Master's thesis

2022

Anniken Vagnildhaug

NTNU
Norwegian University of
Science and Technology
Faculty of Humanities
Department of Language and Literature

Anniken Vagnildhaug

Representations of the female sex in *The Lady's Magazine*

May 2022

NTNU
Norwegian University of
Science and Technology

NTNU
Norwegian University of
Science and Technology

NTNU
Norwegian University of
Science and Technology

Representations of the female sex in *The Lady's Magazine*

Anniken Vagnildhaug

Master's thesis in Language Studies with Teacher Education
Submission date: May 2022
Supervisor: Paul Goring

Norwegian University of Science and Technology
Department of Language and Literature

Abstract

This is a study of female representation in an eighteenth-century periodical called *The Lady's Magazine* (1770-1837). The aim is to investigate how the magazine portrays women and how its portrayals changed in its early years by analyzing three separate issues published almost 20 years apart. By close reading and comparing selected content in the three issues, the result shows that femininity is represented in a similar way, promoting domestic-focused content and qualities characterized and desired by the male sex. Therefore, much of the content included in the issues continues to reproduce the patriarchal society. However, by analyzing three issues located in different decades, the thesis also finds that much of the content reflects the contemporary society and shows traces of, for instance, the growing ideology of motherhood at the end of the eighteenth century, and the impact of the French Revolution and radical female thinkers at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Acknowledgment

I would first like to thank my supervisor Paul Goring, for all the help and support in writing this thesis. I have appreciated your critical feedback and helpful comments which have been important for me in the process of writing the thesis. Thank you!

I also want to thank my professors at NTNU for introducing me to several new perspectives related to literature, literary history, and the feminist debate. Yuri, Rhonna, Hania, and Eli, thank you all.

I would like to thank my friends from the lektor-program, Julie, Lise, Maren, Eline, Marie, Vilde, Sandra, Ingrid, Emelie, and Elin, for new friendships. Thank you all for making my time at NTNU an unforgettable one. I want to thank my friends and family for their general love and support. My dear friend Maren, who has accepted my absence these past months while writing the thesis. Many thanks to my boyfriend, for always supporting me, and for helping me with the thesis and the several breakdowns resulting from it. Thank you, mom and dad, for pretending to find my thoughts and opinions about feminism in the late eighteenth century, interesting. I would also like to thank my dear sister, Astrid, for always taking the time to talk, and for inspiring and motivating me further. Finally, a big thanks to my brother, Andreas, for proofreading the entire thesis. I could never have done this without you all.

Anniken Vagnildhaug

Trondheim, May 2022

Table of Contents

Introduction

The Lady's Magazine: or Entertaining Companion for the Fair Sex was a British women's magazine that dominated the market from 1770 to 1837.[1] It was published at a time when attitudes about women, their talents and abilities, and their place in society were changing. The magazine's several contributions promoted the rising bourgeois ideology that emphasized domestic values and motherhood as something other than biological reproduction. Beth Tobin argues that the construction of motherhood and representations of the domestic woman was culturally and politically constituted and that popular print, particularly the publication of *The Lady's Magazine,* played an essential role in this process. Women's periodicals established a type of 'curriculum' for their readers that conveyed necessary information about the household and the domestic sphere (Shevelow 179-80). This domestic content involved the construction of the ideal mother, wife, and household manager, which influenced eighteenth-century readers and sharpened the differences between the male and female social roles. The tender mother was depicted as sympathetic and anxious, which were qualities often associated with women. Stories in popular print reflected how mothers were selfless and self-sacrificing to ensure their children's well-being and described the pain of the women who were separated from their children (Tobin 209-10). Men were, in contrast, not presented primarily as fathers but instead depicted with pride, responsibility, and wisdom, whose domains were public, political, and productive (Shoemaker 39). In constructing these popular opinions, the periodical press was important because it contained implicit ideas about gender (Shoemaker 16).

The Lady's Magazine was published when the print market was expanding and women were gradually included in the literary sphere, becoming part of the reading public (Miller

[1] Further references to the magazine will be given parenthetically in the text, shortened to "LM", with the year of publication, volume and, where necessary, pages.

280). Reading was no longer only associated with upper-class societies or the male elite but welcomed the lower parts of the social hierarchies of class and gender, causing a social transformation (Shevelow 22-3). This 'new group' of readers came from the lower ranks of society, and most did not have access to private libraries which were often associated with patriarchal control. Therefore, women joined book clubs, reading circles, and circulating libraries, which contributed to the democratization of literature and allowed people who did not have enough money to own books to read (Pearson 153; 161-3). However, circulating libraries were also believed to be dangerous public spaces because they challenged patriarchal guidelines of women's reading behaviors, referring to how and where women should read (Pearson 160). Pearson writes that books "had to be read in the right manner, the right company, and the right places," referring to how women were expected to read in their private spheres, in contrast to men, who occupied the public sphere (152). Silent reading was associated with selfish pleasure, and it was more accepted that women should read aloud, especially to their children. However, it was best if women were read to by their father, husband, or brother because this allowed them to perform domestic duties simultaneously (Pearson 170-1). Pearson argues that "the harmony of [the] reading husband and [the]sewing, listening wife is central to many didactic novels promulgating domestic ideology…" (172-3). Thus, the practice of reading was dominated by the patriarchal power that controlled so much else in society.

Peter John Miller argues that the eighteenth-century periodical promoted the proliferation of formal and fashionable education for middle-class girls and women. The magazine's *Address to the Publi*c aimed to "convey useful information, to combine amusement with instruction, and to cherish and direct the development of Female Genius" (LM, 1809, Vol. XI). Accordingly, it was selected by the editors to:

> appear most suitable of the delicacy, and refined taste, of the Fair Sex; carefully excluding whatever might appear too heavy and formal… or too light and frivolous… guarding against every thing that might have the slightest tendency to that indelicacy which must be, above all things, offensive to a modest and cultivated female mind. (LM, 1809, Vol. XI)

The editors appropriately controlled the contributions they received and published what they thought best suited the magazine's readers. The magazine's popularity stems from providing the readers with the content they viewed as comfortably familiar, fulfilling expectations by satisfying "the demands for familiar beauty, confirming familiar sentiments, encouraging dreams…, even raising moral problems" (Tobin 205-6). O'Connell claims that instead of publishing conduct books that promoted ideal womanly virtues, *The Lady's Magazine* offered its readers a place of debate, where they could discuss codes of femininity (1). However, understanding that the magazine consisted of short stories, extracts from novels, biographies, poems, news sections, puzzles, travel writing, advice, recipes, and needlework patterns, a fair share of these contributions were instructive to the female sex.

Lisa O'Connell mentions that *The Lady's Magazine's* success was "an index of broader historical changes…that saw female readers and writers" as participants in and contributors to literary culture (1). The editorial policy of readers contributing to the content may have spurred readers' interest in the magazine, especially among the female readers. This relates to how participation allowed women to express themselves in the public sphere and political life while remaining in their domestic, private home, which supported a female literary community (Kelly 9). Jennie Batchelor argues that "the readers of *The Lady's Magazine* were not simply "consumers" who bought into the ideals of gender, class, and community the magazine promoted; they actively shaped the magazine's content" (qtd. in Gledhill 296). The magazine's content was also dependent on textual contributions written by the public, which

supports the fact that periodicals "became an arena in which women as readers and even writers encountered women as cultural signs" (Shevelow 23-4). According to Brita Ytre-Arne, magazines change to reflect contemporary society (250). It is therefore valuable to reflect on how magazines may promote certain representations of women within popular culture. Tobin refers to *The Lady's Magazine* as a "culturally shared artifact" created by its contributors and therefore a product of the readers, their values, beliefs, assumptions, and expectations (206). It is thus interesting to research the magazine because it contains such contrasting representations of women. For instance, the magazine includes extracts on female liberation as well as essays instructing how to best support their husbands. The aim of this thesis is to explore the social representations of the female gender in *The Lady's Magazine*. More specifically, it intends to answer the following question:

'In what ways does the variegated content of *The Lady's Magazine* promote particular ideas of the female gender, and how did the content of the magazine change during the early decades of its publication?'

Method

My aim is to conduct a literary analysis of *The Lady's Magazine* with the purpose of examining how women were represented in the magazine at different points in its early publication history. In order to do this, I have selected three issues of *The Lady's Magazine*, which I have read closely, compared, analyzed, and considered in their historical context. Using close reading as a research method allows me to engage with the material on a deep level since I am able to focus on stories individually. I have also gathered research on relevant topics and analyzed the magazine's content based on this research. Considering how I wish to locate female representation and changes over time, I have chosen to examine contributions within each issue that represent topics related to female identity and social roles. For instance, I have examined a selection of domestic-focused content concerning topics such as female

education, instruction, and conduct, together with fashion and beauty reports and sentimental tales.

In choosing research material [2], I found access to the selected volumes of *The Lady's Magazine* through Oria and HathiTrust's database. In finding and selecting issues, I have used the open-access annotated index of the magazine created by the University of Kent and funded by Leverhulme [3], which is an overview of all items in the magazine. This resource allowed me to search for keywords of importance to my research question and look through the content, listing authorship, type of text, and keyword summaries. For example, I wanted to select the volumes and issues that included multiple female descriptions and searched for keywords such as education, revolution, virtue, fashion, domestic, and other words related to femininity to locate issues with the most specified content.

The idea of selecting three issues was to locate the changes within and in between the magazines. By selecting magazines with an interval of several years between their publications, the aim is to interpret any notable change that may have happened during that time more efficiently as it may be more noticeable. In order to research the change in women's representation that occurred in the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth century, it is also beneficial to investigate one specific magazine rather than researching and comparing several magazines because changes may be more evident within the same magazine. The reason I chose magazines as the medium to investigate the social changes in women's social and political world is because they offer reflections of society. Therefore, one may also locate these changes more efficiently.

[2] Seeing how we are currently in the final stages of a longstanding global pandemic, some problems relating to access and available resources have occurred during my project. Because of strict travel rules in Norway as well as England, I was not able to travel to the British Library to access the materials for *The Lady's Magazine*.
[3] For more information on this, visit https://research.kent.ac.uk/the-ladys-magazine/index/

The first selected issue, November 1770, is in the first volume of *The Lady's Magazine*. After looking through the several issues in this volume and searching in Adam Matthews' index of *The Lady's Magazine*, I found the November issue to involve several contributions connected to female characterizations and gender representations. In addition, since this was one of the first issues of the magazine's publications, I thought it would be a good starting point to further examine a change in female representation.

