *Woman's* publication these editorials returned repeatedly to issues of femininity and female progress. While other articles in the magazine offered a plurality of perspectives on femininity, from the reactionary anti-feminism of Eliza Lynn Linton or Marie Corelli, to the more advanced views of, for example, Lady Dilke or Harriette Raphael,²⁶ the editorial column offered a more stable position from which feminine progress was both acknowledged *and* consistently problematized. *Woman's* editorial ethos, which proposed 'progress, but not too fast', was repeatedly emphasized and provided a sense of coherence for the contradictions contained elsewhere in the text. This editorial stance explained away the potentially unsettling gap between the anti-feminist feature and the article suggesting feminine progress.

A typical example of *Woman's* policy on progress can be seen in an editorial appearing in June 1890. The editorial began by praising a recent speech given by Millicent Fawcett, a woman the magazine held in high regard, and invariably contrasted with its readers. The reader is advised that 'If all of us are as Mrs Henry Fawcett ... women's suffrage would indeed come as a boon and a blessing to men and women alike'²⁷ If Mrs Fawcett is offered as an ideal figure to the reader, indicating the potential desirability of female progress, she also operates as a means of denying that progress. Clearly women are *not* all like her, as the editorial goes on to elaborate:

Can we women for a moment deny in our inner consciences that, as a body, we are easily carried away by clap-trap oratory and appeals to sentiment in every shape and form rather than to common sense? There is a vast

difference between what we are and what we may be, as we of WOMAN have pointed out on a former occasion, there is great and noble work for women who will educate themselves up to a high standard of political morality and political intelligence, and stand between the two opposing parties, whose methods of attaining their ends are as demoralizing to the individual politician as to the nation. ... Let us gradually train ourselves for the coveted position, and show that we are fitted for it, rather than rush headlong into it. Here is an opportunity for us to prove ourselves not only equal, but superior, to men.²⁸

This editorial is interesting for the way in which it slips effortlessly between the assumption of a shared perspective between the editor and reader as part of a recognizably gendered group 'we women', and that of the privileged perspective of 'we of WOMAN'. The use of the cross-gendered 'we', which appeals to 'our inner consciences', creates the illusion of shared gender, experience and values and positions the reader in such a way as to close off alternative readings. This closing off of alternative readings operates to naturalize the subsequent switch in editorial position, in which 'we of WOMAN' assumes the privileged role of critic and adviser.

The use of personal pronouns can have a significant effect upon the ways in which both readers and producers are positioned in the text.²⁹ Clearly the editorial's use of 'we' operates in two ways: firstly as an expression of the 'corporate' voice of *Woman* in which 'we' signifies the editorial persona, and secondly in constructing a specifically gendered appeal to the readership in which 'we women' creates an imaginary bond between the writer and the reader. Moreover, by constantly shifting between these two forms of expression, the text reaches a second level whereby the 'corporate' voice of *Woman* becomes the more universalized voice of 'we women', despite its inherent contradictions.

The voice of the editorial comment column closed off alternative readings by assuming a feminine voice which was at once intimate and privileged. In addressing the readers as 'we women', the editorial voice created a sense of complicity which naturalized its pronouncements on the nature of femininity in contrast to the informative editorial in which readers were addressed on a more impersonal level as consumers. The editorial column, although employing shifts in its address to the reader, nevertheless maintained a relatively consistent approach to female progress. This was not the case with many of the feature articles where different views could be found within a single article, between articles in the same series, and across time - as will become apparent in my discussion of the representation of female employment in the magazine.

Before I go on to offer case-studies of *Woman's* editorials and feature articles, I should like to draw some initial conclusions from the foregoing discussion. Out of all the writing genres explored in this study, feature articles and editorial columns were, not surprisingly, least open to the insertion of the reader's voice. While it is clear from the notices to contributors published by the magazine that readers did contribute feature articles, these were never explicitly flagged as the work of the reader. Series such as 'Our Readers' Friends' offered the inquiring reader some clues to the identity of reader-contributors, although such clues would only work in retrospect. Thus at the moment of reading, unless one knew the contributor personally, it would be difficult to recognize any feature as the work of a reader.

This is not to say that the feature, or editorial, did not allow the reader to find alternative positions within the text. The fragmentation and multi-vocal nature of the feature article created gaps within which the reader was able to construct alternative meanings. As I have pointed out, however, this is less the case with the editorial feature which addresses the reader in such a way as to close off alternative readings. As I shall demonstrate in my discussion of *Woman's* treatment of employment, the text operates through several discursive layers. While my analysis is purely text-based, as there is little evidence of the original readers' approach to the text, it would seem feasible to look at the different ways in which the implied reader was constructed, focusing on areas open to more than one interpretation.

As I suggested in Chapter Two, *Woman's* main support of female progress was located in its treatment of employment. Indeed, the magazine regarded women's entry into the labour market as a prerequisite for more general advancement, as it made clear in an editorial in 1891.

'Forward but not too fast' is our motto, and we agree with Mrs Besant that when women have shown themselves to be equal with men in the more remunerative trades and professions it will be time enough for them to agitate for equality in other respects.³⁰

Employment was, then, an important marker for feminine progress within the magazine. *Woman's* remark about the 'more remunerative trades and professions' indicates an awareness, not only of women's presence within the lower-paid and less prestigious end of the labour market, but also of the importance of establishing social and economic independence. In fact, while *Woman* found political activity too controversial an area to endorse within its pages, female employment seemed to offer

a means of advancement that was less overtly threatening to the status quo. The 1891 editorial suggested that:

... many womanly women are quietly and unostentatiously proving their equality with men in intellect and in the labour market, not by their shrieks or protestations of strong-mindedness, but by their quiet and earnest work.³¹

This potentially radical position was, however, undercut by an ambivalence towards the notion of female progress. Health, intellect and motivation were all cited as reasons for women's innate inability to compete equally with men. In the discussion which follows, *Woman's* contradictory approach to employment for women will be explored through its editorial and feature articles.

From the middle of the nineteenth century, the plight of the single woman in need of some form of financial independence had occupied the thoughts of social commentators and philanthropic bodies. Mary Poovey claims that the first organized project to expand the opportunities for female employment occurred in the 1850s,³² with the publication of *The Englishwoman's Journal* in March 1858 which specifically demanded improvement in employment opportunities for women as well as lobbying for legal reforms. In 1859 Barbara Bodichon and Jessie Rayner Parkes founded the Society for the Promotion of Employment for Women and Jessie Boucherette launched a business school for women, both of which survived after the *Journal* was closed down in 1864. Other magazines which dealt with the practicalities of women's employment, such as Emily Faithfull's *Victoria Magazine* (1863-80), Louisa Hubbard's *Woman's Gazette* (1875-79), and *The Englishwoman's Yearbook* (1875-1916) also linked work to a practical agenda of reform.

The demands for an expansion in employment opportunities for women which had formed the nucleus of *The Englishwoman's Journal* had been explicitly linked to female equality and had, according to Lee Holcombe, enjoyed some degree of success within the women's movement.³³ However, as critics have pointed out, such success was limited to a specific audience and did not, according to Ballaster *et al*, make 'the impact they sought upon the general public.'³⁴ This claim is supported by Evelyn March-Phillips who, writing in 1894, argued that

... in the ladies' journal [women's interests] are usually treated in a weak, dull way which can arrest the attention of no one, while in the professed organs of a cause, that cause is dealt with *ad nauseam*, till it becomes distasteful and unwelcome.³⁵

Moreover, she pointed out that feminist publications not only appealed to a very limited audience, but were also unable to attract the advertising necessary to subsidize their production costs.³⁶ Indeed, Sibthorp Shurmer's repeated requests for donations from the subscribers to her 'advanced' magazine, *Shafts*, indicates that finance was a major problem for such periodicals.³⁷

While the popular women's magazines may have treated female employment in the 'weak dull way' described by March-Phillips, they could not avoid acknowledging the fact that women were increasingly entering the labour market. As David Rubinstein points out, by the late-nineteenth century the working woman was 'a well established feature of the nation's economic life.'³⁸ J. F. C. Harrison suggests that the expansion of employment opportunities from the 1880s had comprised 'middle-class women together with some working-class females who were able to move into lower middle-class occupations' such as clerical work, teaching and other 'white-collar work.'³⁹ The entry of middle-class women into the labour market was also remarked upon by Clara Collet in her report on female employment in 1894. Collet found that the middle-class woman, whose domestic load was lighter than in the past, and for whom the imbalance between the sexes had reduced her prospects of marriage, was increasingly looking to find independence through employment in the public sphere.⁴⁰

Coverage of employment opportunities for women, then, became largely unavoidable for the popular magazine. Indeed, as March-Phillips claimed,

No section [of a woman's newspaper] is more really important than that which deals with women's employment, giving descriptions, suggestions, advice, and it is to be hoped real pains will be taken to make it as comprehensive and trustworthy as possible.⁴¹

Even in the more domestically oriented magazines, such as Annie Swan's *Woman at Home*, readers actively sought assistance in choosing and finding work.⁴² This is not to suggest that women's entry into the public sphere of work was regarded unproblematically. As Margaret Beetham has pointed out, while Annie Swan acknowledged the problem of the 'odd' woman needing to find employment, she was unable to point readers towards any more professional sphere than domestic work.⁴³

The question of how women might reconcile financial independence with 'respectable femininity' was certainly one which raised problems. Ballaster *et al* point out that:

Increasingly ... magazines had to respond to the contradiction between the discourse of domesticity and the economic position of those readers who were being forced into the labour market, or who had begun to demand the right to 'male' occupations.⁴⁴

Moreover, as Dorothy Thompson has suggested, a significant number of women during this period of change felt anxious about the changing position of women.⁴⁵ Thus the entry of women into the public sphere (of employment, politics etc.) was regarded by many as entailing a loss of authority within the home. Such women felt themselves to be the moral and spiritual guardians of the family and, by extension, the nation. Any change which limited their involvement in the home was perceived to limit this influence.

Men, too, feared women's entry into the labour market. There was a prevalent belief that if women were allowed to work they would abandon marriage and house-keeping altogether. Thus it was in men's interests not only to exalt the position of the housewife and mother but to denigrate the sphere of outside employment. Meta Zimmeck argues that

It was not society's goal to create work which was more attractive than the home - offered more interest and satisfaction, gave financial independence, fostered 'strong-mindedness' - lest this work became more than a *pis aller*: lest it be an inducement for women to violate 'nature', shirk their 'home duties' and wallow in 'selfishness'.⁴⁶

Clearly, a gap existed between the figure of the 'odd' woman who was forced to find work and the more challenging figure of the woman who demanded equal access to male-dominated professions. In general, the commercial women's magazine avoided engaging directly with the feminist implications of women's work, preferring to validate the home as the 'true' sphere of female labour. However, as Beetham points out, women's employment

... continually returned as a disruptive presence across the range of women's journals, disappearing completely only in the cheapest serials - the fantasy 'lady-land', of mill girl fiction, whose readers most needed some escape from the work which dominated their lives.⁴⁷

While those magazines aimed at the middle-class reader maintained marriage and the home as the 'ideal' sphere for its readership they were unable to ignore women's increasing demands for financial independence.

Ballaster *et al* have claimed that *Woman* concentrated upon 'fashion, gossip, and fiction rather than on employment or sexuality.'⁴⁸ While *Woman* did not campaign for female employment in the same way as earlier feminist magazines, the figure of the working woman appeared across its range of writing genres, from the editorial and feature article to the competition and correspondence pages as well as within its short and serial fiction. Indeed, it was within its engagement with female employment that *Woman's* debate on female advancement was most explicitly located; this is typified by the magazine's Birthday Editorial of 1891, which asserted that equality in 'the more remunerative trades and professions' was the keystone for more general equality.⁴⁹

As late as 1903 *Woman* continued to replace demands for female equality with a focus on the practicalities of employment. The launch of her new 'Woman Workers' Page' in the magazine occasioned Rachel Gay to criticize the prejudices of male editors when presented with subjects outside the domestic sphere:

"None of your strong-minded notions for me, please," is the cry when you suggest a subject of interest to thousands of women, intelligent and thoughtful and interested in something besides dress and society; and when you cuttingly remark that you have no intention of writing upon 'Female Suffrage,' and do not even believe in the vital necessity of the franchise for women, they look on you with incredulous wonder.⁵⁰

Indeed, for most of its publication *Woman* replaced the political aspects of women's changing position with that of financial independence. However, as political equality was seen by many as concomitant with economic equality *Woman* was able to engage with advancement in a less threatening or direct way than if it had taken up female suffrage.⁵¹

Woman's treatment of female employment was not, however, uniform throughout its publication; it is possible to see shifts in the representation of the working woman across time, and between articles. Even within a single article there were inconsistencies and contradictions. In what follows I shall demonstrate how and where such shifts occurred, paying particular attention to representations of class, of middle-class respectability and to the different discourses at work within *Woman's* articles on employment.

For the first few years of *Woman's* publication the reader was not addressed as a worker herself. Instead she was offered articles presenting working women as the object of the readers' gaze. Such articles further distanced the reader from the worker by representing them as occupying different social positions, so that the woman engaged in paid labour was either represented by the magazine as a 'working-girl' or a 'Society Lady'. Significantly *Woman's* early representations of female employment avoided using the term 'woman', which was the term used by the magazine to address the reader (the modern 'womanly woman'), and so maintained a semblance of neutrality on a potentially disruptive subject.

Margaret Beetham has suggested that the use of the term 'girl' was 'a familiar rhetorical device for defending a purely domestic femininity',⁵² whereby the working-class 'girl' was denied full adulthood. An article on striking 'factory-girls' from 1890 demonstrates this denial of adulthood in its assertion that factory work was 'more or less antagonistic to the true development of womanhood and the true ideal of family life ...'⁵³ There is a strong element of paternalism in *Woman's* treatment of the 'factory-girls' and, indeed, in its representation of working-class women in general. The striking 'factory-girl' was presented as a 'savage, pure and simple' whose love for feathers and fringes and whose raucous public behaviour signified both her immaturity and lack of civilization. *Woman's* solution to the degeneration of the working-class 'girl', which it termed 'one of the most distressing problems of the century', was to place her in the middle-class home. Domestic service was offered as the ideal way to rescue the working-girl from the moral threat posed by the factory. By bringing her under the control of a middle-class mistress *Woman* argued that the working-girl could thus be instructed in the feminine ideal.⁵⁴

'The World of Breadwinners', *Woman's* first series dealing with female employment, began in January 1890, and ran intermittently until August of that year, although two further articles appeared in 1891 and 1892 respectively.⁵⁵ As the series' title suggests, 'breadwinning' was represented as a world separate from that inhabited by the readership. However, this representation was characterized by ambiguity. While the series included accounts of such morally dubious professions of barmaid, artist's model and stage-dancer, as well as sentimentalized accounts of jam factory workers and foul-mouthed match-girl 'queens', these accounts were juxtaposed with the significantly more respectable and feminine pursuits followed by the supposedly upper-class woman. Certainly, *Woman* was at pains to represent these women as belonging to the upper classes, as an article in the short-lived series 'Society Women at Work' suggests:

The cry is 'still they come'. Hardly a month passes but some real or self-styled 'Society Lady' embarks in retail trade, either as a milliner, dressmaker, florist, furniture dealer, or in one of the many other callings for which women are or are not specially suited.⁵⁶

Although the article goes on to suggest that reports in the provincial press had exaggerated the numbers of working Society women, it nevertheless claims that a small band of such women have established successful businesses.

It is clear from the objectified representations of working-class women that *Woman* was not addressing them as reading subjects. Images of primitive and morally dubious women presented as the object of the middle-class reader's concern were contrasted with articles which, while professing to offer a more positive picture, nevertheless concentrated on questions of morality and respectability. An article on workers in a match factory, tellingly entitled 'A Match Girl Queen', focused on an individual worker whose claims to respectability were contrasted with the degenerate nature of the majority of her co-workers, signified mainly by their abusive language and lack of self-control.⁵⁷

Alongside articles on the working 'girl', the series also featured interviews with upper-class women. These articles underlined the upper-class nature of their subjects by referring to them as 'ladies'. Thus, there were lady decorators, lady clerks, lady cooks and lady shopkeepers. Moreover, these articles were distinguished from the objectified discourse of those dealing with the anonymous working 'girl', by providing the reader with the actual names of the ladies involved. Using the register of the celebrity interview or gossip column, such articles involved a much more equal exchange between the author and the woman in question.

While offering a discussion of work, the articles on the working 'ladies' never failed to make some reference to the ladies' domestic situation. For example, the reader was informed that lady decorator, Mrs Eugenia Merry's, '... friends find her just as much in her element and at her ease in her shop as in her own drawing room.'⁵⁸ The repeated allusions to the domestic setting of the 'ladies' clearly functioned to correct any doubts about their 'true' femininity. Paid work still presented a departure from the conventional feminine ideal which stressed marriage as women's 'natural' career. Lee Holcombe suggests that 'the phrase "working ladies" was, in fact, a contradiction in terms.'⁵⁹ Certainly it would appear that in 1890 *Woman* was well aware of this contradiction. By returning to the successful home life of its working

'ladies' *Woman* was able to discuss paid work for upper-class women without radically disrupting the feminine ideal of home and family.

The article on 'A Lady Laundress' is a perfect example of the construction of the 'lady' worker in 'The World of Breadwinners'. The introductory paragraph claims 'there is such a rage now for women of the upper classes to embark on business of all kinds ...'⁶⁰ The reader was then introduced to the 'lady' in question, Mrs Leith Wright, who, unlike the working-class subjects of the series, was dignified by a real name and who, although referred to as a 'laundress', in fact owned and managed a laundering business employing working-class women. The laundry was not represented in terms of its commercial aspects but purely in terms of its potential for

... moral and social reform among a somewhat rough class, who will probably mend both manners and language when under the influence of the refined minds of cultivated women.⁶¹

Reformation, whether of the lower classes or of existing feminine 'professions' (such as nursing and cooking⁶²), would appear to be the cornerstone of *Woman's* representation of acceptable employment for the upper-class woman. Indeed, it is significant that the only 'lady' to voice some dissatisfaction with aspects of her work was also the only one not to come into contact with the lower classes.⁶³

Five years later *Woman's* approach to employment had shifted towards an implicit acknowledgment that paid work was likely to occupy a more central position in the lives of its readership. 'How Women May Make Money' ran from October 1895 to April 1896.⁶⁴ The title of the series provides an interesting insight into the attitudes of the magazine towards women's work, suggesting both elements of permission and contingency as well as recognition of the practical necessities of earning money. By choosing to focus on work as a means of earning money rather than as providing an area of self-fulfilment it avoided suggesting that women might enter the labour market as an alternative to marriage. The editor's assertion that the series was intended to offer a 'wider field for women than is offered by the ordinary callings hitherto almost monopolized by them'⁶⁵ would appear to be upheld by a cursory reading of the thirteen items in the series which included discussions of Architecture, the Sanitary Inspectorate and Journalism as well as a range of other occupations. However, this is not to suggest that the representation of work in this series was unambiguous.

The series contrasts with the more distanced approach of 'The World of Breadwinners' by claiming to offer a practical guide to employment for the readership.

By focusing upon the actualities of female employment the series closed the gap between the reader and the world of work. As the title signified, work had shifted from a world foreign to the readership to something such women 'may' do. The 'Preliminary Observations' to the series claimed it would offer

... sound, practical information and advice as to what has been done and may be done, and how those who are fitted to work should set about it.⁶⁶

But by closing the distance between the reader and the public sphere of employment, *Woman* was in danger of alienating that proportion of its readership who, as I have argued, viewed the shift in gender roles with suspicion and unease.

As long as *Woman* had represented work as a separate world from that occupied by the readership it had been able to detach itself from consideration of how paid employment might 'fit' into the lives of that readership. Once it had brought the 'world' of employment into the sphere of its readership, its representation became more complex and it is possible to identify three quite distinct discursive threads running through the series. These discourses, which may be termed the orthodox or patriarchal, the practical or pragmatic, and the progressive, also operated elsewhere in *Woman*, both within single articles and across time. 'How Women May Make Money' offers a useful way to explore the ways in which these discursive threads engaged with a potentially contentious topic and also offered the reader a range of reading positions.

The orthodox discourse, which had dominated 'The World of Breadwinners', drew upon an implicit assumption that employment posed a threat to the feminine ideal, whether in terms of the individual female or the family unit. This discourse appealed to the 'essential' femininity of the aspiring worker as well as to the reader who neither desired nor wholly approved of women's entry into the labour market. The woman to whom the series was ostensibly addressed was explicitly constructed as single. In his introduction to the series the editor stated that he

... would not on any account be a party to encouraging that form of breadwinning which often means half or entirely supporting the home in which a husband has his place. I do not believe in a man looking to his wife as a matter of course to help pay the bills; I see too often around me cases in which, as the wife moves forward earning money by her energies, the husband seems to drop out of the labour market.⁶⁷

The working wife, while a not uncommon figure in reality, clearly represented a very real threat to the domestic ideal.⁶⁸ Of course, the 'ladies' in 'Breadwinners' had all been married. These 'ladies' had, however, belonged to 'Society' and as such were neither subject to the same social constraints as the middle-class woman nor were they intended to be representative of the readership. Closing the gap between the reader and the actualities of paid work threatened to disrupt the magazine's domestic ideal. Thus employment was transformed from an extension of social reform for the upper-class lady to a last resort for the single woman unable to find a husband.

The editor's introduction to 'How Women May Make Money' based his comments upon a series of gendered oppositions in which men were represented as physically and mentally robust, original and creative, and women were described in terms of frailty, temperamental instability and lack of originality. As Meta Zimmeck has argued, a fundamental process in patriarchal thought entailed the 'attribution ... of different inherent characteristics to each sex which fitted each for different types of work'.⁶⁹ The division of labour along conventional gender divisions, according to Zimmeck, 'owed more to men's fantasies, self-interest, and *amour-propre* than to any real understanding of what women could or wanted to do'⁷⁰ Of course, this meant that it was more acceptable for women to work in those areas most closely allied to the home ('How Women May Make Money' suggests dress-making and the management of small hotels for example), not only from the point of view of supposed 'respectability', but also because these areas did not challenge male-dominated professions.

In suggesting woman's physical and mental characteristics might 'severely handicap' her in the labour market, the editor specifically referred to women 'competing with men in the most remunerative callings.'⁷¹ Clearly, the issue of remuneration played an important part in determining the acceptability or otherwise of female employment. It is clear from the pages of *Woman* that a proportion of its readership were also seduced by the idea of women's 'natural' disability for work. A competition in *Woman* in 1893, asking the rather leading question, 'In what main points do women fail in competing with men in profitable fields of employment?', occasioned such a pessimistic response to women's capabilities that the magazine was prompted to comment on the 'somewhat narrow treatment the subject has received at the hands of most of the competitors.'⁷²

As well as articles dealing specifically with conventionally-held aspects of femininity, it is also possible to identify strands of orthodox discourse running throughout the series. Where an individual was interviewed, for example, there was

invariably a paragraph or two describing her womanliness, her soft hands, her pretty and quaint cottage etc.⁷³ But it was not only in the text that the orthodox discourse was at work. Most of the articles were accompanied with small illustrations depicting women ostensibly employed in the job under discussion. Apart from a portrait of the Indexer, Miss Nancy Bailey, the illustrations were of no specific individual, and may be taken as general representations. Some of these were clearly based upon stereotyped images, which operated to subvert the messages within the text they accompanied. In the article detailing lecturing as a profession, the accompanying illustration shows a severe looking woman with the short hair and masculinized dress that were the staple characteristics of the New Woman as she was represented in the magazine. Indeed, *Woman* tended to use these visual signifiers as a form of shorthand criticism of any woman suspected of being 'advanced'.⁷⁴

The 'pragmatic' discourse offered advice and reassurance to those readers who were forced through economic necessity to seek work. This discourse concentrated on the practical aspects of finding work, and emphasized the respectable nature of its offerings. It included work which, while 'new' to women, also offered a feeling of security. Secretarial and clerical work had been seen by feminists as the ideal site for women's work. The Society for Promoting the Employment of Women, set up in 1860, had opened its own training and employment agency which the article recommended the reader to go to for advice and work. Expansion of trade and industry together with innovations in office practice and machinery had increased the demand for clerical staff. While in 1861 there were only 279 female clerks, by 1891 there were 18,947. The reason for its popularity was, according to Holcombe, the fact that 'not only had it become more accessible but it was also easy and light ... and it was traditionally associated with middle class respectability.'⁷⁵

Respectability could also be found in other occupations suggested by the series. Librarianship and indexing were both paralleled in terms of their suitability for women on the grounds that they drew on traditional female skills: the ability to do routine and detailed work, and the willingness to service the requirements of others. Although these were both 'new' in the sense that they had only recently been taken up by women, they were also areas in which no prestige or challenge to the male ego were involved. The forty or so librarians commented upon in the text were all assistants to men. The indexer, Miss Nancy Bailey, put together indexes for other people's work. Similarly Chromo-Lithography was shown to be ideally suited to women who were 'given rather to faithful reproduction than to independent origination.'⁷⁶

The 'progressive' discourse appealed to the feminist reader and focused on the possibilities of female advancement. It offered a variety of 'new' occupations, notably those within the Sanitary Inspectorate and in Architecture, which actively challenged male dominated spheres, and which represented a real advancement in the cause of equal rights. The feature on Architecture remarked on the challenge to male monopoly in this field, commenting

The fascinating game of bricks and mortar has hitherto been played out by the sterner sex, and women are supposed to leave off building houses when they are promoted from the nursery to the school-room.⁷⁷

Although the number of women engaged in architectural study was low, with only two women having secured articles at the time the feature was written, it nevertheless represented an advance for women. As well as rallying women with the assurance that 'Faith comes with time and study', the feature provides instruction on where and how to obtain training, although it acknowledged the difficulty in securing apprenticeships.

The article was not, however, unequivocally progressive. The reader concerned with the propriety of entering such a male oriented profession was offered an image of the woman architect engaged in building school-rooms and village halls. Cheap housing would, 'under her hands lose something of its blatant hideousness, the closely stacked airless flats something of their gloom.'⁷⁸ This discourse presented the female architect not so much as furthering her own self-interest as performing a charitable and socially useful act.

To an extent the inconsistencies and contradictions which ran throughout *Woman's* features on work may have arisen through the magazine's attempts to construct some sense of coherence in the gap between the readers' lived experience of employment and the dominant feminine domestic ideal. Although *Woman's* treatment of women's work reveals an underlying ambivalence, the magazine could not avoid such a topical issue. As Evelyn March-Phillips commented in 1894, many women actually relied upon magazines to give them the guidance they required:

We cannot over-estimate the value to a girl who contemplates a self-supporting career, but may be living in the provinces, with no friend to apply to, and no money to spend on pursuing researches, of being able to obtain experienced opinion, to gauge to some extent the openings available and the

conditions of success; to find out all about expense, training, lodgings, and the most suitable societies for assisting her special bent.⁷⁹

While *Woman's* treatment of employment in the first five years of its publication was ambiguous it nevertheless established it as a continuing theme. The advice column conducted by Mrs Maud Rawson, 'Home Work and How to Make it Pay',⁸⁰ which appeared throughout the latter half of the 1890s, positioned paid work within the home, linking the domestic ideal with financial independence and so contributed towards a growing naturalization of work.

In 1903 'The Woman Worker's Page' was introduced. This page was much more in keeping with what March-Phillips had proposed. Introducing this new feature, the reader was informed that:

... breadwinning employment will absorb but a portion of our space. Week by week women workers will find this page indispensable to them. Notes on the openings for women abroad, with short, descriptive experiences, reports of meetings, lectures etc., and philanthropic, educational and social topics, which scarcely ever find a place in women's papers and rarely in the daily and weekly ones ...⁸¹

The appearance of this page represents a continuation of *Woman's* focus upon employment as the ideal path towards female equality. However, while earlier features in the magazine treated the decision to enter the labour market as a radical choice, the 'Woman Worker's Page' assumes work to be an established part of its readers' experience, with topics consisting of the minutiae of everyday working life.

The appearance of different views within individual articles and across time in *Woman* suggests that the magazine experienced difficulty in establishing a consistent approach to the thorny subject of female employment. As Margaret Beetham has pointed out, 'In the fully commercial women's press, the meaning of women's paid work was never located within a coherent model of the feminine.'⁸² Naturally, as a commercial magazine, *Woman* was catering to the interests not only of a diverse readership, but also of its advertisers. It was in the interests of advertisers that women should stay within the home and fulfill their roles as consumers of the products and services featured in the many advertisements in the pages of *Woman*. Moreover, in order for the magazine to cater to the widest possible audience, it was impossible for it to follow a narrow line on as controversial a topic as female employment was in the

1890s. The inclusion of different discursive positions even within a single article, however submerged beneath the dominant discourse, broadened *Woman's* appeal.

This is not to say, however, that the construction of such an appeal was immutable. Clearly it underwent alterations across the twenty years of *Woman's* production. I suggested in my introduction to this chapter that the feature article, together with the editorial, were the major sites in which one might expect to find an expression of the 'corporate' voice of the magazine. While multi-vocal the feature articles were subject to the controlling editorial framework. However, the particular sensitivity of the popular periodical to its audience, and to the shifts in circulating discourses within the society in which it was produced, combined to help shape the form the editorial policy took. It is clear from the way in which *Woman* tackled employment that its preferred discourse of the feminine ideal had to be modified in response to the shifts in the way society and its readership perceived it.

In the first year of publication, at a time in which other commercial women's magazines were finding women's employment a problematic area and when *Woman* was still in the throes of establishing its audience, its treatment of employment was markedly cautious. Rather than ignoring the topic, which would have disrupted its editorial policy of addressing 'modern woman', *Woman* adopted a detached approach. In distancing its readership from the actualities of paid employment, the magazine was able to both cater to the aspiring worker by acknowledging the acceptability of upper-class work, while also appeasing the doubts or fears of other readers by stressing the benefits of social reform accruing from contact with the uncivilized lower classes.

The later series detailing 'How Women May Make Money' conceded the fact that its readers might actually aspire to or be involved in paid employment. In the new penny papers, such as *Home Notes* and *Home Chat*, which were regarded as serious competitors by *Woman's* directors,⁸³ the woman reader was located in the domestic sphere and addressed as a housewife and consumer. *Woman* had responded to the success of these papers by modifying its editorial content. From the middle of the 1890s *Woman* became increasingly oriented to the domestic. However, one might regard the magazine's treatment of employment, especially its coverage of new and challenging professions, as an attempt to retain a distinctive personality - to mark it off from the purely domestic papers of Newnes and Harmsworth. While regular domestic departments (Jeanne Jardine's *Chats with Young Wives*, Mrs Hope's *Household Management Page*, and so on) proliferated in response to the wider field of women's

publishing, the feature article became increasingly the site for the expression of the magazine's individual 'corporate' identity.

That such an identity was unstable and fraught with internal tensions is demonstrated by the appearance of a variety of often conflicting discursive strands within and between articles. The need to cater to the interests of both advertisers and all sections of the readership evidently caused ruptures in the dominant discourse of the magazine as this chapter has discussed. If one can discern an instability in the construction of a textual identity through a form of writing over which the magazine had the most editorial control, then the area of reader participation may have been even more problematical. The next two chapters include an analysis of the strategies employed by the magazine in its attempt to control the meanings generated in the prize essay competition and in readers' correspondence.

- ¹ See Chapters Four and Five for a full discussion of how *Woman's* readers attempted to negotiate the magazine's efforts to shape their responses.
- ² Notice advertising back issues, *Woman* 25.09.1890, p. 18:
- No. 1 "An Ideal" by Mrs Lynn Linton.
 - No. 2 "Novel Writing" by May Crommelin.
 - No. 3 "The Portrait of a Lady" by Marie Corelli.
 - No. 4 "Gambling Women."
 - No. 5 "Stage Dancing" by Letty Lind.
 - No. 6 "Artist's Models" by Louise Jopling.
 - No. 7 "Journalism" by Mabel Collins.
 - No. 9 "Are Women Physically Deteriorating?" by Dr. Kate Mitchell.
 - No. 10 "Feminine Politicians" by Mrs Lynn Linton.
 - No. 11 "Women and Sport" by Lady Violet Greville.
 - No. 12 "A Dipsomaniac's Warning."
 - No. 13 "Women Astride."
 - No. 15 "Pianoforte Teaching" by Mrs Dutton Cook.
 - No. 17 "Technical Education for Women" by Eleanor Row.
 - No. 20 "Lady Shopkeepers" by Lady Granville Gordon.
 - No. 21 "Of Making Many Books" by L. T. Meade.
 - No. 25 "The of Women's Trades Unions" by Lady Dilke.
 - No. 26 "Waists and Stays" by Mary F. Billington.
- ³ Margaret Beetham, *A Magazine of Her Own? Domesticity and Desire in the Woman's Magazine, 1800-1914* (Routledge, 1996), p. 187.
- ⁴ The respective size of each form of writing in the magazine was calculated in terms of the number of columns it occupied. This is based on the three-column page. *Woman's* format varied from issue to issue (even within a single number it used both two- and three-column pages). Where the magazine adopted a two-column format, the actual number of columns was multiplied by 1.5 to allow comparison.
- ⁵ It should be noted here that this interview series was a feature of the magazine from its first year of publication, and did not, as Clotilde De Stasio claims, originate with Arnold Bennett's assumption of editorial control. See De Stasio, 'Arnold Bennett and the Late-Victorian *Woman*', *Victorian Periodicals Review* 28 :1 (Spring, 1995), p. 42.
- ⁶ 'The World of Breadwinners', *Woman* 03.01.1891-06.02.1892: for a full list of articles see Chapter One fn 5.

7 'What Women May Do': *Woman* 27.04.1892, pp. 3-4; 04.05.1892, pp. 3-4;
18.04.1892, pp. 4-5; 01.06.1892, pp. 3-4; 06.07.1892, pp. 3-4.

8 'How Women May Make Money', 23.10.1895-22.04.1896: for a full list of
articles see Chapter One fn 6.

9 'Where Girls Grow Wise', *Woman* 02.11.1892-14.02.1894: For a full list of
articles see Chapter One fn 4.

10 *Woman* 30.08.1893, p. 5.

11 Thus Mrs Charlotte Burckhardt and Violet Saunders were cited as contributing
both feature articles and fiction to the magazine. See 'Our Readers' Friends',
Woman 25.04.1894, p. 6. This series is one of the few instances of the
magazine identifying readers as contributors, elsewhere in the text features
were not signaled as reader-originated. The full series appeared intermittently,
and can be seen in the following issues: 30.08.1893, pp. 4-5: 13.09.1893, p. 5:
27.09.1893, p. 4: 18.10.1893, p. 5: 08.11.1893, p. 4-5: 22.11.1893, pp. 4-5:
06.12.1893, pp. 4-5: 24.01.1894, p. 5: 31.01.1894, pp. 7-8: 14.02.1894, pp.
4-5: 28.02.1894, p. 4: 21.03.1894, pp. 7-8: 04.04.1894, p. 7: 25.04.1894, p. 6.

12 Richard Ellman, *Oscar Wilde* (Hamish Hamilton, 1987), p. 288 cited in John
Stokes *In the Nineties* (Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire: 1989), p. 2.

13 *Woman* 02.05.1894.

14 De Stasio, *op. cit.* p. 42.

15 Clementina Black, 'Women under Victoria: 'Physical Developments and
Surroundings of Women' 07.04.1897, pp. 12-13; 'Women and Education'
14.04.1897, pp. 12-13; 'Social Developments of Women' 21.04.1897, pp. 10-
11; 'Political and Legal Development', 28.04.1897, pp. 10-11; 'Women in the
Literature of the Reign', 05.05.1897, pp. 10-11; 'Women in the Professions and
Industry', 12.05.1897, pp. 10-11.

16 'The Week's War' - weekly from 04.04.1900 - 22.08.1900.

17 *Woman* 26.02.1902, p. 11.

18 See, for example, *Woman* 14.03.1906.

19 'Our Birthday Greetings' in *Woman* 04.01.1893, p. 3.

20 Walter Besant, *The Pen and the Book* (1899), p. 257.

21 The lists were not directly linked to contributors to the specific issue in which
the list appeared, but were rather intended to give a more general impression
of the nature of *Woman's* contributions.

22 *Woman* 03.01.1890, p. 8.

23 Lady Violet Greville, however, may well have been known to the readers as
she was an established writer. She was a contributor to numerous periodicals

including the *Graphic* and the *Daily Chronicle*. In her autobiography Lady Greville states that, although initially writing anonymously 'Not until I was fairly launched on the stormy ocean of literature, not until an eminent editor told me I had a public, did I ever dare to reveal my identity.' Lady Violet Greville, *Vignettes of Memory* (Hutchinson, 1927), p. 166.

²⁴ *Woman* 01.03.1890, p. 12.

²⁵ Evelyn March-Phillips, 'Women's Newspapers' in *Fortnightly Review*, N.S. LVI (1894), p. 669.

²⁶ *Woman* 01.02.1890, p. 2.

²⁷ 'Politics for Women', *Woman* 05.06.1890, p. 3.

²⁸ *Ibid.* p. 4.

²⁹ See Chapter Five for a more detailed discussion of the use of personal pronouns in the dialogue between the readers and producers of the magazine.

³⁰ *Woman*, 01.01.1891, p. 4.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Mary Poovey, *Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England* (Virago, 1989), p. 149.

³³ Lee Holcombe, *Victorian Ladies at Work: Middle-Class Women in England and Wales, 1850-1914* (Newton Abbot, Devon: David & Charles, 1973), p. 5.

