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The Public Voice in Victorian Feminist Speech and Writing

by

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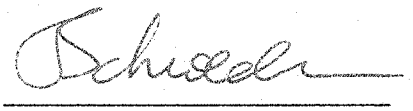

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled *The Public Voice in Victorian Feminist Speech and Writing* submitted by Janice Schroeder in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Abstract

The periodical press and the public speaking platform were rich contexts for the articulation of a feminist voice and identity in nineteenth-century England. This dissertation argues that middle-class feminist writers and speakers of this period occupied a space between prohibition and inclusion in the structures of Victorian print and platform culture, and that this space was immensely productive of new social formations and public identities for women. Chapters One through Three focus on the ways in which several mid-century feminist journals, including the *English Woman's Journal* and the *Victoria Magazine*, produced a series of demands, arguments, and appeals in a particular "voice" that both echoed and contested dominant expectations of the way "women" should "sound" in print. Feminist writers, including Bessie Rayner Parkes, Emily Faithfull, and Anna Jameson, participated in broad cultural debates about "woman" using rhetorical resources and tones of voice that contributed to shifts in gendered codes of politeness, critique, and public demeanour within journalistic debate at mid-century. Chapters Four and Five extend the discussion of women's print voices to explore the political valency of women's public, embodied speaking voices. Chapter Four traces the development of discussion and debating societies in Victorian middle-class culture as sites for women's speech, emphasizing an important intellectual formation called the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science (SSA). This broad-based reform organization was a crucial platform for the performance of a feminist voice at mid-century because it offered women an opportunity to speak publicly as embodied actors to a mixed and influential audience about feminist issues. Chapter Five uses a case-

study approach to examine the public and professional speaking experiences of Mary Carpenter, a frequent speaker at the meetings of the SSA, and an influential figure for the mid-Victorian feminist construction of women's professional authority. Broadly, then, this dissertation examines the relationships between the written and the spoken voices of feminism, and between periodical and platform culture, in order to offer a fuller understanding of nineteenth-century feminism's participation in dominant and emergent public spheres, its use of available modes of expression, and its construction of the feminist public intellectual as a voice of cultural authority.

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Introduction

"Humble but Ceaseless": Voicing the Moment of Feminism

Since the time of its formation and the launch of its publications, feminists have characterized the Langham Place Circle as a "moment" in the history of feminism. Perhaps the first writer to begin the work of historicizing Langham Place and the feminist press was one of its founders, Bessie Rayner Parkes, co-editor of the *English Woman's Journal* (1858-1864, hereafter the *EWJ*). In "A Review of the Last Six Years," an article for the *EWJ* published in 1864, Parkes sketched out the pre-history of Langham Place before going on to discuss the establishment of the *Journal*,[1] the various organizations that operated under the umbrella of Langham Place, (named for the location of the office at 19 Langham Place), and the individuals associated with them. Parkes's article has become an important evidential document for several reasons. First, it connects all of the major points of interest—those related historical developments that came to be seen as the impetus for a mid-century feminist movement and consciousness, and which have since come to characterize the telling of this moment in English feminism: the paucity of educational and employment opportunities for middle-class women; the discriminatory laws governing married women's property; and the "mass" of unmarried middle-class women whose "condition" had begun to seem like a social problem worth addressing systematically (Parkes, "Review" 215).

Secondly, "A Review of the Last Six Years" contains perhaps the most heavily-quoted passage about the *EWJ* within recent feminist scholarship[2] on the mid-Victorian feminist press. Mid-way through her article, Parkes departs from her rather

straightforward narrative about the establishment of the *EWJ*, and the movement it reflected and helped generate, to offer the following observation on its marginal status. In adherence to the tradition, I quote the passage at length:

> It now needs to be considered in what relation this journal could be expected to stand to the rest of the periodical press. Had it from the first any hope, any expectation, any *wish* to come forward in the same field with the able monthlies, which contained the best writing of the day? To this question an emphatic *no* must at once be given. Such an idea would have been perfectly hopeless and absurd, and indeed self-destructive; for a subject cannot be at once popular and unpopular, rich and poor, clothed in purple and fine linen, and undergoing incessant fear of social martyrdom. If it had been wished to start a brilliant and successful magazine, some eminent publisher should have been secured and persuaded to undertake active pecuniary interest and risk; all the best-known female writers should have been engaged, "regardless of expense"; *and then*—goodbye to the advocacy of any subject which would have entailed a breath of ridicule; goodbye to any thorough expression of opinion; goodbye to the humble but ceaseless struggle of all these years, and to the results which have sprung up around the small office where so many workers collected together, because the purpose and the plan were *honestly conceived and carried out.* (Parkes, "Review" 218-219)[3]

The significance of this passage to the understanding of the mid-nineteenth century feminist press will be discussed in greater detail below and in subsequent chapters. At the moment I want to draw attention to the passage's defensive and somewhat wounded tone, which I read as both an indication of Parkes's increasing personal frustration with public

feminism[4] in 1864,[5] and, more broadly, as a sign of an important conflict in the feminist community at this moment around the efficacy of the *Journal* and the politics of feminist publicity within the wider periodical market, an issue I discuss in greater detail in Chapter Three. In addition, it is unsurprising that this passage has been so fruitful for recent scholarship on the feminist press, since it confirms one historical understanding of feminism's relationship to writing, literature, the world of letters, and the press. Parkes's contention that feminist writing could not be both popular and unpopular, that the work of feminist expression was heroically humble, ceaseless, underpaid, subject to ridicule, and, by extension, *honest*, has characterized our explanations of feminist and women writers' "exclusion" from *both* the mainstream *and* the elite, the literary canon, and "history".

Thirdly, "A Review of the Last Six Years" closes with a series of reflections on what Parkes saw as feminism's current failure and its necessity for the future, a key aspect of her argument that has received less attention in recent engagements with the article. Parkes concludes by writing that a secular movement united by neither a common religious purpose nor "pecuniary contracts" cannot hope to survive for long. "There is want of organic coherence in the elements of human character, and this is why the best workers are apt to lament the difficulties of working through committees, even when these committees are formed of really sympathising people. . . . [Secular work] lacks the fusing element, and each atom stands out, hard or soft, round or square, crooked or straight, as the case may be" (Parkes, "Review" 222).[6] But while the movement may have failed in the short term to achieve its ends, Parkes concedes in the last lines of the article that there is hope yet for feminism, in that no effort will have been in vain if it has managed to instill a "thorough conviction" that can be pressed into service in the future

(Parkes, "Review" 222). Movements come and go, Parkes suggests, but "conviction" remains constant. Thus, another set of feminism's historical narratives about itself is articulated here: that differences between women (here characterized primarily as religious ones) often hinder feminism's projects; that feminism is always marked simultaneously by a sense of present failure and hope for the future; that feminism is a historically-continuous consciousness that comes into prominence in fits and starts of "movements" and "waves"; perhaps even that "woman" is not as useful (or at least as stable) an organizing category as, at least according to Parkes, religious belief or paid work.

I dwell on "A Review of the Last Six Years" because it anticipates several of the main historical, theoretical, and methodological issues underlying this study. Parkes's refusal of woman as an adequate organizing category usefully complicates our sense of feminist history, in that it helps reveal the instability of the term woman across feminism's moments. We need not read Parkes's misgiving about the term, however, as a wholesale rejection of feminism. That she questions the term woman in a discussion of the development of the feminist press suggests the need for a more complicated reading of the relationship between definitions of feminism and the structures of literary production and transmission in which feminism and woman get articulated.

Broadly, this dissertation is concerned with the mid-Victorian press and public discussion and debating cultures as dynamic media for Victorian feminism. I am particularly interested in *how* feminism historically articulates and defends itself as, variously, a coherent political movement, a set of attitudes or values, or a public identity and "model of the self" (Beetham 1). My way into these issues is to trace some of the

foundational assumptions and contradictions that structured debates about the definition of women and gender in print and vocal cultures in the mid-Victorian period. I place particular emphasis on the rhetorical resources available to women editors, journalists, platform speakers, and public intellectuals who, to varying degrees, situated their work in relation to a set of goals and values we now characterize as "feminist." These rhetorical resources shaped the conditions of possibility for articulating a feminist public identity, and were in turn informed by broad social and cultural forces of the 1850s and 60s, including a growth spurt in the periodical press market following the repeal of a repressive newspaper tax, a proliferation of opportunities for women to speak publicly on moral, social and political issues, and a series of related feminist campaigns that posed challenges to accepted definitions of femininity and women's role.

By "rhetorical resources" I mean those tools of meaning and persuasion that feminist periodical writers, editors and public speakers used in order to "make sense" to an audience that was unaccustomed and even hostile to seeing women's names attached to argumentative discourse in a journal or newspaper, or to hearing them raise their voices in public assemblies. My use of the term "rhetorical resources" rather than simply "rhetoric" is meant to signal my interest in the historicity of language, and the social, political, and cultural contexts informing the choices a writer, editor, or speaker makes in trying to convince her audience of the rightness or appropriateness of her argument. Thus, for example, when the entry on Bessie Rayner Parkes in the *Feminist Companion to Literature in English* tells me that Parkes's editorial tone in the *EWJ* was "somewhat cautious" (Blain, ed. 833), or when Parkes's father, Joseph, scolds her for allowing the word "prostitute" to appear in the *Journal*, I want to uncover the historical context

informing Parkes's editorial decision in these matters, and what it can tell us about the cultural meanings and values of this moment in feminism and in the periodical press market. These meanings and values shape the ways in which a writer regards her position in the social order; that is, formal, generic, and rhetorical choices are not merely a matter of selecting an appropriate model, but are a function of a writer's positioning as, among other things, an embodied subject (Bassard).

Similarly, I'm interested in how the public platform is a context that enables an embodied *presence* for feminism, where the conditions of articulation shape both women's performance, their audience's response, and the recording of these performances in writing which, at this historical remove, is our only way of apprehending women's oral and vocal expression. Standing before an audience to convince it of the rightness of one's argument is never a gender-neutral activity, despite claims to the contrary of the dominant institutions of the modern public sphere, whose foundational ideal attempts to erase or bracket identity differences in the pursuit of a disembodied "truth," or rational decision. One of the reasons this is an ideal and not a description of the modern public sphere is that the language one uses in this "arena of discursive relations" (Fraser 70), and the tone in which it is presented, seems to come from "inside" a speaking or writing body. Throughout this study I return to the issue of women's "greater" embodiment—how Victorian feminists used it, resisted it, and claimed it in the public arenas of political discussion and debate.

While I am concerned with demonstrating the risk and agency of women's use of rhetorical resources, I am also interested in how embodied speech produces an excess of meaning beyond one's stated argument. As Judith Butler reminds us in *Excitable Speech*,

"speaking is itself a bodily act" that cannot fully contain the meanings it purports to master or control; "the utterance performs meanings that are not precisely the ones that are stated or, indeed, capable of being stated at all. . . . the body is the blindspot of speech, that which acts in excess of what is said, but which also acts in and through what is said" (10-11). Butler reminds us here that language is not a transparent medium of meanings outside or beyond the embodied moment of speech, but that the act of utterance produces meanings in an "inseparable and incongruous relation between body and speech" (12). My way into the implications of Butler's observation—particularly in Chapters Three through Five—is through "tone of voice" as a significant bodily property of written and oral utterance. One's tone—the way one actually "sounds" in print or speech—conveys the emotion one is trying to communicate (or conceal) and is thus a constant reminder of the bodily aspect of utterance. Many Victorian observers commented on the difficulty of controlling, managing, or manipulating the tone of the voice—one's ability to do so successfully was regarded as a mark of strong character and professional success. Victorian audiences were quick to assess the tone or "moral atmosphere" of public assembly, periodicals and newspapers, drawing-room conversation, or state institutions. Because women were supposedly governed by feeling and passion, they were often regarded as especially sensitive and susceptible to tone, making them both the victims and the protectors of the moral environment of public discourse, a charge which feminists eagerly took up and transformed.

The other term I want to touch on here is "voice". One of feminism's foundational metaphors, voice is associated with women's silence and resistance, and personified through the "iconic figure[s]" of the Siren, Cassandra, Scheherazade, and the platform

suffragette (Scott 293). In the history and literature of women's and feminist experience, "voice" signals that which is suppressed, ignored, or silenced, but is also linked with intervention, newness, disruption, and resistance. The appropriation-of-voice debates so important within feminist theory and community serve as another reminder of how closely feminism links voice with identity. Yet if "voice" is one of feminism's foundational metaphors, and the figure of the platform woman one of feminism's organizing "fantasy scenarios" as Joan Scott has recently argued (293), its ubiquity is also what makes it somewhat opaque, and difficult to historicize. Following Leslie Dunn and Nancy Jones in their introduction to *Embodied Voices*, I argue that "voice" is both a productive and a limited metaphor with which to imagine historical forms of embodied feminism, which are available to us only through scattered written records. Dunn and Jones argue that "too often 'voice' is conflated with speech, thereby identifying language as the primary carrier of meaning. However, human vocality encompasses all the voice's manifestations, each of which is invested with social meanings not wholly determined by linguistic content" (1). I want to supplement our understanding of voice as a metaphor for women's entrance into the male dominated public sphere by exploring as much as possible the materiality of voice and vocal affect at a moment when women were prohibited both by law and social custom from making public utterances. How did this prohibition extend to women's written voices, and thus shape the sound, appearance, and conduct of the some of the first feminist magazines? As self-consciously "feminine" publications, feminist journals claimed and were assigned a particular womanly identity in the periodical press market, making it possible to think of them, like the individual woman speaker, as "embodied."

I thus take up the category of voice critically and carefully, not as an ahistorical imperative of a pluralist feminism in which all voices, both past and present, get their say, but as a metaphor and vehicle of feminism that gets used for specific, strategic purposes. For a Victorian feminism trying to carve a space as an emergent public opinion that both supports and contests the dominant, voice is very much in circulation as a rhetorical device in print and a material sign of embodied presence in the discussion and debating cultures through which feminism is articulated. My interest in feminism's historical use of the speaking voice is less concerned with uncovering the experience of specific individuals in public forums, but in the ways in which meanings of the "public woman" or "feminist public intellectual" are generated in the performance and representation of the "moments" of the feminist voice.

* * *

My starting point and the centre of much of this work is the *EWJ*, which I read as historical source and primary text, and a locus for a series of cultural and social conversations that I trace between the *EWJ* and its "competitors." Several key contexts inform the methodology of this work: debates on women and knowledge, and on the figure of the domestic woman (Chapters One and Two); the periodical press as a "battlefield" and "marketplace" of public opinion formation (Chapter Three); and oral discussion—talk, speech, and vocal expression—as a contested term and a political activity informed by gendered codes of public demeanour (Chapters Four and Five). Chapters One and Two are perhaps more broad in scope than the next two. The first chapter opens with a discussion of the *EWJ*'s inheritance and promotion of a set of "facts" and methodologies drawn from the predominantly masculine discourses of

political economy and social science, and assesses a series of debates about mental habit and scientific method from roughly the 1830s onwards. Chapter Two revisits the question of methodology, and examines the elaboration of a feminist methodology of daily life within discussions about domesticity and "waste" in the *EWJ*. In Chapter Three, I demonstrate the importance of written tone to the conversations in which the *EWJ* participated in its attempt to articulate a feminist position and identity in the periodical market, while Chapter Four explores the relationship between the feminist speaking body and its representation in print in the construction of a feminist platform identity. Chapter Five broadens out again to discuss the politics of vocal culture and their relationship to shifting constructions of femininity through the figures of "exemplary" women speakers.

In the remainder of this chapter, I map the relevance of several key cultural formations: the Langham Place Circle and the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science; the nineteenth-century feminist press, established press, and public speaking platform; and the public intellectual as a figure of feeling and care. I end with a discussion of a recent feminist debate on the power and limitation of "voice" to the ongoing attempts to redefine feminism's future.

* * *

As I suggested at the outset of this chapter, the Langham Place Circle is routinely identified as the first "moment" of organized feminism in the nineteenth century. Barbara Caine has recently called attention to the 1850s and 60s as the period "which saw the emergence of the first women's movement in Britain" (Caine, *English* 88), with the Langham Place Circle constituting a centre to this movement. In her account of the emergence of Langham Place as a hub of activity and organization, Bessie Rayner Parkes

touched on the importance of particular institutions like the Bedford Ladies College[7] in the creation of a new consciousness about women's position in society, as well as the influence of Harriet Martineau and Anna Jameson, who by mid-century had become models of a feminist public authority and demeanour. An 1856 parliamentary petition, organized by Parkes and Barbara Leigh Smith on behalf of a proposed Married Women's Property Bill, accompanied by a "long list of signatures" that included those of Anna Jameson and Elizabeth Barrett Browning, was characterized as a moment which helped galvanize scattered efforts into a "movement" (Lacey 217). That is, the 1856 bill, although it was not carried, helped stimulate debate in the press, while the gathering of signatures for the petition brought women into contact with one another in a way that facilitated further collaboration on a host of issues related to women's position in public and private life.[8] Middle-class women's employment, legal disability, education, emigration, and health were regarded by the women of Langham Place as the most pressing issues in the late 1850s and early 60s, and were duly publicized and theorized in and through the *EWJ* and the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science (hereafter referred to as the SSA). Thus, as the story goes, the constellation of societies, services, and campaigns under Langham Place's aegis by the middle 1860s included the *EWJ*, the Society for Promoting the Employment of Women (known by the unfortunate acronym, SPEW), the Female Middle-Class Emigration Society (FMCES), the Victoria Press and the Law-copying Office, a Reading Room, and the campaign to admit women to the University of Cambridge local examinations.[9] Particular individuals became associated at this point with the various organizations: Parkes, "Max" Hays, and Bodichon with the editorship and financing of the *EWJ*; Jessie Boucherett, Sarah Lewin,

and Jane Crowe with the SPEW; Maria Rye with the FMCES and the Law-copying office; Isa Craig with the SSA as its first secretary; Emily Faithfull with the Victoria Press, Emily Davies with the Cambridge local exams and the campaign for middle-class women's access to higher education.[10]

This narrative of the origins of feminism in the nineteenth century will undoubtedly and necessarily read as incomplete and insufficient to any historian of feminism in this period. Of course, Parkes could not hope to account for every single historical development that would have led to the formation of a Langham Place Circle; she is, after all, offering a review of the last six years, not the last sixty. Interestingly enough, Parkes deliberately delimits the scope of her survey, thus bracketing any sense of connection between Langham Place and earlier instantiations of a feminist awareness or politics. Parkes may have been reluctant to claim a long feminist heritage in the pages of the *EWJ* in order to avoid even a whiff of scandalous association in a publication that had always had to work overtime to demonstrate its legitimacy—an issue I return to in Chapter Three. Elsewhere, in Parkes's 1865 book *Essays on Women's Work*, and in her 1854 tract *Remarks on the Education of Girls*, for example, the sweep of feminist time was more broadly conceived to include a wider range of historical developments, organizations, writings, and individuals.[11] A spectrum of recent feminist scholarship on the political, social, legislative, cultural, and economic transformations affecting women's public and private lives, indicates that something we would now classify as a feminist consciousness or politics was circulating in England well before the appearance of organized feminism, and certainly before the term "feminism" itself was in use.[12]

The significance of the Langham Place Circle to the historical development of feminist consciousness, writing, thought and activity, then, has been mapped out in the work of historians, biographers, and literary critics. Taken together, this scholarship scopes Victorian feminism by focusing on the lives and work of particular founding figures,[13] individual campaigns,[14] or by providing chronological overviews within specific temporal frames.[15] A growing body of work emphasizes the imperialist and colonialist assumptions at the centre of Victorian feminism's articulation of its moral authority as a "civilizing" agency.[16] Much of this research is united by a concern with primarily middle-class women and the movements that addressed their particular needs within a liberal-imperialist political framework. However, recent studies of focused feminist activity in the early decades of the century help reorient the sense that organized feminism surfaced only after the 1850s, and only by and for middle-class women within a liberal-individualist milieu. This research explores the place of feminist claims and appeals in the Radical, Chartist, socialist and radical Unitarian traditions, underscoring the need to understand nineteenth-century feminist activity in the plural.[17] Focused research by Barbara Taylor, Katherine Gleadle, and Helen Rogers, in particular, challenges the dominant historiographical assumption that a feminist argument was merely a footnote to these traditions, allowing us to see that a set of socialist, communitarian, and universalist feminisms was being organized and articulated in the early decades of the nineteenth century, and which, even if obliquely, informed the mid-Victorian feminist movement that constitutes the focus of this study. In addition, Catherine Hall has drawn attention to the ways in which feminist history imagines a blank spot between Wollstonecraft and mid-Victorian feminism. Hall argues that instead

of assuming that women were simply outside politics in the early decades of the nineteenth century, we need to understand how "a whole set of ideologies and social practices developed which saw middle-class women as essentially non-political beings" (152).

Finally, a handful of recent anthologies has helped bring together some of the scattered, often obscure written sources of nineteenth-century feminisms.[18] These collections accompany an increasing interest in the periodical press as an important site of both women's and feminist writing, politics and rhetoric. Whereas the newspaper and periodical press have been routinely treated merely as transparent sources from which to draw evidence of early feminist argument, recent scholarship employing cultural studies, materialist, and post-structuralist methodologies has refocused attention on the periodical press as a dynamic cultural, social, and political formation through which separate Victorian reading audiences and interests, including feminist ones, came to be identified and addressed.[19] In English studies, this research has served as a reminder that many of the ur-texts of the Victorian period were read by their first audiences within the pages of monthly and quarterly periodicals—Dickens' and Trollope's novels, for example, or Matthew Arnold's *National Review* essay, "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time."[20] In feminist literary criticism, the interest in the periodical press accompanies the broad recovery of women's writing that has been forgotten or obscured within literary history. Thus a figure like Mary Elizabeth Braddon, a sensation novelist and editor of the highly successful *Belgravia Magazine*, which Braddon shrewdly used to publish and market her fiction, has recently begun to receive deserved attention as one of the century's most successful novelists and effective magazine editors.[21] In recent approaches

to the study of women's magazines, both past and present, the emphasis on these texts as simply the repositories of negative representations of women has been replaced by a more nuanced attention to the "work" they do in shaping culture.[22]

Although serial publication has received greater attention in recent years within literary studies, there are few monographs devoted to women's or feminist magazines in historical periods that take the form itself as an object of analysis. Margaret Beetham's *A Magazine of Her Own?* and Kathryn Shevelow's *Women and Print Culture*, however, are two book-length studies of women's periodicals that have influenced the ways in which I read feminist magazines of the mid-Victorian period. Shevelow's book examines the single-author essay-periodicals and magazines, or miscellanies, of eighteenth-century England, and discusses the very first periodicals intended for a specifically feminine audience. While the earliest periodicals, such as the *Tatler* and the *Spectator* were singly-authored and featured a consistent editorial voice of paternal authority who assumed his male and female readers required guidance in morals and manners, Shevelow shows how the shift to the multiply-authored, multi-genre magazine occurred simultaneously with the appearance of the first periodicals written specifically by women for women.[23] "The periodical," Shevelow argues, "played a key role in expanding women's participation as readers and writers, and as textual figures; and in so doing, the periodical was simultaneously a principal site of the normative construction of femininity in writing" (6). For the purposes of understanding women's relationship to print culture, one of Shevelow's most salient claims is that the periodical operated as a mechanism for both women's increased visibility in the world of publication, and their containment by increasingly prescriptive definitions of appropriate femininity. Central to this argument is

Shevelow's larger and fascinating observation about print culture itself—that the simultaneous envisaging and control of women in periodicals seem like contradictory processes "only if we insist upon equating access to the mechanisms of print exclusively with metaphors of enfranchisement and inclusion rather than those of restriction and containment" (1). Throughout this study I engage specifically with this observation in my discussion of the mid-Victorian feminist journal as a space whose limits were carefully demarcated and controlled by women as the condition of their collectively-shaped visibility in public debate.

Beetham's study draws from a considerable amount of scholarship in feminist popular culture studies in its exploration of the history of the nineteenth-century women's magazine in England. Adopting a chronological and case study approach that covers a range of ladies', domestic, and family magazines, Beetham divides the century into three overlapping periods: the emergence of the ladies magazine between 1800 and 1850; the consolidation of the form between 1850 and 1870 into reading for middle- and upper-class audiences; and the appearance of an increasingly diverse women's press in the 1880s and 90s as New Journalism helped create the figure of the New Woman. Beetham reads magazines as whole texts, paying attention to the features that are typically devalued or ignored as non-literary—recipes, fashion plates, and letters pages, for example. Her introduction makes a series of highly useful generalizations about how to read a form like the magazine on its own terms; she points out that women's magazines are defined by their interpellation of a reading audience understood as specifically female; that there is a constant reworking in women's magazines of "the same" elements, and that this need to redefine demonstrates the instabilities rather than the coherence of

terms like "woman" and "femininity"; that the periodical is a form which encourages readers to shape the text's content by encouraging them to write back; and that the women's periodical "simultaneously root[s] its readers in the present while pointing them to the future. . . . The promise of self-transformation is endemic in the form. . . . Dissatisfaction with the social self is recognized but endlessly displaced" (14). I will return to the resonance of time with the feminist periodical and its role in shaping our sense of feminist history at the end of this chapter.

Shevelow's and Beetham's work, while providing important historical contexts for my understanding of the appearance of mid-Victorian feminist journals, are even more important in demonstrating a set of methodologies with which to read a cultural form like the monthly magazine. In addition, recent scholarship on the feminist and women's press in Victorian England informs my discussion of the *EWJ* and its immediate successors, the *Victoria Magazine* and the *Englishwoman's Review*. The painstaking recovery work at the heart of this research is invaluable to my analysis of these journals, as is one of its prevailing arguments: that these journals constituted a "separate voice" within the broad field of the Victorian periodical press. My work contributes to the body of scholarship on the Victorian feminist periodicals in several related ways: it pays close attention to the language and rhetorical affect of voice, tone, and feeling in feminist periodical discourse; it contextualizes this affect in relation to a series of debates about women in the wider field of the newspaper and periodical press, of which the feminist press was a part; and it emphasizes the magazine as a "whole text"—a distinct cultural and literary form, collectively-produced, with its own rich history, persuasive logic, foundational assumptions, imagined readers, and ideological contradictions. I am on the

whole less concerned with tracing the specificities of particular figures or campaigns—how they emerged, or how successful they were—than I am with the effect of their journalistic representation and their embodied appearances on public platforms. In this sense my work departs from some of the existing scholarship on this period in feminism, whose methodology tends to regard periodicals and platform speeches as sources of information about feminist movements, rather than as *enactments* of them. Collectively written, financed, and edited, I read feminist magazines less as sources about, than as acts of, feminism, and as extensions of women's serial collectivities and shared identities, which, as Beetham points out, are in a constant state of revision and reiteration. Likewise, public speeches, available to us in transcripts or transactions, need to be read as the scripts of embodied public performances, even when those records give us little information as to the tenor of the speaker's performance, the reaction of her audience, and the role of speaking events in creating public meanings about women.

* * *

My interest in women's speaking voices and the oral delivery of feminist argument in public arenas began with a curiosity about the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science, one of the first organized platforms for women's and feminist speeches. In Chapter Four I discuss the emergence of the SSA in greater detail, but I want to point out here that the SSA has typically been understood within feminist historiography as an important forum for the promotion of mid-Victorian feminism in its instantiation as a series of separate but related campaigns by a group of "reform ladies." Most historians of this moment in nineteenth-century feminism cite the SSA, and note the women who participated in its annual congresses, but there are few full-length studies of

its relationship to organized feminism, or its gradual disappearance from feminist history. I argue that one of the reasons this is so is because the official records of women's participation in the Association offer the researcher very little; a series of annual Transactions published by the Association tells us next to nothing about women's presence at the congresses; some of their speeches are reprinted verbatim in the Transactions, others are merely listed in the table of contents. To gain a sense of the effect of women's appearance at SSA meetings, one must turn to reports in the established and feminist press, although, of course, none of these offer an unmediated or unqualified representation of women's public speech. The question of how texts such as the transaction, the newspaper report, or the periodical essay attempt to "echo" the sound of women in public—to imprint the embodied experience of delivering and listening to oral public speech—is at the centre of my interest in Victorian feminism's use of the platform lecture, and its relationship to debating and discussion cultures.

John North has written that the most serious challengers to the periodical press's claims on the public attention in the nineteenth century were the lecture platform and liquor (5). More recently, Martin Hewitt has called for more consideration of oral cultures in Victorian studies—of the pulpit, the platform, and the "cultures of discussion" with which Victorian audiences were familiar (154). As Hewitt notes, "[t]he writing, delivery, publication, listening to and reading of sermons saturated Victorian culture. Even if in decline, pulpit practice and its reverberations remained probably third only to the novel and the newspaper in the production and reproduction of ideas, and in its influence on broader patterns of everyday living" (148). While a body of research exists on the everyday practice and experience of reading aloud—with Dickens' highly theatrical

reading tours epitomizing the Victorians' passion for the oral word—there has been little work done on speech and voice, except as they are represented in fiction and poetry. One notable exception is Aled Jones' *Powers of the Press*, in which he describes the struggle for authority between the press and the platform, and between written and oral opinion. As the century wore on, the press gradually outstripped the platform as the repository and purveyor of cultural and social value, a shift that partly helps to explain the demise of a forum such as the SSA.

The presence and absence of women's voices in public was key to the Victorians' everyday experiences of the effect of public and semi-public spaces. Eliza Lynn Linton, one commentator who was particularly attuned to the quality and use of different kinds of public and private voices, made the following observation about the power of the speaking voice to produce sensation in its hearers: "We all know the effect, irritating or soothing, which certain voices have over us; and we have all experienced that strange impulse of attraction or repulsion which comes from the sound of the voice alone" (Linton 40). There was no voice more irritating to Linton's ear than the voice of the "Shrieking Sisterhood," a term she coined in an 1870 article on feminism for the *Saturday Review*. The ridicule of a public feminist voice was one of the most effective oppositional tactics in the "battle" for public opinion at mid-century, largely because feminist writers and public speakers felt they could not take up ridicule as a rhetorical weapon. Mockery and dismissiveness would have been read as distinctly unfeminine rhetorical traits, and would only have invited further provocation and notoriety; Linton adopted these characteristics to great effect, but it was the *Saturday Review*'s highly

masculinized periodical identity that make this possible, demonstrating that a rhetorical personality was not a function of the author's gender as much as of a journal's identity.

On the public platform, however, there is no possibility of anonymity. Public speech of any kind was for women fraught with a range of affects that male speakers did not necessarily share. Particularly for women who mounted the platform to speak about women's rights, there was the distracting assumption on the part of their audiences that their main purpose was to gain a public reputation or to earn an independent living. For example, in 1872, the suffragist Lilias Ashworth wrote the following of her West of England speaking tour for the suffrage:

> It was evident that the audiences came expecting to see curious masculine objects walking on to the platform, and when we appeared, with our quiet black dresses, the whole expression of the faces of the audiences would instantly change. I shall never forget the thrill which passed through us when, on one occasion, a Nonconformist minister assured the audience in his speech from the chair, that we were 'quite respectable'—meaning to convey that we were people with some position, and not merely seeking notoriety or earning money by our speaking." (qtd. in Hollis, 7)

Because of the general cultural disapproval of women speaking in public, women who did raise their voices were usually seen and heard as transgressive, and have continued to be understood this way within feminist history. While women's presence on the suffrage platform constitutes a high water mark for feminist public speech, and has duly received much critical attention, there has been less interest in earlier moments of feminist oratory, speech-making, and public reading. The women who spoke at the

meetings of the SSA faced (in the press and, there is evidence to suggest, at the meetings themselves) a mixture of polite support, condescension, silence, and ridicule. As I demonstrate in Chapter Four, this reaction was consistent with the broader public reputation the SSA claimed for itself as a temperate association of amateur experts and professional reformers who valued dispassionate discussion and the free speech ideal. The women of Langham Place who used the SSA to promote their work were keenly aware that they needed to present their cause in a particular "voice"—both actual and metaphoric—that would be consistent with the SSA's stated claim to disinterestedness. Yet the women who were sanctioned at the SSA as feminist speakers represented the limitation of this claim. Feminist speakers could not appear as disinterested, since their argument was in many ways a personal one, and because as "exceptional" women, they could not hope to speak for all women, or so their critics argued. In an 1866 article for *Blackwood's Magazine,* for example, Margaret Oliphant protested against feminists' claims to representation with the following:

> No man dreams in private life of considering that the lady who reads papers in a Social Science Congress, or addresses a political meeting, is a type of his own sisters or daughters. In reality, this exceptional woman is often, strange as it may seem, a very womanly and lovable person; but she has chosen to separate herself to a certain extent from her kind, and she must take the penalty. . . . They are too clever to be accepted as our representatives. They have artificial wants and capabilities which are not the capabilities and wants of women. (377)

Thus, while the ideals of disinterestedness and free discussion were at all times promoted by the SSA as part of its claim of influence on legislators and other influential members

of society, the SSA's detractors identified the feminist presence at its meetings as the flaw of this claim.

For women to appear in a forum like the SSA, which aspired to the discovery of the facts and laws governing all forms of human organization, was already to contradict a widely-accepted set of beliefs about the mental and intellectual capabilities of women. Attempts to define the gender of intellect in the early decades of the century assigned women to the intuitive, the passionate, and the desultory. Most significantly, women were regarded for their quickness of observation and their facility with the particular, while the male intellect was defined as slower, but more careful and thorough because governed by a carefully-elaborated method. Political economy and social science—two key "disciplines" for the *EWJ*'s "exposure" of the social and legal wrongs of woman—were the testing grounds for a set of facts and methodologies that would track the progress and the relief of society. Feminist writers and speakers of the mid-Victorian period appropriated political economic and social scientific discourse in their critique of the assignment of women to what they regarded as a vague and ineffectual moral influence. These discourses authorized their discovery and exposure of the "facts" of women's lived existence both inside and outside the home, and were used to "discipline" what was seen as a dangerous and wasteful domestic idleness.

One public speaker who regularly decried women's "idleness" was Mary Carpenter, an educator and social reformer who made use of the SSA's platform more regularly than any other woman speaker. Although Carpenter did not consider herself a feminist, or work closely with other women reformers, she had contacts with some of the most well-known advocates of women's rights, including Harriet Martineau and Frances

Power Cobbe. The *EWJ* and the *EWR* routinely referred to Carpenter as a model for other women to follow, and Carpenter contributed to the *EWJ* and its short-lived successor, the *Alexandra Magazine*, on women's work in the reformatory movement, and allowed her signature to be associated with a variety of feminist causes, including the suffrage and the contagious diseases agitation. Carpenter's public reputation was similar to Florence Nightingale's—both were unmarried, and were regarded as exceptional women whose "selfless" public service and reluctance to claim a feminist identity forestalled criticism of them as "unnatural" or publicity-seeking. Carpenter, for example, was lauded by feminists and non-feminists alike for her "universal mother-heart," an appellation that may strike us as contradictory, given the highly-rational, social-scientific tenor of her writings. My work explores Carpenter's status as a particular type of woman intellectual who combined a recognizable public moralism and accepted femininity with a social-scientific analysis and "discovery" of the categories of juvenile delinquency and the institutions that could correct it. In doing so, I focus on the importance of the category of voice to Carpenter's unquestioned public authority, to her shifting definitions of self, and to the "rehabilitation" of poor and working-class children—referred to by one of her reviewers as the "voiceless class"—she assumed as her burden.

* * *

Barbara Caine has argued recently for the "persistence" of an English feminist tradition within a range of writings, movements and individuals of the last two hundred years (*English* 1). Aligning the Langham Place Circle with "the emergence of the first women's movement in Britain," Caine finds evidence of the tradition that preceded it in Mary Wollstonecraft, Hannah More and Fanny Burney; women's active opposition to the

slave trade in the first half of the nineteenth century; the emergence of Owenite socialism and Unitarian radicalism in the 1820s, Caroline Norton's case against her abusive husband in the 1830s and the long struggle towards the Divorce Act of 1857; Harriet Martineau's press articles on political economy, abolitionism, and women's employment; the national census of 1851, which identified the extent of women's paid work and the imbalanced ratio of women to men in the general population that was seen as responsible for the "surplus" population of single women in England; and the evangelical writings on women's domestic mission by such figures as Sarah Ellis and Anne Richelieu Lamb.

The feminist genealogy Caine proposes here is persuasive; it covers the major events, movements, and individuals that would have "led" to the materialization of the Langham Place Circle. An important aspect of Caine's project, however, is to query the project of writing "conventional" chronological histories of feminism in the first place (*English* 9). I want to conclude this chapter with a consideration of recent debates about the ways in which feminist history writes its object through the notion of a feminist tradition, or lack of one. Caine herself asks "whether such a tradition does or ever has existed, and [whether] the extent to which a history such as the one I am seeking to write serves to enforce—or to invent—such a tradition. [T]he question of history itself, of the sense of history within feminism at various times, and of the importance of memory and the invocation or denial of a feminist past have become major issues" (*English* 5). Citing Wollstonecraft's public absence from feminism in the nineteenth-century, except in covert references, Caine points out that women have generally lacked the resources to maintain a feminist tradition, that feminist writers and theorists have never garnered the prestige that guarantees their citation by succeeding generations, and that the gendered

nature of the public sphere has stigmatized feminism so as to make a public feminist identity unattractive to most women. But, Caine asks, should this bother us? Caine argues that the discontinuity of feminist history is both hampering and beneficial; that the lack of a tradition means every new generation of feminists feels it is starting over, but that this same "lack of an institutionally based tradition has conferred great freedom on later feminists to break with the past, and thus not only to formulate new theories and programmes, but also to read and reconstruct their feminist past as they choose" (*English* 8). This argument registers current debates about feminism's history and historiography, institutionalization, and political efficacy.

Recent discussions within feminism about its own history-making projects document a sense of feminist "crisis" about its own institutional power, and its value as a socially-transformative project inside and outside the academy. The question of *who* will speak for and of feminism has broadened to include questions of *where* feminism articulates itself, and *when*. The crisis in feminism has been broadly characterized by Susan Stanford Friedman as a struggle between the "outer-directed," positivist impulse of rescuing feminist activity and writing from obscurity and producing new narratives of women's past experience, and the "inner-directed," subjectivist turn to language, textuality, and the problematization of history itself. I want to engage briefly with Friedman's argument before turning to a recent critique of Friedman by Robyn Wiegman, who draws attention to the "apocalyptic narratives" that characterize contemporary academic feminism's fears about the future. The conversation between Friedman and Wiegman opens a window onto the possibilities and limitations of "voice" as a metaphor

for feminism, and offers a way to theorize what it means to understand feminist history as a sequence of loosely-connected "moments."

In "Making History: Reflections on Feminism, Narrative, and Desire," Friedman's identification of two of the major frameworks for feminist historiography serves her argument that feminism needs both the outer and the inner-directed impulses of "history-making." Asserting that the current moment in feminist knowledge production is too often understood through a language of "winners" and "losers," where a sophisticated post-structuralist discourse is seen to be the province of the former, and a naïve faith in progress narratives that of the latter, Friedman rejects the notion that feminism must embrace either one or the other or risk its own undoing.

Wiegman's response to Friedman in "Feminism's Apocalyptic Futures" points to the "apocalyptic narratives" that characterize contemporary academic feminism's fears of failure in the present. As Wiegman demonstrates, Friedman rejects the apocalyptic when she calls for feminist compromise in "the subjectivism of subaltern experience . . . Friedman positions the writings of racialized women as an important impetus for the imperative toward voice and experience that grounds her critical negotiation of positivist and subjectivist epistemologies" (816). One of Wiegman's most compelling points about Friedman's argument is that it fuses "the subjective formation of feminists and the knowledge formation of academic feminism," creating a political demand for each generation of academic feminists to take up the "'wheel'" of a feminist consciousness defined as historically consistent and continuous, but which is in fact a product of a specific institutional moment when a "particular 'we' learned to think feminism as both a

personal and intellectual entity" (820). With this argument, Wiegman demonstrates the limitation of "voice" as an organizing category for feminist history:

> [I]n its requirement that academic feminism does justice to women by honouring feminist consciousness as the necessary counter to women's pain, ["Making History"] fixes a paradigm of subjective formation (as narrative and voice) as the content and political imperative of feminist knowledge. As Friedman puts it, 'we need not only to foster the existence of many voices engaged in the dual tasks of making feminist history but also to acknowledge in our own histories the possibilities of other voices (re)telling the stories we have told' (Friedman 41). Such an all-inclusive move actually subverts feminism's critical ability to extend its discursive power beyond the identity emplotments of female subjectivity and women's history, beyond the epistemological and methodological practices that first organized feminism's excursion into the university. In this regard, Friedman's rhetoric of negotiation, of feminisms in the plural, is a strategy that works specifically to contain the risk that academic feminism might construct a knowledge project that cannot be made coherent with the political demands of identity struggle in any range of national and transnational public spheres (820).

Thus, in Wiegman's analysis, "voice" is a metaphor whose use-value is specific to a particular type of feminist project centred around a historical set of political and emotional needs that may not be commensurate with a feminism of the present or future. The "non-identicality" of feminism across a temporal axis is part of Wiegman's overall argument in both "Feminism's Apocalyptic Futures" and another recent article, "Feminism, Institutionalism, and the Idiom of Failure." In both, she argues that the

temporal claims of feminism need to be interrupted in order to understand why "the present" always appears as a moment of feminism's failure. For some theorists, this failure is characterized by a nostalgic yearning for feminism's activist past and a dissatisfaction with feminism's "retreat" (into the ivory tower, into signification, etc.) while for others, feminism's crises over its own academic institutionalization are a distant early warning of its future demise and political inefficacy both within and outside the university. Wiegman contends, however, that such crises need to be embraced and carried through as feminism continually transforms its object and history in ways that cannot be predicted, thus arguing that there is "political value" in "feminism's inability to remain identical to itself" across its various moments (809).

I find Wiegman's argument about feminism's difference from itself productive because it delivers me from the temptation to draw a continuous line between historical and contemporary forms of feminist thought and writing. I do not want to make the argument, for example, that the feminist present is hampered if it knows little of the Langham Place Circle, mainly because I do not necessarily think that mid-Victorian feminism can "teach us" about where "we" are now. However, this is not to suggest that historical and contemporary feminisms can never speak to each other, only that they will do so in ways that are both unpredictable and historically-informed by feminism's transformation. For example, I find it interesting that Bessie Rayner Parkes publicly declares a sense of failure or fatigue with her own feminist present in 1865, but that she does so for reasons that are vastly different from those currently being cited in the academic feminist circles Wiegman is discussing.