The second selected issue, June 1790, was written only a year after the French Revolution began and at the beginning of the Revolution Controversy – a British debate arising from the revolution discussing the rights of men and women. The 1790 issue contains multiple texts relating to the female sex, for instance, advice on relationships, fashion reports, sentimental tales, queries, and opinion pieces and essays concerned with conduct. The main reason I chose this issue is because it was published in a time when the rights of women were much debated, as well as it contained a variety of letters and essays that may prove beneficial to my research question, analysis, and further discussions.

In selecting the final issue, June 1809, I wanted to find a volume that was published some years after the Revolution Controversy. I selected this issue primarily because it included an extract by Hannah More, which was interesting because of her arguments on female education and women's rights in the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth century. The insertion of stories by radical writers was unexpected and controversial because the magazine had previously stated that it did not intend to publish any political content that would present any form of one-sided political position (Claes 330-1). By including such content, the magazine clearly shows that it was conflicted in its editorial policy, which further emphasizes the contrasting influence a magazine can present to its readers. This issue also includes descriptions of contemporary fashion, biographies, and a story on forbidden romance, which may reflect the contemporary woman in the first decade of the nineteenth century.

The method I have used for selecting the issues comes with certain implications. First, the method may affect how I interpret the issues and discuss the results, because I specifically searched for issues containing certain topics, such as education, motherhood, or domesticity. I have also analyzed selected stories within each issue which, in my opinion, represented the female sex, and therefore disregarded content that could have resulted in a different interpretation of each issue. For instance, in the 1809 issue, much of the content is excluded because it does not contribute to representations of femininity, but rather include stories that may be interpreted interesting to both genders. Second, it can be argued that a random selection of issues and volumes may have resulted in an entirely different conclusion, as it may be more accurate to the reading experience of an eighteenth-century female reader, but it is also likely that the results would remain the same. Moreover, it is also important to reflect on whether selecting only three issues of the magazine will give me enough material to conclude about actual trends or changes seen within the magazine and in society, considering its large amount of publications. By selecting the entire volume instead of issues, there is reason to believe that the abundance of material could have resulted in a more concrete result. Nevertheless, the method I have used corresponds well with the aim of this thesis, which is to locate representations of femininity in *The Lady's Magazine*.

Representations of femininity in *The Lady's Magazine, 1770-1809*

The Lady's Magazine contains a variety of texts which are aimed at entertaining the 'fair' sex. The several essays and letters in the November issue of 1770 contain representations of the female and male sex, which both contribute to the construction of motherhood and domestic ideology. The selected issue of June 1790 includes a variety of letters presenting contrasting ideas of the female sex through emphasizing the importance of virtuous behavior, female etiquette, and fashion, as well as discussing women's education. In contrast, the June issue of 1809 contains very few letters relating to similar representations of women, but instead, the issue expands its readership by including exciting stories for both sexes. The contrasting material in the 1809 issue presents a change in the representations of the female gender during the magazine's early decades of publication.

Chapter 1: November issue, 1770

In the first issue, the content of the magazine is quite varied. In the early 1770s, *The Lady's Magazine* consisted primarily of sentimental verses, serialized love stories, fashionable essays, and letters on female education. This type of content was associated with a fascination with "high life" and activities of the fashionable world which dominated the magazine in the first decades (Tobin 207). In addition to numerous essays concerned with conduct, this issue includes fashion patterns, translations, oriental tales and travel writings, anecdotes, sermons, and songs. The last pages of the magazine consist of poems and poetic essays, as well as foreign news and home news, informing their readers about events in the world, robberies, deaths, marriages, and bankruptcies in England. There is a range of different characterizations of both the female and male sex, and one can argue whether the male portrayals may influence and enhance the female representations in contemporary society, as they appear contrary to each other. More specifically, the contrasting representations of parenthood in this issue emphasize the domestic role assigned to women.

One representation of the male gender is visible in the unsigned oriental tale, *The Cruel Father*, where men are portrayed as unvirtuous, aggressive, and murderous. In this tale, Kebal, the main character, has an affair with a beautiful Greek woman who arrives with a newborn son after nine months. In wanting to keep the affair from his wife, Kebal kills the Greek woman but figures that he will give his son a few years before killing him. The next time Kebal sees him, he deceives his son by throwing him into the sea after giving a pretense of taking care of him. However, Kebal's son is rescued, and when Kebal later discovers this, he buys him and keeps him enslaved. This treatment does not resemble the parental characteristics that the eighteenth-century reader is familiar with, nor do they correspond to the social expectations of fathers. The author writes that "the assiduity of his labours, the integrity of his manners, the sweetness of his behaviour, had no effect upon the cruelty of his father" (LM, 1770, I, 156). However, relating to Kebal's affair, the qualities of aggression and violent, brutal behavior are typical in men with women they feel superior to (Shoemaker 55). On the one hand, it may correspond to the fact that his sexual misbehavior resulted in an illegitimate child, which could destroy his family. On the other hand, it may also be an expression of an orientalist position relating to race and ideas of East and West. There is a certain racial discourse implied in the narrative, presented primarily through the representations of Kebal but also his mistress, which contributes to demonizing the portrayal of the Orient.

In finding that Kebal cannot kill his son after having tried repeatedly, he sends him to his daughter in Bagdad, expecting that she will be the one who kills him. However, his daughter refuses to do so because she instantly falls in love with him. In contrast to her father, Kebal's daughter "had a heart which was filled with sentiments of humanity" (LM, 1770, I, 157). Relating to the period's ideas on motherhood, the fact that she refuses to kill Kebal's son emphasizes the female sex as caring, nurturing, loving, and kind. By including this

"romantic" moment in this story, the magazine further contributes to women's overall image as softer and more passionate creatures than men. The author may have presented the women in this story as forgiving, caring, and loving because it emphasized female qualities. Even the story's title suggests and emphasizes women's role as the more capable, caring, and loving parent. In terms of gender representation, *A Cruel Father* presents the contrasting qualities of the female and male sex through opposed descriptions of parenthood, such as aggressive and caring behavior. In addition to representing a contrary image of the role of parenting, this story views the sentimental features of women. Considering how Kebal died trying to kill his illegitimate son, the story can also appear morally didactic, exemplifying the consequences of immoral actions.

The importance of religious and moral behavior in a marriage is also included in the first selected issue of *The Lady's Magazine*. In the eighteenth- and early nineteenth century, marriage was considered necessary for women in order to gain financial and social stability. A tale much concerned with female conduct, *The History of Isabella,* promotes the importance of virtuous behavior in a marriage. The story depicts Isabella as a beautiful girl who occupies herself with fashion, dresses, and the beau monde, several of the most acknowledged qualities some men seek. However, because she lacks religious values and is too flirtatious in her behavior, she consequently scares off all her admirers, and "all hopes of an advantageous marriage vanished" (LM, 1770, I, 159). In a desperate attempt to save herself from financial deprivation, she marries a young officer. Although it is not explicitly stated, this luscious behavior appears to have resulted in sexual affairs, seeing how after she "eloped with one of her father's footmen…the levity of her conduct was publicly known" (LM, 1770, I, 159). Unfortunately, the officer was a cruel man and treated her very harshly. Isabella becomes so unhappy that she starts to drink and later dies. The author argues that if religion and discretion had guided her, she would "have been happy to herself, a blessing to her parents and useful to

society" (LM, 1770, I, 159). Instead, she becomes an example of how coquetry, flirtatious behavior, and lack of religious practices can have a tragic impact on women's lives. It also presents the importance of a good marriage, further promoting a domestic ideology. If she had not engaged in immoral behavior, she could have married whomever she wanted.

Stories and advice about marriage are thus considered beneficial to the readers of *The Lady's Magazine*. This is further communicated in *Letter to a Lady on the Point of Marriage,* a letter of marital advice written from a brother to a sister. The author mentions that "prudence and virtue will certainly secure esteem" (LM, 1770, I, 160), communicating the importance of virtue to a good and healthy marriage. He claims that the best marriages consist of love, tenderness, and patience, qualities associated with women. One should "not hope for perfect happiness, [because] there is no such thing in this sublunary state; our sex is the more exposed to suffer because it is always in dependence on a husband" (LM, 1770, I, 160). The author suggests that women are dependent on men, particularly when considering financial and social stability, similar to what was communicated in *History of Isabella*. This letter was published in *The Lady's Magazine* by a woman, which is ironic considering the excessive amount of domesticated content. This woman, named Amelia, mentions that this letter is "designed for the improvement as well as the amusement of the fair sex" (LM, 1770, I, 159), which further promotes an understanding of how women were adjusting to patriarchal principles. Considering how the letter is written by a man who promotes female qualities to symbolize a good marriage, one may interpret the marriage's success as a woman's responsibility. Amelia supports this, stating that "it probably may be of service to himself, and to his sex in general, and if the advice be followed, it may be very beneficial to the other" (LM, 1770, I, 160). The inclusion of such a letter may appear helpful to many women, considering how the author writes from a male perspective, claiming to know what men expect of their female companions. This is because most people wish to behave according to

society's expectations, especially considering the importance of marriage in society. Pearson mentions that women were encouraged to "read Men, in order to make yourselves agreeable and useful" (43). Thus, in taking the author's advice and adapting to the given instructions, women unintentionally support a patriarchal society that promotes female subordination, neglecting their own independence.

The author of the letter states that women should "not examine whether their rights are well founded" because they have already been established (LM, 1770, I, 160). He explains that "men are in general less tender than women" (LM, 1770, I, 160), further encouraging women to improve their qualities of patience and softness to please their husbands, promoting a happy, healthy marriage. However, it also connects to the maternal qualities of women, which are essential in constructing the idea of the domesticated woman. In configuring and further reproducing the role of each gender, he mentions that men are "naturally tyrannical… masters," and women are portrayed as the weaker, subordinate sex who "only know how to suffer and to obey" (LM, 1770, I, 160). Women were understood as weaker in physical and mental strength, with little control of their impulses when excited with passionate topics, and thus incapable of rational thought (Shoemaker 18-9). This explained why they were not included in the public, and political sphere but had to be kept in the private, controlled home. Women were associated with softness, tenderness, patience, and care, and considering their ability to reproduce, taking care of children was automatically seen as women's responsibility (Shoemaker 18-9; 122). The author reinforces domestic ideology, conforming to popular conduct literature during this period, further articulating "a specific understanding of the relationship between reading, sexuality and social control" (Pearson 46). The letter thus presents elements of male superiority in viewing the relationship between men and women.