³⁴ Ros Ballaster, Margaret Beetham, Elizabeth Frazer & Sandra Hebron, *Women's Worlds: Ideology, Femininity and the Woman's Magazine* (Macmillan, 1991), p. 85.

³⁵ March-Phillips, 'Women's Newspapers', p. 670.

³⁶ *Ibid.* pp. 669-70.

³⁷ See, for example, *Shafts*, Vol. III No. 1 (April 1895).

³⁸ David Rubinstein, *Before the Suffragettes: Women's Emancipation in the 1890s* (Brighton, Sussex: Harvester Press, 1986), p. 69.

³⁹ J. F. C. Harrison, *Late Victorian Britain 1875-1901* (Fontana, 1990), p. 167.

⁴⁰ Clara Collet, 'Report by Miss Collet on the Statistics of Employment of Women and Girls' 1894, cited in Rubinstein *op. cit.* p. 71.

⁴¹ March-Phillips, 'Women's Newspapers', p. 666.

⁴² *Woman at Home* V 1895-96, pp. 546-48 cited in Beetham, *A Magazine of Her Own*, p. 132.

⁴³ Beetham, *A Magazine of Her Own*, p. 170.

⁴⁴ Ros Ballaster, Margaret Beetham, Elizabeth Frazer, & Sandra Hebron, *Women's Worlds: Ideology, Femininity and the Woman's Magazine* (Macmillan, 1990), p. 99.

- 45 Dorothy Thompson, 'Women, Work & Politics in Nineteenth-Century England: The Problem of Authority' in Jane Rendall (ed.), *Equal or Different: Women's Politics 1800-1900* (Basil Blackwell, 1987), pp. 57-81.
- 46 Meta Zimmeck, 'Jobs for the Girls: The Expansion of Clerical Work for Women, 1850-1914', in Angela V. John (ed.), *Unequal Opportunities: Women's Employment in England 1800-1918* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987), p. 157.
- 47 Beetham, *A Magazine of Her Own*, p. 139.
- 48 Ballaster *et al*, *op. cit.* p. 85.
- 49 'The Progress of "Woman"', *Woman* 01.01.1891, p. 4.
- 50 'The Woman Worker's Page: Woman and the Mind of the Modern Editor', *Woman* 27.05.03, p. 7.
- 51 Martha Vicinus, *Independent Women: Work and Community for Single Women, 1850-1920* (Virago, 1985), p. 24.
- 52 Beetham, *A Magazine of Her Own*, p. 141.
- 53 'On Strike', *Woman* 24.07.1890, p. 5.
- 54 *Ibid.* p. 4.
- 55 'The World of Breadwinners', 03.01.1890-06.02.1892; for a full list of articles in the series see Chapter One fn 5.
- 56 *Woman* 09.10.1890, pp. 4-5.
- 57 Unsigned, 'A Match-Girl Queen', 22.02.1890, pp. 2-3.
- 58 Eve, 'The World of Breadwinners: A Lady Decorator', *Woman* 11.01.1890, p. 6.
- 59 Lee Holcombe, *Victorian Ladies at Work: Middle-Class Working Women in England and Wales 1850-1914* (Newton Abbot, Devon: David & Charles, 1973), p. 4.
- 60 Push-Push, 'The World of Breadwinners: A Lady Laundress', *Woman*, 25.01.1890, pp. 3-4.
- 61 *Ibid.* p. 4. It is also interesting to compare this comment with Angela Messenger's working-girls in Besant's *All Sorts and Conditions of Men*, in which their dispositions, speech and behaviour all show marked improvement after a few weeks in her company.
- 62 Which 'Push-Push' points to as having been improved by 'gentlewomen adopting the profession', *ibid.* p. 4.
- 63 Lady Granville Gordon, 'Lady Shopkeepers', *Woman* 17.05.1890, p. 3.
- 64 'How Women May Make Money', 23.10.1895-22.04.1896: for a full list of articles see Chapter One fn 6.
- 65 *Woman* 23.10.1895, p. 9.

- ⁶⁶ 'How Women May Make Money: Preliminary Observations.' By the Editor, *Woman* 23.10.1895, p. 8.
- ⁶⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁶⁸ Although prior to 1901 census data did not distinguish between married, unmarried or widowed women, in 1911 married women over the age of twenty constituted 10.3% of the total female working population. Lee Holcombe, *op. cit.* p. 217.
- ⁶⁹ Zimmeck, *op. cit.* p. 155.
- ⁷⁰ *Ibid.* p. 156.
- ⁷¹ *Woman* 23.10.1895, p. 8.
- ⁷² *Woman* 18.10.1893, p. 4.
- ⁷³ See, for example, Ubiquiteuse, 'Miss Hopkins on Women Gardeners', *Woman* 06.11.1895, p. 8.
- ⁷⁴ In the short story by Meta Rotton, 'Hockey or Matrimony: A Story-Study for the Athletic Girl', for example, the tomboy heroine is shocked out her masculinized ways when confronted with a vision of her future self, with severe and weather-beaten face, short hair and tweedy garb. *Woman*, 06.01.1904, p. 17.
- ⁷⁵ Holcombe, *op. cit.* p. 146.
- ⁷⁶ *Woman* 11.03.1896, p. 8.
- ⁷⁷ *Woman* 15.01.1896, p. 8.
- ⁷⁸ *Ibid.*
- ⁷⁹ March-Phillips, 'Women's Newspapers', p. 666.
- ⁸⁰ See for example, *Woman* 01.02.9188, p. 11.
- ⁸¹ 'The Woman Worker's Page', *Woman*, 27.05.1903, p. 8.
- ⁸² Beetham, *A Magazine of Her Own*, p. 139.
- ⁸³ See Chapter Two for a full discussion of the response of the directors to the publication of the new penny weekly domestic women's magazines.

CHAPTER FOUR

Participating Readers: *Woman's* Prize Competitions.

Throughout its publication *Woman* provided readers with numerous opportunities for becoming directly involved in the text, running both prize essay competitions and correspondence columns, as well as soliciting a range of other contributions from the readership. Although, as I indicated in the previous chapter, *Woman's* readership participated in other writing forms, notably in the production of feature articles and fiction, the correspondence columns and regular competitions provided the only space in which reader-participation was explicitly flagged as such. As many of the issues arising from my analysis of competitions and correspondence overlap, this chapter will begin by providing a discussion of the major considerations underpinning my approach to explicit reader-participation across both this and the next chapter.

Reader-Participation: Overall Issues and Approaches.

Ample provision of space for reader involvement, according to Kathryn Shevelov, has always been a major distinguishing feature of the popular press, originating with the publication of John Dunton's epistolary journal *The Athenian Mercury* in 1691.¹ Throughout the nineteenth-century, the popular press provided space for readers to participate in the form of competitions and correspondence or problem pages. Part of the success of *The Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* (1852-1879), for example, lay in its regular competitions for essays on set topics as well as its correspondence columns, the 'Englishwoman's Conversazione' and 'Cupid's Letter Bag', which dealt with general topics and love and romance respectively. Margaret Beetham's assertion that the two forms of correspondence in *The Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* were founded upon 'both the tradition of "Answers" in the penny journals of the 1840s and the earlier tradition of the Confidante in the ladies' magazines'² underlines both the continued appeal of reader-participation and also the way in *Woman* appropriated and adapted existing forms in its construction of spaces for reader-participation.

In order to ensure its continued economic success the popular periodical needed to establish its audience immediately.³ By encouraging its readers to see the magazine as a microcosm of an ideal world, a community of which they were valued members, it attempted to ensure its continued survival.⁴ Mass-production of the periodical press created the need to appeal to a large and potentially diverse readership, maintaining which often resulted in the production of texts aimed at the lowest common denominator of 'taste' or 'cultural appeal'. Seeking to cater for such a disparate readership made it important that 'the reader' appear in the text; without this

figure the creation of a textual community became highly problematic. Kathryn Shevelov suggests that:

The appearance of a dialogue between parties mutually concerned in the production of the periodical, concretized the association between the popular periodical and its varied audience by explicitly figuring that audience within the text.⁵

The inclusion of the reader as writing subject helped to create a bond between the reader and the text, by emphasizing their complicity in the creation of the text. Moreover, for a readership dispersed socially and geographically, the figure of the reader within the text operated as a point of reference against which readers were able to construct a sense of the magazine's textual community. Mass production of the periodical text meant that it crossed many social and geographical boundaries. In terms of their fractured and multi-vocal address and the diversity of their potential readership, such texts are markedly heterogeneous. In order to maintain a sense of coherency and recognition across issues it was crucial that these texts construct a means of identification for readers, both with the magazine and with the general readership. The figure of the 'textual reader' was therefore important in drawing together the 'real readers', by concretizing the magazine's construction of its textual community as well as by providing a departure point for the formulation of individual readers' own 'textual identities'.

Within the world of the popular magazine the appearance of the 'textual reader' functioned to both specify and consolidate the readership, in much the same way as the encoded discourse of, for example, the front cover or the material format. The success of a magazine was in large part due to its formulation of a textual or 'corporate' identity - inextricably linked to its successful appeal to its targeted audience, conveyed through the clues provided by title, cover design, editorial content and so on.

With the proliferation of titles in the latter part of the century, the women's press needed to imagine and appeal to increasingly specific audiences. The construction of the magazine's 'corporate' identity and the imagined community of readers were thus interdependent. However, as this chapter and the next will demonstrate, such communities, once set up, were not so easily controlled. The multiplicity of voices interacting within the text (asking for advice, competing, commenting on editorial text and on previous contributions) can be interpreted in many different, often conflicting ways. Editorial comment is one way in which the magazine sought to shut down the

proliferation of meanings (guiding the reader toward preferred interpretations); but ultimately, the power of interpretation rested with the reader.

While opportunities for reader-participation in *Woman* clearly operated to establish a sense of 'textual community', questions remain as to what extent this was a construction by the magazine's producers or an authentic expression of the readership. Such questions are clearly difficult to resolve. Demographic research into 'real' readers may offer some information on their geographical and class distribution, but the main evidence on their reading practices remains in the text itself. In using the printed sources within *Woman*, however, hidden (editorial) processes of censorship at work in the selection and presentation of published material must also be taken into account.

For a cultural form whose original participants are no longer around to confirm or refute any speculations on its reception, *Woman's* correspondence columns and competition pages offer a useful site for examining the ways in which readers at the time of publication constructed identities within the margins of the text - whether as progressive 'woman' or conservative 'lady'. Such constructions clearly work on a number of levels, which will be discussed in more detail in the course of the chapter ; however it is worth pausing to identify the two main ways in which reader contributions can be said to help construct a separate self from that implied within the editorial copy. As I argue more fully in the next chapter, on one level the competition or correspondence page may prompt readers to either identify with or challenge the figure of the reader in the text. Where readers themselves participate, receive replies, or recognize the contributions of other readers personally known to them, then the process reaches a different level whereby they may move beyond their otherwise purely textual engagement with the magazine and the reading community.

Janice Radway argues that it is oversimple to assume that any one text or genre has the power to constitute an audience in isolation from all other practices and influences. Radway would prefer to investigate '...the multitude of concrete connections which ever-changing, fluid subjects forge between ideological fragments, discourses and practices.'⁶ Radway's call for an acknowledgment of the multiplicity of narratives, texts and practices which combine to inform the reading subject offers a caution against too easily considering any one text as exerting a totally dominant influence. However, such a project has a number of methodological problems, as Radway concedes; not least of which is the sheer vastness of the field of study. While this thesis does, indeed, focus on the reader-text relationship in one magazine, it does so in the belief that a diachronic analysis offers the opportunity to focus upon a

particular set of reading practices. From a close examination of readers' contributions to *Woman* it would appear that there was a process of response which, while not necessarily informed solely from that particular periodical, was in dialogue with it. In any case, I would suggest that at the moment of reading the reader was responding to that specific periodical; the construction of subjectivity at that moment, however transitory, was predicated upon that particular response - whether oppositional or not.

The commercial periodical, once having defined itself to its readers and advertisers, was under pressure to reproduce itself within the parameters it had set up in order to preserve a sense of unity from week to week. The 'corporate identity' was one which, while not being monolithic, was certainly resistant to change. The struggle for meaning created gaps within which alternative identities and meanings were constructed. Clearly such a process is at work in any number of texts and practices, and I would draw attention to Michel de Certeau's assertion that:

Far from being writers - founders of their own places, heirs of the peasants of earlier ages now working on the soil of language, diggers of wells and builders of houses - readers are travellers; they move across lands belonging to someone else, like nomads poaching their way across fields they did not write, despoiling the wealth of Egypt to enjoy it themselves.⁷

De Certeau draws attention to the tension between readers and writers in relation to control of the text and the meanings arising from it. As 'poachers', readers may be involved in a process of interpretation and appropriation, in which only those parts of the text perceived to be valuable are taken up and used. According to De Certeau readers develop 'tactics' as a way of inserting themselves into the spaces created by institutionalized power.⁸ Such tactics are a form of resistance to the dominant codes of mass-produced texts which attempt to impose their systems of meaning upon the reader. *Woman's* provision of spaces for readers to participate in the construction of the text offers an insight into the ways in which some readers interpreted and appropriated the dominant codes of the magazine. Conversely, *Woman's* correspondence columns and competition pages were highly structured, bound with rules and editorial comment, all of which was intended to maintain the magazine's power over the production of meaning.

Before readers could correspond or enter any of the competitions they were required to attach a coupon clipped from the inside wrapper of the relevant issue. This was a not uncommon practice in the women's magazines of the period.⁹ Failure to do so invariably attracted comments from the editorial staff. As a sales technique, the

coupon system ensured that the full benefits of the magazine (access to advice and the possibility of winning a variety of prizes) could only be obtained by one reader per issue. As many periodicals at this time were passed on from reader to reader, the coupon system was at this level an attempt to increase sales figures.

Restricting participation to those coupon holders who could prove their purchase effectively limited the range of readers who figured within the text. For research purposes it must be noted that any analysis of the readership based upon the contributing readers will not necessarily be representative of the overall readership. The coupon system may also account for the preponderance of middle-class participants identified in the 1890s. It is notable that in later issues of *Woman*, particularly those of the 1900s in which there is a greater emphasis placed on domesticity and in which, additionally, the overall tone is more 'down-market', there is evidence of a wider class of readers including a significant number of readers giving 'care of' addresses and letters from servants.

As well as encouraging sales *Woman's* coupon system also functioned as an attempt at audience building, feeding into the notion of the magazine as a community. The possession of a physical symbol of belonging to a particular group (that of the community of *Woman* readers and correspondents) not only provided proof of the reader's licence for participation but also invested the participant, as a legitimate member of the 'community', with full access to all the privileges offered. The very act of purchase contributed to the readers' sense of belonging, based upon the notion of reader and magazine having a mutual interest in the construction and maintenance of both text and identity.

The notion of a community reinforced by the 'right' to participate however, should not be regarded as representative of *Woman's* total readership. As I have pointed out, magazines were not read only by the individuals who actually purchased them. Popular texts do tend to get passed around - periodicals in particular are noted for their large and informal circulation - and it is unlikely that *Woman* would prove to be any different. Moreover, while *Woman* claimed to have established itself in various parts of the Empire, the deadlines for competition entries meant that colonial readers would be debarred from competing.

Possession, or otherwise, of a coupon clearly implies that within the readership itself there was a division - between those who saw themselves imbued with full participatory rights and those who had no opportunity to intervene directly in the text. Of course, possession of a coupon does not necessarily mean that a reader would be

sufficiently motivated to compete. The frequency with which some names appear in the lists - often across a number of years - suggests that the magazine enjoyed a nucleus of loyal readers. What is also impossible to resolve, though itself an interesting question, is how this affected the readers' construction of a self in relation to the text; whether the opportunity to intervene actively within the printed pages of the magazine made readers more or less likely to identify with the community represented by the magazine and the readers' voices which figured there. It seems feasible to suggest that participating readers may have been more likely to see the magazine as having closer links with their life and sense of self (even where they may have been challenging assumptions made there) than those whose experience of the magazine was founded on a rather more unevenly balanced relationship.

Close reading of *Woman* indicates that within the parameters of the text the opportunities for creating textual identities were not, however, totally open-ended. Fearful, perhaps, of the results of a multiplicity of identities, the magazine sought to limit the range of responses. Readers who wished to correspond were encouraged to shape their inquiries or contributions in accordance not only with the rules and conditions set out by the magazine, but also with the code implicit within the text, as the notice to contributors in the January issues of 1890 suggests:

The Editor will be glad to receive for consideration original contributions, such as short, smartly written sketches on subjects or events of interest to women, authenticated paragraphs giving special information as the doings of 'Society' and the latest *on dits*; also practical suggestions on Household Economy, Decoration, and Dress, especially those applicable to small households...

Much time and disappointment will be saved if intending contributors will study the style and length of the contributions which appear in these columns, and will remember the fact that *WOMAN* is not a 'class' paper.¹⁰

The prescriptive nature of such 'advice' was an attempt to limit the proliferation of styles and subject matter - to keep such material in line with the identity which it had conceived for itself. Moreover, the constraints imposed upon the contributing reader encouraged them to re-create themselves textually within the boundaries of that identity formulated and privileged by the magazine. The process of limitation implied in the advice to contributors may be regarded in two ways. The magazine needed to draw the reader into seeing herself as, at the least, a potential contributor and thus someone with at least nominal power within the text. At the same time the magazine needed to retain some sense of internal unity.

In addition to the explicit constraints imposed by *Woman's* notices to prospective contributors, participation in the magazine was also shaped by the spaces in which such activity was allowed to take place. This is particularly apparent in the areas marked off specifically for reader involvement. Pierre Bourdieu claims that:

Among the most effective and best concealed censorships are all those which consist in excluding certain agents from communication by excluding them from the groups which speak or the places which allow one to speak with authority.¹¹

As I remarked in Chapter Three, although feature articles were written by readers, they were never flagged as such. Knowledge of the origin of reader-produced features was limited to the contributing reader and those who actually knew her. For the general readership the feature article was the work of the editorial team or of named professional writers. As such one might argue that an invisible structure of power was in operation.

In contrast to the feature article, spaces for reader-participation - the correspondence page and the competition essays - were not invested with the same level of authority. While readers were invited to see themselves as complicit in the production of the magazine, they were not privileged in the same way as the authors of feature articles. Bourdieu suggests that

Symbolic productions ... owe their most specific properties to the social conditions of their production and, more precisely, to the position of the producer in the field of production...¹²

The successful expression of the reader's voice would be, for Bourdieu, problematized by the relative lack of power readers had over the form such expressions could take. Moreover, the way in which readers' contributions were presented exerted a powerful shaping influence, what Bourdieu would refer to as 'censorship'. Prize essays were routinely framed by editorial comment, while correspondence was, as I shall discuss in the next chapter, translated through the editorial voice; such mediation functioned to assert the authority of the editorial voice over the voices of the readership. Certainly, *Woman's* prize essay competitions allowed the reader space to comment, however obliquely, upon the discourses at work in the magazine. While the figure of the reader functioned on one level to create a bond between the reader and the text it also presented a potential threat to the unity of the editorial voice.

Bourdieu's model of implicit censorship is useful to an exploration of *Woman's* internal structure and its function as a curb on the proliferation of meanings arising from the magazine's disparate readership. However, Bourdieu's approach ignores the 'resisting reader'.¹³ My discussions of *Woman's* competitions in this chapter, and of the magazine's correspondence columns in the following chapter, seek to engage both with issues of censorship and also with the readers' struggle to assert their own meanings.

Reader Competitions.

From its inception in the 1850s, *The Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* had used the essay competition as well as the correspondence page to foster what Beetham refers to as a 'lively dialogue between readers and "The Editor"'.¹⁴ Beeton's magazine set the tone for many of the popular women's periodicals that followed and competitions were a familiar feature in the popular periodical press, particularly by the time of *Woman's* publication.¹⁵

Competitions were a recurrent feature of *Woman* although, as the outline of changes in form and content throughout its publication span shows, they were rather more sensitive to shifts in editorial control than the correspondence column. This section of the chapter will begin with an explanation of the sampling procedure and will offer a summary of the main types of competition identified. A discussion of the main changes in form and content, linking them to changes in editorial control, will follow. The following section will examine the function of the competition as a means of constructing and consolidating a sense of the readership. One major type of competition, the prize essay competition, which was a more regular feature of the issues published under the editorship of Fitzroy Gardner up to the succession of Arnold Bennett in 1897, offered a public forum for the exchange of ideas in *Woman*; this will provide the focus of the remaining section of the chapter.

In order to identify the form, content and frequency of competitions in *Woman* I undertook a scanning of all issues published between the months of January and June for each year up to 1909. A table given in Appendix 4:1 which is based on this scanning shows the frequency of competitions in terms of their general subject matter, also indicating changes in editorial control. Competitions averaged one a week under Gardner. Their numbers fell sharply and continuously under Bennett; but they were revived under Meller and Hall Fielden, and especially under Peel and Nolan (see Appendix 2:1). However, these overall figures conceal a marked and significant shift in the nature of competitions. Under Gardner's editorship, only 10 out of 176



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'Social dilemmas' were a popular type of competition in *Woman* in the mid-1890s. These competitions are a useful indicator of the magazine's assumed class of readership. The 'social dilemma' was concerned with solving such knotty problems of etiquette as the following, published in 1892:

Mrs A., recently arrived from Australia, is staying in a London house for Christmas. On entering the drawing-room just before dinner on Christmas-day, she discovers to her surprise amongst the guests a young Australian, Mr B., who had forged her father's name to a cheque in Melbourne, and had been pardoned through her intervention and on condition that he left the country. He implores her in a moment's conversation not to breathe a word about his past. During dinner she observes that there is an obvious understanding between him and her host's daughter. After dinner, in the drawing-room, the latter confides to her that Mr B. has proposed to her that morning, and will ask her father's consent that night. What ought Mrs A. to do? ¹⁸

This is typical of the problems offered to the readers and is remarkably similar to a recurring plot in *Woman's* own short fiction. It would seem to be doubtful that such 'social dilemmas' actually formed a part of the readers' lives. Certainly, responses within the correspondence columns do not suggest this sort of problem occupied readers much, if at all.

As an element in the construction of a textual identity for the readership, however, the representation of such high-class problems feeds into *Woman's* construction of its readership as one inhabiting, or aspiring to inhabit, a middle- to upper-class sphere. Readers, through their familiarity with the fictionalized narratives of the social dilemmas, were provided with a further opportunity for aligning themselves with the textual identity created through the editorial material, regardless of their actual social position. In fact, the narratives contained within the social dilemmas closely reflected the fictional narratives which Louis James has identified with periodical fiction aimed at the lower end of the social scale.¹⁹ The inclusion of country homes, town houses and balls, together with flawed or corrupt upper-class characters, which were integral both to the competition and to lower-class periodical fiction served, he suggests, to engender a feeling of moral superiority as well as a vicarious pleasure in imagining oneself in sumptuous surroundings and with elevated company. Readers competing in these competitions could, clearly, belong to any social group as the knowledge required to respond does not necessarily arise from their own lived experience. What is important about such competitions is that they created a space in which fiction and

reality merge, and in which readers from any background met on the terms provided both by the magazine and by their shared reading practices.

The most resilient form of competition was that requiring readers to submit practical hints, recipes, or even samples of handicrafts. The domestic competition appeared in some form or other in every year of *Woman's* publication - and was even sponsored by a patent food manufacturer for a time.²⁰ Such competitions demanded relatively little literary talent from the reader apart from the ability to transcribe a recipe or set out a household budget. This was not the case with the prize essay competitions which were prevalent during the early 1890s. As I demonstrate later, the prize essay covered a host of subjects and required readers to exercise skill in conveying their thoughts in set word counts or specific literary forms such as epigrams, limericks or verse.

The type of competition appearing in *Woman* is a useful indicator of the degree of freedom and range of expression open to the competitor. Different types of competition called for different levels of input by readers. As I have indicated, the domestic competition required a different set of skills or competencies from those demanded by the essay competition. Additionally, the levels of skill or free time demanded by various competitions reveal editorial assumptions regarding its readership. Competitions requesting samples of readers' embroidery skills, for example, implied the reader was in possession of an amount of leisure and aptitude that poorer or working women may not have possessed. Similarly, ballots requiring the reader send in multiple coupons assumed the reader to have regular and equal access to the magazine, precluding the casual reader. Bennett's scholarships demanded that readers canvass friends and relations to purchase copies of the magazine, or to take out subscriptions, in order to collect sufficient coupons to stand a chance of winning. Paradoxically, those readers most in need of commercial training or scholarships in order to afford education were probably least likely to have the wherewithal or a large enough circle of affluent relations to collect enough coupons to win.²¹

As might be expected with a woman's magazine, the most enduring competition subjects for prize essays were those closely associated with traditional notions of femininity, with love, marriage, dress, appearance, and domestic topics figuring largely. The many practical competitions reinforced this femininity by requesting readers send in samples of embroidery, dress designs and examples of hand-sewn children's garments as well as detailed menus, recipes and household accounts.

Leisure was also a popular subject matter - and covered such diverse topics as bicycling, photography and gardening.

While the subject matter of *Woman's* competitions during the 1890s was clearly intended to appeal to the 'womanly woman', rather than to the magazine's *bête noire* the 'advanced woman', it did not preclude the discussion of woman's position within society. Such apparently innocuous essay titles as 'Should Women Weep?',²² while attracting a high percentage of frivolous responses, also allowed some readers the space in which to satirize the constraints imposed upon women dependent upon men for their economic survival.

Unlike the correspondence column, whose parameters are discussed in the next chapter, the competition provided an area for participation with less rigidly defined boundaries. Instead of the prescribed areas afforded by the specific correspondence columns, offering a relatively unchanging arena for dialogue across extended periods, the form and content of the prize competitions varied from week to week. The frequency of both type and subject of competition altered over the publication of *Woman*, so that, for example, there were more essay competitions dealing with a range of issues during the early 1890s while the 1900s showed a marked rise in domestic 'hints and recipes' competitions. In the following discussion I shall trace the changes in *Woman's* competitions across its publication span.

For the first three to four years of *Woman's* publication, under the editorship of Fitzroy Gardner, its content was highly diverse, suggesting a more open-ended approach to the assumed readership than existed later on in the publication run. The general textual diversity across the entire text was also reflected in the variety of the competition types and subject matter. A broad range of competitions was obviously necessary in the early years of the magazine's search for a readership. An announcement concerning forthcoming prize competitions, which appeared five months into the publication, had a deliberately wide range of appeal, listing the readers likely to be attracted by these subjects as:

1. Marriageable Girls.
2. Women who take Long Walks.
3. Art Amateurs.
4. Women of all Kinds who want to Win £5.
5. Young Mothers.
6. Women who Read.
7. Intelligent Women and Men.

8. Women who Travel Abroad.
9. Young Wives.
10. Women of all Kinds who want to Win £2.
11. Good-looking Women.
12. Women who have a Sense of Humour.
13. Good Housewives.
14. Women who love the Picturesque.
15. Politicians.
16. Women who Listen to Sermons.
17. Men Only.
18. Women who go to the Seaside.
19. Practical Philanthropists.
20. Women who have Good Figures.²³

Instructing readers that, 'the above order of subjects will not be strictly followed, so that those who wish to compete in any one must watch these columns from week to week', the announcement clearly functions to build and consolidate its readership without limiting its appeal. It is also clear, from the way in which *Woman* presented its list, that it regarded the competition as a means of encouraging continued purchase.

The prize competition offers a useful barometer of the ways in which *Woman* both imagined its readership and also constructed an appeal to them. *Woman's* deliberately catholic choice of competition, however, suggests an initial ambivalence towards its targeted readership, with a list of potential competitors that had a fairly universal appeal. This appeal, it should also be noted, indicates the way in which *Woman* defined what were the acceptable features of the female reader - good-looking, philanthropic, marriageable rather than, for example, independent, employed, or 'advanced'. Once the magazine had established itself and its readership, it was able to be much more specific about its definition of the readership. This was, to greater degree, made possible by the information about readers that was provided by the response to the competitions. Entries not only provided plenty of information on readers' geographical and, possibly, class positions, but also supplied readers' opinions on a whole range of issues, offering the opportunity for the magazine to react to particular responses and to shape future competition subjects predicated upon past reader-response.

Although one aspect of the competitions' divergence may be regarded as audience building, the variety of competitions continued throughout Gardner's editorship, even after the audience might be considered to have been established.

This would appear to indicate a closer engagement with his readers than was evident under later editors, most notably his successor Arnold Bennett.

The variety of competition subjects, and indeed, their frequency, altered dramatically under Bennett's control.²⁴ Competitions declined noticeably, with numbers halved in each successive year. The higher number of competitions in Bennett's first year as editor consists mainly of a regular domestic competition, 'Helps for Housekeepers', which appeared every fortnight and required competitors to answer any or all of six pre-set questions within the general sphere of domesticity. Later competitions, apart from one or two short essays, tended to require readers to provide lists or collect coupons for voting purposes. Consequently there is a noticeable lack of a space in which readers could contribute textually. The absence of the 'reader's voice' means that to a greater or lesser extent the power to impose a dominant reading within the text itself devolves into the hands of the magazine. Under Bennett's control, the opportunities for readers to enter a dialogue - either with the magazine, or with each other - were severely limited, which has clear implications for the way in which readers saw or imagined the reading community of the magazine as it was represented textually.

Bennett was, as I argued in Chapter Two, more detached from his readership than his predecessor, Gardner. From 1897, and up to the final year of Mrs Peel's editorship in 1906, the competitions become firmly centred on the domestic sphere. The introduction by Bennett, in 1897, of a 'Quarterly Household Competition', inviting readers to send in responses to six questions relating to household matters, was a precursor for the regular appearance, in 1901 under Hall Fielden's editorship, of the Home Hints Page. The Home Hints Page, which consisted of prize recipes and domestic hints, survived under different titles until the final full year of publication, and provided the bulk of competitions open to the readers. The restrictive framework of the domestic 'prize hints and recipes' format denied the reader the same amount of expressive freedom that the earlier essay competitions offered. As with the correspondence columns, the readers' response was bound by editorial intervention.

Clearly the arrival of the Home Hints Page heralded a new departure for the magazine - and one which represented a significant limitation in terms of the voice allowed to the reader. This also tends to reflect the overall shift in the magazine in the 1900s towards a far more domestic, and indeed homogeneous, format. In the same issue as that in which the Home Hints Page first appeared there was also an editorial outlining changes in the magazine. Entitled 'A Great Surprise' this item introduced a number of changes being made (none of them referring to the competition) explaining

this in terms of the need for change in order to appear 'bright'.²⁵ The changes outlined seem in keeping with the more standard popular women's magazines of the time²⁶ insofar as they were concerned with children, fashion, society and theatrical gossip and fiction.

Although changes within the format of the magazine were gradual, one may regard 1901 as marking a general shift in orientation away from a more varied and (albeit diluted) 'progressivism' towards the domestic 'service' magazine we still see today with its emphasis on home, children and cooking. Clearly this change in format had significant implications for the relationship between the reader and the magazine. Whereas in the 1890s readers had a space for developing an individual voice, in the 1900s communication was restricted to the conventional formula of the recipe or home hint. This remained the case up to the final year of Mrs Peel's editorship, when the prize essay was reinstated, although it never reached the heights of popularity it achieved in the 1890s. During the period between the start of Bennett's editorship in 1897 and 1905 we get very little sense of the individual readership apart from what clues we may glean about their general affluence and class from the implications of culinary and domestic hints published.

The closing down of areas in which meanings might be contested may be regarded as the means by which power was recuperated into the hands of the magazine. As women became more visible in the public sphere so the opportunities for exploring and challenging female roles within the magazine lessened. This should not be regarded as mere coincidence, but as a deliberate ideological strategy. Women's position as the main consumers of goods and services made them attractive to advertisers. It was, therefore, in *Woman's* interests as a self-confessed commercial venture, to encourage them to remain there. One of the ways in which the magazine sought to achieve this was through the privileging of the male voice. This is apparent in *Woman's* birthday editorial of 1893 in which each of the members of the editorial staff was given a 'voice'. Unlike the other 'writers' the Prize Editor did not actually talk for herself. Giving as a reason her preoccupation with choosing the winning entry on 'how to use up the remains of a cold joint' she offered the reader, instead, a letter written by her husband:

No one can realize what I have gone through since I married, but it was all as nothing compared with my experiences since *WOMAN* started and my wife became 'Prize Editor.' Of course, I know that to have such an honour conferred on her ought to have been a source of gratification and pride to the

whole family, including the baby, but since her preferment my lot has not been a happy one.

No sooner do I sit down to dinner than I am appealed to as to whether Mrs Somerville Blenkinsop or Miss Cynthia Busypen has given the best solution of 'Should Cats Wear Corsets?' or some equally important social question of the day. Babies' photos and pictures of weird, mystic fancy dresses are strewn about my study. Prize tennis-aprons find their way into my dressing-room. and narrowly escape being used for shaving purposes...²⁷

The prize competition, as viewed through the male eyes of the Prize Editor's husband, took on a ludicrous and superficial significance; serving only to reinforce male assumptions about the readerships of women's magazines and women in general. The prize essay competition, which I explore in the remainder of this chapter, offers a further opportunity to trace changes in reader-participation.

The prize essay covered a multitude of subjects, both frivolous and serious, and offered a space in which readers could explore a variety of issues. Essay titles were published on average three to four weeks before the results were printed, and required responses of between one and five hundred words.²⁸ Under Gardner a host of topics were debated; perhaps the most interesting of these covered issues of gender and marriage. Although the prize essays didn't disappear entirely after this, they did not become popular again until 1905; and even then lacked the same degree of variety that was a feature of the earlier essay competitions, although from 1906 at least one competition per year involved some discussion of female suffrage. Alternating between the frivolous, such as whether women should weep, and the more serious which debated the position of the married woman, the subject matter of the essay competitions provides a useful site for analyzing the ways in which the reader sought to negotiate meanings both within the community of readers and in dialogue with the editorial voice.

In contrast to *Woman's* correspondence, much of which was conducted entirely through editorial responses, the content of the competition entries had to be made manifest as the magazine was no longer supposed to be talking to one individual, but to all competitors and all readers. Competitions did not take place in secret. Obviously this does not mean that the reader was given autonomy over her contribution; the process of editorial selection and intervention were still at work and the editorial voice was no less active in its struggle for ascendancy.

Certainly *Woman* was not averse to using the results of its competitions as a means of reinforcing its own construction of woman's 'ideal' sphere:

No one can so well realize the neglect of domestic matters in the education of girls of the present day so much as the Editor, or, still more, the Prize Editor of this paper. We had the greatest difficulty at first in finding a thoroughly practical housewife to take charge of the domestic department, and to discriminate between practical and unpractical advice given in the articles on domestic subjects. The really good papers received in Prize Competitions on domestic subjects were in the proportion of about one to ten of the clever papers received in other competitions. The truth is that while the modern maiden is making strides in Higher Education she seems to be gradually losing ground in her own peculiar sphere - that of the housewife.²⁹

Once again the voice of authority, in this case that of the editor, is endowed with a superior knowledge, not only of his readers, but also of their entire sex, his views being naturalized so that he can set himself up as an authority on what was and was not practical from the point of view of domestic matters. It even seems reasonable that he should be able to pronounce on the very concerns that he claims constitute woman's own peculiar sphere. The editor's comments about the results of the domestic competitions, however, not only ignores the fact that few purely domestic competitions were set by *Woman* in the early 1890s, but also disregards the possibility that domestic subjects did not figure highly in readers' regard. Thus it may be argued that the disappointing response to domestic competitions points to a disparity between the assumptions of the editor and the readers' actual desires or interests.

The editorial drive within the magazine towards unity was constantly being thwarted by the readers as the above editorial comments demonstrate. Moreover, because the magazine had ultimate power in choosing which responses it printed, it may be assumed that other, even more radically challenging responses were received. Kathryn Shevelow claims that

... most periodicals exercised some degree of overt censorship over their correspondence, and it is probable that they also exercised unacknowledged censorship, or at least editorial alteration of the material they published. Yet their address to their audience turned upon the pretext, extensively promoted, of reader complicity in the production of the text.³⁰

Certainly, *Woman* used various strategies in its attempt to keep competition responses within the boundaries of what was felt to be editorially acceptable. The choice of subject matter and tone of prize essay titles constituted an implicit form of censorship and thus were an attempt to limit the range of readers' responses to such competitions. Additionally, the selection, editorial comment and criticism of published responses, as well as the format and location of the responses within the text, all influenced possible interpretation.

The competition 'What is unwomanly?', which appeared in 1893, offers an interesting illustration of the way in which *Woman* sought to impose a dominant reading. Through the instructions to 'treat the competition ... from the point of view of *Woman's* policy as expressed by her motto, "Forward but not too fast:" and in not more than 100 words', the range of acceptable responses was limited to those the magazine approved.³¹ Very few of the essay competitions identified in the sample provided the reader with such explicit instructions on how to approach the topic, which suggests the magazine was particularly uneasy about the possible range of responses to it. The subject of the competition, essentially concerned with definitions of what was and was not feminine, was also, by implication, tied up with the construction of *Woman's* own identity. Clearly the title 'Woman' and its subtitle 'for all sorts and conditions of women', indicates an assumption of authority over the definition of what was actually meant by the term 'woman'. Unwomanliness, therefore, could only stand in opposition to the identity *Woman* had created for itself, and which it encouraged in its readers.