Rather than demonstrating feminism's seamless continuity across time, Parkes's apocalyptic narrative, and her wariness of the category woman, complicate and complexify our sense of feminist history and "persistence." If I have found myself as a feminist reader and researcher identifying with Bessie Rayner Parkes and the struggles of the Langham Place Circle, it has not been in those instances that are supposed to hold my attention: the victories and achievements of various individual women, for example, or the passing of progressive legislation after a hard-fought campaign. Instead, it is the *EWJ*'s obvious frustration with anti-feminist opinion in the *Saturday Review*, or *Victoria Magazine*'s irritation with Eliza Lynn Linton's "Girl of the Period" columns that reminds me of my reading experience of Margaret Wente's and Leah Maclaren's columns in the *Globe and Mail*, for example. In a similar vein, Joan Scott has recently noted in a discussion of European women's oratory that "the contemporary feminist historian, herself grappling with the joys and anxieties of exercising a public voice, easily reads herself into these scenarios [of feminist public speech] even though good historical sense warns that important differences are being ignored" (296). Wiegman's suggestion is that if we require a continuous engagement with particular knowledge categories that appear as foundational, such as women's subjectivities and personal experience, we risk a flattening of feminist history in order to cohere with interests and needs that may not be shared across feminism's moments. On the other hand, as Joan Scott points out, feminist identification, (not identity), *is* a historically-continuous feature of feminism, one that is neither uniform nor predictable across time:

> [T]here is no denying the persistent fact of identification, for echoing through the twists and turns of history is the fantasy scenario: if woman has the right to mount

> to the scaffold, she has also the right to mount to the rostrum. It is in the transgression of the law, of historically and culturally specific norms, that one becomes a subject of the law, and it is the excitement at the possibility of entering this scenario of transgression and fulfillment that provides continuity for an otherwise discontinuous movement. (297)

Feminism's need to continually reproduce and reimagine itself is, I want to suggest, emblematized through the concept of the serial, in both its abstract and textual senses. The women's serial in particular is nothing if not a text that is radically concerned with a need to manage crises as it renews, reassesses, and reproduces "woman" as a historically-continuous category. Some have argued that the magazine form, like the soap opera, is a particularly "feminine" one in its cyclical organization and resistance to closure, claims to which charges of essentialism have been duly applied (Beetham 13-14). As Beetham reminds us, any celebration of the magazine as an inherently feminine and subversive form is somewhat dampened by the knowledge that the development of the periodical—traditionally controlled and staffed by men—coincided with the regulation of work and leisure according to the demands of industrial expansion in the nineteenth-century. The very first periodicals in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Europe were, according to Jürgen Habermas, essential elements of the early capitalist commercial system, and were quickly appropriated by state authorities to serve the interests of state administration (21-22). The *EWJ*'s appearance at the end of the 1850s, far from a spontaneous surge of feminist sentiment, was facilitated by the 1855 repeal of the stamp duties.

The material origins of the press and of individual newspapers, journals, and magazines mitigate against a reading of the serial form as essentially feminine. That said, it is worth repeating Shevelow's observation here that the modern version of the magazine as a multiply-authored, heterogenous form appeared at the same time as serial publications began to be conducted by women for other women. In addition, Beetham points out that "those qualities of fluidity and openness to the future which characterise serial forms do make them attractive to the powerless. . . . [T]his openness to the future also carries an implicit utopianism which makes it attractive to all those dissatisfied with the current social order" (14). Thus, I want to close this chapter with a series of provisional observations about how we might think of the magazine form as bearing some resemblance not to "woman" or to "feminism" as such, but to the *telling* of feminist history as one of continuity and interruption. That is, each "issue" or "run" of feminism echoes previous ones, but is not identical to them. Feminism's pragmatic side—its commitment to addressing the needs of the present—means that a sense of tradition, legacy, or timelessness often takes a back seat to timeliness and the current. A sense of improving resourcefulness seems to characterize feminism; one uses whatever tools are available in order to accomplish some purpose, thus giving rise to a constant emphasis on the future, on renewal, on making over. This making over is never complete, nor is completion expected—one assumes that the concerns and needs of the next generation will be different and will require new forms of address. Similarly, although the magazine's repetitiveness always seems like a form of forgetting, it might also be read as an acknowledgment that it cannot assume shared knowledge or "know-how" among its readers. Victorian feminists like Bessie Rayner Parkes and Anna Jameson believed

strongly in the power of repetition to advance a particular opinion over time, recognizing that "the same" story changed slightly with each new telling. Finally, each moment of feminism seems to see and to seek its own end, but as this end is constantly receding, we could compare this to the way in which any periodical publication knows it cannot last forever, even as it anticipates its "next issue."

Notes

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[1] The *EWJ* was a shilling monthly that ran for twelve volumes. In 1857 Parkes and Barbara Leigh Smith joined the staff of a women's periodical called the *Waverley Journal*, and, frustrated with its limitations, tried to purchase it. Parkes was offered the editorship of the *Waverley* in April 1857, but it only lasted for a few more numbers before folding. Plans to develop a new journal then began to take shape, with Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon (she had married in 1857) providing the capital for start-up costs, and Parkes and Matilda "Max" Hays assuming co-editorship of the *EWJ*. The first number appeared in March of 1858. The most complete account of the founding and financing of the *Journal* is Rendall, "'A Moral Engine'."

[2] See Broomfield and Mitchell; Burton; Caine; Frawley; Hamilton; Herstein; Hirsch; Jordan; Lacey; Levine; Nestor; Onslow; Rendall; Robinson; Sarad; and Stone.

[3] Hereafter all emphases are as they appear in the original unless otherwise noted.

[4] One way of considering the term "public"—and its difference from parallel social categories like "community"—is that "public" is an abstraction that encompasses more individuals than it can name; "[w]hen we understand images and texts as public, we do not gesture to a statistically measurable series of others. We make a necessarily imaginary reference to the public *as opposed to* other individuals. . . . So it is only meaningful to speak of public discourse where it is understood as the discourse of a public rather than as an expansive dialogue among separate persons" (Warner 379). See also Berlant and Warner, 361-362. Thus, I use the term public feminism to mean a feminism that circulates as an abstract concept beyond the control of a limited group of individuals, and can therefore become a subject of competing representations and reconstructions. I return to this discussion in Chapter Three.

[5] No full-length biography of Parkes has yet been written, although Pam Hirsch's recent biography of Bodichon supplies important biographical details on Parkes, her close friendship with Bodichon, and her editorship of the *EWJ*. Parkes's conversion to Catholicism in 1864 distanced her from her feminist colleagues, along with what were regarded as her increasingly conservative views on the issue of married women's work outside the home. There had been quarrels and schisms among the Langham Place workers from the early 1860s onwards, as well as a couple of public scandals involving members of the organization that threatened to bring notoriety to the group (See Chapter

Three, notes 21 and 22, and Chapter Four, note 27.) Parkes continued to edit and write after the *EWJ* officially folded in 1864. She married Louis Belloc in 1867, after which she lived mostly in France and retired from public life.

[6] Privately, Parkes wrote the following to Bodichon in 1863. "I am induced by all I see more and more to believe that cohesion in outward work is next to impossible unless there be the inward binding of a common religious principle. I can work with Unitarians, because tho' I am not dogmatically a Unitarian, I have been trained in and still retain in a great measure their view of life and its duties. And I could work [with] the Catholics because of my intellectual sympathy with their doctrines, and the definiteness of their plans. But I confess that when I get hold of minds which have been trained (or not trained) in the Church of England, I don't know how to deal with them" (BRP V 121/3).

[7] Founded by Unitarian Elizabeth Reid, Bedford College was non-sectarian and non-residential, and was intended for the further education of middle-class women. Primarily a teachers' college, Bedford also catered to women who wanted to study part-time in a particular field; Barbara Leigh Smith studied art there in 1849. Queen's College, founded in 1848 by Frederick Maurice, was an equivalent institution intended for training governesses, and was affiliated with King's College. See Sutherland (qtd. in Hirsch, 332).

[8] Barbara Leigh Smith's 1854 pamphlet, *A Brief Summary, in Plain Language, of the Most Important Laws Concerning Women* had helped draw attention to the wrongs women suffered under the common law of coverture, the doctrine that subsumed a wife's legal personality in that of her husband's. Before the gradual dismantling of this doctrine in the Married Women's Property Acts of 1870 and 1882, coverture ensured that a husband assumed the legal rights to his wife's property upon marriage, and to any income she acquired thereafter. A wife could not sue or be sued, could not draw up her own will, and could not sign contracts without her husband's involvement. The Married Women's Property Committee and Married Women's Property Bill of 1857 "endorsed the equitable concept of separate estates" (Shanley 35). It is worth noting here, as well, that although the 1857 property bill did not pass, Parliament did pass a new Divorce Act in 1857, which was regarded as a concession to the demand for reform to the married women's property laws. Parliamentary discussions of the property laws and the divorce laws were at first regarded independently, but were yoked together in 1856 when attention was drawn to the lack of protection for women who obtained an ecclesiastical separation from their husband—a costly and cumbersome form of marital dissolution of which few availed themselves. The Divorce Act of 1857 was only a partial victory for feminists, since it offered protection of a wife's earnings and property only in the case of a husband's desertion of the marriage. For recent discussions of nineteenth-century marriage laws and feminist responses to them, see Shanley; Hirsch.

[9] Although Parkes does not mention them in "A Review of the Last Six Years," the Ladies Sanitary Association and the Workhouse Visiting Society were also organizations affiliated with Langham Place and the SSA.

[10] Davies also briefly assumed the editorship of the *EWJ* near the end of its run.

[11] Parkes's *Essays On Women's Work*, for example, contains a chapter entitled "The Changes of Eighty Years," which lifts content from "A Review of the Last Six Years" directly out of the *EWJ*, but contextualizes that discussion within a wider narrative that includes Rousseau's theories of education, and figures such as Madame Roland and

Madame de Stael, Jane Austen and Maria Edgeworth, Becky Sharpe and Jane Eyre. *Remarks on the Education of Girls* refers to George Sand and to "some excellent remarks" in Mary Wolstonecroft's [sic] *Vindication* (9).

[12] A full examination of the historical emergence of the term "feminism" and the debate on whether to use it anachronistically is provided in Offen.

[13] See, for example, Caine on Emily Davies, Frances Power Cobbe, Josephine Butler and Millicent Garrett Fawcett in *Victorian Feminists*; Hirsch on Barabara Leigh Smith Bodichon; and Diamond on Maria Rye.

[14] See, for example, Jordan on feminism and women's employment; Shanley on feminism and marriage law; Holton and Purvis and Holton on suffrage.

[15] See Rendall's *Origins of Modern Feminism 1780-1860*; Levine's *Victorian Feminism 1850-1900*; Caine's *English Feminism 1780-1980.*

[16] See Burton; Cherry; Grewal; Kranidis; McClintock; and Sharpe.

[17] See Helen Rogers' *Women and the People* on women's and feminists' interventions in Radical and Chartist politics and Kathryn Gleadle's *The Early Feminists* on Radical Unitarianism and the emergence of the female suffrage argument in that tradition. See also Barbara Taylor's foundational *Eve and the New Jerusalem* for an account of the feminist socialist movements of the 1820s and 30s; Clare Midgley's *Women Against Slavery* for accounts of the intersection of feminist and emancipationist discourses within the British anti-slavery campaigns; F.K. Prochaska's study of middle-class philanthropic organizations as a training ground for women's public authority. Gary Kelly's *Women, Writing, and Revolution 1790-1827* explores women writers' use and construction of the figure of the domestic woman and the cult of sensibility in their interventions in public, political, and professional spheres.

[18] See Susan Hamilton's *Criminals, Idiots, Women and Minors,* Carolyn Nelson's *New Woman Reader*, Anne Varty's *Eve's Century,* and Mitchell and Broomfield's *Prose by Victorian Women.* These contain the full texts of writing by women on women, much of it culled from the feminist and established periodical press. Earlier anthologies such as Patricia Hollis's *Women in Public* and Bauer and Ritt's *Free and Enobled* excerpt original source material.

[19] See the Introduction and Chapter 1 of Laurel Brake's *Subjugated Knowledges* for a succinct overview of a methodological approach to Victorian journals that accounts for them as highly influential forms of literary and ideological production. Following D.F. Mackenzie, Brake aligns her work with "the sociology of texts" (xi). For me, one of Brake's most salient points is that Victorian "criticism is shaped to a greater or lesser extent by the specific periodical in which it appeared, and is informed by the critical debates in other periodicals of the day" (8). Brake's claim supports my interest in tracking the appearance of particular pieces of writing in space and time; articles that appear in journals as single arguments are often interventions in larger debates going on outside the space of the journal, and often appear at strategic moments. Every separate feature of any single issue of a magazine is thus the result of an editorial decision, and of a convergence of material and ideological resources that must inform our readings of particular pieces of writing.

[20] See North.

[21] See Tromp et al., eds.

[22] See Ballaster et al.; Sheridan.

[23] The first periodical aimed specifically at a female audience was the *Visiter* (1721), while the *Female Spectator*, (1744), edited by Eliza Haywood and *Old Maid* (1755), edited by Frances Brooke were the first magazines conducted by women for a female audience.

Chapter One

Feminism, Mental Difference, and Debates on Scientific Method

> Never was there a more perplexed question, or one perhaps more apparently hopeless; yet turn and discuss it as we may, theorise as we will, one fact stands immovable as the rock of Gibraltar—the preponderance of females over males in the population of Great Britain, as shown by the census of 1851; of whom upwards of two millions, above the age of twenty, are engaged in non-domestic industry on their own accounts! ("Notices" 203)

Since many Victorian feminists were quick to repudiate "abstract notions" and "philosophical controversy" in their writings on women, and given the plethora of campaigns in the 1850s and 60s focused on specific goals, it is unsurprising that mid-Victorian feminism has come to be known mainly for its practical activism on women's social, political, legal, and economic needs/rights. The historical documents of mid-Victorian feminism would seem to lend themselves to this type of interpretation as well—the *Englishwoman's Journal*, the *Transactions* of the *National Association for the Promotion of Social Science*, and the writings of women including Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon, Bessie Rayner Parkes, Anna Jameson, Emily Davies, Lydia Becker, Emily Faithfull, Mary Carpenter, Louisa Twining, and Elizabeth Blackwell are goldmines of information on the reform campaigns and networks of activity from the mid 1850s onwards. With titles like "A Year's Experience in Women's Work," "Second Annual Report of the Ladies' Sanitary Association," and "A Brief Summary of the Most Important Laws Concerning Women," it seems safe to assume that the feminist writing of this period eschews abstraction and theory in favour of the concrete and the factual. However, as I show in this chapter and throughout this study, feminist journalism and public addresses of this period rely on a complex of metaphors and rhetorical styles worth

exploring as one might do with more "literary" or abstract forms of expression, and are underwritten by contemporary theories of social wealth, scientific knowledge, gender difference and moral law.

Our view of this moment in feminism as practically- rather than theoretically-oriented is an effect of the elaboration of scientific method in the human and natural sciences in the early decades of the nineteenth century, the attempts to separate and define theory and practice as "separate stages of a single process"[1] and concomitant debates on knowledge, expertise, and the efficacy of the public intellectual, debates whose terms were anything but gender-neutral. Another way of putting this would be with a question: if mid-Victorian feminism, epitomized by the work and writings of the Langham Place Circle, tended to claim a practical orientation for itself, what was the political, intellectual, and cultural context informing such a claim?

The equation of theory with "mere talk" and practice with action informed attitudes towards public intellectual culture, such that talkers came to be seen as separate from doers. In 1860, the American feminist speaker Ernestine Potowski Rose addressed the effects of the dichotomy between thought and speech on feminist public utterance with the following: "We have often been asked, 'What is the use of [Woman's Rights] Conventions? Why talk? Why not go to work?' Just as if the thought did not precede the act!" (qtd. in Campbell 49). In England, critics of feminism used the speech versus work dichotomy to deride women who adopted public voices deemed masculine, whereas women who seemed to act in silence were praised for "getting the job done" without seeking a dangerous, self-serving publicity. Twentieth-century feminist scholarship, on the other hand, has tended to represent mid-Victorian feminism as an almost exclusively

practice-oriented movement that had little time or luxury for talk or theory. As Mary Maynard has noted, Victorian feminists "appear as *doing* rather than as developing ideas," in much recent feminist research in the period. "They are busy organizing meetings, drafting the odd piece of propaganda, drawing up petitions, and, of course, campaigning. They are not often shown to have much of a coherent view of women's position *as women*. The whole image constructed of their politics is that it is one directed at achieving reforms, not at trying to understand or explain why, as women, such reforms needed to be sought in the first place" (Maynard 225). Although Maynard rightly wants to suggest that feminist action in this period was theoretically-informed, and driven by shifting ideas about femininity and masculinity, citizenship, and the family, the opposition she relies on between practice and theory means that she overlooks one crucial aspiration of the feminists of Langham Place: that they wanted to present a public feminist identity that would appear as active, or as "doing," but that they did not necessarily regard talking as its opposite. The reasons for this, I argue, can be found in debates about knowledge production and scientific method, about inductive and deductive thinking, and in broadly-accepted stereotypes about women's mental nature.

Mid-Victorian feminism's reputation as activist in its approach is based on the level and success of the "equal-rights" campaigning in which women were involved. In addition, the codes of feminine propriety feminists followed in this period make mid-Victorian feminism seem more "moderate" in form, argument, and tactic than its socialist predecessors or its New Woman inheritors in the latter decades of the century. Separate spheres ideology has been one of the most productive areas to date for understanding the theoretical underpinnings of individual women's approach to social and political issues,

as well as definitions of woman and femininity.[2] Much of the recent scholarship on the ideology of separate spheres has tracked Victorian feminists' simultaneous complicity with and resistance to this ideology that was at the heart of their thinking and writing about women. While much feminist argument at mid-century questioned the restriction of women to the sphere of married home life, many feminists at this stage continued to uphold the domestic woman as a civilizing figure, marriage as women's first goal, and domestic duty as her highest priority. Issues related to marriage—whether married women should be granted the suffrage, for example—tended to divide feminist opinion.

If mid-Victorian feminism now appears to us as moderate, pragmatic, and activist, what exactly do we mean by these designations? My purpose here is not to call them into question so much as to explore the political, intellectual, and rhetorical contexts informing the public intellectual demeanour of mid-Victorian feminist argument. I do so by exploring the terms of the debates about femininity that women took up and transformed through their journalism in the 1850s and 60s. Women as doers rather than thinkers—or our sense of them as such—has roots in a set of ideas about women's nature that were so familiar by mid-century that they had become banal: conjectures about women's "natural" intellectual and mental capabilities, most often imagined as their innate ability to intuit rather than reason. Given that women were routinely figured as inherently and rightfully inferior to—or at best different from—men in mental ability, we need to ask how feminists contested this commonplace, and therefore claimed a space for a feminist public intellectual critique that would at least be taken seriously, if not necessarily embraced by majority opinion?

Mid-century feminism relied on two disciplinary and discursive formations in its challenge to the mental inferiority of women: political economy and social science. These two loosely-connected "disciplines" were not the only ones through which a public intellectual feminism emerged, nor was the Langham Place Circle the only location of feminist intellectual activity in the mid-nineteenth century. Rather, it is clear from the writings of this group of "reform ladies" and their detractors at mid-century that political economy and social science were two of the grounds on which models of femininity would be restructured to include increasingly secular, public, professional forms of authority for women. That political economy was regarded as an almost exclusively masculine domain of knowledge production whose prestige and authority were fairly established by mid-century, while the looser term "social science" was still regarded with some suspicion, makes these two domains particularly interesting to compare in a discussion of the social theories informing the context of Victorian feminist argument. Women's appropriation of the language, assumptions, and aspirations of these discourses had twin effects: a strategic complicity with entrenched assumptions about gender, class, and nation that would establish a middle-class feminist counterpublic as non-threatening, and an "exposure" effect that would claim to represent in precise, even "scientific", detail, the truth and breadth of women's lived experience, both within and outside of marriage.

Both political economy and social science offered influential, practically-oriented methodologies for explaining the condition of women, authorizing feminists' description of social problems as truthful and offering solutions for their amelioration. But feminists' appropriation of these discourses had a subjective content as well, in that the

methodologies associated with political economy and social science were regarded as properties of an intellect that was in a constant state of redefinition as "masculine." In taking up and promoting the methodologies of the new sciences of society in their writing, feminists set out to embody particular mental and intellectual characteristics that had been appropriated as male, thereby offering a direct challenge to entrenched attitudes about "the female mind," which was often regarded as static, inactive, and charmingly idle.

Women and the "Fact"

By the 1850s, feminist writers like Bessie Rayner Parkes and Barbara Leigh Smith could draw on the acknowledged cultural authority of Harriet Martineau and Jane Marcet in order to demonstrate and call for women's familiarity with the lessons of the production and distribution of social wealth offered through political economy. In her 1854 pamphlet *Remarks on the Education of Girls*,[3] Parkes outlined three reasons why political economy was important for women. She argued that because women were increasingly expected to relieve social problems, especially those related to the poor, women's moral action and influence would benefit from a knowledge of the laws political economy had already discovered about the nature and effects of urban poverty. Secondly, Parkes argued that the study of political economy was an end in itself, in that it would serve to strengthen women's "mental powers": "the study of Social and Political Economy also requires close attention, a power of perceiving and weighing evidence, and a capacity for abiding by previous steps of induction without the necessity of constant recurrence" (16). Here Parkes was not only identifying the relevance of political economy

to social phenomena, but was also making an argument for what women were capable of learning. Political economy seemed to offer a particular form of mental training and discipline that not only had no place in existing curricula for girls at the time, but was actually seen as inherently beyond their mental capability, for reasons I outline below. Thirdly, however, Parkes added that this mental training would have a direct applicability to women's domestic experience. "And while in Political Economy the processes of reasoning required are of equal importance for mental training, they have the advantage of being such as are in daily requisition in common life" (16). All three of Parkes's arguments for the study of political economy would be reiterated in the *English Woman's Journal* from time to time, although it was the third of these that would be the most prominent.

Political economy was neither a unified field nor a single doctrine, but in its broadest sense had come to be known as the "science" of the production of wealth, whose theorists and practitioners, beginning with Adam Smith's 1776 *Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, drew on history, politics, and statistics in their exposition of the "laws" of the production and distribution of capital.[4] For feminists at mid-century, the most influential theorist of political economy was John Stuart Mill, whose *Principles of Political Economy* (1848) had made an argument for both women's right to work and the reform of repressive legislation through the notion of *laissez-faire* (Caine, "Feminism", 29).[5] Mill and other political theorists including Henry Fawcett reasoned that the restrictions on women's employment led to the "overstocking" of the few employments to which they were admitted, and to the feminization of poverty (Caine, "Feminism", 30). Arguing that the lack of employment opportunities for middle-

class women was a "waste" of social and human resources, Mill concluded that by increasing women's work and granting them their rights to citizenship, greater wealth would be created, leading to the overall improvement and progress of society. His arguments were distilled again and again in the pages of the *EWJ* a decade later. One political economist quoted in the *Journal* framed the issue in the following way:

> If an educated woman be fitted for something better, it is folly and cruelty not to give her an opportunity to employ herself at it, if possible. It is folly, because the wealth of the community is diminished by the loss resulting from the waste of her faculties misapplied; it is cruelty to condemn her to the drudgery of prædial servitude, which, with her original associations, she can scarcely be supposed to do otherwise than detest. . . . Many women who are now supported at the expense of others, or on private property of their own, would, if a pleasant, profitable or honourable career were open to them, embark in it joyfully, instead of passing their lives, as at present they do, in a process as nearly allied as possible to vegetation. Thus would the gross wealth of the country receive a clear addition to its bulk, by an amount exactly corresponding to the produce of this new fund of labour." ("Middle-Class Female" 83-84)

The preceding quotation captures the essence of a political economic feminist argument on women's employment at mid-century, but I want to focus attention here on the twinning of "folly" and "cruelty" in the first two sentences. I read "folly and cruelty"—a phrase used by more than one writer in this connection—as a sign that the case for women's employment still needed to be made by appealing to two sets of explanations, one "rational", the other "emotional", one relying on the science of wealth

and an abstraction like "the community," the other more familiar one on the personal plight of the "condemned" individual woman. Writers in the *EWJ* routinely combined these two explanations, and argued along with Mill that it was the tyranny of male "custom" and "prejudice" that kept middle-class women out of the labour market. But there was a third figure in this conceptualization: the idle woman, whose leisure was figured as the material sign of her father's or husband's prosperity. The representation of the "vegetative" middle-class woman as a drag on society's wealth and progress was a dominant one in the *EWJ*, and will be discussed in the following chapter.

If Mill's political economic theory supplied an important source of authority for the *EWJ*'s promotion of women's work, it was, however, Harriet Martineau's 1859 article, "Female Industry" for the *Edinburgh Review* that more fully reflected the *EWJ*'s commitment to exposing the "truth" of women's lived experience and its relation to the production and management of national resources. Martineau's article reviewed a series of related publications, including the results of the 1851 census, the reports of the Governess's Benevolent Institution, Bodichon's 1857 *Women and Work*, and a number of publications on women's education and training. "Female Industry" argued that one of the problems in women's paid work was that it was largely unknown and unseen by the casual observer: earning one's bread in the modern sense was a creation of middle-class society. . . . "Women have been more and more extensively involved in the thing, especially during the last half-century; but the name is new and strange; and the extent to which they work for a maintenance is a truth known scarcely to one in ten thousand of us It is as well to know it; and timely attention to the fact is the best way of knowing it to practical purpose" (30). Martineau argued further that the language and rhetoric

associated with womanhood was out of step with the "facts" revealed by the census: that women's independent labour outside the home was rising at a greater rate than the increase in the female population overall (34). She pointed out that society was organized *as if* women were supported by the male members of their household, when it was clear that more women than ever were involved in the "business of life", and that their labour was not being recognized for its "quality, and its place in the market, irrespective of the status of the worker" (33).

In 1860, Emily Faithfull told the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science that Martineau's article "had contained a fuller account of the actual state of female industry in this country than perhaps had ever been previously brought before the notice of the public" (Faithfull 121).[6] As early as May of 1859, the *EWJ* was endorsing the article, and praising the writer for his "thorough" and "critical" analysis, premised on "facts and statistics" ("Notices" 1859, vol. 3, 201). In interpreting the results of the census together with several other sympathetic publications on women's work and education, "Female Industry" confirmed the *EWJ*'s message with a set of facts presented in a prestigious quarterly that had a long- established authority in the field of political economy (Newton 4).

Martineau's representation of women's work was valuable to the *EWJ* for its appearance of disinterested neutrality, achieved in part through its citation of the census returns, and its appearance in a venerable quarterly review. Martineau herself drew attention to the need for numbers early in the article with the following observation:

> Wearied as some of us are with the incessant repetition of the dreary story of spirit-broken governesses and starving needlewomen, we rarely obtain a glimpse

> of the full breadth of the area of female labour in Great Britain; and it requires the publication of the "Results of the Census," or some such exhibition of hard facts, to make us understand and feel that the conditions of female life have sustained as much alteration as the fortunes of other classes by the progress of civilization. Sooner or later it must become known, in a more practical way than by the figures of the census returns, that a very large proportion of the women of England earn their own bread; and there is no saying how much good may be done, and how much misery may be saved, by a timely recognition of this simple truth. (29-30)

Martineau's language is interesting here for its privileging of "hard facts" over "dreary stories," and its implication that popular narratives of women's suffering were limited in their ability to expose and describe the "full breadth" of women's actual labour. The ubiquity of the figures of the distressed governess and impoverished needlewoman had only served to enervate readers' sympathies, while the figures of the census would make us "understand *and* feel" the weight—and more importantly the extent—of the problem, which would in turn motivate a practically-motivated recognition of the "simple truth." Indeed, Martineau's call for a practical knowledge of "the truth"—here embodied as a statistical "fact"—now reads as prophetic, since it was this article that was later cited as spurring the creation of one of Langham Place's daughter organizations—the Society for Promoting the Employment of Women (Hamilton ed., 72).

Martineau's distinction between narratives and facts, or rhetoric and numbers—and the uses to which both could be put—was not new. In *A History of the Modern Fact*, Mary Poovey describes how statisticians of the 1830s began to oppose statistical representation to rhetoric in order to shore up statistical knowledge as authoritative

because disinterested, dispassionate, and value-neutral. This move was effected in part through debates about the best way of representing the "laws" sought by political economy and other exact and abstract sciences (*History* 314). Champions of statistics argued that if long columns of numbers looked "dry and dull" in comparison with personal testimony and inflamed rhetoric that usually passed for "experience", at least statistics had the advantage of being more reflective of the actual state of things, because it could encompass and extrapolate from a larger number of single instances. As the decade wore on, "numbers continued to accumulate cultural value, precisely because their dullness seemed to be a guarantee against the undue embellishment associated with fiction, hyperbole, and rhetoric" (Poovey, *History,* 313). As statistics continued to accrue authority, the "problem of induction" Poovey identifies, one that had been at the heart of much epistemological controversy, was set aside. That is, the problem of "how one could reason from observed particulars to final causes or from observed particulars to general laws" (Poovey, *History,* 325)—a question that had plagued philosophers since at least the seventeenth century—was bracketed when statisticians aligned numerical knowledge with fact, objectivity, action, and observation, and rhetoric with "mere" conjecture, theory, speculation, talk, and opinion. Critics of statistics, however, were quick to point out that discrete particulars presented as "facts" masked the interest that governed their observation and collection. One critic writing in the *London and Westminster Review* argued that "'[o]pinion is what is most wanted where truth is the object, it is the parent and precursor of truth . . . the exclusion of opinions is the exclusion of the only guides which can conduct researches to any useful end'" (Poovey, *History*, 316). Many feminists aimed for a middle course between fact- and opinion-based knowledges in their

representation of women, a strategic move that linked their argument with the progressive languages and methodologies of social ameliorism, and established discourses like moral philosophy, rooted in notions of "feeling" and "value."

The tension Poovey discusses between the general and the specific in the elaboration of method in the physical and social sciences, and between deductive and inductive reasoning, had an important effect on the knowledge about women that Martineau and other feminists were trying to create and embody in the 1850s and 60s. If the opposition Martineau voiced between rhetoric and numbers was not new in 1859, her association of women with "the social fact" was. Up to this point, women had neither been the subject of "fact" nor its practitioners. As one critic writing in the *Quarterly Review* put it, "[f]or 'facts,' we need scarcely say, we retain an unfeigned respect . . . but we think that the faculty of the woman's mind consists rather in refracting, than in reflecting the truth—and that one of her most fascinating powers is that of subduing mere facts by feelings, and putting the hard realities and formal rules of life in a charmingly wrong point of view" ([Kinglake] 114). By 1859, feminists' appropriation of "facts" had already becoming the subject of open hostility and ridicule in the established press, as an article called "A Fear for the Future" in *Fraser's Magazine* makes clear:

> As for Romance, it has had its day. Young women, in whose fresh untutored minds and generous hearts it had known from time immemorial its sure stronghold and sanctuary, have gone over in a body to the enemy, and now range themselves under the brown banner of Matter of Fact, Stern Reality, and Common Sense. . . . They study McCulloch and Adam Smith, and light the candles directly it is too dusk to read or write. Moreover, they have grown gregarious in their

> habits; they incline towards Committees, and take pleasure in Associations. They know too much about sanitary laws, and pay too much attention to them . . . I suppose the influence on the statistics of female health under this new *regime* must be considerable. All very well; but when I was a young man the notion of statistics in connexion with a woman would have appeared to me almost profanely impertinent ("Fear", 245-246).

Appearing only two months prior to Martineau's "Female Industry" for the *Edinburgh,* the writer's fears would surely have been reinforced by her argument. Thus, for feminists, it was not simply what the new social facts revealed "about" women that was important, but women's actual collection and presentation of these facts that constituted an issue for feminist intellectuals, who faced the double task of exposing and "proving" the nature and extent of women's suffering—the work of an activist politics—and wielding the evidence of this suffering with authority.

The question of women's knowledge was always mediated through knowledge about women, as Martineau, Parkes, Jameson, and Bodichon implicitly understood. In order to alter the situation of women, women needed to collect and present the evidence of women's experience in a way that would be appealing to an increasingly powerful appetite for the "social fact" upon which to base changes in public policy. Hence, the drawing up of a parliamentary petition and the collection of supporting signatures, the gathering of subscriptions for a new college or house of refuge, the day-to-day administration of such an institution based on sound moral and economic principles, and the gathering and interpretation of pertinent statistics and case histories in order to support and prove the rightness of one's argument became the substance of feminist

practice in the period, and appeared in women's representation of feminist activity. None of this appears to us as the radical series of manoeuvres it actually was. Because women were regarded as mentally incapable of perceiving ordinary details as "fact," or of organizing and formulating arguments and judgments based on the collection of facts into evidence, or reasoning from particular facts to general truths (inductive thinking), feminists' determination to present an active, inductively-based program of social reform offered a direct challenge to received notions of the intellectual and mental habits of women. As their appreciation for Martineau's and Mill's political economic arguments anticipated, Langham Place feminists began employing forms of reasoning, argument, and persuasion in their writing that would earlier have been regarded as anathema to women's mental nature.

Feminist Facts

If women seemed preternaturally incapable of perceiving, collecting, and organizing the facts on which social policy would be based—if they were, in effect, outside "fact" itself—then it followed that women's education should not be overly concerned with the futile task of attempting to cultivate these qualities in women. Nevertheless, as I indicated at the outset of this chapter, mid-century feminists like Parkes and Martineau, along with Boucherett, Bodichon, Cobbe, and Becker began to "factualize" the experiences of women by exposing in their writing and speech the conditions of their working lives through an appropriation of the language and methods of the sciences of society. Furthermore, as I discuss in the next chapter, the methodologies belonging to a broadly-conceived political economy and social science

were everywhere encouraged in feminist journals like the *EWJ* and the *Englishwoman's Review*, less through an appeal to readers to familiarize themselves with Adam Smith and John Stuart Mill (although they were not discouraged from this), but by showing how careful observation, the collection of particulars, and a knowledge of causal relationships were essential to a reformed methodology of daily and domestic life.

For their part, mid-century feminists like Anna Jameson and contributors to the *EWJ* began to attack the hollowness of women's moral authority, calling for the coupling of women's moral influence—a term coming under increasing scrutiny—with an actual social efficacy based on knowledge and reason over feeling. As one writer in the *EWJ* put it,

> To act from impulse or only from instinct will no longer suit the times; and if women are now to be considered of more importance to society than heretofore, they must value themselves, and to be really of value, they must reason and perform their tasks with method. They must no longer be content to look on effort as a temporary expediency, no longer regard the acquirement of knowledge as a hard necessity bringing no reward with it. To work is not to be a drudge; to learn is not to be a mere tasked schoolgirl; the highest motives should make women acquire knowledge, as well as practise philanthropy and industry." (A.R.L., "Organization" 334)

As the next chapter will make clear, the 1850s and 60s saw many attempts by male and female writers to discipline women's natural sympathy with a methodology loosely based on social scientific principles of inquiry. In an 1861 article on women's participation in the SSA, Frances Power Cobbe entered the debate on induction and deduction to argue

that women's contribution to the amelioration of social ills would best be served by a methodology which combined both inductive and deductive forms of reasoning. As Cobbe reasoned,

> Intuition teaches me the axiom that I must love my neighbour, and reflection will deduce the proposition that I must relieve the wants of the poor to the best of my ability. But no deductive science of morals can teach me what are the wants of John Styles, nor whether he will be best relieved by alms or employment. Where deductive science stops the inductive one must meet it, and, by a process which modern logicians have named traduction, we pass from one order of reasoning to another, and complete a science of ethics practically applicable to every detail of life." ("Social" 83)

Thus, as Eileen Janes Yeo writes, Cobbe advocated for women "what could be called an intuitive-inductive method", and one which many feminists seemed implicitly to practice. The laws of the universe could be apprehended by listening to the heart, but the best way of administering these laws was through the morally-based observation and collection of material particulars.

One of the strategies feminists used to contest the relegation of women to the role of moral figurehead was to take up the language and methods of the sciences of society, thereby "proving" that women could participate in discovering the social laws governing the relationship between women and the wealth and happiness of society. The document that facilitated this move more than any other was the 1851 census, which had helped reveal what became one of the core feminist "facts" of the next several decades: women outnumbered men in the overall population count, creating a "surplus" of middle-class

women who could not hope to marry, and were forced to seek work in a limited number of employment fields. The deplorable working conditions and low wages of the governess and the dressmaker—the two most acceptable employments for middle-class women—resulted from the "overcrowding" of these professions, and the imbalance between labour supply and demand. Importantly, feminists led by Parkes, Bodichon, and Boucherett deduced from the census results that barriers to women's employment in male-dominated fields were responsible for women's suffering. That is, the surplus population of women was not the *reason* for overcrowded occupations; these numbers were instead a symptom of a deeper problem—the "prejudice" and "custom" restricting women from most forms of remunerative work.

Critics responded by arguing that when feminists advocated women's admission to "men's" employments, they practiced a faulty political economy; employment was a "fixed quantity", according to one observer for the *Saturday Review*, and the influx of women into male occupations would only serve to reduce men's wages, since, naturally, women would then swell these occupations since they could be hired by employers at a lower wage. The *EWJ* declared in response that no political economist had ever asserted that the amount of employment was fixed. Furthermore, if a decrease in wages ensued from the influx of more workers into the labour market, the long term result was an increase in production, a rise in profits, an increased accumulation of capital, and job creation for all.[7]

Parkes "went public" with a political economic analysis in 1859 in Bradford at the meeting of the SSA.[8] In "The Market for Educated Female Labour", co-written by Bodichon, Parkes pointed out that although middle-class women accounted for a small

percentage of the overall population of women in paid employment, the wrongs against them were disproportionately severe. Calling the support of "educated" daughters by the male members of their households a "theory" and a "hypothesis," Parkes stated emphatically: "Educated women must work." In order to support this assertion, and to illustrate the extent of the suffering involved, Parkes included ten short case study descriptions of destitute educated women drawn from the reports of the Governess's Benevolent Institution, concluding, "Here you see are ten cases of most deplorable destitution, arising from the most ordinary causes" (148). The ordinariness of the details and the recognition factor of these "tales" were calculated to arouse the moral feeling of Parkes's listeners. Citing the methods of natural science, in which "the discover of great laws is constantly inaugurated by minute observation of particular facts," Parkes next proceeded to an analysis of a single family—"the type of many thousands" (149). The lesson to be drawn from the experience of a typical family, in which a father made no pecuniary investment in his daughter's future on the speculation that she would marry was "plausible but fearful logic" (150). Parkes weighed financial investment against material and emotional cost when she estimated that the amount a daughter suffered because of her father's faulty speculation about her future outweighed the amount of the initial investment, concluding that a daughter's only capital was a *theory* or an *expectation* based on an outmoded ideal of femininity.

Parkes extended her argument even further in an article for the *EWJ* later in 1859. In "What Can Educated Women Do?" Parkes returned to the subject of men's empty investments in their daughters' futures in order to discuss the political economy of English marriage. In the first place, middle-class daughters were unnaturally forced into

non-reproductive, socially-wasteful idleness by fathers who refused to entrust them with the necessary capital to go into business for themselves if they could not or did not marry (295). Using the language and method of social arithmetic, Parkes reasoned that "if a girl were taught how to make capital reproductive, instead of merely how to live upon its *interest*, a much less sum would suffice her; and the father who gave or left her a thousand pounds, would bestow upon her a benefit of which he could not calculate the results, instead of a miserable pittance of thirty or at most fifty pounds *per annum*" (292). Parkes cited as preferable the French example of the dowry system, in which fathers allotted a portion of money to their daughters upon their marriage, "in order that she may conduct that domestic business of household economy in the marriage life on terms of mutual respect and obligation" (292). Parkes knew her "English readers will shrink from thus regarding marriage as a commercial firm", but, Parkes asked, hadn't the Christian theory of marital union already become inextricably linked with a political economy which assumed husbands' financial provision for their wives? "Therefore I would ask all my readers to settle this question quite fairly in their own minds. Is marriage a business relation, or is it not a business relation; or is it, as most people in the depth of their hearts consider it, a judicious mixture of the two?" (293). With this analysis, Parkes attacked the political and social economy of middle-class marriage, bringing the experience of women within the terms of sciences whose intelligibility depended on a notion of the domestic/private sphere of married life as its outside.

By the early 1860s, Langham Place feminist Jessie Boucherett could assert with confidence that the question of whether women suffered as a result of their restriction from most employments was no longer a question but a fact. Significantly, when

Boucherett made this remark she proceeded by outlining the inductive process by which this generalization had been constructed: the census numbers; Martineau's interpretation of them in "Female Industry"; narrative accounts of women's suffering in magazines, newspapers, novels, and poetry; the creation of public feeling as a result of the circulation of both stories and numbers; and, finally, the blessing of the *Times*, who had endorsed the arguments of Parkes's "Market for Educated Female Labour." The power of the *Times* to confer meaning and legitimacy, to render mere opinion into established fact, is indicated by Boucherett's declaration that, with the approbation of the *Times*, "the point, therefore, may be considered as decided" ([Boucherett] 362). From this generalization, Boucherett next "descended" to a discussion of the particular barriers or obstacles to women's employment, which she itemized as the overcrowding of particular employments, the impression that women's gentility would disappear through remunerative employment, the impression of women's mental inferiority, and inferior practical instruction. Boucherett paused on the last of these to complain that women's education was "invariably general." But the chief obstacle to women's employment, regardless of the type of work under discussion, was "the impression that their employment would throw men out of work" (372). Boucherett's answer to this problem was in the way families trained sons and daughters for work; instead of training all its sons to the same work and its daughters to idleness, families should train daughters and sons to several professions within one family: one son and one daughter to the profession of clerk, one son to that of carpenter, one daughter to a dressmaker, etc., creating a larger, more diverse work force.

"Why is women's work ill-paid?" asked the *EWJ* in its first volume. "Here lies the whole question. There are such things as custom" (Parkes, "Reviewer" 203). As Ellen

Jordan has argued, Langham Place did not succeed so much in finding employment for individual women as it did in creating an atmosphere of change and awareness about the ideologies that worked to restrict women from seeking or obtaining most forms of remunerative labour. If the lessons of political economy and social science seemed to hold the key to a feminist analysis of women's specific wrongs, feminists nevertheless recognized their limitations, and tried to steer a middle course between empirics and moral law, as Parkes indicated with the following:

> It is not possible to treat a subject like this in a scientific way. Philosophers who argue upon the laws which govern the development of men are almost always destined to see their theories pass away or fade into comparative oblivion before the century which gave them birth is gone. . . . If, then, theories respecting masses of men are continually broken to pieces, how much more impossible is it to argue from abstractions upon the nature of women; for a woman's life is certainly more individual, more centred in one house and one circle; and so it must be until the constitution of the world is changed" (Parkes, "Balance" 342-343).

Parkes made this statement in her 1862 address to the SSA, "The Balance of Public Opinion in Regard to Woman's Work." Jane Rendall has interpreted this speech as a sign of Parkes's "retreat" from her earlier advocacy of women's work outside the home (Rendall, "Moral" 124), supported by Parkes's statement to the SSA that "she never wished or contemplated the mass of women becoming breadwinners" ("Balance" 342). But Parkes also argued that women's domestic experience held greater evidential appeal on the question of women's work than "abstractions" about women's "nature" found in the theories of Rousseau, Fourier, "even the Political Economists" who had engineered

the Poor Law as the "practical experiment of some of their principles" ("Balance" 342). Parkes insisted that the household was the "primary unit in social organization" and that "women are, and ought to be *employed* in the noble duties which go to make up the Christian household" ("Balance" 344, emphasis added), an argument which need not be read as entirely conservative. Parkes was not arguing for women's "retreat" to the household, or for the scaling back of feminist claims about women's work outside the home, but for renewed attention to the domestic as a unit of social production and a site of fact-based knowledge and practice worthy of serious study. In effect, then, Parkes wanted to unite political economic analysis with domestic practice, a move contrary to that of the male political economists who had tried in the early decades of the century to hive them off from each other.

Induction "versus" Deduction

Judith Newton has argued recently that 1830s periodical discourse on masculine and feminine difference helped legitimate male authority in the realm of political economy, and that this process of legitimation might usefully be read in relation to women's increasing power in the domestic sphere. Middle-class men shored up the disciplinary authority of political economy—and by extension their own expertise—by distancing themselves from both "women's" discourses, the home, and the "interestedness" of the entrepreneurial class. Newton has found that the *Quarterly Review*, in particular, disparaged women on the basis of supposed natural mental differences between the sexes, while the *Edinburgh* tended to argue that women's greater embodiment suited them for active and practical pursuits, leaving men to a life of sober,

disembodied contemplation within the inner sancta of scientific societies and professional associations springing up in the 1820s and 30s.