However, reading conduct texts could also do more harm than good, "offering a model of behavior only achievable by angels" (Pearson 46). Coinciding with this compliant and

obedient behavior, in the letter *Difficulty of preserving the Affection of some Men*, the narrator Caroline explains the various incidents that eventually result in her husband leaving her. Caroline is described as "a fine girl- full of vivacity and spirit" (LM, 1770, I, 171), who could choose whomever she wanted in a marriage. When Caroline first met her husband, she was pleased to have found someone to take care of her, and her duty and primary focus was to please him. The husband requested that Caroline should change her hobbies and stay home instead of going out to proms, galas, and concerts, which she did. They later had a child together, and she thought this was the happiest they could ever be. However, despite Caroline's efforts to obey her husband's wishes, he became jealous of her spending time with their son, as he "complained that [her] whole time was employed upon [their] child… [and therefore] paid too little attention to him" (LM, 1770, I, 172). As a result, and "ever ambitious of pleasing him" (LM, 1770, I, 172-3), she was forced to give him away for a while to keep her husband satisfied. Addressing the readers of *The Lady's Magazine*, Caroline asks what she might have done wrong, considering how she has shown her husband nothing but love and support, complied with all his wishes, and even given away their child to satisfy him. Their relationship is contradictory compared to the social expectations of a woman's role as a wife because even though she complies, her husband still leaves her. He explains that he "could not stay [even] if [she] would give [him] a thousand pounds" (LM, 1770, I, 173). After she "begg'd [and] even kneeled to him," he mentioned that he "shall come home as soon as [he] can" (LM, 1770, I, 173), with no mention of where he is going or for how long. Frustrated and confused with her situation, she asks the public for advice.

In reading this letter, one may reflect upon whether the overwhelming amount of conduct literature has domesticated Caroline to the degree that her husband feels suffocated. One can also suspect that the husband is jealous of the attention given to the child, and in wanting to keep his wife all by himself, he sends away their child. A recurring topic in

contemporary literature is the mother's devastation of losing a child (Tobin 211). This devastation is visible when Caroline sends away her child, as "it was like parting with my life" (LM, 1770, I, 173). She mentions that she "felt the greatest pain at the appearance of even so short a separation" (LM, 1770, I, 173). It may be argued that a mother's separation from her children could impact her rational state of mind, making her unable to perform the duties and responsibilities attributed to the domestic woman. Thus, another possible reason why Caroline's husband left her may relate to her ability to perform her duties. The overall representation of this letter describes how too much domestic behavior may result in marital problems, which is why it may appear contrary compared to many of the other stories found in the magazine. Instead of emphasizing domesticity, the letter suggests that women should avoid obeying their husbands at all times, and further recommends that women should be attentive towards spending too much time with their newborn child.

The misfortunes of marriages are also present in the *Danger of relying on the Promises of Men*, a letter concerned with conduct, addressing the issues of lying men. The letter views the importance of virtue, chaste behavior, and marriage. The female author describes how she witnessed a woman who had hung herself because she was "deluded by a promise of marriage, made to her by a young carpenter in the neighborhood, who had deceived her, and married some time ago another woman" (LM, 1770, I, 174). As stated in the title, in addition to warning women about the dangers of relying on men's promises, the letters also highlight the importance of marriage. The author states that she cannot "help reflecting on the misfortune of so many of the female sex, who are deluded by the stale and worn-out promise of a speedy marriage," discussing how women wait for their perfect partner "to whom she yields her virgin treasure" (LM, 1770, I, 174). This relates to how women were expected to keep their virginity intact until marriage or until they were promised a marriage. Some of the consequences of engaging in sexual affairs outside marriage, particularly for

women, becoming a symbol of unchastity and impurity, may lead to an absolute exclusion from society or even the death sentence if proved (Hunt 97). Referring to the severity of her actions, one assumption is that she was given the promise of marriage and thus engaged with him sexually. Another relates to the social understanding of women in contemporary times, seeing how their weak minds may collapse once they figure out that they have been deceived by a man they love, causing them to think and behave irrationally.

Considering the consequences of sexual relations, it is evident that women's sexuality has long been policed, controlled, and restrained. In the construction of the different spheres of gender that occurred during the eighteenth century, the position of sexuality is deeply involved in this process. Robert Shoemaker states that because "men and women were expected to behave differently" (85), the social interpretations of their sexual activity were also expected to contrast. The letter, *Danger of relying on the Promises of Men*, responds to the way men behaved sexually and how women were not allowed to behave sexually. The author includes an extract from a letter written "by a young lady of distinction, after her deviation from virtue" (LM, 1770, I, 174), presenting a lady who is angry with a man named Endymion because he purposely seduced her and ruined her life. Although sexual behavior outside the marriage was condemned by society and the church for both genders, men's promiscuity was less harmful than women's and were less likely to be punished. Women were publicly insulted for engaging in sexual activity outside the marriage, while "accusations against men disappeared" (Shoemaker 72). This is related to how the consequences of infidelity were much more significant with reproductive women, considering how a bastard child would affect the family (Shoemaker 23).

Although some women engaged in premarital sex, others were often forced into sex by a superior man's social position (Shoemaker 75). However, this was also considered a power move from the man's point of view. Shoemaker states that "the seduction of women was

perceived in terms of conquest and submission, and thus was connected with male pride" (27), bragging about their exploits, which supports this immoral behavior within men. Considering that the author is a woman discussing men's behavior, the letter's underlying tone may criticize the consequences women receive from sexual misbehavior. In understanding that these were different from men's, the respectable society avoided women involved in such actions despite not knowing the truth, as exemplified in this letter. Moreover, it is also apparent that the author criticizes the courting of women and the promises of marriage. Therefore, one can argue that in demeaning the importance of a quick marriage, the author contrasts some of the more critical values in contemporary society. Instead, she emphasizes the importance of patience, being able to wait for a perfect match to prevent such actions that could result in exclusion from society.

On the subject of sexual behavior, virtue and chastity are also essential to an eighteenth-century female reader. For instance, the letter, *Relation of a Vision at Margate,* describes the importance of virtue as mentioned by Goddess Diana. The author compares the powers of virtue as God-like, stating it is a "heavenly stamp" and that "*Tis* chastity, *ladies*; 'tis chastity… is inexpressible, ladies, what power and authority chastity gives the sex" (LM, 1770, I, 167). If any unfortunate event had led women to sin, they were invited to join Diana for a bath in the Virgin's Stram to recover "the stolen jewel, and become as perfect virgins as before" (LM, 1770, I, 168). The letter emphasizes the importance of female virtue, making religious connotations to promote its importance. The inclusion of such letters contributes to an overall understanding of female chastity as sacred and important, further promoting female virginity. Since there are no descriptions of the importance of male virginity, this letter also reproduces and encourages the different sexual behaviors and social expectations of men and women.

The differences between genders are also distinguished in terms of education. Seeing how female education and instruction are essential to the understanding of women as mothers, the 1770 issue includes an anecdote discussing the importance of a good education for men. In *On the Advantages of a Good Education*, the narrator mentions that he must "exert his utmost efforts to leave [his children] in affluent circumstances" and that he "has enriched [his son's] soul with the most inestimable gifts, which no one can deprive him of: he possesses the most eminent qualities of the heart and mind" (LM, 1770, I, 179). Shoemaker writes that "[o]ne of the most important paternal functions...was helping their children, especially their sons, get started in a career" (124-5). Contrary to Kebal, he is invested in his son's life and upbringing, corresponding to the general understanding of how fatherhood contributes to a better future for his children. The narrator explains that he is particularly devoted to education because it was considered "the best fortune that a father could bestow upon his son" (LM, 1770, I, 179). In contrast to the several stories presenting mothers educating their daughters on feminine instruction, this tale presents fathers educating their sons on work, politics, and public life. Therefore, the narrator promotes the two spheres of genders, emphasizing the growing understanding of men and women as contrasting sexes. Furthermore, since this was considered an essential part of parenting, Shoemaker mentions that "mothers could fulfill [education] only to a small extent and then primarily with their daughters" (124-5), further promoting the roles and spheres of each gender. Deborah Simonton describes how girls "were expected to focus their life on the world of house and home, while their brothers anticipated a life of work, politics, and public affairs" (41-2). This underlines that women's education was highly differentiated and suppressed, but also that the popular press further supported these understandings.

In the November issue of 1770, the stories included show a form of strict didacticism towards the female sex, discussing what and how one should behave and act, as well as

depicting the consequences of ill behavior. The issue promotes virtue and virtuous behavior, exemplified through the essays of *Relation of a vision at Margate* and in the story of Isabella, who discuss some of the consequences of immoral behaviors. The importance of virtue is also described in *Letter to a Lady on the Point of Marriage*, which puts forwards marriage advice written by a brother to a sister. In *Danger of relying on the Promises of Men*, the author criticizes the consequences of women's unvirtuous behavior, which was caused by the deceiving male sex. This letter may appear controversial because it promotes certain opposing ideas concerning marriage. Moreover, certain portrayals of men and fathers contribute to a different understanding of the two genders, and this is, for instance, understood through the representations of Kebal, Isabella's, and Caroline's husband, and the man in *Danger of Relying on the promises of Men,* which all involve depictions of men as mean, superior, and even murderous. This representation of the male sex promotes the construction of motherhood in late eighteenth-century society.

Chapter 2: June issue, 1790

In the second selected issue of *The Lady's Magazine*, published in June 1790, the content reflects the social, economic, and political turbulences in contemporary society. By the end of the 1780s, there was a shift in the magazine's content from "high life" features to domestic life attitudes, in which women were no longer portrayed as "beautiful objects made to please men" (Tobin 209), but rather as mothers with a particular task to nurture and educate children. This issue emphasizes female representations through the notions of parental education, virtuous behavior, female etiquette, fashion, and education of the female mind. It consists of serialized stories, opinion pieces, medical queries, moral essays on friendships, travel-writing, fashion reports on dresses worn on the King's birthday, and a pattern of a petticoat. The last few pages consist of poetic essays, puzzles, solutions, a news section, and reports of births, marriages, and deaths.

In discussing the educational content of *The Lady's Magazine,* particularly in the years around 1789, the magazine did not publish any news on the pressing social and political issues concerning the French Revolution nor its consequences and repercussions in England (Miller 282). Miller finds it strange that "there is not the slightest interest shown in the important social and political issues of the day. As far as *The Lady's Magazine* was concerned, England might never have been at war…" (283). This further supports the ideology of educating women to care for their families rather than their intellect. It also responds to the belief of patriarchal control that several female radicals promoted during the eighteenth century, that poor education was the only thing that prevented women from becoming equally rational beings like men (Shoemaker 51). By excluding social and political debates occurring in society, women were forced to remain in their private spheres. It also connects to popular opinions of the "Learned Lady", which demonstrated how contemporary society ridiculed women who prioritized acquiring knowledge of the world outside of the home rather than focusing her time on domestic duties appropriated for women (Kelly 24-5; Pearson 49). In deciding not to publish content related to the current social and political issues, the magazine may have shielded its female readers from gaining such a label. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the editors of the magazine were males, and it can therefore be discussed whether their editorial control may have impacted the content (Batchelor, *Connections* 245). Any decision to leave out such important social and political events supports the idea that contemporary society, primarily controlled by the patriarchy, reproduced different spheres and roles for each gender.