Editorial comment, which often appeared alongside competition responses, was largely absent in the publication of responses to 'What is unwomanly'. Instead, the selected papers were given at length. The rubric of the competition meant that winning entries were unlikely to challenge *Woman's* definition of femininity, and of its obverse, unwomanliness. It is clearly possible that *Woman* received entries which challenged the magazine's dominant position; such entries would fail to meet the competition conditions and as such could not be expected to be published. As I remarked earlier, the process of censorship, whether implicit or explicit, was undoubtedly a feature of the popular periodical, and thus *Woman* could, in this case, publish only those responses in line with its own position without having to justify its actions. Readers' responses published in other competitions quite often challenged the dominant position of the magazine, but in most cases this was not such a problem, and the magazine dealt with such responses through comment and presentation. The sensitive nature of this competition, however, dealing, as it did, with a subject which impinged upon *Woman's* construction of its own textual identity as

well as of its readership, meant that the need to 'police' readers' responses became more urgent. The noticeable similarity in the published essays made editorial comment to an extent unnecessary; presenting the results as the product of a consensus amongst the readers effectively 'naturalized' the discourses contained within them and made them less open to challenge. Where the readers' responses closely followed *Woman's* own editorial line there was little need for intervention apart from the occasional approving comment. Indeed, the responses to 'What is Unwomanly?' and *Woman's* editorial definitions of womanliness are so closely aligned that there are few spaces for resistance.

However, while *Woman* presented the entries to this competition uncritically, they did spark a response elsewhere in the press. In her paper, which occupied the privileged position of first published response on the page, a Mrs Wood had written:

To consider herself undeveloped man and act accordingly.

To storm the Woman's Rights Citadel, instead of advancing mine and countermine.

To rudely reject man's aid, and then state that chivalry is dead.

To 'touch pitch' unnecessarily and publicly, and then abuse men for despising women.

To compete jealously with men, oblivious of her delicate organism and the rights of posterity.

To fret because her home work is too little.

To wear too short skirts, or to drag them in the mud.

To forget that woman is only womanly when she sets herself to man

'Like perfect music unto noble words.'³²

Mrs Wood's prize-winning paper became the subject of a lengthy attack in *The Spectator*.³³ In the article 'Womanliness and Womanishness' definitions of gender were explored, and Mrs Wood was criticized for a paper that *The Spectator* saw as 'written too much for the express purpose of pleasing men, with a little hint thrown in, - perhaps purposely obscure, - of the best way of obtaining what women desire without offending men.' There followed a long and involved discussion of womanish-, womanly-, and mannish-women as well as manly men, as typified in the following.

There are, in truth, two very different kinds of unwomanliness; one kind is to be mannish, the other kind is to be womanish as distinguished from womanly. It is very unwomanly to be mannish, but it is just as unwomanly to be womanish, The womanish woman is a woman who has not a nature large

enough to enable her to put natural feminine etiquettes and preferences by, when there is a need to show she is made like a man in the image of God.³⁴

In fact, all the winning entries in the competition mentioned, at some stage, the imitation of man as unwomanly. However, unlike *The Spectator*, none mentioned exaggerated femininity or 'womanishness'. This provides a further example of the way in which the readers' response was shaped by the competition instructions; by treating it from the point of view of *Woman's* motto, 'forward, but not too fast' competitors were directed to look towards the progressive woman as a point of contrast with womanliness rather than to any unacceptable aspects of the 'old' woman. This limited the field of inquiry, and the general reader is left with the impression that only the advanced woman was 'unwomanly', a curious position for the reader of a 'progressive' magazine.

Woman's defence of Mrs Wood's paper, indeed, its generally uncritical approach to all the papers in that competition, was possible only because the responses mirrored its own editorial approach to femininity. In a later competition to suggest the 'Best Novels of 1893'³⁵ *Woman* was far more censorious. The magazine dismissed the fact that 'very many' of the competitors voted for 'New Woman' novels because such a result was not in line with the magazine's preferred approach. Although the editorial commentary was not attributed, it is more than likely that the voice condemning the popular choice was that of Arnold Bennett, then the assistant editor and book reviewer. Writing as 'Barbara' in 'Book Chat' Bennett made no mention of any of the winning novels in any of his reviews during 1893, although several of the books which were cited as not having been picked were the subject of glowing reviews in his column. While Bennett claimed 'advanced' literary views for himself³⁶ these did not extend to the novels dealing with the New Woman. Writing in *Woman* as Sarah (Sal) Volatile, Bennett used fiction to satirize both the New Woman and the New Woman fiction.³⁷

The majority of competitors cited just four novels as the best published in 1893. These, in their respective order of popularity, were: Sarah Grand's polemic against gender inequality within marriage, *The Heavenly Twins*; Beatrice Harraden's romantic novel, *Ships that Pass in the Night*; *Diana Tempest*, a melodrama by Mary Cholmondely; and E. F. Benson's rather sentimental novel, *Dodo*. Despite the popularity of these novels, which was not confined only to the readers of *Woman*, very little mention was made of them in the pages of the magazine during the year of their publication, and none of them appeared in the book review section. A paragraph in

the gossip column in August 1893 is all that I have been able to identify. However, this in itself is revealing:

It would appear that there are only three books that anyone reads just now. I heard a lady the other day at a circulating library ask for *Dodo* or *Ships that Pass in the Night*. On learning that it was impossible to get hold of a copy of either at present, "*Heavenly Twins*, then," she demanded. "Yes," said the man, "*Heavenly Twins* is breaking down a bit now. I can let you have the first volume next week."³⁸

Despite acknowledging the popular reception of the books, *Woman* forbore from dealing with any of these novels in any detail at all.

Although Sarah Grand's novel was well-received amongst the public its popularity preceded most critical attention. Writing about *The Heavenly Twins* in the *Critic* in April 1893, Arthur Waugh had commented upon the difference between the novel's popular and critical reception:

During the few weeks of its life, it has been discussed little enough in the papers; and yet report has it that private persons, unconnected with the trade, have boldly penetrated into the shades of the publishers' receiving-department, and tendered their full thirty-one shillings and sixpence for their own single copies - a very unusual proceeding, indeed.³⁹

It would appear that in dismissing the literary value of novels such as that of Sarah Grand, *Woman's* attitude towards the New Woman fiction paralleled the more general critical response to *The Heavenly Twins*.

The novel's three main female protagonists, Edith Beale, Evadne Frayling and Angelica Hamilton Wells, each marry in ways which call into question the social institution of marriage as well as prevailing attitudes towards gender roles. Edith Beale marries the licentious Sir Mosley Menteith. The socially advantageous match is approved by her parents who, although not knowing the precise details of Menteith's private life, do not regard his debauched past a hindrance. Indeed, Edith's mother argues that the 'womanly woman' never thinks of such things.⁴⁰ While Edith believes that she can change her husband she is swiftly disillusioned by his cold and selfish manner. After giving birth to a congenitally syphilitic baby and discovering further proof of Menteith's degeneracy, Edith becomes insane and dies a lingering death.

The awful fate of Edith has a significant effect upon Angelica Hamilton Wells. One of the 'heavenly twins' of the title, Angelica has already realized the limited options available to her as a woman. In answer to the suggestion that she will marry eventually, she replies

Like poor Edith? ... That was her ideal, ... her own home and husband and family, someone to love and trust and look up to. She told me all about it at Fountain Towers under the influence of indignation and strong tea. And she was *an exquisite womanly creature!* No, Thank you! It isn't safe to be *an exquisitely womanly creature* in this rotten world.⁴¹

In an attempt to take some control of her life, Angelica proposes to a family friend, Mr Kilroy, 'Marry me, *and let me do as I like.*'⁴² Superficially Angelica is the least conventional of the main female characters. After marrying Kilroy she takes to dressing as a boy; initially in order to experience a freedom now denied to her as a married woman, and later to facilitate her meetings with the cathedral's tenor who is unaware of her real identity. On his discovering her gender she explains

The charm ... has all been in the delight of associating with a man intimately who did not know I was a woman. I have enjoyed the benefit of free intercourse with your masculine mind undiluted by your masculine proclivities with regard to my sex. Had you known that I was a woman - even you - the pleasure of your companionship would have been spoilt for me, so unwholesomely is the imagination of a man affected by ideas of sex.⁴³

Angelica's unconventionality ends abruptly after the tenor dies following a boating accident when she relinquishes her male disguise and begs her husband: "Don't let me go again, Daddy, keep me close. I am - I am grateful for the blessing of a good man's love."⁴⁴

Of the three female characters, Evadne Frayling is the closest to the figure of the 'New Woman'. Self-taught, Evadne recognizes the inherent dangers in marrying a man with a 'past'. When she learns on her wedding day that her husband, Major George Colquhoun, has had previous liaisons she runs away to her aunt who suggests that Evadne should forgive the past and think instead of her husband's future. Evadne, however, argues differently:

That is the mistake you good women all make. ... You set a detestably bad example. So long as women like you will forgive anything, men will do

anything. You have it in your power to set up a high standard of excellence for men to reach in order to have the privilege of associating with you. There is this quality in men, that they will have the best of everything; and if the best wives are only to be obtained by being worthy of them, they will strive to become so. As it is, however, why should they? Instead of punishing them for their depravity, you encourage them in it by overlooking it ...⁴⁵

Evadne eventually capitulates to her parents' demand that she return to her husband to avoid bringing shame on her family, however she refuses to consummate the marriage. After Colqhoun's death Evadne marries Dr. Galbraith and has two children by him but she is permanently scarred by her experiences, and suffers recurring bouts of depression.

In the preface to the results the editorial voice could not refrain from expressing disappointment with the response, in which 44% of votes were in support of Sarah Grand's novel.⁴⁶ Dwelling upon the way in which readers explained their preference, justifying it in terms of the purpose behind the novel, the editorial voice not only criticized them for their critical shortcomings, but also implied that the novel with a purpose must, necessarily, be bad:

Before quoting a few of the best answers, it will be well to make just one criticism of the papers in general. Fiction is fiction, and must be judged solely as fiction. If a novel is good, it is good because its construction is sound, because its characters are life-like and consistent, because it is honest, because it interests, and for no other reason; and certainly not because it advocates new principles or preaches a new gospel. A novel may have the best purpose in the world, and yet be woefully, unutterably bad. We are moved to say this since very many of the competitors state that such and such a novel is the best of the year because its purpose is so and so, or because it teaches us this or that or the other. As thus:-

The Heavenly Twins; because it is by a woman! with a high purpose in view which aims to prove how individual help is necessary to the development of human advancement.⁴⁷

While the majority of competitors had evidently fallen foul of the magazine's own view of what constituted the 'correct' form of criticism, Violet E. Saunders (a regular contributor) clearly managed to strike the right note:

At the risk of being considered anything but original, I must record my vote in favour of *The Heavenly Twins*; for although it is unquestionably a 'novel with a purpose,' the language throughout is temperate, the arguments logical, and the interest well-sustained.... In short *The Heavenly Twins* is a remarkable literary achievement, and although we may not entirely sympathize with Sarah Grand's views, her honesty of purpose and endeavour cannot fail to command our admiration.⁴⁸

The magazine's praise for her '...excellent answer, [which] manages to strike the right note of criticism' exemplifies the way in which the magazine sought to shape readers' responses, and, by extension, the way in which they re-created themselves textually. Thus Miss Saunders' rather detached, hesitant, and unemotional criticism, focusing on the temperate language and logical argument, was privileged over the sort of criticism that centred around the gender of the author and the principles transmitted. The opportunity to discuss the issues raised by the novel was deliberately avoided - although one suspects, from the editorial comments, that many respondents attempted to do just that. The magazine allowed discussion of what were progressive novels while the issues contained within them (which were, after all, what made them progressive) were dismissed as irrelevant to a literary appraisal. Thus the magazine both appeared progressive, for naming the novels, and at the same time managed to avoid alienating its more conservative readers by disavowing their contents.

Ballaster *et al* have argued that in order for contemporary women's magazines to construct their female readers as a homogeneous group it is necessary to define them in relation to men - their 'supposedly "natural" opposites.'⁴⁹ This, they suggest, results in 'an evident tension between the need to confirm the centrality and desirability of men in all women's lives and the equally insistent recognition of men as a problem for and threat to women.'⁵⁰ This tension is particularly apparent in the debates which were circulating in other periodicals around the time of *Woman's* publication as well as in *Woman* itself. Although the questioning of marriage as an institution was not new (originating in the 1860s with T. E. Huxley and Frances Power Cobbe) Mona Caird's articles in the *Westminster Review*, starting in 1888 with 'The Morality of Marriage' and continuing through the 1890s, invested the debate with new life. The extended correspondence in the *Daily Telegraph*, also in 1888, asking the question 'Is Marriage a Failure?', elicited 27,000 letters, attesting to the amount of interest that was generated on this question.⁵¹

Caird's articles, which continued into the 1890s, criticized the mercenary motives of the would-be bride, the social necessity for finding a partner, and the ensuing

dependency within marriage. Later writers, notably 'New Woman' novelists such as Sarah Grand and Emma Brooke, as well as Caird herself, dwelt not only on the inequality within marriage but also on the dangerous double standards which allowed profligate husbands to inflict disease on their wives and produce unhealthy offspring. For these writers, the social structure which allowed such inequity and dependence within the supposed protection of marriage was one which demanded reform. Writers like Sarah Grand saw men as being the main problem - with vice and disease before marriage resulting in misery and degradation for wives. The approach taken by the editorial voice in *Woman* throughout the 1890s, however, centred around issues of domesticity and the 'fitness' of women to be wives, rather than with any examination of, or challenge to, either husbands or the established institution of marriage. An editorial published in July 1893 demonstrates this clearly:

A certain amount of sense and a great deal of nonsense has been written on the 'Why Men Don't Marry' question, but the evil of the present day is not so much that men don't marry as that they marry girls who are quite unfit to be wives, and that consequently married life in its reality comes very short of the ideal.⁵²

Woman's stance on this question is remarkable not only for the way in which it side-stepped the issues being debated around it, but also for the way in which it overturned these arguments to suggest that women were the cause of marital disharmony. In a paper which, at this point in its publication, was still making some pretence at progressivism, this appears to be a strange approach. However, despite the dominant patriarchal discourse transmitted by the editorial voice, the treatment of marriage in *Woman's* essay competitions introduced a discursive element that was far more complex and radical.

A number of competitions appearing in the first few years of *Woman* addressed marriage from a variety of perspectives, ranging from the serious to the frivolous. Readers were asked to comment on, for example, the average age at which a girl should marry, the girl who would make the best wife, and what sort of man constituted the ideal husband. One of the more interesting of these competitions appeared in 1891 asking 'Is a husband worth having?'⁵³ Such a question clearly borrows from the debate surrounding marriage that was sparked by the debate in the *Daily Telegraph* and in the New Woman novels. Indeed, while *Woman* had avoided engaging with the issues raised by *The Heavenly Twins* in its editorial material, it was not so reticent where readers' responses to the desirability of marriage were concerned, as the framing editorial comment shows:

It so happens that the best written papers of those emanating from the few ladies who are disgusted with matrimony (and who request that we should not publish their names) do not allow for even the contingency of the married state proving satisfactory.⁵⁴

While *Woman* could not openly condemn marriage, by publishing such negative responses by readers it was able to at once acknowledge the more problematic aspects of marriage while at the same time avoiding openly endorsing such opinions.

The dangers of attacking marriage, however, are clearly indicated by the participating readers' reluctance to have their names published. Indeed, *Woman* felt it necessary to protect those readers unwise enough not to seek anonymity:

A very interesting paper by Mrs B-- we cannot refer to. It bears no *nom de plume*, and any reference would be a clue to its authoress, and might lead from bad to worse in her matrimonial circumstances.⁵⁵

The issue of named readers and those who requested anonymity is interesting from the point of view of the seriousness with which readers treated the question. Generally the issue of naming, or otherwise, of competitors was one which attracted no comment, even though lists of winners frequently included obvious pseudonyms. From these lists it is apparent that competitors either did not always use their own names or specifically requested their real names to be withheld. This was particularly the case with those competitions dealing with what were perceived to be 'delicate' subjects. In a competition published a few months later asking whether a husband should 'love or be loved'⁵⁶ the reader was told that given the nature of the competition, 'it is not altogether surprising to find that many of the writers imperatively insist upon a *nom de plume*'⁵⁷

The competition 'Are husbands worth having?' reveals an ambiguity in the editorial approach which is in evidence throughout the magazine. On one level the inclusion of Mrs B-- encouraged readers to create their own narratives around Mrs B--'s mysterious circumstances, with a space being opened up for readers' fantasies. Such a space, moreover, implicitly encouraged and authorized the submission of readers' confessions, with the additional assurance that these confessions need not even be referred to in print. One explanation for why this should be so is provided by Foucault's reminder that the discursive formation which promulgated sexual confession

... always presented it as the disquieting enigma: not a thing which stubbornly shows itself, but one which always hides, the insidious presence that speaks in a voice so muted and often disguised that one risked remaining deaf to it.⁵⁸

The very ambiguity inherent in the editorial treatment of Mrs B-- both presented the fact of her confession and hid the details. Readers were able to interpret this in ways which were meaningful to them, and to see the act of confession as being both legitimate and also, because of the disguised nature of the printed confession, non-threatening.

The gaps which allowed the creation of readers' narratives also allowed the readers to embrace the idea of confession within the parameters of their own personal sense of what was permissible. The hidden nature of Mrs B--'s problems also allowed the editorial voice to be read in two main ways. Firstly, it could be regarded as a subtle reactionary move; while acknowledging that there were problems within marriage the absence of concrete details worked to contain them. Secondly, it could be read as the intrusion of a progressive voice which could not afford to be too explicit. In this second case *Woman's* initial criticism of the anonymous competitors' condemnation of marriage, is subtly subverted by Mrs B--'s problems.

It would seem, then, that the competitions within *Woman* did offer a site within which readers could explore a variety of issues relating to their lives and their position within society. Although *Woman's* status as a commercial paper imposed limitations upon what could be feasibly published, there is evidence, to which the competitions on husbands attest, that alternative positions to the dominant values of patriarchal society were expressed. It is equally clear that *Woman* could not afford to endorse such views - even had it wished to - and that the overall tone of the magazine tended towards conservatism.

The competition was used to encourage and consolidate the readership, a process at its most explicit in the appearance of competitions asking readers to suggest ways of improving the magazine. The complicity in the production of the text that such competitions invited may have been no more than an exercise in constructing a bond between reader and text. The absence of any tangible links between the competitions and changes in the format or content means that it is impossible to assess whether the readers' suggestions were acted upon. However, whether such competitions had any real effect upon the text is largely immaterial.

Readers were presented with the idea that they could participate in editorial decisions, an idea which could only strengthen the relationship between the reader and the magazine. This is particularly apparent in an editorial competition which appeared in 1905 in which each reader was invited to imagine herself *Woman's* editor,⁵⁹ and in which the editor expressed the hope that 'the writers of the various editorial schemes have enjoyed their imaginary spells of office as much as I have greatly appreciated their interest in WOMAN.'⁶⁰

The published lists of competitors' names and addresses provides ample evidence that the competitions did encourage some readers to continue buying the magazine: a significant body of readers regularly competed over extended periods of time. This body of readers, amongst them Charlotte Burckhardt and Violet Saunders, the 'Readers' Friends' to whom I referred in the previous chapter, may be regarded as the most tangible proof that a textual community existed. It is, however, entirely possible that the lists of real names may have fed into the construction of a sense of community amongst readers. The actual names and addresses of competitors were located away from the published responses and main editorial text, usually grouped with the editorial notices within the magazine's wrapper. Despite the relatively obscure position occupied by these lists, one can imagine that they were read by other competitors and, possibly, general readers. In fact, the magazine appears to have been aware of this, as shown by its comment on one name in the list of winners of the 'What is Unwomanly?' competition:

We should have been more satisfied had we seen our way to not including Mrs Wood among the prize winners as she seems to be taking so many prizes; but a perusal of her paper elsewhere in this issue will justify our decision.⁶¹

Clearly such an explanation implies a familiarity with past competitions, and more specifically, with the minute details of winners' identities. This seems to suggest either that a form of community was in operation, or that the magazine was deliberately taking the opportunity to construct a sense of community.

While the competition page may have represented an attempt to foster a sense of complicity in the production of the text, and to establish a link between readers and with the magazine, this does raise potential problems. As I have already indicated, the inclusion of the reader's voice into the main body of the text created a space in which the magazine's dominant discourse could be threatened or subverted by the dissenting voices of the readership. As the competition to find the best novel of 1893

revealed, *Woman* found it very difficult to allow readers to articulate positions it did not uphold itself. By framing readers' responses with editorial comment the magazine clearly attempted to assert control, either by demonstrating competitors' weakness of argument or by praising responses of which it approved. The editorial comment then was an attempt to shape future responses as well as assert the dominance of the magazine. However, the imposition of the editorial voice was not always or consistently successful. Readers were fully capable of expressing resistance to the magazine's dominant discourse.

- ¹ Kathryn Shevelow, *Women and Print Culture: The Construction of Femininity in the Early Periodical* (Routledge, 1989), p. 37.
- ² Margaret Beetham, *A Magazine of Her Own? Domesticity and Desire in the Woman's Magazine 1800-1914* (Routledge, 1996), p. 69.
- ³ See, for example, Lyn Pykett's discussion of James Mill in 'Reading the Periodical Press' in Laurel Brake, Aled Jones and Lionel Madden (eds.), *Investigating Victorian Journalism* (Macmillan, 1990), pp. 3-16.
- ⁴ For example, a notice in *Woman*, 28.12.1892, p. 4, announces that 'as from time to time we have received from our readers numerous requests to publish the portraits of the principal members of our staff in WOMAN, we have decided to do so in our "Birthday Number" which will be our issue of next week. That number will also contain sketches of the Editorial offices, a story by the Editor, and other matters of special interest to the regular readers of WOMAN.' Regardless of whether readers had, in fact, made such requests the notice (and subsequent publication of portraits), was a clear attempt to establish a sense of community and a closer relationship between the 'regular' readers and the magazine's editorial staff.
- ⁵ Shevelow, *op. cit.* p. 37.
- ⁶ Janice Radway *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy and Popular Literature* (Verso, 1987), p. 365.
- ⁷ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Stephen F Randall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), p. 174.
- ⁸ *Ibid.* pp. 36-7.
- ⁹ Evelyn March-Phillips, 'Women's Newspapers', p. 665.
- ¹⁰ *Woman* 03.01.90, p. 1.
- ¹¹ Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), p. 138.
- ¹² *Ibid.* p. 139.
- ¹³ Judith Fetterley, *The Resisting Reader: A Feminist Approach to American Fiction* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978).
- ¹⁴ Beetham, *A Magazine of Her Own*, p. 64.
- ¹⁵ See March-Phillips, 'Women's Newspapers', p. 668.
- ¹⁶ Under the four editors from Bennett to Peel, the proportion of domestic competitions was 72% (154/214), whereas under Nolan it was 50% (37/74). This offers some support to the point made in Chapter Two that Nolan sought to return the magazine to a somewhat more socially-oriented agenda.

- ¹⁷ 'Woman Free Scholarships', which was first announced 05.01.1898, (a second appearing 04.05.1898), both offering £25 'to be spent in obtaining such general or special education'. The third scholarship offered a 'complete course of commercial training' was announced 23.11.1898.
- ¹⁸ *Woman* 06.01.1892, p. 1.
- ¹⁹ Louis James, 'The Trouble with Betsy: Periodicals and the common reader in mid-nineteenth century England' in Joanne Shattock and Michael Wolff (eds.), *The Victorian Press: Samplings and Soundings* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1982), pp. 349-66.
- ²⁰ 'Plasmon' offered a regular prize for the best recipe using its patent food; this was an integral part of 'Cash Prizes for Clever Housewives' throughout 1904 to 1907. See for example, *Woman* 06.01.1904, p. 11.
- ²¹ The winner of the first scholarship, for example, apparently collected 3,948 coupons. See *Woman* 11.05.1898, p. 16.
- ²² *Woman* 05.02.1896, p. 9.
- ²³ *Woman* 03.05.1890, p. 20.
- ²⁴ See Appendix 4:1.
- ²⁵ *Woman*, 18.09.1901, p. 3.
- ²⁶ See Cynthia White, *Women's Magazines 1693-1968* (Michael Joseph, 1970), esp. pp. 58-93.
- ²⁷ *Woman* 04.01.1893, p. 6.
- ²⁸ During Fitzroy Gardner's editorship the prize essay accounted for roughly half of all competitions.
- ²⁹ *Woman* 04.01.1893, p. 5.
- ³⁰ Shevelow, *op. cit.* p. 42.
- ³¹ *Woman* 18.10.1893, p. 1.
- ³² *Woman* 15.11.1893, p. 3.
- ³³ *The Spectator* 25.11.1893, pp. 742 - 3.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.* p. 742.
- ³⁵ *Woman* 04.04.1894, pp. 3-4.
- ³⁶ Arnold Bennett, 'Editing a Woman's Paper', in *The Savour of Life* (Cassell & Co., 1928), pp. 146-7.
- ³⁷ See, for example, 'The Renaissance of the Romp', *Woman* 28.02.94, pp. 16, 18; also 'Five O'clock at the Heroine's Club: A Fantasia', *Woman* 02.05.1894, p. iv.
- ³⁸ *Woman* 02.08.1893, p. 7.

- ³⁹ Arthur Waugh "London Letter (Review of *The Heavenly Twins*)", in *Critic*, 22 (April 8, 1893): pp. 223-24.
- ⁴⁰ Sarah Grand, *The Heavenly Twins* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1992), p. 233. Author's italics.
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.* p. 317. Author's italics.
- ⁴² *Ibid.* p. 321. Author's italics.
- ⁴³ *Ibid.* p. 458.
- ⁴⁴ *Ibid.* p. 483. For the significance of Angelica's addressing her husband as 'Daddy', see also my discussion of *Woman's* short story, 'The Broken Chime', in Chapter Six.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.* pp. 79-80.
- ⁴⁶ Interestingly, *Woman* later published a short story by Grand, 'A New Sensation', 01.05.1907 pp. 12-13; 08.05.1907 pp. 13-14. Despite its title, this story was a fairly conventional romance.
- ⁴⁷ *Woman* 04.04.94, p. 3.
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁹ Ros Ballaster, Margaret Beetham, Elizabeth Frazer, Sandra Hebron, *Women's Worlds: Ideology, Femininity and the Woman's Magazine* (Macmillan, 1991), p. 9.
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid.* p. 9.
- ⁵¹ See also Harry Quilter, *Is Marriage a Failure?* (Swan Sonnenschein, 1888): D. Rubinstein, *Before the Suffragettes: Women's Emancipation in the 1890s* (Brighton, Sussex: Harvester Press, 1986),
- ⁵² *Woman* 05.07.1893, p. 5.
- ⁵³ *Woman* 12.02.1891, p. 3.
- ⁵⁴ *Ibid.*
- ⁵⁵ *Ibid.*
- ⁵⁶ *Woman* 20.07.1892, pp. 3-4.
- ⁵⁷ *Ibid.* p. 3.
- ⁵⁸ Michel Foucault, 'The Repressive Hypothesis', in Paul Rabinow (ed.), *The Foucault Reader* (Penguin, 1984), p. 316.
- ⁵⁹ *Woman* 04.01.1905, p. 7.
- ⁶⁰ *Woman* 18.01.1905, p. 12.
- ⁶¹ *Woman* 15.11.1893, p. 7.

CHAPTER FIVE

'Women in Conference': The Creation and Negotiation of Identities in *Woman's* Correspondence.

In the previous chapter I outlined the main theoretical issues underpinning my analysis of reader-participation in both competitions and correspondence. The articulation of the readers' voices contributed significantly to the creation of a link between reader and text, not only in providing a complicity in the production of the text, but also in constructing a sense of community between readers socially and geographically isolated from the production of the text and from each other. However, as I demonstrated in my discussion of *Woman's* prize competitions, the magazine also attempted to control readers' responses through its manipulation of the shape, size and location of the spaces offered for participation.

In this chapter I want to address the issue of community in more detail. I will explore the complex relationship between reader and text that arises through the negotiation of meaning and identity in the correspondence pages. I aim to examine how the power to define the self (particularly in terms of gender roles) was divided between reader and magazine, and to explore the strategies each adopted in order to make their voice heard. The contact occurring within the correspondence columns may be broken down into three main types. Firstly, the reader of these columns may be brought into contact with the textual community on the level of fantasy, constructing her own narratives around the responses which she reads from week to week. Those reading other readers' contributions may be prompted to either identify with, or challenge, the 'voices' of these readers (or those of the editorial respondents). This process feeds into the individual reader's fantasy of self in relation to the textual community of the magazine (her 'textual identity'). Secondly, the reader may enter into actual contact with the textual community through writing addressed to the editorial respondents and/or other reader-contributors. As I will demonstrate, when the reader actually writes in herself, and when she receives a reply (whether publicly or privately), then the process of identification reaches a different level. Although such readers may still regard the correspondence columns as a point of departure or of confirmation, they were able to transcend the more abstract reader/text relationship and enter into a process of exchange with more tangible results. Such readers may be looking for reassurance or may wish to register their independence from the dominant values of the magazine; either way, by intervening publicly in the creation of

meanings the process of identification becomes more dynamic and highly charged. This level also includes the relationship which arises through seeing one's own contributions, or recognizing those of friends, in print. The third level of contact occupies a more material space, in which readers go beyond engagement in a purely textual community to seek actual goods or services via the agency of the magazine and/or its readers.

In the course of my analysis of the correspondence columns I have divided them into two distinct types. In the first type of correspondence column the reader's 'voice' and details of the original inquiry are largely absent. Instead, the editorial 'voice' offers advice, occasionally paraphrasing selected brief excerpts from letters. By contrast, the second type of correspondence column prints both the reader's letter and, where appropriate, the editorial reply. Accordingly my discussion will be split into two main sections. The first will deal with correspondence presented entirely through the editorial voice. Since one of the underlying questions in my treatment of reader participation is the extent to which it provides an opportunity for the textual construction of identity and community, this section of the study will ask how far correspondence mediated through the language of the magazine allows an authentic voice to the reader, particularly in terms of constructing subjectivities. Related to this, of course, is the reciprocal question of how the identity of the magazine itself draws upon the responses of its readers, building upon an awareness of, and sensitivity to, the reactions and assumptions of its readership. This will necessarily involve an exploration of language - of the uses, appropriations and negotiations of meaning and naming. The second section will look at that correspondence which featured the 'voice' of the reader, whether alone, or in dialogue with the magazine. This part of the chapter will examine in more detail the functioning of the relationship between reader and magazine within the parameters of the text.

A two-tiered approach was conducted in order to provide a detailed analysis of *Woman's* correspondence. Firstly, a scanning of issues throughout the publication of *Woman* was undertaken in order to identify areas of particular interest. This revealed a possible correlation between the form and extent of correspondence and changes in editorial control. A structured sample was accordingly taken in order to explore this more fully. This consisted of a reading of all issues in the first and final months of the magazine under the control of each editor. As the chapter will show, this provided evidence from which it is reasonable to suggest that the form and provision of correspondence altered according to changes in editorial control.

The correspondence column was a regular feature of the magazine, occupying an average of 7% of column space throughout, except for the last two years of Nolan's editorship when it rose to 12% (see Appendix 2:1). While the provision of correspondence remained fairly unchanged, its precise format underwent certain changes which can be directly related to changes in editorial control. From 1890 to 1900, under the management of Fitzroy Gardner and Arnold Bennett, correspondence consisted of advice columns split into specific areas of interest corresponding to aspects of the feminine sphere as conventionally defined. These columns, devoted to Health, Dress, Furniture and Domestic & Sundries, consisted of editorial responses only. The type-face is significantly smaller and the layout denser than that of the editorial material; and this, coupled with the location of the columns among the advertisements at the back of the magazine, serves to mark them off as separate from the main body of the text. Readers are identified by pseudonym which was a general requirement of most correspondence throughout *Woman's* publication. Pseudonyms provided an anonymity for readers which was, apart from exceptional cases, enthusiastically promoted by the magazine. The possible reasons for this, and the implications for the readership, were discussed in Chapter Two.

Following Ida Meller's assumption of editorial control in October 1900 the correspondence columns became integrated into the main body of the text. This marked a radical departure since for ten years the correspondence had followed the same format - surviving the change in editorial control from Gardner to Bennett. The original columns' succinct titles are replaced by those which borrow from the register of the editorial copy: 'Round the House', 'Toilet Talk', 'What Shall I Wear?' and 'Home Work. And How to Make it Pay'. In terms of actual subject matter there is little change; the columns are still conducted through replies only, although the space allocated is roughly halved. Integrating the columns within the main text also has the effect of 'rescuing' them from their previously isolated position. Instead of turning to the back pages to read the columns the reader finds them slotted in amongst articles on fashion or cookery. Obviously the juxtaposition of correspondence and editorial copy imbues the correspondence with different connotations than those which might be apparent to the reader when the columns are surrounded by advertising. The association of consumerism with correspondence, when the columns are embedded among advertisements for precisely those products which are recommended as solutions to the reader's problems, becomes much less explicit when those columns are included in the main body of the text.

It might also be argued that readers receiving a reply in the relocated columns are encouraged to regard themselves as more closely involved in the production of the

text than when they appear as an appendage to the rest of the magazine. Clearly this is not entirely unproblematic; the contraction of distance between reader and text within the framework of the correspondence column also encroaches upon the sense of independence from the dominant discourses of the magazine. Readers' correspondence, while being given a surface authority - granted by the acknowledgment of their 'right' to be regarded as equally important as feature articles etc. - become at the same time something less. This is reflected in the decreased space occupied, and in the guarded manner of presentation. When readers' letters are moved into the body of the text with no dissimilarity between type-faces to mark their separate status, they can no longer be allowed the same freedom of presentation. The alteration in titles works to subsume the correspondence within the parameters of the magazine itself, erasing any explicit sense of disparity between the two.

Meller also introduced 'Our Social Club' - a general correspondence page for which readers were encouraged to write in either with ideas for discussion or in response to those ideas. This constituted a radical departure from those correspondence columns which limited the area of discussion and which, moreover, consisted only of editorial response. Although 'Our Social Club' began as a correspondence page (it was never merely a single column - a fact that also marks it out from the preceding correspondence) a gradual dwindling of responses clearly led to the announcement that henceforth a 'New Novel' would be offered every week for the best letter. The introduction of a prize brought in an element of competition, and the chance of material gain seems to have given the Club a new lease of life. Encouraging participation by offering a prize for the best letter is now a generally accepted practice, but was not for *Woman* at the time. This also marks this page off from the preceding correspondence and presages other reader-directed correspondence pages, such as 'Women in Conference', in the later years of the magazine. 'Our Social Club' lasted only as long as Ida Meller remained in editorial control.

The majority of the correspondence in *Woman* fell into quite clearly defined parameters of what was (and in the case of many of today's women's weeklies, still is) conventionally considered to be woman's natural sphere. The absence of a general correspondence column in favour of readily formulated categories of 'feminine interest' (health, appearance, dress, and domestic matters), limits the possibilities for multiple constructions of the subject. In prescribing the areas of potential interest for the reader the magazine is effectively shaping the sort of inquiries which can legitimately fit into the defined categories, and is at the same time delineating the

areas which are seen as of 'naturally' feminine interest. This process of fragmentation is also at work within the magazine as a whole. By presenting women's interests as compartmentalized - cooking, dress-making, gossip, and correspondence - the text assumes a similar process at work within women's lives; an assumption which feeds into the shaping influence of the magazine.¹

In the first issue of January 3rd, 1890 a notice advised readers that: 'The Editor is prepared to answer any reasonable inquiries on the subject of Domestic Management, Dress, Health, where to purchase the best of everything, Safe Investments for Spare Capital, &c., &c.'² Exactly what constitutes a 'reasonable' request is left unsaid, although clearly the Editor possessed the authority for defining this through his decision whether or not to respond. This produced an unequal relationship between reader and text, endowing the magazine with the power to identify and fragment women's experience. In addition to representing such experience as essentially problematic the magazine assumed sole possession of the answers for such problems, while the reader was further disempowered through the absence of her own voice.

The use of correspondence columns to engender a sense of community has a somewhat ambiguous status during the 1890s. These columns, far from being an overtly privileged writing form, were marginalized: included at the back of the magazine amongst the adverts and isolated from the main body of the text with a type-face significantly smaller and more densely set than the rest of the text. The position and appearance, then is not immediately appealing, and serves to convey a sense of separation from the rest of the editorial material. One reason for this may be that the letter, which is highly personalized, is a site over which the magazine has least editorial control. Potentially, the letter proffers a multiplicity of discourses and as such may be adjudged threatening to the sense of unity aimed at by the magazine. By declining to publish the actual letters the periodical could exercise some degree of control over the meanings and identities evolved from them. Michel de Certeau's assertion that contemporary culture hierarchizes the activities of reading and writing, so that 'To write is to produce the text; to read is to receive it from someone else without putting one's own mark on it, without remaking it',³ suggests that allowing the actual voice, the 'mark', of the reader to intrude into the text becomes a highly charged process. While the magazine was essentially heteroglossic, with a multiplicity of voices, the greater part of these were presented as belonging to the magazine - contributions which had been either written or commissioned by the editorial staff. By paying for the material the magazine exerts its authority over these voices through a commercial exchange in which it becomes the legitimate owner - the contract is purely

economic with none of the sort of obligations one might expect to find when contributions are of a different, more communal nature. With this other sort of exchange, when readers are complicit in creating the text from the point of view of community, then they might reasonably expect to find themselves on a more equal footing with the editorial team. Clearly this sort of relationship would be unacceptable to a commercial organ whose affiliations are not just to the readership. As has already been suggested, the magazine needed to maintain a 'corporate identity' which requires controlling, to a greater extent, the form and content of the text. With the publication of readers' letters a space is created which, through its economic independence, is outside the unifying drive of the magazine. Controlling the opportunities for correspondence - by fragmentation and by 'silencing' the readers' voice - allows the magazine to present these columns as having a nominally independent status while preserving its own dominant position.

