THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

The *London Journal*, 1845-83

Periodicals, Production and Gender

LONDON JOURNAL:

And Weekly Record of Literature, Science, and Art.

THE RIGHT OF TRANSLATION IS RESERVED.] [REGISTERED FOR TRANSMISSION ABROAD.

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[HOW TRIX TOOK IT.]

TERRIBLE SECRET.

By Mrs. MAY AGNES FLEMING.

Author of "A Wonderful Woman," "The Sister's Crime," &c.

PART SECOND.

right had she to grudge her her luck? Against the baronet himself she felt anger deep and strong still. How dared he seek her out as he had done, select her for his *confidante*, and look love in fifty ways, when he meant to marry Trix? What a fool she might have made of herself had she been a whit less proud than

stately villas, away for miles over a country road, then Chesholm, at three in the morning, silent and asleep. Presently an endless stretch of ivied wall appears in view, enclosing a primeval forest, it seems to Edith, and Lady Helena sits up and rubs her eyes, and says it is Catheron Royals.

ANDREW KING

THE *LONDON JOURNAL*, 1845-83

To LJH

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Periodicals, Production and Gender

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The Nineteenth Century Series General Editors' Preface

The aim of the series is to reflect, develop and extend the great burgeoning of interest in the nineteenth century that has been an inevitable feature of recent years, as that former epoch has come more sharply into focus as a locus for our understanding not only of the past but of the contours of our modernity. It centres primarily upon major authors and subjects within Romantic and Victorian literature. It also includes studies of other British writers and issues, where these are matters of current debate: for example, biography and autobiography, journalism, periodical literature, travel writing, book production, gender and non-canonical writing. We are dedicated principally to publishing original monographs and symposia; our policy is to embrace a broad scope in chronology, approach and range of concern, and both to recognize and cut innovatively across such parameters as those suggested by the designations 'Romantic' and 'Victorian'. We welcome new ideas and theories, while valuing traditional scholarship. It is hoped that the world which predates yet so forcibly predicts and engages our own will emerge in parts, in the wider sweep, and in the lively streams of disputation and change that are so manifest an aspect of its intellectual, artistic and social landscape.

Vincent Newey
Joanne Shattock
University of Leicester

Preface

> It starts when the child is as young as five or six, when he arrives at school. It starts with marks, rewards, 'places', 'streams', stars – and still in many places, stripes. This horserace mentality, the victor and the loser way of thinking, leads to 'Writer X is, is not, a few paces ahead of Writer Y. Writer Y has fallen behind. In his last book Writer Z has shown himself to be better than Writer A.' From the very beginning the child is trained to think in this way: always in terms of comparison, of success, and of failure. It is a weeding-out system: the weaker get discouraged and fall out; a system designed to produce a few winners who are always in competition with each other.
>
> (Lessing, 1962: 15)

One of the major themes of the 'Preface' to Doris Lessing's *Golden Notebook* concerns the reception of her work by critics, academics and students. It criticises us, accusing us of a 'horserace mentality', and asks readers instead to envisage a flat, autodidact culture independent of institutions. Even if I no longer accept the possibility of realizing such a utopian space, I still consciously refuse to image writers as competitors in a horserace. This refusal constitutes my intervention here.

I came to Lessing late, first reading *The Golden Notebook* while I was teaching in Sicily in the mid 1980s. I read it in a cool blue-grey flat, in a baronial palace in which a baron still lived. It looked out onto a flight of dark steps that climbed sedately up to two churches, one flamboyantly baroque and the other a classical reprimand. At the base of the steps was a communist nightclub, and on hot summer nights beer-drinkers would spill out onto the steps and talk and shout. Opposite my flat there was a lava-block convent with a thick grating over each opaque and dirty window. The nuns would come out once a year, to sing in the Easter Sunday night, candles making a festival of their faces. Beneath my balcony there was an excavation of black-and-white geometry, a Roman mosaic. An Apollo and a Venus had been dug up so I was told, neither of great value. I never saw them. The archaeologists kept them locked up.