The education of the female mind was a critical and much-debated topic during the late eighteenth century, not only for the sake of manners and behavior but also for marriage and motherhood. Female instruction and education were necessary to improve women's social roles as educators for their children and companions to their husbands. As a result, women's

periodicals began to publish articles considered more suitable for women, promoting instructions on feminine education to regulate women's behavior and habits (Shevelow 188-9). *The Lady's Magazine*, for instance, attempted to ornament "the Sex with something more permanent and more attractive than mere beauty" (Claes 329). In a letter concerned with conduct, *Cautions to a Young Lady*, the author, Senex, discusses the upbringing and education of his orphan niece. Senex finds that the most crucial task and his "principal aim" of educating his orphan niece "is to make her a conversable companion to a man of sense, and a useful mother to her children" (LM, 1790, XXI, 321). He argues that she should avoid educating herself and instead take care of her own family, which is much more rewarding. This is linked to a domestic portrayal of the female sex and supports contemporary beliefs and understandings of female education, which may further contribute to the construction of motherhood. This sort of content may have influenced the readers of *The Lady's Magazine.*

The importance of parenthood is significantly presented in *Cautions to a Young Lady* because Senex reflects on his role as a foster parent. Senex writes that "[f]or her I feel all the anxiety of a father, and, for her sake, wish to live till I can secure to her the protection of some worthy man, who may deserve to call so bright a jewel his" (LM, 1790, XXI, 320). Fathers usually contributed to their children's upbringing in the later years, helping them find a career and plan their future (Shoemaker 123-4). Thus, being left with the responsibility of his niece, Senex hopes that the promise of marriage will secure her future. In saying this, he addresses the issue of patriarchal control as necessary in order to protect a woman, which is supported by the rise of the nuclear family that grew in the late eighteenth century (Shevelow 11). Considering the female readers of this magazine, this may reproduce the understanding of women's dependency on men.

Senex discusses his role as a father but argues that the role of the mother is much more critical, at least for a female child. He mentions that in contrast to himself, "[h]er mother

would have held forth her indulgent hand to guide her through those paths [she] herself had trod with so much honor" (LM, 1790, XXI, 320). This is related to how women were seen as the best educator to their daughters because they were familiar with the female qualities, fashions, and duties. Considering that he cannot educate his niece in such feminine manners because of his sex, it also highlights the differences in gendered education. In discussing parenting, Senex appears anxious about raising his niece and protecting her from unvirtuous behavior, which may relate to how men were usually not involved in the upbringing of their children as this was understood as a woman's responsibility. In promoting the importance of chastity and virginity, Senex writes that "[w]hen her glass presents to her the faithful representation of her obligations to nature, I advise her to be careful that the jewel within may be worthy of so rich a casket…" (LM, 1790, XXI, 320). He discusses the nature of reproduction as the sole purpose of engaging in sexual relations but wants his niece to be careful about whom she chooses as the father of her children. This representation of parental anxiety makes him seem more sentimental than harsh and thus more linked to the female sex, which contributes to a conflicted portrayal of Senex, but also the roles of each gender.

Since most fathers were not involved in their children's upbringing, this undermined the role of fathers in the domestic sphere and increased the ideology impressed upon mothers during his period (Shoemaker 27). Considering how the late eighteenth-century society had a greater focus on domesticity and maternity (Tobin 207), this story glorifies the newly constructed ideology of motherhood. Although Senex describes fathers as soft, caring, and loving parents, he also neglects fatherhood as crucial to a child's upbringing. However, it is not surprising that this story- which praises the greatness of mothers - is written by a man because it contributes to the overall theme of the domestic woman and popular conduct literature.

The elements of motherhood and female characterization are also presented in the serialized advice column, *Letters to The Matron*. The author, Mrs. Grey, writes about a 16-year-old girl who feels it is her duty to take care of the household. After losing her mother, the young girl took "upon herself the management of her father's family," instructing her two youngest sisters "in reading, needle-work, French, &c. acquitting herself with a propriety which makes the best of father's happy in his domestic situation" (LM, 1790, XXI, 306-7). This letter emphasizes women's domestic responsibilities, which primarily consisted of taking care of others. Kathryn Shevelow argues that magazines often incorporated such letters "to fill feminine minds with the diverse… information deemed suitable to those minds' capacities and the proper duties of women. Instilling specific information became in itself a crucial means of regulating conduct" (152). The young girl mentions that this is "doing herself at the same time the highest honour" (LM, 1790, XXI, 307), which further implies that she is fully aware of what is expected of her role as a woman in the future. A polite, feminine education consisted of "reading, writing, French music, drawing, and dancing" (Shevelow 148), which were qualities that were important for any woman to acquire in terms of understanding their role in society. Nevertheless, Simonton argues that this "fashionable education served little practical purpose…[as] its main function was to present a girl in the best light in the marriage market and to make her a suitable ornament in marriage" (44-5). By teaching this "fashionable content" to young girls, women contributed to creating different spheres for each gender. Seeing how this education only reproduced women's domestic situation, one can argue that feminine instructions contributed to subordinating women and further promoting patriarchy.

The overall context of the letter considers the integration of women taking on the role of a mother and reflects upon womanhood. In understanding that the older sister educates her younger sisters, one may comprehend Senex's difficulties with educating his niece in the

same terms, especially when considering how their genders have opposite expectations in society, which is why he promotes the figure of the mother as the primary educator. Furthermore, the fact that the father's role in the story, told by Mrs. Grey, is unnoticeable further underlines and encourages the general belief that fathers were not involved in the upbringing of the children. Considering that this letter describes some of women's domestic duties, the father is rarely mentioned in the story. His absence symbolizes and promotes the idea of the gendered spheres. The importance of female education and instruction, the maturation into womanhood, and the father's absence in the story contrast the two sexes.

Since women were given a new role in society, instructions on how they should behave were also necessary and much debated in the popular press. On the subject of female behavior, *The Lady's Magazine* includes letters discussing Alexander Pope's assertions about women, found in his work, *Of The Characters of Women: An Epistle to a Lady*. Pope was a well-known poet from the early eighteenth century who expressed misogynist views on women in his poetic essays. In tracing the origin of the correspondence, a man called R. Beaumont wrote in the December issue of 1789 *Questions on an Assertion of Mr. Pope,* where he asked "[w]hether Mr. Pope's celebrated assertion of "Every Woman being at heart a rake," is founded on malice of from a knowledge of the world?" (LM, 1789, XX, 622). In response to this question from Beaumont, both "B.C.", "J. D.", and W. Edwy wrote, in several of the issues in the 1790 volume, their opinions that both contrasted and supported Pope's condescending beliefs concerning women. In these letters, the authors C.J. Pitt and "B.C." reply to Edwy and agree with Pope's opinions. Pitt writes that if a woman "throws off" her virtuous habits, she will have no "veneration for moral duties," agreeing with Pope's assertion that "every woman is at heart a rake" (LM, 1790, XXI, 298). By saying this, Pitt suggests that virtuous behavior is necessary to control in order to prevent women from turning into a rake. The inclusion of such correspondence exemplifies the social debate concerning the role of

women. In another response written to Edwy, "B. C." continues in the same manner, stating that "modesty…can only be regarded as a vail to hide their lascivious hearts" (LM, 1790, XXI, 299). This view on women suggests that they need to be controlled, which can be accomplished by the implementation of instructional conduct literature, as well as restricting access to public and political life. Pitt mentions that women are "allowed to be of weaker natures than men, and as custom has denied them so much of the advantages of education bestowed on men, their minds are consequently, in general, not so much enlarged" (LM, 1790, XXI, 298). His thoughts explain how women have long been subjugated for educational repression and thus naturally become "of weaker natures than men" (LM, 1790, XXI, 298), corresponding to society's general understanding of women. Again, this exemplifies how feminine instruction and education of behavior only contribute to more female suppression. Simonton writes that "[t]he level of debate at the end of the eighteenth century…reveals the underlying tensions in society" (52), which is promoted in these correspondences between letters written across several issues of the magazine.

Another contribution in *The Lady's Magazine* called *Letters to the Matron* describes and exemplifies the rules of etiquette that may begin to control the luscious behavior of women. In requesting advice from the famous Matron (Mrs. Grey), Petty Plain mentions that she has a problem because she often accompanies a friend of the male sex. She reveals that since they are often together, "many busy tongues are at work" (LM, 1790, XXI, 309), describing how people gossip about them engaging in immoral behavior. However, her "affection from him is no more than for any of my fellow-creatures" and "the gentleman in question is actually engaged to a young lady" (LM, 1790, XXI, 309). Petty then asks the readers of *The Lady's Magazine* what to do with this problem and how she should conduct herself in the future. One cause of people gossiping is linked to how men and women are not supposed to meet without proper chaperoning. Relating to the rules of etiquette, a proper lady

should not engage in such a manner because it is perceived as unvirtuous. According to Anthony Fletcher, "women should avoid any familiar talk with men…since there could be no confidence in their discretion" (393). Therefore, it was a woman's responsibility to keep a respectable distance from men to avoid any temptation. This may relate to the severe consequences of such actions, considering how women were more often accused of promiscuity than men (Shoemaker 72). Another possible interpretation of this is linked to the understanding of the female mind, seeing how familiar talk with men could enhance their temptations and provoke immoral actions. As a result of the French Revolution, there was much debate concerning the roles, rights, and values of each gender. Thus, the inclusion of this letter may have been selected by the editors to promote and further emphasize these beliefs communicated by Pitt, "B.C.", and Pope to create a more common understanding of women.