It is possible that some replies may have been deliberately constructed as an extension of the advertising copy, as many of the items in the correspondence columns directed readers to branded products and services which appear elsewhere in the magazine as advertisements. I have already argued that magazines were heavily reliant on advertising to subsidize production costs and the inclusion in the correspondence columns of testimonials to various goods would seem to reinforce this. The late nineteenth century was a period which saw the expansion of the 'consumer culture' which gained much of its momentum from the Great Exhibition of 1851. Thomas Richards has remarked that the discourse of 'spectacle' originating with the Great Exhibition resulted in, '...the autonomous iconography of the manufactured object, the replacement of history by commemoration, the intervention of a democratic ethos for consumerism, the constitution of a manageable consuming subject, a reshaping of language, a mythology of abundance.'⁴ Advertisers, according to Richards, sought to align themselves, not with any specific political group or ideology, but rather with bourgeois authority in general thus aligning themselves with dominant capitalist and patriarchal values. Richards goes on to suggest that the emergence of a national commodity culture paralleled the commodification of women - particularly within advertising itself.

This process of commodification is also noted by Rachel Bowlby who argues that:

... the making of willing consumers readily fitted into the available ideological paradigm of a seduction of women by men, in which women would be addressed as yielding objects to the powerful male subject, forming, and informing them of, their desires. The success of the capitalist sales project

rested on the passive acceptance or complicity of its would-be buyers, and neither side of the developing relationship can be thought independently of the other.⁵

Bowlby's argument is particularly relevant to a discussion of the correspondence in *Woman* in which advice to readers so often rests upon their purchasing the right product. The shaping process at work in advertising and the creation and maintenance of a consumer culture can be readily seen at work in the correspondence columns of *Woman*. In these columns readers are constantly being referred to products and services advertised elsewhere in the magazine. Advice to readers was typically detailed, such as that offered in 1894 by Mrs H. H. Burney.⁶

LEYDONE - Essex's, 116, Victoria-street, S.W., green 'Epping', one shilling and ninepence the piece, ivory paint and yellow 'Tiferuum' ceiling, one shilling the piece; Shoolbred's 'Cameo' Brussels, three shilling and ninepence the yard; curtains of W.S. Brown's, 65, George-street, Edinburgh, pink 'Armine' tapestry, and his cream 'Harness' muslin would make a charming south bedroom, and I should paper the dressing room to correspond. Upholster the Italian bedstead with Fraser's, Museum-street, Ipswich, pretty pink 'Watteau' cretonne, one shilling and fourpence the yard. I consider three lamps would be ample for your drawing room. Go to Evan's, 43 Baker-street, for these. I would have one of his large scrolly iron and copper floor lamps, about thirty-five shillings, and two of the projecting wall ones at twenty-six shillings and sixpence each, being the *most* handsome. I have a weakness for yellow shades, but Evan's has a really beautiful pink one, trimmed with black lace at twenty-one shillings, which would suit the large lamp, and you could get a couple of smaller yellow ones for about seven shillings and sixpence each. As you live within a few miles of Baker-street, it will be easy for you to go and see everything before buying.⁷

Products are specifically named, as are the sources from which they may be purchased; and various names occur regularly both in the correspondence columns and in the advertising content. Indeed, one advertisement for J. Shipley Slipper's 'Painless Dentistry' contains a testimonial from 'The Editor of *Woman*.'⁸ The construction of the reader in terms of goods and services which effect a transformation of the individual into a subject defined through the text of the magazine is highly significant in determining the structure of the textual community. This can be seen at work in a short-lived service offered to the readers in the early issues of *Woman*. While not sharing the same textual characteristics as the other

correspondence columns, the Factotum Agency offers a useful way of looking at the consumerism inherent in certain sections of the magazine.

The Factotum Agency, which ran throughout 1890, is particularly interesting for the range of services it offers the reader and for the way it interacts with the community represented in the more enduring correspondence columns. After running an announcement of the forthcoming service for two months, the magazine finally proclaimed that:-

We can undertake to -

Make purchases in London shops for country readers.

Take up servants' or governesses' characters in London, or engage them.

Engage furnished apartments for ladies visiting London.

Chaperone young ladies to evening parties or to theatres.

Meet at the station, and escort young ladies or children through London, or take them to places of entertainment.

Purchase horses, or break them in for ladies.

Undertake the entire furnishing of houses in town or country.

Take tickets for theatres.

Organize theatricals and balls.

Recommend, in cases of difficulty, a clever doctor, an honest lawyer or stockbroker, a capable launderess, riding-mistress, daily governess, amanuensis, monthly nurse, or dentist.

... All commissions entrusted to our care will be conscientiously carried out by thoroughly capable and experienced persons.⁹

Although use of the agency was not free (readers being advised to apply to 'The Factotum' at *Woman's* offices for 'full particulars of terms') the nature and range of services proposed not only sets up the magazine as an authoritative source of advice and help but also offers the reader an intimate point of contact, such services being those one would normally entrust to friends or family. This is important in establishing a relationship with the reader which, while implicitly functioning on a commercial basis, transcends it to bridge the gap between reader and text. Whereas the relationship with the reader in the other correspondence columns exists only within the arena of the text, the Factotum Agency offers a channel of communication which operates in the realm of 'real life', providing an opportunity for physical contact with the magazine, consolidating the intimate address of the text and drawing the reader into a relationship which offers the opportunity to go beyond the bounds of the textual 'community'. While the Factotum Agency is an extreme example, the attempt to reach

beyond the text which is implicit in its framework can be seen elsewhere both within the correspondence columns, and in the opportunities for contact afforded by the private classified advertisement column in which readers could advertise services and goods. Whereas the other correspondence columns provided an implicit, if sometimes illusory, point of contact both with the magazine and between readers, the Factotum Agency operates on a different level. Rather than inhabiting a purely textual sphere, the Agency provided the promise of actual contact and physical exchange, offering a more tangible link between reader and magazine.

While there is no evidence within the magazine to explain why the Factotum Agency only appeared in the first year of *Woman's* publication, one may speculate on the possible reasons for its demise. Although the Agency contributed to the construction of a sense of community between magazine and reader, it could only properly operate for a limited number of readers. The cessation of the Agency after the first year of publication suggests that *Woman's* success may have meant that it was unfeasible to continue to offer such services for an increasing readership. Equally, the range of services offered by the Agency assumed a quite specific target audience whose tastes, social life, and income rendered such services appealing. Clearly, only those readers within the upper social and income groups were likely to avail themselves of *Woman's* offer to purchase horses, furnish entire houses or organize balls. Analysis of competition entrants indicated that a significant proportion occupied the upper-middle and middle-classes, although these individuals tended to live within London rather than in the provinces. However, as I have argued, the lists of competitors should not be taken as entirely representative of the readership as a whole. It may be the case that the bulk of *Woman's* readers belonged to the lower ranks of society for whom the Agency offered merely a fantasy of aspirational living.

The absence of the reader's voice within the correspondence columns during the 1890s provides a particularly one-sided 'dialogue'. While most replies make the initial inquiry explicit, others leave one mystified as to what exactly is being referred to, such as the reply to 'Nancy' - 'I cannot suggest anything better than our WOMAN motto, "Forward! But not too fast."¹⁰ By making no attempt to indicate what they are responding to, the correspondence columns force the reader to fill in the gaps. While this filling in is performed to a greater or lesser degree with all the replies, the publication of such manifestly cryptic answers not only allows this to occur, but implicitly encourages such activity. This raises the question of whether such open-ended responses provide a point of departure for readers to develop their own narratives. Not only are the columns highly self-referential - directing readers to past answers and assuming an awareness of the various threads of discourse running

throughout them, but they also contain letters from readers commenting on replies to other readers in past issues. 'Petite-Yvonne' clearly followed the correspondence, however inattentively. In reply to her comments on a response printed four weeks earlier she is told that: 'You must have mis-read my reply to "Little Blossom," as I did not recommend her a depilatory, on the contrary I advised her to use nothing of the kind.'¹¹

The sort of interaction, in which the reader not only follows the 'conversations' but is sufficiently motivated to comment on another reader's problem (and the magazine's response to it) suggests that the correspondence column functioned significantly to create a sense of belonging. That such a sense existed is supported by answers such as the one given to 'Corrie':

I hope you may see this. A lady having noticed my answer to you a fortnight since, has very kindly written offering to give you any information you may require on the subject of embarking as a laundress ... If you will send me your name and address I will put you into communication with her.¹²

Answers such as these reveal the extent to which readers sometimes went beyond the textual community to come into actual contact with each other. The exchange between readers within the limits of the text becomes more highly charged with the possibility of it also occurring in reality. Whether this was ever very much the case is largely irrelevant, as long as it was seen to be a possibility. Such a strategy could, of course, operate to very different ends: it might be understood as a means of crossing class boundaries, by encouraging readers to think of themselves as equal, but the reply to 'Corrie' could also be read as yet another instance of upper- and middle-class patronage being extended to the lower ranks.

Readers clearly sought to personalize their relationship within the column - both to the magazine itself and, as the replies to other readers suggest, to the readership as a community. It would be wrong to suggest that a reader's personal sense of self is endangered through misrecognition or misrepresentation within the magazine; clearly individual personal identity derives from any number of circulating discourses and texts. However, I would suggest that the urge to personalize is based, in part at least, upon the readers' tacit acknowledgment of their relative powerlessness in constructing a self within the correspondence column. In order to correspond the reader is forced to conform to the various conditions laid out by the magazine: use of a pseudonym; attachment of the relevant coupon; use of separate pieces of paper for each inquiry; confining letters to those areas prescribed by *Woman*. The urge to

personalize correspondence, in the face of the many limitations imposed by the magazine, may be a reaction to this loss of mastery over the representation of the self. By introducing a personal element (whether to thank the editor of that particular column for past advice, to ask for recognition, or simply to congratulate them on their good work) the correspondent effectively breaks the frame of the correspondence and hopefully ensures an acknowledgment which transcends the superior relation of the advice-giver.

What is particularly significant about the way in which the correspondence column functioned as a site for the creation of identity is that, as has been pointed out, the dialogue is one-sided. The ultimate power of expression lies with the magazine which can edit, interpret or misinterpret readers' letters. In Emile Benveniste's study of linguistics he claims that subjectivity has its basis in language. Benveniste suggests that a desire to communicate on a personal level may arise from the correspondent's need to establish a relationship of trust with the magazine - to ensure that articulation of their subjectivity (insofar as it touches upon their representation within the pages of the text) be as fair and complete as the format could allow. The crucial signifier here is the absent *I* of the reader, who gains recognition and is articulated through the use by the columnist of the second-person, *you*. Benveniste asserts that: 'Language is possible only because each speaker sets himself up as a *subject* by referring to himself as *I* in his discourse. Because of this, *I* posits another person, the one who, being, as he is, completely exterior to "me," becomes my echo to whom I say *you* and who says *you* to me.'¹³ This polarity of positions is not equal; Benveniste argues that *I* ('ego') is always in transcendence over *you*. In the case of *Woman's* correspondence columns, the readers' textual subjectivity (their identity within the text) is undermined by the translation of their inquiry couched in the first person into the object position given them by the column. Their initial use of *I* is thus subsumed by the *you* of the response.

Numerous replies begin with reassurances such as the one given to 'Bee' that, 'I should doubtless remember you at once if I had time to look up your previous answer...'¹⁴ Clearly such readers are caught up in a relationship with the magazine extending beyond that of merely reading. This relationship, however, is manifestly uncertain - the need or desire to be remembered suggests a degree of anxiety on the part of the reader. Judith Kegan-Gardiner provides us with a key to this anxiety in her suggestion that: 'throughout women's lives, the self is defined through social relationships; issues of fusion and merger of the self with others are significant, and ego and body boundaries remain flexible.'¹⁵ The construction of identity through the reader's relationship with the magazine and with the textual community it represents

may lead to her investing it with a significance which requires reaffirmation. Margaret Beetham suggests that: 'For many - perhaps most - readers the desire to be confirmed in the generally accepted or dominant discourse may be a more powerful need than the dream of a different future or the desire to construct alternatives.'¹⁶ If a reader's sense of confirmation in the dominant discourse of *Woman*, or of belonging to the community represented within the magazine, rests on being remembered, it follows that without acknowledgment or recognition her identity, as a member of the textual community, comes into question. Of course, it would be wrong to assume that such desire arises solely from the readers' engagement with the magazine - the desire to be confirmed in the dominant discourse may equally be informed by a host of circulating texts. Equally, not all readers may have felt the need to be remembered or acknowledged in order to feel part of the textual community. Such readers may have enjoyed other relationships with the magazine: contribution of fiction or articles, for example, may have functioned to provide a sense of belonging. However, in terms of the expression of desire within the pages of *Woman* one can discern a clear impulse amongst some readers to be acknowledged as a member of the reading community, or at least to establish some form of relationship between themselves and the editorial staff. That this attempt to establish a relationship was often reciprocal is suggested by a reply to 'Penelope-Anne':

I remember you well, and am so glad that all the things pleased you. I am always glad to hear that my advice has given satisfaction, it encourages me more than my correspondents have any idea of. ¹⁷

That readers were actively involved in constructing identities for the editorial staff is a further indicator of the interpretative practices over which the magazine itself had little control. Readers were quite clearly caught up in imagining or fantasizing about the 'real world' of the editorial office. Such a practice suggests that this world was one which had some resonance for the reader, and one in which some personal investment was made.

The earlier discussion of readers' personalization of their discourse with the magazine is further evidence of an interpretative process which is, to an extent, suggestive of an emotional involvement. The preface to a response to 'An Admirer of *Woman*' demonstrates quite clearly that readers were in fact interpreting the text in ways which transcended the cues provided by the magazine. One such case is the pseudonym given to the conductor of the column dealing with health. Although this writer had been given the obviously female name of 'Medica' at least one reader clearly had her doubts about his/her gender, provoking this reply:

I wonder what made you imagine I am a man. Had I been I am quite sure I should not have felt the sympathy for you that I did on learning that your skin which, until recently, has always been so beautiful, is showing a decided tendency to fall into lines. Truly a horrible discovery for a woman to make...¹⁸

Resisting the construction placed upon her by a reader, 'Medica' is not merely reinforcing an editorial definition of what it is to be 'feminine', but is actually in the same position as the readership who are also being constructed by the text, and must also make the decision to accept or reject that definition. It may be argued that in accepting this, 'Medica' (or any of the other editorial voices) is in also, in effect, appropriating the readers' fantasy in order to further his/her own textual identity - creating a stronger sense of this 'real world' s/he supposedly inhabits. The construction of identity would, then, appear to be a mutually ongoing process. Although the representation of the editorial team as an intimate and 'real' circle of women is clearly artificial, made up as it was of those writing under pseudonyms and under their own names, some of whom were actually men, there is a drive to represent themselves as 'real' and, moreover, real women. Attempting to construct a 'real world' of the editorial office prompts responses such as the self-referential and intimate reply given to 'Pilgrim' who finds herself drawn into an exchange between two of the editorial staff:

How strange that you should write to me on the subject of a small Continental outfit. 'Lady Vain' and I were only discussing the question the other day, with the result of which [*sic*] you will find in Snuggery Small Talk ...¹⁹

Such comments invite the reader to see her interests reflected in the 'real' life conversations of pseudonymous journalists which further encourages her to regard the magazine as an extension of feminine life.

What the preceding discussion points to is that the construction of the textual community, the 'world' in which identities are constructed and challenged, is a two-way process, albeit an unequal one, in which magazine and readers are involved in a struggle to assert their own meanings, and in which it is not a simple matter of the magazine imposing a way of reading on a passive readership. In fact, readers and editorial staff seem, at times, to be complicit in the creation of a discursive world in which it seems that a constant process of misrecognition is occurring - with both sides active in the imagination, imposition and appropriation of identities.

Although, as the preceding comments demonstrate, the construction of community and identities on the part of both reader and editorial staff is a mutual process, there is also ample evidence to suggest that the magazine sought to diminish the power of the reader. Within the parameters of the issue the reader is relatively powerless against the restrictions and admonishments imposed by the magazine - they have little or no recourse within the text to correct or challenge what is written. Readers are criticized for poor handwriting, spelling, and grammatical errors as well as for their choice of pseudonym. In a two paragraph attack on an unnamed reader, 'Marjorie', the author of *Woman's* gossip column 'D'You Know?', provides an exhaustive criticism.

In reply, apparently, to my recent remarks about the ladies of our Royal Family, I have received an anonymous²⁰ epistle, full of incoherent indignation of the most approved Revolutionary pattern ... The letter is so coarsely and so illiterately worded, that my first feeling on reading it (with some difficulty) was one of disgust.

...Possibly the writer of all this nonsense imagined it would appear in print; but I have no intention of gratifying her ambition... There are many other elegant extracts that I feel strongly tempted to quote; but, as it is, I feel I have perhaps given too much prominence to a production of which, I hope, by now the writer is ashamed.²¹

In fact, 'Marjorie' quotes very little of the original letter and the final sentence reveals the motivation underlying its appearance. The editorial voice is presented as naturally superior - privileged over that of the reader who is constantly returned to the magazine for information, advice, and reassurance. Certainly, those columns which omitted the readers' voice made the process of asserting individual subjectivities more problematic for the readership, although they did not prevent such incidents.

As the textual creation of identity within the correspondence column hinges on the ability to both write and receive a reply, we might expect that limiting the range of inquiry would function to limit the formation of a textual identity. However, there is evidence within the text of alternative subjectivities being constructed by the readers notwithstanding the boundaries imposed by the format of the magazine. Thus we see answers such as that offered to 'Self-Help' - 'I do not know of any such penny weekly paper as you require; it seems to me that this paper would exactly meet the requirements of your friend if it gave politics, which I am most thankful to say it does not do.'²² In the same column in which 'Self-Help' is chastised, a correspondent is

taken to task over her choice of 'Tom' as a pseudonym rather than something more feminine.²³

Readers unwise enough to assume an equality (or worse, a superiority) were soon corrected. In the gossip column of November 1893, 'Marjorie' (the then editor, Fitzroy Gardner) felt obliged to comment upon a perceived impertinence on the part of one of the readers:

I am obliged to Mrs (Jenny) Rose for calling my attention in such a superior manner to a couple of apparent grammatical errors in my column - errors that were obviously due to misprints overlooked by the proof reader. I feel satisfied that my correspondent has devoted a considerable amount of industry to her search, and am glad for her sake that it was not altogether in vain. The care with which she has pasted the cuttings on to paper for her own delectation - and, perhaps she thinks my discomfiture - is alone worthy of praise ... The lady, ignorant perhaps of the pressure I am under in writing my paragraphs up to the last moment before going to Press, is triumphant over her discoveries, and I do not grudge her this triumph.²⁴

This response reveals the true power structure underlying the reader/magazine relationship. Clearly Mrs Rose has constructed a relationship with *Woman* in which she feels it is legitimate to offer criticism about the editorial text - a relationship which quite clearly is abjured by the editor. The decision not to publish the original letter, instead offering a representation of the contents not only reformulated in the language of the magazine but also heavily and disapprovingly commented upon, demonstrates the fragility of the editorial authority. Whereas correspondence which feeds into the identity *Woman* had constructed for itself is generally published in full, letters such as Mrs Rose's are regarded as too destructive or subversive to appear in their original form, and yet pose a sufficient threat to merit being publicly denounced. The 'helpful' hints on spelling etc., comments on the suitability of pseudonyms and other corrections, which appear with such regularity within the correspondence columns, apparently given in the spirit of kindly superiority, are in fact a unilateral arrangement.

It is significant that this reader is named (this does not appear to be a pseudonym); elsewhere within the magazine correspondents' anonymity is safeguarded zealously. The response given to 'Vulture' dwells upon the benefits, both material and in terms of the reader-magazine relationship, of readers also providing a real name -

You are right, I do like my correspondents to give me their proper name and address in addition to a pseudonym. To begin with it is more friendly and confidential, and secondly, it is to their advantage to do so, as I am better able to advise with regards to purchases.²⁵

Naming for Jenny Rose, however, becomes both a punitive action - setting the reader apart from the rest of the readership while ensuring a public humiliation, and a sanction to other readers.

As I have pointed out, correspondence after 1899 allowed the readers' voice to figure explicitly within the text. Although I have suggested that the absence of a voice has implications for the creation of an identity within the boundaries of the textual community represented by the magazine, I would not suggest that the appearance of this voice was, by contrast, unproblematic. In this section I want to look at three of the main correspondence pages featuring the readers' voice, 'Our Social Club', 'Queries and Answers', and 'Women in Conference'. Although these were not the only pages from 1900 onwards to publish readers' letters, they were the longer running ones as well as being the only ones ostensibly providing a free space for readers to exchange views. Pages such as 'Answers' and other more specious pages which occurred sporadically²⁶ did publish readers' letters but unlike the aforementioned pages, they prescribed the areas of discussion. Other regular pages, for example Home Hints, dealt exclusively with domestic hints and recipes with little sense of any individualization.

The major textual characteristic which distinguishes the correspondence figuring the readers' voice from that in which this voice is absent is the narrative structure. With the publication of both letter and editorial response there is a much more explicit sense of a narrative than that which can be deduced from the response only columns. I have already suggested that the publication of often cryptic replies to specific readers in the 1890s made the columns difficult to follow, and yet there is ample evidence that readers not only followed them but were inspired to write in and comment on the advice tendered to other readers. The degree of dedication that this sort of involvement requires is significantly different when the correspondence is neatly presented as following a clear and definite (as well as more impersonal) structure. What is also significant is that, paradoxically, meanings begin to close down with the publication of both reader and editorial voice. While the reader of correspondence in the 1890s had only the editorial voice to provide clues as to the original letter, the content and meaning of that letter was much more in flux. Lacking the full text, readers are forced to fill in the gaps, in the process of which they are able

to construct meanings which are, obviously, of greater relevance to their own situation; once the original letter is published the gaps are not so obvious.

Publication of 'original' letters, however, does not guarantee provision of the 'authentic' voice of the reader. As with correspondence in the periodical press even today, letters underwent selection and editing, with text often being significantly altered in the process. There is considerable evidence within the pages of correspondence of editorial intervention in the original text. For example, in 'Answers' in 1901, the answer to V. B.'s query, 'Is it necessary when a hospital nurse is in the house to include her as one of the family?' is concluded with the statement that '...Yes, you will be responsible for the laundry.'²⁷ A reply to Bella, who asks, 'I want you, if you will, to give me some hints on catering on £3 a week. There are three of us and two servants.' asserts that, '...from what you tell me of your means I am inclined to think that you use too much meat.'²⁸ These answers clearly point to other, unpublished, elements of the original letter. Additionally, it would seem probable from the brevity of, and uniform language employed in, the letters that a significant amount of editorial shaping was going on. Whether this would be apparent to the original reader is a point which is impossible to fully resolve. I would suggest, however, referring back to an argument put forward in the opening section of this chapter, that such correspondence, presented as the authentic product of the readership, was intended to be read as such. Even if readers had been sceptical about the origins of the actual language employed, its appearance on the printed page acted as a means of shaping their responses to it.

Although it featured the voice of the reader as well as the magazine, 'Queries and Answers' provided a space in which readers were able to obtain advice in a similar way to earlier columns: the subjects covered followed no particular pattern and were, rather, the result of whatever personal or domestic situation was being experienced at the moment of writing. In contrast, 'Our Social Club' and 'Women in Conference' were conducted in a more formal manner: 'real lives' are not lived out in pages such as these. Topics were announced in one issue, and readers' opinions were all published in a single, subsequent issue. This meant that there was an absence of the sort of dialogue that would occur in the less formally set out correspondence columns of the 1890s. Although social issues, the majority of which touch directly upon women's concerns, are debated within the pages of 'Our Social Club' and in 'Women in Conference' there is not the same sense of engagement that occurs in the earlier columns. The issues are not only more general, and as such are discussed in more abstract tones, but the implicit process of exchange within those columns is absent. One of the reasons for this is that discussions tend to be carried out in a vacuum. This

is particularly the case with 'Our Social Club', in which each topic is allotted a specified submission date, and all letters on that topic are printed on that same date. There is no provision for readers to react to letters that have been previously published, and consequently the appellation of 'debate' is somewhat specious - the only individual these letters are in debate with is the editor, who holds total power over the selection of responses for publication. Although there is no editorial comment, the fact that some letters are singled out for a prize, while others are presumably not even selected for publication, conveys the views of the magazine albeit in a more subtle manner than by direct editorial comment.

What also marks off the correspondence which actually figures the 'voice' of the reader is not only that it is generally allotted a page of its own, rather than constituting a column either appended to a 'main' feature or ensconced among the advertisements in the back pages, but also that it is presented as being conducted or directed by the readers. 'Our Social Club' was the first to do this. Instead of providing readily-formulated categories within which readers were able to respond, this page not only asked the readers to contribute subjects for discussion but also provided a space in which far more disparate topics were discussed. Meller's introduction points to the hidden activity of readers who, despite the lack of any general correspondence column, had, nevertheless, written in.

The receipt of numerous letters from readers of *WOMAN* referring to various topics that are of general interest has induced me to start a new feature this week, and I introduce Our Social Club, which will, I hope, form an interesting medium through which the ideas of our readers may be exchanged. All are heartily welcome to become members. The more the merrier is our motto. There is no entrance fee, no subscription - popular features which make our Club almost unique.²⁹

This certainly suggests the existence of a tension between the way the magazine had previously conceived the needs and interests of its readers and what that readership had, in fact, wanted. That the readers had persisted, even ten years into the publication of *Woman*, in writing letters for which there was no legitimate space in the text is highly significant, pointing to a level of engagement which transcends the framework of community which is editorially encoded. Meller's identification of a practice of correspondence having no foundation in the official spaces of the text underlines the arguments on participation and appropriation at the beginning of this chapter. Although the magazine had set itself up as representing a textual community of readers it had limited the opportunities for intervention within the text to those

defined by itself as acceptable. The fact that readers persisted in corresponding on subjects outside those areas which were explicitly permitted suggests that they were involved in negotiating a relationship with the magazine based upon their own needs and desires rather than on those allowed them within the parameters of the text.

This, then, goes towards an explanation for the much more detailed 'guidance' offered to correspondents of pages like 'Our Social Club' or 'Women in Conference' than for the columns of the 1890s. Listing subjects for debate, providing submission dates, and lists of rules demonstrate an attempt at retaining control; as does Meller's caveat that, 'I shall be glad to receive from our members lists of subjects for discussion and shall endeavour, as far as possible, to put up the topics they suggest for debate...'³⁰ Evidently correspondence is still being vetted according to its proximity to the editorial line; and there is a clear implication that there were subjects which the magazine refused to allow readers to engage with. Concomitant with the need to retain editorial control over textual content is a drive towards limiting or shaping the levels of engagement open to the readership. Once a prize of 5s. for the best letter is introduced in 'Our Social Club', editorial control is not only increased but is also justified. Payment of a monetary reward for the 'best' letter (i.e. the one which gained most editorial approval) allows the magazine to claim the correspondence for its own, and to reduce it to the level of competition rather than a communal space for mutual discussion. The publication of letters on the same subject, and indeed the requirement for readers to contribute letters on set topics, also tends to take away any sense of spontaneous or authentic correspondence that may have existed previously. We do not get an impression of the full range of readers' views, as these have been edited and selected for us. Similarly, such correspondence does not allow the readers to identify with each other as easily as they did in the single-voiced columns of the 1890s. No longer relating to specific (if unnamed) reader's problems and queries, they lack the intimacy of that correspondence - albeit an intimacy based partly on fantasy - nor do they exhibit the same degree of exchange. It is paradoxical that the creation of a 'social club' for readers, with the freedom and community that this implies, should display less intimacy and exchange than the single-voiced and fragmented columns of the 1890s.

It would seem that once the reader is invited to construct the space in which to correspond, the authority of the editorial voice is regarded as at risk. Despite the cosy and communal titles of the pages, and the freedom offered, editorial control appears to be more pressing. The rules and caveats, the selection and alterations all imply a drive towards closing off alternative readings. The maintenance of editorial control in

supposedly 'reader-directed' correspondence is also clearly manifested in an introduction to the 'Women in Conference' page in 1909:

I have received a very large number of letters from readers dealing with housekeeping problems this week, but these while all very good in their way, hardly touch the subjects which my 'Women's Parliament' sets out to deal with; in addition, I may say, that the ground is covered in altogether admirable fashion by our valued contributors, Mrs Hope and Mrs Bayly, who are always pleased to help readers with their valuable and expert advice on all questions dealing with housekeeping and furnishing.

I want you on this page to deal with topics of the hour of interest to women, to tell of your difficulties overcome and by giving them hints to help them on life's journey. As all my best letters were 'housekeeping' ones, and as I said before, they hardly come into the region of our 'Women in Conference,' there is no prize awarded this week, but, instead, I will print some extracts from letters from some of our readers ...³¹

The two letters then printed deal with sweated labour and the desirability of secularized education. Exactly why this should be so is an interesting question. Both letters here deal with subjects well within the remit of the 'Women in Conference' page, yet their writers had either omitted the relevant coupon, or had declined to submit them to that page (if they had, presumably they would have been eligible for a prize). This suggests that perhaps correspondence was still being entered into outside the confines of the pages given over to it.

When the page reappeared in September, however, an apparently active solicitation of readers' correspondence seemed to offer a greater degree of autonomy for the corresponding readership, although this change in format is evidently not regarded by the 'editress' as unproblematic:

... I am always glad to hear what they [the readers] have to say on different subjects of interest to women, and from time to time intend to print selections from letters I receive on this page, it being quite understood the opinions expressed are those of the writers and not mine...³²

Although similar to Meller's attempt to retain editorial control over 'Our Social Club' it differs in the sense that there is an implication that 'Women in Conference' will publish material opposing the editorial line. This is all rather misleading. Despite editorial announcements to the contrary such as the following:

Personal Experiences, Advice on the Choice of a Livelihood, How to Overcome Difficulties, What to Avoid; these are the points on which First-hand Knowledge is Invaluable to the beginner, be she young or old. Things you have done are just what other women have to encounter. You can help them, and help yourself at the same time.³³

- the page remains mainly under editorial control with letters still not being given prominence.

In fact, although letters are printed they are not always very clearly marked off from the editorial material, and it requires a degree of effort on the part of the reader to distinguish the source of the text. This is, in some way, similar to the dedication needed for readers of the 1890s correspondence columns to follow the narrative thread. By 1908, however, 'Women in Conference' had shrunk from one full page to half a page and consisted of, generally, one reader's letter. By and large, the subject matter of the column dealt with issues concerning employment for women although there were occasional forays into more general topics. There is also a greater sense of exchange between readers, as in a series of correspondence dealing with women's suffrage. The sense of this page as constituting a conference of women readers - that is, a space in which readers were able to freely raise and discuss ideas - is belied somewhat by the reticence expressed by a correspondent, B. Spencer, who, in bringing up a subject not explicitly within the parameters of women's employment set up by the magazine, prefaces her letter with the hope that;

I trust I am not transgressing the rules of this correspondence by addressing you again on the subject of the Women's Suffrage. This seems to me to be of such great importance at the present time that I think it deserves consideration among all Women in Conference...³⁴

Although the correspondent had specifically called for a debate among the readership of this question, the sanction given by the 'editress' is important - certainly the reader here feels it necessary to refer to the 'rules' of the correspondence page, and the framing device of editorial comment which 'cordially invites our readers to give us their opinions on the subject' is significant for the continuance of the correspondence. The publication of a letter from A. Pahner three weeks later also acknowledges the power of the magazine in determining the topics for readers to discuss. She wrote to say that:

... I was very pleased to learn that you had decided to act on the suggestion contained in the letter of B. Spencer, in your last issue, to open your pages to a discussion on 'Women's Suffrage'; as I think one of the best means of propaganda is through the medium of newspaper or magazine correspondence...³⁵

Pahner's identification of the periodical press as offering a site in which various ideologies could be promulgated is consonant with the earlier points made regarding the position of the periodical in the construction of readers' subjectivities. Although Pahner is referring here to the promotion of 'social issues' rather than to the more nebulous area of shaping readers' subjective positioning, it is useful at this point to refer back to the arguments we have touched on in Chapter Three regarding the status of the popular periodical in creating, concretizing, and maintaining certain discourses. A brief analysis of the way in which *Woman* provided readers with advice concerning etiquette and romantic relationships will demonstrate the manner in which readers turned to the magazine for advice on matters relating to class and gender positions.

During 1901 and 1902 *Woman* ran a letters page, entitled 'Answers', which dealt specifically with questions of etiquette and 'love and sentiment'. The readership were advised that 'here will readers of WOMAN find answers to questions of every kind'; although the division of the page into 'Questions on Etiquette and Housekeeping' and 'Questions on Love and Sentiment' meant that the field of inquiry had already been demarcated. This page is very similar in many ways to the 'agony aunt' column of today's women's magazines; it consists of a series of questions and answers, with emphasis placed on the magazine's ability to provide solutions to personal problems. The inclusion of a section on etiquette follows the apparent prevalence of questions concerning this area which had already appeared in 'Side Talks' (the immediate predecessor to 'Answers'). Previous correspondence had not dealt so much with this issue - social customs and niceties not constituting a significant proportion of published responses. This may have been the case for two reasons. Firstly, in the early years of *Woman's* publication the target audience *Woman* specifically identified for itself belonged to the middle and upper classes. If it was correct in its targeting, these readers would have already been well-versed in questions of etiquette; if not it would destroy the illusion of a high-class readership to publish responses to enquiries which could only come from readers lower in the social scale. The publication of this sort of question would not fit into the magazine's own construction both of itself and of its readership. With the advent of 'Side Talks' a forum was opened up which apparently addressed the young girl. Letters were appended to a column in which

'The Editress' engaged her young readers in discussions of the perils of vanity, the duties owed to friends and family, and the benefits of a musical or sporting education. Explicitly figuring a young reader in this page meant that questions which a mature and middle-class reader would not be expected to ask became valid and permissible. Under the guise of advising young readers on matters about which, in reality, if they belonged to the middle-classes they would probably know already or could easily find out from their family, a space was opened up for lower-class but socially mobile readers to enter and learn the customs of the class of which they were a new member, or to which they aspired.

Although the absence of any reliable demographic information about *Woman's* overall readership (rather than the participating readership discussed in Chapter One), means that this analysis can only be speculative, I would suggest it as a feasible mode of reading. The tone and content of the magazine during the 1900s is clearly different from that of the 1890s. From 1901 to 1906 under the editorship of both C. Hall Fielden and Mrs Peel, feature articles and regular items became increasingly fragmented, their tone more intimate and chatty, and the content centred on romance and domesticity. Certainly the subject matter of the correspondence in 'Answers' suggests a sizable section of the readership who did not belong to the upper ranks of society, with a multiplicity of questions regarding how to lay tables, when to leave calling cards, and the most socially acceptable way of giving dinners and dances.

The tone of responses to these questions emphasizes the superiority of the editorial voice: in answer to 'Marje's' query as to whether it is '...proper for me to enter the hall where a social dance is to be held arm in arm with my gentleman friend, or should I let him go first?' the 'editress' replies, 'My dear, the custom of walking arm in arm, which only a generation ago was considered the acme of elegance, is fast becoming obsolete among people of refinement...'³⁶ Although superficially this suggests a concern with the passing fashions and social niceties, the language employed by the 'editress' - the term of endearment employed and the assumption of a complete and up to date knowledge of what 'people of refinement' consider the 'acme of elegance' - effectively positions the reader as outside the circle inhabited by refined people which, of course is also inhabited by the editorial voice. The reader's diffident concern with what is 'proper' and the editorial appropriation of her as 'my dear' emphasizes a unequal relationship predicated upon class. Within this page the use of 'my' ('my dear', 'my dear girl' etc.) colonizes the correspondent - she (or he) becoming the property of the editorial voice, in which is manifested authority, patronage, and the ability to control the narrative of the correspondence. Whereas in

those columns in which the readers' voice was silent the magazine attempted to retain control of the text and of the meanings arising from it through their expropriation of the pronoun 'I', in the 'voiced' columns ascendancy is essayed by the use of the possessive 'my'. Whether or not the magazine succeeded in this endeavour is, of course, impossible to resolve.

Prior to 'Answers' there is no evidence to support the contention that men read or corresponded with *Woman*, apart from an injunction in the competition rules that unless otherwise specified men were disbarred from competing. However, despite *Woman's* definition of its readers as female, as reflected in its description of itself as, variously, 'for all sorts and conditions of women,' 'for up-to-date women,' or, as in the 1901 issues which contained the 'Answers' page, 'the favourite woman's paper', it is clear from the correspondence that its readership was not confined to the one gender.³⁷ It is patent that there is another level of identification going on over which *Woman* had no control, and which, despite their publication of men's letters, had no effect on its definition of itself.

What has been demonstrated in this chapter is that the negotiation of identities, both on the part of the reader and of *Woman*, was a dynamic process, requiring an understanding of the various interpretative practices utilized by both sides. Neither the voice of the reader nor the editorial voice could claim an unassailable ascendancy. Although there is ample evidence of the unifying drive of the magazine to present itself as a coherent whole, and its audience as a homogeneous group, it is also clear that this process was not unchallenged. Readers, as de Certeau has suggested, were active in taking and interpreting the text in their own terms.

1 The process by which this shaping occurs is also influenced by changes in editors. See Chapter Three for a discussion of the relationship between editorial control and *Woman's* format.

2 *Woman*, 03.01.1890, p. 16.