The supposed mental or logical incoherence of individual women writers like Martineau and science writer Mary Somerville[9] was often framed as a generalization about "woman" as a "sex" in the early decades of the century. The ease with which much writing by women was dismissed via sweeping statements about the mental inferiority of "woman" reveals the ideological force of generalizations which, notably, seemed to require no evidence beyond a limited number of writings by women. To take just one example, an 1841 review in the *Edinburgh* of women's writing attacked the "theory of mental equality between the sexes" by saying that, whether it be a result of nature or education, there were clear differences in the moral and intellectual complexion of men and women that no reform in education could alter. Women were more excitable and enthusiastic, with a "nicer perception of minute circumstances." They were inferior to men in their powers of association, logical and sequential thinking, combination, and generalization, and were apt to let their feelings cloud their judgment. Women's limited "sphere of observation"—the home—enabled their ability to perceive details, while "woman's indisposition to generalize [was] more attributable to her livelier sympathy and stronger interest in individual cases" ([Lister] 193-194).

At the same time, methodological conflicts in the physical and social sciences coalesced around the problem of inductive versus deductive reasoning, a debate whose political content had a relevance for feminism in the 1850s, informing women's articulation of a notion of women's public expertise, and their challenge to sexual stereotypes about mental difference. John Herschel's 1830 *Preliminary Discourse on the*

Study of Natural Philosophy and Mill's *System of Logic* (1843) had attempted to assimilate inductive and deductive reasoning in the natural sciences as separate but interconnected steps in a single process. As Poovey writes, Herschel "wanted to demonstrate that induction was actually dependent on deduction, just as a responsible application of deduction required induction" (*History* 317) at a moment when most scientists regarded a practically-oriented inductivism—reasoning from the particular to the general—as the preferred method over "'mere conjecture' or 'pure theory'" (*History* 322). Later, Mill drew on Herschel's and William Whewell's theories of method in the natural sciences in order to advocate a science of society, of which political economy would form one branch.

It is worth knowing that deductive reasoning had been subject to a gradual devaluation in the elaboration of scientific method, and that Mill and Herschel had attempted to rehabilitate it in the 1830s and 40s, when we come to consider an article by Henry Thomas Buckle that appeared in *Fraser's* at the end of the 1850s, shortly after the launch of the *EWJ*. Buckle's "The Influence of Women on the Progress of Knowledge" was originally presented at the Royal Institution[10] as a lecture in March, 1858. Buckle couldn't have made the gender of inductive and deductive reasoning more clear when he associated women's "natural" intellectual abilities with deduction and men's with induction. In Buckle's formulation, the deductive method stood for that which was emotional, artistic, intuitive, ideal, desultory and imaginative, the inductive with the sequential, the objective, the scientific, the concrete, the methodical, and the rigorous. Here is Buckle's explanation for why women "naturally prefer the deductive method to the inductive":

> They are more emotional, more enthusiastic, and more imaginative than men; they therefore live more in an ideal world; while men, with their colder, harder, and austerer organizations, are more practical and more under the dominion of facts, to which they consequently ascribe a higher importance. . . . [Women] possess more of what is called intuition. They cannot see as far as men, but what they do see they see quicker. Hence, they are constantly tempted to grasp at once at an idea, and seek to solve a problem suddenly, in contradistinction to the slower and more laborious ascent of the inductive investigator. (399)

Women's supposed quickness in decision-making, and superior insight into human character and motivation, was presented in contrast with the "slower and laborious ascent of the inductive investigator" whose ability to focus on particulars sometimes blinded him to general truths (399). According to Buckle, women's place in the progress of knowledge had been in influencing—consciously or unconsciously—the method by which such luminaries as Newton and Goethe had made their discoveries.

A self-taught historian and admirer of John Stuart Mill, Buckle incorporated recent feminist criticism on the state of girls' and women's education into his argument, a point the *EWJ* endorsed in its short review of the lecture, although it reserved comment on Buckle's main contention about the gender of inductive and deductive intellect. The popularity and influence of Buckle's lecture is indicated in a letter to the editor in the *EWJ* in 1860. In writing in to report on a lecture by Mrs. B. Inglis to a working men's club in Folkestone on "The Influence of Women on Society," "E.E.R." wrote that she had "fully expected to hear some more or less familiar 'preparation' of Mr. Buckle's celebrated lecture on the same" but was "agreeably disappointed" to find that Mrs. Inglis,

unlike Mr. Buckle, did not "carefully avoid any allusion to women", nor did she mention the theory of induction and deduction "of which most of us are heartily tired" ("Open Council" *EWJ* 6, 211).

On one level, Buckle's lecture might be read as little more than a reiteration of entrenched attitudes about men's and women's mental difference (the feminine mind as intuitive, imaginative, and lacking in rigour was nothing new, as Wollstonecraft had already demonstrated). What was new in Buckle's lecture was its explicit gendering of terms within ongoing debates about scientific method. That is, Buckle's claims about both the quickness of women's intellect *and* their predilection for generalization had already been identified by inductive philosophers as a problem in scientific method—as a "rush to theory"—although within a context that seemed to have little to do with notions of men's and women's mental differences per se. In the early 1830s, for example, the natural scientist William Whewell criticized political economists like David Ricardo and his followers in the following way:

> [they] have begun indeed with some inference of facts; but, instead of working their way cautiously and patiently from there to the narrow principles which immediately inclose a limited experience, and of advancing to wider generalities of more scientific simplicity only as they become masters of more such intermediate truths—instead of this, the appointed aim of true and permanent science—they have begun endeavouring to spring at once from the most limited and broken observations to the most general axioms. (qtd. in Poovey, *History* 310)

Here Whewell was making an argument for scientific objectivity as a slow because methodically-informed *process*—one, luckily enough, that was particularly well-suited to the routines of professionalizing men with leisure. But his main concern was that Ricardian political theory was not sufficiently grounded in fact, a problem in method he later explicitly associated with the feminine intellect. In an 1834 article for the conservative *Quarterly Review* on Mary Somerville, Whewell had identified the characteristics of female intellect as clarity of perception, practical emotion, and lucidity of thought. But their practical action was not informed by speculation and theory, while their theory—"if they do theorize"—was unconcerned with practical application. Furthermore, if the few women philosophers like Somerville occasionally offered greater clarity in their work than men, it was a fine line between "clarity" and "superficiality", since women exhibited no natural ability to reason from the deliberate and methodical collection of disparate facts, the province of the inductive philosopher. Men, on the other hand, Whewell criticized for the conflicts they tried to negotiate, often unsuccessfully, between practice and theory; in men, "the heart and the head are in perpetual negotiation, trying in vain to bring about a treaty of alliance, offensive and defensive. The end of this is, as in many similar cases, inextricable confusion—an endless seesaw of demand and evasion" ([Whewell] 65). Whewell's answer to this muddled thinking was a pure inductivism; the "brokenness" of male political economy Whewell had already identified was precisely a result of a confusion between observation and theory, or inductive and deductive method.

On one hand, then, "exceptional" intellectual women like Martineau and Somerville had long been associated with the practical, the everyday, the general, the

embodied, and the popular; their work was neither speculative nor abstract enough to be classified as "theory,"—Martineau herself would likely have repudiated the term. On the other, the general suspicion around the category of theory on the part of practical men of science didn't mean that women of letters would be celebrated for their useful insights by inductive philosophers who reserved for themselves the practical application of useful facts. Third, as Buckle's formulation demonstrated, there was a parallel discourse relegating women to the realm of the ideal, the imaginative, and the intuitive, one which many women claimed as the source of their authority. Buckle reformulated what champions of induction like Whewell had "known" all along: that deduction was an effete mental trait, and the "rush to theory" on the part of deductive philosophers a mark of "feminized" thinking.

Even for John Stuart Mill in the *Subjection of Women*, women's "quickness of observation", borne out of their tendency towards "practice", was one of the "least contestable" of the mental characteristics ascribed to women. That is, although Mill was everywhere concerned in the *Subjection* with arguing that there simply was not sufficient evidence on which to found generalizations about women's intellectual capacities, it was *evident enough* to him that women exhibited greater practical intuition than men. Mill tried to elevate intuition by explaining it as "a rapid and correct insight into present fact" (358). Because women seemed particularly skilled in observing, gathering, and applying the material facts of their (limited) sphere of existence, it was only a broad, general education that women required in order to save them from the worst effect of deductive thinking: the "over-hasty generalizations" they tended to make. A wider experience of the "human race", once combined with their aptitude for the individual and the particular,

would, Mill argued, actually make women superior reasoners to men, who were often blinded by theory and speculation to actual facts.

The contest between "fact" and "theory" was imagined and articulated in broader terms than induction and deduction, of course: as an opposition between numbers and poetry, judgment and feeling, realism and romance, use and beauty, calculation and speculation, head and heart. Such critical oppositions everywhere informed the ways in which public intellectuals of various political, doctrinal, and religious allegiances understood their "service function" to society. No longer regarded as a distracted, isolated genius with little investment in the interests of his audience, the intellectual came to be regarded as a new kind of "service" figure, a moral leader and secular prophet who would answer society's needs by guiding it through its spiritual malaise and indirection. This generalization about the changing complexion of intellectual culture has prompted Deirdre David to argue that Victorian intellectuals began to assume a moral responsibility that had traditionally been allotted to women. As David writes, "It seems . . . entirely possible that the emergence of intellectuals as secular prophets and moral teachers legitimated the presence and identity of the woman intellectual; that is to say, she gained a cultural respectability as her conventional function of moral guidance became the property of a social group desired by the powerful middle class" (14). David's argument—that Victorian moralists and intellectual culture became subject to a broad process of feminization—makes even more sense in light of Stefan Collini's assessment of the privileged place of emotion in intellectuals' ideas about moral agency.[11]

Yet David's argument isn't as useful when we consider another set of qualities desired by the powerful middle class: sound judgment, empirical observation, practical

sense, and models of social phenomenon based on causal relationships, which would equip individual observers with the fact-based authority to intervene and ameliorate. That is, just as morality understood as "feminine" began to accrue authority in the sense of being a publicly-useful and necessary property of a socially-engaged intellectual culture, the ground of authority was shifting again, to a set of mental qualities that women could apparently never possess: judgment, sequential thinking, inductive logic, fact-based reasoning. In the gradual ascendancy of a scientific paradigm for intellectual activity (see Heyck) "men of genius"—abstract philosophers, theorists, and poets—found themselves in the first half of the century defending a suspiciously feminine-looking set of mental and moral attributes against the "mere vulgar men of dry, hard business" the Gradgrinds of the world whose "coarse practical benevolence [was] little touched by painful sensibility" (Brydges 675). In other words, the very qualities the woman intellectual seemed to espouse could just as easily be used to denigrate "men of genius", whose use value to society was coming under continual scrutiny, and whose status was in constant need of defense and redefinition, as Thomas Carlyle's overtly masculine model of true literary and cultural authority attested in "The Hero as a Man of Letters", for example.

"The test of observation and experience"

By the time Buckle delivered his lecture at the Royal Institution in 1858, there was already a well-established, contradictory discourse of "sex in mind" that extended to questions of the role of intellectuals in the overall improvement and progress of society. Buckle's argument was easily appropriated by critics less sympathetic to the claims of feminism, which must have made the editors of the *EWJ* shudder with despair. The

Saturday Review, for example, equated deduction with superficiality as Whewell had done, arguing that women "do not proceed by arriving at argumentative conclusions from clearly-defined premises, but they throw out observations which they cannot tell how they came by" ("Intellect of Women" 417).

Depending on the writer's perspective, then, women had either little ability to generalize from particulars to final causes, or were too quick to generalize from a limited observation of a few particulars. Again, women's reasoning power was seen as transient, fluid, more resourceful, while men's was slower, accumulative, tending towards collection and classification. If women showed an aptitude for detail, it was merely the trivial details of everyday domestic life that concerned them. Women operated by influence rather than efficiency and were, of course, more intuitive—they couldn't explain how and why they knew what they knew; their knowledge was a felt rather than a purely mental knowledge. This notion of a felt knowledge coincided with general views on women's greater embodiment; the differences in bodily organization between men and women seemed to explain women's weakness of mind. By 1868, this kind of thinking was so widely received that Lydia Becker could generalize that men had "softened" their assertion of superiority by "compensating" women, reassuring them of the importance of their "gifts" of fine perception and intuition over slower, but, according to Becker, more publicly valued processes of reasoning (Becker, "Is There Any" 483).

Theories of mental and intellectual difference came under increasing scrutiny in the campaign for women's access to higher education in the 1860s, and Becker was at the forefront of this challenge. Feminist education reformers were by no means unanimous in their attitudes towards theories of mental difference, as the campaign for women's higher

education campaign began to indicate. Some, like Emily Davies and Lydia Becker, argued and campaigned from the position that women's higher education should be identical to men's, while others such as Anne Jemima Clough and Josephine Butler continued to uphold the notion that women's natural mental difference (not inferiority) required a different curriculum of study.[12] Unsurprisingly, the debate about inductive and deductive reasoning, which at least since Buckle's lecture had been mapped directly on to questions about gender and sexual difference, found further elaboration in the campaign for women's higher education.

For those who argued that girls and women were capable of and entitled to instruction in the same subjects men studied, the question of women's ability to reason inductively became an important staging ground for the debate. In one of the many articles in the periodical press in the 1860s on the question of women's education, J.G. Fitch asserted in the *Victoria Magazine* in 1864 that the inductive sciences were daily increasing in their educative value through their proximity to the "facts of life"; the majority of men now based their political and moral beliefs on "inductive generalization from a wide range of particulars, [rather] than by the process of pure inference from axiomatic truth" (435). As Parkes had argued ten years earlier in *Remarks on the Education of Girls*, inductive reasoning promoted sound "mental habits" of immense value in practical life, which were absent in any female education scheme that did not teach its students *how* to learn. Further, Fitch added there simply was not enough "*data*" on which to form theories of mental difference, since the training of women had never attempted to test them in those mental habits they seemed incapable of acquiring—strength of judgment, thoroughness of method, or seriousness of purpose (450). Referring

to Buckle's "remarkable" lecture, Fitch called the equation of the feminine intellect with deduction a "familiar truth", adding that undisciplined male intellects had also succumbed to the dangers of deductive reasoning—reasoning from the single instance, jumping to conclusions, etc. "But while we continue to withhold from women all logical training whatever, we have at least no right to complain of nature for making them bad reasoners" (451).

By referring to mental difference as a "theory" and a "hypothesis" based on feeling and custom rather than evidence or "data", reformers accused their opponents of the very logical "deficiencies" and emotional excesses regarded as the marks of the female mind. Becker even went so far as to contend that "masculine minds"—hence male forms of reasoning—did not only inhere in male bodies, so that "what is called a masculine mind is frequently found united to a feminine body, and sometimes the reverse" ("On the Study" 387). Becker, as well as being a suffrage activist and campaigner for other feminist causes, was a botanical writer and lecturer who drew Darwinian analogies between plant, animal, and human biological organisation to argue that differences among men and women were not greater than those among members of the same sex.[13] Her paper on this subject to the venerable British Association for the Advancement of Science in 1868 caused a "furore" among her audience ("British Association" 53), the Reverend F. Meyrick arguing in response that "each sex had its special excellences, and education must be adapted to its future work in life", with the Reverend A. Jessop chiming in that he "did not see the force of the illustration drawn from bee-land—(laughter)—we were not bees, but men and women—(laughter)—and we could not ignore the actual physical distinction which existed between the sexes.

(Laugher)" ("British Association" 53). Becker contended that because there was no sex in mind, any observable difference between the minds of men and women was entirely owing to the influence of circumstances, which, unlike natural differences, were capable of reform. While this created great excitement and indignation among her listeners and critics, there was also much alarm about the implications of another of her suggestions: that the only way to test the differences between men and women was to admit them to the same examinations, courses of study, and, by extension, the same learned societies and institutions of higher education to which men were admitted.

What Becker, Davies, Fitch, and other education reformers were calling for was, in effect, a large-scale social *experiment*—a term they used often, and one which would have lent a particular rhetorical thrust to their argument, associated as it was with the scientific paradigm of knowledge production from which women had been largely excluded. Here is Becker on the importance of testing the question of mental and intellectual difference:

> The existence of a difference in the intellectual powers of the sexes is a question fertile in endless disputations, which can only be satisfactorily set at rest by the test of observation and experiment. Wherever this test has been impartially applied, by studies and examinations conducted without reference to the sex of the student, the honours have been fairly divided between men and women, and no line of demarcation has made itself apparent between the character of the subjects chosen, or the degree of proficiency attained. The extremely limited area in which this test has been applied renders it, as yet, hardly safe to draw a general conclusion from the results, though these have hitherto pointed all one way; but

> the existence of equality or disparity between the intellectual endowments of the sexes can only be established by the result of studies pursued under a common method, under the stimulus of similar incentives, and tested by the application of a common standard. ("On the Study" 387-388)

The tests Becker referred to that had already been "impartially applied" were probably the Local Examinations, a series of tests administered by Cambridge and Oxford beginning in the mid-1850s to provide middle-class boys' schools with a standardized measurement of academic proficiency. In the early 1860s, Davies began to campaign for women's admission to these examinations, which were held in various districts across Britain. Cambridge began to admit women to the examinations in 1863, Oxford in 1870. The results were as feminists had predicted: women achieved high scores in most of the subjects included in the test with the exception of arithmetic.[14] Becker also reported in 1869 that women had been regularly receiving first and second-place prizes at Dublin's Royal College of Science for Ireland, which had been admitting women to its annual examinations since the mid-1850s. The tabular results of the exams for successive sessions from 1855 to 1868 were included in Becker's article, with women achieving first or second-place prizes in geology, botany, chemistry, etc. from year to year ("On the Study" 396).

My point here is to demonstrate the kinds of persuasive techniques that feminists like Becker and the Langham activists began to employ in the 1860s in order to contest what had come to seem like a series of *unsubstantiated* claims—rather than axiomatic truths—about gender difference. The statistical tables, test scores, and "hard facts" drawn from observation and experiment helped to create new knowledge about women, which

feminists in some sense embodied in their actual collection and presentation of it. The publication of Mill's *Subjection of Women* in 1869 boosted feminist reformers' insistence that there simply was not enough information from which to make generalizations about the minds of women, even though, as we saw earlier, Mill relied heavily on a timeworn generalizations about women's mental complexion in order to make this point. Like Becker, Mill proposed a broad social experiment in which all "artificial" obstacles to women's full participation in public and intellectual life be removed, in order to test their true natural capacities, for, "what is now called the nature of women is an eminently artificial thing—the result of forced repression in some directions, unnatural stimulation in others" (324). Of course, as recent feminist critics of Mill's faith in empiricism remind us, the problem with Mill's (and many of his contemporaries') call for an experiment which would prove once and for all what women were "truly" capable of, threatened to reinscribe the objectification of women within a new set of scientifically-sanctioned terms. Mill didn't seem to recognize that, far from removing "artificial barriers" based on sexual difference, standard testing simply replaced one "artificial" scenario with another.

Nevertheless, feminists' advocacy of a social test had a political content that we can't ignore as simply "wrong-headed" or blinded by a faith in empirical evidence. By promoting the testing of women and men under the same standards of measurement, feminists set out to accomplish several tasks at once: to add to the stock of tabular "facts" about women (test scores) that were seen as one of the most persuasive forms of "evidence" of women's ability and experience; to carry out at local levels the first steps of a larger social experiment involving women, knowledge practices, and institutions; and to begin the work of gathering evidence in the service of future campaign goals, such as

the establishment of women's university colleges like Hitchin, which later became Girton, and the admission of women to colleges and degrees that excluded them on the basis of mental difference.

Notes

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[1] The phrase is drawn from Poovey's *A History of the Modern Fact.* Please see in particular Chapters Six and Seven.
[2] See Caine's *Victorian Feminists*, for example.
[3] I am working from the third, revised edition of 1856.
[4] For recent discussion of the development and impact of political economy, see Poovey's *A History of the Modern Fact* and Collini et al.
[5] Bodichon read Mill's *Political Economy* in 1848 and wrote a précis of it, criticizing it for its failure to address what she called the tyranny of marriage and divorce laws. See Hirsch 84.
[6] Faithfull did not name Martineau as the author—the article had been published anonymously.
[7] These arguments have recently been closely and thoroughly examined by Ellen Jordan, who argues that it was Langham Place's identification of the gender prejudice of the labour market that constitutes its most significant contribution to feminist history.
[8] Parkes's address at Bradford drew strong reaction and will be discussed in greater detail in Chapters 3 and 4. It was printed in full in the *English Woman's Journal* in November, 1859.
[9] Somerville (1780-1872) was known as the "queen of nineteenth-century science", and wrote highly-regarded scientific papers and books in physical science between the 1830s and 1860s.
[10] The Royal Institution was established in 1810 to conduct courses and lectures in "useful knowledge" on technical subjects directed towards middle-class audiences. Women were admitted to lectures at the Royal Institution at a time when they were barred from most learned societies.
[11] See Collini's *Public Moralists*, Chapter 2, where he argues that Victorian moralists "accorded priority to the emotions over the intellect as a source of action, and so addressed themselves particularly to the cultivation of the appropriate feelings, [tending] to assume that our deepest feelings, when aroused, would always prove to be not just compatible with each other, but also productive of socially desirable actions" (65).
[12] On the history of the feminist campaign for women's higher education, see Levine's *Victorian Feminism*; Burstyn. See Caine's *Victorian Feminists* and Rendall on the politics of the productive feminist conflict around "equality versus difference."
[13] See Shteir's discussion of Becker's scientific writing and its influence on her feminist analysis.

[14] For senior candidates, the Cambridge exam tested students in the following compulsory areas: reading aloud from a standard English poet, English grammar, composition, Arithmetic, Geography, English history, and in three of the following nine options: Religion; English political history; Latin or Greek; French or German; Mathematics; Chemistry; Zoology, Botany or Geology; Life drawing; Music.

Chapter Two

"Spheres of Observation": The *English Woman's Journal* and the Methodology of Everyday Life

> It is said that if women are too highly educated they will not be able to discharge their household duties. On the contrary, we hold that the highest minds can best discharge its rudiments. A woman trained to the ordering of her thoughts, will by that very discipline be fitted to regulate ten thousand trifles of daily life, on the right conduct of which so much happiness depends. (H.W.C. 294)

The natural mental division between the sexes that so many attempted to explain in the early half of the nineteenth century justified differing programs in male and female education before feminists began to challenge those programs as the cause rather than the result of women's intellectual "inferiority." Women had been told that they had no natural aptitude for "facts" because there was no evidence that they could reason from one to the next; their facility with particulars was borne merely out of their powers of sympathetic understanding and their circumscribed existence within the home. Those strong-minded women who seemed to display the qualities of a masculine intellect, such as Harriet Martineau, Anna Jameson, and Mary Somerville, were diminished by their critics as the popularizers and generalizers of the particular truths men had discovered through their superior inductive powers. Parkes and her contemporaries inherited the legacy of such generalizations about the sex of moral and mental intellect, as well as a feminist counter discourse, and I want now to turn to a discussion of the ways in which feminists of the late 1850s and 60s inhabited these discursive contexts, and argued for the renewal of the figure of the domestic woman through the particularist discourses of political economy and social science.

The increasingly-debased category of general knowledge was an important one for mid-Victorian feminists like Parkes and Bodichon. The assignment of middle-class women to the home meant that women's knowledge was often represented as limited to the particulars of everyday life, despite the broad moral guidance women were expected (and many claimed) to exert. Yet it was important to middle-class feminism's overall project that women be able to discuss general ideas with the male members of their families and communities, a message Jameson had initiated through her theory of the communion of labour, and which Parkes everywhere promoted. For instance, in the *EWJ* she encouraged women to take up the study of political and social science, in order to make sense of newspaper and periodical criticism: for women, "[t]hat mass of miscellaneous information which the journals contain would no longer be a confused hodge-podge linked to no leading ideas, but every detail would range itself under an orderly plan, and men would not have to complain of that total want of interest in the worthiest exertions for progress, which is now so often the affliction of domestic life" (*Remarks* 16). As I will demonstrate in Chapter Four, the SSA and the feminist debating society were vital spaces for feminism for precisely the reasons Parkes had identified; mixed social intercourse on a range of broadly-defined issues was essential not just for the promotion of feminist opinion, but for the public enactment of a feminist intellectual figure who could claim to represent "women" as a general social category facing systemic problems.

Yet in order to contest the effects of middle-class ideology that consigned women to a vague, ineffectual "moral influence," feminists also wanted to interrogate the association of women with the particular in their attempts to redefine women's

relationship to knowledge. While the *EWJ* didn't directly contest what in Buckle's formulation had been an alignment of women with deductive reasoning and moral influence, it did argue for women's training in (and aptitude for) the inductive methods of inquiry and observation associated with the new sciences of society. Contesting Theodore Parker's claim that "'Woman's moral action is more like a special human providence, acting without general rules, but caring for each particular,' Parkes replied that this was "the very reason why women have never hitherto exercised their full influence on the moral well-being of the world" (*Remarks* 15). As I read it, then, one of the goals of the *EWJ* was to investigate women's work both within and outside the home in order to make the particulars of everyday life into "fact"; it wanted to discover the scientific methodology governing everyday life which some women were already practicing, and to promote it to the so-called idle women who were not. In so doing, the *EWJ* sought to redefine a model of the feminine self, one who could locate her everyday practices—contiguous with her identity—in relation to other models of the self, some deemed exemplary, others unreformed.

In its endorsement of women's powers of observation and their moral conviction, the *EWJ* implicitly took up a position in a philosophical controversy which partly relied on terms that already had gendered meanings. In 1858, Parkes called for women to discipline their powers of minute observation together with their moral conviction in order to effect a socially-vital wisdom:

> By observation then we must become wise in our generation; not by a narrow descent on and fear of particulars, but by summing up these into their results, hearing what everybody has to say, and deducting thence a reasonable estimate of

> the wisdom of the course we take. That intellect which is firmly rooted in a clear moral conviction, and yet possesses the most rapid power of absorbing and analysing the opinions of others and the experience of daily life, will be the *wisest* in its practical work; firm, without rigidity; clear, without shallowness; humble, without weakness; practical, without presumption. (Parkes, "Domestic" 74)

"Domestic Life," the article in which this statement appeared, contained a clarification of the *EWJ*'s editorial position in response to readers' criticisms of the *Journal*'s coverage of domestic issues. Readers were concerned that the domestic sphere was not receiving sufficient attention in the *EWJ* because of its emphasis on women's work outside the home, to which Parkes replied that the examination of the interior of domestic life was not the mandate of the *EWJ*: "Every work must have its defined limits, or it would run into confusion and disorder, and this periodical was chiefly instituted to discuss those very problems which are *extra* to the household" (Parkes, "Domestic" 75). Yet Parkes added that if the *EWJ* was not a domestic magazine per se, it was nevertheless interested in the relationship of the home and the family to the life of the nation. As "the basis and the constituent" of all social life, the household deserved attention as the place in which the physical and moral needs of future citizens were met.

Particularly in its early numbers, the *EWJ* was eager to link political with domestic economy, as in the following statement: "Political economy is to the nation what domestic economy is to the family" (Parkes, "Opinions" 4).Throughout its run, the *EWJ* underscored women's vital role in the moral and physical progress of the national economy, and urged women to begin to see themselves as domestic economists and managers who could benefit from some knowledge of political economy in the practice of

domestic economy. As one writer put it, "[s]he is in all things the adviser of the family, of the husband and children, and it would be a great individual and social benefit if she were early initiated in the first principles of that branch of moral philosophy which treats of the natural organization of society, its wants, the forces and means which it employs to satisfy them . . . The understanding of women possesses as much aptitude for these subjects as that of men" ("Women and Commerce" 291). While the male political economists of the 1830s and 40s had attempted to distance political economy from domestic economy in their attempts to secure its professional reputation,[1] feminists of the 1850s and 60s tried to show the relevance of political and domestic economy to each other by reporting on them as integrated *practices* with similar methodologies. If legislation could not penetrate to the minute but important details of everyday living, as Parkes claimed in "Domestic Life," women could nevertheless begin to subject their households—and their minds—to the rigorous observation, collection, and application of domestic facts, which would in turn lead to the overall improvement and progress of society.

The *EWJ*'s interest in the domestic particular was established in a debate in the early numbers of the journal concerning a new book by Emily Shirreff,[2] *Intellectual Education and its Influence on the Character and Happiness of Women* (1858). Shirreff advocated women's pursuit of the Vocation of the Scholar—of learning for its own sake—instead of household labour, which, according to Shirreff, was easy enough to learn and beneath the abilities of educated women who aspired to something higher. The *EWJ*'s reviewer objected strongly to this view, arguing that few women—and few men—were naturally suited to the life of the mind, that "the facts" of most women's lives were

already centred in domestic vocation, and that intellectual culture should be pursued professionally rather than as an end in itself. The reviewer argued that household labour was the work of the world, since "the great bulk of the race are wholly absorbed in wresting food, and clothes, and shelter, from the powers of nature; . . . shall women feel it any degradation to perform heartily their share of the universal labor, in superintending, or in executing, the nicer details required for the perfection of clothing, food, and household order?" ("Notices" 1, 346).

In the next number, a letter signed "A.S."[3] sided with Shirreff's argument, claiming that those middle-class daughters who had been relegated to the role of "assisting" with housework had not become the practical, sensible housekeepers the *EWJ* valued, but the unemployed milliners and "the extensive dealers in crochet and small talk" whose situation it deplored ("Open Council" 1, 427). To "A.S.," the *Journal*'s position on Shirreff's book seemed to be a contradiction of one of its own complaints: that women lacked thoroughness and professionalism which, A.S. argued along with Shirreff, could be derived through rigorous intellectual study as an end in itself. A.S. compared the *EWJ*'s response to one of its rivals when she countered, "[t]his will do to propitiate the *Saturday Review*, but it was hardly worth while to start an *English Woman's Journal* to recommend a state of things which has existed already, with a few variations, for so many hundreds of weary years" ("Open Council" 1, 427). An editorial statement followed immediately upon "A.S.'s" letter, countering that the reviewer had been recommending not "crochet and small talk" but *work*. Significantly, the *EWJ* argued that "making the beds and roasting the meat," more so than intellectual study, would make middle-class women the mental equals of the male members of their family, and

would equip them with "capacities for intellectual usefulness" beyond their homes. Those women who led a life of mental contemplation were represented as cramped, shrunken, and choked—"surely an active intelligent housemaid is on a higher level of development than these young ladies, whom emigration would drive to despair, and shipwreck would infallibly drown, who are not adding to the sum of ideas possessed by our race, nor helping to diffuse those which already exist; and who have, alas, resigned that firm grasp on this dear and beautiful material world" ("Open Council" 1, 429).

In the context of debates on scientific methodology and inductive and deductive reasoning, I read this debate not as a sign of the *EWJ*'s defense of doing *over* thinking, but of doing *as* thinking. One of the advantages of inductive reasoning was that it seemed free of theoretical bias because it claimed to be cataloguing the facts of the world, which had themselves come to be seen as value-neutral; the *EWJ* argued that women were uniquely suited to observe the facts of everyday living, *and* to demonstrate their value through their superior moral sympathy and domestic acumen. By advocating women's domestic labour as a form of intellectual exertion, the *EWJ* drew attention to the home as a potential site for women's rigorous observation of particulars, and for their active intervention in the ordering and improvement of a household, which, it argued, contributed significantly to the production of national wealth and well-being.

The *EWJ* also routinely suggested that women could be moral fact-gatherers outside the home, and that domestic practices actually equipped them for such work. This view was reiterated in an 1861 article on women's evidence to select parliamentary committees on poor relief. The writer argued that evidence supplied by Louisa Twining,[4] Mary Carpenter, and Mrs. Woodlock[5] on reformatories and workhouses had "mark[ed] an

epoch in social history, we had almost said in statesmanship" ("Ladies' Evidence" 405). The qualities these women displayed—quiet dignity, devotion to a cause, intelligence, social position, and experience—were cited as the requirements of women's role in social experimentation and fact-gathering. "They have amply tested what others have only vaguely surmised; they really know what the fate is of pauper-reared children, and women upon whom the workhouse has set the seal of degradation; they are in no way trammelled by conflicting interests, personal or remote" ("Ladies' Evidence" 406). That is, women were characterized by this contributor as being unencumbered by the personal interests and biases that had marred the evidence of the male poor law commissioners, guardians, and officers. The evidence of women, and the potential for women investigators to act as neutral recording machines and information gatherers meant that "[h]enceforth, ignorance of facts can no longer hold as an excuse for inaction. Eventually, a wider scope must be allowed for woman in the appointed and chosen sphere of her charitable ministrations" ("Ladies' Evidence" 409).

This plea was echoed by many contributors to the *EWJ*, who argued that women's work, particularly their work on behalf of the poor, could only be carried out by empirical observation: "The reason why so little sympathy is experienced, is that we do not come in contact with suffering itself. We look on pictures, not on originals. We hear *of* the distressed, but we hear not *them*" ("Word" 94). Women like Twining, Carpenter, and Florence Nightingale, who had been in direct contact with forms of suffering and distress, were congratulated in the *EWJ* for combining a natural feminine sympathy with a practical acquaintance with the factual details, causes, and results of distress. By observing and anticipating the needs of others, following events to their root causes and

natural outcomes, and then appealing to higher authorities with factual "evidence" of what they had seen and experienced, women like Twining, Carpenter and Nightingale were at the forefront of a scientific methodology of everyday life whose result was nothing less than the prevention of death.

Prevention, Diffusion, and Repetition

The concept of prevention became an important keyword for the feminist reform of everyday life because it was seen as the first link in the chain between observation and reform. In an October, 1858 letter to Open Council, the letters section of the *EWJ*, "Medicus" reasoned that "[p]revention is better than cure, and *one* woman theoretically and practically instructed in the science of preserving health will be able to do more good than twenty professional men or women engaged only in curing the disease" ("Open Council" 2, 209). But prevention itself was no simple matter, requiring a trained eye, an ability to act, and most importantly, method, as Frances Power Cobbe maintained in her 1861 address to the SSA in Dublin. In "The Preventive Branch of the Bristol Female Mission," Cobbe reasoned, "[i]f philanthropists saw how they could keep their poor fellow creatures in the right path, they would gladly double the energies with which they now labor to bring them back when they have gone astray. It can surely only want the knowledge of *a practicable method* of attaining such a purpose which can hinder them from directing their first care to the *prevention* of evil" (Cobbe, 145). As we saw in the previous chapter, Cobbe advocated a reform method that combined religious and social-scientific principles—what she here referred to as "the true Religious Philosophy of Social Science"—in which religious duty would be fulfilled by actively seeking the

means to "hinder" and "prevent" moral and physical evil ("Preventive" 146). Her report to the SSA on the Bristol Female Mission supplied the details of its mandate and operation with the express purpose of "exciting desire" among her listeners to imitate its example in other cities ("Preventive" 149).

Parkes, too, encouraged her readers not only to "exert their imaginations" in the matter of public health, but to take action by observing the "lower particulars" and "personal habits" of the poor, to "know the laws of health, and to enforce them" in their parishes (Parkes, "Ladies" 82). In one article Parkes detailed the history of the public health movement, or the "Sanitary idea," before going on to spell out to her readers the implications of public health commissions and acts of parliament:

> We would ask those who are little used to deal with figures, and to whom such terms as "Boards" and "Acts of Parliament" convey none but an abstract meaning, to exert their imaginations in filling in the details of local activity. To say that the average rate of mortality is high in any given district, means that when a mother looks round her populous nursery she must expect to lose one or more of those little children before they have grown up. . . . It means that many coffins will be bought of the undertaker, and that the milliner will often sit up at night to finish mourning clothes. . . . These are the common every-day miseries which afflict a district suffering from bad drains and ill constructed houses. (Parkes, "Ladies" 81)

Women were now being encouraged to scrutinize the seemingly innocent and innocuous details of everyday life as important links in the well being of their communities. Cold sausage, a broken pane of glass, or a dirty pinafore could now be regarded as potentially dangerous agents in the spread of physical and moral illness. The draining and ventilation

of towns was no longer a vaguely good idea, but a moral and physical imperative worth everyone's notice and effort. The homes of the poor and of the middle class were now apparently governed by "laws" which it had become women's duty to seek out, follow, and enforce. That these laws were observable through the personal habits and particulars of everyday life made women especially well-suited to carry them out, given their natural roles within the private sphere and their ability to perceive and incorporate information quickly.

Women's role in prevention found institutional expression in the establishment of the Ladies' National Association for the Diffusion of Sanitary Knowledge (later known as the Ladies' Sanitary Association) in 1859, an association loosely affiliated with Langham Place and the SSA. Under its auspices, women were called to enforce sanitary legislation and the medical knowledge of experts through private, personal means. At the second annual meeting of the Association, Charles Kingsley underscored this message by telling women that they were uniquely suited to carry out the individual, personal preventive work that men were by nature and temperament incapable of performing. To make his message more persuasive, Kingsley hastened to remind his audience that disease and death knew no class boundaries, and that it was not only the homes of the poor that were in need of reform. "[T]his Society, I do hope, will bear in mind that it is not simply to affect the working man, not only to go into the foul alley; but it is to go to the door of the farmer, to the door of the shopkeeper, ay, to the door of ladies and gentlemen of the same rank as ourselves" ("Second Annual" 384). Like Cobbe in "The Preventive Branch of the Bristol Female Mission," Kingsley castigated the Evangelical explanation of physical suffering as the "'will of God,'" associating it with "a stupid

neglect, a stupid ignorance, and . . . a stupid indulgence" in both the working- and middle-class home ("Second Annual" 385). But short of sending a government inspector to every home in the kingdom to root out sanitary evils and indulgences, Kingsley argued for women's increased familiarity with sanitary laws, and a heightened surveillance of their physical surroundings and that of their neighbours. In a striking bit of oratory, Kingsley underscored the Messianic power of prevention by appealing directly to women's moral conscience:

> It is in the power, I believe, of any woman in this room to save three or four lives, human lives, during the next six months. It is in your power, ladies, and it is *so* easy. You might save several lives a piece, if you choose, without, I believe, interfering with your daily business, or with your daily pleasure, or, if you choose, with your daily frivolities, in any way whatsoever. . . . Will you let this meeting to-day be a mere passing matter of two or three hours' interest, that you shall go away and forget for the next book or the next amusement? Or will you be in earnest? ("Second Annual" 387)

Within the sanitary imagination, the work of "prevention" would be directly accomplished through the mechanism of "diffusion," another important keyword in reform circles since at least the 1820s and the creation of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge. The production and diffusion of knowledge via tracts and "maternal meetings" was cited by the Ladies' Sanitary Association as its most important and effective work. By 1860, forty-four thousand tracts had been distributed, with titles such as "Cheap Doctor," "Power of Soap and Water," "Worth of Fresh Air," and "Influence of Wholesome Drink." In the third annual report of the association, printed in the *EWJ*, the

preventive agency of the diffusion of knowledge was confirmed by a conductor of maternal meetings who testified that she had "'created quite a 'sensation' the other day among my poor women by reading the 'Cheap Doctor' and now I find quite a reform in the whole court in the matter of fresh air'" ("Third Annual" 237). The Association had discovered in its three years of operation that it could do more effective work by diffusing knowledge and publicizing the causes of disease to the poor, rather than by a more direct course of action, in other words, by promoting and diffusing a message of self regulation (what might now be called a change in "lifestyle"), rather than through direct material or financial means like the construction of new drains. The Ladies' Sanitary Association was thus the "missing link" between abstract medical knowledge and the self help of the newly-enlightened poor, who could improve their situation better by removing the causes of suffering themselves within their own households and neighbourhoods ("Third Annual" 236).

Kingsley imagined middle-class, literate women as the auxiliary experts to male medical professionals, and as links between medical theory and everyday practice because they seemed particularly apt at translating, diffusing, and popularizing the "Latinised, technical language" of medical men to their unlettered sisters. Although sanitary law was probably the site in which the link between diffusion and prevention seemed most clear and urgent, there were other social issues affecting women which required these two modes of theoretically-informed action—the prevention of the needlewoman's suffering through the diffusion of pathetic tales, for example, or the prevention of marital suffering through the gathering and diffusion of "cases." At times the *EWJ* itself assumed the role of supplement and translator of masculine authority, as

when it proposed to abstract the opinions of John Stuart Mill for female readers who could benefit from his ideas, but who were perhaps unlikely to "take the trouble to wade through eight volumes of political economy and philosophical writing (Parkes, "Opinions" 1-2).

The *EWJ* thus modeled the social work of diffusion for its readers when it claimed its connective agency in the prevention of women's suffering. Parkes realized that the Woman Question, like all other important social questions of the day, would need to be gradually and "systematically" diffused from the pamphlet to the special journal to the national newspaper and finally to a shift in public opinion. As Parkes wrote, "[a]n idea may be broached in books and pamphlets, and obtain great hold over a select class of minds, long before it penetrates familiarly into the columns of the newspapers, and becomes really incorporated with our national thought. Therefore, by systematically urging these things in a monthly periodical, it is to be hoped that a new range of readers will be touched" (Parkes, "What Can Educated?" 297). Like domestic labour, the work of diffusion through the mechanism of the press was slow and repetitive; like the education of the young, "touching" the hearts and minds of readers started in private circles and ended in the public domain. For Parkes, repetition was key to the domestication of the new and the unfamiliar; the diffusion of the related aspects of the Woman Question was a form of domestic reiteration, which the *EWJ* both practiced and encouraged: "Therefore it is that I hope to see these subjects brought up again and again, in every cheap and accessible form, till the thoughts they embody are thoroughly leavened through the homes of England, making the men willing to admit female co-operation in the

institutions they control, and the women themselves ready and ardent to enter the new sphere" (Parkes, "What Can Educated" 227).

Establishing or identifying any kind of system is a recognition of repetition. Repetition is one—some might say *the*—constituent feature of the everyday. Rita Felski has pointed out recently that the identification of women with embodiment, social reproduction, and commodity consumption has led to their greater association with repetition and repetitive forms of labour. As the previous chapter indicated, women's connection to repetition has meant that men have traditionally been regarded as innovators, women as reproducers. Twentieth-century feminists have contested the identification of women with the routine, associating it with domestic enslavement and blaming it for the misogynistic view of women's "inability" to transcend the familiar and invent the new. The association of repetition with domination, innovation with agency and resistance, however, obscures the importance of repetition to the organization and practice of daily life. As Felski writes, "Repetition is one of the ways we organize the world, make sense of our environment, and stave off the threat of chaos. It is a key factor in the gradual formation of identity as a social and intersubjective process. Quite simply, we become who we are through acts of repetition" (84).

Parkes's editorial practice explicitly recognized that repetition was key to the formation of public feminist identity: the repetition of particular lines of argument, the continual appearance of certain public figures of sympathy such as the dressmaker and the governess, the annual reports of benevolent societies in the pages of the *EWJ*, were all necessary for the reiteration and diffusion of a public feminist practice and identity, one which would have the power to improve the situation of women through the prevention

of their distress. Parkes recognized that feminism needed to become a "familiar feature," both in the press and in the practice of daily life; the repetition and dissemination of feminist opinion in and through *EWJ* was thus an everyday act of resistance that its editors quite consciously practiced.