On the topic of female behavior, both in being virtuous and in educating the female sex into more proper ways of behaving, female etiquette is also mentioned in another story in this issue. The essay, *Female Rumpus*, challenges society's contemporary understanding of etiquette and how this controls women. The author states that quarrels are unpleasant and that "[m]any of these quarrels in which the ladies are concerned, take the rise from paying too much attention to ETIQUETTE" (LM, 1790, XXI, 289). The essence of the essay argues that women are too concerned with the laws and rules of proper etiquette relating to how they portray themselves in society, further suggesting that etiquette should "be the servant, and not the master of your sense and reason" (LM, 1790, XXI, 291). This may imply that women are too concerned with conforming to the norms in society, presenting the constraints of behaving in contrast to these norms. The author narrates a story about two ladies who become angry with each other due to a series of miscommunications and therefore start gossiping about their etiquette to other friends and social communities. The moral of the story can be interpreted as

a warning to other ladies who may experience a similar situation because they are too occupied with the rules of etiquette. Since most readers of the magazine were from the upper and middle classes, members of this rank may be concerned with how the outside world represents them, which is why this story reflects on women's obsession with etiquette (Tobin 207-8). Moreover, the *Female Rumpus* is also relevant when discussing the spheres of each gender in the late eighteenth century since the rules of etiquette are primarily linked to instructing the female sex. In addition to several other publications in the magazine, the essay describes women who follow the rules of etiquette because they are too concerned with not conforming to the expected behaviors, which further separates the genders.

Reflecting further upon female behavior and education, this issue was published at a time when women's education was a controversial and heated topic in contemporary debates. Ideas concerning women's education were flourishing during the French Revolution, and conduct books even suggested that women could acquire the same intellectual skills as men if they were adequately educated (Shoemaker 45-6). Therefore, discussions and reflections on the topic were expected to appear in contemporary magazines. In *The Lady's Magazine,* there were several interpretations of what kind of education was to be promoted and forwarded to the female sex. This is related to how the magazine's position on women's education was not "radical or even internally consistent, nor [was] it to suggest that its readers were always in sync with the views on female learning of editors, prominent columnists, or each other" (Batchelor, *[T]o cherish* 383-4*)*. Batchelor mentions that disagreements and debates on female education were especially encouraged, also because this "powerfully demonstrated [women's] intellectual competency" (*[T]o cherish* 383-4). In the essay, *The Censor*, female education is linked to female behavior, relating to how education is used to make women act in a more intelligent and well-behaved manner. The author writes that women can "improve [their ideas and noble principles] by reading works of polite literature, and observing the

manners of individuals, whose good qualities they imitate, yet carefully avoid their defects" (LM, 1790, XXI, 295). The author thus suggests that women should read and observe to incorporate approved manners. However, reading was not straightforward to most women, and often "had to be policed because it was a crucial element in the 'creation of femininity'" (Pearson 42). This meant that men largely controlled women's reading, deciding what was appropriate for the female mind and avoiding literature that could promote unvirtuous behavior.

Considering that the 1790 issue was published during a time of debate, it is interesting to investigate the meaning of "polite literature", seeing how much reading material was both unavailable and discouraged to read. For women, reading was restricted and had to be controlled because there was a precise balance between being ill-informed and too well-informed (Person 49). On the subject of books, the author of the essay, *The Index, No. XV,* Marmaduke Mastix, wants to inform the readers of *The Lady's Magazine* which "books are really good, bad, or indifferent" (LM, 1790, XXI, 284). He writes that in the present state of literature, there is an abundance of books being made, but that the "number of good [books] bears but a small proportion" (LM, 1790, XXI, 283). This may relate to how some books are used as "elegant ornaments to a house" in the libraries of the elegant upper and middling classes, considering how "splendid bindings make a splendid show" (LM, 1790, XXI, 284), while others may be harmful to the heart. He discusses the use of the novel, enjoyed by many female readers, arguing that they are "as devoid of taste, genius, knowledge of life…as they are pernicious to the understanding, and unfriendly to the heart" and "wished they were not read at all" (LM, 1790, XXI, 284-5). According to Pearson, this is also supported by general opinions in contemporary society since some of the dangers of female reading, especially the reading of imaginative reading, had the power to "humanize the heart", while others feared it might "develop the heart prematurely" (42). The novel was considered

seducing, dangerous, and unfit for young women because of its indulgence in passion and pleasure, which could corrupt both hearts and minds. It was also dangerous because it was addictive, and women wasted much of their time reading instead of doing more productive tasks (Pearson 82-3; 170).

Mastix believed it was necessary to inform the public what to read because, in some cases, "no good could come of [all this] reading and writing" (LM, 1790, XXI, 284). For instance, he mentions that the right kind of books could improve "habits of thinking- ...more gentleness of manners, and upon the whole, understandings better cultivated. This must render... women agreeable companions" (LM, 1790, XXI, 285). This supports the belief that conduct books were safe to read, because they promoted female instructions and domesticity, and additionally could improve thinking and manners, and cultivate readers (Person 47). The essay further shows that Mastix promotes conduct literature to improve female readers and connects to a dominant male portrayal of how women should read books. In some ways, he discusses the notion of accessibility, both in terms of gender but also social rank, referring to the libraries of the upper- and middle classes and how they "are great friends to booksellers, because a library is an elegant ornament to a house" (LM, 1790, XXI, 284). Reviewing the restricted access women had to libraries, often only through their fathers, husbands, or sons, this further presents the contemporary understandings of women's relationship toward reading (Pearson 153). It may be argued that since women gained access to the literary public through circulating libraries, men lost control of women's reading, which promoted the importance of including conduct literature in women's magazines.

Realizing that books can educate women within certain areas, *The Contrast,* a tale concerned with conduct, presents an understanding of female education relating to behavior. The narrator describes a mother's duty to educate her two daughters to become "proper" women. The mother, Mrs. Bowen, wants her daughters to observe and get acquainted with

"the manners of the polite world, [so that she] could point out to them what was proper to be avoided in public, and what to be pursued" (LM, 1790, XXI, 305). For instance, she mentions that they had to be careful not to be frequently seen at Ranelagh since people would gossip about how they spend their time and thus attain an infamous reputation. This connects to the rules of etiquette, which were ideal for understanding the "proper" ways of behaving, especially for middle-and upper-class societies (Hughes). Like several other essays in *The Lady's Magazine,* much of the content links to female behavior and etiquette. In this essay, Mrs. Bowen symbolizes most other women in this period, who had to educate their children and specifically their daughters, to become "proper" women. This topic is considerably emphasized in the magazine, considering how two of the first articles in the 1790 issue, *Cautions to a Young Lady* and *Letters to the Matron,* also discuss the importance of women educating their children or younger sisters. In understanding that etiquette controls female behavior and form, these essays demonstrate how female practices, beliefs, and values exist throughout several female generations. Moreover, it can be argued whether this tradition only reproduces women's subordinated, domestic representations, seeing that it connects to the expected behaviors of society, which were constructed and further supported by men.

Exemplifying what proper female behavior is, the author of the essay *Occasional Papers,* Nestor, writes about two contrasting female characters. Nestor discusses the importance of a well-informed female mind and describes multiple situations of two characters he calls *The Domestic and The Gadder*, "the one attached to home, the other fond of gadding abroad" (LM, 1790, XXI, 300). The underlying arguments from his point of view may be interpreted as a descriptive indication of how women should behave and how women should not behave, depicting the contrasts between a well or ill-informed female mind. The Domestic is glorified in her descriptions, "always found at home when she is wanted," "[cheerfully] attending to all the duties and necessary business of the house" (LM, 1790, XXI,

300-1), and further portrayed as a role model. Her children are well-bred and engaging, in contrast to The Gadder's children, who "are slovenly, have imbibed evil habits from the servants, and are either disgustingly vulgar, or proud and overbearing" (LM, 1790, XXI, 301). After "having done one thing, [The Domestic] knows what remains to be done next," whereas "The Gadder thinks it impossible to do everything, and therefore seldom attempts to do any thing" (LM, 1790, XXI, 301). The Gadder is never found at home when her presence is wanted, stays up late and ruins the next day, is anxious and fretful, confused and perplexed, and "is always (according to a vulgar phrase) 'in the cellar or in the garrett,' too high or too low…" (LM, 1790, XXI, 301). This may present how The Gadder is more applicable to mental instability because of their lack of morality and other qualities that were considered important virtues for women.

The Gadder's characterizations exemplify which behavior women should avoid. For example, a woman should not be away from her home or travel abroad if anyone needs her. This is supported through the descriptions of The Gadder's children, having attainted bad habits from the servants because of the mother's absence. The author states that if a woman is not present to support her husband, her husband will become a rake, which is entirely the woman's fault. The differences between the two characters thus show the advantages and disadvantages of a well or ill-informed mind, showing the "infinite importance of giving a proper bias to the female mind in youth" (LM, 1790, XXI, 302). Considering this text's argumentations and underlying theme imply that a well-informed mind will lead to domestic life and corresponding to similar points made in other letters of this issue, this promotes a particular ideology of the domestic woman. Ros Ballaster et al. argue that the "*Lady's Magazine* offers its women readers a programme of femininity as ornaments; becoming feminine is a task to be accomplished through the acquisition and consumption of the magazine itself" (74). This becomes apparent through reading articles on female beauty,

etiquette, and conduct, as well as in essays such as *The Contrast*, because it exemplifies some of the consequences of the ill-behaved woman. Moreover, this connects to the recurring idea of women's fear of being excluded from society because in promoting conduct literature and presenting good and bad behaviors, most women may choose what is most acceptable. This further reproduces the gendered spheres and the qualities associated with each gender.

Considering how *The Lady's Magazine* promotes a particular type of education through feminine discourse, the author of the letter, *On the Inestimable Value of Time,* discusses the importance of improving the female mind at an early stage. Young girls should "acquire the habit of obtaining useful in polite literature, and make themselves useful in every department of life" (LM, 1790, XXI, 311-2). The author argues that "[y]outh is the season for it, and the attainment of such branches of literature, and of such accomplishments as are proper to your sex, will prove useful to you through life, and will render you a desirable companion" (LM, 1790, XXI, 312). Then when properly improved, "you will consequently become a useful member" of society (LM, 1790, XXI, 312). The letter describes how female education is an essential part of becoming a loving, caring, and cultivated wife, and a loving mother, as members of society. Furthermore, education is also considered an attractive quality, considering how "whatever arts you may at first attract the attention, you can secure it the hearts of others only by amiable dispositions, and the accomplishments of the mind" (LM, 1790, XXI, 312). Correspondingly, Nestor, in the essay *Occasional Papers*, writes that "[t]here are so many occasions in the married life ... [where] the advantages of a well-cultivated mind are experienced, that an intention to the cultivation of the female mind in early life can never be too frequently ...inculcated" (LM, 1790, XXI, 300). He promotes education for women because it is advantageous in married life, supported by other writers in this magazine, claiming that education will make women better companions and mothers. Nestor continues by saying that "an ignorant and ill-informed mind is the cause of much

misery and distress. Life, without knowledge, is mere existence...” (LM, 1790, XXI, 300). Although Nestor does not specify what kind of education he refers to, he promotes female education because he finds it necessary for women to become happy. This extensive representation of motherhood and domestic ideology supported and legitimated “the division of labor and the binary opposition that splits society into the separate worlds of men and women” (Tobin 217-8). The several essays and letters that associate women with children, matrimony, and the household, contribute to separating the genders, which serves to maintain and reproduce the ideology of the domesticated woman.