3 Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Stephen F Randall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), p. 169.

4 Thomas Richards, *The Commodity Culture of Victorian England: Advertising and Spectacle 1851 -1914* (Verso, 1992), p. 251.

5 Rachel Bowlby, *Just Looking. Consumer Culture in Dreiser, Gissing and Zola* (Methuen, 1985), p. 20.

6 Probably the daughter of Charlotte and John Talbot Coke, who also contributed household advice as Diana Burney. See 'Our Readers' Friends', *Woman* 04.04.1894, p. 7:

'Diana Burney, as she is known to our readers, has inherited the sound common-sense, and knack of addressing her correspondents as if she were a personal friend, which have contributed so much to her mother's success in that branch of journalism in which she has made her name. Mrs Burney, as stated before in these columns, is not only a soldier's daughter but a soldier's wife, her husband at the moment holding the position of Brigade Major in the North Camp at Aldershot.'

7 *Woman* 23.05.1894, p. 20.

8 *Woman* 26.06.1890, p. 1.

9 *Woman* 01.03.1890, p. 14.

10 *Woman* 21.03.1894, p. 22.

11 *Woman* 30.05.1894, p. 24.

12 *Woman* 21.03.1894, p. 22.

13 Emile Benveniste, *Problems in General Linguistics* (Miami; University of Miami Press, 1971), p. 225.

14 *Woman* 30.05.1894, p. 24.

15 Judith Kegan-Gardiner, 'On Female Identity and Writing by Women', in Elizabeth Abel (ed.), *Writing and Sexual Difference* (Harvester, 1982), p. 182.

16 Beetham, 'Open and Closed: the Periodical as a Publishing Genre', in *Victorian Periodicals Review* Vol. 22 No. 4 Fall 1989, p. 30.

17 *Woman* 30.05.1894, p. 22.

18 *Woman* 18.07.1894, p. 24.

19 *Woman* 04.07.1894, p. 18.

²⁰ Anonymity, which is generally safeguarded by the magazine's insistence upon pseudonyms for the publication of correspondence, is clearly intended here to signal the writer's lack of credibility.

²¹ *Woman* 18.09.1890, p. 9.

²² *Woman* 30.05.1894, p. 22.

²³ *Woman* 30.05.1894, p. 24.

²⁴ *Woman* 22.11.1893, p. 7.

²⁵ *Woman* 11.07.1894, p. 20.

²⁶ Examples of this sort of page appeared at very irregular intervals in the 1900s. For example, in *Woman* 14.05.1902, p. 11, a discussion of whether town girls or country girls made the best wives was conducted. However, a search of previous issues unearthed no announcement of the discussion or call for letters, provoking the question of how likely it would be for a large number of readers to spontaneously write in on such a subject. These pages, while presented as authentic readers' letters, would seem to be more likely to have been the product of the editorial team.

²⁷ *Woman* 29.01.1902, p. 30.

²⁸ *Woman* 15.01.1902, p. 26.

²⁹ *Woman*, 10.10.1900, p. 20.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Woman* 21.04.1909, p. 12.

³² *Woman* 18.09.1907, p. 10.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Woman* 02.09.1908, p. 14.

³⁵ *Woman* 23.09.1908, p. 16.

³⁶ *Woman* 06.11.1901, p. 16.

³⁷ See, for example, *Woman* 06.11. 1901, p. 26; 01.1902, p. 26.

CHAPTER SIX

The Fictional World of *Woman*

Fiction was a regular and expected component of the popular women's periodical in the nineteenth century. Most popular women's magazines offered their readerships fiction, although the quantity and content of such fiction varied according to the individual magazine and its targeted audience. For example, penny and halfpenny weeklies aimed at a lower class readership, such as *Home Chat* (1895-1958), offered serialized fiction which, as Margaret Beetham has observed, drew upon the 'mill-girl' tradition of the aristocratic heroine popular in story-magazines such as *My Lady's Novelette* (1890), or the *Lady's Own Novelette* (1889).¹ Fiction took up a significant amount of space in Annie Swan's domestic sixpenny monthly, *Woman at Home* (1893-1920).² While *Woman's* fiction did not account for as much of the text as did fiction in *Woman at Home*, every issue offered its readers at least one short story or episode of a serial.

Woman's fiction came from a variety of sources - from popular novelists and fiction writers, journalists, *Woman's* own editorial staff and its readers. While some stories and most serials were attributed, authorship was not always clear. This was particularly the case with reader-originated fiction which, like the reader-contributed feature article, was never flagged as such outside the occasional fiction competitions appearing in the magazine.

Andrew Blake has suggested that the periodical press formed a nucleus around which various modes of writing revolved, and through which both novelists and journalists expressed a concern with social issues, using 'realism' as the form in which to present their ideas. Recent scholarship has pointed to the lack of any real differentiation between literary and journalistic writing within periodicals and related publication. Blake himself argues that:

There was no dividing line between readers and writers, and none between literary reviewing and other forms of journalism; and, significantly, *there was no strict dividing line between any form of journalism and the writing of novels.* (author's italics)³

This lack of differentiation between readers and writers, literature and journalism, has clear implications for the provision and reception of fiction in *Woman*. Accordingly, issues around authorship and the production processes peculiar to periodical

publication of fiction, especially within the popular weekly woman's magazine, will form the first section of this chapter .

While identifying the sources of *Woman's* fiction is problematic, there are some stories for which the origins are clear. Reader-originated stories in particular offer a useful and illuminating perspective on *Woman's* fiction as a whole. Victorian fiction has provided scholars with information about the structure and the values of the society in which it was written, as well as revealing such fiction's normative properties. However, according to Andrew Blake, few studies are able to be precise about the extent to which these norms were transferred to the reader.⁴ Fiction flagged by the magazine as the product of readers therefore offers an unusual opportunity to consider readers' interpretations of meanings transmitted to them through 'author produced fictions'. An exploration of the convergence and divergence between fiction explicitly signalled as originating from the readership with other fiction published in *Woman* therefore forms the second section of this chapter.

The third section of the chapter, which is concerned with interpretation and reception, will concentrate upon those narratives that rupture the superficial homogeneity of *Woman's* more conventional, and repetitious, narrative patterns. These particular stories, which do not easily conform to the narrative formulae of the majority of *Woman's* fiction, are difficult to categorize. While some of the narratives loosely follow the conventions of the romantic love story or the melodrama they are often transgressive - challenging dominant discourses of love and marriage or disrupting notions of the 'feminine ideal'. These narratives, which I have designated 'odd' stories, were the work of both readers and professional authors and do not follow any discernible pattern in distribution - either over time or according to editor. In choosing to focus on these 'odd' stories I am aware of introducing a certain bias - obviously such stories are not representative of *Woman's* fiction as a whole. However, while the more conventional narratives will be discussed and used as a basis for comparisons, such stories reveal more about a tradition of writing than about the actual concerns of society at a particular moment. The 'odd' stories are more noticeably grounded in social and gender issues of the time in which they were written, and reveal underlying and culturally informed desires and anxieties, all of which offers a richer field of analysis.

While Margaret Beetham has asserted that 'For most of the 1890s *Woman* gave little space to fiction and virtually none at all to romantic fiction'⁵ this is not borne out by the sampling I undertook. Although *Woman* may have contained proportionately less fiction than some other magazines of the period (such as *Woman at Home*) it

nevertheless offered its readers at least one short story or serial episode in each issue throughout its publication. From the beginning the majority of the magazine's fiction took the form of light romance. Beetham also claims that *Woman* did not publish serials until 'late in the [19th] century' - in fact the first serial, 'The Scudamores', appeared in 1893.⁶

My sampling of *Woman's* fiction took two forms. To ascertain the type and frequency of its fiction I undertook a structured sample reading. This comprised all fiction in the first four issues for February of each year of publication. Fiction was classified first of all into general format: serials (of eleven weekly episodes or more); extended stories (of between two and ten weekly episodes); and short stories (which were contained within one weekly issue). The fiction was then classified into identifiable narrative genres, which comprised romance, melodrama, mystery, and domestic 'comedy'. A list of all fiction identified in the sample is given in Appendix 6:1. In addition, I scanned the whole run of *Woman* to identify serials or stories of particular interest for further analysis.

The general findings of the structured sample revealed very little in the way of significant changes in either the provision or the content of fiction across *Woman's* publication span. Fiction occupied around 8% of *Woman's* columns over its publication span as a whole; but double this average proportion under Meller and Hall Fielden, half the average amount under Peel (see Appendix 2:1) One possible explanation for the increase during Hall Fielden's editorship is his own fiction-writing proclivities in *Woman*; he had contributed the serial 'When the Tempter Fails' in 1901 and had also collaborated with Herbert Sweetland, a regular contributor of fiction, on another serial, 'A Good Man's Sin', in 1903. By contrast, although Bennett also wrote fiction, during his editorial control the quantity of fiction rose by an average of only one or two per cent. Bennett, as I shall discuss later, held very specific ideas about what constituted 'literature'.

Fiction came from a variety of sources; both from professional authors, whose work was either commissioned directly or was bought from a syndicate, and from readers, whose work was solicited both directly, via fiction competitions, and indirectly, through various notices in the magazine inviting contributions of all kinds. Moreover, readers of *Woman* whose fiction appeared in the magazine received payment for their work; one guinea per thousand words for unsolicited work, or, for competitions, between ten shillings and one guinea in prize money. Interestingly, *Woman's* fiction competitions only offered money as reward - never the gloves, corsets, or other fancy goods which often formed the prizes for other types of

competition in the magazine. This not only distinguished the fiction competitions from more 'feminine' competitions, but also introduced a note of professionalism.

Narratives were generally set in urban, present-day locations with characters coming, more often than not, from the middle and upper-middle classes. Although there were some titled characters, they were more likely to be peripheral, either appearing as benefactors, or as estranged members of the hero/ine's family. The fascination with the aristocracy that characterized the fiction in magazines aimed at servants, mill-girls and so on is not apparent in *Woman's* fiction. Heroines had upper-middle- or middle-class, rather than aristocratic, origins. While some narratives offered a denouement in which the main character learns of their aristocratic origins, thus paralleling another favourite theme of more working-class magazine fiction, they were not particularly common. The most frequent short-story narratives concerned either those events leading up to a proposal of marriage, or marital disharmony and its resolution. Serials were more likely to offer vaguely sensational narratives, and focused upon mysterious happenings, family secrets and mistaken identities.

Many of the stories were remarkably similar to those appearing in today's weekly women's magazines. As Louis James has suggested, the domestic romance '...became the dominant form of popular fiction after the decline of the Gothic, through the interminable tales of periodicals like *The Family Herald*, to the women's magazine romances of today.'⁷ An initial reading of *Woman's* fiction suggests a fairly homogeneous field, with repetitive and formulaic narratives and recurrent themes. There are also a number of 'odd' stories which, in terms of either narrative or characterization, fall outside the paradigms of *Woman's* more conventional narrative patterns, and which disrupt their apparent immutability. Both types of story, to varying degrees, reveal desires and anxieties that can be related to cultural and gender issues current in society at the moment of writing. While the majority of *Woman's* fiction took the form of domestic realism, the 'odd' stories tend to employ rather more different techniques, such as fantasy and individual reveries.

Roughly 50% of *Woman's* fiction was either anonymous or signed with initials. Anonymity in the periodical press was, in the first half of the nineteenth century, the general rule. But, argues Laurel Brake, the appearance of new publications such as *Macmillan's*, the *Cornhill*, and the *Fortnightly Review* between the years of 1859 and 1865, made the practice of signature more common.⁸ However, as Brake points out, this was a gradual process, with the quarterlies and newspapers being slowest to adopt the named system. Part of the reason for this reluctance was, according to Brake, that the '...foregrounding of individuals - named contributors - posed a threat to

the collective identity of the periodical, an identity fostered by the "house" style, the collective "we", and the circulation of periodical persona's...⁹ The collective 'we' of the woman's magazine encompassed those female readers who still felt it unwomanly to write publicly, and it was the case that many feature articles in *Woman* were unsigned or pseudonymous.

Woman's short stories were more likely to be unsigned or initialed than serials, although very occasionally serials might be unsigned. *Woman* began naming its authors regularly only after Bennett took editorial control. This is in part due to Bennett's use of syndicated fiction which, because of its particularly commercial nature, meant that authors' names, like those of branded goods, were part of a promotional strategy - a strategy which is discussed in more detail later in this section. In named stories from the mid-1890s onwards readers were often provided with additional information on other work by the author. These other works, with titles such as 'The Fatal Phyrne' and 'The Pit Town Coronet', clearly have their genesis in popular literature such as the penny novelettes and other fiction aimed at a lower-class readership than *Woman* had identified as its target readership.

Certain named authors appeared at regular intervals, and were clearly popular. Amongst the named authors were 'Rita' (of whom Bennett was mildly disparaging in his reviews¹⁰), a best-selling author of penny romantic novelettes as well as novels including the hugely successful *Kitty the Rake*, who formed the Writers Club for Women in 1902; and Florence Barclay, who went on to become a flourishing romantic novelist in the 1900s. Another popular contributor was May Crommelin, who not only contributed fiction, but also items on the art of novel writing.¹¹ Crommelin's writing career was conducted, initially, in secret from her room at her parent's house, as her father disapproved of her literary ambitions; accordingly her first stories and novel were published under concealment. It was only after she confided in a sympathetic uncle and aunt while staying with them in London, that she was able to confess her literary ambitions to her father who, although never encouraging, allowed her to carry on after her return to the family home.¹² Other notable contributors of fiction, identified by Fitzroy Gardner in his autobiography, *Days and Ways of an Old Bohemian*, were Flora Annie Steel, Frankfort Moore, G.B. Burgin, Eden Phillpott (whom Bennett cites as his inspiration to take up fiction writing as a career¹³), and Jeanette Duncan.

Ella Hepworth-Dixon, often included in the ranks of the 'New Woman' writers, was a frequent contributor to *Woman* amongst other periodicals.¹⁴ Her novel *The Story of Modern Woman*, published in 1894, concerns the trials of a female character, Mary Erle, forced to earn her own living as a journalist. Blanche Oram who, according to

Fitzroy Gardner, was at some point an assistant editor of *Woman*, contributed many stories under the pseudonym Roma White.¹⁵ Arnold Bennett also contributed fiction - his 'Strange Stories of the Occult' ran for several months in 1895 - although he saw his writing at this time as deliberately formulaic and 'pot-boiling'. In a letter to his friend, George Sturt, in 1894, Bennett wrote that:

... happening to mention to my Editor that I thought 'Occult' stories would go down well just now, and that I had a lot of material for them in hand, I was a little surprised to see him jump at the suggestion, and offer to buy the serial rights of eight stories at once. So, deeming eight stories sold in advance to be better than a novel perhaps on my hands, I have shelved the latter for a time, and am to be seen daily reading a vast tome *Mysteres Des Sciences Occultes*. I tremble to consider the bad art which will be compressed into these stories!¹⁶

Bennett was fairly dismissive of the sort of serialized fiction to be found in popular magazines like *Woman*; in 1899 he wrote again to Sturt, complaining that:

I am sick of editing *Woman*, and being bound to go to a blasted office every day.... You may say that writing popular fiction is poor work. It is, absolutely, but it is a damn sight better fun than going to an office and editing a ladies' paper and pays much better - as I think you will agree. Having decided to make a bid for popular fiction, I began - Sept. 12. I wrote a damn silly story for my Autumn number; people liked it. I did a better one, much better, and sent it to my agent to dispose of.¹⁷

Clearly, despite his critical attitude towards popular fiction, Bennett was able to make a distinction within it - so that work he was relatively satisfied with was sent outside to his agents while the 'damn silly' stories were regarded by him as appropriate only for readers of the magazine.

From 1894 Arnold Bennett was in control of the literary side of *Woman*, not only reviewing books but also obtaining fiction.¹⁸ In his autobiography he describes how he procured this for the magazine:

I got important 'names,' the names that one sees on the title-pages of railway novels, at a moderate price, and it was nothing to me that my serial was appearing also in Killicrankie, the Knockmilly-down Mountains, or the Scilly

Isles. The representative of the syndicate, a man clothed with authority, called regularly; he displayed his dainty novelties, his leading lines, his old favourites, his rising stars, his dark horses, and his dead bargains; I turned them over like a woman on remnant-day at a draper's; and after the inevitable Oriental chaffering, we came to terms. I bought Christmas stories in March, and seaside fiction in December, and good solid Baring-Gould or Le Queux or L. T. Meade all the year round.¹⁹

Bennett's attitude towards *Woman's* fiction is evidently based more upon commercial considerations than any sense of literary value. Fiction is represented here as a commodity with authors' names signifying in much the same way as manufacturers' branded goods. This sense of commodification is taken further by Bennett's account of selecting fiction as though it were remnants in a draper's shop - an analogy which also serves to underline its relative cheapness as well as his perception of it as a feminized commodity. Of course, this consumerism was itself a product of the changed face of periodical publication following its mechanization or 'industrialization'. The introduction of the syndicate system was a response to the growing demands of a mass-produced periodical press. Tillotson's, a Bolton firm which established its 'Fiction Bureau' in 1873, had, according to Peter Keating, 'pioneered' fiction syndication.²⁰ Syndicates such as Tillotson's bought the serial rights from authors which it then provided as stereotypes on a subscription basis, much as Bennett describes. In fact, it was this firm which supplied *Woman* with its serials, and which later sold some of Bennett's own work.²¹

Ballaster *et al* point out that 'Most of the ...new penny magazines established in the 1890s included fiction, often formulaic romantic fiction, but subordinated it to their other elements, especially their practical guidance on running the home.'²² However, to dismiss such fiction as merely conventional or formulaic, would be to ignore its deeper structures of meaning. Although it would not be correct to say that *Woman* (which regarded itself as a class above the majority of penny magazines) subordinated its fiction to domestic advice, the fiction does have more in common with those departments than, say, feature articles, gossip and correspondence pages or competitions. These latter departments relate more to the lived experience of the readers, touching upon their *external* relations to society - that is, to interpersonal relationships and contact with the public sphere. Features or prize essays discuss topical matters such as employment or marriage in ways which are grounded in external social relations, rather than the inner psychological world of the individual reader. The domestic and dress departments do, of course, share in the external experience of the readership in the sense that they touch upon practical matters of

day to day living. However, such departments have much stronger links to the *internal* world of the reader - in the pursuit of a variety of idealized selves such as the accomplished home-maker, the perfect hostess, and the fashionable woman.

The fantasy of the perfect self has always been a recurrent image within the pages of the women's magazine. Readers are perpetually encouraged to regard their femininity as something outside themselves - to be improved or changed or disguised. The woman's magazine presents the reader with an image of herself which is also not herself, but objectified and commodified. Femininity can be seen as a discursive phenomenon commensurate with the textual discourse of magazines, advertising, fashion plates and so on. This discourse of femininity is manifestly connected to commercial processes; a connection which is illustrated by Bennett's analogy between buying fiction for the magazine and purchasing remnants at a draper's shop. The process whereby *Woman's* fiction became commodified clearly has implications for its reception. In blurring the line between the fantasy world of the fiction and the 'reality' of, on the one hand, material goods and services - fashion, millinery, fancy goods, and, on the other hand, social codes and practices - class, family, marriage and so on, a space is created in which desire emerges and is ideologically shaped.

Fiction may be regarded as performing a similar function to the dress and domestic departments insofar as it offers a representation of femininity and gender relations. Within the more formulaic fictional writing these relations are generally depicted as stable, and conventional ideas of femininity and the family are privileged. Readers, whether through direct practical advice or through narrative examples within the fiction, are offered guidance on a number of gender and relationship issues which, on the surface, reinforces the ideologies of patriarchy, heterosexual love and capitalism. Paradoxically, *Woman's* fiction also offers a point of departure for individual fantasy which often expresses a resistance to these ideologies and which, occasionally, is overtly oppositional.

Reading *Woman's* articles on literature and authors, the book reviews in 'Book Chat' and readers' own comments on their favourite novels, one is struck by the gap between those texts which are valued as 'literature' and the fiction actually offered in the pages of the magazine. The work of those writers who featured in 'Book Chat' - such as Gissing, Hardy, Meredith and Kipling, as well as R L Stevenson, H G Wells, George Moore and Turgenev - and which were the subject of 'Barbara's praise did not appear in *Woman*. Although there were some translations of the short stories of Daudet and the Goncourt brothers, by and large fiction was of the more popular and formulaic kind.

The regular book review section, and the numerous articles about novels and interviews with novelists, suggest that *Woman* assumed its readership were engaged in wider reading practices. Moreover, the annual literary supplement, inaugurated by Bennett in 1894, which dealt with what the magazine clearly regarded as 'important' authors, and discussed the value of selective and informed reading, implies that these practices were regarded as meaningful. However, Bennett's later comments upon *Woman's* literary reviews reveal a rather different attitude towards their function. Rather than producing them specifically for *Woman's* readership. Bennett claimed to have had a much different audience in mind. Margaret Drabble has observed that 'Bennett boasted that his reviews, even if they were over the heads of most of his readers, attracted the attention of the literary world.'²³ Indeed, Bennett himself described his reviews as of '...so advanced a kind that they might... have ruined the paper - had they been read.'²⁴ Margaret Beetham has pointed out that despite Bennett's claim that his reviews were too advanced for his readers, '...the tradition of such reviews was well established in the lady's magazine and could be accommodated within its discourses of education and leisure.'²⁵ While Anita Miller has suggested that '...there is no question that Bennett is ambitious here, and intends to raise the cultural level of *Woman* in order to be recognized by the London literary world...', Margaret Beetham observes that Bennett's reviews were '...not the disruptive presence he describes.'²⁶

Whether or not Bennett's reviews were disruptive, his comments do suggest that he was writing them with a different audience in mind than *Woman's* readership. This seems to raise the question of how far a purely textual analysis is helpful in gaining insight into a magazine's readership. Clearly, the implied reader in Bennett's reviews was not necessarily compatible with that implied in other parts of *Woman's* text, as Bennett's own comments suggest:

These contributions undoubtedly worked ill to the periodical whether negatively or positively. If not read, they amounted to a mere waste of space. If read, all the readers, save a very few, must have considered them odd, not nice, or simply dangerous. But they were not read.²⁷

While I would take issue with Bennett's claim that his reviews were not read by *Woman's* readers (as Beetham points out, his reviews were simply drawing upon an established practice in the woman's magazine), nevertheless there would seem to be gap between the implied reader of the review and the reader implied elsewhere in the text.

Bennett's earlier remarks concerning his 'damn silly stories' which were good enough for *Woman* but not for any other magazine, indicate that *Woman's* fiction was regarded, by Bennett at least, as of less value than other forms of literature. This is made even clearer in a letter written by Bennett to Sturt, who had written a short story for the magazine. Responding to Sturt's contribution, Bennett makes the telling remark that:

... in the case of a story like yours, which is over the heads of the foolish, amiable readers of our 'bright little paper' but which I should like, for the good of literature and the credit of *Woman*, to have in the paper, I should prefer to throw the responsibility for the acceptance on my Editor's shoulders.²⁸

Bennett's reluctance to take responsibility for this story²⁹ which he regarded as 'above' his readers' heads, but which in fact differs very little from the rest of the fiction in the magazine, reveals an ambivalence about the magazine and its readership which is reflected in his attitudes to its fiction. Margaret Drabble shares Bennett's somewhat elitist views on women's magazines in her account of his evasion of the domestic requirements of the magazine in order to give the readers '...what he wanted to give them, whether they asked for it or not', which resulted, according to Drabble, in his 'force-feeding' them highbrow literary items.³⁰

The publication, in 1895, of a short story entitled 'Miss Hutton's Proposal'³¹ offers a revealing critique of the conventional romantic narrative of the women's magazine, and also illustrates some of the problems of interpreting fictional material in this particular context, in which both authorship and readers' response are unknown, and the editorial attitude is, to say the least, ambiguous. Unusually for *Woman*, the story was prefaced by editorial comment:

The following short story was sent to us in the ordinary course by a presumably humorous literary aspirant. It seemed to us that the alteration of a single word, a single letter, a single stop, would mar the delicate exotic charm of this tale, in its way quite the most remarkable we have ever received, and we therefore print it exactly as it stands in MS.³²

These comments, presenting the writer as 'presumably' humorous, raises implicit doubts both about its literary worth and its author's talent. For the knowledgeable reader, moreover, the emphasis on the 'delicate exotic charm' of the story signals its status as a parody.

The narrative, published with all spelling and syntactical errors intact, takes place in Miss Hutton's drawing room during afternoon tea, and follows her increasingly direct (and ultimately successful) attempts to get a proposal of marriage from a bishop. The story begins with a detailed description of the eponymous heroine:

Bertha Hutton was a very handsome woman, some people said she was cold & stern-looking, and others said she had a decided will of her own, but no one denied she was handsome, adding in a lowered tone "and oh so rich."

People were quite right - Miss Hutton was cold-looking she was a woman with an athelatic [*sic*] type haughtily [*sic*] cut burnuette [*sic*] face, a rather long thin nose and a fine colour, people were right Miss Hutton had a decided will of her own, her eyes were as blue as forgetmenots and of a soft dreamy nature.³³

Incorporating many elements of the standard fictional heroine, the narrative lingers over the material aspects of the heroine's life - her sumptuous dress, her liveried servants and many priceless ornaments. The catalogue of wealth and symbols of status are clearly located within a particularly middle-class, industrial framework. Miss Hutton's father, the reader is repeatedly reminded, was a 'soap boiler', not the sort of background generally given to *Woman's* heroines: Malchester evokes a northern, industrialized town, whereas many of the locations for *Woman's* fiction are situated in London and the Home Counties. In many respects, then, the actual elements of this story are antithetical to the sort of narrative *Woman* usually offered its readers and to the sort of upper-middle- and upper-class women which the magazine was targeting as its readership, to whom 'soap boiler's daughters' might hold little attraction.

It is interesting to speculate upon the origin of the story. Bennett was on the editorial staff of the magazine at this time, and five months earlier had parodied Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr Hyde* under the pseudonym Sarah Volatile.³⁴ This is not the first example of Bennett's parodic talent; he had won twenty guineas in 1893 when *Tit-Bits* had invited readers to submit a humorous condensation of Grant Allen's 'What's Bred in the Bone'.³⁵ Furthermore, Anita Miller has commented upon Bennett's intense dislike of '...the author with "genteel" or "artistic" pretensions'.³⁶ As I have already mentioned, Bennett took a dim view of women's ability to write. Indeed, in *Journalism for Women* Bennett claimed that;

A long and intimate familiarity with the manuscripts of hundreds of women writers, renowned and otherwise, has convinced me that not ten per cent. of

them can be relied upon to satisfy even the most ordinary tests in spelling, grammar and punctuation.³⁷

Even more telling is his suggestion that in a general examination of the twenty most popular women writers of the time the result '...would not only startle themselves but would provide innocent amusement for the rest of mankind.'³⁸

Seven years earlier John Strange Winter's comic-novella, *Confessions of a Publisher, Being the Autobiography of Abel Drinkwater*, had lampooned the talentless woman writer. For example, a lady-author's poorly written manuscript is presented to the reader in all its syntactical weakness:

Oh why does this horrid faintness come over me when I want to think. But the next time I can think I am in bed and the room is dark I lay a long time thinking of Leslie when Dr. Aylene comes to my side with a draught [*sic*], drink this Mrs Carruthers he raises me on one side, and there is a strong arm on the other side, but I am too week [*sic*] to see who it is...³⁹

Winter's novella, according to Margaret Diane Stetz, split the readers' sympathy equally between the publisher who was '...a likeable opportunist' and the society author with pretensions to literary authorship.⁴⁰ No such equality of representation occurred in *Woman's* story. Instead, the editorial introduction interpellates the reader, persuading her to adopt a superior position and to search the story's details for the ridiculous, whether intentional or otherwise.

The incongruity of the class element in the fantasy allows the reader to further distance herself from the author, and from any sense of being the implied reader. Instead, she is confirmed in the position offered her in the editorial preface. But, as has been pointed out, the basic structure of the narrative differs little from other romance narratives which means that the reader, while being interpellated by the editorial preface, is simultaneously being manipulated into deriding exactly the sort of fiction she is offered elsewhere in the magazine. Moreover, in highlighting the 'humour' in the stories details - the heroine's provincial home town, the origin of her money in trade - *Woman* glosses over the heterogeneous nature of its readership in favour of assuming a uniformity in the class and background of its readership which is more in keeping with the textual identity it created for itself and its imagined reader.

However, without the veneer of writing ability, 'Miss Hutton's Proposal' makes absolutely explicit the fantasy impulse behind the romantic short story which was so

popular in *Woman*. The lack of any linguistic richness in the text foregrounds its preoccupation with wealth and material objects. Writing about Harlequin romances, Ann Barr Snitow has observed that:

Their particular sort of unreality points to what elements in social life women are encouraged to ignore; their distortions point to larger distortions culture-wide; their lack of richness merely bares what is hidden in more inclusive, more personally controlled works of art, the particular nature of the satisfactions we are all led to seek by the conditions of our culture.⁴¹

Barr Snitow's comments, though addressed to twentieth-century romance, are equally helpful in engaging with the 'distortions' of *Woman's* romantic fiction. 'Miss Hutton's Proposal' offers an extreme example of the way in which a lack of richness (or, in fact, a lack of literary talent), exposes the elements of personal fantasy underpinning many, rather more conventionally written, romances in the magazine.

In addition to parodying the conventional romantic narrative, the story also undermines the process by which women's magazines addressed their readers through the commodification of femininity. A large part of the humour in 'Miss Hutton's Proposal' is located in the narrator's preoccupation with material objects, which are used as indicators of the heroine's social status and femininity. This same preoccupation, however, is also in evidence in *Woman's* fashion pages and household and furniture columns. One might argue that 'Miss Hutton's Proposal' not only parodies women's writing, and the magazine romance in particular, but that it also offers a critique of women's magazines and the commodified femininity expressed in their editorial.

While 'Miss Hutton's Proposal' problematized the relationship between the reader's lived experience and the femininity represented through aspects of the magazine text, the publication of a later serial used editorial interventions to blur the boundary between the fictive and the real. 'The Love Affairs of a Pretty Shop Girl. Being a True Account of the Heartburnings and Triumphs of Violet Hunter', published in 1902, offers a contrast to 'Miss Hutton's Proposal' by interpellating the reader into its fictional world and implying a direct relationship between the fantasies contained in that world and the readers' lives and desires.

'The Love Affairs of a Pretty Shop Girl...' concerned the tribulations of a poor but well-bred heroine whose aristocratic origins are only made clear at the end of the story when she finally marries a member of the aristocracy. *Woman* vigorously

promoted the serial, running several notices in each issue in which it appeared. The following notice appeared ten pages on from the first episode:

GIRLS WHO HAVE TO EARN THEIR OWN LIVING should not miss one word of our charming New Series, entitled

'THE LOVE AFFAIRS OF A PRETTY SHOP GIRL.'

It has been specially written by one of the most popular Authors of the day, and most of the situations have been taken from real life.

Nearly every girl who has had to earn her own living has at some time other been brought face to face with love problems.

Some girls are happy in their choice.

Some are less fortunate.

The heroine of our new Series experiences so much sorrow and joy that she is bound to become an immediate favourite with you all.

You should tell all your friends to read

'THE LOVE AFFAIRS OF A PRETTY SHOP GIRL.'⁴²

The fact that this notice is positioned in a later section of the magazine, with other, smaller, notices dotted throughout the issue, suggests quite clearly that the magazine was aware of the fragmentary nature of magazine reading. More importantly, in stressing the connection between readers' lives and the fictional experiences of the heroine, these notices both reveal how the magazine expected its readers to interpret its romances and also suggest that its imagined audience occupied a lower position on the social scale in 1902 than it had in the early years of *Woman's* publication. Obviously, stories dealing with poor but noble heroines whose aristocratic origins ultimately lead to her recuperation held a greater appeal for women of lower-class origins. Moreover, as the notices suggest, *Woman* expected a significant enough number of its readers to be employed in shop work, or similar occupations, a form of employment more likely to be taken up by working-class or lower-middle-class women.

Woman's notices, which act as a guide to interpretation, encouraged readers to look for those elements in the serial which correspond to their lives. The 'Author's Thanks to His Readers', which appears at the end of the last episode, makes the distinction between fact and fantasy, reader and producer, even more indistinct. In this 'Thanks' the anonymous author stated that s/he

... has been much struck and gratified by the exceedingly kind way the series of tales has been received. My readers can scarcely guess what

encouragement it gives to find one's work - work which, at any rate, the author takes seriously - so much appreciated; so, to one and all, hearty thanks.

In answer to more than one kindly inquiry, there is hardly a character, from Violet to the 'long-legged girl,' that is not drawn strictly from life, and the leading episodes, save for alterations of dates, places and names, are true. De La Rue's envelope addressing establishment, long since closed, really did exist in one of our large cities.⁴³

The inclusion of the author's comments is unique among the sampled fiction, and it opens up an interesting sense of dialogue between reader and author. Many critics have noted the particularly 'intimate' relationship between the author of a serialized piece of fiction and his/her readership.⁴⁴ The mode of production invited reader participation in the manner to which the author refers, although it was not usual for *Woman* to publish author's 'responses' to their readerships. By publishing this thanks after the conclusion of the serial, the magazine creates an illusion of reader-participation tempered by the element of exclusion achieved by the withholding of the 'Well-Known' author's name.

At this point it is useful to consider the space provided for readers to contribute fiction, as readers (rather than by assuming the mask of 'professional' author). Readers such as Mrs Burckhardt and Violet Saunders were actively contributing short stories (as well as features) which were not flagged as the work of readers. The weekly notices advising potential contributors to reproduce *Woman's* style and tone obviously had their effect, and there is little in the texts themselves to indicate their source. However, *Woman* also provided space for fictional writing which was foregrounded as originating from the readership. This reader-originated fiction took two forms.⁴⁵ The first of these, the 'Patchwork Story', required readers to contribute episodes to a serialized narrative following an editorially produced opening episode. The second form, the 'Prize Short Stories', followed similar lines to fiction-writing competitions in other magazines insofar as they allowed a platform for individual efforts. The 'Patchwork Story', or 'Story by Instalment' as it was variously called, first appeared in 1892 and ran annually until 1895. It consisted of six weekly chapters, each contributed by readers who had to follow the style and narrative of each previous episode. Later, in 1901, a 'Prize Short Story' competition appeared, offering a prize of one guinea for a 1700 word story.⁴⁶

As Peter Keating notes, this was a period in which many writers, finding it difficult to break into print, would enter the frequent literary competitions run in the periodical

press.⁴⁷ Grant Allen and Joseph Conrad had both, at one time or other, entered *Tit-Bits*' writing competition, while Arnold Bennett had won a guinea for his short story 'The Artist's Model'.⁴⁸ Although *Woman*, as a weekly magazine aimed at a specific female audience, may not have come within the experience of some writers, it still remains possible that some of the prize stories in the magazine may have originated from outside the regular readership. Certainly, *Woman* offered the same prize money as *Tit-Bits*. There is, however, no way of determining the source of competition fiction, and, as with the attribution of correspondence to genuine readers, it has to be remembered that the stories were presented as the work of readers and were meant to be read as such. Lists of competition winners' names and addresses help to confirm that some stories, at least, were genuine products of the readership.

Generally readers did not seem to have much difficulty in assuming the stylistic and structural conventions of either the mini-serial or the short story although, of course, it is impossible to ascertain how much editorial intervention occurred in their publication, nor how many would-be contributors were deemed unacceptable. This lack of stylistic differentiation suggests a readership so well-versed in the register of magazine fiction that it is able to reproduce it with relative ease. It also raises the question of how far such material was, in fact, original. Gardner cites an instance in which he solicited a short story from a keen young woman he had met at a dinner. The story turned out to have been published a few years earlier in one of the Society papers.⁴⁹ This is not to suggest, however, that readers also reproduced, uncritically, the themes and discourses contained within the magazine's regular fiction. As I shall show later, many of the Prize Short Stories challenged the assumptions in the more conventional romantic narratives.

At this point I want to consider the 'Patchwork Story' in terms of the ways in which readers recreated the dominant structures and discourses of fiction provided elsewhere in *Woman*. 'Patchwork Stories' were all mysteries which also contained a significant element of romance, with titles such as 'The Mystery of Adrian's Wife', which was published during November and December 1894 and 'The Disappearance of Evelyn', which appeared throughout July and August 1895. The segmented nature of the patchwork stories lent itself to the mystery form, in which each successive competitor had to answer the 'cliff-hanger' provided by her predecessor. This is made absolutely explicit in *Woman*'s insistence that each chapter must:

... take up the link dropped at the end of the previous chapter (published above), according to the writer's idea of what should follow, with a view to a complete serial in SIX CHAPTERS. It must terminate at a critical point so as

to leave the reader in a state of doubt and anticipation as to what will follow. Sequence, consistency, plenty of incident, not too much dialogue, good literature, and clear writing are the points that will be considered in awarding the prize.

PLEASE NOTE that intending competitors must bear in mind the necessity of carefully digesting the chapters which have appeared, before beginning to write. Remember that all the characters introduced must play their parts in the sequel, and that every incident narrated should have some bearing on the ultimate issue. Finally, do not bring the plot 'to a head' too soon, and avoid too much bloodshed.⁵⁰

The comprehensive nature of these instructions could easily be describing the narrative structure of any piece of penny fiction.