I had left Britain believing – no, hoping – that there must be something else, another way of thinking the world, but I was not even sure what I disliked about the twenty-year attempt to route my thought. Lessing's novel put my vague unease into language. It focussed my discontent and moved it from the personal into the social. It gave my dissatisfaction the more concrete form of a question mark which opened a space for words gradually to form before it: affect emerged into cognition.

Why did I so intensely want to know yet feel alienated by Books of Knowledge? How and why did what I was supposed to hear not speak to me? Why did I feel left out of this vast chatter of Learned Books, so vast as to make me feel there was nothing else? Why did these Books of Knowledge not love me, while my love for them remained?

Sicily, an edge of Europe like my native Wales, helped me form the questions that offered a respite from unrequited love. It was in Sicily, far from Wales, that I had time to reflect on how cultural hierarchies had shaped the Books and my reactions to them, and on how specifying these hierarchies might help me to move on. Distance provided a satirical mirror in which to see my British experiences and then also to scrutinize the nature of such reflection itself. For Sicily was hardly a narcissistic mirror comfortably offering self-satisfaction. There was an anxious irony in questioning consecrated culture in a baronial palace so close to churches and nuns. And the archaeologists had snuck away the gods, the beer-drinkers kept me awake, the convent was ugly, the steps mostly in shadow.

In place of a sweepstakes in which the competitors are our Great and Famous literary forebears (respectable ancestors for those of us who have no portraits on our walls), it would be possible, I imagine, to propose a rival horserace, using a different course and different fences. Studies of class, gender and 'race' have been key in mapping alternative routes which have allowed us to hear the marginalized and silenced. But what of that great mass that is both central and silenced, the occluded norm beyond the Books of Knowledge – *Readers Digest* and its ancestors?

The novels of, say, Henry James command a few thousand readers. The even smaller number of readers with high status have produced letters and books and periodicals that let us know how these novels were and are read, and create that vast chatter that still largely sets the parameters of knowledge. Such thoroughbreds are not my forebears. Although I love many, I will not hang their portraits on my walls. The *London Journal* was bought by 500,000 people a week for over twenty years between the 1850s and the 1870s. If alternative horserace we want to set up, then sales figures offer a criterion for determining the winner. The *London Journal*, as perhaps the best-selling publication of mid-nineteenth-century Europe, offers the temptation of a massive reality, vaster, at least in echo, than the voluminous chatter of up-market in-groups legitimating their own lineage.

Yet the metaphor of an alternative race still offends me. Must I enact the violence of a snobbery – structural, even if disavowed – that is merely inverted? Is there no other reason to study the mass market? If there were not, I could not have written this book. While inversion of the terms in a violent hierarchy is necessary, there is also a beyond, a deconstruction of the violence that shuts up and out.

This book treats a nineteenth-century periodical as a case study to explore various methods of writing about mass-market media in general. My fundamental thesis, however, concerns the necessity for an interdisciplinary vision that recognizes that periodicals are commodities that occupy shifting but specific places in a constantly mobile market. They are not only produced and distributed commodities though, but consumed as magical, fantasmatic *commodity fetishes*, aesthetic objects that give imaginative pleasure. Hence the need for a constant oscillation between the 'hard' facts of production and hypothesized gratification.