The 1790 issue of *The Lady’s Magazine* offered feminine instructions by including descriptions of female beauty. Multiple stories reflect women’s inner and outer beauty, while others present more concrete advice on fashion and skincare. The magazine includes a serialized letter with descriptive details on the dresses worn on the King’s birthday. The report, *Dresses on the King’s birthday*, clearly presents the Lady in *The Lady’s Magazine,* considering how fashions and trends have been important to women for a long time. Several of the fashionable trends include colors of white, blonde, or silver, fabrics for crapes, petticoats with drapery or laces, and other ornaments. It is, for instance, stated that “[t]he ear-rings, most in fashion were clump ear-rings, in the shape of a large button, of gold” (LM, 1790, XXI, 315). How women should dress also responds to specific rules of etiquette, which is why including such reports contributed to the creation of femininity. Ballaster et al. mention that women were measured by “dressing according to its fashion plates” (73), emphasizing the importance of fashion in being feminine.

In moving away from behavioral education and towards ideals of beauty, which still is regulated by male domination, other stories reflect how women can educate themselves to be more beautiful. The essay, *The Contrast,* discusses representations of both inner and outer beauty through the characterization of Mrs. Bowen’s two daughters. In the essay, a group of

men compares the two sisters and points out that one of them was more beautiful than the other, saying, “Louisa might have been tolerable once, but that she was totally spoilt by the horrible small-pox, and not fit to be seen” (LM, 1790, XXI, 305). Since men are the ones discussing female beauty and the qualities and behaviors they find attractive in women, this may further symbolize the patriarchal control in society. Consequently, female beauty is understood and idealized by the qualities desired by the male sex, which makes women adjust to the beauty standards and ideals of what men want. However, in *The Contrast*, the mother disregards Louisa’s beauty and focuses on more important things. She says that “you are not so pretty as you might have been had you not had [small-pox] to such a degree,” but instead of feeling sad, it should “rather be of service, as it may keep down aspiring thoughts, preserve you from pride and disposition, which are not only more attractive, but more durable than the most beautiful set of features, and the most brilliant complexion” (LM, 1790, XXI, 305). In reflecting upon her thoughts on female beauty, she wants her daughter to focus on her inner self, proper manners, and charms, which will endure longer than looks. This story resembles another feature in the same issue called *Letters to Elvira*, where the narrator, Lucinda, mentions that “it is easy to get the affections of men, but difficult … to retain them” (LM, 1790, XXI, 310). This further supports the argument that beauty is no longer understood as the only necessary and attractive part of a woman. Besides beauty, domestic duties and motherhood are also appealing qualities that are essential, corresponding with the growing ideology of women in the late eighteenth century. Corresponding to what other letters and essays have discussed, education and a well-informed mind are important qualities for a happy and successful marriage.

The 1790 issue of *The Lady’s Magazine* includes contrasting representations of both the female and male sex. In *Cautions to a Young Lady,* Senex writes about the importance of mothers and simultaneously highlights a patriarchal understanding relating to male parenting.

Although the essay may appear as a celebration of women as mothers, stating their importance in society, it also diminishes their role as politically active and involved in public life. This representation of gender is also promoted in the two correspondences addressed to the serialized advice column *Letters to the Matron*, where a woman's role is clearly understood by including an explanation of her responsibilities and the domestic relations of man and woman within their home. This representation of women is also promoted in several other stories in this issue, which shows how the periodical contributed to the creation and reproduction of femininity and the construction of womanhood. For instance, in *The Censor* and *The Index*, both authors promote conduct literature as a tool to make women more intelligent and improve their manners. On the topic of female education, *On the Inestimable Value of Time* and *Occasional Papers,* both discuss the improvement of the female mind to become a better wife and companion. They argue that beauty does not last for eternity, but an improved mind will.

Furthermore, female virtue and virtuous behavior are also represented, focusing on female education and patriarchal control. In the letters debating Pope's assertions, the authors present an image of women as luscious beings in need of instruction in virtuous conduct. It is interesting to find such correspondence in *The Lady's Magazine* because it portrays the social debate concerning women's position in society in the contemporary period. This luscious behavior may also apply to the acts of Petty Plain in *Letters to the Matron*, who is spending a considerable amount of time with her male friend. In *The Contrast,* the author discusses her daughters' upbringing related to female behavior and education, teaching them how to behave appropriately. In *Occasional Papers*, this sort of female behavior is contrasted by the depictions of The Domestic and The Gadder. Several of the stories reflect how gossip and quarreling should be avoided. For instance, the author of *Female Rumpus* thinks women should say things aloud instead of quarreling with others. However, the essay can be

interpreted as controversial because it promotes ways of female behavior that deviate from patriarchal advice. The many essays and letters in the 1790 issue emphasize how the role of women was much debated in society at this time but show that the majority of these texts correspond to the growing ideology of women as wives and mothers. Considering the varied content, the issue contributes to showing the importance of periodicals and their ability to influence their readers.

Chapter 3: June issue, 1809

The third selected issue of *The Lady's Magazine*, published in June 1809, includes discussions of virtuous behavior and morality, sentimental tales, and fashion reports, similar to the earlier issues analyzed. There are biographical memoirs of the King of Prussia and a Portuguese poet, historical writings of the Irish Nation, observations of epitaphs, an apology for card-playing, among other satirical tales, and finally, an extract from a book written by one of the period's radical female thinkers, Hannah More. However, the content of the 1809 issue of *The Lady's Magazine* does not promote the specific female ideology interpreted in the other selected issues. Instead, it shows how the period's growing debates on female education and the role of the female, post-revolution, implicated and influenced society.

After the French Revolution, new ideas about women, female education, and their role in society appeared (Shoemaker 45-6). In fact, "the most important developments in feminist thought … [were] stimulated by the French Revolution and political radicalism in England," most notably through "Mary Wollstonecraft's writings on women's education and women's rights [which] gave renewed impetus to argument for women's mental equality with men" (50-1). Women's magazines were seen as "one of the seemingly least political forms of literature" but seeing how *The Lady's Magazine* published several extracts from radical female writers (Tobin 250), this created a contrasting representation of the magazine's intentions and the actual content. These were extracts from Wollstonecraft's *Vindications of*

the Rights of Women, Catharine Macaulay's *Letters on Education*, and More's *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education,* which argued that women should be presented with a fair and rational curriculum equal to men, not reproducing domestic affairs and feminine instruction (Rendall 25-6). Claes argues that the extracts that were included in the magazine did not present any political or radical argument but instead were relatively innocent and appeared similar to contemporary female conduct literature (330). Nevertheless, by including such controversial authors, *The Lady's Magazine* offered a strong statement saying it "would not abstain entirely from addressing politically sensitive topics" (Claes 331), and further encouraged its readers to find and read the entire book. Thus, women were given the opportunity to familiarize themselves with critical opinions on domestic ideology.

In the June issue of 1809, *The Lady's Magazine* included an extract from More's novel *Coelebs in Search of a Wif*e. The plot of the overall story follows a young man named Charles, in search of a good wife, describing his several meetings with potential brides. These meetings depict Charles' observations of good and bad behavior and female habits, which Claudia Johnson argues "[elaborates] a construction of sexual difference which confirms male superiority, and ...[recommends] the strictest and most excruciatingly proper model of female delicacy" (17). In the abstracted version included in this issue, *The Visit: With Strictures on Modern Female Education,* Charles meets a young girl named Amelia Rattle. Through Amelia, More communicates some of her own opinions on young girls' education, emphasizing the importance of a natural childhood. As More mentions in her book, *Strictures on Modern Female Education*, childhood is a critical phase and should be "natural" because if one begins to inflict education upon children from an early age, it may promote discontent and premature caprice (57). In the extract from *Coelebs in Search of a Wif*e, she mentions that it is unnecessary "to decorate women so highly for early youth; youth is itself a decoration… It is for that sober period when life has lost its' freshness, the passions their intenseness, and

the spirits their hilarity, that we should be preparing" (LM, 1809, XI, 214). There was a great deal of political and philosophical debates about educational practices, but a common belief was that "children were innocent and that the impressions and environmental influences of their early years shaped them for adulthood" (Simonton 33-4). Even contemporary thinkers like John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau expressed their views on this topic, claiming that children were born good, but corrupted by society, and therefore "great Care is to be had of the forming Children's Minds" (qtd. in Simonton 33-4). Concerning this topic, *The Lady's Magazine* shows that it was a platform of debate among its many correspondents, seeing how these beliefs are contrary to the letter written in the 1790 issue, *On the Inestimable Value of Time,* where the author argues that girls should be educated in female manners from an early age, perhaps to incorporate good habits.

When Charles meets with Amelia, she describes all the things she either has learned or will be learning in the future. In discussing female education, Charles and Mr. Stanley are amazed by how some girls can attain and "take in every thing" (LM, 1809, XI, 211), whereas men only exceed in one channel. They mention further that Amelia is an "… ambitious, aspiring, universal triumphant, glorious woman, even at the age of a school-boy, [who] encounters the whole range of arts, attacks the whole circle of sciences!" (LM, 1809, XI, 211). In this regard, More may have intended to promote the ideology of the bourgeois women who advocated a new understanding of women, not only as biologically reproductive but also capable of other things, such as education or work. This example may present how women were equal to or even better at acquiring knowledge than men. However, this is in clear contrast to contemporary beliefs, seeing how the image of the "Learned Lady" was ridiculed and associated with unfeminine qualities (Kelly 24-5). In referring to current positions on female education, Simonton writes that the "fundamental view was that nature had created men and women differently… [and s]ince the female mind could be shown to be

unlike the male mind… it followed naturally that women's education should be different" (35). There was a precise balance between being ignorant and too well informed, as "the period's paranoia about the learned lady, associated in stereotypes with dirt, neglect of domestic skills, vanity, and sexual immorality, put pressure on real learned women" (Pearson 49). Accordingly, Johnson argues that Amelia "is intrepid", stating that despite her several feminine qualities desired by men, she is too confident, opinionated, and self-sufficient, which "are not marriageable qualities" (17). Consequently, it may be argued that because of her overwhelming amount of education, she appears too well-informed for Charles and contemporary suitors.