Emotion Work

Occasionally in the *EWJ*, one begins to hear tones of discontent with the model of female supplement to male professional. In a paper read to the Workhouse Visiting Society in 1859, for example, Louisa Twining provided an eyewitness account of the details of women's suffering in the workhouse, which she argued would have been prevented if women inspectors had been allowed into the workhouse as guardians. Arguing that inspection was "essentially '*woman's work*,'" Twining declared that Poor-Law inspectors and guardians ignored "God's providence" when they refused women to exercise their specific, God-given abilities on behalf of the poor (Twining 187). Women were capable of more than simply diffusing the knowledge that had been discovered by male experts, and at times were required to do work that men were actually incapable of performing, if men would only admit them.

Even though the overall thrust of the *EWJ*'s message on women and work was the removal of barriers to male-dominated employment fields, contributors to the *EJW* often made strategically essentialist arguments like Twining's about the gender of labour in order to broaden the possibilities for discussion of women's work. As one contributor put it, "[t]he redundancy of women is not the chief cause of the deficiency of remunerative employment. Other causes are at work: men are doing women's work" ("Middle-Class"

85). Here the argument about women's redundancy, drawn from the discourse of political economy, was grafted directly onto a feminist argument about women's work that relied on a conception of women's natural fitness for certain kinds of labour. One reader wrote to the *Journal* in 1859 to point out that no outcry was raised when men accepted work that could not be considered "'manly,' while if women seek occupations quite suitable to their sex, but hitherto in the hands of men, we have a vast deal of nonsense spoken about their losing their 'womanliness,' a word often without meaning" (Open Council 3, 68). Hairdressing was cited frequently in the *Journal* as an example of an inherently womanly occupation dominated by men, an argument that seemed to require little justification; similarly, the practice of medicine was routinely named as a field in which women could excel, but, unsurprisingly, this claim was often accompanied by a more involved set of justifications for women's admission to the field, and generated more controversy.

Rather than dwelling on a particular occupational or professional field here, however, I want to suggest that the *EWJ* worked most often to promote a broadly-conceived category—emotional labour—as that which women were naturally suited to perform above all others, and which was most urgently required in homes, state institutions, and male-dominated professions. Domestic reform in the workhouse and the reformatory, the homes of the poor, and middle-class households, required a combination of intellectual and emotional work that women were uniquely suited to perform. In an article on women's work in the reformatory movement, Mary Carpenter characterized the ideal qualities of the reformatory worker as loving discipline, a deep familiarity with human nature, practical experience, religious conviction, household management, business management, and an ability to teach others. "Though she desires to bind the

children to her by cords of love, yet in the wild and undisciplined condition of many of the children there must be an admixture of the prison element of compulsory power, but this must be so wisely and lovingly administered as to be felt only where absolutely needed" (Carpenter, Mary 293). As I discuss in Chapter 5, the institutional professionalization of "love" was to be one of Carpenter's most lasting contributions to the reformatory movement.

Arlie Russell Hochschild has explored the related concepts of emotional labour, emotion work, and emotion management in *The Managed Heart*. Hochschild defines these as "the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display[.] Emotional labor is sold for a wage and therefore has exchange value. I use the synonymous terms emotion work or emotion management to refer to these same acts done in a private context where they have use value" (7). Hochschild argues that feelings and emotions are not intrinsic or interior qualities which we experience or reveal at random, even though they are usually imagined this way. Rather, feelings are socially-organized in both public and private settings, and are "shaped to social form and put to civic use" (18). Hochschild also points out that women have traditionally understood and used emotion work as "one of the offerings they trade for economic support" (20). "Feeling rules," according to Hochschild, are the implicit standards used in the exchange of emotional currency, are culturally and historically variable, and empattern social relations between individuals in public and private.

Hochschild's fascinating 1983 case study of women's emotional labour focused on the commodification and management of feeling in Delta Airlines' training course for female flight attendants, but her broader discussion about the nature and uses of emotion

work is relevant to my exploration of mid-Victorian feminism's attention to the emotion work of everyday life, which was characterized as both the cause and cure of women's oppression. Although it did not use such a term, the *EWJ* implicitly understood, promoted, and criticized emotion work as a category of activity and containment. In an article on manners and morals, one contributor pointed out that "women are brought up to put on smiling faces, whereas men are brought up to wear masks only when it suits their convenience" ("Modern Inconsistency" 309). The article argued that the true gentlewoman was one who refused to perform the emotion work associated with "femininity"; if she sometimes appeared stern, sad, or grave, it was because she was content to be rather than to seem, unlike her shallow, frothy peers who let their false smiles drop behind closed doors. The writer attempted to account for the "inconsistency" of the perpetually-smiling woman who would privately storm at her servants, children, and husband: "Let us follow this pretty, smiling creature into her private sitting-room, and see how nature revenges herself for the mockery. The outward guise is laid aside with the outward garb; there is no one near to smile upon, no one within hearing of the ultra soft voice, and the player is graver, more ill-natured, and her voice harsher than need be from the long strain and the weary sameness of her daily task" ("Modern Inconsistency" 308). The writer wanted to know whether this was "inconsistency," or merely the inevitable effect of the "feelings" women were forced to display in public.

The *EWJ*'s overall stance on emotional work was one of discipline, regulation, and systematization; caring for each particular was to be combined with a new attention to social law and causal relationships—feeling rules—among people, things, and self. In an article on the power of association for the women's movement, one contributor wrote

that women's unchecked feelings were an unreliable guide upon which to organize an effective feminist politics: "It is now found that feelings are not of much value in the matter of hard work, and hard work we fear many women will be compelled to perform before they can sit down at ease and indulge in sentimental reveries which, in nine cases out of ten, are mistaken for feelings. . . . Feeling, standing by itself, produces nothing, and is as often a hindrance as a help" ("A.R.L." 337). Channelled emotional energy would lead to improvements in women's mental health and the achievement of feminine perfection, as one contributor theorized when she cited women's untamed or thwarted affection as the leading cause of female insanity. The unhealthy combination of aimlessness and over-excitement in girls' education was responsible for their later melancholy and hysteria. A balance between reason and passion in the education of women was called for: "That a woman's strength of judgment and strength of moral purpose should equal the strength of her affections, ought surely to be the guiding maxim upon which her training should proceed . . . it is only when this perfect balance is approximated to, that we approximate to the perfect woman" ("Insanity" 13).

A heightened emotional sensitivity towards others would seemingly result in the creation of true feeling "within."[6] In order to make this argument, the *EWJ* routinely scrutinized the figure of Lady Bountiful, who was criticized for throwing money at the poor in order to assuage her guilt or gain the approbation of others. One contributor wrote, "[W]e have seen much of the evil of ... indiscriminate alms-giving and of the hasty condemnatory process pursued by so many excellent people, who, judging of the poor by their rough and uncourteous manners and their wretched homesteads, do not look deeper into the cause and effect of things, but condemn the ailing sickly mother together

with the confirmed drunkard, or the poacher's family with the poacher himself" (A.L. 322). Moreover, the display of true feelings for others and the creation of feeling in oneself—imagined contiguously—could be accomplished in a few simple steps. One contributor instructed her readers in feeling rules when she offered tips on how to make effective home visits to the poor: the visitor should make an appointment, knock on the door before entering, take care not to interrupt a meal, or partake of one with grace and politeness if offered. She should address her neighbours by name, and refrain from criticizing the domestic arrangements of the cottages and apartments she visited, but take mental note of everything she saw (A.L. 323-4). Above all, the visitor/inspector must systematize her dealings with the poor in order to know how to treat them as individuals.

> [She] must show that she has a real interest in what concerns them; she must make herself one with them; and both by deed and word do what she can to improve their condition, but she must avoid lecturings. Often have we heard a poor person say, 'I like so and so, ma'am, she is such a real lady, she comes in and sits down among us so free, just as if she belonged to us, and she is so *feeling*.' Yes, this is the true secret of getting at poor people's hearts." (A.L. 324)

By encouraging women to regulate their conduct in the homes of the poor "by the very same rules which apply to persons of your own class," (S.R.P. 224), the *EWJ* participated in the instruction and regulation of women's seemingly natural, unregulated sympathy, establishing feeling rules that seemed vital to the overall progress and improvement of society.

The relationship between the diffusion of sanitary law, polite conduct, and emotional offering was conceived in the *EWJ* and elsewhere as specifically feminine, as a

"woman to woman" relation. This type of advice helps reveal the untold history of the production and management of emotional labour among women, a history that has begun to be uncovered in Ellen Ross's *Love and Toil*. But what did it mean that this guide to "emotional know-how" with the poor appeared in a feminist magazine whose stated mission was the promotion of middle-class women as extra-domestic professionals? The *EWJ* helps reveal, first, how mid-Victorian feminists saw opportunities for middle-class women to remodel the definition of "woman" using the details of daily life that were available in relationships between people and the material world, and, secondly, how much this definition relied on and consolidated notions of class difference, even as it encouraged the reader to overcome this difference by "making herself one" with her servants. Like most magazines aimed at women, then, part of the overall responsibility the *EWJ* reserved for itself was to advise women in their attempts to improve themselves and their communities, to guide them through the steps they would need to take in order to *become*, in this case, the professionalized domestic managers of a household order that could be practiced, and whose effects could be felt, not just in their own homes but in the homes of their

neighbours and in the state institutions dedicated increasingly to the "rehabilitation" of the "disordered" and "unregulated" poor. One of the most consistent arguments underlying the *EWJ*'s stance on women's labour was that until the emotion work of women and their moral intuition could be channelled and adjusted towards certain kinds of public agency, women's claims to moral authority would be hollow. As the author of "Modern Inconsistency" put it,

> [d]elicate perceptions of right and wrong and an intuitive sense of justice are admirable in themselves, but until united with the power of volition, and with judgment to guide that power, and scope given for its working in a judicious direction, it may be asked—Are they of any use? Women cannot and do not give the tone to morals, because it is not in their power either to undo the evil which is committed by others or to enact laws under whose shelter virtue would be succoured and vice denounced. ("Modern Inconsistency" 312)

Idleness and Household Order

Occasionally, some contributors to the *Journal* castigated women for their lack of sympathy, implying that they were shirking the emotion work they were called by God and society to perform. The problem of middle-class women's "idleness"—emotional, moral, and physical—was routinely identified in the *EWJ* as the source of a range of social problems, including the "servant problem"—the perception that household service was in a dangerous state of decline. Lord Shaftesbury articulated the essence of the problem in a public discussion on the subject of domestic service in June 1862; it seemed clear to him that the quality of service was lower than it had been sixty years ago, and that this was partly owing to improvements in rail and postal service, which had lowered servant "loyalty" by fostering greater freedom of movement and a "love of change." In addition, new schemes in the education of the poor and working-classes had fostered the "pride" of working-class scholars who now saw domestic service as beneath their intelligence and ability. While he acknowledged that some employers were needlessly harsh towards their servants, there were also many instances of kind and sympathetic

employers who had met with "ingratitude" on the part of servants. But to Shaftesbury, the question was a social one that could not be addressed through legislative interference in domestic life. The solution lay in individual "duty," especially that of married, middle-class women ("Meetings" 419).

Shaftesbury's claim about the deterioration of domestic service was a cultural commonplace. In full-length articles on the subject for the *Edinburgh* and *Fraser's* in the 1860s, both Harriet Martineau and Frances Power Cobbe registered the sense that the "servant problem" was a perennial public grievance common to every generation, although for both this did not diminish its present importance. Martineau argued in 1862 that the problem really had become greater—that the crisis was real this time—because a change of public opinion had taken place among the working classes, who now preferred the independence of factory labour to the restrictions of a life of service. Cobbe reiterated this view in 1868 when she argued that domestic work had become less respectable because less respected among the servant class itself. Those who were still employed in domestic labour approached the work with reluctance and disdain, believing they would eventually find more lucrative work. The ubiquity of the "servant problem" for middle-class readers assured it a place in probably every women's magazine of this period. As Margaret Beetham notes, the "servant problem" in these papers was defined multiply: finding, training, keeping and controlling servants all contributed to the overall problem, which required moral more than financial management on the part of the mistress (106-107). The issue became sanctioned and institutionalized in the form of benevolent societies that dedicated themselves to establishing employment registries, pension schemes for aged servants, etc.

The "servant problem" played an important role in defining a feminist methodology of daily life; through it, the *EWJ* helped construct a series of feminine "types"— positive and negative examples upon which to build a reformist feminist politics. The middle-class domestic woman—variously figured as an idle woman of means, a pragmatic household manager, and a sympathetic angel of mercy—was depicted as both the source and the solution to middle-class domestic disorder, which was in turn treated as more than a series of isolated problems in separate homes, but as a national crisis that women could solve through self-regulation as a form of social responsibility. "Open Council," the *EWJ*'s correspondence section, was a particularly important space for exploring the "servant problem;" as I mentioned at the outset of this chapter, readers were complaining to the editors within the first few numbers that domestic issues were not being sufficiently addressed in the *Journal*. Despite Parkes's contention that the *EWJ*'s mandate was not the airing of domestic complaint, many readers used "Open Council" to criticize their servants and each other's domestic management skills, as well as offer advice on how best to regulate household labour and the relationship between employer and servant. The maidservant became an object of intervention in the way that feminist philanthropy identified the poor. The properly-trained maidservant would be an extension of the reformed middle-class woman and the exemplary household, although such a linkage was never presented as simple or straightforward.

The "servant problem" bore directly on middle- and working-class women's self-regulation, and issues of moral and household management that informed the *EWJ*'s understanding of female reform. Without access to the ladies' papers that were circulating concurrently with the *EWJ* and other feminist magazines of the 1850s and 60s, it is

difficult to determine whether the *EWJ* and its readers took a different approach to the problem from other competing publications. According to Beetham, "the 'problem,' like the servant herself, was everywhere assumed but rarely visible" in the *Queen*, a ladies' illustrated newspaper launched by Samuel and Isabella Beeton in 1861. The *Queen* occasionally referred to the problem as one requiring the moral management of its readers, counselling them to pay heed to the feelings of servants, provide opportunities for their self-improvement, and do what they could to ease the workload of both servants and milliners, whose working conditions were becoming increasingly impossible to ignore.

These messages also appeared in the *EWJ*, where the problem was regularly discussed by readers, and occasionally formed the subject of articles. What is immediately noticeable in the letters pages is the tone of moral condemnation that characterized discussion of the problem of other women's "idleness." Readers described women's idleness as an ignorance of the "laws" of health and organization, and a disregard for their servants, families and the world. The problem of getting good servants, was more properly one of "producing" good household managers and mothers, a problem which implicitly gave the lie to motherhood as the most "natural" expression of femininity. For example, one reader castigated women of leisure for jeopardizing the health of their families by hiring ill-trained nursemaids.

> The slovenly habits acquired as a nursery-maid, with fewer facilities for proper management, with less time and with limited means, become worse and worse, and result in misery, disease, and death to their own children. . . .We want mothers more than nurses; and till the favored women of England, whose wifely

> and motherly duties fall on them so lightly, devote at least as many hours to the nursery as to the dressing-room, think it a more pleasing as well as a more profitable task to walk out with their children and nursemaids, than to go through a series of joyless morning calls, or lounge on a sofa, yawning over a novel, that want will not be supplied." ("Open Council" 2, 283)

Here, motherhood was defined in secular rather than religious terms, and characterized as a crisis of national proportions. For this reader and many others, the problem was not so much one of finding and keeping good servants and nurses, as educating good mothers, who would not replace their nursemaids, but diffuse healthier practices among them. Women trained to become better mothers—it was never clear how this "training" would be effected, but reading the *EWJ* seemed to be one possible avenue—would become better workers in their own homes. The nursemaid was still necessary, but as a sign of reformed middle-class motherhood. For many readers, the middle-class home was regarded as the "best training school," where newly-competent mothers would instruct "careless" nurses, whose own "filthy" homes could not be expected to instil the skills needed to raise "Master Harry or Miss Adelaide" ("Open Council" 2, 283). Other readers objected to this view, arguing that special training institutions should be established for instruction in domestic skills, or that facilities for such instruction should be added to workhouses.

The figure of the reformed mother—here imagined as a version of a competent public health practitioner—played an important role in a feminist magazine like the *EWJ* in the way she supported one of the *Journal*'s central arguments about women's work: that leisure and gentility were dangerous and unrealistic ideals that prevented women

from carrying out tasks they were qualified to perform and that needed to be done. Like other women's magazines of the moment, most notably the Beetons' highly-successful *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine*, the *EWJ* linked domestic, maternal and scientific knowledge, and contested the values of an ineffectual gentility with those of a systematic, practical efficacy. One reader, "M.D.," wondered how there could be complaints about a lack of employment for governesses when so much suffering in families needed to be addressed. "M.D." argued that the occupation of nursemaid was an honourable one that governesses could and should fill if they would only abandon their notions of gentility: "[L]et these lay aside their (often only half acquired) accomplishments, and think a little while on the real education and management which a child requires; let them study the moral and physical wants of human nature in its infancy, and nobly aspire to supply these wants, and there will, I think, be no lack of employment for them" ("Open Council" 6, 213). Thus, the genteel governess and the idle mother who would not condescend to particular types of household work were both reproached as women whose problems were partially of their own making; "unemployment" and "idleness" became proximal categories.

The class, gender, and economic implications of women's work and the "servant problem" were fully explored in two debates between readers in "Open Council" over several numbers of the *Journal*. Late in 1859, a reader signing herself "J.E.B." (undoubtedly this was Jessie Emilia Boucherett) wrote in to take issue with the "many ladies" who denied the problem of women's employment by pointing to the scarcity of good domestics and seamstresses. How could there be both a scarcity of jobs for women *and* a scarcity of good maidservants? "J.E.B." wanted to reconcile these "apparently

contradictory facts," by exploring the real conditions of a servant's apprenticeship and wages, arguing that the "training period" for servants in the homes of farmers and "small genteel" families was overly-harsh, and that servants' wages were insufficient to enable them to save for their retirement. In conclusion, "J.E.B." wrote, "I wish by this letter to create two impressions: first that there is a want of employment for women in spite of the scarcity of servants, that scarcity being caused by the painful nature of the necessary apprenticeship; and secondly that wages for maids are now no higher than is just, but rather the contrary" ("Open Council" 4, 139).

"A Practical Mistress of a Household" objected to this argument in the next number, countering that the average scale of servants' wages was sufficient, but that they required training in how to save their earnings. Here, "training" was equated with conscientiousness, responsibility, and morality, rather than with domestic skill. For "A Practical Mistress," "the true question after all, is not the amount of wages, so much as the quality of the training which our servants receive. If we could secure for them at an early age, religious, moral, and industrial training, so as to render them capable of becoming efficient servants, having the *material* in them, every day's 'experience' would add to their stock of wisdom and knowledge. With such a preparation as this, they would be at no loss for good places and good wages; besides they would know how to value and retain both" ("Open Council" 4, 211).

Such arguments about the "moral management" of servants were not new, nor was the equation of pecuniary saving with moral rectitude and the work ethic. What strikes me about the exchange between "J.E.B." and "A Practical Mistress," however, is what it didn't say about the genteel but impoverished middle-class woman who was the

real subject of the *EWJ*'s campaign for women's work, not the working-class girls and women who formed the bulk of the domestic workforce. That is, the debate elided what "J.E.B." had called the "raw servant girl" of the lower classes with the genteel, redundant woman in order to discuss the thorny issue of middle-class women's paid work, a slippage that would become more explicit in a later instantiation of the same debate that I will discuss further on. But it also inaugurated the unthinkable: middle-class women's paid service *inside* the home, not as governesses, but as domestics.

In the meantime, the discussion was temporarily displaced onto the question of whether servants were underpaid, another dimension of the "servant problem" that was being widely discussed and debated elsewhere. Late in 1859, a couple of numbers after her initial letter on the subject, "J.B"—probably Boucherett again writing under an amended pseudonym—tried to resolve the question of wages, having calculated a servants' annual average income in relation to the amount she could be expected to save over a lifetime of work. According to "J.B.'s" calculations, the maidservant who worked for thirty years at an average annual wage of fourteen pounds, and who lived with extreme frugality, invested her money in a mortgage or annuity, and had no dependents or long periods of illness, would still be short the amount she would need to survive in her old age. Another reader, "B.," protested in the next number that "J.B." had not calculated the amount of interest a servant would accrue by investing her earnings in savings account, a point "J.B." conceded in the next number, with the caveat that "B.'s" calculations were only applicable if the servant was never out of a situation for a lengthy period, and had no dependents to support.

"A Practical Mistress," however, continued to argue that the problem was not financial but moral, owing to servants' recklessness, and employers' idleness:

> I will now say what I consider to be a means of raising domestic service from the very low standard to which it has fallen; and it is the only one that suggests itself to me as practicable or promising. It is for ladies, the proper mistresses of their households, to take a personal superintendence thereof. I believe if women of every class, but more particularly those of the upper division of the middle, and of the higher classes, were educated and trained fully to take an efficient part in the management of household concerns, we should have far more really accomplished, well-informed, and useful women." ("Open Council" 4, 358)

In making such an argument, "A Practical Mistress" endorsed the *EWJ*'s fundamental protest against women's idleness, but stopped short of addressing the problem that had been at the centre of "J.E.B.'s" original letter: fit work for middle-class women. That is, by "denying" the want of work for women, "A Practical Mistress" refused to imagine how women's domestic skill could be practiced outside the home, and traded for wages—an issue at the core of the *EWJ*'s feminist argument about women's work.

Running concurrently with this debate, however, was Parkes's two-part article, "What Can Educated Women Do?" in which she took as given the lack of employment for middle-class women *and* forestalled any suggestion that the *EWJ* might be advocating paid domestic service for middle-class women. Parkes listed the "chief social institutions" —hospitals, prisons, reformatories, workhouses, educational institutions, etc.— in which women could exercise their skills, making clear that the work of these organizations required the special "moral qualifications" that only "educated" women

could deliver. Parkes wanted to know why women were not streaming into these professions, and her answer was twofold: money and prejudice. As we saw in the last chapter, Parkes criticized the bad political economy of middle-class marriages in this article by aligning it with a breach in moral law. Working-class marriage, on the other hand, in which women contributed to the economy of the household through their unpaid domestic labour, was cited as a preferable arrangement that had been lost in the growth of a middle class that preferred its daughters to "ape the aristocracy" (Parkes, "What Can Educated" 295). Women had lost the "natural capital"—their "power of household management"—they had once brought to the marital union. Yet, as Parkes pointed out, the census seemed to indicate that the idle, unmarried daughters of the middle class were anomalous, "the *exceptions* in our busy, respectable female population." These exceptions constituted a "small but very important proportion of the whole body of women" who should ideally contribute to the household economy by performing work that was similar in *kind* but not in *status* to that of their working-class counterparts: "I cannot see why working ladies need be more unsexed than working housemaids, nor why that activity, which is deemed to make a woman eligible as a wife to a working man, should, when exercised on higher subjects, unfit and discredit her to be the wife of a working barrister or medical man" (Parkes, "What Can Educated" 295).

Middle-class women were thus needed to reclaim a widely-conceived set of domestic "skills"—moral superintendence being the highest of these—not in order to replace their paid, working-class housemaids within their own homes, but to avoid the folly and cruelty of the waste of precious human material in the national domestic economy. The argument was a complex one, relying on a host of assumptions,

qualifications, and desires—not least about the domestic economy of working-class homes at a moment when working-class women were entering the paid work force in increasing numbers—in order to "make sense" of women's paid labour according to certain classed and gendered logics of work and the home. As Mary Poovey has persuasively argued about the ideological contradictions of this moment in feminism, "assumptions about class 'solved' the problem of women's work for middle-class women by discriminating among kinds of work . . . These assumptions produced as part of the representation of woman the illusion of one kind of likeness (moral nature, which followed from maternal instinct), while both reinforcing class difference *and* obscuring the positional likeness (legal and economic dependence) all women actually shared" (*Uneven* 160). Despite the careful attempts of Parkes, Boucherett, and other feminists of the Langham Place Circle to contain the contradictions these assumptions helped mask, there were significant moments of "rupture" in the *Journal*, like the one engendered by an 1861 reader's letter on servants and women's work that created more controversy in "Open Council" than any other in the *EWJ's* twelve volumes.

At least two categories of women were proximal by virtue of their status as "exceptional": idle middle-class daughters and good, trained servants. Paradoxically, it had come to be seen as more expedient for the former to approximate to the latter, even though the trend seemed to be moving in the opposite direction. Several readers, for example, worried that the fashion for idleness and accomplishments had trickled down to working-men's daughters, and was responsible for the shortage of trained servants. In October 1861, a letter from "A West-End Housekeeper" levelled the difference between working ladies and servants, occasioning a fascinating debate about the changing

definitions of "the lady" and "genteel" forms of labour. Claiming to be "amazed" by the "noisy cries" about the lack of employment for women, "A West-End Housekeeper's" argument was unambiguous: any woman of social standing who worked for money had already forfeited her claim to the title of "lady," and, "having once been obliged to step from drawing-room dignity, she need not hesitate as to where she steps down." The term "lady" had suffered much abuse lately from those striving to attain "revolutionary equality," and servants' use of the term "lady" among each other had emptied it of all meaning. Given the shortage of good servants, whose scarcity had made them insolent and demanding of their employers, redundant middle-class women, then, might just as well seek their living in domestic service. "A West-End Housekeeper" complained,

> I myself am begging a nurse to come to me for £25 a year and board and lodging, imploring a housemaid to be contented with £18 and not to grumble at cold mutton for dinner once a week. I myself find servants are so rare and so precious, that I am obliged to curb my natural and free manner of speaking to my own, and address them with a strange, unnatural politeness which I internally feel is utterly unworthy of my *position* and *character*. To such a pass have we come! therefore, my dear Ladies, let us not hear any more nonsense about the *distress of women*, the *want of work*, etc. Let those who have such silly senseless pride *starve*, for certainly, if they will not be contented with any position Providence may call them to, they are in the estimation of your correspondent utterly unfit to live. ("Open Council" 8, 139)

The tone and the message of "A West-End Housekeeper's" letter was met with almost universal condemnation on the part of readers, who responded with personal

accusations and imputations: she was charged with being a London snob, a rich fool, unchristian, selfish, unfeeling, and coarse. Notably, her claim to the title of "lady" was questioned by most readers, who observed that real ladies did not have problems with their servants because they governed the affairs of the household, rather than assigning the work to someone beneath them. To many readers, "A West-End Housekeeper's" definition of "lady" seemed to diverge "from that generally acknowledged in this enlightened age" ("Open Council" 8, 207), occasioning a series of letters on the true meaning of "lady," its difference from a term like "gentlewoman," etc.

Risking the "revolutionary" argument, "S.A." responded by asking why a reduced lady should not be free to seek employment "congenial to her feelings" and sensibilities: "When a woman has received a good education, in *heart* as well as *head*, is respectably connected, and is obliged to perform no menial work, she is in my opinion a lady, and she still retains her character, even though she suddenly loses her position and be brought to poverty" ("Open Council" 8, 207). "L.L." took this argument even further when she contended that men and women who were intellectually qualified to improve society sinned against God when they performed menial labour that should rightly be performed by "those disqualified for higher work." ("Open Council" 8, 428). "C.M." reminded "A West-End Housekeeper" of the amount of effort required to train servants properly, reasoning that reduced ladies could not be expected to enter domestic service that easily. She found it distressing that farmers' daughters—formerly the source of the best household service—now aped ladies' accomplishments rather than learning the skills they would need to become good servants.

Finally, after several months of protest from readers and an editorial calling the original letter "outrageous," "Fair Play" entered the discussion to suggest that the letter from "A West-End Housekeeper" had been a squib, and a poor one at that. As "Fair Play" wrote, "a squib ought to be an amusing exaggeration of the real sentiments of a class; and in this the "West-End Housekeeper" fails. She is intended to represent an old lady of rank and wealth, but her sentiments are as unlike those generally entertained by old ladies of rank as can possibly be." "Fair Play" was inclined to regard the letter as a joke, but worried that "hard-working and meritorious women may have been led thereby to believe that their more fortunate sisters are indifferent to their sufferings and regardless of their feelings, and have been consequently pained and discouraged." ("Open Council" 8, 358).

Despite "Fair Play's" insistence to the contrary, the "West-End Housekeeper" letter was in many ways extremely successful, in that it had registered one of the most troublesome contradictions within the *EWJ*'s project to shape a feminist methodology of daily life: how the idle/unemployed woman's domestic agency could be restored through the observation and reformation of the maidservant. The volume and the passion of the responses the letter garnered is further evidence that the letter had been successful in carrying out what all squibs were surely meant to do: give voice to the unspoken, the contradictory, and the unacceptable through satire and exaggeration. Furthermore, in implying that there was little difference between servants and unemployed ladies, "A West-End Housekeeper" bespoke the crisis in the debate on idleness and gentility—the erosion of class boundaries between women— which the *EWJ* tried to forestall through its promotion and diffusion of new and more appropriate outlets for educated women's "wasted" skills. If we take "A West-End Housekeeper" at her word for a moment, we can

see that her suggestion, despite its rhetorical appearance as a conservative lament for a fixed class hierarchy, was actually presenting a more revolutionary argument than the *EWJ*'s official line on middle-class women's work.

If the *EWJ* had several times come precariously close to erasing class difference between women through its discussion of the moral and pecuniary value of household labour, it was also aware that it needed to be careful not to alienate its readers or engender controversy in the hostile press by advancing too revolutionary an argument. As Mary Poovey has remarked of this moment in feminism, "[a]lmost every advocate of expanding women's employment shared two crucial assumptions with her (or his) opponents: that women would work only out of necessity and that every occupation was appropriate to a specific class" (*Uneven* 158). A "West-End Housekeeper" effectively exposed both of these assumptions, to the great consternation of the *EWJ*'s readers. In its editorial response to the debate, the *EWJ* sidestepped the elision between unemployed, educated women and trained household servants by comparing middle-class women who worked for subsistence not with women servants or factory laborers, but with charity women:

> I work for money, and so in all probability do you, my reader. Perhaps you appropriate your earnings to a school or a hospital, or perhaps they go to pay your own weekly bills; perhaps you are an artist . . . or a sculptress, or an actress, or a popular authoress, or a teacher; . . . But in one thing we are all alike;--either 'our palms are crossed with gold and silver' or we receive quarterly cheques, paid straightway into our banker's account; and the particular destination of the current

> coin is too refined a point to turn the scale of gentility. ("West-End Housekeepers" 250)

In other words, the destination of women's earnings—the reasons women worked—was not a sufficient test of their claim to the category of the "lady" or the middle class. Receiving payment thus levelled difference between women, but only within certain pre-defined limits—those of a class society that marked off types of work from others as genteel—and resolved the troubling proximity of the "servant problem" and the Woman Question that the "West-End Housekeeper" exchange had identified.

I want to end this chapter by drawing attention to another aspect of the debate on "West-End Housekeepers" that is worth noticing—its tone. The "vivid indignation" of readers to the tone and language of "A West-End Housekeeper" is indicative of their importance to readers' overall understanding of the *Journal*'s identity ("West-End" 251). As an editor, Parkes recognized the importance of tone when she observed that change would only come about through the efforts of progressive groups of women who could gradually reshape public opinion by framing their arguments in broadly-accepted language and a non-threatening tone. In the next chapter we shall see how essential the quality of "tone" was to the print debates about women in the mid-century press.

Notes

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[1] See Newton.

[2] Emily Shirreff (1814-1897), together with her sister Maria Shirreff Grey, was an education reformer who published mainly on early childhood education. She was briefly the mistress of Girton College, Cambridge in 1871.

[3] The writer may have been Anna Swanwick—translator and literary scholar—or, more likely, Arabella Shore—poet. Both were interested in social and feminist issues,

particularly the suffrage campaign in the 1870s, and Shore wrote poetry on the work of Florence Nightingale in the 1850s.

[4] Twining (1820-1912) initiated workhouse reforms by pressuring authorities to establish regular workhouse inspection and appoint women as inspectors and guardians. She was a regular public speaker at the meetings of the SSA and other reform organizations and societies.

[5] Woodlock founded and managed industrial schools in Ireland and gave evidence on the condition and treatment of girls in Irish workhouses.

[6] As Hochschild writes, "Both the act of 'getting in touch with' feeling and the act of 'trying to' feel may become part of the process that makes the thing we get in touch with, or the thing we manage, *into* a feeling or emotion. In managing feeling, we contribute to the creation of it" (17-18).

Chapter Three[1]

"Better Arguments": The *English Woman's Journal* and the Game of Public Opinion

> Who can compute what the world loses in the multitude of promising intellects combined with timid characters, who dare not follow out any bold, vigorous, independent train of thought, lest it should land them in something which would admit of being considered irreligious or immoral? (Mill *On Liberty*)

In October, 1858, an article by William Caldwell Roscoe appeared in the *National Review* criticizing the aims and individuals associated with the six-month-old *English Woman's Journal*. Roscoe's "attack" prompted Joseph Parkes, father of Bessie Rayner Parkes, to write to her with the following words of warning: "If you unwisely provoke the opposition of other & more popular Periodicals than the National Review you will speedily smash your Journal. It was born with the Croup, and it may easily be fatally choked. I have no idea who wrote the Article in question; but it has much force and effect. It seems to me to be an Inn of Court Man—either Hutton or his Co-Editor. The English Woman's Journal will be very silly if it replies in any article. Rather let the Westminster Review answer the attack on itself. You will, if not more careful, be fortunate if you do not get more circulated & influential Periodicals 'down upon you'" (BRP II 64/2). "Woman"—the article that so alarmed Joseph Parkes—was an "essay-like review" that took on a number of related publications, in this case the *EWJ*, two anonymous pamphlets, Henry Thomas Buckle's lecture on induction and deduction, reprinted in *Fraser's*, and the 1856 edition of Bessie Rayner Parkes's *Remarks on the Education of Girls*.

But Parkes chose not to heed her father's advice, and a rejoinder to the *National Review* appeared in the *EWJ* in January 1859. The exchange between these two journals, which I discuss in greater detail below, demonstrates the type of risks Parkes faced in forging a feminist public identity through the periodical press—risks that involved her own reputation as a public feminist and a working editor, as well as the circulation and influence of her journal. In this chapter I explore what it meant for a feminist journal like the *EWJ* to "answer an attack on itself" by tracing several debates between the *Journal* and the "more popular Periodicals" and newspapers with which it competed, including the *Times*, the *Saturday Review*, *Fraser's Magazine* and the *National Review*. In doing so, I theorize the feminist press at mid-century as the mouthpiece of an "emergent public" that was never entirely separate from the established, male-dominated public press, a formation that was itself neither stable nor unified. That is, the *EWJ* participated in a diverse periodical culture through a series of print conversations concerning the issues it saw as its purview. It contributed to public debates about women indirectly by reprinting copy from a range of newspapers and periodicals in order to stake out its own position on issues related to women, and by responding directly to both friendly and hostile reviews of itself in the established press. In my discussion of the shape, style, and especially the tone of the conversations to which the *EWJ* contributed, I refer to several private letters from Parkes's father and her feminist mentors and colleagues, most notably Anna Jameson. These letters indicate that the affective qualities of print debate—manner, feeling, and tone—as much as the content of the arguments themselves, were instrumental in the way the journal staked a position in what was coming to be understood as, variously, a "marketplace," a "game," and a "battle" of public opinion. As

I demonstrate below, Jameson's advice to Parkes on the "conduct" of the journal in the competitive, public sphere of letters had a direct impact on the *EWJ*'s articulation of a feminist position.

The point of examining the print debates between a growing Victorian feminist culture at mid-century and the publications of the dominant public is not simply to uncover more evidence of women's involvement in public life, or to do a closer reading of the early texts of liberal feminism as a corrective to the existing scholarship. Instead, this chapter is more broadly concerned with how we understand and make use of the historical emergence of the category of "the public" and feminism's place within, beside, or outside it.[1] What this has usually entailed in previous examinations of this moment in feminism is an engagement with the ways in which feminism worked to change or formulate particular social structures, laws, and institutions, or to interrogate dominant gender ideologies. To this work I add that another way of understanding Victorian feminism's relationship to "the public" is through the less historically available but no less significant aspects of women's affective performances as writers, speakers, and debaters—through the qualities of "tone," "manner" and "feeling" feminism conveyed in print and speech.

In print, Parkes and her colleagues, contributors, and readers managed the tone of feminist argument through a consistent attention to the language with which the *EWJ* claimed a space in the public sphere. Language was thus not simply a tool to be used in the service of a greater argument, but was rather its own argument, and its own enactment of critical claims. As Judith Butler writes in response to Toni Morrison's 1993 Nobel Lecture in Literature on the violence of representation, "we cannot first give an account

of human agency and then specify the kind of agency that humans have in language. . . . Language is a name for our doing: both 'what' we do (the name for the action that we characteristically perform) and that which we effect, the act and its consequences" (8). Mid-Victorian feminist editors and journalists animated a feminist identity by maintaining a certain "dignified manner" of argument in their writing, by employing a series of refusals and repudiations, and, occasionally, by appropriating the tonal qualities of their "competitors." One of the most common ways for the *EWJ*'s competitors to undercut its arguments was through recourse to the tone of the journal, which was variously characterized as strong-minded and vehement, or dull and trivial. Throughout, I argue that one of the reasons this was important was because the press was routinely characterized with market metaphors and the gendered language of competition and battle, which implied that for women to "play the game," they would first need to "learn the rules" of public debate, as Joseph Parkes had advised Bessie.

Underwriting these questions is an engagement with Jürgen Habermas's claim that in the transformation of the public sphere, socio-economic status became subordinated to the "authority of the better argument" in the public theatres of discussion and debate—including the press—that had begun to proliferate from the early eighteenth century onwards. In Habermas's formulation, the "rise" of a "sphere of the social" was conceived through struggles between public power and what came to be known as "public opinion"—"a political consciousness [that] developed in the public sphere of civil society which, in opposition to absolute sovereignty, articulated the concept of and demand for general and abstract laws and which ultimately came to assert itself as the only legitimate source of this law" (54). Thus, "the theme of the modern public sphere

shifted from the properly political tasks of a citizenry acting in common to the more properly civic tasks of a society engaged in critical public debate" and public opinion formation (52). A new political consciousness, articulated and confirmed in the world of letters, guaranteed the "equal" subjectivity of common human beings through the externality, generality, and abstractness of pre-existing laws. Moral authority, fostered through the institutions of the world of letters, was determined by the better argument rather than by rank. Public opinion, rather than the decree of the sovereign, became the basis for public action.

Habermas's critics have since "fleshed out" his theory of the public sphere and public opinion formation in order to gain a better sense of the historical face of the dominant bourgeois public and the marginalized counterpublics that accompanied its "rise".[2] Feminist historians and political theorists such as Mary Ryan and Nancy Fraser have significantly revised our notions of the development and transformation of the public sphere and its efficacy as an organizing concept for understanding women's participation in public life. For many feminist historians of nineteenth-century public women, the task has been one of determining how the "better arguments" were formulated, how they circulated, and who made them. In this sense, then, the established and separatist presses can be understood as rich rhetorical contexts that mediated and extended women's and feminists' relationship to argument itself, a requisite of public interaction. Habermas's formulation of the "better argument" is thus useful as a way of identifying the struggles over meaning and authority that characterized the public sphere, an "arena of discursive relations" (Fraser 70).

Much of the research on the relationship of mid-Victorian feminism to the periodical press has tended to emphasize the historical significance of the Victorian feminist press in its challenges to the male-dominated space of the mainstream or established press. To date, one of the strongest readings of the cultural impact of Victorian feminist periodicals is Philippa Levine's 1990 article in *Victorian Studies*. There, Levine argues that

> [t]he principles of feminist journalism emerged as a challenge to and a means of circumventing reliance on male-run papers. The feminist press publicised and discussed women's issues, and allowed women an actively separate literary space. . . . [W]omen's specifically feminist contributions neither wholly emulated nor directly challenged the male tradition, but rather sought to create another and female voice. It was not just a literature of their own that such ventures helped to create, but a language of their own, and through those twin media a piercing, critical redefinition of political culture. ("Humanising" 299-300)

Levine's argument stands as a persuasive and influential reminder of the radical nature of the earliest, recognizably feminist journals like the *EWJ* and its successors. Not only by establishing a series of feminist responses to women's social and legal disability through the mechanism of the press, but also by assuming the traditionally male roles of the working editor and journalist, the women of Langham Place took the means of production into their hands in a way that was unique, and unsettling to many.[3] Although she does not use the term, for Levine, the feminist press is very much the organ of a competing counterpublic operating outside and against the mainstream or dominant public. Yet Levine's article contains surprisingly little engagement with the actual

content of the feminist periodicals she discusses; likewise, it is difficult to gain a sense from her work of the tone of this other and female voice Levine insists was formulated in the pages of feminist journals of the 1850s and 60s.

The contemporary retrieval of historical feminists' "language of their own" means that another and equally significant aspect of feminist periodicals has remained largely unnoticed: the specific dialogues that took place between the "separate" and the "established" press, dialogues which helped create a public identity for Victorian feminism that would be seen as acceptable to an influential middle-class audience, and which helped publicize a feminist set of beliefs and opinions beyond its immediate readership. Feminist journals both relied on and resisted dominant modes of public discussion in periodical writing and publishing between the 1850s and 1870s—a period that saw the effects of the abolition of the stamp taxes, the proliferation of "special interest" presses, and the move towards signature, all significant material developments that also had an impact on the construction of a feminist culture. An engagement with feminism's relationship to the shifts taking place in the wider press market has implications not only for our sense of the shape and tone of periodical culture in these decades, as women began to participate in it with increasing frequency, but also for our sense of feminist history itself. As Susan Hamilton has remarked recently, "If, in response to past histories that erase Victorian feminisms as insufficiently radical or relevant to modern needs, we define feminist culture and identity only through their separateness from the mainstream, and their subsequent sense of collective purpose, we risk both a narrowing of our definition of feminism and a loss of the 'pastness' of this moment in feminism" ("Making History" 441).

"Arms of Precision"

By the middle decades of the nineteenth century, freedom of discussion among heterogenous social groups on matters of public interest was regarded as a sign of a healthy public sphere. As many historians have noted, the opportunities for open debate and dispassionate argument between private citizens proliferated throughout the century in the form of debating societies, public lectures, working-men's clubs, voluntary associations, specialist societies such as the British Association for the Advancement of Science and the Law Amendment Society, and amateur parliaments like the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science (SSA). Walter Bagehot referred to the period as "'The Age of Discussion'" (qtd. in Smith 163).

Throughout the 1860s, the press saw itself as reflecting and promoting the free speech ideal through a commitment to demonstrating "diversity of opinion" even within the pages of a single journal.[4] With the advent of signature and the increasing proliferation of general-interest periodicals independent of particular party affiliation, the press began to promote itself as the most important space for the discussion and debate of supposedly common interests. (See Jones.) Among the influential monthlies, the *Contemporary Review* and the *Nineteenth Century*, both committed to signature, were among the first to advocate an open space policy of diverse interest on social, political, religious and aesthetic matters.[5] Yet in the race for the authority of the better argument, arguing—in person, in print, or in the abstract—was at mid-century still widely regarded as an inappropriate medium for women's expression of opinion, especially in public, and especially if her opinion ran counter to received notions about women. In the *Subjection*

of Women Mill noted that if it were difficult for men to express "uncustomary opinions" without fear of public recrimination, it was doubly so for women, who depended on men for their literary success (328).