Part 1 begins to form the questions in the blank spaces of the books, and the first chapter offers an initial theoretical engine with which to move through the terrain. Chapter 2 discusses nineteenth-century accounts of the *London Journal*, treating it not as a material body but as a discursive entity that participates in battles over the

definition of the cultural field. In Part 2 I map the magazine through production – circulation figures, labour costs, and profits. I visit its offices, editors, proprietors and authors. I navigate the effects of rivalry with competitors in the same cultural zone and of relations with other now more canonical literary areas, connecting them to changes in the magazine's contents. Just as important are the changing pleasures the magazine offers in its bid to be loved and exchanged for a penny. In other words, I analyse the magic tricks of the fetish, proposing an aesthetic of the nineteenth-century mass-market text (there is no escape from the fetishizing aesthetic: I lived in a cool blue-grey flat after all, not a pure machine for living in). Part 3 traces the *London Journal*'s transitive and tangled relation to gender, weaving it into politics, consumerism and interpretation itself. This part includes chapters on two narratives sold and read today as discrete volumes, Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret* (1863) and Zola's *The Ladies' Paradise* (1883). I explore these novels as embedded in local periodical landscapes, taking the first to query the glamorous notion of the inherent 'subversiveness' of a text and the second to tease out issues of control over the meaning of a commodity.

Despite its metropolitan title, the *London Journal* was read all over Britain, the British empire, and Europe. Maybe even in Sicily too, where in the nineteenth century there were notable British commercial ventures. Marsala was first shipped to England by John Woodhouse in 1773; a hundred years later the Avelines of Bath set up sulphur mines around Etna. There are certainly records of the *London Journal* being bought in the Welsh mining valleys. Since it folded as late as 1928, when it was still recycling stories from the 1850s and 60s, my grandparents and even my parents might have read it. Margery Allingham, the 'Golden Age' detective novelist, certainly did: her father edited the *London Journal* for almost two decades and around 1911, when she was seven, she put together a magazine modelled on it (Thorogood, 1991: 36-7). On the whole though, readers of texts such as the *London Journal* were of little status and their writings, if any, are hardly accessible to us. People without the charisma of learning or radicalism, these are my ancestors. Besides an alternative horserace (for I do not believe in complete escape from the *déjà connu*), this book is then also a family album, a compilation of crazed and faded *cartes de visite*, fragments of calotype stuck together with modern theory and recent technologies, a collage of people and events and above all stories that contributed to forming the imaginary I inherited. Like Richard Hoggart's, mine is an address to the dead, an *ave* and a valediction to a past that I left physically long ago. As a farewell, it is also a move into the future, and into yet another unknown country.

Such a path is not trod alone: neither my questions nor my motive force could exist without other people and the kindness of many. First of all, I want to acknowledge my debt to accounts by previous cartographers of the nineteenth-century mass-market in general and of the *London Journal* in particular – Altick (1998), Dalziel (1957), James (1963), Mitchell (1989), and Anderson (1994). Their explorations have provided me with valuable leads and background knowledge; my specific obligations to them will be acknowledged as appropriate in succeeding pages.

List of Abbreviations

BL	The British Library
Boase	Boase, Frederic, *Modern English Biography,* London: Frank Cass & Co, 6 vols., 1965 (1892-1921)
BUCOP	*British Union Catalogue of Periodicals.* ed. James D. Stewart et al., London: Butterworth Scientific Publications, 4 vols with supplements, 1955-
DLB	*Dictionary of Literary Biography*, ed. Joel Meyerson et al., Detroit: Bruccoli Clark/ Gale Research Co., 1978-
DNB	*Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. Leslie Stephen, Sidney Lee et al., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1917-
ILN	*Illustrated London News*
LJ	*London Journal*
LSJ	*London Saturday Journal*
MLAA	Modern Languages Association of America
N&Q	*Notes and Queries*
n.d.	undated publication
n.s.	new series
NYPL	New York Public Library
OED	*Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd edition, 1989
PMLA	*Proceedings of the Modern Language Association*
SDUK	Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge
Sullivan	Alvin Sullivan, ed., *British Literary Magazines*, 4 vols, London: Greenwood Press, 1984
TLS	*Times Literary Supplement*
VPN	*Victorian Periodicals Newsletter*
VPR	*Victorian Periodicals Review*

Where only volume and page number are given, the reference is to the relevant part of the *London Journal*.