The limitations placed upon readers in terms of length and content, while intended as a form of editorial control shaping each episode, also makes successful production of the desired textual form more difficult. Helen Bosanquet, writing in 1901 about the 'cheap literature' produced for a somewhat younger readership than that of *Woman*, makes the useful observation that:

The conditions of the stories are, then, that they must be interesting, easily read, concise, and purely narrative. In fact the limitations under which the author works are not unlike those imposed upon the artist who has to express himself in black and white - say the wood-engraver. The very simplicity of the material makes failure more difficult to conceal, and blunders of workmanship more glaring.⁵¹

Writing serial episodes, particularly in this fragmented manner, requires a relatively high degree of familiarity with the conventions of serialized fiction (with its particular temporal and structural requirements), and while the guidelines provided by the magazine are intended to clarify these requirements, in order to produce chapters in the seamless way that they do, readers must have had to draw upon other experience of this genre. It is clear from the text that *Woman's* readers were easily able to construct and maintain their joint narrative. Robert Warshow offers a model of understanding not only of the way genres appeal to an audience, but also how such an audience is able to re-create such genres.

It is only in an ultimate sense that the [genre] appeals to its audience's experience of reality; much more immediately, it appeals to previous experience of the [genre] itself; it creates its own field of reference.⁵²

Readers' experience of *Woman's* fiction, as well as their undoubted experience of other serialized fiction, created a field of generic reference from which they were able to respond. Adorno and Horkheimer, discussing the tendency of linguistic expression to embrace dominant modes of thought, state that:

The process which a literary text has to undergo, if not in the anticipatory manoeuvres of its author, then certainly in the combined efforts of readers, editors, sub-editors and ghost writers in and outside publishing houses, exceeds any censorship in thoroughness.⁵³

The serialized story lends itself particularly well to a communal effort; even those serials written by just one author were subject to input from external sources such as editors, publishers, critics and readers. Bill Bell argues that unlike other forms of writing, serialization is not a linear process, with the author the '...principal generative factor' whose text, once published, is passively consumed. Rather, its appearance in a popular magazine over a period of time means that '...the linearity of the productive mode is repeatedly disrupted by a kind of simultaneous production and consumption'⁵⁴ Nineteenth-century readers had a great deal of experience as consumers. It took a short leap for them to cross over into production.

One might see their complicity in creating a fictional narrative as a further example of the way in which the magazine offered the readers a sense of community, of shared experience and the illusion of contact which, in this case, was based not only upon their shared 'identity' as *Woman* readers, but also on other, shared, reading practices. Despite the magazine's manifest intent to retain ultimate control over it, the story by instalment is clearly a process in which readers follow each other's train of thought and test each other's ingenuity. While *Woman* demands readers observe its schema, in terms of how this is put together it is readers who are responding to each other.

Because they were self-contained, the 'Prize Short Stories' did not offer the same platform for readers to interact or respond to each other's ideas. Instead, one can discern a response to the conventional narratives offered in the magazine. While the structure of the readers' short stories echoed that of the short fiction provided by the magazine, the content reveals a reinterpretation of the dominant discourses at work in

Woman's own narratives and, indeed, in the rest of the editorial material. Before I look at the way the 'Prize Short Stories' challenged the dominant voice of the magazine, it is worth considering the conventional short story narratives.

Although Margaret Beetham has suggested that for most of the 1890s there was little romantic fiction in *Woman*,⁵⁵ my sample reading revealed that a significant proportion of *Woman's* fiction across its entire publication dealt solely with the courtship ritual, charting the days or even hours leading up to the declaration of love and proposal of marriage. Ann Barr Snitow, although writing about Harlequin romances, offers the nevertheless pertinent observation that:

Women are grounded, enmeshed in civilization, in social connection, in family, and in love ... while all our culture's rich myths of individualism are essentially closed to them. Their one socially acceptable moment of transcendence is romance. This involves a constant return in imagination to those short moments in the female life cycle, courtship.⁵⁶

These are, indeed, short moments but the frequency with which they appeared in *Woman* suggests either that they were popular with the readers, or that the magazine itself expected them to be popular.

The courtship narrative, in its most conventional and simplistic form, offered a world in which women occupied the central position; in which they were, for a time, the sole object of one man's affections. Commonly presented from the point of view of the heroine, such stories foregrounded the private sphere of love and domesticity into which the hero was inexorably drawn. For the duration of the narrative, then, it is possible to see the heroine, and by extension the reader, as empowered. There is no uncertainty in these stories; the hero is never in any doubt about his feelings and love overcomes all the material obstacles which, almost inevitably, stand in the way of its resolution.

While *Woman's* conventional courtship romances did occasionally acknowledge the obstacles society placed in the way of the courting couple, such as differences in social status or financial obstacles, these were generally resolved by the end of the narrative. Thus, for example, in 'Maisie's Mistake', published in 1902,⁵⁷ the object of the eponymous heroine's affections is initially mistaken for a mere clerk, and so is rejected by her. Happily, he turns out to own the company. Similarly, heroes whose financial circumstances prevent their marriage find wealth in the colonies and return to

claim their brides. While such narratives engaged with the social structure within which courtship took place, they took an ultimately reassuring approach.

I have suggested that the readers' competition fiction was remarkably similar in form and style to the narratives offered by the magazine itself. One of the reasons for this was that the reader's voice was normalized through contact with the magazine - not only through notices advising contributors to follow the dominant 'house style' of the magazine, but also by a less easily defined process of assimilation. This process of assimilation hints at further, passive, absorption of the values contained within the narratives. If courtship took a conventional form in the narratives of *Woman's* own fiction, we might, following this argument, expect the same perspectives to be reproduced in the readers' narratives. If readers were passive consumers of the ideology contained within such narratives, absorbing its values uncritically, then, when they produce similar generic narratives, one might expect them to follow similar ideological or discursive patterns. However, the 'Prize Short Story' suggests that this was not necessarily the case.

Indeed, while the Prize Short Story competition included several straightforward courtship narratives they differed from the majority of similar 'author-produced' narratives elsewhere in *Woman* in their focalization. Three out of the eleven stories in the competition series dealt with specific situations in which two or three male friends are all in love with one woman.⁵⁸ These Prize Stories departed from *Woman's* custom of narrating through the heroine's perspective by presenting the narrative from the perspective of the male character. While it might be argued that if the fantasy of being the centre of one man's universe is empowering, it should be proportionately more so if one is the object of three men's attention, this is not necessarily so. In fact, the female characters in these stories are the shadowy objects of male desire. They remain on the periphery of the action, which is solely concerned with how the males negotiate the territorial right to propose. In two of the stories the woman is not even given a voice. By transferring focalization from the female to the male character these stories reveal the commodified status of women within the marriage 'market' as an object of male negotiation and barter. They also suggest women's powerlessness in 'respectable' courtship rituals, while at the same time privileging male relationships.

The social obstacles which were so easily overcome in *Woman's* conventional courtship narratives were also dealt with differently in the 'Prize Short Stories'. Two of these narratives were concerned with the material problems faced by women in considering marriage. The question of whether to marry for love or economic security was one which had been dealt with obliquely in *Woman's* competitions on marriage -

especially one asking whether a husband should 'love or be loved' - and was a subject of debate at the time. The two stories dealing with the financial and social constraints which lead their heroines to reject their suitors offer a more explicit treatment of the problems faced by women for whom marriage was conventionally represented as the means by which they gained financial and social security.

Each of these two Prize stories demonstrates an unease about women's relationship to marriage. The constraints imposed by financial considerations and preoccupation with rank clearly do not combine unproblematically with 'romance'. Tanya Modleski, talking about Harlequin romances, has pointed out that:

While the novels are always about a poor girl finally marrying a rich man, preferably of the nobility, they must be careful to show that the girl never set out to get him and his goods. This is of course a simple reflection of the double bind imposed upon women in real life: their most important achievement is supposed to be finding a husband; their greatest fault is attempting to do so.⁵⁹

While it cannot be argued that the 'Prize Short Stories' offer any sort of representative response to the fiction published elsewhere in *Woman*, they do provide an insight into how some readers interpreted those narratives. It is interesting that the reader-originated stories offer a more complex and problematical exploration of courtship than those supplied by the magazine. Readers, at least on the evidence of the 'Prize Short Stories', viewed the marriage market in a rather more sceptical light - and their heroines were neither outright victims nor villains. Rather than passively accepting the dominant version of courtship and marriage offered by *Woman* the authors of these stories contest such conventional discourses. By contributing stories in which this dominant version is, in fact, overturned, the 'Prize Short Stories' demonstrate how some readers were appropriating the language of the magazine and transforming it in order to criticize conventional models of gender relations.

In the Prize story, 'Bittersweet',⁶⁰ the heroine, Violet Erlingham, is forced to reject her suitor after being urged to marry another, wealthier man in order to discharge her family's debts. In this story, love is subordinated to the economic realities faced by many women. Violet passionately loves her 'poverty-stricken attorney' but the only way to fulfill her familial obligations and conform to the 'feminine ideal' is to sell herself to the wealthiest suitor. The discussions in *Woman's* competition on marriage had implied that women looked for financial security in a suitor, and, indeed, in other articles in the magazine references were frequently made to the economic desirability

of marriage. Paradoxically, the mercenary motives informing Violet's choice undermine the feminine ideal: while it was tacitly acknowledged that women sought security in their choice of marriage partner, to do so in an explicit manner was to rupture the romantic ideal.

Violet's transgression of the boundaries of ideal femininity is punished when her wealthy suitor elopes with a dancer, leaving her alone and broken-hearted. She is, however, transformed into a romanticized martyr for whom '...there will be no "tomorrows" now, only one endless day of bitter sweet memory.'⁶¹ In contrast to the martyred figure of Violet Erlingham, another 'Prize Short Story', 'A Play of Hearts',⁶² offers a 'heroine' whose social conditioning prevents her from accepting the suit of a respectable if unfashionable suitor. Sylvia is represented as a capricious and shallow flirt preoccupied with social status. When proposed to by the object of one her flirtations, John Duncan, who has sold his farm and jilted his fiancée at her command, Sylvia is unable to respond with anything but disgust at his inappropriate clothing and sentimental love-making.

In conversation with her aunt, and later with Duncan, Sylvia is not a sympathetic character; in fact, she is presented as a threat not only to men like Duncan, but to the whole fabric of a society which assumed feminine passivity and deference to the patriarchal order. Sylvia's 'fair face and gracious manners' combine, in the main body of the text, to give her siren-like powers; powers which are sufficient to make an honourable man like Duncan forget his duties and allow himself to be 'dragged down'. Sylvia is, however, presented as just as much a victim as Duncan. Brought up to express her femininity through flirtation and artifice, she is unable to connect with 'real' emotions. The reader is allowed to glimpse the dismal future ahead of Sylvia when she regretfully comments that '...one can't have everything, and I don't deserve happiness.'

However, this is not to suggest that the married state itself was regarded as unproblematic. While the single reader was exhorted to marry, there is also evidence that *Woman* was not unaware of problems within marriage. Certainly, the responses in the competition on the desirability of marriage reveal that readers were themselves critical of the married state. While courting couples in the conventional romantic narrative were certain about their feelings - having only to overcome the social and economic obstacles in the way of true happiness - the same cannot be said of relationships after the wedding.

Married couples in *Woman's* conventional fiction experienced a variety of misunderstandings and separations, which suggests a deep ambivalence both about marriage and women's position within it which was to a great extent informed by anxieties expressed elsewhere in society and in other texts.⁶³ Lucy Bland has suggested that the interrogation of marriage, in which women's position was regarded by many as unequal and undesirable, was in part a reaction to the new opportunities opening up for single women: '...the gains for the married woman were lagging somewhat behind those of her single sister.'⁶⁴ Apart from the potentially destabilizing implications of the Divorce Act of 1857 and other related legal developments (notably the Clitheroe case in 1891, which established the illegality of forcing women to remain in the marital home⁶⁵), the notion that there were other avenues open to women meant that for many women marriage no longer represented a stable and immutable institution. This is not to say that marriage was regarded as redundant (even those campaigners for women's rights who attacked it in its present form upheld it in its 'ideal' state⁶⁶), rather that these debates opened up certain contradictory spaces. Where *Woman* featured marriage, it did so in ways which both acknowledged problems and offered resolutions which, generally, affirmed the desirability and naturalness of marriage

Many of these stories stressed emotional difficulties in a way that is noticeably absent from the magazine's courtship narratives. Blanche Crackenthorpe's article in 1894 on 'The Revolt of the Daughters' was, in part, a reaction against what she saw as '...the frantic pursuit of so-called pleasure - that ugly cloak for the still uglier matrimonial hunt...'⁶⁷ Crackenthorpe suggested that the working-class girl, whose life was not entirely devoted to the matrimonial hunt, provided a useful example to the middle-classes, and asked '...might not wooing before winning again come into fashion?'⁶⁸ If, as Crackenthorpe suggests, women were so eager to marry that they accepted proposals with an undue alacrity, this would go some way towards explaining why courtship narratives did not problematize the process of falling in love during the courtship period.

Crackenthorpe attacked what she referred to as 'wooing *after* wedding'. Couples, she argued, were so keen on the institution of marriage, that they leapt into it without a full and proper courtship. This meant, she claimed, that it was only after the marriage ceremony that couples were at leisure to get to know one another. The problems attached to 'wooing after wedding' are amply reflected in those narratives which detail married life and marital disharmony. While the magazine's own courtship narratives do not problematize falling in love, stressing instead the practical obstacles to be overcome, stories in which the protagonists are already married are more likely

to deal with emotional difficulties. In almost every instance, these difficulties are ultimately overcome, and so one may regard them as a form of 'wooing'. The emotional nature of marital disharmony - jealousy, misunderstandings, youthful impatience and so on, which are ultimately resolved - would seem to support this contention.

While marriage and heterosexuality were presented as natural and necessary, certain narratives do point to difficulties underlying women's position. In general these difficulties appear to be mainly concerned with women's alienation and their powerlessness in relation to their husbands - and with the manner in which women accommodated this imbalance. Emphasizing difference, wives were frequently represented as 'child-brides'. Husbands, on the other hand, were hyper-masculine - highly educated, wealthy, holding positions of power within society.

'The Broken Chime', published in 1905,⁶⁹ is an example of what I have designated the 'odd' stories which disrupted the surface homogeneity of the magazine's conventional romance narratives. Dealing with both alienation within marriage and, more significantly, sexuality, the story is worth exploring at length. It concerns the marriage, separation and eventual reunion of Sir Geoffrey and his young wife Dorothy. The narrative offers a typical description of the hero:

... this quiet, long-legged, handsome man of thirty-two, lord of many acres, squire of the village ... First Eton, then Oxford, with a brilliant record at each; a short career in a cavalry regiment; then, succeeding to a very large slice of the county on his father's death.⁷⁰

Sir Geoffrey is the embodiment of English masculinity as perceived in popular fiction (and in the popular consciousness); each step of his development occurring within iconic patriarchal institutions. On the other hand, his wife Dorothy is represented as child-like and capricious.⁷¹ Although being '...one of most envied women in the county', Dorothy had been given no say in her choice of husband: 'the poverty at home had been grinding ... Then Sir Geoffrey came a-wooing, she was ordered to marry him, and did so (and her father drew up the marriage settlements).'⁷²

The alienation that Dorothy experiences, married to a man outside her own social group to whom she has been given in exchange for money, indicates her objectification within the patriarchal culture. Indeed, this is the very objectification which had led Violet Erlingham to reject her penniless suitor in favour of one who would discharge her family's debts, and which, as I have suggested, informed other

less critical narratives. Peter T Cominos suggests that for late-Victorians the relationship between the married couple was neither 'mature', nor 'free and equal' but rather was 'immature, i.e. an association between unequals characterized by domination and submission.'⁷³ This unequal relationship is given fictional form in 'The Broken Chime' where Dorothy's enforced passivity - her lack of choice or power within the relationship - coupled with the gap in social background and experience, means that the couple's mutual recognition of each other as distinct and coherent subjects is lacking.

Dorothy's experience, which is symbolic of the state of all women implicated in the exchange and replication of the social order, clearly reaches out to the female reader's own experience of the necessity of marriage and the social codes which complicate and constrain free choice. This is, in fact, a common theme in nineteenth-century fiction - although perhaps not presented in quite such an explicit manner as in this story - and Mrs Henry Wood's extremely popular *East Lynne* (1862) also featured a young heroine, Lady Isabel Carlyle, who has to marry a man whom she did not love, despite his being, like Sir Geoffrey, kind, indulgent and paternal.

In the story Sir Geoffrey is represented as being fourteen years older than the eighteen-year old Dorothy. This was not an unusual gap; many middle- and upper-middle class men married late to women younger than themselves. The social codes which demanded the married couple begin life with what Blanche Crackenthorpe described as a 'fictitious standard of living'⁷⁴ were partly to blame - men needed to establish their financial security before finding a wife. This was not a desirable state of affairs, as the various articles and editorials in *Woman* suggest. In a competition asking at what age a woman should marry, it was generally agreed that a woman under twenty-five lacked the necessary experience to deal with the 'difficulties' of married life.⁷⁵ Indeed, Dorothy's character finds it difficult to relate to her older husband, as the reader is informed that she:

... did not understand him one little bit; he was old enough to be her father, she thought; he thought different thoughts to hers, treating her like a child, making him, in her eyes, more fatherly than ever.⁷⁶

The prominence given to Sir Geoffrey's fatherly status in Dorothy's eyes not only emphasizes the alienation that arises from a disparity in social background but also problematizes women's relationship to men within the sphere of married life. The story provides a more realistic exploration of marriage, taking into account those factors,

such as age, social disparity, lack of choice and object exchange, which other, more conventional romantic narratives, do not.

Dorothy's alienation extends even to the difference in their relationships with external society. Dorothy, for example, is also unable to relate to the neighbouring county people '...who almost spoke a different language to hers, who carried a different atmosphere [and] who irked her'; the very group of people to whom Sir Geoffrey belongs. This interpretation of the end-results of marrying above one's own social group is clearly at odds with those earlier courtship narratives in *Woman* in which readers were presented with heroines whose only desire was to marry a man, at least their equal but preferably their social and financial superior. Dorothy's situation, in the sense of the alienation resulting from her relocation into a social group not her own, is therefore a more realistic treatment of the situation of many women who were expected to assimilate easily into their husband's home. As noted, there are some striking similarities between 'The Broken Chime' and the best-selling *East Lynne*. In contrast to Dorothy in 'The Broken Chime', however, Lady Isabel returns a fallen and disfigured woman to find her husband remarried. Despite the terrible punishment meted out to its heroine, Elaine Showalter argues that *East Lynne* appealed to readers' fantasies of escape in a society in which divorce was extremely difficult to obtain.⁷⁷ Clearly this narrative theme still appealed to the reader forty years later.

The process of alienation not only renders Sir Geoffrey incomprehensible in the eyes of his wife, but extends beyond their day-to-day social contact into their sexual relationship. While this is veiled, it is likely that readers would have been able to identify with the implied sexual tension. In 'The Universal Tendency to Debasement in the Sphere of Love', first published in 1907, and considered to be one of his most sociological essays, Freud situates sexual relationships within a specific cultural context. Making repeated reference to the way in which education and upbringing impinges upon the achievement of a mature sexual attachment, Freud suggests that one of the factors which will decide whether an individual's libido, their ability to love and make love, develops satisfactorily is;

... the amount of *frustration in reality* which opposes the new object-choice and reduces its value for the person concerned. There is no point in embarking upon an object-choice if no choice is to be allowed at all or if there is no prospect of being able to choose anything suitable.⁷⁸

Not only is Dorothy the subject of exchange but in transferring from father to husband/father she does not clearly make the transition from attachment to primary object (the father) to a mature sexual object (the lover). The distinction between these is blurred. Dorothy has been unable to fuse the affectionate and the sensual currents in her libido, partly because of her lack of choice and partly because of the lack of distinction between father and lover. The underlying narrative in 'The Broken Chime' offers a portrayal of marriage that problematizes women's powerlessness in relation to their choice of husband, and of one woman's revolt against it. Certainly, Dorothy does not seem comfortable with a husband who, in her mind, simply replicates the father/daughter relationship. And again, the implication of father/daughter incest seems to underlie this unease.

Because 'civilized' women did not generally transgress the prohibition on sex before marriage, Freud argued that they 'thus acquire the intimate connection between prohibition and sexuality.' The fictional narrative of 'Broken Chime' allows this connection to be articulated in an indirect, although none the less powerful, manner. Dorothy's subsequent rebellion against her unchosen and suffocatingly paternal husband, transgresses the boundaries of respectability and, as I shall show, clearly connects the prohibited and the sexual.

After two years of being 'good and brave, ... an obedient little daughter to the husband who worshipped her...' Dorothy runs away. If we look to Freud for a way of understanding female sexuality at the beginning of the century, then the passage that precedes Dorothy's defection has a particularly sexual content and one which is quite unique within the fiction sample. On New Year's Eve, the couple listen to the traditional bell-ringers, noticing that the tenor ringer is missing. Dorothy capriciously runs to the tower, followed by her husband who first stops to fetch her cloak. On reaching the tower Sir Geoffrey finds

The circle of ringers, each standing up to his rope - Dan Hook, ex-smuggler and life boatman, the captain of the belfry, with a grin upon his bearded lips (the first seen there within the memory of man), the others blushing like schoolboys.⁷⁹

The phallic nature of this scene, in which each bell-ringer stands erect, prepares the reader for the erotic display to come. The condition of forbiddenness, to which Freud refers, is manifest; the blushes on the men's faces indicates quite clearly their awareness of the transgressive nature of Dorothy's actions. Dan Hook who, alone of the bell-ringers is named, is provided with a background that marks him out as both

outside normal standards of respectability (his smuggling activities) and also heroic (as lifeboat man). Dan and Sir Geoffrey occupy contrasting sides of conventional ideas of masculinity: Dan, bearded and implicitly dangerous, and Sir Geoffrey, an integral part of the patriarchal ruling classes. That Dorothy abandons her child-like innocence in the presence of Dan, rather than her husband, reinforces Freud's notion that those women who have been unable to make the transition to sexual maturity prefer and enjoy liaisons outside the boundaries of what is both acceptable and decent.

By presenting the reaction of the bell-ringers first, the action is contained within the frame of the male gaze. John Berger suggests that 'The surveyor of woman in herself is male: the surveyed female. Thus she turns into an object - and most particularly an object of vision: a sight.'⁸⁰ This split, to which Berger refers, means that in order to immerse herself in the fantasy of, for example, Dorothy's erotic power over the bell-ringers, the female reader must split herself into the watched and the watcher. Tanya Modleski has suggested that:

A heroine must not even understand sexual desire, for knowledge entails guilt; but since she is a child and knows not what she does, she can do a lot and be excused ...⁸¹

This is important, especially as the text that follows is, by the standards of *Woman's* fiction, quite explicitly erotic:

Dorothy, her hair unloosed and falling below her waist, lit by the torches stuck in their sconces, stood up to her rope too. Her head was thrown back, her face flushed with the unwonted exertion. The loose sleeves had fallen back to the shoulder, exposing arms of ivory; a tiny foot in white satin slipper, the buckle glancing in the light, was pushed through the bight of the rope.⁸²

The detailed description of Dorothy, her apparent artlessness and her 'arms of ivory' and tiny feet, emphasizes her child-like, even doll-like appearance. Certainly, this description together with the previous repetitious references to her childishness combine to reinforce her innocence, making her behaviour, as Modleski has suggested, acceptable. The reader, however, whose gaze is now mediated through that of Sir Geoffrey, is fully aware of the sexuality in her actions:

For more than a minute Geoffrey Lascelles stood there, his heart in his eyes, looking at his child-wife through a golden haze of dust.

She heard his quick breathing and dropped her rope, dragging off the tiny slipper as she withdrew her foot. She held up her smooth palms, both cut and bleeding, for she could not reach as high as the padded part of the rope.⁸³

The show of blood is perhaps the most potent symbol in the entire narrative, signifying a loss of sexual innocence or defloration. Dorothy displays her smooth palms (as a baby's are smooth), which are now bleeding, in much the same way as newly married husbands displayed the soiled sheets of the bridal bed. If the reader is supposed to deduce that an act of defloration, symbolic or otherwise, has taken place, this does not mean that relations between Dorothy and her husband have improved. Freud, in 'The Taboo of Virginity', observed that the narcissistic injury that defloration could cause often led to women 'tak[ing] flight from the first occasion of sexual intercourse.'⁸⁴ Moreover, he points to 'certain pathological cases in which, after the first and indeed after each repeated instance of sexual intercourse, the woman gives unconcealed expression to her hostility towards the man by abusing him, raising her hand against him or actually striking him.'⁸⁵ Consider what happens after Dorothy displays her bloodied palms:

And Geoffrey, unmindful of the ringers, threw a cloak over her, enveloping her in its folds, and picked her up like a child of a year old, kissing and scolding her by turns.

He ran the whole short distance to the Hall with her, and her little ladyship lost her temper, screaming and kicking - aye, and biting at the arm that held her.⁸⁶

How is the reader meant to receive this? The foregoing scene, with its breathless abandon, is fairly adult but once Dorothy is made aware of Sir Geoffrey's presence the couple revert to their father/daughter relationship. Is this scene meant to counter the unsettling eroticism of what has gone before, or does it actually deepen the level of erotic fantasy by linking the elements of sexuality with elements of incestuous desire? Regarded in the light of Freud's assertion, in 'The Universal Tendency to Debasement in the Sphere of Love', that immature sexual relationships are not only based upon the cultural taboo on pre-marital sexuality in women but also on an inability to successfully separate from the first sexual object, this scene seems to play out the seduction of the father by the daughter. We might consider this as a fantasy which can be read in two ways. Firstly, the repeated emphasis upon the fatherly nature of Sir Geoffrey and the childlike status of Dorothy seem to offer the reader a fantasy of incestuous desire on the part of the reader herself - a psychic playing out in the text of the reader's own hidden desires. On the other hand, the tension which is

throughout the narrative also links in with the psychic trauma of defloration, a trauma which may well have been part of the reader's own experience.

Immediately after the scene in the bell-tower, the narrative cuts to Sir Geoffrey and his sister, who have been remembering those events which, we learn, led to Dorothy running away. An interesting aspect of the story is how it overlooks Dorothy's three-year absence from the marital home. From an account of her running away, the narrative cuts immediately to her return, giving no explanation of her whereabouts or means of support in the interval. While marital separation was by no means uncommon in *Woman's* fiction, it is usually treated seriously enough to warrant some form of explanation of what the wife has been doing during her absence from the marital home. The absence of any explanation, and Sir Geoffrey's silence on the subject, leaves the reader to decide for herself whether Dorothy's desertion is acceptable. Of course, by acting independently and in defiance of both her husband and social codes, Dorothy might be seen to have transgressed acceptable feminine boundaries, and, indeed, her absence provides strong evidence of her protest against Sir Geoffrey's appropriation of her body (and reinforces Freud's contention that defloration often led to the flight of the female).

The final paragraphs re-enact the original scene in the bell-tower, this time with no mention of bloodied palms or grinning ex-smugglers. As Sir Geoffrey and his sister sit contemplating Dorothy's absence, a peal of bells is heard and his sister, who clearly understands its import, encourages Sir Geoffrey to investigate. On entering the tower, Sir Geoffrey sees Dorothy who immediately drops the rope. Sir Geoffrey's response, which in his excitement mirrors his earlier actions, is this time met with a meek passivity as Dorothy, still child-like, winds her arms around his neck. This section of the narrative, which is fairly brief, suggests a rapprochement within which Dorothy has finally accepted her position. It is left to the reader to accept or reject this conclusion. The various strands of fantasy within the story allow the reader to use the narrative in several ways; most notably as an exciting fantasy of sexual initiation, in which Sir Geoffrey ultimately reclaims his prize, benefiting from the transgression, and as a means of mitigating unsettling eroticism for the reader by infantilizing Dorothy - representing her as a silly girl.

'The Broken Chime' is unique among *Woman's* marriage narratives for its treatment of sexuality within marriage. However, its conclusion, in which marital harmony is restored, brings it in line with other stories in which couples experience difficulties. Many of the stories dealing with marital disharmony employ misrecognition as a narrative device. This is a common theme throughout *Woman*. However, in the

context of narratives of marriage, misrecognition is used to explore anxieties surrounding the women's role within marriage and the family without the narrative being directly oppositional. Certainly the preponderance of separated and divorced couples in these narratives suggests an acknowledgment that marriage might not always be as stable as was implied by *Woman's* dominant discourse.

Roma White's short story, 'The Journalist's Christmas Story',⁸⁷ published in 1895, featured a heroine whose marriage had broken down as a result of 'the old tale, a wife's jealousy, a bitter quarrel, and then the parting.' In attempting to provide for herself and her son, the heroine, Mrs Marks, in common with many such heroines in *Woman's* fiction, had taken up journalism by means of which she manages to eke out a precarious living although, by the time the story opens, she is struggling:

For she had not a spark of genius, and any buds of talent she might once have tremulously put forth had been long since nipped and blighted by the winds of adversity.⁸⁸

Unknown to Mrs Marks, however, her estranged husband had been living in the same apartment block, disguised by blue spectacles and muffler which fools both mother and son. Mrs Marks' failure to conceive an original idea for a story prompts her son to visit the 'stranger' whom he then introduces to his mother with the promise that he has a very good story to tell. Of course, the story is their own, and concludes with the family happily united. Tellingly, it is only at the point when she acknowledges her essential inability to live a successful independent life that Mrs Marks is able to be recuperated into the family unit.

In 'A Bitter Wrong', published in 1902,⁸⁹ Mina and her husband, a doctor, are already separated as a result of his unfounded jealousy and suspicion. Mistaking Mina's absence for an elopement her husband has barred her from their house. The reader is only introduced to the characters at the point of their reunion, the element of surprise being limited to the first couple of paragraphs where the husband is summoned to the bedside of a dying woman whom he almost immediately recognizes as his wife. In her delirium, Mina reveals how, far from eloping, she had been visiting her dying sister who had been disowned by the family for deserting her own husband. Mina's husband is moved to an admission of guilt and, more significantly, a declaration of love which brings about his wife's recovery. While the reader is assured that her husband's guilt ensures Mina's future security, it is clear that her continued happiness remains in his hands.

What these stories show is a profound unease about the apparent instability of marriage. The various changes in legislation that made divorce and separation relatively easier may have improved women's position. However, it also meant that for some women at least, the indissolubility of marriage, and their security, were threatened. In all such stories, misunderstandings, disharmony and separation are allowed to exist, yet the inevitable resolution whereby the protagonists realize their actual affinity for each other and return to the marital home preserves the ideal of the naturalness and sanctity of marriage which is presented as a constant in the face of human frailty.

While such narratives problematize marriage, the eventual resolution usually returns the woman to the home. Even where characters such as the wife in 'A Bitter Wrong' lay on their death-bed, the love of a repentant man is sufficient to bring them back from the brink. Death is unnecessary in these narratives; in fact, its occurrence would indicate a direct attack on the security and desirability of marriage. This is not what these narratives intend, rather they offer the reader a fantasy of empowerment and revenge which reveals a perceived gap between the romantic ideal and the lived experience of marriage. Pointing to the common nature of such fantasies of vengeance amongst women, Karen Horney has suggested that:

A wife who harbors suicidal thoughts because her husband does not give her all his love, time, and interest, will not notice how much of her own hostility, hidden vindictiveness, and aggression are expressed through her attitude. She will feel only despair because of her abundant 'love,' while at the same time she will feel most intensely and see most clearly the lack of love in her partner.⁹⁰

While wives might not die with any significant frequency in *Woman's* fiction, this is not to say that deaths did not occur to other female characters. Single women were far more likely to die, and exact a much more extreme form of retribution in so doing. In 'Three Pictures', published in 1890,⁹¹ the narrator's jealousy and disregard for the heroine's moral safety is starkly contrasted with her loving and trustful nature. He recounts how he persuaded Nellie, the woman he loved, to agree to what is evidently a dubious rendezvous with him in order that she might prove her love for him. Nellie is knocked down and killed on the way to the assignation, which saves her from what the reader is aware would have been a highly compromising meeting. The narrator's grief is intense, and becomes even more so when her ghost appears in his room on his birthday, with the words 'I have not forgotten my promise, dearest.' Nellie is able to demonstrate her faithfulness without actually compromising her honour. His final

confession that: 'I sometimes think I am going to my love, but, although it is the one thing my soul yearneth for, I would not hasten my end in any way. I must wait until I am accounted worthy' consolidates her revenge - despite wishing for death, he must remain alone and repentant until he has fully atoned for his sin against her.

Characters like Nellie achieve transcendence only through death, while those, like the wife in 'A Bitter Wrong', who are recuperated into the ideal of married love, find it only through their imminent death. None of these characters offers an image of strength to the reader, rather their revolt is achieved indirectly. The anger that is manifest here is expressed in ways which reinforce their submissive and powerless situation, and at often fatal cost to themselves. However, in expressing anger, these narratives offer the reader a fairly potent fantasy in which women retain their spiritual superiority and, to an extent, their dignity, while highlighting the unreasonable and unjustifiable behaviour of men. The inevitable assurance that these men will regret their actions for the rest of their lives goes beyond the transitory importance bestowed upon the courting female, and endows her with an importance for the male that will endure until his death. Those readers who, as the various responses to *Woman's* essay competitions suggest, were experiencing a lack of fit between their experience of marriage and the idealized version dominant within the magazine as well as in surrounding discourses, could find in such narratives an outlet for the anger and frustration from which some of them at least clearly suffered.

Stories like the above deal with a form of revenge which, while expressing feminine rage and powerlessness, do so in a relatively indirect manner. There is no suggestion that the female characters are in any way responsible for the ills that befall them, nor can they be blamed for the retribution which follows. There are other narratives, however, in which the female characters exact revenge far more directly, and are, in fact, active in the male's downfall. Such characters are usually either successful actresses or prima-donnas. Their association with the stage has two functions. Firstly it provides them with an income and an identity of their own, which allows them to lead a much more active and independent life than if they were dependent upon any individual man to provide them with money or status. Secondly, by situating them outside the boundaries of 'normal' or 'respectable' feminine life, it enables them to transgress social codes in a way that a normal or respectable female character could not do without totally alienating the reader. Because these 'masterless women' embody what Dorothy Dinnerstein calls the 'split off fury [which] is the underside of the "truly feminine" woman's monstrously overdeveloped talent for unreciprocated sympathy',⁹² it helps if they occupy a space which is also split off from the reader's own life. Creating a distance in this way helps assuage any guilt that

might arise from an enjoyment or recognition of this 'fury'. Moreover, the choice of an actress whose profession it is to counterfeit emotion, highlights the artifice or performativity of femininity. Joan Riviere, in 'Womanliness as Masquerade', has observed that womanliness 'could be assumed and worn as a mask both to hide the possession of masculinity and to avert the reprisals expected if she was found to possess it.'⁹³ It is this sense of femininity as an act, a mask behind which is hidden both anxiety and anger, that makes the actress a potent symbol of female alienation in *Woman's* fiction, and which allows her to express this in ways forbidden to women clinging to the feminine 'ideal'.

In 'The Critic's Lesson',⁹⁴ published in 1892, Inez Romaine swears vengeance on the dramatic critic of the *Morning Indicator* for his poor review of her. She quickly arrives at a solution, although it takes twelve months for her plan to come to fruition. Significantly, Inez's plan to convince the critic of her acting talent is to make him fall in love with her. In playing her feminine part in the courtship ritual she is also transforming it into a performance. The underlying implication of this is that femininity, 'womanliness', is merely a construct, a mask which women are able to assume and against which men are relatively powerless. Stephen Heath has observed that 'representation gives not essential but constructed identity', an identity which is uncertain and, 'as the perspectives slide precisely masquerade, mask, disguise, threat, danger'; he cites Michele Montrelay's assertion that 'man has always called the feminine defenses and masquerade *evil*'.⁹⁵ Inez's conquest of the critic reveals the danger implicit behind her mask of womanliness, a danger which while empowering the female undermines male power. Certainly, the critic is unable to penetrate this mask despite his supposed expertise in all things theatrical. His reaction to Inez's assertion that she has never loved him is one of initial disbelief:

"Tell me - quickly" - he muttered, "What do you mean? You said you loved me."

A peal of laughter broke from her lips.

"Love you? Not I. I said I did, of course, but what of that? You thought I couldn't act once. Do you think so still?"

"My God, woman, you don't mean - no, it cannot be. You have not -

"Been acting all this time? Excuse me, that is just what I have been doing. You see, I am not such a very bad actress, after all, am I, Mr. Critic?"

Whereas in the majority of *Woman's* other stories women who mistreat and deceive men are punished, actresses like Inez suffer no similar fate. Inez's final action, for example, is to go off for a cup of tea.

Inez's revenge is a direct reaction against the imposition of a definition which she finds unacceptable. In 'A Story in Pastel', which appeared in 1894,⁹⁶ Mark Everill agrees to extricate a friend's son from an ill-judged romantic entanglement with an actress. Over the course of several visits to her apartments Everill falls in love with her himself. The narrative details the actresses deliberate choice of sensuous attire with which to beguile him. Her real feelings of contempt, which she shares with her companion, leave the reader in no doubt of Everill's unhappy fate. Like the critic in the previous story, Everill is unable to distinguish between the real and the artificial. The actress although not openly pursuing revenge, clearly revels in her power to manipulate masculine emotions. For the reader however, Adrienne's adroitness at deception and Everill's subsequent downfall articulate a similar feminine anger to that expressed in 'The Critic's Lesson.'