Women's direct challenge to male authority through public argument was routinely theorized in 1860s "morals and manners" journalism—the precursor of "human interest" stories?—in which the *Saturday Review* specialized. On the question of why most gentlemen would refuse to debate in public with women, one writer in the *Saturday* compared public argument to

> a game of chess between two moderate players, in which the love of science is almost always swallowed up by the desire to win. It is, in fact, a duel. And any one who remembers that to all dueling it is essential that the weapons and the laws of combat be equal to both combatants will see at once why men cannot argue with women. A man arguing with a woman is at a fatal disadvantage. Neither the weapons nor the laws of conduct are equal. He fights with a blunted sword, or a blunderbuss; she with a double-edged rapier, or an "arm of precision." . . . Considerable differences still remain between men and women, and for the present society does not permit us to ignore these differences in argument or elsewhere. ("Arguing" 345)

The writer chose to describe women as cunning and men as clumsy in debate, although this characterization was just as often and as easily reversed in representations of women in discussion. Although the reviewer was referring to oral, face-to-face argument in this article, debate in the press was also routinely characterized by a similar use of such competitive and military metaphors, some of them occasionally quite violent. Joseph

Parkes's reference to "smashing" and "attacking" in the letter quoted above is but one example of the aggressive language and imagery through which readers and writers understood the relationship between organs of public opinion, even as the press was supposedly becoming a space of free, disinterested, dispassionate debate.[6]

Dallas Liddle has recently shown the significance of sporting and market metaphors to the anonymity-signature debate that began at the end of the 1850s. The qualities of fair play, manliness, and healthy competition were conveyed through gaming metaphors employed by pro-signature advocates who argued that public debate was weakened by anonymity. They contended that anonymity produced lazy, irresponsible writing and an "unmanly" atmosphere in public discussion. The cultural and social impropriety of public argument between men and women, either in print or in assembly, was only reinforced by such metaphors of competition and battle with which women were supposed to be unfamiliar.

As we saw in Chapter One, because women were regarded as creatures of emotion and instinct, their supposed mental and physical inability to reason made them unfit participants/combatants in public debate, which seemed to require both cunning and fair play. The *Saturday Review* referred to the debate on deduction and induction in order to explain that women's intellect belonged naturally in the former category and was therefore unsuited to a coherent public debate between intellectual equals: "[Women] do not proceed by arriving at argumentative conclusions from clearly-defined premisses [sic], but they throw out observations which they cannot tell how they came by, but which give the discussion a new turn, and open up new lines of thought. However equal, therefore, their intellect may be, yet, as it works in a different way from that of men, their

education must be accommodated to this difference" ("Intellect" 417). Women, the writer reiterated, were known for enthusiasm and emotion, rather than method or thoroughness. The writer concluded by pronouncing that he or she did not wish to see girls indulging in the same sports and amusements with boys: "Young ladies surely can attain and preserve health without anything like public games" ("Intellect" 418).[7]

This was not of course the first or last time the *Saturday* commented on the Woman Question or on the activities of the Langham Place circle. Another relative newcomer, having originated in 1855, the weekly *Saturday Review* established its socially-conservative signature in part by ridiculing the claims of the feminist movement, and the individuals associated with it.[8] Shortly after the *EWJ*'s first number in 1858, an article in the *Saturday* had called it "temperate," "dull," and "ludicrous" before going on to argue with its understanding of political economy. One month later the *EWJ* responded, saying, "we will venture to meet our critic even upon the forbidden ground of political economy" ("'Saturday'" 202). Invoking the names of Harriet Martineau and Jane Marcet[9] to authorize women's right and ability to speak about political economy, the *EWJ* argued that "custom and prejudice" as much as the laws of the labour market determined the gender of the workforce ("'Saturday'" 204). The response to the *Saturday Review*, and to the larger issue of political economy as a set of immutable, gender-blind "laws," is but one example of how the *EWJ* attacked what it saw as the root of women's oppression—"custom and prejudice." Thus, despite the fact that many feminist articles in this period (in the *EWJ* and elsewhere) repudiated "theory" and abstraction, it is possible to read such disclaimers as the necessary rhetorical precautions women needed to take in order to preserve the accepted appearance of women's intellectual capacity as rooted in

the concrete and the experiential.[10] At the same time, however, a feminist public intellectual like Frances Power Cobbe could also just as easily draw criticism for the absence of theory and the preponderance of fact in her writing (Brake, "*Westminster*" 257).

Argument between men and women was for many an issue unto itself, a sign that women had abandoned their feminine modesty in order to "parade their knowledge and their cleverness for the gratification of their own vanity" (Roscoe 344). The majority of women were seen to be mentally incapable of argument, while the select few "strong-minded" women were so "unnatural" as to be unfit for reasoned argument as well. Writing for *Macmillan's Magazine* in 1866, Helen Taylor assessed the current state of gender debates, using the familiar metaphor of combat to a slightly new purpose. In an article signed with her initials, Taylor wrote,

> [O]f all the battle-fields of confused and diverse opinion, none is more strangely and chaotically intermingled than the perennial dispute, which all the world loves to join in, as to the comparative merits, duties, faults, and virtues of men and women. Feelings, passions, fancies, sentiments, resentments, hopes, dreams, fears, come pouring in, all eager to do their part in settling the matter, so that, in this particular contest, prejudice and ignorance seem calm and rational in comparison with the rest of the combatants. Nor is this abundance of personal feeling astonishing when we come to consider the subject, since every one is personally concerned in it[.] (Taylor 248)

For Taylor, as for John Stuart Mill in the *Subjection*, it was neither women nor men who were particularly confused or incapable of debate. Rather, the Woman Question was itself

an arena of confusion and chaos, ruled by passion and prejudice that clouded one's ability to perceive and reason from "evidence" rather than from custom, or from "fact" versus "theory." Unlike most commentators, however, Taylor accused both men and women of excessive passion and feeling. The rules of engagement enforced and observed in other arenas of public debate were seemingly inapplicable to debates about sexual relations.

"Added Power"

The article in the *National Review* (1855-1864) that provoked Joseph Parkes to write his stern letter to Bessie about the conduct of the *EWJ* was not written by Richard Holt Hutton or his co-editor, Walter Bagehot, as Joseph Parkes had surmised, but by William Caldwell Roscoe, Hutton's brother-in-law, and a frequent contributor to that journal who wrote mostly on poetry and fiction.[11] Like many anti-feminist articles of its kind, Roscoe's discounted feminist claims by praising women's innate virtue, intuitive intellect, and quickness of observation, thus "proving" that a man's education was unsuited to a woman's nature. It also criticized "this body of female-right vindicators" for speaking for all women, advising, "it should be remembered that of women these are the least truly women, and that it is most misleading to assume them as representatives of their sex" (349-350). Joseph Parkes made no comment in his letters on this personal jibe at Parkes's sexual identity as a feminist and a spinster. Rather, he was most concerned about Roscoe's rebuke of Bessie's argument for women's study of Chaucer, Jonson, Dryden, Fielding, and Sand. In *Remarks on the Education of Girls*, Bessie had singled these out as authors who could instruct women on the history of the relations of the sexes. Roscoe took direct aim at this suggestion, implying not that these authors were unsuitable

reading for women, but that Parkes must be insufficiently familiar with them, since there was nothing in them about the relations of the sexes. He also laughed off her suggestion that political and social economy, along with arithmetic and geometry, were becoming appropriate training grounds for women's intellectual and social pursuits.

Joseph Parkes, too, thought these suggestions of Bessie's ludicrous and wrote to her immediately:

> I always thought your ephemeral & thin Remarks on the Education of Girls—with the thoughtlessness of your own young single name unnecessarily on the Title Page, would get you into trouble. But you never would take counsel of the older of your friends—preferring the flattery of your Younger Compatriots; & like me & others of your literary Predecessors you will repent at leisure of early indiscretions of premature publications. And you have one bad & dangerous fault—that you also in your youth will not read what others have written & discussed for centuries, over & over again, of your favourite Theories. (BRP II 64/1)

What interests me about the exchange between the *National Review* and the *EWJ*, particularly when read through the lens of her father's harangue, is that Parkes must have recognized a value in responding, rather than remaining silent and shielded behind a more prominent and established periodical such as the *Westminster,* as her father had cautioned.[12] Given her background in a political and religious tradition that valued rational public debate, Parkes's decision to reply to the *National Review* is unsurprising on a personal level, especially since the *National* was loosely Unitarian, and staffed by writers and editors with whom the Parkes family were likely connected.[13] But the

exchange also reveals the risks Parkes was willing to take, not only on issues of middle-class women's education and employment, but also on the status of *EWJ* itself as a new "player," small though it was, in the periodical press's battle for public opinion.

It is worth noting that the quarterly *National Review* was itself a relatively new player in the game, originating in 1855. By 1858, however, the *National* had already established itself as a viable competitor with the *Westminster, Edinburgh* and *Quarterly Reviews* (*Wellesley* 140). By 1861 its circulation had reached 1500, hardly more than the *EWJ*'s. But its status, mandate, and the audience it imagined in its prospectus—"thoughtful and able men in the country at large . . . whose incalculable influence on public opinion makes it most important to give them the means of arriving at just conclusions"—had an appeal that the *EWJ* could only dream of (*Wellesley* 139). With such established periodicals as *Fraser's* and the *Westminster* to contend with, the *National*'s inclusion of Roscoe's article, "Woman," can be read as a move in the game between those journals, particularly given the *Westminster*'s high concentration of articles on topical gender issues throughout the 1850s.[14] Although the *National* maintained strict adherence to anonymity, Roscoe was nevertheless one of its star contributors; the editors were clearly interested in having one of their best writers address the latest publications on the Woman Question. In addition, "Woman" appeared at a crucial moment in the *National*'s run. In the July,1858 issue, an "Advertisement to Subscribers," which the *Wellesley* calls "unique" for its time, had notified its readers that the success of the journal meant it would be extending its length and increasing the price "to approximate the size of the *National* very closely to that of the other Quarterlies" ("Advertisement" 246). Roscoe's "Woman" appeared in the very next number,

suggesting that a full treatment of the Woman Question was key to the appearance of successful renewal and social relevance the *National* was cultivating at the time.[15]

But even if Roscoe's article spoke less to the *EWJ* than to the *Westminster* and *Fraser's*, its main competitors, the *EWJ* had now become involved in the debate as the ground on which it was staged. The question of how and whether to respond was paramount, and Parkes wrote immediately to Anna Jameson to ask for her advice. A feminist mentor to Parkes who was both a frequent critic and admirer of the *EWJ*, Jameson was more inclined to sympathize with Parkes than to scold her, as Joseph Parkes had done. In October 1858 Jameson informed Bessie that although she had been unable to obtain a copy of the *National Review*—"it is not to be had in Brighton at any library"—she was sympathetic to "the pain & the indignant sense of wrong in your own mind" that the article had occasioned. "I can only comfort you by telling you that it will all pass away—it will be forgotten & it will be to you an added power. This I am sure of.—every one who breaks out a new path has this to undergo. I am only sorry the attack was noticed in any way—what is the result?" (BRP VI 26). Jameson's assurance that the attack would give Parkes and the *EWJ* "added power" is worth emphasizing, since there are at least two ways of reading its significance. Jameson may have meant that even negative publicity could strengthen and clarify a journal's position in the market, and attract readers. She may also have meant that public disapprobation could only help to fortify Parkes's resolve over the long term.

Parkes evidently sent a copy of "Woman" to Jameson. A few days after her first letter on the subject, Jameson wrote again to Parkes, criticizing the essay's length, and its "verbose commonplaces" (BRP VI 35/1). Jameson's advice helped persuade Parkes to

enter into open debate with her opponent. Defying her father's advice, then, "The Reviewer Reviewed" appeared in the *EWJ* in January, 1859, answering the attacks on Parkes's book and on the movement in general. It was unsigned, but was undoubtedly authored by Parkes. With a sarcastic, crisp tone to match Roscoe's, the article opened by confessing to a confusion about just which "side" the author was on: "the first question one asks is whether the reviewer be for us or against us," it remarked ("Reviewer" 336). It also mocked the reviewer for employing a rhetorical strategy that ultimately undermined his argument: "Nothing in the progress of a controversy indicates better on which side the scale is turning, than to see a combatant driven to plead the cause of his opponent as a condition on which he himself may obtain a hearing—and plead it too so well" ("Reviewer" 336). To illustrate this point, the article went on to quote liberally and selectively from the "good bits"—those sections of the article that, read out of context, would appear to be arguments for a feminist cause. This had been Anna Jameson's advice: "you may however pick out some good passages—& endorse them with the name & dignity of a 'Judge' which always has an effect . . . these sort of truisms (not generally accepted however) lose nothing by repetition" (BRP VI 35/1). It was perhaps these "good passages" that constituted the "'added power'" Jameson had written of earlier.

On several occasions Jameson offered valuable advice to Parkes on how to cultivate and manage the content, style and tone of the *EWJ* and the *Waverley Journal* (1856-58), which preceded the *EWJ*. (See Rendall.) Like Joseph Parkes's sometimes scathing indictments of his daughter's literary endeavours, Jameson's critiques offer insight into the kinds of values and assumptions that informed the reading experience of monthly journals. Both Joseph Parkes and Jameson were as concerned with the journal's

affective qualities, such as style and feeling tone, as with its feminist politics. More to the point, they saw little distinction between the arguments and the language, tone, and style with which they were articulated. Joseph Parkes was as anxious with Bessie's use of the word "prostitute" in one article as he was with her reason for using it (BRP II 64/1&2). Jameson had been very clear on the importance of tone in periodical discourse in her 1859 "Letter to Lord John Russell,"[16] where she observed that while periodicals had become an important element of women's casual reading, many of them were full of ridicule and satire directed at women's "honest endeavours" (xxiv). In the pages of the national literature, the woman reader "perceives that these gentlemanly adversaries do not argue the question of right or wrong, they simply use a power for a purpose. . . . It is not the facts or the truths which offend, it is the vulgar flippant tone, the slighting allusion, the heartless 'jocosity'—to borrow one of their words—with which men, gentlemanly, accomplished, otherwise generous and honourable men, can sport with what is most sacred in a woman's life—most terrible in a woman's fate" (xxv). For Jameson, such discourse was "unanswerable" and women's position would not be advanced by "retorting scorn for scorn" (xxvi)—such a move would lead to nothing less than the unraveling of the entire social fabric. Parkes seems to have adopted Jameson's advice quite deliberately, as the tone of the *EWJ* indicates, and as Parkes commented in a letter to Bodichon in 1863:"[T]here seems to me no good in provoking the vulgarities of a tribe of newspaper writers, who can adorn their style with language to which ladies can make no reply" (BRP V 122/1).

Regarding the *Waverley*, Jameson advised Parkes to seek the advice of "good and intelligent men," and, like George Eliot, not to "feminise" the journal too much (BRP VI

21). She objected to the "vulgar" use of the word gentlemen (rather than simply men) in the *Waverley*'s prospectus, and criticized the quality of the book reviews, calling them "careless in style & very hurried & unsatisfactory" (BRP VI 22). When the *Waverley* folded in 1858, Jameson wrote Parkes that she was not sorry to see it go, and looked forward to the *EWJ*, Parkes's new venture. A faithful subscriber and feminist supporter who nevertheless refused to contribute her own work to the journal—"I must fight my battle single-handed"—Jameson continued to read each issue cover to cover, and offered Parkes valuable critical assessments of each article (BRP VI 30/1). For the October 1858 number, for example, she pronounced Parkes's article "Domestic Life" very good on the whole but "confused" in places, and wanting "close & more consecutive reasoning." She admired a biographical sketch of Felicie de Fauveau by Isa Blagden,[17] affirming its "truth" and "good taste"; Barbara Bodichon's article "Slavery in America" she appreciated for its "correctness simplicity & gravity," while an article on the workings of the divorce act was deemed "unintelligible—you should have given a clear abstract for the use of the unlearned." She remained critical of the book reviews, which were "not lively nor on subjects generally amusing" (BRP VI:27). Jameson saw reviews—of both books and other periodicals—as potentially important platforms from which to share information and "suggestive thoughts"—"some wit and gracefulness in this department would be very serviceable" (BRP VI 30/1).

The EWJ and the Cultural Field

Striking the right tone among the *EWJ*'s small readership thus demanded considerable editorial skill and caution, and entailed both the reiteration and redefinition

of gendered codes of public behaviour. While her father continually reminded her of her gender and youth, warning her not to argue in print with "Experienced and older Males," Parkes was urged by others to adopt a stronger, more combative tone. Referring to co-editor Matilda "Max" Hays and W.J. Fox, Bessie wrote the following to Bodichon in 1859: "Max thinks I am far too timid in my expression of opinion, and Mr. Fox thinks so too; but I don't believe there is any abstract Public for Divorce & the Suffrage, and I am far better pleased to gain the approbation of our elders and betters, and trust to the gradual workings of public opinion towards further extentions [sic] of principle, than to smash my head and your money against a Brick wall" (BRP V 86/3).

Falling somewhere between Joseph Parkes and Max Hays's opinion was the advice Parkes received early on from George Eliot, warning her not to effect a signature for the *Journal* that read as "lady-like." For Eliot and other readers, an editorial tone and identity that proclaimed their femininity up front connoted the trivial and unprofessional. As Solveig Robinson has written recently, for many, "[t]o proclaim that a publication was 'Conducted by Women' would be to immediately marginalize it and thus impede its ability to effect change" (159). This was Emily Davies' assessment of the *EWJ* as it began to falter seriously in 1862 and 1863. For Davies, the *Journal* had always been too avowedly feminine, appealing too obviously to a female audience. In promoting such a particular and still very vulnerable set of arguments and opinions, Davies felt the journal had sacrificed quality and a general, mainstream, mixed readership. Yet at the same time, Davies was concerned with the *EWJ*'s "license," and envisioned a new journal which would, in historian Jane Rendall's words, "[avoid] any appearance of antagonism between the sexes" (136). This was to be the mandate of the *Victoria Magazine*, a

"quality" journal, with a stable of known male and female writers, whose signature was to include women's rights as one among several of its running themes.[18] Davies had envisioned a journal that would compete with a *Fraser's* or a *Westminster*, and was interested in cultivating a more professional manner that she believed was beyond the capability of the *EWJ*.[19]

As Laurel Brake's recent discussion of the *Westminster Review* in the 1850s and 60s demonstrates, gender issues, (including, but not restricted to, feminist ones), had become one way for periodicals to establish and reinforce their position in the market. Particularly following the repeal of the stamp duty, "gender" could signal a journal's interest in the topical, and reinforce its identity as a politically progressive or conservative space. Thus, as Eliot had implied in her advice to Parkes—and as her editorial experience at the *Westminster* demonstrates—"woman" was by no means off-limits as either a topic or a place from which to advance a particular argument; rather, it was the production and reproduction of "woman"—the shape, style, and tone she would assume in the pages of the established press and its competitors—that was of primary concern.

On the heels of a successful address to the SSA in 1859, Parkes wrote excitedly to Bodichon, "If you write for me upon Mill it will go into far more influential quarters than anything in Thackeray's Magazine"—the *Cornhill* (BRP V 94/1). In its early days, Parkes saw the *EWJ* as being potentially competitive with the *Cornhill*, an expectation that her father and even her colleagues regarded as a sign of her inexperience as an editor. As Jane Rendall has demonstrated, Bodichon and Emily Davies thought Parkes had unrealistic expectations for the *EWJ*, and, by 1865, Parkes seems to have revised her

hopes for the *EWJ* when she wrote that she never expected it to compete with the "able monthlies"—"such an idea would have been perfectly hopeless and absurd, and indeed self-destructive." (Qtd. in Lacey, ed. 218-219.) In addition, it is worth noting that Parkes and the editors of the *EWJ* viewed highly-successful domestic magazines like those run by Samuel Beeton as competition as much as they did a *National Review* or a *Cornhill.* The *EWJ* announced with evident satisfaction in its "Books of the Month" section for March 1862 that Beeton had sold one of his ladies' papers, the *Queen*, at auction, adding the following commentary: "This looks as if the providing of special literature for women's use were a difficult matter, even when undertaken by an excellent man of business, backed by capital and a large trained staff of workers; and gives the conductors of this journal increasing assurance that a slow and careful procedure is the only safe mode of dealing with questions of woman's work and social interest. Better to wait five years and *do it*, than try to accomplish it by a *coup* and—fail! (65).[20] Privately, Parkes wrote to Bodichon early in 1862 that "[t]he EWJ is doing its work; and the Queen Newspaper which started with such a flourish is being sold by auction! You feared it would be a rival, so did I; and so it might have been! but it wasn't!" (BRP V 111). Thus, the editorial identity of the *EWJ* was continually defined in relation to what it was *not*: neither a commercial women's paper with trained writers, nor an "able monthly" whose politics would necessarily be "diluted" by the fickle demands of the publishing market.

Parkes's 1865 explanation of the *Journal*'s cultural status, which I discussed in the Introduction, is worth repeating here:

> If it had been wished to start a brilliant and successful magazine, some eminent publisher should have been secured and persuaded to undertake active pecuniary

> interest and risk; all the best-known female writers should have been engaged, "regardless of expense"; *and then*—goodbye to the advocacy of any subject which would have entailed a breath of ridicule; goodbye to any thorough expression of opinion; goodbye to the humble but ceaseless struggle of all these years, and to the results which have sprung up around the small office where so many workers collected together, because the purpose and the plan were *honestly conceived and carried out.* (Lacey 218-219)

Pierre Bourdieu's theory of the field of cultural production is useful here in explaining the negative construction of the *EWJ*'s marketplace identity, not least because of the structuring metaphors of the "playing field" and "competition" Bourdieu employs in *The Field of Cultural Production.* Aligning their marginality—commercial, political, and artistic—with intellectual or artistic honesty and integrity is one of the strategies by which "newcomers" make room for themselves in the cultural field, as Bourdieu demonstrates. In its disavowal of commercial interests associated with self-interest and political impotence, the *EWJ* laid claim to the slow (careful, safe, and honest) accumulation of symbolic capital. And yet the *EWJ*, though it promoted a feminism that in its own day was regarded as a challenge to dominant authority, cannot properly be characterized as "avant-garde" or "insurgent," since it posed few serious political challenges to the established hierarchies on which its slender measure of success relied, and was by no means experimental on a formal level. Nor has it become "consecrated" as a timeless classic, except in the sense of a limited academic interest in it. However, as Bourdieu points out, the "restricted" field of cultural production, which produces "pure" works of art for a small, educated audience of often similarly-minded producers, depends

heavily on the field of "large-scale" production as its outside; it is not so much interested in overturning dominant culture as defining itself in relation to it. (See Bourdieu 74-110.)

Strategies

Eight numbers into the *EWJ*'s run, Bessie's father warned her that a "flagellation" in the *Times* would be in store if she did not take care (BRP II 64/1). Rather, and perhaps unexpectedly, the *Times* turned out to be something of an ally for the *EWJ*, if only briefly.[21] Late in 1859, the *Times* commented on "The Market for Educated Female Labour," Bessie's first address to the SSA congress in Bradford. Co-written with Bodichon and originally published in the *EWJ*, the article was reprinted in full in the *Times* and was the subject of two leaders in as many weeks.

Parkes was thrilled by the notice of the *Times*, and tried to get as much mileage out of it as possible. On November 11 a letter to the editor appeared in the *Times* expressing approval of the article, and listing a number of suitable new occupations for women. On November 18, one day after the second of the two leaders appeared, another letter to the editor was published, this one signed by Langham Place member Isa Craig, with a notice that a committee had been formed to seek the best means of promoting women's employment.[22] Parkes wrote excitedly to Bodichon, co-author of "The Market for Educated Female Labour": "Dear, the Whole Kingdom is ringing with our Bradford Paper, and subscribers are pouring in at the EWJ Office.

The *Times* took an avuncular approach to the question of educated female labour when it lamented the hard reality that not all women could find husbands and hence fulfillment inside the domestic sphere. But it urged its readers to recognize this social fact

rather than cling to inaccurate notions of women's actual situation. The *Saturday Review,* on the other hand, was contemptuous of the "argumentative fallacy" of Parkes's paper, countering that work for women and life insurance had nothing to do with one another ("Queen" 575). The *Saturday* summed up its argument with a commercial metaphor: since marriage was a woman's profession for which dependence trained her, those who "failed" to marry had simply failed in business. The situations of distressed governesses, unprovided widows, and insolvent tradesmen were seen to be contiguous—they were to be pitied, but their plight was inevitable. Referring to both Parkes and the *Times'* cautious approval of her position, the *Saturday* remarked, "We fear we are driven, in spite of Miss Parkes and a writer in the *Times*, to the old-fashioned view, that it is better for all parties that women should not, as a rule, be taught some useful art, and so be rendered independent of the chances of life. We do not want our women to be androgynous" ("Queen" 576).

The emotional impact of representation in the mainstream press was significant for women entering public life. In January 1860, an article in the *Saturday* entitled "The Ladies Club" made sport of the recently-formed women's club at Langham Place with "scandalous" allusions to the French revolution, Tennyson's *The Princess,* the Turkish harem, and the island of Lesbos. With patronizing assurance that male club life was not all it was cracked up to be anyway, the writer warned that the spinsters who frequented such a club could probably expect never to marry, and that the matrons would be found guilty of shirking their domestic duties. Parkes wrote immediately to Bodichon:

> The Saturday Review wrote the most beastly article against the "Ladies Club" that has yet appeared in its pages; dirty & indecent to a horrible degree. I expect it will

> get all the husbands and fathers of our 80 ladies wild with anger; for this time, you see, the whole body are attacked; & I was quite amused to see how the half dozen ladies in yesterday afternoon stormed at it! Dr. Richardson also came in; very angry. It will do us no harm; because it is so outrageous and makes such disgusting classical allusions that it isn't fit for family reading. It mentions no names; but comes down on every woman who enters our doors; so I hope Mrs. Jameson and Lady Goldsmid and Miss Twining and Mrs. Webber will feel flattered! (BRP V 95/1)[23]

There is no record of Joseph Parkes ever responding to the *Saturday*'s attacks on the *EWJ*, although this doesn't mean that he wasn't concerned, or that he didn't write to Bessie about it. As Bessie's letter to Bodichon indicates, while the *Saturday* may have had a larger readership than the *National Review*, the latter had greater prestige, and the good opinion of its intended audience was probably of greater importance to Joseph Parkes than that of the *Saturday*'s.

One common way of responding to the "vulgar" attacks in the *Saturday* and elsewhere was by making a point of "rising above" them. For example, an 1860 article in the *EWJ* called "Tuition or Trade?," signed by A.R.L.,[24] took up the arguments of an unsigned article in *Fraser's* called "Female Labour."[25] A.R.L. prefaced her remarks with the following observation:

> It is pleasant to meet an opponent of polish and culture, in contrast to the coarseness of some of our few adversaries; we feel at ease to speak calmly and kindly, as with a friend from whom we differ on a few points only to agree all the more on those of higher and enduring importance; while we are sadly out of our

> element in an encounter with uncourtly foes, having to guard against stabs in the back or thrusts in the dark. (173)

Referring to the *EWJ* as "the recognised organ of those who advocate the employment of women," A.R.L.'s opening statement indicated that the tone of argument in *Fraser's* was more amenable to a response from the *EWJ* than that of its other unnamed "foes" (A.R.L 181). Using terms laden with class-specific meanings such as "culture," "coarseness," and "uncourtly," the *EWJ* thus aligned itself with *Fraser's* prestige and authority, before going on to refute each of the major claims in "Female Labour." Another way of reading the *EWJ*'s recognition of the "polish and culture" of the *Fraser's* argument is as a reciprocation of *Fraser's* polite approval of the tone of "The Market for Educated Female Labour," which it described as "thoroughly judicious and business-like" and free of the "error," "prejudice," and "feeling" that often accompanied such discussions ("Female" 359). By invoking them to disavow them, however, both *Fraser's* and the *EWJ* kept the other participants in the public debate in view and in play: *Fraser's* negatively defines Parkes and the *EWJ* by referring to those unnamed, prejudiced, and erroneous "female writers . . . both here and in America" ("Female" 359); A.R.L. responds by calling up the low, back-stabbing tone of the unnamed *Saturday* as the "other" to *Fraser's* politeness and fair play. A.R.L concedes that while some feminist writers, although few, may have exceeded the limits of good taste in their mode of argument, it is also true that "while we are thankful for the generous encouragement shown in many influential quarters and in tangible form . . . a narrower spirit prevails and in a wider sphere, whereby the mere effort to gain bread is encountered by . . . prejudice" (A.R.L. 174).

"Nobody in Particular"

The most sustained and witty attack the *EWJ* ever made against the *Saturday Review* appeared in 1859 in an articled entitled "Things in General," signed by "Nobody in Particular." This time the offending article in the *Saturday* was one on Elizabeth Blackwell, who had recently received her M.D. in America ("Lady Doctors"). It had been full of factual errors and, according to the *EWJ*, unsound premises. "Things in General" was the "transcript" of a dialogue, perhaps only slightly fictitious, between "Nobody in Particular"—Bessie—and her "Intelligent Friend," or I.F.—Bodichon. The dialogue ranged over a variety of issues faced by the editors of a reform periodical trying to gain a footing in the race for public opinion: the homogenizing influence of Mudie's on the English reading public, the circulation of literary gossip, and the "lack of truth" in newspaper and periodical criticism. Not needing to name the *Saturday Review*—two dashes were coyly inserted in place of the name—"Nobody in Particular" and her "Intelligent Friend" dissected the *Saturday*'s article on Blackwell, before "Nobody in Particular" made the following observation:

> The writers, very clever, well educated writers, men who are far too highly cultivated, by help of college and class, to fall into any solecisms of grammar or obvious inaccuracies in matters intellectual, persist and will persist in ignoring and ridiculing the greatest movement of modern times, what Mrs. Jameson in her late letter to Lord John Russell calls 'this much vexed woman question.' And they will do this with all the power of their logic, which is as perfect as their premises are usually unsound, and with all the sharpness of their wit, which is as amusing as it is universally unscrupulous, up to the very last moment. ("Things" 297)

"Nobody in Particular" here draws attention to the gendered game of the better argument, in both its political and rhetorical senses. Education, social class, and maleness—signified in print by impeccable grammar, logic and sharp wit—were essential weapons of public debate that the *EWJ* could not flaunt, not because its editors and contributors did not possess them, but because to wield them would have weakened the position it was trying to maintain on the border between established and progressive discourses, between polite dealing and social critique. By 1862 Parkes seems to have grown weary of this battle when she commented to Bodichon that the periodical market had changed since the *EWJ* had begun, that it had become a "race" "which shall buy the cleverest article," a race she admitted she could not hope to "win" given her limited resources (BRP V 114/1).

More generally, "Things in General" is notable for its tone—it is one of the few instances in the *EWJ* where earnestness is replaced with irony and satire; the attitude is one of battle-weary familiarity with the slings and arrows of public debate in the press. "Nobody in Particular" begins by remarking "how useful it would be if a freer element of discussion could be introduced" in the *EWJ*. That is, "Nobody in Particular" regrets that casual remarks heard in everyday conversation—the best indicators of shifts in public opinion about the Woman Question—never get to appear in the *EWJ*'s "grave articles" on workhouses and governesses. "'Let us,' said I, 'try to remember all the clever hints we hear.' 'Yes,' said my Intelligent Friend, sighing, (for the I.F. is of a satirical turn,) 'but the stupid things also. *What stupid things people do say.*'" ("Things" 289). "Intelligent Friend" wonders whether "Nobody in Particular" is thinking of "Friends in Council" and "Christopher North"[26] as examples of the kind of forum she proposes.

> "[Y]ou must take care not to plunge into scrapes," warns Intelligent Friend. "How exceedingly awkward if the desire of being lively should make you personal. For instance, Christopher was always in hot water. . ."
>
> "Do not fear," I replied, "I do not intend to make my observations issue from people's mouths like the labels from the figures in the old Florentine pictures. We will only try to embody the current speech of society, and there is such a wonderful *solidarité* among us that really anybody might be everybody, and *vice versa.*" ("Things" 290)

This moment in the dialogue opens a window onto several separate but related issues: it reinforces the care that was needed when the woman journalist entered into or tried to "embody" or mimic public discussion for the purpose of criticizing it. "Intelligent Friend's" warning that a lively tone could "make you personal" could refer to either subject or object; that is, "being personal" could mean either a dangerous exposure of oneself or others. Although the raison d'être of "Christopher North" was to provoke *Blackwood*'s audience through personal innuendo and suggestion, the *EWJ* could not run the risk of directly offending other authors or journals, for fear of retaliation or "flagellation," as Joseph Parkes would have put it. At the same time, it was clear that Parkes was eager to make the *EWJ* a more vital space that could embody the current conversation of society in order to push the style and mode of feminist argument to a level that would invite further debate. The problem was how to invite interest without controversy; how to provoke without offending.[27]

The subterfuge of the pseudonyms "Nobody in Particular" and "Intelligent Friend," the censored name of the *Saturday Review*, and the conviction that "anybody

might be everybody" draw attention to women's precariousness in public print discussions, and to the conventions of anonymity and false politeness that structured print debates in general. Although the article does not directly call the practice of anonymity into question, it is perhaps no coincidence that anonymity was at this time beginning to come under serious question.[28] In 1860, William Hawes read a paper on anonymous writing in the daily press to the SSA, in which he argued that "the cause of truth must be injured by secrecy of any kind attaching to public writing" (846). Like other writers after him, Hawes worried about the leveling tendencies of anonymity:

> Anonymous writing places the most scrupulous and most unscrupulous, the most exact and the most inexact, the most truthful and the most untruthful, upon a presumed equality. Education and intelligence, position and rank, are all sacrificed to anonymous writing. Were the authors of articles known, the moral character, the social position, the superior intelligence, and means of obtaining information by one set of men over another, would at once turn the scale in their favour when statements differed." (854-55)

Liddle has noted that, unsurprisingly, advocates of anonymity did not generally identify women's access as a possible argument in its favour, although it has occasionally been suggested that anonymity was crucial for women authors and journalists in the early to middle decades of the century, for it allowed them access to an audience without fear of exposure and notoriety, and to experiment with a variety of narrative voices and strategies deemed "male" (Onslow).[29] For these reasons, it is not clear that, as a woman journalist and editor, Parkes would have agreed entirely with Hawes's pro-signature argument. It was Parkes herself who, in an unsigned 1859 article in the *EWJ*, applauded

women's direct, but unacknowledged influence on public opinion through the press, and who pointed out the extent to which male editors relied on women's unsigned contributions:

> As periodicals have waxed numerous, so has female authorship waxed strong. The magazines demanded short graphic papers, observation, wit, and moderate learning,—women demanded work such as they could perform at home, and ready pay upon performance; the two wants met, and the female sex has become a very important element in the fourth estate. If editors were ever known to disclose the dread secrets of their dens, they only could give the public an idea of the authoresses whose unsigned names are Legion; of their rolls of manuscripts, which are as the sands of the sea. ("Adoption" 4)

Parkes called writing for the press the "easiest" of the few suitable occupations for middle-class women because it could be done from the privacy and comfort of one's home under cover of anonymity—"Its successful exercise demands little or none of that moral courage, which more public avocations require" ("Adoption" 4). This is a significant statement, given that Parkes herself had already—to her father's chagrin—signed her name to *Remarks on the Education of Girls*; added her signature to letters to the editor in the *Daily News* in the 1850s; mounted the platform of the Social Science Association; occasionally signed her articles in the *EWJ* with her initials; and was becoming increasingly recognized as a public figure. Her use of signature suggests that she was willing to risk her own reputation for the sake of public discussion and the promotion of "the cause". By 1865 Bodichon remarked in a letter to Louise Belloc—Parkes's future mother-in-law—that Parkes "[had] built up, though she may not be

conscious of it, a position of great distinction" (Hirsch 237). Thus, even as Parkes applauded women's unseen labour and unacknowledged influence as periodical writers, she was participating not only in articulating a feminist set of arguments and appeals, but also in making women's journalism a "more public avocation" by assigning her own name to her work. Parkes's signature, like the "polite" language that characterized the *EWJ*'s reform arguments, was thus a strategic enactment of a new type of periodical identity, one which attempted the "unheard of" argument in a style, tone, and voice that would be familiar and acceptable to its audience.

Regardless of Parkes's own literary reputation, however, her contention that anonymous journalism required little "moral courage" had implications for anonymity as a practice that could lead to abuse and irresponsibility. Pro-signature advocates argued that anonymity afforded a dangerous license rather than freedom of speech. The remark of "Nobody in Particular" that "anybody might be everybody" suggests a shared concern with Hawes that anonymity created an aggregate public voice undifferentiated by social markers of class, age, profession, or gender that inhered in the individual writer. Signature, like the rules of order in debate, guaranteed "freedom," but it held out the possibility of freedom from abuse and ridicule as much as the freedom to speak one's opinion. Although one couldn't argue that Parkes was a pro-signature advocate, it is possible to read one of the effects of the *EWJ*'s signature—together with women's increased presence on the public platform—as the introduction of a feminized, "civilizing" influence in public debate, as the "bettering" of argument itself.

In appealing to Jameson's wisdom on how best to respond to the *National Review*, Parkes wrote that she was reluctant to be "squeamish" of language in her response. While Jameson agreed with this, she also offered the following counsel:

> [I]t is quite possible to write forcibly without using coarse words—just as it is possible to be energetic without swearing. It is not "morbid sensitiveness" which renders some words and expressions offensive—it is a difference of manners by which women will profit & which we ought not to wish to see removed. We <u>can</u> deal fairly with subjects the deepest, the most hazardous, the most unaccustomed to "ears polite" without shocking conventional refinement, & it is worth while to do so. I have often wished to say this to you & now it is <u>said</u>. (BRP VI 35/2)

With these words, Jameson was instrumental in helping Parkes "set the tone" for the *EWJ*. Her advice in some ways captures the "essence" of this particular moment in the production of liberal, middle-class feminism: politeness, fair dealing, manners, and refinement were class-specific qualities worth preserving in the service of gaining a respectful hearing from "ears polite." Better to remain within the limits of an available and widely-accepted model of feminine behaviour than to transgress these limits for the sake of a set of arguments that were still marginal. In this, we see that women journalists and editors were as astute as their male counterparts in assessing the playing field of public opinion, the limits of the sayable, and the affect of particular positions, and tones of argument. But we also see that feminist journalistic discourse, and its entry into the dominant public sphere, was managed and disciplined by women as much as it was by a frequently hostile, male-dominated newspaper and periodical press. The rules that tried to govern women's participation in the game were thus reinforced and monitored by women

as much as by male writers and editors who controlled not only the dominant quarterlies, monthlies and dailies, but also much of the "ladies" press market.

If, as Philippa Levine has written, women's issues in the established press before the 1860s had often been the subject of "sport," as was arguably the case with the *National Review*'s article on the *EWJ*, how then do we make sense of the overall effect of such discourse on the shape and content of the first feminist periodicals? Is there a way to understand "sport" less as negative than as productive of feminism's entrance into the "game" of publicity? The "established" press was itself in a constant state of transition; if we understand the feminist press as merely the object of ridicule on the part of mainstream and/or "higher" journalism, we risk an understanding of the latter as unchanging and uniformly hostile to feminist argument. The *National Review*'s "attack" on the *EWJ*, was, I argue, an important and productive moment in the course of the *EWJ*'s run, but was also key to the *National*'s jockeying of its own position in 1858. As Brake has demonstrated, periodical culture after 1855 was becoming increasingly diverse, with writers becoming newly self-conscious about their language, their role in opinion formation, and their relation to other writers in the field ("*Westminster*" 255). As an editor, Parkes had not previously experienced the scope and force of the attention the *EWJ* received in the *National*, and the exchange offered a valuable lesson in the rules of the better argument. Rather than desiring complete separateness from the established press, the *EWJ*, as the first, public, sustained articulation of a middle-class feminist agenda, was keen to position itself in relation to a larger market of ideas and arguments of the "Experienced and older Males." It is this desire to play the game, to attempt the better argument, with extremely limited material resources—and circumscribed rhetorical

resources—that constitutes one of the *EWJ*'s most radical feminist projects.

Notes

[1] A version of this chapter has been accepted for publication in *Victorian Periodicals Review*. Forthcoming.

[2] One way of considering the term "public"—and its difference from parallel social categories like "community"—is that "public" is an abstraction that encompasses more individuals than it can name; "[w]hen we understand images and texts as public, we do not gesture to a statistically measurable series of others. We make a necessarily imaginary reference to the public *as opposed to* other individuals. . . . So it is only meaningful to speak of public discourse where it is understood as the discourse of a public rather than as an expansive dialogue among separate persons" (Warner 379). See also Berlant and Warner, 361-362.

[3] See Geoff Eley's discussion of multiple nineteenth-century publics: "The classic model [of the bourgeois public sphere] was already being subverted at the point of its formation, as the actions of subordinate classes threatened to redefine the meaning and extent of the 'citizenry'" (306).

[4] Ever wary of Bessie's increasing professionalization as a woman of the press, Joseph Parkes cautioned: "Do not make yourself a Slave or fancy it is necessary to the life and success of a monthly Periodical to be always behind its Counter" (BRP II 63/1). See also Anne Thackeray Ritchie's 1861 account of working women at the Victoria Press.

[5] See Brake; Brake et al; Boyce et al; Jones; Kent; Liddle; Onslow; and Shattock and Wolff for discussions of the periodical press's articulation of its own cultural and social role.

[6] On the history and impact of the editorial policies of the *Contemporary* and the *Nineteenth Century*, see Metcalf; Srebrnik; and the *Wellesley Index*, Volume 3.

[7] Parkes also used the language of infant sickness and death when he referred to the *EWJ* as being "born with the Croup." Such language was consistent with Parkes' continual infantilization of his daughter and her literary efforts of the 1850s, as well as the paternal authority he wielded within the family. (See Hirsch.)

[8] Women's role in public life continues to be understood through the use of sport metaphors. A recent feature in the *Guardian Weekly* on women politicians in New Zealand links "female bonding and competitiveness instilled on netball courts" with women's current prominence in New Zealand politics. (New Zealand's prime minister, opposition leader, governor-general, attorney general and chief justice are women). The article goes on to point out that despite this "female top five," wage gaps, domestic violence and the feminization of poverty persist in New Zealand, leading the writer to the following conclusion: "When New Zealand's netball team arouses similar passion [to its male rugby team] in its national psyche, maybe the battle for equality will have been won" (Barkham 21).

[9] See Bevington, Chapter 4, "Morals, Manners, and Social Subjects." It was perhaps the *Saturday* that one writer in the *Westminster Review* had in mind in a review of Parkes's *Essays on Women's Work* when he or she wrote that "Miss Bessie Rayner Parkes has

met, we are sorry to say, with rudeness from anonymous male writers, who seem to imagine that she is bent on unsexing women" (qtd. in Brake, "*Westminster*" 256).

[10] Marcet (1769-1858) wrote instructional and popular books for women and children on science and political economy, and was acquainted with Harriet Martineau, Mary Somerville, and Maria Edgeworth.

[11] By way of example, I quote Emily Davies' introduction to a signed article on "The Training of the Imagination" in the *Contemporary Review*: "I am anxious to keep as far away as possible from philosophical controversy. The purpose in view does not necessarily involve a decision on points at issue between rival systems of mental philosophy" (25).

[12] According to the *Wellesley Index*, Roscoe contributed, with one possible exception, at least one article to every issue before his sudden death from typhoid in July 1859. He was the *National*'s major literary critic; his reviews of *Maud, Aurora Leigh* and Gaskell's *Life of Charlotte Brontë* attracted much acclaim. In the "Opinions of the Press"—a running selection of positive reviews of the *National* reprinted in its advertiser—Roscoe's articles were often singled out for praise.