Furthermore, in viewing the advantages of reading, Charles compares the activity in association with other, more feminine activities, stating that:

> The reading of a cultivated woman… occupies less time than the music of a musical woman, or the idleness of an indolent woman, or the dress of a vain woman, or the dissipation of a fluttering woman; she is therefore likely to have more leisure for her duties, as well as more inclination, and a sounder judgement for performing then. (LM, 1809, XI, 214-5)

This excerpt promotes reading while neglecting the importance of other feminine activities, which corresponds with More's views on the matter. Charles finds that reading is a more advantageous activity because a woman will have "more leisure for her duties" or a "sounder judgment for performing them" (LM, 1809, XI, 214-5). Reading may therefore be considered educative in terms of becoming more competent on household responsibilities, which corresponds to similar beliefs by writers in earlier issues. Although More was an effective advocate for women's rights, she also emphasized that women were responsible for domestic affairs and taking care of the children (O'Brian 233). The extract written by the radical More comes across as conflicting because it reveals what kind of education men want and expects

women to acquire. Nevertheless, it also advocates educational equality, stating that women are better at attaining education than men, which conflicts with common opinions about gender in contemporary society.

The extract by More introduces new reflections on gender equality to *The Lady's Magazine* compared to the previous issues analyzed but also manages to communicate some ideas regarding how women should conduct themselves. Female behavior is further presented in the essay, *Andromache Delaine*, where the narrator, Blanche Davison, discusses virtuous and moral behavior through a girl named Flirtilla. Blanche writes that Flirtilla possessed "every feminine loveliness," which caused her to believe she was "the fairest of the fair" (LM, 1809, XI, 205), almost unachievable to all. Because of her confidence in her beauty, she could not imagine settling with the paltry shop boy named Edwin, even though he "solicited her love" (LM, 1809, XI, 205). The importance of looks and beauty appears to be essential when assessing the opportunities for marriage and relationships. Contrary to what was viewed as appropriate for women in this period, "Flirtilla was passionately fond of dancing…in a red coat and lofty leather," perhaps because "it showed her fine form to advantage" (LM, 1809, XI, 205). This notion of female sexuality is presented by focusing on her body and dress. The inclusion of such a perspective may provoke an unvirtuous characterization of Flirtilla, as readers learn that she often attended balls to dance, suggesting she wanted to show her fine form. Concerning the rules of etiquette discussed by other female characters in the two former issues, this is not advantageous because she wastes her time on selfish activities instead of attending to her domestic duties.

Furthermore, considering that Flirtilla was inconsiderate toward appropriate behavior, her final 'break' with virtue appears when she meets Captain Dash at the dance. Blanche explains the sexual tension that emerged between them when "Captain Dash pressed her hand, praised her slender shape, [and] swore by the bright lustre of her eyes that he could not live

without her" (LM, 1809, XI, 205). Unfortunately, Dash was "a complete man of intrigue," and Flirtilla became a victim of his "smooth-tongued" seduction and was left "to repent at leisure the fatal effects of her guilty passion" (LM, 1809, XI, 205). Her fall from virtue would destroy her reputation and therefore had to be concealed, which is why "Edwin was selected by [Flirtilla's] father as a match for his unfortunate daughter" (LM, 1809, XI, 205). Experiencing the consequences of Flirtilla's actions, they were both miserable, and Edwin became so upset with his situation that he eventually left her. Flirtilla, already ruined, continued to live as Captain Dash's lover for many years until he finally got tired of her.

On the one hand, Flirtilla is interpreted as a luscious woman who gives in to her sexual lust and, consequently, is left with the damaging consequences of the affair, while Dash moves on with his life as if nothing has happened. Thus, Flirtilla may represent women's unfair treatment of poor behavior, and Dash may symbolize the victorious male patriarchy. On the other hand, the moral of the story may emphasize the importance of virtuous behavior towards the early nineteenth century readers of the magazine. This is similar to many other letters concerned with conduct in other issues of *The Lady's Magazine*, comprehending how women had to take control of their sexual desires in order not to be depicted as unchaste. However, although some readers may feel for Flirtilla's misery, the story also presents a perspective from Edwin's point of view to which readers may be even more sympathetic. Blanche presents this story about Flirtilla to warn men, stating they should "beware of all such women as Mrs. Flirtilla" (LM, 1809, XI, 206). Similarly, when reflecting on the consequences of these ill-behaved actions, the inclusion of this story may cause female readers to repel unvirtuous behavior, thus functioning as instructive conduct aimed at improving female behavior.

Another essay discussing women's emotions, called *Frederic and Matilda,* is a sentimental tale about two lovers. The narrator describes Matilda as a beautiful girl who,

unfortunately, was afflicted with insanity caused by the death of Frederic. Although her father gave her "an accomplished education, which… together with her extremely elegant person, [could] procure her many wealthy suitors" (LM, 1809, XI, 221-2), she fell in love with Frederic, the youngest son of a baron. Their relationship was a typical case of forbidden love since Frederic's father "commanded him, in an authoritative and peremptory tone, never again to visit" her (LM, 1809, XI, 222). However, Frederic went against his father's demands which resulted in a deadly match, executing them both. Matilda was so heartbroken, as the narrator says, "her sorrow may be felt, but never can be described. Suffice it to say, that an almost immediate insanity took possession of her fine and cultivated imagination" (LM, 1809, XI, 223). At the end of the story, Matilda eventually dies, longing for her dear Frederic.

Although this story does not directly represent women, it may describe what women usually enjoyed reading. Women were warned against these kinds of sentimental, passionate texts because they could construct false expectations of men (Pearson 83). This story may present men as romantically sacrificing because of Frederic's heroic actions concerning his relationship with Matilda. However, one may also argue that certain aspects of the story relate to female representation, as it touches upon the sentimental feelings and emotions consistent with the female sex. Nineteenth-century women wanted relationships filled with love and affection, and they were expected to marry and have kids (Perkin 311). Pearson mentions that a large number of romance novels celebrated "marriage as the ultimate goal of womanhood" (301), and reinforced a culture of women as lovers, wives, and mothers, creating an identity for women to associate with. Women who deviated from societal norms and social identities were often confronted with consequences that impacted their lives. This is visible in *Frederic and Matilda* because the essay introduces notions of female insanity, describing how Matilda's separation from society's expectations made her insane. Considering how Frederic's death caused Matilda to turn insane, it connects to the image of women as fragile,

soft, and mentally weak, but may also symbolize women's dependency on men because it describes how she cannot live without him. This corresponds to general opinions in early nineteenth-century society.

In contrast to the two other selected issues of *The Lady's Magazine,* the 1809 issue does not include many stories viewing the importance of motherhood or discussing the role of parents. There is, however, a poem called "The Orphan," which emphasizes the maternal instincts of women. The poem is about a woman named Celia who finds a female child beneath a haystack. The author writes:

> 'Ah! Cruel mother,' Celia cried,
> 'To leave so young, so sweet a child
> In this sad helpless state!
> In me a mother you shall find
> To rear, instruct your tender mind,
> And teach life's path to tread. (LM, 1809, XI, 230)

In this passage, the author describes how Celia takes on a motherly role to rear, teach and educate the child in the same manner as a mother would. This corresponds to the topic of motherhood and maternal instincts, which were popular in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century literature and advocated in society (Tobin 211). Celia also mentions elements of female instruction, stating that she will "instruct your tender mind, / and teach life's path to tread" (LM, 1809, XI, 230). Instructing one's daughter is a responsibility consistent with the female sex and the maternal role and is often included in women's periodicals. For instance, this is shown in the stories *Letters to the Matron* and *Cautions to a Young Lady* located in the 1770 and 1790 issues, which argued that this bond between a mother and a daughter is crucial, especially in terms of feminine instruction and upbringing. On the one hand, "The Orphan" refers to the descriptions of the tender mother, depicted as "sympathetic, selfless and self-

sacrificing" (Tobin 209-10), which are assumed to be spontaneous and natural qualities. On the other hand, it represents the cruel mother who abandoned her child, which is a perspective that is rarely included in the selected issues analyzed. There is reason to believe that this portrayal of mothers represents the ongoing debate concerning the role of women, arguing that not all women are destined to be mothers. In addition, it may touch upon notions of female insanity due to the severity of this mother's act, leaving her child in a "sad helpless state" (LM, 1809, XI, 230).

In the 1809 issue of June, the content has shifted from promoting female domesticity to more generalized content intended for both women and men. Certain aspects of the essays and letters included may be more appropriate for women, while others appear more attractive to the male sex. By comparing the diverse content of the 1809 issue with the two selected issues (1770 and 1790), the representations of the female sex and the ideology of motherhood are not as dominant. This may be related to the period of the magazine's publication, during the early stages of the Napoleonic war, a decade after the Revolution Controversy, and the beginning of a new century. The nineteenth century was a critical period of change concerning women's equality and the history of women's oppression (Perkin 2-3). This is exemplified by the extract from Hannah More's book, *Coelebs in Search of a Wife,* which is controversial in terms of how More advocates for women's rights through criticizing female education. Although this extract presents some of her more innocent opinions on this topic, the inclusion of such a radical writer may demonstrate how the early nineteenth century opposed the suppressing role of women that was growing in the late eighteenth century. However, it may also be argued that some women avoided reading content expressing controversial opinions on women's rights. Additionally, they may have omitted sections "more directed" towards the male sex, for instance, biographical memoirs and historical observations, which may have created a similar interpretation of the magazine's issue as

instructive or didactic towards the female sex. In *Andromache Delaine,* some of the more familiar topics of virtue and virtuous behavior are communicated by Blanche Davison. The consequences of Flirtilla's actions can be interpreted as a warning to women in general, but they may also give male readers thoughts of reflection because of how she treated Edwin. The story about Frederic and Matilda is also connected to women, and female emotions, as it discusses how Matilda's love for Frederic made her insane. This story puts forward the idea that women's minds are fragile, corresponding to contemporary beliefs about women seen in other letters from the selected issues of *The Lady's Magazine,* but it stands in contrast to the story written by More. Female emotion is also communicated in the poem "The Orphan," where the narrator, Celia, wants to take care of an orphan child and reflects upon her motherly instincts. In sum, the small amount of content representing femininity, motherhood, and the role of woman, does not promote the same portrayal of women as the earlier issues analyzed, and therefore, there is reason to believe that this reflects the situation in society.

Conclusion

This thesis has found that the varied content of three selected issues from the popular periodical *The Lady's Magazine* promoted several ideas about the female gender. The majority of the content was published to promote the idea of the domestic woman. In constructing these popular opinions, depicting women as "other" than men, magazines were important because they contained implicit and explicit ideas about gender. The differences between genders were enhanced by characterizing women as sentimental, emotional, self-sacrificing, and caring mothers. The magazine promoted, supported, and romanticized women as mothers and wives through various letters, essays, advice columns, poems, and anecdotes. This representation may be seen to parallel general beliefs in society but also to spread those beliefs and to participate in the ongoing maintenance of ideas and ideals of the female.