Both 'The Critic's Lesson' and 'Story in Pastel' demonstrate the constructed nature of courtship rituals, and posit a feminine superiority which, moreover, reveals an awareness of male anxiety. Joan Riviere's conception of womanliness as a mask, is useful here, particularly as it suggests some undefined and inexplicable danger. Friedrich Nietzsche's comments illustrate this anxiety well:

Reflect on the whole history of women: do they not *have* to be first of all and above all else actresses? Listen to physicians who have hypnotized women; finally, love them - let yourself be 'hypnotized by them'! What is always the end result? That they 'put something on' even when they take off everything.⁹⁷

The notion that women are capable of hypnotizing men through the assumption of the mask of femininity, while clearly a cause for male anxiety, offers a sense of empowerment to women whose lives were particularly circumscribed by social codes.

Characters like Adrienne and Inez offer a portrayal of independent and transgressive femininity which quite clearly both positions them outside what was conventionally held to be 'proper' feminine behaviour, and, by declining to punish them for their transgressions, implicitly endorses their behaviour. Readers are offered the fantasy of stepping outside their normal sphere of proper behaviour, and assuming a power over men that has little to do with romance and everything to do with domination. Of course, by locating this reversal of power relations within the actress, a conventional 'folk devil', the narratives allow the reader to interpret the heroine's behaviour in a way that they would find unacceptable had the character belonged to their own sphere of 'respectability'.

Woman needed to be particularly sensitive to the diverse needs of its readership, not all of whom shared the same desires or fantasies. It is apparent that even in those narratives which seem to uphold the dominant values of society, there is an underlying, and oppositional message. Similarly, in those narratives ostensibly challenging the status quo, there are elements which uphold it. This is not surprising. For one thing *Woman* could not afford to alienate readers by offering them stories which too specifically challenged or confirmed the values which its readers might or might not share; for another, as Linda M Shires has suggested, this was a defining aspect of nineteenth-century society:

The instability of any ideology in the period and the even more radical instability of Victorian representations must count as defining characteristics of the age. In fact, Victorian representations are noted for simultaneously venting various ideological positions, airing multiple points of view, letting them comment on each other, and closing off, with affairs left largely as they stood in the beginning.⁹⁸

The instability of representation described by Shires is, as has been argued earlier in the study, also a defining characteristic of the writing in *Woman*. This is partly founded upon the heteroglossic nature of the magazine - in which multiple authorship is contained within an overarching and largely invisible editorial structure; but it is also, as Shires suggests, due to societal indeterminacy. For the readers of *Woman*, of course, there was the additional instability of their role. In a period where woman's 'natural' position as spiritual guardian of the nation was being increasingly seen in certain quarters to be undermined by demands for entry to the public sphere, there was inevitably a degree of slippage in the representation of femininity.

While *Woman's* fiction is, in many respects, similar to magazine fiction aimed at women today, it also offers a record both of how women related to their positions within society, and of how the magazine sought to present this. The divergence between the narratives offered by the magazine, and those written by the readership, although slight in terms of style and format, nevertheless show a degree of difference which suggests that, even in the creation of fiction or fantasy, readers were still actively involved in constructing and negotiating their own narratives and meanings as well as contesting the dominant editorial discourse.

- ¹ Margaret Beetham, *A Magazine of Her Own? Desire and Domesticity in the Woman's Magazine 1800-1914* (Routledge, 1996), p. 194.
- ² *Ibid.* p. 171.
- ³ Andrew Blake, *Reading Victorian Fiction* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan, 1989), p. 70.
- ⁴ See Blake's discussion of the treatment of texts by both literary critics and historians, *ibid.* pp. 1-14.
- ⁵ Beetham, *A Magazine of Her Own*, p. 188.
- ⁶ F. C. Philips & C. J. Wills, 'The Scudamores', *Woman*, 15.02.1893-25.05.1893.
- ⁷ Louis James, *Fiction for the Working Man 1830-50* (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1974), p. 134.
- ⁸ Laurel Brake, *Subjugated Knowledges: Journalism, Gender and Literature in the Nineteenth Century* (Macmillan, 1994), p. 91.
- ⁹ *Ibid.* p. 91.
- ¹⁰ See Anita Miller *Arnold Bennett: An Annotated Bibliography 1887-1932* (Garland, 1977), p. xlii.
- ¹¹ May Crommelin, 'Novel Writing', in *Woman*, 11.01.1890, pp. 2-3.
- ¹² Margaret Diane Stetz, 'New Grub Street and the Woman Writer of the 1890s' in Manos, Nikki Lee and Meri-Jane Rochelson, (eds.), *Transforming Genres. New Approaches to British Fiction of the 1890s* (Macmillan, 1994), pp. 30-1.
- ¹³ James Hepburn (ed.), *Letters of Arnold Bennett Vol. II 1889-1915* (Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 117 fn.
- ¹⁴ Ella Hepworth-Dixon, *As I Knew Them. Sketches of People I Have Met on the Way* (Hutchinson, 1930), pp. 133-4.
- ¹⁵ Fitzroy Gardner, *Days and Ways of an Old Bohemian* (John Murray, 1921), pp. 101-2.
- ¹⁶ Letter to George Sturt, 28.10.1894 in James Hepburn (1968.), *op. cit.* pp. 12-13.
- ¹⁷ Letter to George Sturt, 05.01.1899 *ibid.* p. 115. The 'damn silly story' was 'The Marriage of Jane Hendra' which appeared under the pseudonym, Sarah Volatile, in *Woman*, 26.10.1898, pp. 12, 14, 15.
- ¹⁸ As he described in a letter to his friend George Sturt in 1894: 'With regard to purely literary matters I accept or reject everything that comes to our paper absolutely at my own discretion.' 27.11.1894, Hepburn *op. cit.* p. 15.
- ¹⁹ Bennett (1903) *op. cit.* p. 104. In fact, the writers Bennett refers to, who were all popular authors of the time, did not feature to any significant extent in the

magazine. Le Queux was classified in 1907 by literary historian Ernest Baker as a class III author: second-rate and ephemeral. See Peter Keating, *The Haunted Study: A Social History of the English Novel 1875-1914* (Secker & Warburg, 1989), p. 418.

²⁰ *Ibid.* p. 44.

²¹ *Ibid.* p. 45. See also Bennett (1903), *op. cit.* pp. 102-114 for an account of how he approached *Woman's* syndicate to distribute his own work.

²² Ros Ballaster, Margaret Beetham, Elizabeth Frazer & Sandra Hebron, *Women's Worlds: Ideology and Femininity and the Woman's Magazine* (Macmillan, 1991), p. 102.

²³ Margaret Drabble, *Arnold Bennett: A Biography* (Trinity Press, 1974), p. 59.

²⁴ Arnold Bennett, 'Editing a Woman's Paper', in *The Savour of Life: Essays in Gusto* (Cassell, 1928), p. 146.

²⁵ Beetham, *A Magazine of Her Own*, p. 189.

²⁶ Miller, *op. cit.* p. xxix: Beetham, *A Magazine of Her Own*, p189. Whatever the quality of reviewing under Bennett, he gave it less space. Reviews, which occupied around 7% of *Woman's* columns under Gardner, declined to around 4% under Bennett, and then effectively disappeared (see Appendix 2:1).

²⁷ Bennett, 'Editing a Woman's Paper, pp. 146-7.

²⁸ Letter to George Sturt, 27.11.1894 in Hepburn, *op. cit.* p. 15.

²⁹ George Sturt's, 'The Courting Umbrella', appeared in *Woman* 01.05.95, p. 23.

³⁰ Drabble, *op. cit.* p. 58. See also Evelyn March-Phillips, 'Women's Newspapers' in *Fortnightly Review* (1894), N.S. Vol. LVI pp. 661-9, who writes of *Woman* that '...this clever little paper has taken a distinct stand in its efforts to lead literary opinion among its readers.'

³¹ Anon., 'Miss Hutton's Proposal', *Woman*, 07.08.1895, p. 15.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Sarah Volatile, 'Strange Stories of the Occult. No. V - Dr. Anna Jekyll and Miss Hyde' *Woman*, 06.03.1895, pp. 15-16.

³⁵ See Walter Allen, *Arnold Bennett* (Home and Van Thal, 1948), p. 15; Reginald Pound, *Arnold Bennett: A Biography* (William Heinemann, 1952), p. 78.

³⁶ Miller, *op. cit.* p. xlv.

³⁷ E A Bennett, *Journalism for Women* (John Lane, The Bodley Head, 1898), pp. 15-16.

³⁸ *Ibid.* p. 16.

³⁹ John Strange Winter, *Confessions of a Publisher, Being the Autobiography of Abel Drinkwater* (1888) cited in Margaret Diane Stetz, *op. cit.* p. 37. (An advertisement for a new serial by Winter in *Tinsley's Magazine* appears on *Woman's* front cover 02.10.1890).

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ Ann Barr Snitow, 'Mass Market Romance: Pornography for Women is Different', in Christine Stansell and Sharon Thompson (eds.), *Desire: The Politics of Sexuality* (Virago, 1983), p. 247.

⁴² *Woman* 07.05.1902, p. 27.

⁴³ *Woman* 16.07.1902, p. 9.

⁴⁴ See Linda Hughes and Michael Lund, *The Victorian Serial* (The University Press of Virginia, 1991): Bill Bell, 'Fiction in the Marketplace: Towards a Study of the Victorian Serial' in Robin Myers and Michael Harris (eds.), *Serials and their readers 1620-1914* (Winchester, Hampshire: St. Paul's Bibliographies, 1993), pp. 125-144.

⁴⁵ From my wider scanning of *Woman* these two forms appear to be the only ones offered to the reader.

⁴⁶ The 'Prize Short Story' competition appeared in *Woman* from 18.09.01 to 27.11.1901.

⁴⁷ Peter Keating, *op. cit.* pp. 51-52.

⁴⁸ Dudley Barker, *Writer by Trade: A View of Arnold Bennett* (George Allen & Unwin, 1966), p. 57.

⁴⁹ Gardner, *Days and Ways of an Old Bohemian*, pp. 102-3.

⁵⁰ *Woman* 21.11.1894, p. 16.

⁵¹ Helen Bosanquet, 'Cheap Literature', in *The Contemporary Review* (1901), Vol. LXXIX pp. 671-681: p. 675.

⁵² Robert Warshow, *The Immediate Experience* (1964) cited in John G Cawelti, *Adventure, Mystery and Romance: Formulas as Art and Popular Culture* (University of Chicago Press, 1976), p. 13.

⁵³ Theodor Adorno, & Max Horkheimer, *The Dialectic of Enlightenment* (Verso, 1979), pp. xii-xiii.

⁵⁴ Bill Bell, *op. cit.* p. 129.

⁵⁵ Beetham, *A Magazine of Her Own*, p. 188.

⁵⁶ Snitow, *op. cit.* p. 252.

⁵⁷ *Woman* 03.09.1902, pp. 11-13.

- ⁵⁸ See Miss N Munro, 'British Chums', *Woman* 02.10.1901, p. 10; M Eveline Farr, 'A Mild Flirtation', *Woman* 30.10.1901, p. 10; Miss Ethel Jones, 'Brothers in Adversity', *Woman* 20.11.1901, p. 10.
- ⁵⁹ Tanya Modleski, *Loving with a Vengeance. Mass Produced Fantasies for Women* (New York & London: Methuen, 1982), p. 48.
- ⁶⁰ Miss V. Croft, 'Bittersweet', in *Woman* 06.11.1901, p. 10.
- ⁶¹ *Ibid.*
- ⁶² Mrs Winifred Crooke, 'A Play of Hearts', in *Woman*, 27.11.1901, p. 10.
- ⁶³ See Mary Lyndon Shanley, *Feminism, Marriage, and the Law in Victorian England 1850-1895* (I B Tauris, 1989); Lucy Bland, 'Marriage Laid Bare: Middle-Class Women and Marital Sex c. 1880-1914', in Jane Lewis (ed.), *Labour and Love. Women's Experience of Home and Family 1850-1940* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), pp. 123-148.
- ⁶⁴ Lucy Bland, 'The Married Woman, the "New Woman" and the Feminist: Sexual Politics of the 1890s', in Jane Rendall (ed.), *Equal or Different: Women's Politics 1800-1914* (N.Y. & Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1987), p. 144.
- ⁶⁵ See the editorial features: 'A Spoilt Sensation', *Woman* 19.03.1891, p. 3; 'Wife Capture', *Woman* 26.03.1891, p. 3 which discuss the rights and wrongs of the Clitheroe case in a somewhat flippanant manner. For the Clitheroe case see D. Rubinstein, *Before the Suffragettes: Women's Emancipation in the 1890s* (Brighton, Sussex: Harvester Press, 1986), pp. 54-8.
- ⁶⁶ Lucy Bland, 'The Married Woman, the "New Woman" and the Feminist: Sexual Politics of the 1890s' in Jane Rendall, (ed.), *Equal or Different: Women's Politics 1800-1914*, (N.Y. and Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1987)p. 147.
- ⁶⁷ B A Crackenthorpe, 'The Revolt of the Daughters. A Last Word on 'The Revolt'', in *The Nineteenth Century*, Vol. 35 (1894), p. 427. See also *Woman's* response to this debate: *Woman*, 17.01.1894, p. 2-3 and 24.01.1894, pp. 4-5.
- ⁶⁸ *Ibid.* p. 248.
- ⁶⁹ Herbert Sweetland, 'The Broken Chime', in *Woman*, 04.01.1905, p. 8. Sweetland contributed other short stories to *Woman* see, for example, 'The Professor's Love Story', 15.01.1902, pp. 13-15; 'Cynthia's Love Story', 19.02.1902, pp. 9-10; 'The Child Bride', 09.04.1902, p. 11 (in which a young wife comes to realize the 'true' worth of her older husband); 'Daphne: A Studio Story', 10.02.1904, pp. 19-20. He also collaborated with editor, C. Hall Fielden, on 'A Good Man's Sin', *Woman*, 04.02.1903, pp. 13-15.
- ⁷⁰ Herbert Sweetland, 'The Broken Chime', *Woman*, 04.01.1905, p.8.

71 Sir Geoffrey's tolerance of his rather unstable younger wife parallels the
relationship between Angelica and her older husband in Sarah Grand's *The
Heavenly Twins*. For the significance of Angelica's addressing her husband as
'Daddy', see also my discussion in Chapter Four.

72 *Ibid.*

73 Peter T Cominos, 'Late-Victorian Sexual Respectability and the Social System.
III' in *International Review of Social History* Vol. 8 (1963), p. 243.

74 Crackenthorpe, *op. cit.* p. 428.

75 *Woman* 10.05.1890, p. 4.

76 'The Broken Chime', *op. cit.*

77 Elaine Showalter, *A Literature of Their Own* (Virago, 1978), p. 173.

78 Freud, Sigmund 'The Universal Tendency to Debasement in the Sphere of
Love', Penguin Freud Library V. 7.

79 'The Broken Chime', *op. cit.*

80 John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (New York: The Viking Press, 1973), p. 47.

81 Modleski, *op. cit.* p. 51.

82 'The Broken Chime', *op. cit.*

83 *Ibid.*

84 Sigmund Freud, 'The Taboo of Virginity' Pelican Freud Library Vol. 7, p. 274.

85 *Ibid.* p. 275.

86 'The Broken Chime', *op. cit.*

87 Roma White, 'The Journalist's Christmas Story' in *Woman* 02.01.1895, pp. 16,
18. Other fiction contributed by White includes: 'The Midsummer Mummies',
05.09.1894, pp. 16, 18; 'Yvonne's Lover', 14.02.1895, p. 16; 'An Episode of the
Twenty-Ninth', 26.02.1895, pp. 15-16; 'A 1st of April Story', 03.04.1895, pp. 15,
16, 18; 'A Camera Tragedy', 03.07.1895, pp. 15, 16, 18. White also contributed
feature articles to *Woman*. See, for example: 'An East-End Funeral',
20.06.1894, pp. 3-4.

88 Roma White, 'The Journalist's Christmas Story' in *Woman* 02.01.1895, p. 16.

89 Ina Leon Cassilis, 'A Bitter Wrong' in *Woman* 05.02.1902, p. 10.

90 Karen Horney, *Feminine Psychology* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1973), p. 108
cited in Modleski, *op. cit.* p. 45.

91 'Three Pictures', in *Woman*, 02.10.1890, pp. 13-14.

92 Dorothy Dinnerstein, *The Mermaid and the Minotaur. Sexual Arrangements
and Human Malaise* (1974) cited in Modleski, *op. cit.* p. 94.

- ⁹³ Joan Riviere, 'Womanliness as Masquerade' (1929) in Victor Burgin, James Donald, and Cora Kaplan (eds.), *Formations of Fantasy* (Methuen, 1986), p. 38.
- ⁹⁴ A.H.G. 'The Critic's Lesson', in *Woman* 03.08.92, pp. 14, 16.
- ⁹⁵ Stephen Heath, 'Joan Riviere and the Masquerade' in Burgin *et al*, *op. cit.* p. 53: See also Michele Montrelay, 'Inquiry into femininity', in *m/f* no. 1, 1978, p. 93.
- ⁹⁶ E.R.Y. 'A Story in Pastel' in *Woman* 07.02.1894, pp. 16, 18.
- ⁹⁷ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science* (1882) cited in Heath, *op. cit.* p. 51.
- ⁹⁸ Linda M. Shires, 'Ideology and the Subject as Agent' in Linda M. Shires (ed.), *Rewriting the Victorians* (New York, Routledge, 1992), p. 185.

Conclusion

What has emerged most strikingly from this study is the complex and dynamic nature of the relationship between *Woman's* producers and consumers in the construction of the text as well as in the generation and interpretation of meaning. In looking at *Woman* in depth my findings are, of course, specific to that magazine. However, by studying one magazine over a period of time it is possible to gain a clearer understanding of the nature of periodical publication as a cultural practice: the shifts in editorial tone and content, the complexities of the relationship between the magazine and its readers, and the dynamics of the text and its meanings.

Earlier feminist accounts of the women's press, such as that of Cynthia White, looked to the editorial voice to explain how the magazine engaged with its readers. While the editorially produced material of *Woman* offers interesting insights into dominant modes of address they cannot be regarded as consistent or unified. *Woman's* treatment of employment, for example, revealed the presence of a variety of discursive positions both across whole series of feature articles and also within individual articles. Although *Woman* attempted to maintain a unified editorial voice, a sustained analysis across time indicates that such unity was constantly undermined. The multiple points of production and the pressures of a host of surrounding discourses and cultural concerns resulted in a far more heterogeneous text than critiques such as that of White suggest.

As I discussed in Chapter One, the earlier feminist critics were concerned with proving the ideologically harmful influence of the women's magazine upon its readership. It is clear from my reading of *Woman* that the magazine was not the simple agent of hegemony suggested by such accounts of the women's press. The degree of reader interaction in the text offers clear proof that readers were capable of resisting the dominant values expressed by the editorial voice. Indeed, although the spaces offered for readers to participate in the text may, on one level, be regarded as a means of strengthening the bond between reader and text, they were also spaces in which oppositional discourses surfaced.

My discussion of the reader-originated fiction in Chapter Six showed how readers were capable of challenging the dominant editorial discourse which privileged marriage as women's 'true' vocation. Similarly, those competitions in *Woman* which dealt with marriage also contained responses from readers dissatisfied with their position within married life. The many rules and limitations imposed upon participating

readers were, of course, an attempt on the part of the magazine to exert a shaping and controlling influence upon dissenting readers. However, such rules were not capable of closing down oppositional discourses completely.

Indeed, the presence of these oppositional voices raises questions about the overall unity of the editorial 'voice'. The shaping influence at work in editorial rules and comments on readers' contributions, as well as the process of selection and ordering, may have exerted a form of censorship over the range of discursive arguments appearing in the text; they failed to impose a unified voice throughout the magazine as a whole. In fact, by allowing some oppositional voices to appear in the text *Woman* was able to broaden its appeal to a more diverse audience than could be achieved by a wholly unified editorial discourse. The appearance of a variety of discursive strands was to some degree the result of the magazine's attempt to construct a more commercially successful appeal. The inclusion of oppositional voices produced a more lively and, at times, mildly progressive text which raised topical issues in an unthreatening manner. It is significant that those voices which posed the greatest challenge to the dominant values of society were presented as the work of readers. *Woman* was thus able to introduce controversial ideas while avoiding having to endorse them editorially, and so run the risk of alienating its more conventional or conservative readers.

This raises the question of how far the editorial voice itself can be relied upon as an indicator of the magazine's general textual identity. In the course of this study I have attempted to show how *Woman* tried to shape notions of femininity, and how readers themselves formulated their own responses to the magazine's editorial voice. There are some fundamental problems with the notion of editorial unity which need to be addressed here. Most important is the idea that any magazine can maintain a stable and unified editorial voice across time. Although the magazine creates the illusion of unity, close reading across its entire publication span reveals the editorial voice to be shifting and fractured.

While one may discern a general tone to the dominant editorial discourse it must be remembered that this is, in fact, itself made up of many different voices. The diversity of voices and discourses which combine to produce a highly heteroglossic text must, however, be presented to the reader in such a way as not only to make sense, but to make a similar sense across time. The editorial framework, then, becomes significant in providing a recognizable textual field while at the same time containing many different voices and discourses. The use of layout and other formal cues enables the magazine to maintain a sense of continuity, so that while the actual

content and approach may differ, it does so within a generally recognizable format. The many notices to intending contributors advising them to study the general length, tone, and format of *Woman's* articles is clearly intended to preserve this semblance of unity.

Editorial discourse is, of course, subject to many external influences. *Woman's* initial editorial policy, to appeal to the intelligent modern woman, had produced a quite diverse text. With the appearance of the penny weeklies *Home Chat* and *Home Notes*, and the competition they posed, *Woman* responded by altering its approach and becoming increasingly domestic in tone and content. It was not only competition, however, that influenced the editorial material. Shifts in proprietorial control and in editorship produced effects upon the magazine. As I have already noted, changes in editorial control had impact upon various areas of writing in the magazine so that, for example, Bennett dropped the prize essay competition, Mellor brought the correspondence into the main body of the text, Hall Fielden broke the text up into short, busy fragments, Peel introduced a note of sisterhood in the competitions and Nolan shifted the text back towards the diversity of those issues produced under the original editor, Gardner.

The magazine also, of course, responded to the demands of its readers. Readers helped to shape the text, through contributions, comments, and continued purchase. As a commercial magazine *Woman* had to be aware of the wishes and needs of its readers. The repeated competitions asking readers to name their favourite features or suggest ways to improve the magazine played a significant part in shaping the magazine in its early years. Naturally readers' wishes had to be tempered with a concern for the demands of the advertiser, and the acerbic editorial responses to some readers' suggestions demonstrate that it was impossible to cater to both groups without some degree of tension arising.

Woman encouraged its readers to regard themselves as part of a textual community largely in order to ensure that they continued to purchase the magazine. Inviting readers to become complicit in the creation of the text, through correspondence, competitions and other contributory forms, was part of this communality. As I have pointed out the various rules and limitations imposed upon contributing readers were largely an attempt to control the multiplicity of discourses that threatened to disrupt the editorial drive towards unity. In his work on the social construction of identities, John Shotter has pointed to what he sees as the constraints imposed upon individuals by the medium of communication used.¹ For Shotter, if 'only certain ways of talking are considered legitimate and not others - then our

understanding, and apparently our experience of ourselves, will be constrained also.¹² In the case of *Woman* one can see how the magazine sought to impose its own definitions of acceptability, both in terms of how it shaped textual contributions and in terms of how it defined 'true' femininity. The repeated notices to intending contributors advising them to study the style and content of existing editorial material, and the fragmentation of the text into areas such as dress, cookery and house-keeping, gossip and light romantic fiction, for example, were clearly attempts to influence the ways in which contributing readers expressed themselves and their experience.

However, as this study has shown, once established the textual community was not so easily manipulated. John Fiske suggests that

As social power can take many forms, so too can the resistance to it. There is no singular blanket resistance, but a huge multiplicity of points and forms of resistance, a huge variety of resistances. These resistances are not just oppositions to power, but are sources of power in their own right: they are the points at which the powers of the subordinate are most clearly expressed.³

While *Woman* sought to impose its own dominant meanings upon the readership, it failed to fully control those readers' responses. Gaps in the dominant discourse - and conflicting messages within that discourse - actively encourage oppositional meaning.

The construction of textual communities (and textual identities) changes in time. However, the fact that the impulse to construct such communities is there suggests that there is a more intricate network of relationships within the text. The attempt to forge tangible links between readers and text (as in the Factotum Agency) or between readers themselves (such as through the correspondence column) suggests that the balance of power is constantly in flux.

Popular magazines, as this study of *Woman* has shown, cannot be characterized simply by looking at the dominant editorial discourse. Indeed, as Chapter Three demonstrated, the editorial voice itself was fractured with even individual editorials often containing conflicting discursive threads. *Woman's* initial editorial policy, to appeal to the modern 'intelligent, womanly woman', was particularly open to contradictions. In a period in which women were quietly beginning to challenge conventional attitudes towards femininity, *Woman* had to negotiate between those readers embracing change and those for whom such change represented a threat to their domestic authority. Throughout the 1890s there is ample evidence of a split between *Woman's* notion of female progress (itself constantly subject to re-

negotiation), and a more conservative attachment to a feminine ideal situated within the domestic sphere.

In fact, throughout the analysis of *Woman* it became increasingly evident that the editorial voice was neither stable nor consistent. Editors came and went, text attributed to 'the editor' was the work of more than one individual, editorial policy was determined by a host of internal and external factors including changes in proprietorial control and competition posed by other magazines. While some textual forms, notably that of the novel, can be assigned a recognizable point of production, the 'author function', the magazine's 'editor function' was far more fractured and slippery. Indeed, one of the defining characteristics of the periodical text is its plurality in which a multiplicity of voices, discourses and genres of writing exist. Lynn Pykett suggests Roland Barthes' model of the text as a methodological field as the best means of approaching and interpreting the periodical text.⁴ In this model Barthes distinguishes between the fixed text, or 'work', and the more fluid and open 'text':

The Text is plural. Which is not simply to say that it has several meanings, but that it accomplishes the very plural of meaning: an *irreducible* (and not merely an acceptable) plural. The Text is not a coexistence of meanings but a passage, an overcrossing; thus it answers not to an interpretation, even a liberal one, but to an explosion, a dissemination.⁵

Barthes encourages a reading of the periodical text which takes into account the limitless ways in which it can be read. The fact that *Woman* allowed the oppositional voices of the readership to appear, despite being framed by editorial comment and criticism, suggests that it exploited this plurality.

- ¹ John Shotter, 'Social Accountability and the Social Construction of "You"', in John Shotter and Kenneth Gergen (eds.), *Texts of Identity*, (Sage, 1989), p. 141.
- ² *Ibid.*
- ³ John Fiske, 'The Popular Economy', in John Storey (ed.), *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: A Reader* (Hemel Hempstead: Wheatsheaf, 1994), p. 502.
- ⁴ Lynn Pykett, 'Reading the Periodical Press' in Laurel Brake, Aled Jones and Lionel Madden (eds.), *Investigating Victorian Journalism* (Macmillan, 1990), p. 12.
- ⁵ Roland Barthes, 'From Work to Text', in *Image Music Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (Fontana, 1977), p. 159.

APPENDIX 1:1

Select Bibliography of Women's Magazines in Circulation 1890-1910

Titles are divided into periods of publication and listed alphabetically. Where known the frequency of publication is indicated.

- (W)** weekly
- (M)** monthly
- (BM)** bi-monthly
- (Q)** quarterly
- (A)** annual

Women's magazines already in existence before 1890

<i>Ladies' Fashionable Repository</i>	1809-1895	
<i>The Ladies' Gazette of Fashion</i>	1834-1894	W
<i>London and Paris Magazine</i>	1842-1891	M
<i>Le Follet</i>	1846-1900	
<i>Mother's Friend</i>	1848-1895	M
<i>The Ladies Treasury</i>	1858-1895	
<i>Queen</i>	1861- 1863	M
then <i>Queen: The Ladies' Newspaper</i>	1863-1970	M
then <i>Harpers and Queen</i>	1970-date	M
<i>British Workwoman</i>	1863-1896	M
<i>Young Ladies' Weekly Journal</i>	1864-1920	W
<i>Englishwoman's Review</i>	1866-1910	M
<i>Journal des Modes</i>	1868-1913	M
<i>Women's Suffrage Journal</i>	1870-1890	M
<i>Englishwoman's Yearbook</i>	1875-1916	A
<i>Myra's Journal of Dress and Fashion</i>	1875-1912	W & M
<i>Women's Union Journal</i>	1876-1890	Q
<i>Sylvia's Home Journal</i>	1878-1891	M
then: <i>Sylvia's Journal</i>	1892-1894	
<i>Weldon's Ladies' Journal</i>	1879-1954	W
<i>Girl's Own Paper</i>	1880-1927	W
then <i>Woman's Magazine & GOP</i>	1927-1930	W
<i>Own Paper</i>		
<i>Home Friend</i>	1880-1925	
<i>Le Monde Elégant</i>	1880-1891	

<i>Work and Leisure</i>	1880-1893	M
<i>India's Women</i>	1881-1957	M
<i>The Lady's Pictorial</i>	1881-1921	W
<i>Schoolmistress</i>	1881-1935	W
<i>Le Moniteur de la Mode</i>	1882-1896	M
<i>Myra's Threepenny Journal</i>	1882-1893	M
<i>Schild's Ladies' Magazine of Fashion</i>	1882-1891	W
<i>Friendly Work</i>	1883-1917	M
<i>The Lady</i>	1885-date	M
<i>British Women's Temperance Journal</i>	1886-1892	
<i>The Housewife</i>	1886-1900	M
<i>Pioneer</i>	1887-1898	M
<i>Woman's World</i>	1887-1890	M
<i>Mothers' Companion</i>	1887-1896	
<i>Dawn</i>	1888-1896	Q
<i>Woman's Penny Paper</i>	1888-1890	W
then <i>Women's Herald</i>	1891-1893	W
<i>Ladies' Monthly Review</i>	1889-1896	
<i>Lady's Own Novelette</i>	1889	M

Women's magazines launched 1890-4

<i>The Gentlewoman</i>	1890-1926	W
<i>Ladies' Home Journal</i>	1890-1923	
<i>My Lady's Novelette</i>	1890	W
<i>Woman</i>	1890-1912	W
<i>Forget-Me-Not</i>	1891-1918	W
<i>Hearth and Home</i>	1891-1914	W
absorbed by <i>Vanity Fair</i>	1914	
<i>Threefold Cord</i>	1891-1896	Q
<i>Women's Suffrage Journal</i>	1891-1892	M
<i>Women's Trades Union Review</i>	1891-1898	Q
<i>Women Workers</i>	1891-1924	Q
<i>Cartwright's Lady's Companion</i>	1892-1915	W
<i>Female Servant's Union</i>	1892	M
<i>Home Cheer</i>	1892	
<i>The Ladies' Review</i>	1892-1908	W
<i>Shafts</i>	1892-1900	W/M
<i>Wings</i>	1892-1925	M

<i>The Young Gentlewoman</i>	1892-1921	M
<i>The Young Woman</i>	1892-1915	M
<i>Home, Sweet Home</i>	1893-1901	
<i>Journal</i>	1893	M
<i>Woman at Home</i>	1893-1920	M
<i>Home Circle</i>	1894-1897	
<i>Home Notes</i>	1894-1957	M/w
then <i>Woman's Own</i>	1957-date	W
<i>Woman's Voice</i>	1894-1896	M
<i>Women's Signal</i>	1894-1899	W
<i>Women's Suffrage News</i>	1894	M
<i>Women's Signal Budget</i>	1894-1895	M

Women's magazines launched 1895-9

<i>Home Chat</i>	1895-1958	W
<i>Ladies' Gazette of Fashion</i>	1895-1899	W
<i>The Lady</i>	1895- date	W
<i>Madame</i>	1895-1913	W
<i>My Paper</i>	1895	
<i>Sisters</i>	1895-1898	M
<i>Woman's Life</i>	1895-1934	W
<i>Women's Industrial News</i>	1895-1919	
<i>La Mode Illustrée</i>	1896-1899	M
<i>White Ribbon</i>	1896-1925	M
<i>Girl's Best Friend</i>	1898-1931	
<i>Girl's Realm</i>	1898-1915	M
<i>The Ladies' Field</i>	1898-1928	W
<i>Ladies' Home</i>	1898-1899	W
<i>Ladyland</i>	1898-1899	M
<i>Lady's Own Magazine</i>	1898	
<i>The Lady's World</i>	1898-1926	W
<i>Latest Paris Fashions</i>	1898-1902	
<i>London Journal Fashions</i>	1898-1902	M
<i>Womanhood</i>	1898-1907	
<i>Woman's Weekly</i>	1898-1900	W
<i>World of Dress</i>	1898-1908	M
<i>Household Hints and Mothers' Handbook</i>	1899-1901	W
<i>My Magazine</i>	1899	

Red Letter 1899 W

Women's Magazines launched 1900-4

<i>Ladies' Daily News</i>	1901	
<i>Lady's Magazine (II)</i>	1901-1905	
<i>Paris Fashions</i>	1901-1914	
<i>Lady's Gazette</i>	1901-1904	W
<i>Housewife's Magazine</i>	1902	
<i>Woman's Health and Beauty</i>	1902-1920	M
<i>Ladies' Mirror</i>	1903-1954	
<i>Woman's World</i>	1903-1968	W
<i>Cartwright's Home Life</i>	1904-1914	

Women's magazines launched 1905-10

<i>Lady's Illustrated Weekly</i>	1905-1906	
<i>The Matron</i>	1906-1916	M
<i>Woman's Magazine</i>	1907	M
<i>Ladies' Fortnightly Leaflet</i>	1908	
<i>Woman Citizen</i>	1908-1913	W
<i>Woman's Realm (I)</i>	1908-1909	
<i>Lady's Gazette (II)</i>	1909-1910	M
<i>Ladies' Home Paper</i>	1909	W
<i>The Ladies' Kingdom</i>	1909-	M
<i>My Favourite Home Journal</i>	1909-1914	
<i>Women Folk</i>	1909-1910	
<i>Mrs. Bull</i>	1910-1913	
<i>My Weekly</i>	1910-	W

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APPENDIX 1:2

Analysis of Competition Entrants by Location and Frequency of Communication, 1894 and 1904.

The list of names and addresses of all competition participants for the months of January to June of both 1894 and 1904, chosen to represent two distinct phases of *Woman's* history, were checked against postal directories. As indicated above, this check provided independent confirmation of the authenticity of many of the competitors. This argues against any notion of editorial intervention of competitors (as women's magazines are known to have done at times for correspondents), and in favour of the view that they are drawn from a community of actual readers.

Table 1:3 shows the frequency with which individuals were competition entrants, in both 1894 and 1904. A significant shift is apparent; whereas in 1894 some 15.4% of entrants (275/325) appeared more than once, in 1904 this had almost halved to 8.1% (14/172); and whereas in 1894 some competitors entered between four and six times in a six-month period, by 1904 none entered more than three times. This suggests that in the mid-1890s, *Woman* had among its readership a small but enthusiastic group who entered its competitions regularly, and may have formed the basis for the sort of community of engaged readers discussed above in Chapters Four and Five.

Table 1:4 shows the shift in geographical location of competition entrants between 1894 and 1904. One striking feature emerges from this comparison. In 1894, some 40% of traceable competitors came from London, and 40% from the Home Counties and the South West, making a total of 80% from Southern England as a whole. By 1904, while the Home Counties and the South West still accounted for 36% of such competitors, the proportion from London had nearly halved (from 40% to 24%). This was the result of a doubling of competitors from the Midlands and North of England (from 20% to 40%). This strongly suggests that by the mid-1900s, *Woman* had succeeded in extending the geographical range of its readership.

TABLE 1:3**Frequency of Entry to Competitions by Individual Entrants, 1894 and 1904.**

	1894	%	1904	%
1	275	84.6%	158	91.9%
2	30		10	
3	8		4	
4	5		-	
5	5		-	
6	2		-	
Total	325		172	

TABLE 1:4

Geographical Location of Competition Entrants by Region and County, 1894 and 1904.

	1894	%	1904	%
London	84	40%	36	24%
Home Counties	39	19%	28	18%
Beds	1		1	
Bucks	3		4	
Essex	4		5	
Herts	3		2	
Kent	12		5	
Surrey	8		4	
Sussex	10		7	
South-West	43	21%	27	18%
Devon	13		3	
Dorset	3	1		
Gloucs	8		7	
Hants	6		5	
Isle of Wight	-		3	
Jersey	-		2	
Somerset	10		4	
Wilts	3		2	
Midlands & East Anglia	17	8%	31	20%
Derby	1		-	
Lincs	1		1	
Leics	-		1	
Norfolk	4		4	
Northants	-		2	
Notts	1		1	
Oxon	1		1	
Rutland	-		1	
Shrops	1		1	
Staffs	1		4	
Suffolk	3		7	
Warks	3		4	
Worcs	1		5	
North	26	12%	31	20%
Cheshire	3		8	
Cumberland	1		2	
Durham	2		1	
Lancs	9		9	
Westmoreland	2		-	
Yorks	9		11	
Total	209	100%	153	100%

APPENDIX 2:1

Categories of Writing as Percentage of Total Writing in *Woman*, 1890-1909

<i>Editors</i>	FG		AB								IM	HF	DP			JN			Avg		
<i>Year</i>	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	
Advertising	17	41	43	42	38	38	43	38	34	29	25	27	32	33	31	28	27	28	24	25	31
Features	27	17	15	18	18	19	17	19	21	21	16	25	14	16	33	18	41	28	23	24	22
Gossip	17	12	9	8	10	11	12	11	11	12	5	7	9	7	6	11	-	7	7	8	9
Fiction	11	6	6	4	7	5	-	7	7	7	12	10	16	25	4	3	5	10	13	7	8
Correspondence	5	9	8	8	8	8	7	4	3	6	8	5	3	4	10	8	3	7	13	12	7
Fashion Plates	1	-	2	4	5	7	5	7	9	14	9	7	3	5	9	5	10	5	4	7	6
Illustrations	1	2	3	1	2	2	2	3	3	2	18	7	12	7	3	2	2	5	6	4	4
Reviews	9	6	8	7	7	6	4	5	6	3	3	2	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	4
Publishers' Notices	2	4	3	3	2	3	2	2	2	1	1	3	3	-	1	12	2	3	4	3	3
Competitions	3	2	-	3	2	-	7	2	2	2	-	-	4	2	4	7	5	2	-	2	2
Children's Page	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	2	3	7	4	-	-	3	2	3	3	4	2
Poetry	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	2	-	2	4	4	1
Editorials	5	2	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Total	100	101	99	100	99	99	99	98	101	99	100	100	100	101	101	100	101	100	101	100	100

- Notes: (1) The data for all categories of writing are based on a sample of all writing appearing in the first two issues of February in each year.
 (2) For each category of writing, the figure given represents the columns occupied by that category as a percentage of all the columns of writing.
 (3) The editors are abbreviated as follows: FG = Gardner; AB = Bennett; IM = Meller; HF = Hall Fielden; DP = Peel; JN = Nolan

APPENDIX 3:1

Features Sub-Categories as Percentage of Total Features in *Woman*, 1890-1909.