[13] In his letter Joseph Parkes referred to the *National Review*'s "attack" on the *Westminster* but he probably meant *Fraser's*, the periodical in which the article by Buckle appeared.

[14] The Parkes family was one of the "first families" of English Unitarianism; Bessie's maternal great-grandfather was Joseph Priestly (1733-1804), a rationalist theologian and a leading force in the articulation of English Unitarian doctrine. (See Gow.) Joseph Parkes, a barrister, was a leading Birmingham Radical, founder of the Reform Club, and activist in the Anti-Corn Law League. See Herstein, "Mid-Victorian"; Hirsch. Regarding the *National Review*, the *Wellesley Index* refers to it as "the most distinguished periodical founded by Unitarians in nineteenth-century Britain" (135), with contributions by W.R. Greg, James Martineau, and J.L. Sanford, among others.

[15] See Brake, "*Westminster*".

[16] Although the *National* did not include full-length articles on the Woman Question on more than a couple of occasions, it regularly featured reviews of women's literary writing. In addition to Roscoe's major reviews of Browning and Gaskell's *Life*, the *National* included an essay on George Sand by T.C. Sandars (1858); reviews of George Eliot's and Charlotte Yonge's fiction by R.H. Hutton (both in 1860); an article on Lady Mary Wortley Montagu by Walter Bagehot (1862); and a review of Margaret Oliphant's *Life of Irving* (1862). It was W.R. Greg's articles on women and the Woman Question, however, that attracted the most notoriety—"False Morality of Lady Novelists" (1859) attacked the corrupting influence of Gaskell's *Ruth* and "Why are Women Redundant?" (1862) provoked Frances Power Cobbe to reply with "What Shall We Do with Our Old Maids?" in *Fraser's* in 1862. While the *National* was not invested in the Woman Question to the extent that the *Westminster* was, "woman" and the literary endeavours of women were central to the *National*'s reputation for "discernment" and "discrimination."

[17] The open letter to Russell, who was at the time the president of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science, served as the introduction to the 1859 edition of her two famous drawing room lectures, "Sisters of Charity" (published in 1855) and "The Communion of Labour" (published in 1856).

[18] Blagden was a novelist and poet who is now remembered mostly for her friendship with the Brownings. See McAleer.
[19] Davies co-edited the *Victoria* for its first year with Emily Faithfull before leaving to concentrate on the campaign for women's access to higher education.
[20] On Emily Davies' assessment of the *EWJ*, see Rendall.
[21] The *EWJ* would eventually have had to eat these words, however. The *Queen* has lasted to the present, amalgamating with *Harper's Bazaar* in the 1990s to become *Harper's and Queen* (Beetham 9).
[22] On other occasions in later years, however, letters to the *Times* by members of Langham Place created conflict among the group's members. In 1862 Parkes's co-editor Matilda Hays published a letter to the *Times* explicitly comparing marriage to legalized prostitution, and calling the position of women in England "a fatal disease at the root of our civilization" (Hays 14). Her letter also implied that men who wrote and spoke about womanhood seemed to derive their knowledge of women "from intercourse with the fallen and degraded of the sex" (Hays 14). The members of Langham Place, as well as the Council of the SSA, were incensed by the tone and scandalous accusations of the letter, which led to Hays's "resignation" from the Society for the Promotion of the Employment of Women (SPEW) and the co-editorship of the *EWJ*. Then, beginning in 1863, a series of letters from Maria Rye, coordinator of the Female Middle-Class Emigration Society, (like SPEW, one of the several organizations under the umbrella of Langham Place), stirred Bessie Parkes's irritation for its "impudence." Writing to the *Times* from Australia between 1863 and 66, Rye was unsparing in her criticism of living conditions in the colony, and the lack of interest from colonists in helping her facilitate the settlement of middle-class female emigrants. When her letters eventually reached a colonial audience, they provoked much counter-criticism of Rye and her projects. (See Diamond.) In 1863 Parkes wrote about Rye to Bodichon, saying, "I was sorely tempted to write at once to the *Times* when the attacks appeared; but the cost seemed greater than the good to her" (BRP V 122/1).
[23] Seemingly an innocuous letter, it was later cited as an important piece of evidence in a private disagreement in 1862 between the members of Langham Place about the founding of the SPEW. Briefly, Jessie Boucherett, the founder of the SPEW, became concerned that she would be accused of spreading misinformation about herself as its originator after Lord Brougham mistakenly cited Parkes and Faithfull as the founders of the SPEW in his opening address to the London Congress of 1862. The subject of Craig's 1859 letter to the *Times*—a temporary committee that had been struck between Langham Place and the SSA to study the best means of promoting the employment of women—was not the same committee as SPEW, which had been founded by Boucherett prior to the SSA meeting. Anyone familiar with the complexities of collaborative organizing and overlapping committee work will recognize this as one of the inevitabilities of such work. But the incident serves to demonstrate that Boucherett, a Tory, was probably marginalized by influential male leaders of the SSA such as Brougham and George Hastings, its founders, and gives us some indication as to why the members of Langham Place gradually stopped using the SSA as a platform.
[24] See Hirsch for a discussion of the *Saturday*'s "disgusting classical allusions."
[25] Several articles by A.R.L. appeared in the *EWJ*. It is possible that A.R.L. is Anne Richelieu Lamb, author of an 1834 tract entitled "Can Women Regenerate Society?"

[26] The author remains unidentified in the *Wellesley Index.*

[27] *Friends in Council* was a series of four dialogues on social and intellectual subjects by Arthur Helps, published anonymously between 1847 and 1859. "Christopher North" was the central figure of *Blackwood*'s "Noctes Ambrosianae" series.

[28] In all likelihood, any reader of the *EWJ* who was familiar with the journal's editors and contributors would have easily surmised the "real" identities of "Nobody in Particular," her "Intelligent Friend," and the unnamed periodical they derided. Perhaps this is why "Things in General" only lasted for one more number (until August 1859)—such a feature may have seemed to veer too closely to a "personal" type of discourse associated with literary scandal and gossip, an association that the *EWJ* could ill afford.

[29] See Salmon; Liddle; and Brake (*Subjugated Knowledges)* for recent discussions of the anonymity vs. signature debates.

[30] This does not mean, however, that all women journalists clung to the practice of anonymity. In 1864, for example, Frances Power Cobbe clashed with the editors of the *National Review* when she insisted on signing her name to her article on the annexation of Italy, even though the *National* had been strictly anonymous up to that point. Cobbe's article appeared in the second-last issue of the journal but, interestingly, when Bagehot attempted to revive it with a "New Series" later that year (of which only one number was published), five of the ten (male) contributors signed their articles (*Wellesley* 144).

Chapter Four[1]

Speaking Volumes: Langham Place and the Social Science Association

> Regarding the rhetorical faculties of women, we may first remark that, by a well-known law of acoustics, a female voice will, if equally strong, reach further, and be audible more clearly at a distance, than that of a man, and, for some kinds of eloquence at all events, its softer and purer tones will probably find their way most easily to the heart. What her actual powers of oratory may be, is one of the problems of the future; but the experience of feminine public speaking during the last few years, though far too trifling to base a theory upon it, seems to point to a curious but not inexplicable rule, viz., that, given the same *ideas,* a woman will generally *express* them more easily than a man, at least than an Englishman. (Cobbe, Fitness 260)

In 1851, Bristol educator Mary Carpenter made the following observation in her private journal: "I wish that I could pursue the work I love so much without anyone seeing me, and that I could speak the word without anyone knowing who says it. It is a *great pain* to me to be brought into any degree of notoriety; but yet I must speak" (Carpenter 116-117, original emphasis). Ten years later, Carpenter's friend and colleague, Frances Power Cobbe, wrote, "The truth is unquestionable, that the most ordinary human voice conveys a power over the emotions far greater than the same ideas would bring by writing. The presence of the individual who addresses us, his whole personality brought before us—face, figure, voice, motion—are immense levers of our feelings and sympathy" (Cobbe, "Social Science" 92). Taken together, Carpenter and Cobbe articulate the central concerns of this chapter: the ambivalent appeal of public speech for Victorian women. An activist, speaker, teacher, social worker, and writer who worked with children of the "perishing and dangerous classes," Carpenter was throughout much of her adult life a very public figure whose influence and authority was often compared with Florence Nightingale's.[2] Carpenter became a prolific public speaker,

delivering more papers than any other woman speaker to the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science, giving lectures in India and America, and appearing as an expert witness before two parliamentary commissions on juvenile delinquency. However, she remained outwardly suspicious of publicity throughout her career, and eschewed direct involvement in the public feminist campaigns that lauded her work and held her up as an exemplar. Her letter expresses the desire of many early Victorian public women, feminist or otherwise: to be heard and not seen. Cobbe, on the other hand, encouraged women to exploit the power of the spoken word, to consider any occasion for public speech as an opportunity to appeal to an audience's moral feeling, and to introduce the "feminine element" unabashedly into public discourse (Cobbe, "Social Science" 93).[2]

In what follows, I discuss the significance of public speech and private conversation for the mid-Victorian feminist movement, with particular emphasis on women's speaking voices as sources of anxiety for both speakers and listeners. My focus is on those women speakers who were connected with the Langham Place activities and who were beginning at mid-century to address "mixed," middle-class, influential audiences on questions concerning women's work, education, and legal status. That is, I am examining a moment in Victorian feminism that both preceded and informed the organized women's suffrage movement and Josephine Butler's lectures on the Contagious Diseases Acts, but which followed earlier instances of public speech by women involved in the anti-slavery movement, Owenism, Chartism, and the agitation against the corn laws.[3] In this chapter I will focus on women's involvement in the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science, and the reception and amplification of their vocal contribution to the SSA within the mainstream and feminist

press. I demonstrate how Victorian middle-class women's appropriation of the SSA for the articulation of a liberal feminist agenda was marked by an acute awareness on the part of speakers and listeners of the status of the voice as a political instrument in the articulation of public spheres and identities. I argue that forums for public speech such as the SSA need to be understood not merely as "platforms" for the articulation of early feminist public identities, but as speaking contexts which organized the ways in which women's voices—both literal and metaphoric—were heard and understood.

> In order to assess and divine the real meaning of others' words in everyday life, the following are surely of decisive significance: *who* precisely is speaking, and under *what* concrete circumstances? When we attempt to understand and make assessments in everyday life, we do not separate discourse from the personality speaking it . . . because the personality is so materially present to us. And the entire speaking situation is very important: who is present during it, with what expression or mimicry is it uttered, with what shades of intonation? (Bakhtin 340-41)

Mikhail Bakhtin's insistence on the "entire speaking situation" as constitutive of the meaning and experience of verbal utterance serves as a reminder that the public sphere was comprised of embodied actors whose speech performances carried meanings over which they had only partial control. Despite Cobbe's insistence to the contrary in the epigraph to this chapter, a woman's speaking voice was generally perceived to be naturally unfitted for public delivery. A "feminine" voice, perhaps one with "an accent," was (and often remains) a distraction from, or negation of, the "content" of her speech. Yet as Bakhtin suggests, the gender of the voice, its tonal qualities, the audience it

addresses, and the location of the address also constitute the content of speech. For this reason, we need to pay more particular attention to the "entire speaking situation" of women's first attempts at public speech in the modern public sphere, in order to better understand the risks and the outcomes of their embodied acts of public participation. In what follows, then, I focus on women's participation in public debate and the anxieties it produced for both speakers and listeners; on their appropriation of particular rhetorical forms and strategies such as the "appeal"; and on the tonal quality of women's vocal expression itself as both a marker of social status and a significant political tool in the articulation of a middle-class feminist identity. In this respect, my work resembles that of Caroline Field Levander's; in *Voices of the Nation* Levander examines the cultural relevance in nineteenth-century America of the female speaking voice to the emergence and consolidation of middle-class power and identity through fictional narratives.[4]

Part of the reason for the lack of attention to women's public vocal expression undoubtedly lies in the impossibility of recovering the vocal effects of women's speaking voices. That is, in the absence of sound recordings of early and mid-Victorian women's speech, our access to women's speaking voices is limited to such texts which, far from conveying the sound of the voice with fidelity, "[inscribe] the absence of the speaking voice, whose place is represented by the words of the text" (Kahane xiii). Yet even if women's speaking voices were available to us as sound recordings, our access to their vocal performances would not be unmediated, for sound recordings are also cultural artifacts that order our reading/listening experience, by, for example, filtering out the presence of an audience at the moment of speech.

Another possible explanation for the paucity of criticism on women's public speech is the tendency in both literary criticism and feminist discourse to identify "voice" with speech, language, and metaphor, to the exclusion of questions about the materiality of the speaking voice and its status as a political instrument. In *Embodied Voices,* Leslie Dunn and Nancy Jones employ the term "vocality" rather than "voice," pointing out that "voice," although a central metaphor in feminist discourse, is too often associated with speech and language to the exclusion of the non-verbal properties of voice. The term "vocality" thus signals a more specific engagement than does "voice" with issues of performance, speaking context, and audition, and with the non-verbal and culturally-constructed meanings of vocal gesture, accent, pace, volume, and tone.

Researching the vocality of Victorian feminist public speech is, however, ultimately determined by the fact that women's speaking voices, the responses to them, and the reporting of the responses to them, are available to us as written texts. The task then becomes one of uncovering the ways in which particular texts, such as the transaction or the newspaper report, either attempted or refused to "'recapture' the authentic event of speech" (Salmon 31). Richard Salmon has argued recently that one of the hallmarks of the New Journalism was the privileging of speech over print in the attempt to convey a sense of presence and immediacy to the reader, through such techniques as the interview, and an increased emphasis on the speaker rather than the speech.[5] At mid-century, however, the annual *Transactions* of the SSA, one of the forms of speech transmission under investigation here, were notable for their refusal to convey much information about the speaker or the speaking event. In what follows, I gauge the

effects of this "silence" on the reception of the SSA as a space for public discussion by Victorian feminists and the press, and by historians of feminism.

Discursive Relations and Women's Appeal

Speech, talk, conversation, and discussion are central concepts in recent theorizations of the emergence of the modern public sphere. As an arena where social meanings and identities are generated and contested through discursive relations, the public sphere has been characterized as a space, both literal and abstract, constituted by the free and unconstrained speech of voluntary participants on matters of public concern. In her response to Habermas's *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, Nancy Fraser has written that the public sphere "designates a theatre in modern societies in which political participation is enacted through the medium of talk. . . . [I]t is not an arena of market relations but rather one of discursive relations, a theatre for debating and deliberating rather than buying and selling" (70). Here I understand "talk" and "debate" broadly: as vocal discussion in civic and semi-private forums such as clubs, as public writing, and as the liberal bourgeois ideal of free speech. For the purposes of this chapter, I am interested in talk as both an historical event, in which men and women communicate orally in organized settings, often with particular speaking rules, and in "talk" itself as a gendered activity and a subject of debate in the Victorian press. Although we might not consider the following instances of public speech and discussion as forms of "talk," since they are highly structured by particular rules of engagement, I proceed on the assumption

that all forms of talk, both formal and casual, "disciplined" and "free," are organized according to more or less implicit codes of utterance.

Also worth noting here is Fraser's engagement with Habermas's notion of the rational public sphere as an arena of free and unconstrained speech between citizens about matters of public concern. One of Habermas's most important claims—that socio-economic status became subordinated to the "authority of the better argument" in the transformation of the public sphere—probably describes an ideal rather than an historical set of circumstances. That is, social differences between public actors were never erased in public but "bracketed": the marginalization of women, people of colour, and working-class voices in the official records of public culture in western liberal democracies supports this argument (Fraser 77). Historians of British feminism and abolitionism have reminded us that one of the most famous examples of the public silencing of women occurred in London at the 1840 World Anti-Slavery Convention hosted by the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society. American and British women were prevented from participating in the convention as office holders and lecturers by the all-male, all-white committee of the British Anti-Slavery Society. It was eventually agreed that women be allowed to attend the assemblies, but only if they were seated behind a curtain and remained silent.[6]

The classic model of "the" public sphere as a singular achievement of upper middle-class men was never adequate even as it was being formulated as an ideal because it failed to account for the variety of counterpublics that created space for other voices.[7] Moreover, as Fraser indicates via revisionist historiographies of nineteenth-century counterpublics,[8] "the view that women and blacks were excluded from 'the public sphere'

turns out to be ideological; it rests on a class- and gender-biased notion of publicity, one that accepts at face value the bourgeois public's claim to be *the* public" (75). In other words, women's historical relationship to "the public sphere" needs to be re-assessed in light of the counterpublics in which women fully participated. We need to understand more precisely how counterpublics functioned both independently of and in relation to the official, male-centred, white bourgeois public.

Because of the strong cultural injunction against "heated exchange" between men and women in public and semi-public forums, middle-class feminists took extreme care to frame their contributions to public discussion within culturally acceptable modes of address. One of the most readily available of these frames was the "appeal." As Helen Rogers has shown recently, women's use of public appeal (to the constitution, to "the people," to abstract concepts of justice and equality) has a long history; by the time Josephine Butler made her famous 1870 *Appeal to the People of England on the Recognition and Superintendence of Prostitution*, the "appeal" had already been used by many public women in the tradition of popular constitutionalism and radical populism.[9] At mid-century, "the appeal" was appropriated by the growing middle-class liberal feminist movement as a form of discourse which could help contest women's political and legal disability without sacrificing feminine propriety. The boldness of appeal lay in its direct address to a particular, often powerful audience or set of ideals, but the other characteristics of appeal—supplication, entreaty, advocacy on behalf of a weaker party—were well suited to a public feminism that needed to observe particular conventions of femininity in order to gain a hearing. In 1858, Anna Jameson argued for the productiveness of women's appeal in bringing change to the lives of actual women, and

in introducing a fresh, "civilizing" quality to public debate. Praising the "healthy" and "hopeful" tone that had begun to "pervade public opinion" on the Woman Question in the wake of the passage of the 1857 Divorce Act, Jameson took issue with a recent argument in an "influential periodical" which had declared, "'No injured wives or suffering children are ever benefited by an appeal to the public'" (qtd. in "Notices" 345). Jameson argued, "The absolute tone of this assertion, as if it were some indisputable truth, strikes into silent acquiescence a timid unreflecting mind: but is this true? . . . It may be true as regards individual cases . . . but is it not to the awakening of the 'public' conscience by reiterated appeals against such individual cases of irreparable wrong, that we owe the protection of many women, the salvation of many children?" ("Notices" 346). In linking "appeal" to a new, "healthy" and "hopeful" tone in public discussion, Jameson also forwarded the other connotations of "appeal": attractiveness, influence, and "civility," all important qualities for the advancement of a liberal feminist movement and the promotion of women as moral and civilizing agents.

Women's appropriation of "appeal" for a range of political purposes is one way of recovering the relationship between competing publics in which women participated at different historical moments.[10] Mid-Victorian liberal feminism, articulated through formations like the SSA and the separate feminist press, was one such competing public, one which was neither wholly inside nor outside the dominant public sphere. This mode of feminism possessed a degree of cultural and social legitimacy at an official level through its proximity to forms of economic and symbolic capital, its relative access to sites of publicity such as the established press, and through the class status and recognizably "feminine" conduct of its members. But it was also subject to the dominant

public sphere's measures of control, containment, and exclusion, including gender ideologies that discouraged women's public participation and saw publicity as anathema to middle-class women's "nature." One such exclusionary measure was deployed through the press's reception of women's public speech, which characterized it as both a display and a contradiction of moral, middle-class femininity. I want now to turn to a discussion of the SSA as one type of public sphere which both facilitated and contained an emergent public feminism, with particular emphasis on the speaking codes that organized women's participation in the SSA, and on "talk"—both women's and men's—as one of the SSA's contested terms.

The Social Science Association and the Freedom of Discussion

The SSA is something of a lost site in feminist historiography. Although many historians of English feminism footnote it as a crucial platform for individual women participants and campaigns, it has until recently received little attention from feminist scholars. The reasons for this are many: the *Transactions* are unavailable in most libraries, and where they are available, they are vast, and difficult to use. In addition, the SSA dropped from sight not only in feminist history but in many other histories as well. The most extensive discussion of women's involvement in the SSA is by Kathleen McCrone, whose meticulously-researched essay is an obvious starting point. More recently, Ellen Jordan has turned to the SSA as an important site for the elaboration of various feminist campaigns around women's employment and university education. In *The Contest for Social Science,* Eileen Janes Yeo provides a fascinating analysis of the representation of class through the SSA's "version of social science which embraced the

communion of labour between men and women and then extended the principle to include co-operation between specialists and communication with the labour movement" (149). Also worth noting is Denise Riley's *Am I That Name?*, in which Riley touches briefly on the SSA as a space for imagining women as both agents and objects of social reform. The SSA was one site in which the category "women" became connected with "other collectivities established by . . . nineteenth-century sciences" (14). Riley argues that the SSA produced a version of "the social" through which women could apply newly-elaborated, "scientific" modes of "female goodness," which in turn helped redefine "women" as a social category.

The *Transactions* of the SSA are, and have been, an excellent "source" to be mined for the "content" of various mid-century feminist campaigns. Because the *Transactions* contain so little contextual information about the participants in the congresses, they are much less available to readings of the congresses themselves as actual speaking events. I want to suggest here that one of the reasons the SSA is often a footnote is precisely because the *Transactions* omit what made it exciting and attractive to feminist participants: an attentive and generally sympathetic audience whose support was expressed in a set of embodied gestures which are unrecuperable from the record. My contribution to the research on women and the SSA is thus to theorize the "entire speaking situation" of the SSA, even though the main source for this is largely resistant to such a reading.

The SSA can be seen as a near-ideal instantiation of a liberal bourgeois public sphere. Comprised of week-long annual congresses which convened in the civic halls of urban centres across Britain and Ireland, the SSA was a structure that wanted to articulate

a science of society. The original founders of the society included Lords Brougham, Russell, and Shaftesbury, John Stuart Mill, and Mary Howitt,[11] who theorized that if disparate social and legal reform movements and their practitioners could be brought together within a coherent organizational structure, a set of social "laws" would eventually emerge through conversation, which could then be used to ameliorate human misery.[12] Its organization resembled the present form of the academic conference. Individual papers on similar issues were organized into panels, with chairs presiding at each session and discussion time following the papers; plenary addresses were delivered by the presidents of each of the five departments of the SSA (Jurisprudence, Education, Punishment and Reformation, Public Health, and Social Economy were the original departments); a sermon functioned like a keynote address to inaugurate each congress; organized socializing was built into the structure of the week in the form of *conversaziones*, breakfasts, banquets, and site-seeing tours; and an "annual general meeting" wherein members discussed administrative policy took place near the end of the week. A separate Ladies' Conference organized concurrently with the other sections was added in 1869 and dropped after 1870. Delegates could attend by buying Association memberships or by purchasing individual tickets for the events. The *Transactions* of the conferences were published annually and printed by the Victoria Press under the direction of Emily Faithfull.

Most importantly for its role as a model public sphere, however, the SSA was a social and intellectual formation founded on a commitment to free discussion among concerned, non-specialist citizens on a range of public issues. For both its critics and defenders, the Association's heterogenous, non-professional membership was its

downfall and its salvation. In theory, the SSA tried to bracket social differences, including gender and class, in deference to the authority of open discussion as a mode of opinion formation. From its inception, party and religious differences were characterized as impediments to freedom of exchange, while peers, baronets, members of parliament, and fellows of the Royal Society mixed with industrialists, eminent social theorists, medical doctors, clergymen, women, and tradesmen for the purposes of airing all "shades of opinion," a phrase used frequently in the *Transactions*.

From year to year, members of the Association continually needed to remind each other of the inclusiveness and neutrality of the SSA. In his address to a meeting of working-class men at the Glasgow meeting of 1860, Brougham reiterated the Association's founding principle:

> We are of no party in the State; we are of no sect in the Church; we open our rooms to all parties from the highest Tory down to the purest Radical. (Laughter and cheers). Without distinction of persons, from the High Churchman to the Low Churchman, from the Catholic to the Protestant, from the Jew to the Gentile (laughter and cheers)—we open our doors to all sects, all classes, all parties, and all conditions of men. (Cheers). (qtd in Ritt 130)

Brougham's assurances aside, the congress of 1860 had been the most contentious of the SSA meetings so far, with three different sets of public actors dominating the agenda and the press's coverage: members were divided along religious lines regarding proposals for a Scottish public education system; a significant number of working-class men were participating for the first time as speakers and listeners in the meetings of the Committee on Trades' Societies and Strikes; and women speakers were beginning to attract more

attention than in previous years. According to the introduction to the *Transactions* for 1860, 20,000 applications for admission from Glasgow's working-class population were received that year, although only 3,500 tickets were available for distribution. The introduction also noted with pride that "the representatives of capital and labour met face to face and on equal terms, to debate questions involving the most cherished interests of both. Yet here again a feeling of moderation and fairness characterized the discussion, and the aim of the Association to furnish an impartial arena for social inquiry was fully realized" (*Transactions,* 1860, xxiv).[13] Thus, equally important to the SSA's self-representation was the appearance that while discussion among disparate groups had taken place, the tone of the discussion had been dispassionate and neutral.

The SSA's commitment to dispassionate talk as a social good in itself was enshrined in its policy from the beginning. In 1859 one member warned,

> We should avoid all those subjects, the discussion of which might introduce any perturbation in our deliberations . . . on which party feeling can be brought to bear, or upon which there is a fair balance of party opinion . . . If we do not take that course, the Society will be shipwrecked, and its deliberations will be brought to an end. We ought to endeavour to form an opinion calmly, dispassionately, and deliberately; and we cannot do that . . . if we introduce subjects upon which any strong party feeling exists. (qtd. in Ritt 128)

Thus, if discussion at the meeting of the SSA was "free," it was a freedom that was bounded not only by interests which outlawed interestedness, but also by codes for speech behaviours which attempted to forestall "unruly" displays of emotion on the part of speakers and audiences. For the SSA to achieve a level of social, political, and

scientific authority, and to differentiate itself from other pressure groups organized around particular reforms, such as the Anti-Corn-Law League, it needed to guard against any hint of raucous partisan argument associated with popular public assemblies and agitations in the early decades of the century. Platform feeling, outbursts of emotion, and references to personal or subjective experience were almost entirely absent from the proceedings of the SSA. Polite, reasoned, disciplined *discussion* characterized the meetings, rather than stylized oratory, persuasive argument, or even heated debate. Or so the *Transactions* suggest. According to the *Times*, a panel at the 1869 Congress in Bristol featuring papers both for and against the extension of the Contagious Diseases Acts[14] occasioned "a scene of great confusion and disorder. . . . Excited gentlemen in white cravats surged tumultuously over the benches, vociferated, half a dozen at once, set the chairman to rights about his ruling on points of order, and loudly applauded whatever seemed to tell in favour of their views" (Oct. 5, 1869).[15] But while *The Times* saw fit to report on the emotion this discussion produced, the *Transactions* contain no evidence of the effect of the debate on listeners.

Cranks, Bores and Hobbyists

As spaces governed by the interests of a sector of the middle-class public with a passion for reform, a passion regulated by particular speaking behaviours, the SSA's meetings and its *Transactions* were ideal places for middle-class women speakers and the early articulation of Victorian liberal feminism.[16] Women speakers were assured of receiving a "fair hearing" before an audience which had direct access to structures of power in an atmosphere controlled by the gendered, class-specific codes of conduct with

which these women were familiar. There is evidence to suggest, as well, that women's contributions to the SSA were taken seriously by audience members who could lend their support and authority to feminist reform projects, and that the SSA was, particularly in the 1860s, a vital and much-used space for the articulation of Victorian feminism.[17]

What made the space both vital and suitable for women participants was also, according to the SSA's critics, what made it unspeakably dull for the "average" listener. Nicknamed the "Universal Palaver Association" by *The Saturday Review,* the SSA was routinely criticized as a confederation of cranks, bores, and hobbyists full of extravagant theories and idle, undisciplined (and undisciplinary) talk. In 1862 the writer for the *Saturday* noted that, in the absence of a clear definition of the category social science, "we should say that reading dull papers in an inaudible voice is one department of Social Science, and that sitting still on a hard bench in front of the reader and going to sleep is another department of it" ("Social Science" 668). In 1863 *The Illustrated London News*, normally a defender of the SSA, noted that "mere 'talkee talkee' has been in the ascendant" (qtd. in Ritt 216). The tedium of the SSA's meetings even appeared in a comic novel by Thomas Love Peacock. In *Gryll Grange* (first published serially in *Fraser's Magazine*, 1860), the Rev. Dr. Opimian declares the "Science of Pantopragmatics . . . a real art of talking about an imaginary art of teaching every man his own business . . . Like most other science, it resolves itself into lecturing, lecturing, lecturing, about all sorts of matters, relevant and irrelevant: one enormous bore prating about jurisprudence, another about statistics, another about education, and so forth" (52-53).

One contributor to the *EWJ* described her experience at the congress in an unsigned, 1861 article. "A Week in Scotland" is a humourous, conversational, first-person travel narrative that provides some insight into the workings of the SSA, but is more interesting for its tone. Beginning with the journey from Euston Station to Glasgow, the narrator's excitement is deflated when she approaches a railway official to ask about reduced fares to Glasgow "on account of the *Association,*" and is met only with a blank stare and the realization that the meetings of the SSA are not uppermost in the minds of many of her fellow Britons. "I felt quite put down; the importance of my errand shrunk woefully in my imagination" (186), she confides. This disappointment is soon forgotten, however, when the narrator encounters one of the Vice-Presidents of the Association, also on his way to Glasgow, and, at Wigan, "a Dutchman likewise bound for the Association," who immediately enters into conversation with the Vice-President "on the bad sanitary condition of the canals at Rotterdam" (188). Their arrival in Glasgow the following morning is followed by an account of the narrator's brief struggle to find suitable lodgings, salted with a Londoner's withering characterizations of Glasgow, its amenities, and the hospitality of its citizens.

The narrator's descriptions of the atmosphere at the meetings of the Association, held in Glasgow College, are interesting for what they tell us about women's presence at the meetings, and the public reputation of the event:

> There is one element of fun to nine elements of wisdom in these meetings;---and the presence of numerous ladies adds a certain warmth and humanity to the scene. Immense is the excitement felt to hear the half dozen who actually read, and immense is the courtesy bestowed upon them. When Miss Carpenter's soft

> distinct tones are to be heard, the room, large or small, is sure to be packed with listeners . . . Then the ladies of the chief local families are all there, and they give grand dinner parties, and dress with sumptuous magnificence, and invite the strangers to their large houses . . . All Glasgow turned out in the evening to the great public *soirees*, and feasted the entire Association" (192)

The serious/pompous atmosphere of the SSA meetings is usually matched in the *EWJ*'s reporting of the events by a deferential attitude, particularly towards the dignitaries who lent their authority to the Association. The sardonic tone of "A Week in Scotland" is unique in feminist accounts of the SSA, and the article's suggestion that the meetings of the Association might have been a wee bit dull, or its participants occasionally self-important, sounds more like a *Saturday Review* article than anything else in the *EWJ* on the Association.

There is no shortage of contemporary press reports by both critics and defenders of the SSA on the reigning boredom of its meetings.[18] *The Times, The Pall Mall Gazette,* and the *Saturday Review* were among the SSA's most vociferous critics, while for many other major newspapers and journals it was simply beneath notice. Even recent historians admit its dullness: in his dissertation on the SSA, (the fullest treatment of the Association to date), Lawrence Ritt writes, "It must be conceded that a great many of the papers were extremely dull, and that some of them were deadly" (213). Kathleen McCrone has written that "although they make tedious reading, their contents are an invaluable source of information on the mid-Victorian approach to and perception of social and economic problems" (45). If Ritt and McCrone recognize that many of the congresses may have been rather monotonous affairs, however, they do not attempt to explain why Victorian

audiences generally found them boring, or why they remain so to the contemporary reader. I suggest that part of the reason the SSA was represented as tedious by its detractors was not simply because it attracted pretentious cranks with no aptitude for public speech, although this may well have been true in some cases. Rather, it was precisely that which might have enlivened its meetings—emotional display and party feeling—which was discouraged by the organizers and applauded by middle-class women reformers who needed a "safe" space in which and from which to speak. Furthermore, for women unaccustomed to having their voices heard in an assembly, or to inclusion in public meetings of any kind, the SSA was far from boring, and discussion for its own sake far from a waste of time. The question "boring to whom?" thus deserves to be asked when we consider the SSA as an early space for Victorian feminism. Even as early as 1884, two years before the SSA was to fold completely, the participation of the women in the SSA was beginning to be dismissed as outmoded and irrelevant to a "faster" and "more advanced" feminism. In *The Nineteenth Century,* for example, Margaret Lonsdale described the women of the SSA as "old-fashioned leaders of what used to be called the 'blue-stockings' . . . kindly ladies, spectacled and scientific looking [who] mildly address young women on abstruse and purely intellectual subjects, but they are not to be spoken of in the same breath with their more advanced sisters" (Lonsdale 415). Writing in the controversial style of Eliza Lynn Linton's scathing social observations for the *Saturday Review*, Lonsdale's official target of disapproval was the modern "Platform Woman," yet her characterization of their feminist forebears was hardly flattering.

Even as the SSA became known to some as a site of tedium, the "kindly ladies" on the platform provoked emotional responses in the audience and in the press. Late in 1859, the *Times* commented on "The Market for Educated Female Labour," Bessie Rayner Parkes's first address to the SSA in Bradford. The speech was reprinted in full in the *Times* and was the subject of two sympathetic leaders in as many weeks.[19] As we saw in Chapter One, the article/speech pointed out the discrepancy between the feminine ideal and women's actual work experience, and reminded its readers and listeners of the low-paying and "overstocked" profession of the governess, insisting that the notion of gentility was neither accurate nor useful for middle-class women who needed to earn their own living. Perhaps most significantly, the article directly placed responsibility with the fathers of destitute women, by encouraging men to teach their daughters a useful skill, establish savings accounts, and/or take out life insurance policies for them. This appeal to middle-class fathers would become one of the *EWJ*'s most consistent strategies. Parkes directly addressed the predominantly male audience at the SSA, and subsequently the *Times'* readership, with the following observation: "Probably every person present has a female relative or intimate friend whom trade-failures, the exigencies of a numerous household, or the early death of a husband or father has compelled to this course; it is in the experience of every family" (Parkes, "Market" 146).

Both of the leaders in the *Times* referred to this moment in Parkes's speech, suggesting that her appeal to experience was rhetorically powerful, both in speech and in print, and was a bold argumentative move for a woman speaker to make. "In the middle classes women are left so frequently without any resources but their own that Miss Parkes did not hesitate to appeal directly to her audience for proof of her proposition" (*Times,*

November 8, 1859, 6). Emily Faithfull later amplified this public moment: "the notion that the destitution of women was a rare and exceptional phenomenon, was swept away, as the *Times* observed, when Miss Parkes . . . did not hesitate to ask whether there was a single man in the company who had not, at that moment, among his own connexions, an instance of the distress to which her paper referred" (Faithfull 121). The "Passing Events" section of the *EWJ* for November 1859 proclaimed that the third annual meeting of the SSA in Bradford had proved to be "*the* event of the month," helped in no small part by the successful delivery of papers by women speakers, whose "bearing and deportment" lent more authority to their expression of opinion than "almost any merely intellectual exertion could effect" (vol. 4, 215).

The *Times'* guarded approval of Parkes's paper in 1859 contrasted with the disapproval of that perennial antagonist of Victorian feminism, the *Saturday Review*. The 1862 meeting at Guildhall in London occasioned a particularly strong response from the *Saturday,* including personal attacks against several of the women participants. Frances Power Cobbe[20] was referred to as "fanatic" for advocating women's admission to the ancient universities; knowledge of her marital status was all that was needed for the *Saturday* to dismiss her argument: "when Miss Cobbe asks that young ladies should go to Eton and become Oxford undergraduates—because she must mean this if she means anything—we shall not quote the *Princess*, but simply say that she talks like the *Miss* that she is" ("Ladies" 680, original emphasis).[21] Unmarried women speakers, including Cobbe, Parkes, Jessie Boucherett, and Emily Faithfull, were referred to as half women capable of delivering only half-truths. Opposing Brougham's gallant approval of women's "talent in debate" at the congress, the *Saturday* responded, "[t]here are some

carpers who think that they might just as well try to attain a more difficult gift—a great talent for silence; or, as an old-fashioned book calls it, the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit" ("Ladies" 680-81).

At mid-century, when the SSA was established, "open discussion" and "reasoned debate" were, in practice, relatively new categories of public engagement that were becoming increasingly democratized, and which would find eventually find their journalistic expression in the open space policies of publications like the *Contemporary Review* and the *Nineteenth Century*. Critics of the SSA (and eventually of public feminism) routinely invoked a binary between talk and action in order to demonstrate the congresses' supposed lack of substance and utility. "[T]o hold their tongues and do would advance them by as many leagues as babble puts them back" (65) was Eliza Lynn Linton's 1870 argument about feminist public speech. For many feminists, however, talk *was* a form of action, and the SSA's function as a space for women's public, embodied presence and utterance its most salient and politically-cogent feature. This aspect of the SSA has received little notice from historians who have tended to focus, like Victorian audiences, on the feminist campaigns and associations the SSA helped foster. Yet as one contributor to the *English Woman's Journal* remarked, "[I]t is not to this special advocacy that we would direct the attention of the women of England, it is to the fact that the Association has assumed the right of woman to sit in an assembly deliberating on social affairs—nay, to express her opinion in that assembly if she chooses" ("Social Science" 124). The liberal bourgeois model of open discussion and accessibility was thus a powerful ideal for a burgeoning middle-class feminist movement. Women's bodily presence and expression of opinion in assembly were political gestures as significant as

the more direct forms of action that emerged from the meetings. But if "the act" of women's participation was politically significant, so was the mode of their expression.

According to the *Transactions*, gender was bracketed at the SSA congresses for the purposes of discussion, since "'nothing human was alien'" ("Debt Women Owe" 194). However, Parkes's private account of reading at the Bradford congress in 1859 indicates that the experience of participating in this space was charged with gendered codes and expectations, and was far from dull or tedious. In a letter to Bodichon she wrote:

> I had a most successful week at Leeds and Bradford. I read our paper to a crowded section; 200 people listening, at the very least; Mrs. [Anna] Jameson and Miss [Louisa] Twining on the platform beside me—Section B of Social Economy was occupied all day with female interests, and Lord Brougham came and sat with us for ten minutes . . . We staid on the platform all day, receiving the gentlemen. Did you ever hear of such a thing! It really was an extraordinary scene; equivalent to women in Parliament, and a great deal more impressive than anything I ever heard of in America, because of the social weight of the male portion of hearers and speakers. People all told me I read excellently; and I tell you, not from conceit, but because I know it will please you. In the morning I had read it all over to the bed post![22]

Parkes's evident excitement in this private correspondence is significant for several reasons: it demonstrates that oral delivery itself, as part of the "content" of public speech, influenced the "cause of women," in that audiences participated in shaping the meaning of her speech by responding to the way it sounded. In addition, the excited tone of

Parkes's letter provides an important contrast to the unemotional format of the *Transactions* in which her paper, "The Market for Educated Female Labour," was summarized by a third party. For example, the opening sentence of the summary in the *Transactions* is as follows:

> Miss Bessie R. Parkes read a paper entitled 'The Market for Educated Female Labour,' in which she showed, from the reports of the Governesses' Benevolent Institution, the over-crowded state of the profession of teaching, almost the only resource of educated women when compelled to earn a living. (*Transactions* 1860, 727)

From year to year the editors of the *Transactions* selected only a handful of papers and their ensuing discussion to reprint verbatim. Most were summarized by a third party or were merely listed in the table of contents, and, according to Eileen Janes Yeo, the selection process was by no means accidental or politically neutral (152). Women's contributions, including "The Market for Educated Female Labour," were rarely reprinted in full in the *Transactions*, but often appeared later in locations such as the *English Woman's Journal* and the *Victoria Magazine.* As we have seen, the *Times* also eventually picked up "The Market for Educated Female Labour" and reprinted it verbatim. In any case, according to Pam Hirsch, Bodichon viewed the *Transactions* as little more than a "'costly sepulcher,'" and believed it was important to get women's voices into as wide a circulation as possible.

Ultimately, though, our sense of the meanings Parkes's paper generated is limited less by the *Transactions'* incomplete transcription of the content of her speech than by its inability, or unwillingness, to disclose the interchange of bodily forms of expression

between speaker and audience—vocal tone, gesture, accent, nervousness, eye contact, applause, attentiveness, coughing—which help shape the meanings of public utterance. In addition, it is worth noting that the *EWJ*, where we might expect to find a more detailed description of Parkes's mode of delivery, also deliberately eschewed doing so: "It is not of course in the pages of this Journal that the personal delivery of a paper . . . by Miss Parkes can be dilated upon" (215). The *EWJ* would only say that the "modest" and "dignified" mode of Parkes's delivery had added to its impressiveness, "won golden opinions from those who heard it," and could now be assumed as an example for other women to follow (215).

As transcripts and abstracts of public speech, the multi-volume *Transactions* of the SSA did not generally record the effects of speech on listeners, other than the occasional editorial interjection of the parenthetical (Hear, hear!) or (Groans) or (No, no!) or (Applause), a convention borrowed from Parliamentary reportage. Yet these tiny and seemingly insignificant textual markers are important, for they are often the only clues we have as to the effects of speech and argument on audiences. They signify the participation of listeners in the speaking event, and signal the will of the audience as a temporary, public body in shaping a speech's shared meaning and effect. (Cheers) or (Groans) is the *Transactions'* shorthand for the display of feeling on the part of an audience in a public assembly. The brevity of these remarks signals the text's refusal to reveal any more information about the bodily presence of the audience in the room.

Even if the *Transactions* had included a direct transcript of Parkes's 1859 speech and the ensuing discussion, they would nevertheless be incapable of recording the effects of her physical speaking voice on the men and women in the audience. As texts which

purport to transcribe the proceedings of public discussions, the *Transactions* aspire to a disinterested neutrality, like the congresses themselves, in their effort to record speech and discussion with "fidelity." They rely on the omission of the "nonlexical" (Connor 64) in order to be read as authentic, transparent records of public discussion. As Steven Connor has argued of legal transcripts,

> In the fidelity of the transcript, nothing is subtracted from the voice of the accused and those giving testimony and judgement. But, at the same time, nothing is preserved of those acts and agents, except the giving of voice. The transcription separates certain aspects of voice, especially the semantic and grammatical aspects, from others.(64)

Despite the transcript's and the transactions' exclusion of the emotional impact of the voice on listeners, however, there is ample evidence to suggest that Victorian audiences were fascinated with the use of the voice in public settings, and with the sensations engendered in public assembly between listeners.[23] Thus, while the transcript and other written forms of oral communication open a window onto the political content of Victorian feminist activity, they are limited as "records" of the development of the feminist public sphere as a space inhabited by gendered agents.

Vocal Embodiment

Parkes and other women speakers faced the double challenge of arguing from the socially-marginal position of feminism, and of making that argument with the political agency of their embodied speaking voices, some of which had the added marker of a northern or Irish accent. Even as early as 1858, women were evidently being warned not

to let their voices get away from them. One writer for the *English Woman's Journal* in 1859 complained that "[t]he confusion of tongues, which has been humourously depicted as sure to follow the admission of women to the privileges of public speaking, is a picture of the imagination . . . drawn by unfriendly or careless hands, of those women who are not inclined to acknowledge infirmity, either of mind or body, as a necessary or lovely condition of their sex" ("Social Science" 124). Women's speaking voices were described in several contradictory ways: as provocative of intense emotional responses in listeners; as inherently weak, feeble, and inaudible; as sweet, "low" and musical; as a "long and prolonged cackle" or "shriek." In addition, men who spoke publicly in favour of feminist issues were accused of "sounding feminine." In reporting on the 1870 parliamentary debate on the women's suffrage bill, the *Illustrated London News* found that the speeches of the bill's supporters had "a feebleness of rhetoric, and a tone which might almost be characterized as feminine" (qtd. in "Women's Disabilities'" 162).