The content of the three selected issues is varied and does not harmonize within a single ideology. The conflicting material in the issues presents contrasting descriptions of women, which creates an inconsistent image of the eighteenth-century woman. Whereas some of the content in the selected issues contain various representations of both the female and male gender, parenthood, and the domestication of women, others advocate for female education and female equality, criticizing the patriarchal hierarchy. The primary reason for this varied content may be a result of the considerable amount of reader contributions, written both by men and women. Nevertheless, most contributions promote women's domesticity, reinforce patriarchal hierarchies, and are generally didactic – such ideas are certainly presented in the first two selected issues. This may be linked to how the magazine's editorial policy could have contributed to a false representation of women through the selection of certain contributions.

The magazine constructed both the compliant and resistant reader, supported conservative and radical sympathies but also promoted educational and domestic instructions.

In the issues analyzed, most of the stories correspond to the growing ideology underlining the importance of motherhood and domestic women and present conflicting images of the father's role. It can be argued whether this contrary image of the father also corresponds to opinions about fatherhood or if this representation only promotes the importance of women as mothers. The magazine's substantial amount of domestic-focused essays and letters contributed to reproducing the domestic image constructed by the male patriarchy. This is because women reflected upon and interpreted the content as essential and adopted the represented values and behaviors. However, one may argue that most women did not see controversial letters and essays discussing women's rights as necessary, because it was more important for them to adapt to the social norms. This is further understood through several of the stories included in the magazine which explain social etiquette, behavior, and instructions, and exemplify some of the consequences of disobeying the instructed behaviors by, for instance, death, loss of a dear one, or an unhappy marriage. Therefore, along with a variety of responses, the eighteenth-century female readers may have interpreted the magazine's content as instructive towards the female sex.

The Lady's Magazine clearly evolved in its time, first in presenting genders within their separate spheres and creating women as other than men, and then shifting focus towards participating in the gender debate at the end of the century. The eighteenth century was a period of much social, political, and cultural change in England. These changes promoted the construction of women as mothers and wives and removed them from the public, political, and productive sphere that was generally reserved for men. Considering how society and the popular press can influence each other, it may be argued that the magazine's content changed in accordance with society during the early decades of its publication. This is visible when comparing the three selected issues. The 1770 November issue involves essays relating to the construction of mothers, and the content is instructional towards the female sex, discussing

what and how one should behave and act, as well as depicting the consequences of ill behavior. The June issue of 1790 emphasizes the role of mothers but presents conflicting portrayals of men and fathers. There are many letters discussing the importance of female virtue and behavior, but also debating women's education. The amount of conflicting material within the issue reflects the social upheaval at the beginning of the French Revolution and the Revolution Controversy. Moreover, the 1809 June issue is the one that stands out most when comparing the three simultaneously because, first of all, it does not present the same portrayal of women. Though it includes some essays relating to virtuous behavior, marriage, and motherhood, these do not represent women or instruct women's behavior in the same way as the other issues. Secondly, this issue includes an extract from a radical author discussing and criticizing female education, which may be interpreted as controversial to a nineteenth-century female reader. Although the varied content in *The Lady's Magazine* did not promote one specific ideology, it fostered ideas of women as mothers and wives rather than participants in the political and public world. In analyzing the three selected issues, it becomes clear that the content shifted from portrayals of motherhood and domestic environments to debates concerning women and their rights.

Works cited

Primary sources:

More, Hannah. *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education: with a View of the Principles and Conduct Prevalent among Women of Rank and Fortune.* London, T. Cadell Jun. and W. Davies, 1799.

Robinson, G. *The Lady's Magazine; Or, Entertaining Companion for the Fair Sex, Appropriated Solely to Their Use And Amusement.* Vol. I, London: 1770, https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=chi.37239531&view=1up&seq=11&skin=2021. Accessed 5 January 2022.

---. *The Lady's Magazine; Or, Entertaining Companion for the Fair Sex, Appropriated Solely to Their Use And Amusement.* Vol. XX, London: 1789, https://books.google.no/books?id=yktGAAAAcAAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=no&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false. Accessed 20 April 2022.

---. *The Lady's Magazine; Or, Entertaining Companion for the Fair Sex, Appropriated Solely to Their Use And Amusement.* Vol. XXL, London: 1790, https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.hw292g&view=1up&seq=1&skin=2021. Accessed 10 January 2022.

---. *The Lady's Magazine; Or, Entertaining Companion for the Fair Sex, Appropriated Solely to Their Use And Amusement.* Vol. XI, London: 1809,

https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=nyp.33433081685855&view=1up&seq=9&skin=2021. Accessed 15 January 2022.

Secondary sources:

Batchelor, Jennie. "[T]o cherish FEMALE ingenuity, and to conduce to FEMALE improvement': The Birth of the Woman's Magazine." *Women's Periodicals and Print Culture in Britain, 1690-1820s: The Long Eighteenth Century,* edited by Jennie Batchelor and Manushag, N. Powell, Edinburgh University Press, 2018, pp. 377-92.

---. "'Connections, Which Are of Service... in a More Advanced Age': *The Lady's Magazine,* Community, and Women's Literary Histories." *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, vol. 30, no. 2, 2011, pp. 245–67, http://www.jstor.org/stable/23349335. Accessed 10 March 2022.

Claes, Koenraad. "'Due Encouragement': The Consecration of Female Authorship Through Reader Contributions and Extracts in The First Series of *The Lady's Magazine* (1770 1819)." *Victorian Periodicals Review*, vol. 50, no. 2, 2017, pp. 319-35, doi.org/10.1353/vpr.2017.0024. Accessed 12 January 2022.

Fletcher, Anthony. *Gender, Sex, and Subordination in England, 1500-1800*. Yale University Press, 1999.

Gledhill, Evan Hayles. "Suitable Reading Material: Fandom and Female Pleasure in Women's Engagement with Romantic Periodicals." *Women's Periodicals and Print Culture in Britain, 1690-1820s : The Long Eighteenth Century,* edited by Jennie Batchelor and

Manushag, N. Powell, Edinburgh University Press, 2018, pp. 294-309.

Hughes, Kathryn. *The middle classes: etiquette and upward mobility*. British Library, 15 May 2014, https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/the-middle-classes-etiquette-and-upward-mobility. Accessed 21 April 2022.

Hunt, Margaret. *Women in Eighteenth Century Europe*. Routledge, 2010.

Johnson, Claudia L. *Jane Austen: Women, Politics, and the Novel.* University of Chicago Press, 1988.

Kelly, Gary. *Women, Writing, and Revolution. 1790-1827.* Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1993.

Miller, Peter John. "Eighteenth-Century Periodicals for Women." *History of Education Quarterly*, vol. 11, no. 3, 1971, pp. 279–86, doi.org/10.2307/367294. Accessed 4 March 2022.

O'Brien, Karen. *Women and Enlightenment in Eighteenth-Century Britain*. Cambridge University Press, 2009.

O'Connell, Lisa. "Gender, Sexuality and the Family: Women's Writing, Language and Readership in The Lady's Magazine, 1770-1832." *Defining Gender, 1450-1910: Five centuries of advice literature online*, edited by Sara Mendelson, Claire Walsh, Jeremy Black, and Erika Rappaport, Adam Matthew Publications, 2004.

Pearson, Jacqueline. *Women's Reading in Britain 1750-1835: A Dangerous Recreation*. Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Perkin, Joan. *Women and Marriage in Nineteenth-Century England*. Lyceum Books, 1989.

Rendall, Jane. “Women and the Enlightenment in Britain c.1690-1800.” *Women’s History, Britain 1700-1850: An Introduction*, edited by Hannah Barker and Elaine Chalus, Routledge, 2005, pp. 9-32.

Shevelow, Kathryn. *Women and Print Culture: The Construction of Femininity in the Early Periodical.* Routledge, 1989.

Shoemaker, Robert. B. *Gender in English Society, 1650-1850. The Emergence of Separate Spheres?*. Longman, 1998.

Simonton, Deborah. “Women and education.” *Women’s History, Britain 1700-1850: An Introduction*, edited by Hannah Barker and Elaine Chalus, Routledge, 2005, pp. 33-56.

Tobin, Beth. “‘The tender mother’: The social construction of motherhood and *The Lady’s Magazine*.” *Women’s Studies*, vol. 18, no. 2-3, 1990, pp. 205-21, doi.org/10.1080/00497878.1990.9978831. Accessed 10 January 2022.

Ytre-Arne, Brita. “Positioning the self.” *Feminist Media Studies*, vol. 14, no. 2, 2014, pp. 237-52, doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2012.713867. Accessed 8 March 2022.

Relevance to teaching

The relevance of this thesis to my career as an English teacher is apparent when examining the new national curriculum in Norway. The English curriculum states that pupils should reflect and critically evaluate different types of English texts to attain knowledge about language, culture, and society (Ministry of Education and Research 3). It recommends that pupils should work with English texts, both old and new, printed and digital, to comprehend culture, society, traditions, and beliefs (Ministry of Education and Research 3). For instance, by using the topics of this thesis as an introduction or a starting point to teach pupils about the feminist debate, they can gain a greater insight into a part of feminist history and women's history. Another appropriate use of older magazines in the English classroom is that they may introduce another way to comprehend history. By reading *The Lady's Magazine* or other periodicals, students may be able to learn about the French Revolution, women's rights, fashion and dresses, cultures, and customs from the eighteenth century. As an interdisciplinary topic, democracy and citizenship promote ideals of mutual respect, and I think that learning about women's struggles and positions from early on may contribute to a greater understanding of the equality debate. In researching older magazines, particularly from a period of social unrest, such as the eighteenth century, pupils can investigate perspectives that interest them and dig deep into social, political, economic, or historical issues. They may also use the thesis to compare similarities with the literary history of other English-speaking countries to promote a greater understanding of the cultures in each country. By researching this topic, students can learn about the eighteenth-century and early nineteenth century, particularly women's history, feminism, and literature.

There are also several other advantages to studying magazines. It can offer pupils an alternative source of literature, which is beneficial in second language learning because it is often difficult to find the motivation to read. Pupils may find it more interesting to read

magazines instead of books, because it may be easier to motivate themselves since they can select and read certain stories instead of having to read entire chapters. In addition, they may be used to scaffold pupils' writing by offering various opportunities to work with the texts. For example, they can respond to letters or queries or rewrite stories, analyze poems and stories, as well as create their own poetry using the poems included as starting points.

Works cited

Ministry of Education and Research. *Curriculum in English (ENG01 04)*, 2019, https://www.udir.no/lk20/eng01-04?lang=eng. Accessed 26. April 2022.