<i>Editors</i>	FG						AB					IM	HF	DP			JN			Avg	
<i>Year</i>	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	
General Interest	54	51	36	54	38	35	35	6	18	39	50	48	26	22	44	7	56	44	29	31	37
Dress & Millinery	34	35	27	37	23	24	27	37	28	22	17	25	30	24	15	23	9	23	23	34	26
Home & Cookery	12	8	36	–	29	33	38	37	26	21	23	25	–	36	21	13	22	16	19	27	22
Health/Appearance	–	–	–	9	10	8	–	10	5	–	3	2	17	13	16	44	6	9	17	8	9
"How To" Articles	–	6	–	–	–	–	–	10	23	18	7	–	26	5	4	13	7	7	12	–	7
Total	100	100	99	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	99	100	100	100	100	99	100	100	101

- Notes: (1) The data for features, and sub-categories thereof, are based on a sample of all feature articles appearing in the first two issues of February in each year.
 (2) For each sub-category of features, the figure given represents the columns occupied by that sub-category as a percentage of all the columns of features.
 (3) The editors are abbreviated as follows: FG = Gardner; AB = Bennett; IM = Møller; HF = Hall Fielden; DP = Peel; JN = Nolan

APPENDIX 4:1

Number of Competitions, By Subject-Area, in *Woman*, 1890-1909.

<i>Editors</i>	FG							AB				IM	HF	DP			JN			Total	
<i>Year</i>	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	
Domestic	1	2	1	2	2	0	2	12	1	0	0	12	24	25	28	28	24	9	0	28	201
Literature/Art	2	4	4	7	3	7	3	0	1	0	1	2	0	0	1	6	4	1	2	6	54
Women	1	1	3	5	3	3	5	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	6	3	2	3	40
Puzzle	1	0	8	3	3	6	0	1	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	5	36
Leisure	6	0	0	2	1	1	3	2	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	2	1	1	0	23
Culture	3	7	4	2	2	1	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	23
Marriage	1	3	4	1	3	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	0	2	22
Practical	0	0	2	6	4	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	18
Editorial	3	3	1	2	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	16
Dress	3	0	2	3	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	14
Gender	0	1	0	1	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	2	11
Charity	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Training	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Total	22	21	30	34	23	23	23	18	7	4	2	17	25	25	29	50	37	19	5	50	464

Notes: (1) For each subject-area of competitions, the figure given represents the number of competitions in all issue from January to June of that year. The editors are abbreviated as follows: FG = Gardner; AB = Bennett; IM = Meller; HF = Hall Fielden; DP = Peel; JN = Nolan

APPENDIX 4:2

Domestic Competitions as Percentage of Total Competitions in *Woman*, 1890-1909.

	Domestic Competitions		Other Competitions	
	No.	%	No.	%
Gardner	10	6	166	94
Other Editors	191	66	97	34
<i>Bennett to Peel</i>	154	72	60	28
<i>Nolan</i>	37	50	37	50
Total	201	-	263	-

Source: See Appendix 4:1.

List of Prize Competitions Appearing in *Woman*: January-July, 1890-1909.

1890

- 25.01.1890 Charity competition. £100 in donations. Readers requested to collect coupons in order to vote for the charity of their choice. (Cont. to 03.07.1890)
- 08.03.1890 How to manage a £60 p.a. dress allowance. (no restrictions stated).
- 08.03.1890 How to manage a £20 p.a. dress allowance (restricted to readers residing within 4 miles of Charing Cross, on the south side of the Thames)
- 08.03.1890 What two books of modern fiction which have appeared within the last ten years have left the most lasting and the most healthy impression on my mind?
- 16.04.1890 Longest and best list of names and addresses of ladies residing in different parts of the British Isles (*more than twenty miles from London*) who are likely to become regular readers of *WOMAN*.
- 03.05.1890 The best public speaker among women. (Question: Who is the most eloquent convincing, rational, and powerful public speaker among women of today?)
- 03.05.1890 Name the two actresses whose acting in England, Scotland or Ireland has afforded you the greatest amount of enjoyment during the past twelve months.
- 03.05.1890 Fullest list of names and addresses of newsagents (of a superior class, i.e., not small sweetstuff and tobacco shops) who do not have a regular weekly supply of *WOMAN*.
- 10.05.1890 What is your idea as to the average age at which a girl may best marry, and as to the kind of man who would make the best husband?
- 17.05.1890 Guess the maker's number marked on a silver watch in the Editor's possession.
- 29.05.1890 Most practical suggestion as to best way of improving the contents, or the arrangement of the contents of *WOMAN*, from the readers' point of view.
- 29.05.1890 Mothers to send in photo for prize for prettiest and healthiest looking child between one and three years old.
- 05.06.1890 Original short story: 2000-3000 words.
- 12.06.1890 Which play of those that you have seen acted in London since January 1st have you enjoyed most and why?

- 19.06.1890 For the best description (not to exceed 1000 words) of a country walk near London. The railway may be utilized for not more than thirty miles (including outward and homeward journeys) and the walk to be not less than four nor more than ten miles. A suitable resting-place for lunch or tea to be named.
- 26.06.1890 The best article (not exceeding 1000 words) on "TRICYCLING FOR WOMEN," giving practical advice as to the nature of the exercise, dress, best machines etc., etc.
- 03.07.1890 The best article (not exceeding 1000 words) on "AMATEUR PHOTOGRAPHY," by a lady amateur giving sound general advice (not instruction) to those who contemplate taking up photography.
- 10.07.1890 The best and second-best sketch in black and white of a single figure, or several figures, drawn from nature, at the seaside in the holiday season.
- 17.07.1890 The best description of a holiday resort in the British Isles suitable for those who require bracing air and picturesque surroundings, and who do not care for what are known as 'popular' resorts.'
- 17.07.1890 The same as above, but the place described to be on the Continent, within twenty-four hours' journey from London, and where the charges are strictly moderate.
- 24.07.1890 The best and second best short articles on Economies in Dress, giving sound practical hints to girls or young married women who have to make a good appearance on a limited dress allowance. ('Open only to Lady-Assistants in London West-end shops')
- 24.07.1890 Description of the best way of spending a fortnight's summer holiday off the beaten track, and within the means of a lady employee, if she has no home to go to.'

1891

- 08.01.1891 Wedding present competition. (Ballot)
- 15.01.1891 The 4 articles that have been liked best of those that have appeared in *Woman* from the commencement.
- 22.01.1891 Original drawing of a woman's head and bust.
- 24.01.1891 The four favourite Academy pictures.
- 05.02.1891 Is the influence of modern drama on Society elevating or demoralizing?
- 12.02.1891 Is a husband worth having?
- 19.02.1891 The most attractive exhibit at the Woman's handicrafts exhibition.
- 12.03.1891 The girl who will make the best wife.
- 26.03.1891 How to decorate a girl's snugger.

- 02.04.1891 Improvements to WOMAN magazine.
- 02.04.1891 Which English fictional characters have you taken as an example and guide, and why?
- 15.04.1891 The best suggestions of subjects for prize competitions.
- 22.04.1891 Sketch of head for book chat column.
- 20.04.1891 The 6 most important events in 1890.
- 29.04.1891 The 4 most beautiful photographic portraits in specific photo studio window.
- 13.05.1891 The best copy of a photo of Mary Anderson (purchase of photo necessary).
- 20.05.1891 Is smoking good or bad for men?
- 03.06.1891 A bona fide account of an exciting incident in the life of the writer.
- 17.06.1891 What is a woman's highest aim in life?
- 24.06.1891 The 4 favourite Academy pictures.
- 01.07.1891 The best menu for a cold tennis supper.
- 15.07.1891 The 3 words in the English language most frequently misspelt.
- 22.07.1891 A tennis apron designed, worked, and described.
- 29.07.1891 The 2 best repartees heard by a woman.

1892

- 06.01.1892 Social Puzzle III.
- 13.01.1892 The best home woman. (Ballot)
- 13.01.1892 Best original short story.
- 13.01.1892 What popular play that has not been performed in London during 1891 would you wish to see reproduced?
- 13.01.1892 The best setting to music, in the form of a ballad, of 'Saxon Harold.'
- 20.01.1892 Are matrimonial agencies desirable and practicable?
- 20.01.1892 Should women be parsons?
- 27.01.1892 The best suggestions (in not more than 200 words) for enhancing the popularity of WOMAN.
- 27.01.1892 The best anecdote or essay made up entirely of words which appear on the page numbered 4 of this week's WOMAN.
- 03.02.1892 Double Acrostic No. 2.
- 24.02.1892 Suggest rules by which a purely denominational element in the working of the proposed organization of a Women's Guild of Sympathy may be avoided without weakening the principles and spirit of true religion, which should play an important part in the scheme suggested in our issue of October 23.
- 10.02.1892 Dressing with taste and economy.
- 10.02.1892 Double Acrostic No. 3.

- 02.03.1892 Best diagram for laying out a villa garden.
- 09.03.1892 Original suggestion for home-made tea-gown.
- 09.03.1892 Double Acrostic No. 6.
- 23.03.1892 An ideal life (for a single woman 20-30, and married woman 20-40).
- 23.02.1892 Woman breadwinners. (Art competition)
- 06.04.1892 What is socialism?
- 20.04.1892 Supposing you were engaged to be married, what four English books would you want your fiancé to read?
- 27.04.1892 Prize for reader of WOMAN who has taken most prizes in our competitions the results of which have been announced from the first issue to the issue of April 27.
- 04.05.1892 The best fashion letter.
- 11.05.1892 Original drawing of 'The summer girl up to date.'
- 18.05.1892 Society problem.
- 18.05.1892 Word puzzle.
- 25.05.1892 Best amateur photograph of a girl or woman.
- 01.06.1892 The most original and serviceable design for a lady's bathing costume.
- 08.06.1892 What is and what is not vulgarity? (from the point of view of a gentlewoman).
- 15.06.1892 Social problem.
- 15.06.1892 The 5 pictures best liked at this year's Royal Academy.
- 22.06.1892 Would you rather marry a man whom you entirely love, but whose love for you you are not sure of; or a man who entirely loves you, but whose love you do not feel able to thoroughly reciprocate?

1893

- 04.01.1893 The Home Woman - subject 10: 400 words on Good & Bad Taste in Dress.
- 04.01.1893 A Short Story by Installments: Giving first instalment of a story for which competitors must submit 300-400 word 2nd instalment - fortnightly competition.
- 11.01.1893 Request for competition ideas.
- 11.01.1893 Home Woman - subject 11: Home-made nightdresses (the actual garment).
- 18.01.1893 How to treat servants.
- 25.01.1893 Home Woman: describe the character of your dearest friend and give reasons for your attachment.
- 25.01.1893 Sketch of the kind c' man that a woman or girl most admires.

- 25.01.1893 Original suggestions for a game to be played by adults (without romping) in a country house in the evening.
- 01.02.1893 Home Woman - Final subject No. 12 - table detailing duties of 2 servants under specific domestic arrangements.
- 01.02.1893 Fashion Photo Competition.
- 08.02.1893 Are women of advancing years justified, and if so to what extent, in resorting to artificial means to retain the good looks that they would otherwise lose?
- 08.02.1893 Best sketch of type of man that a woman or girl admires.
- 22.02.1893 What man writer now living understands women best, and why?
- 22.02.1893 Amateur hairdressing photograph competition.
- 08.03.1893 Suggestions for increasing the popularity of WOMAN in the provinces (For provincial readers only).
- 08.03.1893 Supposing the present order of etiquette were reversed at a wedding breakfast, and that it were the bride's instead of the bridegroom's duty to respond to the toast of the bride and bridegroom, what is the neatest, shortest, speech she could make under the circumstances, assuming that the speech which proposed the toast were of the orthodox and monotonous order and utterly devoid of any special feature?
- 15.03.1893 How to make friends, and how to maintain their friendship. From the point of view of a young married woman who cannot afford to spend much on entertaining ('The above subject was suggested by MRS. ERNEST GALE').
- 15.03.1893 The neatest and most appropriate answer a man could give to a young lady who, on showing him her photo, remarked, "I never knew how ugly I was before I saw that!"
- 22.03.1893 Best original designs for spring or summer gowns.
- 12.04.1893 Which one of the many callings that women have adopted as a means of livelihood during recent years do you consider combines the following advantages: - That it is the best suited to her sex, the most beneficial to mankind, and, at the same time, fairly profitable?
- 12.04.1893 Best embroidered tea-cloth.
- 12.04.1893 How to arrange in April, and keep up through the summer, a window-box effectively and economically in a house that has neither garden nor conservatory.
- 19.04.1893 Best original pen and ink drawing suitable for illustrating any well-known advertisement (which is of sufficient size to allow space for an illustration) now appearing in WOMAN or in any other lady's paper.

Advertisements of wearing apparel are excepted, but this exception does not apply to houses that supply materials only.

- 26.04.1893 Best paper giving in a few brief sentences what is suggested to your mind by the expression 'she looked chic.'
- 03.05.1893 Best original and unconventional plot suitable for a story of, roughly speaking, double or three times the length of the ordinary WOMAN stories, The scene to be laid amid picturesque and unconventional surroundings, and the story to be enacted as much out of doors as possible (in 300 words).
- 10.05.1893 Sketch or amateur photo illustrating.
- 17.05.1893 Best 'social dilemma' (most original and difficult).
- 24.05.1893 Best 5 pictures in this year's Royal Academy.
- 31.05.1893 How to avoid looking dowdy.
- 07.06.1893 Best original up-to-date designs for yachting, boating, tennis or country gowns.
- 14.06.1893 Social dilemma.
- 21.06.1893 Best piece of poetry extracted (consecutively) from any poem by any well-known writer.
- 28.06.1893 Social dilemma.
- 28.06.1893 Repeat of 'Summer girl' competition (poor results previously).

1894

- 03.01.1894 At what age of a girl child is its mother most devoted to, and influenced by, it and why?
- 03.01.1894 Suggestion for a prize competition.
- 10.01.1894 How I managed to cut down household expenses.
- 10.01.1894 Original proverbs on the subject of married life.
- 10.01.1894 Table centre to be worked in Harris threads.
- 17.01.1894 Description of the most novel and artistic form of needlework.
- 31.01.1894 The best housewife I know (by vote).
- 07.02.1894 What is the greatest and most genuine of modern women's grievances, and why (100 words).
- 21.02.1894 Spring dress design competition.
- 21.02.1894 What do you consider to be the best novel published during 1893 and why?
- 07.03.1894 Social dilemma.
- 21.03.1894 Best description of the artistic temperament
- 04.04.1894 What living male author best understands women?
- 18.04.1894 Acrostic competition.

- 24.04.1894 Has love (in the romantic sense of the word) degenerated in quality or quantity during the past thirty years?
- 09.05.1894 The 8 best don'ts on the subject of taste and economy in dress.
- 16.05.1894 Photo of 'A type of womanly beauty' (for provincial readers).
- 23.05.1894 A wrinkle for a summer holiday to be spent off the beaten track.
- 06.06.1894 A playgoer's competition.
- 06.06.1894 Novel dress design competition.
- 13.06.1894 5 word proverb using letters of WOMAN.
- 27.06.1894 Best poem of not more than 12 lines addressed to the infant son of the Duke and Duchess of York.

1895

- 02.01.1895 What woman during the year 1894 has done most for her sex and why?
- 09.01.1895 The best figure, or half figure, giving the competitor's ideal of a British Cavalry officer (not in uniform)
- 16.01.1895 What are the most marked characteristics or shortcomings of women, standing in the way of their success in those professional and business careers which require more than mere mechanical aptitude and book education?
- 23.01.1895 A brief and lucid account of the most difficult social dilemma in which a reader of WOMAN has actually found herself.
- 30.01.1895 The best Valentine addressed to the speaker of the House of Commons from behind the grille of the Lady's Gallery.
- 03.02.1895 The best suggestion (from actual experience) for a comfortable residential arrangement suitable to the requirements of a gentlewoman coming up to London to attend classes.
- 03.02.1895 The best not less than half-length figure of a girl in black and white 'wash' or chalk (in either case to be suitable for reproduction) illustrating the following idea -
 Standing with reluctant feet
 Where the brook and river meet.
- 13.02.1895 Spring fashion competition.
 a) Best design for an out-door spring costume.
 b) Best design of a fairly simple evening gown suitable for a girl of 19 years.
- 20.02.1895 Best epigrammatic description of 'a bargain ' in not more than 25 words.
- 27.02.1895 Best figure or half figure giving the competitor's ideal of a good, sensible, healthy bachelor curate of the Church of England.

- 27.02.1895 Social dilemma.
- 13.03.1895 Which sex is most able to influence the other for good, and why?
- 03.04.1895 The modern novel- its length.
- 03.04.1895 Best set of verses, not exceeding 12 lines, into which are introduced the names of the several pseudonymic contributors to WOMAN.
- 10.04.1895 Illustrated types III - The man who is in love.
- 17.04.1895 Why are women addicted to postscripts? (Epigram).
- 01.05.1895 Best paper of not more than 300 words, giving sensible suggestions in respect of the objects and organization of the proposed 'Guild of Sympathy'.
- 08.05.1895 Best black & white drawing of 'The Summer Girl of 1895'.
- 15.05.1895 The truest and most epigrammatically expressed distinction between 'society' and 'Society'.
- 22.05.1895 Short story - (2000-3000 words) -the scene of which is laid in a fairly well-known (but not necessarily 'popular") holiday resort.
- 12.06.1895 The truest and most epigrammatically expressed distinction between 'scandal' and 'gossip'.
- 19.06.1895 The best design for a not very elaborate seaside gown for the present summer.

1896

- 01.01.1896 What is most distasteful in women to a woman?
- 01.01.1896 Resolutions for the New Year (by a wife, husband & engaged girl).
- 08.01.1896 Pen and ink drawing- a story without words.
- 08.01.1896 Should women weep?
- 15.01.1896 The most brilliant repartee that the competitor has heard from one of her own sex.
- 29.01.1896 Best paper on uses of Californian Borax.
- 29.01.1896 What may women do to improve husbands?
- 05.02.1896 How may the wives and daughters of the clergy best contribute to improving the relations between the clergyman and his parish, for the advancement of Christianity and the benefit of the community (for the wives and daughters of the clergy of all denominations)?
- 12.02.1896 Baby photo competition.
- 26.02.1896 Best design for out-door spring costume.
- 26.02.1896 Best verse of not more than 8 lines written up to the title 'He'.
- 04.03.1896 Is the army a good profession to marry into? (For wives and daughters of Army Officers).
- 18.03.1896 Is the bicycle easy to learn?
- 01.04.1896 Best witty anecdote in connection with bicycling for women.

- 08.04.1896 Should a lawyer talk 'business' with his wife (or daughter as the case may be), or are his clients entitled to expect that their secrets should be kept absolutely inviolable?
- 15.04.1896 At what age is an Englishwoman in her prime?
- 29.04.1896 The difference between culture well applied and culture badly applied in daily life.
- 06.05.1896 Are 'Gentlemen' (using the word in its highest sense) dying out?
- 20.05.1896 Best photo of a lady cyclist.
- 20.05.1896 Description of a cycle-ride near London.
- 03.06.1896 List of 4 best pictures in Royal Academy exhibition of 1896.
- 10.06.1896 Drawing illustrating 'how women walk'.
- 10.06.1896 Which sex finds it easier to harden its heart, and why?

1897

- 06.01.1897 Household competition - I Household Wrinkles (200 words and practical nature to housewives).
- 13.01.1897 Child's Saying.
- 27.01.1897 New quarterly household competition: 6 questions relating to household matters to be printed each fortnight over a quarter - short (300 word) answers to any or all may be sent in. Answers printed on full page = 'Helps for Housekeepers' Last appearance of Helps for Housekeepers - 28.04.1897
- 14.04.1897 Do rich women quarrel more frequently than poor?
- 12.05.1897 Health & Beauty competition: Series of 6 questions relating to health & beauty to appear alternate weeks - answers (300 words) to all or any, the best answer. To run for 2 months.
- 09.06.1897 How I Saw the Jubilee Procession in 800 (humorous) words.
- 02.06.1897 Description of a holiday haunt (500 words) may be accompanied by photo.

1898

- 05.01.1898 "WOMAN" FREE SCHOLARSHIPS (Votes - Closing date 28th Feb.)
- 04.05.1898 Second scholarship competition.
- 23.11.1898 3rd scholarship - 'TRAINING FOR COMMERCIAL LIFE'.
- 01.06.1898 Original and practical suggestion for novel holiday (home or abroad).
- 25.01.1898 Postcard competition - New Year Mottoes.
- 15.02.1898 Postcard competition - recipes.
- 18.05.1898 The most original and practical suggestion for a novel holiday, either at home or abroad.

22.03.1898 List showing order of preference for products advertised in current issue.

1899

15.03.1899 'Lost words' competition.
19.04.1899 'Lost words' competition.
24.05.1899 Grand handwriting competition.

1900

03.01.1900 'Greetings to soldiers' -New Year's verses to a wounded soldier in South Africa.
20.06.1900 Holiday Haunts competition.

1901

02.01.1901 Housekeeping on £300 a year.
02.01.1901 Best collection of 6 jokes.
23.01.1901 How to dress well on £25 a year.
27.02.1901 Best drawing room dialogues.
03.04.1901 How to arrange a dance or conversazione (in honour of a 21st birthday or some such other event) upon the sum of £15 for 80 guests.
08.05.1901 Best original drawing room recitation (suitable for children or grown-ups).
12.06.1901 Description of life in a seaside boarding-house.

1902

01.01.1902 Home Hints (prize recipe and prize hint) regular weekly competition.

1904

06.01.1904 Cash prizes for clever housewives (including extra prize for 'Plasmon' recipes) regular weekly competition.
13.01.1904 Pretty children contest.
20.01.1904 Pretty children contest.
16.03.1904 Pretty children contest.
01.06.1904 Literary competition II: The Mill on the Floss (9 questions on the book to be answered, where possible, in the words of the novel).

1905

04.01.1905 Our editorial competition (suggestions for content of WOMAN).

- 04.01.1905 *Woman* monthly debate - Does the modern woman keep love letters?
- 04.01.1905 Cash prizes for clever housewives - regular weekly competition.
- 04.01.1905 New graphology competition - a prize will be awarded to the ladies whose dispositions, as delineated from their handwriting, are most calculated to make home happy.
- 11.01.1905 'A suspicious character' (Humorous incident).
- 11.01.1905 New Year limerick competition.
- 11.01.1905 New post-card competition - cleverest and wittiest definition of 'the January sales'.
- 01.02.1905 Novel prize competition - a new idea for a 'question tea'.
- 08.02.1905 Monthly debate - Is flat life a success?
- 15.02.1905 Novel graphology competition - Prizes ...will be awarded to the four ladies whose husband's dispositions - as delineated from their handwriting - are most calculated to make the home happy .
- 01.03.1905 p7 In response to requests to include fiancés and men friends.
- 01.03.1905 Novel photograph competition - Of interesting people, places and incidents.
- 08.03.1905 New Postcard competition - suggestions for a popular competition.
- 15.03.1905 Dressing on £25 a year.
- 15.03.1905 Monthly debate competition - should married women work?
- 22.03.1905 New 'question tea' competition.
- 05.04.1905 Novel Literary competition - best version in French of the words of 'the lost chord'.
- 19.04.1905 Monthly debate competition - should parents interfere with their children's love affairs?
Mothers' competition - anecdotes of children.
- 10.05.1905 New 'question tea' competition.
- 17.05.1905 Monthly debate competition - Are chaperons necessary?
- 24.05.1905 New photograph competition - best original photograph postcards.
- 24.05.1905 Cash prizes for clever housewives .
- 07.06.1905 Workers' competition - best expenditure lists for living on £1 a week.
- 14.06.1905 Amusing incident competition - that has really happened to any reader in the management of servants.
- 21.06.1905 A novel tea question competition.
- 21.06.1905 Monthly debate competition - do riches improve women?
- 28.06.1905 A novel tea question competition (by Mrs. Neville Cubitt)

1906

- 03.01.1906 'Monthly Debate Competition': Should young girls be allowed a free choice of literature?
'Postcard Competition': Motto for 1906.
'Cash Prizes for Clever Housewives'*
- 10.01.1906 'Monthly Debate Competition': Are women's clubs desirable?
'Cash Prizes for Clever Housewives'.
- 17.01.1906 'Cash Prizes for Clever Housewives'.
- 24.01.1906 Women's Suffrage and the Woman Worker (will suffrage benefit her?).
'Cash Prizes for Clever Housewives'.
- 31.01.1906 'Cash Prizes for Clever Housewives'.
- 07.02.1906 'Cash Prizes for Clever Housewives'.
- 14.02.1906 'Grand "Home" Competition': How to Amuse the Husband in the Evening and Keep the Sons at Home After Dinner.
'Cash Prizes for Clever Housewives'.
- 21.02.1906 'Monthly Debate Competition': Is Restaurant Dining Desirable? Is Real Happiness Possible for a Bachelor Woman?
'Cash Prizes for Clever Housewives'.
- 28.02.1906 'Cash Prizes for Clever Housewives'.
- 07.03.1906 'Cash Prizes for Clever Housewives'.
- 21.03.1906 'Cash Prizes for Clever Housewives'.
- 28.03.1906 'Cash Prizes for Clever Housewives'.
- 11.04.1906 'Cash Prizes for Clever Housewives'.
- 25.04.1906 'Monthly Debate Competition': Which are a Woman's Best Friends, Men or Women?
'Cash Prizes for Clever Housewives'.
- 02.05.1906 'Cash Prizes for Clever Housewives'.
- 09.05.1906 'Cash Prizes for Clever Housewives'.
- 16.05.1906 'Cash Prizes for Clever Housewives'.
- 23.05.1906 'Monthly Debate Competition': Should Divorce be Made Easier?
'Cash Prizes for Clever Housewives'.
- 30.05.1906 'Cash Prizes for Clever Housewives'.
- 06.06.1906 'Cash Prizes for Clever Housewives'.
- 13.06.1906 'Cash Prizes for Clever Housewives'.
- 20.06.1906 'Cash Prizes for Clever Housewives'.
- 27.06.1906 'Cash Prizes for Clever Housewives'.

* Domestic Hints and Recipes competition.

1907

- 02.01.1907 'Postcard Competition': Verses on 'The Woman of the Future'.
Prize Hints and Recipes.
- 09.01.1907 Children's Sayings.
Prize Hints and Recipes.

1909

- 06.01.1909 Education debate- Is it desirable to Educate Boys and Girls together?
- 27.01.1909 'Snap-shot' competition - of some interesting event.
- 17.03.1909 'A girl has a dress allowance of £20. How can she spend it to the
best advantage?
- 05.05.1909 'How to get the vote.'

APPENDIX 6:1

List of Fiction Published in all February Issues of *Woman* from 1890-1910.

1890

Unnamed, 'The Wrong Scent', 01.02.1890, pp. 14-15 [short story].

Unnamed, 'From One Generation to Another', 08.02.1890, pp. 13-15 [short story].

F. C. Philips & J. C. Wills, 'The Scudamores', 22.02.98, pp. 12-14 [serial 15.01.1890-29.05.1890].

1891

Unnamed, 'The White Dragoons' Ball', 05.02.1891, pp. 14-16 [short story].

George F. Underhill, 'The Result of a Thaw', 12.02.1891, pp. 15-16 [short story].

Ella Hepworth-Dixon, 'Endsleigh's Wife', 19.02.1891, pp. 14-16 [short story].

1892

A. C. H., 'Disillusioned', 03.02.92, pp. 14,16 [short story].

Unnamed, 'A Servants' Ball', 10.02.1892, pp. 14, 16 [short story].

Florence Mulleneux, 'Comedy or Tragedy?', 17.02.1892, pp. 14,16 [prize short story].

Florence Kingscote, 'Graziosa', 24.02.1892, pp. 14,16 [short story].

1893

Miss D Ellis, 4th instalment of Prize Short Serial ['The Margaret Mystery']
01.02.1893, p.14 [serial].

A.H.G., 'A Man's Love', 01.02.1893, pp. 14,16 [short story].

F.G., 'The Premiere Danseuse', 08.02.1893, pp. 14,16 [short story].

Miss Lucy Meynell, 5th instalment of Prize Short Serial ['The Margaret Mystery']
08.02.1893, p.16.

Evelyn St. Leger, 'Where They Met', 15.02.1893, pp. 14,16 [short story].

Miss Robinson, 6th instalment of Prize Short Serial ['The Margaret Mystery']
15.02.1893, p.16.

Various, 'The Margaret Mystery' 22.02.1893 pp. 14,16.

1894

E.R.Y., 'A Story in Pastel', 07.02.1894, pp. 14,16 [short story].

Roma White, 'Yvonne's Lover', 14.02.1894, p.16 [short story].

Unnamed, 'The Other Man', 21.02.1894, pp. 16,18 [short story].

Sarah Volatile, 'The Renaissance of the Romp', 28.02.1894, pp. 16-18 [short story].

E.A.B., 'The Silken Serpent: A Fantasy', 28.02.1894, p.18 [short story].

1895

Sarah Volatile, 'An Astral Engagement', (Strange Stories of the Occult No. III), 06.02.1895, pp. 15-16 [short story].

Charles Cosgrave, 'My First Epigram', 13.02.1895, pp. 15-16 [short story].

Sarah Volatile, 'The Fatal Marriage', (Strange Stories of the Occult No. IV), 20.02.1895, pp. 15-16 [short story].

1896

L. Henvey, 'Humphrey's Wife' [winning entrant for story written around series of sketches], 05.02.1896, pp. 14-16 [short story].

Unnamed, 'M. le Cure', 12.02.1896, pp. 15-16 [short story].

Alice Herbage, 'Time's Mistake', 19.02.1896, pp. 14-16 [short story].

Roma White, 'An Episode of the Twenty-Ninth', 26.02.1896, pp. 15-16 [short story].

1897

George Mortimer, 'Fumblefist', 10.02.1897 [extended short story].

George Mortimer, 'Fumblefist', 24.02.1897 [extended short story].

1898

Derek Vane, 'The Mystery of the Moat House', 01.02.1898, pp. 12-14 [serial: 18.01.1898-08.03.1898].

Derek Vane, 'The Mystery of the Moat House', 08.02.1898, pp. 12-14 [serial].

Derek Vane, 'The Mystery of the Moat House', 15.02.1898, pp. 12-14 [serial].

Derek Vane, 'The Mystery of the Moat House', 22.02.1898, pp. 12-14 [serial].

1899

Unnamed, 'Heard Unaware', 02.02.1899, pp. 10-12 [short story].

Unnamed, 'The Romance of Bobby Lempriere', 08.02.1899, pp. 10-12 [extended short story].

Unnamed, 'The Romance of Bobby Lempriere', 15.02.1899, pp. 10-12 [extended short story].

Unnamed, 'Marjorie', 22.02.1899, pp. 10-12 [short story].

1900

Winifred Graham, 'The Beautiful Mrs. Leach' 07.02.1900, pp. 8-10 [serial: 17.01.1900-11.04.1900].

M. L. Barry, 'Brother Conrad's Novitiate' 07.02.1900, p.22 [short story].

Winifred Graham, 'The Beautiful Mrs. Leach' 14.02.1900, pp. 8-10 [serial].

Winifred Graham, 'The Beautiful Mrs. Leach' 21.02.1900, pp. 8-10 [serial].

Winifred Graham, 'The Beautiful Mrs. Leach' 28.02.1900, pp. 10-12 [serial].

1901

Rita, 'The Sin of Jasper Standish' 06.02.1901, pp. 10-12 [serial: 17.10.1900-13.02.1901].

Rita, 'The Sin of Jasper Standish' 13.02.1901, pp. 10-11 [serial].

Unnamed, 'Cross Purposes' 13.02.1901, p.18 [short story].

1902

Ina Leon Cassilis, 'A Bitter Wrong' 05.02.1902, p.10 [short story].

A. Coralie Stanton, 'At the Crowning of the King', 05.02.1902, pp. 15-18 [serial: 29.01-23.07.1902].

Herbert S. Sweetland, 'Cynthia's Love Story', 19.02.1902, pp. 9-10 [short story].

Frederick R. Burton, 'The Conspirators', 9.02.1902, p.12 [short story].

M. Capes, 'Twice Saved' 26.02.1902, p.10 [short story].

1903

Unnamed, 'In High Places. Being the True Story of the Love Affairs of an Australian Heiress', 04.02.1903, pp. 9-10 [serial: 14.01-20.05.1903].

C. Hall Fielden: told in collaboration with Herbert S. Sweetland, 'A Good Man's Sin', 04.02.1903, pp. 13-15 [serial: 26.11.1902-22.04.1903].

Unnamed, 'That Money Cannot Buy', 04.02.03, pp. 17-18 [serial: 14.01-08.04.1903].

1904

Rosalie Neish, 'Tales of Today: Eliza Migson' 03.02.1904, pp. 19-20 [short story].

Herbert S Sweetland, 'Tales of Today: Daphne: A Studio Story', 10.02.1904, pp. 15-18 [short story].

1905

Paul Halliday, 'With the Squire's Compliments', 08.02.1905, pp. 8-9 [short story].

Olive Carruthers, 'Barbara's Valentine', 15.02.1905, p.9 [short story].

Pauline Aganour, 'A Fisherman's Love Story', 22.02.1905, pp. 7, 9 [short story].

1906

Norah Vynne, 'The Wroote Entail' 07.02.1906, pp. 10-11,13 [serial: 31.06-20.06.1906]

Norah Vynne, 'The Wroote Entail' 14.02.1906, pp. 10-11 [short story].

Norah Vynne, 'The Wroote Entail' 21.02.1906, pp. 10-11 [serial].

Mrs. Neville Cubitt, 'Miranda and Her Motor Car. A Story of the Recent Elections,' , 21.06.1906, p. 7 [short story].

Norah Vynne, 'The Wroote Entail', 28.02.1906, pp. 10-11 [serial].

1907

E. F. Harvie, 'The Career of Phyllis', 06.02.1907, p. 9 [serial: 30.01-20.03.1907].

Myra Hamilton, 'Two Men and a Girl', 06.02.1907, p. 18 [short story].

E. Burrowes, 'My Valentine', 13.02.1907, p. 8 [short story].

E. F. Harvie, 'The Career of Phyllis', 13.02.1907, p. 9-10 [serial].

Unsigned, 'Stage Struck: An Episode', 13.02.1907, p. 18 [short story].

M. E. Rotten, 'The Family Buffoon', 20.02.1907, p. 10 [short story].

E. F. Harvie, 'The Career of Phyllis', 20.02.1907, pp. 13-14 [serial].

M. Goddard, 'Out of the Prison House', 20.02.1907, p. 18 [short story].

E. F. Harvie, 'The Career of Phyllis', 27.02.1907, p. 10 [serial].

J. F. Roe, 'The River of Years', 27.02.1907, pp. 13-13 [short story].

1908

E. Phillips Oppenheim, 'The Man Who Saved the President's Life', 05.02.1908, pp. 10-18 [short story]

Mrs. Clement Shorter, 'The Father Confessor', 12.02.1908, pp. 10, 12 [short story].

Cairo Ismail, 'The Strange Story of Sheik Djazzar-ben-Yousef', 19.02.1908, pp. 11-13 [short story].

H. C. Bailey, 'The King's Way', 26.02.1908, pp. 9-12 [short story].

1909

Annie Armit, 'A Maker of Mischief', 03.02.1909, pp. 10-11 [short story].

Baroness Von Hutton, 'From the Burglar's Point of View', 10.02.1909, pp. 10-11 [short story].

Wilfred Richmond, 'Thirteen at Table', 17.02.1909, p. 10-11 [short story].

Sarah Doudney, 'How He Was Saved', 24.02.1909, pp. 10-11 [short story].

1910

Dorothy Baird, 'Doris', 02.02.1910 pp. 10, 12 [short story].

Annie O. Tibbits, 'His Midnight Patient', 09.02.1910 pp. 10, 12 [short story].

Horace Wyndham, 'Mr. Brigginslaw's Adventure', 16.02.1910 pp. 8, 10, 12 [short story].

Jennings Carmichael, 'Marjorie', 23.02.1910 pp. 10, 12 [short story].

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