The conservative mainstream press used all of these strategies at different moments to ridicule, dismiss, and silence women speakers. Common to all of them was the category of the "natural." The *Saturday Review*'s account of women's participation at the meetings in London in 1862 proclaimed, "We heartily wish the strong-minded ladies happiness and success in their new alliance; and do not doubt that they will remember and practise the precept of one of their debaters, 'not to mind being thought unladylike.' It is always better not to mind that which is inevitable" ("Social Science" 668). Writing for the more sedate but more influential *Blackwood's* in1861, J.B. Atkinson remarked, "The spectacle . . . of a woman's speaking, told with astounding effect; crowds came as if to witness a phenomenon transcending the limits of ordinary nature" (468). But Atkinson

pushed the "unnatural" angle further, claiming that women were simply "unfit for oratory, in the simple incapacity of making themselves heard" (472).[24] (In other accounts of SSA meetings, women's "low voices" were praised as signs of their femininity). Atkinson then characterized women's platform delivery in a manner worth quoting at length:

> In Dublin, the course was simple enough, and being in the nature of a tentative trial, not, we trust, to be pushed farther, was pursued with praiseworthy caution. A lady reads a paper, applause follows, a few words of congratulation are then bestowed, and so the matter ends pleasantly enough, to the mutual delight of all parties. All this, we readily admit, is so far sufficiently social and charming, and yet, we venture to assert, in no way accordant with deliberate scientific inquiry, or compatible with the freedom of open and impartial discussion. Whenever, in fact, woman's vital interests came into debate—in marriage, divorce, and kindred topics—we confess ourselves to have been so ungallant as to have wished that the ladies, chiefly for their own sakes, had been out of hearing. (472)

Finally, Atkinson was also concerned that male chivalry would be too severely tested by "those women who should venture into noisy controversy" with men in a public forum. He was concerned that no woman speaker could emerge "unscathed" from a public verbal sparring match such as men were used to (472). And yet, as I mentioned above, one of the foundational goals of the SSA was to avoid "noisy controversy" between all parties. The climate of the SSA as one of reasoned and polite debate, and its overall "orientation to consensus" (Abrams 47) would seem to have forestalled the "unladylike" display of political passion that Atkinson feared.

Yet Atkinson's article identified an issue that public feminists needed to take very seriously: how to appropriate successfully the influential structures of male vocal authority, such as oration and parliamentary debate, which were founded upon women's exclusion? Feminists at mid-century insisted that women's vocality was not incompatible with public authority. The *English Woman's Journal* was careful to stress that the propriety and the power of women's speech lay precisely in its adherence to "womanly tact." One contributor wrote, "There is no fear of English women flinging themselves recklessly into the arena of public speaking . . . There is no fear of a woman who has gained a right to be heard on any social question" ("Social Science" 124). In 1859 Parkes wrote, "If women can write books which the world will gladly read, they can also deliver lectures which the world will gladly hear, and they can be trusted to do so with ample delicacy and dignity" (Parkes, "Adoption," 8). This claim had its supporters among the mainstream press. When those newspapers sympathetic to the congresses reported on women's participation, they invariably stressed the feminine grace and propriety of women speakers. In fact, this was often the only aspect of women's speech that was mentioned; the verbal content of their contributions was often passed over.

The most sustained response to Atkinson's *Blackwood's* article, and to the "experiment and innovation" of women's participation in the SSA generally, appeared in a December 1861 article in *Macmillan's* by Frances Power Cobbe, two months after Atkinson's. While Cobbe encouraged women's use of the platform, she advised them to make use of the power of speech with much care. Like Atkinson, Cobbe warned women not to participate in "angry debate," where, "if she were a man," she would be expected to respond to hostility and disagreement. "Nothing can be more ungenerous than the act

of a woman by which she provokes opposition and disapproval as a man might do, and then appeals for defence and consideration as a woman" (92), Cobbe warned. Atkinson had implied that because it was unseemly and even dangerous for women to enter into heated public debate with men, they should refrain from public discussion altogether.[25] In response, Cobbe pointed out that the majority of public addresses by men were sermons, a form of utterance which also precluded reply, opposition, and the expression of disapproval. Cobbe argued that if the male clergy could read or speak from their pulpits with the most "sublime immunity" from groans, cheers, and heckling, why should not women "speaking on matters of morals and philanthropy" enjoy the same protection from extemporaneous exchange and face-to-face criticism? The problem according to Cobbe was that listeners constantly confused argument with appeal. She suggested that a woman should never speak to a mixed audience as if she expected a reply or a discussion; her attempts at public address should always lean towards appeal rather than argument.

In emphasizing appeal as a proper mode of address for women, Cobbe was undoubtedly referring to both content, tone, and tone *as* content in public speech. Because appeal implicitly elevates the listener to a position of authority and humbles the speaker to that of supplicant, appeal reinforced gendered codes of public behaviour which found women's expression of formal reasoning inappropriate or threatening. Appeal, more so than argument, calls forth the listener's moral sympathy and "better judgment" rather than his analytical faculties. Furthermore, a slightly different sense of appeal connotes qualities of attractiveness and agreeability, whereas argument suggests conflict and dispute. For Cobbe, attractiveness of tone would inevitably follow suitability of content if women were careful to frame their speech as an entreaty for action and justice

rather than an invitation to argument. Paradoxically, by emphasizing appeal over argument as the proper mode of feminine address, Cobbe elevated women speakers, at least in theory, to the status of clergy.

I have focused on the debate between Cobbe and Atkinson for what it reveals about the importance of vocality in the production of definitions of masculinity and femininity in the liberal public sphere. Their debate also indicates that the rhetorical frames women used to present a set of feminist claims, coupled with the sound of those claims, had particular, gendered meanings that women needed to control, manage, and cultivate if their opinions were to be taken seriously. A woman could be "in the wrong place" if her voice was either too strong or too feeble (Cobbe, "Social Science," 92). For Cobbe, there seemed to be a middle register and a "right place" for feminist speech that was neither male nor female. Furthermore, it seems clear that Cobbe was not merely reacting to Atkinson's conservative argument in *Blackwood's*, but was also addressing other feminists, and feminism in general. Cobbe offered a warning to public women that they put a fledgling counterpublic at risk when they ignored the affective qualities of their speaking voices.

Women were thus both the agents and the objects of feminist speech and discussion. In her address to Emily Faithfull's Victoria Discussion Society in 1869, a society formed for the express purpose of giving women a semi-private forum in which to hone their skills in public speaking, Mrs. Horace Roscoe St. John observed, "If occasionally a too shrill vehemence has appealed to feminine rights, such extravagance inevitably follows in the train of all free discussion. There is 'a shadow cast by fairest things,' and these exceptional instances of bad taste are in strong contrast with the good

sense, moderation, and temperate tone which have for the most part signalized the speculations of women with regard to themselves" ("Victoria Debating" 194).

St. John speaks here with a maternal authority that chastises gently even as it excuses. In the enactment and embodiment of a feminist identity through vocal expression and public discussion, women like St. John addressed not only their male listeners and the press, but also themselves, and in so doing, began to articulate a shared public identity for feminism. I have been arguing throughout that one of the ways women articulated this feminist identity to each other was through a series of vocal performances which are unavailable to us as readers. What the written records of early vocal interventions on the part of women do indicate, however, is that feminist public speech within highly codified environments such as the SSA was both performative and pedagogical, with several simultaneous effects: it appropriated traditional forms of address; it supported and contested dominant attitudes towards women's public utterance and speaking voices; it participated in and helped articulate a dominant and influential public; and it enacted a new public identity and space that women could inhabit collectively.

The Victoria Discussion Society

Although Faithfull is remembered mostly for her work as a printer, publisher, editor, and journalist, she was also a prolific public speaker who gave successful lectures across Britain and the United States from the 1860s through the 1880s. Faithfull may have come to prefer public speech to journalistic writing as a vehicle of expression for feminism. In 1870, Faithfull remarked that she had discovered on her lectures tours that

"as a rule people threw aside what they were pleased to call 'dry magazine articles on the woman question'" ("Victoria Debating" 200). "I saw that an audience could be collected (to say nothing of those who would come from love of novelty) and I then trusted to a plain statement of facts and figures reaching the hearts of those who came from any motive" (200). Emily Faithfull used the good reviews she received on her public speaking engagements to her advantage by giving elocution lessons to women in her home in 1871. Between 1873 and 78, advertisements in Faithfull's publications informed readers that her classes would continue in "home reading, public speaking, pronunciation, English composition, etc., and that 'resident pupils would be received for a period of six to eight weeks'" (Stone 294). Faithfull of course charged for these classes, as well as for her public speaking engagements, and thus used her voice as much as she did her pen and her press for professional ends, although she had never been formally trained.

Faithfull's elocution lessons formalized the advice feminists had been giving each other on public conduct since the 1850s. Her Victoria Debating Society, established in 1869, was another site in which women received training in public vocal conduct. The prospectus for the society appeared in the November issue of *Victoria Magazine*, 1869:

> The public mind is becoming more and more occupied with the various schemes proposed in the interests of women, and though many people are still strongly opposed to a movement which they confound with an unreasonable *clamour* for misunderstood 'rights and equalities,' the class which is totally indifferent to the subject is certainly decreasing. At this juncture it has appeared to many of those who are engaged in actively promoting educational and industrial schemes for women, that a society, embracing all persons honestly interested in such

> questions, though holding opposite views, would prove of no little value, if it could be judiciously conducted, and kept free from all narrow cliques and jealousies." ("Victoria Debating" 78)

By all accounts, the Victoria Discussion Society, which met nine times a year between 1869 and 1875, was a great professional success for Emily Faithfull, although the main source of information about the society is Faithfull's own *Victoria Magazine*, which she quite unapologetically used to promote her own successes and triumphs. In 1893, Faithfull declared that "the debates of the Victoria Discussion Society led the way to the meetings and congresses at which women now speak without fear or hesitation" (qtd. in Stone 80). According to her biographer, Faithfull seems to have stacked the society with as many influential male participants and donors as she could find in order to ensure a "respectable" and influential reputation (Stone 78). This was an especially important consideration for Faithfull, whose name had previously been brought into public notoriety on at least a couple of occasions. In 1864 she became embroiled in the highly-publicized Codrington divorce case, in which it was suggested that Faithfull may have provided a trysting place for her friend Helen Codrington, who was being accused of adultery by her husband, Admiral Henry John Codrington.[26] Scandal continued to follow Faithfull, when several years later it was suggested in the *London Review* and other London papers that she was connected with an "atheistical" discussion society known as The Ladies' Secular Club, a society with which Anna Kingsford was also connected.[27]

Discussion groups straddled the border between the public and private spheres. Although more private in nature than a forum such as the SSA, discussion societies, their members, and their mandates were clearly subjects of public interest. As the prospectus

indicates, Faithfull initially conceived of the Victoria Discussion Society as a forum for the discussion of women's interests, which was broadly conceived to include debates on the poor laws, temperance, higher education, and literature. Accounts of each meeting were "transcribed" and published in the *Victoria Magazine*, which contributed to the public aspect of the meetings. Stone believes that Faithfull probably edited any "gaffs" committed by the members, particularly those by women speakers. For example, the account of a discussion following a paper by Sir John Bowring in July 1870 called "Woman's Franchise" contains the following:

> Miss Faulkner (a youthful visitor) made a few observations, which excited considerable astonishment and laughter. She attempted to answer the opposition of the evening by some disjointed remarks, upon which an interpretation has been placed by various newspapers which she herself probably never intended, although she said that as "women had taken care of babies so long, that it was perhaps the men's turn to do it now," and "as women could surpass them in Euclid they could doubtless equal them in making laws." (Laughter).

It is clear from the transactions of its meetings printed in Faithfull's *Victoria Magazine* that women were encouraged in this forum to take positions on feminist issues and to argue for them in the face of male opposition in the room, something that is less evident in the *Transactions* of the SSA. With chairs presiding at each meeting and a maximum speaking time allotted to each participant, it is also evident that the discussions were organized to follow particular protocols, and that there were occasionally complaints when someone broke them. For example, following the discussion of St. John's paper alluded to above, "Position of Women" (January 1870), a letter signed "A

MEMBER" appeared in the February issue of *Victoria Magazine* objecting to the conduct of the chair, Justice J.F. Stanford. "The tenour [sic] of [his] observations was to condemn as futile the very purposes for which the Society was formed, that is, to keep DISCUSSION alive on every question appertaining to an amelioration in the condition of women," ("Correspondence" 193, original emphasis). Stanford had invoked the well worn suggestion that "action" in the form of a list of influential names and subscriptions was more expedient to the cause of women than mere talk. Interestingly, what A MEMBER objected to was Stanford's stance on talk as futile, rather than his lukewarm feminism. The conflict indicates that after ten years the SSA had failed to convince everyone of the value of discussion as a social good in itself.

Although edited, the meetings of the Victoria Discussion Society, more so than the *Transactions* of the SSA, provide a valuable insight into the contours of public discussion among a mixed group of citizens at a moment when Victorian feminism was first taking up the question of women's suffrage. Of the few transcriptions of SSA discussion on feminist issues I have been able to locate, it appears that dialogue was often politely benign. At the Dublin meeting of the SSA in 1861, the "Ladies Reception Committee"—likely a delegation of women from Dublin's first families—called for a special Ladies' Meeting on the industrial employment of women. This meeting was reported in the *EWJ*, and seems to have been separate from the general session on women's employment listed in the table of contents for the *Transactions* of 1861. Although the majority of the audience was comprised of women, there were also men in attendance, and the meeting was presided over by Brougham and Hastings, and chaired

by a Reverend Lloyd. Parkes and Faithfull both spoke at the meeting, delivering versions of the papers they had given the previous year at the 1860 meeting in Glasgow.[28]

The transcription of the discussion that followed Parkes's and Faithfull's papers is interesting for its description of the progress of opinion through "free" discussion. After Faithfull had finished speaking, the Chair rose to thank them for their "very interesting statements (hear, hear, and applause.) If any lady is desirous of making any observations or inquiry they will be happy to answer them" ("National" 58). It seems that there must have been several moments of silence, which Parkes then filled by saying, "Should any objections be entertained I should be very glad if they were now stated. We have taken a good deal of trouble to place the meeting on such footing as shall make it really conversational, and I should like to feel that we had raised some interest, and linked people to us in our work (hear, hear)" ("National" 58). Finally Lord Talbot de Malahide rose to say that "as nobody else had risen he would make a few remarks, not by any means objections (hear, hear.) He had listened to the statements made with the greatest possible attention, and fully sympathized and agreed with all that had been uttered" ("National" 58). He and several of the other men in the audience went on to "take a larger view of the subject than had been brought before the meeting," which meant that the conversation then turned to the social evils associated with working-class women's factory labour ("National" 58). Mid-way through the discussion, Lord Brougham artfully steered the conversation back to the employment of educated women with the following:

> There could be no difference, however, as to the advisability, in all respects, of encouraging and supporting the exertions, made so admirably and disinterestedly by Miss Parkes, Miss Faithfull, and others with whom they are connected, in

> finding out new lines of employment for females (applause.) There is no manner of doubt that the greatest possible service has been rendered by these ladies to that most important class of the community, upon whose well-being, both as to their comforts and morals, so many material interests of society depend (hear, hear.) I hope and trust they will find encouragement and support in this country (hear, hear.) To say that Irishwomen are deficient in right feeling towards the less fortunate members of their own sex—to say that they have less feeling than Englishwomen and Scotchwomen—why you might as well say they are not handsome; and if any one had a doubt on this point the sight now before me would convince them (laughter and applause.) ("National" 59)

According to the transcript, no women in the audience responded to Parkes's and Faithfull's papers, and it may have been that Parkes interpreted the initial silence of the audience as disapproval, although it is equally plausible that women audience members did not wish to draw attention to themselves by speaking in discussion. Brougham's patronizing gallantry towards both the women speakers and audience members opens a small window onto the atmosphere of the sessions of the SSA. Although the SSA was everywhere careful to acknowledge the importance of women's contribution to the Association, attempting to treat them as equals, Brougham's casual remark about women's "handsome" appearance is indicative of the persistence of attitudes towards women as decorative. Although the EWJ was always careful to acknowledge the "sympathy and cooperation" of the SSA and its members, it also seems clear that "sympathy" meant little more than a showering of gracious compliments which may have had the paradoxical effect of shutting dialogue down and creating tension between

women activists. Two years later in 1862, a remark by Brougham at the London conference served to create a rift between the Langhamites, when he casually referred to Parkes and Bodichon as the founders of the SPEW, when it had in fact been Jessie Boucherett (see Chapter 3, n. 21).

Faithfull founded the Victoria Discussion Society at a moment when the SSA was becoming less useful as a venue for women speakers, writers and activists.[29] The separate Ladies' Conference (1869-70) at the SSA had met with limited success, since many women members felt that the value of the SSA was precisely its gender-inclusive mandate. Furthermore, the Ladies' Conference had foundered on the rock of political disagreement in 1869, when some members proposed to allow discussion on women's suffrage and the Married Women's Property Bill, while others felt that discussion should be "confined to the consideration of benevolent efforts and works by women" ("Social Science Congress" 45). Victorian feminism was becoming an increasingly diverse movement, and in many ways had outgrown the SSA. It now needed not just one platform, but a variety of them, and women were beginning to build them for themselves, the Victoria Discussion Society being among them, as well as the Kensington Society, a women's discussion group established in 1865 and based in the Kensington home of Charlotte Manning.[30]

Women's suffrage was not an issue that the SSA felt comfortable tackling. Yet even on this question the SSA was generative, perhaps in spite of itself. The first whiff of the suffrage question at the SSA came from Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon's paper on the subject in 1866. Although her paper, "On the Extension of the Suffrage to Women," was received politely (as usual), there seems to have been little outward interest.

Although it received only scant attention and was buried in the *Transactions* under the heading "Miscellaneous," this speech was later cited as the catalyst for the women's suffrage movement in Britain (McCrone 57). At least one audience member was extremely interested: Lydia Becker was in attendance, and was inspired by Bodichon's speech. Becker herself went on to establish the *Women's Suffrage Journal*, one of the most important organs of the early suffrage movement, and to become a popular and frequent lecturer on votes for women. The transcripts of discussions in the *Women's Suffrage Journal* indicate that Becker was a fearless debater who was unafraid to argue with her male opponents, contradicting them if necessary. Although we can't fully appreciate what Bodichon and Becker "sounded like" as they argued for women's full citizenship, we can assume that the productive power of their speech lay not only in its content, but also in its embodied delivery.

Notes

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[1] A version of this chapter has been accepted for publication in *Nineteenth-Century Contexts*. Forthcoming.

[2] Carpenter's experience with poor and "criminal" children, and her theories for their discipline and reformation are described in her *Reformatory Schools, for the Children of the Perishing and Dangerous Classes, and for Juvenile Offenders* (1851; New York: A.M. Kelley, 1969) and in *Juvenile Delinquents: Their Condition and Treatment* (1853; Montclair, NJ: Patterson Smith, 1970).

[3] In a recent discussion of women's oratory in continental Europe in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Joan Scott discusses the feminist platform as a "trope for feminism more generally" and a "primal scene" of feminist history (293). Interestingly, Scott quotes from German socialist and feminist Lily Braun, who "echoes" Carpenter's fear of public exposure: "'It is so very hard to develop my innermost thoughts in front of strangers,—it is as if I had to show myself naked to the whole world.' Nakedness—the exposure of femininity—is at once pleasurably triumphant . . . and erotically provocative" (Scott 296).

[4] See Midgley; Taylor; Rogers. On suffrage and women's public speech, see Norquay; Strachey. On Josephine Butler's public appearances, see Rogers; Walkowitz; Butler. For

discussions of the figure of the woman public speaker in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century fiction, see Kahane; Levander; Scott.

[4] Levander focuses less on the historical instances of women's public speech, than on the role of the female voice as a fictional construct in the negotiation of social change (4). In focusing on fictional accounts of public speech and speech making, Levander demonstrates that male and female novelists used the female voice to lend power and persuasion to their narratives' attempts to influence social change. Yet the novel constitutes just one example among a variety of nineteenth-century textual forms which purported to represent, control, manage, train, and professionalize men's and women's utterance.

[5] See also Jones for a discussion of the contest for moral and political authority between the platform and the press in the latter half of the century.

[6] Recent accounts of this event by Clare Midgley and Barbara Caine have stressed the importance of this public marginalization of women as an important galvanizing moment for nineteenth-century British and American feminism, not only because the first day of the convention was taken up with a contentious and heated discussion of the "'the abstract question of the rights of woman'" (Midgley 159), but because the British committee was forced to enshrine women's exclusion in its policy. Once speech and silence were actually legislated to the advantage of some groups at the expense of others, public opposition could become organized towards specific material effects like the repeal of such policies. It is important to note here, as well, that the deliberate exclusion of women's voice is grounded in race-related assumptions about who can speak.

[7] As Geoff Eley has written, "the positive values of the liberal public sphere quickly acquired broader democratic resonance, with the resulting emergence of impressive popular movements, each with its own distinctive movement cultures (i.e., forms of public sphere)" (304).

[8] Fraser cites Joan Landes's *Women and the Public Sphere in the Age of the French Revolution* (1988); Mary P. Ryan's *Women in Public: Between Banners and Ballots, 1825-1880* (1990); and Elizabeth Brooks-Higginbotham's *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1920* (1993).

[9] See Rogers' *Women and the People.*

[10] See, for example, Rogers' *Women and the People* for a discussion of women's use of "the populist idiom" within a range of reform movements, pressure groups, and counterpublics, including Chartism, Radicalism, and the Liberal Party.

[11] Writer, editor, and translator, Howitt and her husband William were Unitarians whose work and religious faith brought them into contact with influential social reform circles. They both supported "electoral reform, women's rights, improved factory conditions, international copyright laws, and other significant Victorian movements" (Martin 382).

[12] For extensive discussions of the SSA's origins, mandate, and organization, its place within the development of sociology, and its claims to the "scientific," see Abrams, Goldman, Ritt, and Rodgers. See Poovey and Yeo on the SSA and the construction of "class."

[13] Some of the papers by these "representatives of capital and labour" included the following: "How the Condition of the Labouring Classes may be raised by Co-operation" by Henry Fawcett, "Trades' Unions and their Effects upon Society" by Peter Allan, "Trades' Unions not Injurious to the Welfare of the Community" by Alexander Frazer,

and "Workman and Master" by Thomas Pringle. The department of the congress which dealt with these questions was Social Economy. From year to year, most of the papers on the Woman Question were also delivered in the department of Social Economy, although many were also given in the Education department.

[14] The participants included Berkeley Hill, Dr. W.P. Swaine, and Dr. Charles Taylor, with Hill and Swaine arguing for extension and Taylor against.

[15] Significantly, women members, with the exception of Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell, were not allowed entry into the meeting (McCrone 55) because the subject matter was felt to be suitable for discussion only among medical professionals. Josephine Butler was thus not permitted to attend. It is perhaps not coincidental that the separate Ladies Conference was first established in this same year.

[16] A selected list of women who participated over the years includes Lydia Becker, Mary Carpenter, Frances Power Cobbe, Emily Davies, Emily Faithfull, Florence Nightingale, Bessie Rayner Parkes, Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon, and Elizabeth Wolstenholme. See McCrone 47.

[17] The feminist campaigns and associations which the SSA helped launch either directly or indirectly included many of the Langham Place activities, such as the Society for the Promotion of the Employment of Women, the Victoria Press, and the Female Middle-Class Emigration Society. It also facilitated the formation of the Ladies' National Association for the Diffusion of Sanitary Knowledge and the Workhouse Visiting Society. Throughout its tenure, the SSA was a site for the discussion of the married women's property laws, women's university education and employment, the Contagious Diseases Acts, baby farming and wet nursing, infanticide, Indian women's education, girls' schooling, and, to a limited extent, women's suffrage.

[18] See Ritt's dissertation chapter, "The SSA and Its Critics."

[19] "The Market for Educated Female Labour" appeared in the *Times* on November 7, 1859, the two leaders on November 8 and November 17, 1859.

[20] Cobbe was active in the SSA in its early years. In addition to her 1862 address in London on women's admission to universities, she had contributed a paper (co-written with Margaret Elliot) to the 1860 conference in Glasgow on "Destitute Incurables in Workhouses," read by Louisa Twining. In 1861 Cobbe read a paper called "Sick in Workhouses" in Dublin.

[21] On her experience of the SSA in 1862 Cobbe later wrote, "Dean Milman, who occupied the chair, was very kind in praising my crude address, and enjoyed the little jokes wherewith it was sprinkled; but next morning every daily paper in London laughed at my demand, and for a week or two I was the butt of universal ridicule. Nevertheless, just seventeen years afterwards I was invited to join a deputation headed by Lady Stanley of Alderley, to thank Lord Granville for having (as President of London University) conceded those degrees to women, precisely as I had demanded! I took occasion at the close of the pleasant interview to present him with one of the very few remaining copies of my original and much ridiculed appeal" (*Life* 529).

[22] Parkes to Bodichon, October 19, 1859, BRP V 92/1. Parkes Collection, Girton College Cambridge.

[23] See Jones; Vernon; Collins; Vlock; Salmon; and several essays in Hewitt, ed.

[24] This attitude towards women's speaking voices persists. The introduction to the *Penguin Book of Historic Speeches* (1995) states, "women's voices are not by nature for

oratory. They are not deep enough (as Margaret Thatcher discovered until she trained herself to acquire more depth to her voice and was no longer described as shrill)" (MacArthur xx).

[25] See Rogers for a fascinating discussion of a heated exchange between Chartist Mary Ann Walker and a mixed audience in 1842. Upon taking questions from the audience after her speech, "Walker had proved her ability to handle her audience yet it seems that the audience considered such public interrogation unseemly, and chivalrously moved to protect her" ("Any Questions" 14).

[26] Helen Codrington countercharged that her husband had been adulterous while posted in Malta, and that he had attempted to "'have connexion'" with Faithfull while she slept in the same bed with Helen Codrington in October 1856 in London (Stone 18). The trial commenced in July of 1864, by which time Faithfull had fled the country in order to avoid an appearance in court. When the trial reconvened in November, she appeared as a hostile witness to Helen Codrington, claiming she had no recollection of any attempted rape, and that she had signed the initial affidavit filed by Helen Codrington's lawyer without first reading it. As the story broke, the members of Langham Place gradually withdrew their connection to Faithfull, starting with Bessie Rayner Parkes's cancellation of the *EWJ*'s contract with the Victoria Press in December 1863. See Stone; Vicinus.

[27] Faithfull publicly denied any involvement with the society, but was then forced to bring a libel suit against James Grant, the author of a book called *The Religious Tendencies of the Times, or, how to deal with the deadly errors and dangerous delusions of the day* (London: William Macintosh, 1869). Grant had lifted the paragraph from the *London Review* on the Ladies' Secular Club for the preface of his book in order to illustrate women's role in spreading "Infidelity and Atheism among us" (Faithfull, "Faithfull v. Grant" 391). James had written, "'Ladies,' it appears, are as busy in their endeavours to propagate Atheism by organised instrumentalities as the Atheists of our own sex. It is proposed, it seems, to establish a 'Ladies Secular Club'—the word 'Secular' meaning Atheistical—and the two 'ladies' most active in the business are, according to the *London Review*, Mrs. Bradlaugh and Miss Emily Faithfull" (Faithfull, "Faithfull v. Grant" 390). Grant eventually retracted the statement and Faithfull was awarded for damages.

[28] "A Year's Experience in Woman's Work" by Parkes and "The Victoria Press" by Faithfull.

[29] Although some women, particularly Mary Carpenter, mounted the SSA's platform nearly every year, others used it sporadically. By the mid-1860s, the Langham Place circle had ceased to be as important a centre for feminism, and original feminist presenters such as Parkes, Cobbe, and Faithfull were no longer delivering papers to the SSA. However, other women such as Emily Davies and Elizabeth Wolstenholme began speaking more frequently at the congresses from the mid 1860s as other campaigns, particular regarding women and education, gained steam.

[30] Hirsch writes that the society had about fifty members, including Bodichon, Davies, Boucherett, and Helen Taylor, stepdaughter of John Stuart Mill. At least one transcript of discussion survives—that following Elizabeth Garrett's paper, ""What is the true basis, and what are the limits, of parental authority?" Hirsch writes that Bodichon and Taylor both contributed papers on the extension of the franchise to women at the second meeting of the society in November 1865. Other proposed topics for discussion included "How far are the errors and miseries of the lower class of people dependant upon defects of

education and how may such defects be remedied?"; "Is the use of sarcasm desirable in the defence of truth, and if so, when may it be used with effect?"; "Why do not women work well together?"; "Is language the instrument only, or is it the necessary condition of thought?" (Emily Davies Papers IX).

Chapter Five

Mary Carpenter and the Control of the Womanly Voice

In "A Fear for the Future," an article appearing in *Fraser's* in 1859, the narrating persona—a self-professed old-fashioned gentleman who hasn't been in London society for twenty-five years—describes his encounter with a group of young women:

> At one of the first evening parties which I attended this season, I was greatly attracted by a group of pretty, fair-looking damsels, who seemed to herd together in one corner of the room, chirping like sparrows among themselves . . . I assumed the privilege of my age and grey hairs, and approached them, with some conciliatory remark, at once suave, benignant, admiring, and jocose—in fact, couched after the usual manner of old gentlemen to young ladies. "And what breeze is stirring the flowers?" say I—"what momentous subject is rippling over those rosy lips? Will you admit an old man to your conference?" At this they all look at me, and then at each other, with sudden seriousness. They are evidently astonished; and presently the rosy lips assume curves not of the pleasantest; and I am conscious, before any reply is vouchsafed me, that these innocent white-robed maidens know what sarcasm means. ("Fear" 247)

Exchanging sly glances and laughter, one of the women replies that they are talking about their dolls, another that dolls and dress are all that occupy their minds.

> But here she broke off suddenly, as another lady came quickly towards us, and said with great earnestness and energy: "Mr. ---'s in the other room. Go and speak

to him about the Bill. I'll get hold of ---, and attack *him*." Off they fluttered, and I was left stranded in a very blank solitude (247).

"A Fear for the Future" satirizes both the country gentleman of age and grey hairs who has fallen out of step with the times, as well as the Reform Ladies who call themselves Professional Artists and sneer at men at evening parties. The women of Langham Place are clearly being referenced here, as indicated by allusions to the "Committees and Female Associations" they preside over, and the unspecified "Bill." What interests me most is the narrator's alarm about the power of this shift in the tone of society to alter sexual relations. Women's use of sarcasm is linked with a loss of innocence, romance, femininity and the destruction of the race; the "scientific damsels" who silence elderly gentlemen at parties will never attract husbands: "could I ever feel a tender sentiment for any of these? Does a man fall in love with artist, novelist, mathematician, or politician? No, he doesn't . . ." (248). Feminists themselves appear to have debated the subversive effects of a feminist rhetorical position that used sarcasm or ridicule; one of the Kensington Discussion Society's proposed topics for discussion was, "Is the use of sarcasm desirable in the defence of truth, and if so, when may it be used with effect?" (See Chapter Four, n. 30.)

While feminist public speech in the 1850s and 60s was never linked with the kind of riotous responses Josephine Butler's speech would provoke in the Contagious Diseases agitation, even feminists associated with a more "moderate" or "polite" tone often received a mixture of harsh criticism and snide mockery, making them question the value of publicity for the feminist cause. Thus, "after 6 years of unceasing anxiety, and publicity . . . ," Parkes told Bodichon, "I never see 'Miss Bessie Rayner Parkes' in print

without a nervous pang of disgust, and many causes have conspired to make me feel that for the last 2 or 3 years, every fresh appearance thereof is such an injury and not a help to the real influence I might exercise in future years" (BRP V 122/1&2). But if Parkes had become wary of the uses of publicity by the mid-1860s, other public women who worked in approximate circles, such as Mary Carpenter and Emily Faithfull, seemed to thrive on it. In this chapter I am interested in tracking the authority and influence of Carpenter's vocal presence for Victorian feminism. How was it that Carpenter, as a public female speaker but not necessarily a feminist one, escaped the kinds of criticism levelled at other women, and what can this tell us about the differences between the tone of public feminism in this period and that of other approximate causes?

My interest in "tone" and "voice," as I have been suggesting throughout, is less concerned with either of these as formal properties of texts, than with the social relationships we can trace through these textual devices. As I pointed out in the previous chapter, the tones of a past culture are necessarily lost to us except as written traces, but the point is rather one of listening to the ways in which print culture tried to capture or make sense of or replace the oral and vocal shifts in both formal and casual modes of communication. The elaboration of a feminist presence in public and semi-public spaces is a particularly rich place from which to explore the social and cultural meanings around tone and voice, not least because of the values associated with women's silence, and the labelling of women's and feminist speech as, variously, weak, trivial, shrill, ill-bred, or, in the case of the exceptional few, such as Carpenter, womanly.

Although I am focusing on a relatively small, privileged circle of women and men, whose access to literacy was unquestioned, it is worth noting that oral forms of

communication and address—the sermon, the platform lecture, reading aloud—were central to most Victorians' experience of daily and professional life in ways we don't share. While the novel might be one of the most obvious places to look for evidence of the social meanings of tone in everyday speech—through dialogue, narrative voice, or vernacular, for example—my points of entry are rather the less self-consciously literary texts that also registered patterns and shifts in vocal address: transcripts of debating and discussion societies, advice manuals on public speaking, personal reminiscences by women public speakers, and occasional periodical essays like "A Fear for the Future," which both echoed and amplified public and private speech behaviours.

Vocal Culture

The attempt to account for the change of society's tone in "A Fear for the Future" is shot through with sexual anxieties about women's reproductive role and, by extension, men's social role when women begin to speak the language of Bills and committees in "masculine" tones. The narrator literally feels "stranded" and "struck dumb" by the change women effect in the social atmosphere, and projects his feelings of irrelevance onto his sons' marriage prospects. Around the same time, but to a very different purpose, Anna Jameson had also registered the "crisis" that would ensue if women began to use male tones in their writing. In her "Letter to Lord John Russell," Jameson wrote, "[s]uppose a woman were to take up the pen and write a review, headed in capital letters, 'MEN in the 19th Century!' and pointing to absurd mistakes in legislation; to the want of public spirit in public men; to fraudulent bankruptcies, to mad or credulous speculations with borrowed gold—to *social evils* of the masculine gender corrupting the homes of

others, and polluting their own, and wind up the philippic with—'Of such are our pastors and our masters?' . . . True! this might be done—but God forbid that it ever should be done!" (Jameson xxv-xxvi). Here Jameson inserts a critique of male power into her discussion of feminist public language. She suggests that the feminization of public discourse will prevent the political, social, and legislative wrongs committed by men, even as she cautions other women against levelling such a critique in a way that will serve to perpetuate such wrongs. As we saw in Chapter Three, Jameson believed that it was women's duty to maintain the difference of tone on which the "social edifice" was built, and the editors of the *EWJ* for the most part followed her advice in this. For Jameson, matching tone for tone would only contribute to what she saw as an increasing antagonism between the sexes that hindered the "communion of labour"—the term she used to describe the complementary nature of men's and women's public service work. Jameson believed that society would benefit if women could balance or reform the male tone of public life.

"Women give the tone to society." For many observers in the period, this commonplace explained women's social role, and is somewhat less banal than it seems if we consider that tone is the felt property of speech, associated with bodily and physical sensation, and usually regarded as subordinate to the substance or content of speech—the actual words being uttered. If women gave the tone to society, it is unsurprising that the narrator of "A Fear for the Future" would be so shocked and dismayed to hear women using a tone he had never associated with polite, drawing-room femininity. Women who seemed to sound like men provoked anxiety because they had the power to "infect" and transform the social atmosphere through which gender relations were managed and

understood. Through tone, one can "feel" the voice of another and perhaps "catch" his or her energy, manner, or attitude, or be excluded by it; the tone of the voice is that aspect of speech which we seem to "feel" most strongly, and which therefore must be carefully controlled in public so as not to "betray" one's "true" feelings. "In moments of emotion," wrote Eliza Lynn Linton, "no skill can hide the fact of disturbed feeling by the voice; though a strong will and the habit of self-control can steady it when else it would be failing and tremulous. . . . This very effort is as eloquent as if there had been no holding down at all, and the voice had been left to its own impulse unchecked" (Linton 38).

As an orally-literate culture, Victorians were fascinated by and acutely aware of the power of human vocal tone to rouse, enervate, or soothe its listeners. The affective properties of the human voice were explained, theorized, and exploited in a variety of contexts. (See Jones.) Debates about the use of the press versus the platform theorized the power of the spoken versus the written word; parliamentary reporting increasingly focused on not only the content of members' speeches, but also their vocal performance; literary readings by novelists like Dickens and Harriet Beecher Stowe were enormously successful—their ability to send audiences into "fits" of laughter and tears was widely reported in the press; the popularity of such public readings fed into the drawing room pastime of reading aloud, a standard part of the curricula in middle-class schools and Mechanics Institutes. The Cambridge Local Exams tested students on their ability to read aloud from a standard English poet as a way of testing basic literacy, but there was undoubtedly a subjective factor in the evaluation—the ability to read well out loud was regarded as a useful and important skill. Emergent discourses such as phrenology, mesmerism, and psychology were interested in determining the precise relationship

between the sound of the voice and emotional response; in fiction, particularly in narratives of the supernatural, the power of the voice to inspire or enervate its listeners was a standard trope.

The voice is a connecting link between "inside" and "outside," self and other, an invisible object and the "'locus of articulation of an individual's body to language and society'" (Dunn and Jones 2). The voice's ability to "travel" between bodies, producing physical changes in listeners, was explained and understood by Victorian audiences through the metaphor of contagion. One could be "infected" or "healed" by the sound of certain voices, while inspired speakers seemed to have been "overcome" by an invisible—often heavenly—force. Frances Power Cobbe worried that electoral democracies were ruled not by the high ideals of statesmanship and patriotism, but by the contagion of emotions among the masses via "'the gift of Tongues'" ("Education" 224). The scene of Dinah Morris's preaching in *Adam Bede* contains probably one of the best-known fictional examples of the physical effects of a woman's voice: Dinah's tones "chain" the traveller to the spot, and "arrest" her audience, producing "many a responsive sigh and groan" (71-72). The ability of the voice to inhabit bodies was a sign of God's immanence; the religious affect of the divinely-inspired speaking voice was to bring God's presence inside the body.

The sense in which a politically- or religiously-inspired voice could inhabit or contaminate a crowd of listeners was often used to justify women's exclusion from public life. On the one hand, women were to be protected from the "corrupting" tones of male-dominated public institutions and employments, while women's heightened sensitivity seemed to make them particularly susceptible to the subtleties of private, social

interaction, making them its natural protectors. The author of "Toasting the Ladies" in the *Saturday Review* observed that "[t]he slightest change in the tone of voice, the merest inflection of bearing, the tiniest fluctuation in the quality of quantity of attention, conveys a meaning to a woman who is well up in the conventional learning of refined society. The use of the subtle signs of society is manifest. They give play to the intellect. They permit women to think, by permitting them to be treated as capable of thought" ("Toasting" 419). But if women were the natural protectors of polite and decorous tones—if it was through shades of tonal meaning that they exercised their intellect—they were also its victims. The author of "Toasting the Ladies" complained that overly-generous toasts by male speakers made a mockery of women's actual abilities by subjecting them to all manner of hyperbole and exaggeration, as in the assertion of one gentleman at an SSA dinner that women made the best social scientists.[1]

A dispassionate or disinterested public tone was often linked with Englishness, an association that was reinforced in elocution manuals, histories of British parliamentary procedure, and the press. One historian of English parliament declared that "pathos has had its day in the House of Commons. At no time, however, was it a leading characteristic of English parliamentary speaking: and a comparison of English speeches with contemporary orations on the other side of the Channel . . . will soon convince the reader that the chief trait of modern public life in England—its sober earnestness—was the keynote of the whole, even in those days" (Redlich 67). For every tribute to the institutionalization of English vocal reserve in its highest national theatre, however, there was a corresponding disparagement of parliamentarians' ineptness in public speech and

oratorical style, their inability to say anything worth listening to, etc. "Oratory," declared Cobbe, "is proverbially rare among men of our nation" ("Fitness" 260).

Because the voice was generally regarded as evidence of strength of character, not to mention class background, the voice came to be seen as an effective professional and political tool. Elocution manuals became increasingly specialized to appeal to the various professions: the vocal tones and styles one would learn to use if he were a preacher were different than those for lawyers, parliamentarians, or teachers. Much of this professional vocal advice was aimed towards men, while women, rather paradoxically, received instruction in how to be "natural"—that is, how to speak in low, gentle and musical tones. The explosion of advice literature for speakers in the nineteenth century attests to the growing awareness that the tonal qualities of speech—professional and private—conveyed meanings and affects one needed to control and manage. As a body of writing that was nothing if not obsessed with appearance, advice literature for professionals implicitly suggested that that the voice was not only the property of the aural register but of the visual as well. One's voice, accent, and syntax had an "appearance" and, as Lynda Mugglestone has noted recently, these texts stressed that behaviour and the appearance of ordered speech constituted the best proof of one's class and gender identity. The class-consciousness of this advice was obvious; one book declared that a loud voice was "utterly plebian" and "repulsive in a lady" (qtd. in Mugglestone 174).

Although not an elocution manual, Florence Nightingale's influential *Notes on Nursing* (1859) is a type of advice literature directed towards women that stressed the professional use of the voice and the relationship between vocal (in)visibility, identity, and authority. In a chapter entirely devoted to "Noise," Nightingale cautioned her readers

to be as noiseless as possible in both voice and movement when treating patients. "Quickness, lightness, and gentleness" in step, manner, and voice were qualities that were conducive to a patient's recovery. A rustling skirt, the rattling of keys, the sound of voices in the hallway, loud whispering, a sudden voice from behind, were all likely to aggravate the sufferer's pain.[2] Reading aloud to patients, while not absolutely forbidden, was to adhere to strict protocols. Nightingale warned, "If there is some matter which *must* be read to a sick person, do it slowly. People often think that the way to get it over with least fatigue is to get it over in least time. They gabble, they plunge and gallop through the reading. There never was a greater mistake" (55).[3]

The voice of authority in the professional sick room was a silent one, or was at least a voice which had already spoken elsewhere and did not need to repeat itself. (See Hamilton, "From Sagely Wisdom".) One of the reasons Nightingale was so successful as a public figure was because she was regarded as someone who had done her good work quietly, with no need of or desire for "publicity," although she was probably one of the most publicized women of the century. Eliza Lynn Linton and other conservative critics who espoused a hostility to a vocal feminist presence, but who celebrated female independence, implicitly endorsed the ideal of a voiceless, disembodied feminine authority that Nightingale and *Notes on Nursing* upheld. In the "Shrieking Sisterhood," for example, Linton praised Nightingale and unnamed "Lady Superintendents" for their noiseless good work, declaring, "The silent woman who quietly calculates her chances and measures her powers with her difficulties so as to avoid the probability of a fiasco, and who therefore achieves a success according to her endeavour, does more for the real emancipation of her sex than any amount of pamphleteering, lecturing, or petitioning by

the shrieking sisterhood can do" (Linton 66). Linton is an interesting example of someone who was fascinated by the sound and effect of human voices as indices of individual character, social interaction, and profession. Medical men required a "good voice, calm in tone and musical in quality . . . not false, not made up, not sickly, but tender in itself, or a rather low pitch, well modulated and distinctly harmonious in its notes" while the successful clerical voice had to be "a class voice—neat, careful, precise, neither wholly made nor yet natural" (Linton 40-41). In other places, Linton referred disapprovingly to "that hoarse chest-voice [as] one of the characteristics of the modern girl of a certain type" (Linton 38), and the social confusion that had resulted from the topsy-turveydom of women acting and sounding like men and vice versa.

As we saw in the previous chapter, feminist speakers and writers like Emily Faithfull recognized the power of the speaking voice to attract and alienate listeners. I want now to turn to a discussion of Mary Carpenter, probably one of the century's most frequent women public speakers. The eldest daughter of the prominent Bristol Unitarian minister Lant Carpenter, Mary Carpenter had links to organized feminism, but, like Nightingale, kept her distance from the movement, lending support to certain causes and inspiring feminists through example rather than direct involvement. The speech "versus" work dichotomy I examined in Chapter One surfaced repeatedly in comparisons of female philanthropists who knew their place and lady agitators whose work consisted more in talking "rather than" doing. Mary Carpenter's reluctance to lend her name to feminist causes like the suffrage movement of the late 1860s was informed by this dichotomy: she felt that by doing the work she had chosen, she was quietly taking the rights other women were merely talking about.[4] She contributed more papers to the SSA

than any other woman member, was an expert witness to two parliamentary inquiries on juvenile delinquency, and delivered lectures in the United States and India in her sixties. By all accounts, she was a powerful speaker who commanded the respect of audiences, although I have not been able to find evidence that she was particularly charismatic or inspirational, which may have had the effect of protecting her from adverse criticism in the press. Carpenter's reputation as a speaker helped establish the ideal of professional domesticity within a set of prescribed feminine attributes. Yet her experience demonstrates the importance of "voice" as a professional and spiritual quality, a metaphor for reform, and a location of public female power.

"If I be I": Mary Carpenter as Public Speaker

> If we impiously exclaim, 'Am I my brother's keeper?'--the Lord will reply, in a voice we shall be compelled to hear, 'The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.' A fearful retribution will come upon us, which we shall find increasingly heavy to bear, the longer we delay to fulfil towards these 'little ones' the commands of the Saviour, whose words cannot pass away, though Heaven and earth should be removed. (Carpenter, J.E. 57)

With these words Carpenter concluded the introductory chapter of *Reformatory Schools, for the children of the perishing and dangerous classes, and for juvenile offenders* (1851), her second book on criminal and destitute children. At the time, Carpenter was near the beginning of her career as a social reformer and teacher whose work was dedicated to the establishment of juvenile reformatories and industrial schools for the children of the poor. In one sense, the passage can be read as a fairly standard type of

appeal to a reader's sense of social responsibility that is typical of much Victorian social reform discourse, a form of writing that drew heavily on the authority of the scriptures as one way of provoking readers to a sense of moral responsibility, culpability, and action. Yet such a reading in no way cancels out the possibility that for Carpenter this was no empty rhetorical gesture with which to conclude her introductory chapter, but rather described her own understanding of social responsibility as the literal command of a heavenly voice. In addition, Carpenter wrote from experience when she described the "fearful retribution" brought on by inaction, for she had experienced years of restlessness and depression throughout her adolescence and early adulthood as a result of the conflicting forces of domestic ideology, work ethic, family obligation, and her powerful desire to fulfil her father's demand that she lead a useful life of service to others. Although Carpenter never seemed to have experienced the spiritual crisis and religious doubt that so many of her contemporaries described in their life writing, she did write of debilitating depression and self-reproach during her twenties, as well as series of formative experiences which had a profound effect on her definition of self. One of the most formative of these occurred in 1833 when Carpenter met the influential American Unitarian leader Joseph Tuckerman on his visit to Bristol, where the Carpenter family lived and worked. At the age of twenty-six, Carpenter "longed to fling herself into the work which there seemed few or none to undertake" and was dissatisfied with her mundane responsibilities at her father's Sunday school (Carpenter, J.E. 33). One day as she accompanied Tuckerman on a walk through Lewin's Mead, a poor Bristol neighbourhood well known to the Carpenter family, a "miserable ragged boy" darted across their path and out of sight. "'That child,' remarked Tuckerman, 'should be

followed to his home and seen after'." Thirty-six years later, Carpenter recalled Tuckerman's casual response to this everyday occurrence as the occasion of her own philanthropic and professional awakening: "'His words sank into my mind with a painful feeling that a duty was being neglected'" (Carpenter, J.E. 35). Associated with bodily sensation, Tuckerman's words "sink in" and are impossible to ignore, like the "commands of the saviour, whose words cannot pass away."

Carpenter's work in a ragged school near the end of the 1840s marked the beginning of a lifelong commitment to the education of poor and orphaned children and juvenile crime. Throughout her career, Carpenter was haunted and compelled by the words of several influential men, especially her father, whose actual and spiritual voices were seemingly inextricable Christ's. Carpenter's first biographer, her nephew Joseph Estlin Carpenter, recounts that at the age of three Carpenter already associated her father with Jesus. "'Last night papa took me on a walk, and when we were coming back, the sea was come up under the rocks, and papa thought mamma would be frightened if we went all the way back again, so he took off his shoes and stockings and carried me through the sea, and that was very like the good Jesus'" (Carpenter, J.E. 3-4). In his recollection of Carpenter in his memoir, James Martineau described the figure of Mary Carpenter at age twelve listening to her father preaching to his Bristol congregation: "that intent young daughter, lost to herself and all around, and surrendered to the sweet pieties that flowed upon that winning voice" (Carpenter, J.E. 10). After her father's death in 1840, writes J.E. Carpenter, "when he was no longer by her side as the inspirer and stay of her life, she sought and found a peace of heart in an ideal communion with him. He seemed to her to be yet close at hand, whispering encouragement at each fresh step of her course . . . . none

had ever so infused an invisible presence into the scenes that beheld them no more" (Carpenter, J.E. 55).

Eleven years after her father's death and already in her mid-forties, Carpenter planned a conference for "workers" in the area of juvenile crime and reform on the heels of the success of her second book, *Reformatory Schools*. Organized with the assistance of Matthew Davenport Hill, the conference took place in Birmingham in December 1851 and was attended by many of the experts Carpenter had quoted in her book.[5] Carpenter's sense of excitement in organizing the conference was obvious, and was the occasion for moments of self analysis like the following to her friend, Lucy Sanford:

> Being, as you know I am, excessively timid underneath my armour, I am so very thankful that all my advances have met with so cordial a response, for I am afraid I should have been too terrified to speak again, if I had met with a cold repulse. One thing is, you know, that my instinct guides me to whom to speak. I have been hitherto a sort of center of communication, an unseen spring in this Conference matter, which has caused me to write multitudes of letters and so I must go on till the machinery is fairly at work. Sometimes I almost ask myself with wonder "if I be I." (J.E. Carpenter, 124-125)

Carpenter did not speak at the conference, for, in a phrase belonging to her nephew that has often been quoted, she then felt that to have spoken in an assembly of men would have been "tantamount to unsexing herself" (Carpenter, J.E. 126). Like the protection of anonymity that women journalists enjoyed in this period, Carpenter initially appreciated and exploited the "invisibility" of her role as an "unseen spring." Even so, the experience occasioned a feeling of misrecognition and self-distance, when she wondered "if I be I."

For Carpenter, the Birmingham conference was less productive as a venue for revealing "new truths" about juvenile delinquency, than as a space for the continuing development of a professional reform community, and her role in it. In a letter to Lady Byron, another of Carpenter's close allies and later a patron of the institutions she founded, Carpenter spoke of the conference as the occasion of "deep joy," and the 10th of December, 1851, as a "sacred" day in her memory. Her satisfaction and relief arose mainly from the non-sectarian tone of the conference and the resultant sense of shared commitment and "unity of purpose" she derived from having met with her colleagues in person—"some, one knows better from correspondence, but most are revealed more by their looks or words. I did not gather a single new thought or principle, scarcely a new fact, from the whole proceedings; but I derived great stores of knowledge of the human soul" (Carpenter, J.E. 126). Frances Power Cobbe, who for a brief period worked directly with Carpenter in her Bristol ragged school, would reiterate the importance of vocal presence ten years later in her article for *Macmillan's* on Social Science Congresses.

Together with the success of *Reformatory Schools,* Carpenter's participation in the conference and an ensuing debate on the principles of reform versus retribution in the treatment of criminals led to two important developments in her career: the invitation to give evidence before an 1852 parliamentary committee on criminal and destitute children and her decision to open her own reformatory school, to be conducted according to her own principles of juvenile reform. Under the chair of M.T. Baines, Carpenter appeared before a Select Committee of the House of Commons in May 1852 as one of the first witnesses. She looked upon this opportunity with a mixture of fear and "profound

satisfaction" (Carpenter, J.E. 132), and wrote in her journal of the powerful feeling that came with bearing testimony:

> Father of my spirit, I would here record the overflowing homage of my heart that Thou has permitted me in some small degree to bear a testimony to the cause of these forsaken young immortals whom I love with my heart's love, and reverence as Thine image, defaced though it be, and crushed down by the spirit of evil. I feel my mind greatly relieved, for though I have not said nearly as much, or that so powerfully, as I desired, yet I have been enabled to speak some words of truth[.] (Carpenter, J.E. 133)

Jo Manton, Carpenter's most recent biographer, describes her voice on this occasion as "low and pleasant but very clear and she spoke with the fluency of long practice as a teacher" (107), although she does not ascribe a source to this characterization of Carpenter's voice. What most distinguished Carpenter's testimony on this occasion was the way she "outed" her principles of reform—revolutionary for their time—and contradicted one of commissioners. When asked to describe her own views of the disciplinary principles on which a reformatory would be based, Carpenter stated that she would "'enlist the will of the child in the work,'" treating him as a child and not as an adult, making him feel like a fellow worker in his own reformation. When one of the Commissioners objected that there seemed to be no provision for punishment in Carpenter's theory of reform, she replied that society owed more to the child than vice versa: "'If society leaves them knowingly in the state of utter degradation in which they are, I think it absolutely owes them reparation, far more than they can be said to owe reparation to it'" (Manton 108). But, asked one of the commissioners, did she not think

there was something "extravagant and absurd" in this theory? "'I do not'," she replied firmly. Carpenter was also unsparing in her criticism of Parkhurst Prison on this occasion, a "state-of-the-art" juvenile reformatory built on the Isle of Wight that for Carpenter approximated a prison more than a school. Her testimony on this was discredited, however, because she had never visited the school in person.

We need to recognize how significant it was for a woman to be giving evidence to a parliamentary commission in the first place, and, secondly, how striking it must have seemed for a woman, unmarried and a Unitarian, to disagree publicly with a commissioner. As I mentioned in Chapter Two, the *EWJ* called this moment "an epoch in social history" and went on to imagine how difficult it must have been for Carpenter to answer the summons: "crossing the lobby of the House of Commons, confronting the chairman, answering methodically the interrogatories of the honorable gentleman who undertook to conduct the inquiry, and withstanding the shock of a cross-examination by members on the 'other side,' may have been received with a feeling more or less akin to a natural feminine shrinking from the obligation of occupying a too conspicuous position" ("Ladies'" 406). If Carpenter had at one time felt that speaking publicly was a contradiction of femininity, she soon discovered a way to reconcile public activity with private conviction in a way that "made sense" to audiences whose support she wanted to enlist, and allowed her to redefine her sense of self in a way that seemed coherent with a "natural feminine shrinking."

Estlin Carpenter's biography and a smattering of press reports on Carpenter's career all suggest that in the 1850s, Carpenter's increasing public visibility and vocal presence entailed a self-transformation, but one which allowed "I" to be "I". Feminists

later found this self-remodelling all the more surprising given the late age at which she became a public figure—Edith Simcox used Carpenter's example to decry the position of unmarried women who were hampered by family obligations until late in life, for example (Simcox). The death of her mother in 1856 contributed to Carpenter's self-transformation; for the first time she was able to settle in a house of her own and devote herself exclusively to her work, occasioning a sense of freedom that caused her to reflect privately that "I feel as if—now past fifty—I were only just emerging from childhood. So this puts me back at times; but on the whole I feel more 'myself and nobody else,' or rather that I shall soon be so" (Carpenter, J.E. 196). Carpenter's sense of self as "true" was, interestingly, forged in the realm of public work and speech instead of in the private sphere.

By the time Carpenter began delivering papers to the SSA in 1857, she was already a highly-regarded public figure whose vocal tones and speaking style were considered "feminine" enough that her presence seemed to confirm rather than contradict notions of proper womanhood. As Simcox noted years later, "All Miss Carpenter's letters, even on somewhat burning questions, are so unfailingly clear, courteous, and diplomatically impersonal, that we understand their freedom from offense" (664). Carpenter's writing and public speech combined technical detail about her reformatory work with the language of moral and spiritual reform, and, while guided by a palpable moral feeling,[6] were also "free" of "flights of oratory." The *Englishwoman's Review* article on the fifteenth meeting of the SSA in Leeds in 1871 glossed Carpenter's paper on women's education in India before comparing women's public speech to men's: "we must add that out of the many instances in which ladies took part in the discussions, not

one occurred in which the speech was not concise and to the point. The speakers knew and said just what they meant, and were not led away into flights of oratory, or depths of dim 'no meaning'" ("Fifteenth" 27).[7]

In an article on the "Fitness of Women for the Ministry," Frances Power Cobbe observed that women public speakers were more likely to be self-forgetful in public—to be "carried away the moment they begin by feelings which leave little room for self-reflection" (261). Cobbe's purpose was to demonstrate women's superior platform ability to the average male speaker, whose dread of public humiliation was so "deeply ingrained" that he was often reduced to the stammerings and stutterings he was so anxious to avoid. But her representation of women speakers as self-forgetful also worked to forestall accusations of self-interest and publicity-seeking. The evidence of women's self-forgetfulness in public utterance was their smooth delivery—"I never knew one of them 'hum' or 'haw,' or stammer, or break down, even when (as in one very remarkable case) the gentle and learned speaker had never addressed an audience till the occasion, when she had already passed middle life" (Cobbe, "Fitness" 261). Cobbe was surely referring to Carpenter here, and her omission of Carpenter's name echoed her larger argument about women's public disinterestedness.

Carpenter's repudiation of "publicity"—or the repudiation that people liked to attribute to her—as well as the sheer volume of her contributions to the SSA, and the "reasoned," "gentle" tone of her public demeanour, helped normalize and legitimize women's platform presence. The public exposure she "endured" was invariably framed as a "sacrifice" or a necessary evil for the sake of a great cause—the rescue of indigent children. Simcox explained the cause as something like an irresistible force that had

"claimed her" (663). In one of the few articles she contributed to the *EWJ,* Carpenter herself resolved the problem of the public professional woman when she advised her readers that publicity for the sake of reform work was not a contradiction of Christian femininity, but a God-given test of it:

> Nor let women fear the difficulties to be contended with in this work, the apparent publicity to which it may expose them, or the unwillingness of the other sex to allow them to work. *A true woman* will surmount all obstacles by the God-sent strength of her very weakness;--while *apparently* placed in a public position, she will know how to keep the privacy of her individual nature guarded by an invisible but impenetrable shield,--and so, going forth with no desire for worldly glory, no attempt to intrude on the peculiar duties of the other sex, she will not be hindered by them, but aided and encouraged." (292)

Carpenter regarded the legal and social barriers to women's work not as the arbitrary and artificial restraints of women's agency, nor as symbols of male power and prejudice, but as necessary tests of women's spiritual and moral strength: "Whatever legal or social disabilities she may still lie under, however she may be thwarted in her aims, cramped in her endeavours, fettered in her action, by the real or imaginary shackles imposed by public opinion, yet let her be imbued deeply and strongly with a Christian spirit of self-denying love, and she will have the *freedom* which Christ has given to his disciples, and which no mortal *can* take from her" (Carpenter, "Women's" 290). Thus, although Carpenter did not avow feminist arguments in her work as a woman, her public example as a type of social martyr who laboured in the face of adversity held a powerful appeal for other women who worked more directly on behalf of women.

A review of Joseph Estlin Carpenter's biography in the *London and Quarterly Review* endorsed the doubleness of Carpenter's public reputation as both brave and timid, fearless and retiring:

> many touching little traits reveal all the woman—timid, self-distrustful, home-loving; dreading publicity, and yet braving it without hesitation when she could thereby serve the cause she had at heart; so that she who had feared to let her name appear in print, and who did not venture to speak at the first conference of workers gathered by her efforts, became a witness before House of Commons Committees, and a ready and eloquent speaker at Social Science Congresses, and before great public gatherings in the United States. Yet it was most truly that she said, 'I have a lamb's heart under my coat of armour' (58).

The public ideal that was articulated here was made possible by imagining that women could "raise the tone of society," both in a literal and metaphoric sense, through a complete repudiation of "self." Women like Carpenter who addressed the public were made intelligible through metaphors of interiority and images of the "heart" and the "shield" that endorsed a divided speaking subject. As her biographer put it, "it was one of the peculiar characteristics of Mary Carpenter's mind, that it united qualities very rarely found in harmonious combination. She had the soul of a mystic, and the insight into affairs and the grasp of detail of a born administrator" (108-109). In addition, because Carpenter seemed to speak for others, she was free from the charge of self-promotion that feminist speakers suffered, even though most feminists also claimed to speak on behalf of others. When Carpenter spoke, she represented not a "self" seeking personal power or reputation, but a "voiceless class" (*EWR*) that could not speak for itself, one literally and

figuratively imprisoned. Privately, however, Carpenter wrote in her journal that her work was leading to a feeling of agential power and self-definition she hadn't felt before.

> I have had a peculiar pleasure in this book independently of its object; I have had a strange and very unusual feeling of satisfaction in being thus able from my quiet study to tell the world (small and unimportant as it may be), what is the deep and earnest desire of my soul, and perhaps to stimulate some kindred spirit to the same work . . . I feel as if I had within me powers which have never yet had tranquil leisure to expand themselves. I desire to work out more my own individuality, and to be freer from the shackles which I have always felt imposed on me in various ways. (Carpenter, J.E. 106).

It was perhaps this need to throw off "shackles" that most influenced her theory of reformatory and prison discipline.

Moral Environmentalism and the Voice of Love

If Carpenter learned to "know herself" through the use of her public voice, we need also to recognize how important "voice" was to her theories of juvenile reform. One of the foundational oppositions in her approach to juvenile delinquency and the reclamation of the lost was her pragmatic, practical faith in the power of legislation to produce material change in the lives of poor children, and her continual recourse to the invisible, the unknown, the spiritual, and the intangible yet powerful effects of a voice of love. In representing the children of the poor, Carpenter often referred to such agencies as "voice," "tone," "atmosphere," and "spirit" as essential to the reclamation of the child who was outside the realms of the "citizen" or, in some cases, the "human." The human

voice of sympathy was a recurrent image in Carpenter's theory, and was often figured as an animating spirit that could pervade institutional settings and produce particular desired effects in children who, in Carpenter's view, had never heard a "voice of love."

Frank Mort's term "moral environmentalism" captures the prevailing attitudes of middle-class social investigative discourse between the 1830s and 60s, in which Carpenter's writing participated. Starting with the response to the cholera outbreaks in these decades, a "medico-moral" logic united investigators' responses to a host of social issues related to the urban poor. Of primary concern to these early experts, including James Phillips Kay and Thomas Chalmers, were the "moral habits" of the urban poor, where poverty, vice, and disease seemed to accompany each other, and were communicated between populations by way of miasma, an early and influential theory of contagion.[8] For these practitioners of "social medicine," a circular logic about the cause of disease prevailed, so that "immoral conduct was the direct result of filth, squalor and disease of the urban working-class environment. But immorality—conceived as a general lack of self-reliance and improper habits—was also cited as one of the principal *causes* of disease" (Mort 29). The proposed solution was often increased isolation, surveillance, and inspection of poor and diseased populations, in order to halt the spread of moral and medical illness among individuals.

Mary Carpenter was very much a "moral environmentalist." In her writing Carpenter mapped physical metaphors of disease, illness, and contagion onto juvenile "crime" or "delinquency" to reproduce a specialized cause-and-effect discourse about a sector of the poor and a particular "species" of child. Carpenter argued that basic education, accompanied by moral training—preferably in isolation from the disease-

ridden environments of poor homes and neighbourhoods—would lead to the physical and moral "rehabilitation" of individual children, and, ultimately, the moral uplift of society. Carpenter had very specific proposals for the treatment of the various classes and categories of wayward child she helped identify, with a different type of institution, administered according to specific principles, for each class of child. Equally important to her theory, however, was a set of abstract, environmental terms drawn from religious and philanthropic discourse, such as moral atmosphere, tone, voice, heart, feeling, spirit, and sympathy—agencies that would do their work invisibly, spreading contagion-like through each of the "moral hospitals" Carpenter called for and eventually administered.

One of the first principles of the theory of juvenile reform in *Reformatory Schools* was that "Love must be the ruling sentiment of all who attempt to influence and guide these children" (Carpenter, *Reformatory* 74). Carpenter characterized love as "an absolute necessity" of children's nature, declaring that the absence of love made children into something other than children; the expression of love was constitutive of the state of childhood, making citizenship an impossibility for those who had not first experienced childhood. One of the most important ways of administering "love" was through the use of kind but firm tones and gestures that would transform the poor or criminal child from what was essentially in Carpenter's view a non-being—neither child nor adult—into a human with a discernible "self" upon which one could work further miracles of social and physical healing. In *Reformatory Schools,* Carpenter wrote of the feeling of power that came with witnessing this transformation: "None can tell but those who have witnessed it, the responsive love which is awakened in the heart of one of these forsaken

ones by a kind look or word, or the purifying effect of the feeling, now by many experienced for the first time, that they are 'loved for themselves'" (74).

The class-specific nature of the definition of love, childhood, and citizenship that Carpenter and other reformers in this period relied on cannot be underestimated, and has been discussed elsewhere.[9] Reform projects directed at the poor made sense to middle-class audiences because they were guided by (albeit shifting) class definitions of family, motherhood, and filial love. Like other middle-class reformers, Carpenter's reformed child was one who resembled a very specific notion of what "childhood" should look and sound like; poor homes and neighbourhoods could provide none of the "loving discipline" which would not only make each child into a productive citizen, but, more importantly, grant him or her a "self" and a "soul." The reformatory was thus imagined as a surrogate middle-class home and family for the outlaw child, where he would come to experience the pressure of law not as a set of moral strictures (as in the poorly-managed penal institutions Carpenter routinely criticized) but as a *feeling* of love and a *desire* to obey engendered by a kind discipline he would soon learn to recognize and welcome. As Carpenter's biographer described it, "[t]he child must be placed where he will be gradually restored to the true position of childhood. He must be brought to a sense of dependence by reawakening in him new and healthy desires which he cannot himself gratify, and by finding that there is a power far greater than his own to which he is indebted for the gratification of these desires. . . . this power, while controlling him, is guided by wisdom and love" (Carpenter, J.E. 145). The child's ability to feel love was predicated on the teacher's; in Carpenter's pedagogy, as in her father's, the teacher was the intermediary through which the errant child would learn to express his "spiritual

affections toward the Heavenly Father" (Carpenter, *Reformatory* 75). As the child learned to feel and to know the love of his teacher, "who is making a constant sacrifice to benefit him," he would eventually learn to feel the unseen force of an "ever present spirit" of "love."

A fuller investigation of Carpenter's role in articulating state-sanctioned definitions of childhood, delinquency, and criminal behaviour, as well as her belief in what Michel Foucault has called "disciplinary individualism" and "the gentle way in punishment" is somewhat beyond the scope of this chapter.[10] I want only to point out here that Carpenter's appropriation of the contagion metaphor worked in both directions—if it was possible for children to become contaminated by one moral environment, it was equally possible for them to be healed by another. Physical punishment and restraint were, above all, anathema to Carpenter's theory of disciplinary reform. In their place, Carpenter advocated the "force of love," administered through a "kind" or "gentle" tone of voice, which seemingly had the power to subdue all unruliness. Estlin Carpenter's biography includes several accounts of Mary Carpenter's almost Messianic power to subdue or restrain her scholars with look, accent, and tone.

> [She] soon acquired a complete familiarity with the ways of the scholars, and also with the habits of the neighbourhood. Strong in the power of sacred purpose, she was perfectly devoid of fear, and would traverse alone and at night into courts which policemen only went by twos. The street quarrel was hushed at her approach, as a guilty lad slunk away to avoid her look of sorrowful reproof; and her approving word, with the gift of a flower, a picture, or a Testament, often

made sad homes cheerful and renewed the courage of the wavering" (J.E. Carpenter 88).

Carpenter's journal entry for March 12, 1853 describes a situation at Kingswood, a reformatory she established near Bristol in 1852. Six girls had run away from the school while Carpenter was absent, and had been apprehended by police. When Carpenter went to retrieve them, she found them locked in separate cells and in states of "wild excitement."

> They had insulted the officers and been so outrageous that he had been incited to give two a slap in the face, and to lock them in separate cells, whence they called out, screamed, and sang, in such a manner that those six were enough to corrupt a hundred. He then led us to the entrance of the corridor, where I listened to sounds that indeed shocked me, and that revealed the wicked and audacious state in which they were. . . . He then accompanied me to the door of each cell, calling each little girl to the door, as one would call a wild beast to the front of his den. Had I felt any doubt before of the useless and injurious effect of physical coercion, and the force of kindness and moral influence on these poor children, all doubt would have vanished. As I approached each girl, and gently but very sorrowfully told her how grieved I was to see her here in such a condition when I had left her good and happy the day before, she hung down her head and was quite softened; one affectionately took my hand. There was now no fear. (Estlin Carpenter 150)

What strikes me about this passage is Carpenter's preoccupation with the sound over the sight of her pupils, reinforced through the order of events—she hears them before she

sees them, and greets the sound of their "wickedness" with a tone that has the power to subdue and manipulate their bodies: the hanging of the head is read as the sign of submission and obedience to higher authority.[11]

For Carpenter, the power of the voice—both the actual speaking voice and as a metaphor for the spirit—lies in its ability to touch the heart. The voice has a restorative, transformative power, calling forth both the weak and the strong into a single, connected body held together by a vocal presence each member "feels" individually. That is, the power of the individual voice to link single bodies into collective identities contains what Poovey calls "the paradox of disciplinary individualism—a *collective* sense of *individual* responsibility" (Poovey, *Making* 103). The effect of Carpenter's vocal power is not to make each child the same as the next by virtue of his categorical proximity to others like him—as either a "delinquent" or one of the "reformed"—but to construct and reaffirm his individuality through his "voluntary submission" to something "greater" than himself—God, society, his teacher, the nation.

Models of the Selfless

Millicent Garrett Fawcett's 1889 compendium of biographical sketches of women made a similar point to the one Edith Simcox had made nine years earlier regarding the arc of Carpenter's career. For Fawcett, Carpenter's experience was "striking proof of the change that has taken place in the sphere and social status of women"; the fear of publicity that had given her such mental anguish in the first half of her life was for Fawcett not a sign of "true womanly modesty," as others would describe it. Rather, Carpenter's transformation was a sign that attitudes prohibiting women from exercising

authority in public were gradually receding, thanks in no small part to Carpenter's heroic emergence into the public realm (15).

"[F]or her work's sake she became able to speak in public with ease and self-possession" (Fawcett 15). Carpenter's relevance for feminism was frequently explained by her contemporaries as a self-possession borne, paradoxically, out of "selflessness" and sacrifice on behalf of others. This was a particularly important aspect of her career for feminist intellectuals who were concerned that they would be regarded by public opinion as self-promoting or non-representative of other women. Carpenter's four consecutive visits to India in the last ten years of her life to observe and promote Indian women's education reinforced both this reputation of selflessness and her connection to the claims of women. In its obituary of Carpenter, the *Englishwoman's Review* predicted that the "cause" of Indian women would be one with which Carpenter's name would forever be "inseparably connected" ("Mary Carpenter" 296).[12]

Carpenter's public image as "selfless" protected her from hostile criticism in the press during much of her career, and made her attractive to other women speakers who could use her experience as proof that women speakers could be socially-engaged, public intellectuals whose exposure did not automatically make them "masculine." One of the ways in which feminists reinforced Carpenter's femininity was through the metaphor of motherhood, which Fawcett called one of the "secrets of her power." She was credited with being more "motherly" than most mothers, with a "universal mother heart," a "special capacity for protecting love," and a saintly patience with unruly children "such as many a real mother might envy" (Fawcett 11). According to Fawcett, "[s]he was especially proud of the title of 'the old mother' which the Indian women, whom she

visited towards the close of her life, gave her" (11). The link between selflessness and (non-biological) motherhood that Carpenter seemed to embody offered a powerful example for feminism because it combined a practical reason with an emotional investment in the sufferings of others.

Carpenter was thus an importantly embodied figure—both "head" and "heart"—whose authority seemed to issue directly "from" her speaking body. In a description of her public speaking style written by her brother Philip and quoted in Fawcett's account of her life, Carpenter's voice was characterized as one with the power to physically control others in order to produce desired effects:

> She stood up and read in her usual clear voice and expressive enunciation. . . . It was, I suppose, the first time a woman's voice had read a lecture there [at Oxford] before dignitaries of learning and the Church; but as there was not the slightest affectation on the one hand, so on the other hand there was neither a scorn nor an etiquettish politeness; they all listened to her as they would have listened to Dr. Rae about Franklin, only with the additional feeling (expressed by the President, Mr. Nassau Senior) that it was a matter of heart and duty, as well as head. (Fawcett 10-11)

The real and imagined link between voice and heart, or sound and body—one that Carpenter relied on in her pedagogy and platform appearances—has been widely acknowledged in feminist, psychoanalytic, linguistic and communication theory. That is, sound has often been recognized as a more "bodily" sense than vision, for example: "what we see is kept at a distance, but what we hear penetrates our entire body. . . . Hearing is intimate, participatory, communicative; we are always *affected* by what we are

given to hear" (Levin 32). Part of the reason hearing is associated with intimacy is because of the "interiority" of sound—Walter Ong discusses the human voice as coming from somewhere "inside the human organism which provides the voice's resonances" (72). We can be enveloped and overpowered by sound, so that the boundaries between self and other seem to become less fixed.

Thus, Carpenter's "full-bodied" speech enlists the bodies of her listeners by holding their attention and appealing to their "hearts,"—their sense of moral responsibility and social duty. The disciplinary scene of reformatory classroom obedience is repeated in the venerable lecture halls of ancient universities, but Carpenter's authority in both of these spaces is presented as neither charismatic or stylized, but as predicated on a repudiation, or perhaps more accurately, a dispersal of self among and between the bodies of listeners. Carpenter provided a powerful example for feminist speakers of a publicly-oriented female authority that brought both her weak and influential audiences into proximity with each other through the medium of the ("clear" and "expressive") speaking voice—an agency that could be felt and heard but not seen.

Notes

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[1] By praising women's intelligence on the one hand and denying their abilities as social scientists on the other, the *Saturday* delivers yet another of its signature rhetorical gestures, the back-handed compliment to the women of Langham Place and the SSA.
[2] Clearly the nurses and medical students in George Moore's *Esther Waters*, have not studied their *Notes on Nursing*, for example, since they take no notice of how Esther's labour pains are exacerbated by the sound of their casual conversation about a popular shilling novel.
[3] Nightingale discussed reading aloud from the perspective of the patient as well as the nurse. In *Cassandra*, Nightingale called being read to "the most miserable exercise of the human intellect. . . . It is like lying on one's back, with one's hands tied and having liquid poured down one's throat" (402).

[4] A letter from John Stuart Mill to Carpenter in 1867, however, began to convince her otherwise. Mill wrote, "I cannot agree in the wish you express that the right should rather be '*given* to women by those who deprived her of it, than from her own *demand.*' Feminists had been "courting" Carpenter's influence from the late 1850s, but she had always preferred to maintain her distance with the explanation that the unpopularity of their cause could hurt hers. In 1877, the year of her death, Carpenter finally lent her presence to the suffrage movement by appearing before a meeting of the Bristol and West of England Society for Women's Suffrage (Manton 219).

[5] This was not the first or last time that the issue of juvenile reform had been the subject of public debate; select committees of the House of Lords and the House of Commons in 1847 and 1850 respectively had inquired into criminal legislation, juvenile crime and transportation, and the reports were used extensively by Carpenter as source material in her books. For a good discussion of the category of the juvenile delinquent as elaborated in the first half of the century through various parliamentary inquiries into youth crime, prison reform, and child labour, see May. The format of the parliamentary committee, articulated through the important mechanism of the Blue Book, was undoubtedly the model of public discussion and information gathering that inspired Carpenter's idea for the conference.

[6] Upon seeing her photograph, Benjamin Jowett is quoted in Manton as saying, "This is the portrait of a person who lives under *high moral excitement*" (110).

[7] The fact that the *EWR* included this comment in its review of the meeting that year demonstrates both the difference between the *EWR* and the *EWJ* (the latter would never have dared suggest that male speakers at the SSA were given to "flights of oratory"), and the reputation the SSA had settled into by the early 1870s as a forum for much talk and little action.

[8] See Poovey, *Making a Social Body*; Levy; Goodlad.

[9] See Steedman, Cunningham, May, Ross.

[10] See Foucault's chapter, "The Carceral," in *Discipline and Punish*, for his description of the establishment of Mettray, a reformatory founded in France in 1844. Mettray is for Foucault "the disciplinary form at its most extreme, the model in which are concentrated all the coercive technologies of behaviour. In it were to be found 'cloister, prison, school, regiment'" (293). Carpenter's plans for her institutions were heavily influenced by the Mettray model.

[11] As phenomenologist Erwin Straus pointed out in his study of the act of listening, the Latin word for "obey," *obaudire,* means "to listen from below" (Levin 32).

[12] See Antoinette Burton's discussion of Carpenter in relation to nineteenth-century feminism's assumption of Indian women as their special responsibility in *Burdens of History.*

Afterword

The Victorian press, the SSA, and the network of discussion societies that developed at mid-century need to be read not only as spaces for the articulation of Victorian liberal feminism, but as spaces which the emergent counterpublic of feminism helped define. I have tried to avoid suggesting throughout that "the" public sphere was either entirely prohibitive or inclusive of middle-class women. Rather, I have argued that there was a space between prohibition and inclusion which women occupied, and that this space was itself immensely *productive* of new social formations and public identities.

But how do we "listen" to talk in the written documents that are our records of this central mode of feminist action? I suggest that texts such as the *Transactions* of the SSA, the feminist journal, and the records of women's debating societies, "speak volumes" about middle-class women's early interventions in public debate as it was staged in the influential bourgeois public sphere, but that we hear women's voices in a way that is only ever partially adequate to the effects of women's historic, embodied interventions in public (and private) spaces. Nor would our sense of nineteenth-century feminist public presence somehow become unambiguous if sound recordings of their speech suddenly became available. My point is rather that the relationship between the spoken and written voices of feminism in a given historical moment—particularly in the ways that print endeavours to render oral feminist utterance—reveals broader cultural and social values relating to our sense of "the public", and who is authorized to speak "within" it.

What is the impact of the speaking voice in print and image-saturated cultures like those that dominate now? What does the feminist speaking voice mean to classroom teaching, for example, and face-to-face interaction with students, particularly as public, post-secondary education gets "distanced" through new, progressive technologies that allow us to transcend the everyday space of the classroom? What does the feminist speaking voice mean to our interactions in public forums like the academic conference, and the media? Sunera Thobani's recent conference speech about September 11 suggests that the feminist speaking voice continues to generate important, often unspoken cultural anxieties about who can speak, and when.

Thobani's experience illustrates that the pervasiveness of sound and visual media technologies does not make the reception of feminist speech any less complicated, or foreclose multiple interpretations. On October 1, 2001, Thobani, the former leader of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) and a professor of women's studies at the University of British Columbia, delivered a speech at the "Women's Resistance: From Victimization to Criminalization" conference in Ottawa. Attended by hundreds of activists and social workers in the areas of anti-violence, female poverty, and Canada's prison system, Thobani's keynote address began with a reminder to listeners that "this particular phase of globalization is rooted in the colonization of aboriginal peoples and third world peoples all over the world. . . . there will be no social justice, no anti-racism, no feminist emancipation for anybody on this continent" until the Western domination of aboriginal and third-world peoples is ended (Thobani 18). What followed was a critique of the multifarious public responses to September 11, led by the American government's rhetoric in the immediate aftermath and its plans for military reaction in the

Middle East. Thobani touched on neo-colonialist language ("'forces of darkness,' 'crusade,' 'evildoers,' 'infinite justice'"), random attacks and bullying against people of colour, racial profiling, the tightening of immigration law and border control in Canada and the U.S., and the sudden media interest in the struggles of Afghan women. All these, Thobani argued, were both symptoms and effects of the global domination of the West. She called feminists to resist "jingoistic militarism", and to recognize it as "the most heinous form of patriarchal, racist violence that we're seeing on the globe today" (Thobani 21). Thus, Western and American geopolitical domination, and the colonization of women, third-world, and aboriginal peoples on which that domination depended, were *contexts for* (rather than *causes of*) September 11 and its effects.

While Thobani is known as a dramatic and powerful speaker, none of this would likely have been "news" to the five hundred supportive listeners in the audience that day. The mainstream media, however, interpreted the speech and its author as "outrageous," "idiotic," and "biased." The phrase that was picked up and repeated in the reportage most often was Thobani's powerful assertion, made near the beginning of her speech, that "the path of U.S. foreign policy is soaked in blood" (Thobani 19).[1] With these words, the press alleged, Thobani had engaged in victim-blaming, and had implied that all Americans were blood-thirsty. Her speech was denounced by parliamentarians across the political spectrum, while then-Multiculturalism minister Hedy Fry, who occupied the platform with Thobani, was criticized for not walking out of the conference.

In a recent article in the feminist magazine *Herizons*, one writer commented that "it seems hard to believe that a speech delivered on October 1, 2001 could whip the Canadian media, parliament and the country into such a frenzy. Had Sunera Thobani

spoken the words on any day prior to September 11, they would surely have been ignored" (Croft 6). In effect, however, her words *were* ignored; the media was much more interested in the body and the voice they "came from" than in the content of her speech. It's hardly worth pointing out here that had the same speech been delivered by, say, Noam Chomsky or even Michael Moore, the response would have been entirely different. Many of the shots of Thobani that appeared in mainstream dailies the following morning are close-focus shots from a low angle, making Thobani look "impassioned" and "angry"—emotions that were applauded by an enthusiastic and supportive conference audience, but easily co-opted and denounced by the established press and politicians as dangerous and shameful. All the predictable responses to her speech popped up in the days following: she was an angry feminist, hysterical, foolish, hateful and destructive, a Communist by virtue of her association with NAC, and an ungrateful, uppity immigrant. (Does Thobani not live in the "evil" West, taking advantage of all its benefits?" asked one commentator.) As Michele Landsberg pointed out, "[t]he National Post was, predictably, the most meretricious, reprinting a 'condensed version' of Thobani's speech that craftily carved out all the paragraphs that made her meaning clear. The clue to the whole squalid hate campaign emerged by chance in a Globe and Mail cartoon, which depicted the Taleban fighters listening contentedly to a broadcast of Thobani's speech" (Landsberg A2). Perhaps most insidiously, the media message around Thobani's speech was that if you agreed with her, you were justifying the bombings, making you, like Thobani, a "monster." Media commentators sympathetic with Thobani's perspective —both mainstream and alternative—immediately identified the moment as a "war on dissent."

The key here is precisely the print media's unwillingness and seeming inability to represent and engage with the content and context of Thobani's speech. Thobani herself has said what frustrated her most about the reporting was the lack of discussion about her message. "'The really serious issues were not being discussed and instead it was a kind of personal vilification and humiliation that many journalists and editors across the country responded to,' Thobani says. 'So again, I have the same kind of response as I did to the hate mail: how can you deal with this? When somebody resorts to this kind of name calling and does not actually deal with the substance of my speech, there's just no way you can deal with them'" (Croft 6-7).

Forms of discursive, physical, and emotional violence have long been the responses—though not the only ones, of course—to feminist exercise of the voice. Most often this violence is a passive one, simply ignoring the voice altogether, rendering the speaker invisible; this would almost certainly have been the "response" to Thobani and the "Women's Resistance" conference itself had it taken place prior to September 11. At other times, the voice is met with a response that exerts its power by using humiliation and insult. As Thobani recognized, the violence she experienced after her speech was achieved in large measure because mainstream media reserved for itself the power to ignore context, replacing it with insult, which by its very nature is bereft of context. As Slavoj Žižek has written, the lack of context for the injurious word accounts for its shocking impact:

> An injurious word aims at bringing about in the other the breakdown of argumentation: its wound "corners" the other. When, to take the most elementary case, I shout at somebody, "You stupid bitch!" the victim makes herself ridiculous

> the moment she sets to refute my charge by means of rational argumentation, since she thereby already falls into the trap of taking my insult seriously. Therein resides the double bind of the injurious word: it discredits in advance the victim's attempt to refute it *via* counterargumentation. (Žižek 106)

What do feminists do when counterargumentation is foreclosed by forms of discursive violence? Victorian feminists responded by reprinting in full the scripts of feminist public presence in their journals. *Herizons* reprinted the full text of Thobani's speech, with little commentary, other than to say that it thought her words "belong on the public record" (Thobani 18). Thobani says she stopped speaking to the media altogether because she believed that it would only contribute to the press's "war-mongering." But she has also said that the media's "coverage" of her speech productively demonstrated "'how extremely important it was to have given that speech'" (Croft 7). The speech and its effects helped galvanize feminist and anti-racist intellectuals in Canada, generated public critique in a moment of crisis, and disrupted the smooth performance of the scripts of multiculturalism through which Canadian national identity is imagined.

The spectacle of the individual addressing a room full of listeners has become an increasingly rare event, and often a distasteful and dangerous one, in which the speaker is forced to express her personal opinion, one that seems to come "from" her body. In our pedagogy we try to resist this model in favour of a more horizontal and participatory classroom space. Yet getting up to speak in front of an audience of relative strangers in order to voice one's opinion, to make that opinion a public one, continues to generate particular responses that, I would argue, print does not. Feminists of colour who speak publicly are treated as more voiced and excessively embodied than, for instance, white

male politicians whose expression of opinion through voice is publicly- and socially-sanctioned so as to seem natural and expected.

Victorian feminist public speech and journalism are not contexts for my understanding of Thobani's address. That is, I don't want to make a claim for the "identicality" of Thobani's experience with that of Victorian feminist public speakers, even though resemblances are apparent. I do want to suggest that past and present "moments of feminism" are always historically "voiced" in such a way as to engender popular responses that seem at once predictable and shocking.

Notes

[1] A fuller context for this phrase is as follows: "Today, the United States is one of the most dangerous and the most powerful global forces that is unleashing prolific levels of violence all over the world. From Chile to El Salvador, to Nicaragua to Iraq, the path of U.S. foreign policy is soaked in blood. All of us have seen and felt the dramatic pain of watching the September 11th attacks and are trying to grasp the facts of the numbers of people who died. We feel the pain of those attacks every day; we have been watching it replayed constantly on television. But do we feel any pain for the victims of U.S. aggression?" (Thobani 19).

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