Part 1

Periodical Discourse

Chapter One

Periodical Questions

Questions of Enquiry

> The London Journal. The Encyclopedia Britannica puts the circulation at 170,000 in 1850 (11 ed., [*sic*] s.v. »Periodicals»); Fox Bourne (2, 228) gives the figure in 1855 as 510,000, which agrees with the Leeds sample and with the estimate of a writer in Household Words (1858, Aug. 21, 218). In 1869, a writer in the St. James' Magazine (Vol. 3, p.4) put it at 120,000. At first a journal of the Family Herald type, though even more trashy in its contents, it eventually (after 1865) gave more and more prominence to women's fashions. Readers lower to middle class women, educational standard low. (Ellegård, 1957: 37)

At a time when many previously unexplored areas of print culture are being charted – the American dime novel, the 'Other Tradition' of mass-market American woman writers, the globally-circulating newspaper novel – there is no full-length account of one of the most pervasive print media, the nineteenth-century British penny fiction weekly. This study is concerned to fill this gap by focussing on the first series of the most popular illustrated example, *The London Journal and Weekly Record of Literature, Science and Art* between 1845 and 1883. I shall treat this magazine not as an isolated entity but as a case study and vantage point from which to explore both the wider field of Victorian periodicals and issues concerning mass-market culture in general.

In recent years, a discipline whose primary educational aim is literacy in present-day media has appeared in the academic firmament with all the apparent suddenness and glamour of a super nova: media studies. Taking literacy to mean ability to use various hermeneutic techniques, it has tended to prioritize theoretical speculation and textual analysis over history, paying the merest lip-service to long-term transformations in its object of study – when they are mentioned at all. On the other hand, and all too often ignoring the theoretical insights of media studies altogether, positivistic histories of print and reading are also burgeoning under the general category of 'History of the Book'. The present study aims to address both hermeneuts and historians. Those in search of biblio- or biographical descriptions of products and producers will certainly find them here, but those interested in theorization of mass-market media consumption will find that too.

I do not seek an easy synthesis of these different and, to many, antithetical approaches. Rather I use each methodology, the 'media studies' and the 'historical', to activate and critique the other. As I suggested in the 'Preface', it is oscillation between the two that I value, not one side isolated from or prioritized above the other in what is by now a conventional but still emotionally fraught debate. For it is oscillation that enables analysis of how a periodical might operate

as a particularly luminous example of what is itself multiple and mobile, the *commodity fetish*.

Towards the beginning of *Capital*, Marx commented on how complex and indeed 'metaphysical' a commodity is, suggesting that the material alone is inadequate to describe its operation:

> A commodity appears, at first sight, a very trivial thing, and easily understood. Its analysis shows that it is, in reality, a very queer thing, abounding in metaphysical subtleties and theological niceties ... [in the marketplace] it is a definite social relation between men, that assumes, in their eyes, the fantastic form of a relation between things. In order, therefore, to find an analogy, we must have recourse to the mist-enveloped regions of the religious world. In that world the productions of the human brain appear as independent beings endowed with life, and entering into relation both with one another and the human race. So it is in the world of commodities with the products of men's hands. This I call the Fetishism which attaches itself to the products of labour so soon as they are produced as commodities, and which is therefore inseparable from the production of commodities.
>
> (Marx, 1887: 76-7)

The commodity fetish has then a double nature, as physical 'product of men's hands' and the metaphysical magic we attribute to the product. Even though this orthodox Marxist notion underlies the whole of the present book, I have not found it necessary to take on board Marx's thought *in toto*. Indeed, as will become clear, I do not accept the utopian Hegelian division of society into two opposing classes whose conflict will eventually bring about a revolutionary *Aufhebung*. It seems to me, however, that employing the commodity fetish as a governing concept allows alternation between 'soft' media studies and 'hard' historical data. While I consider it vital to uncover who produced, sold and bought what, when, where and for how much, this nonetheless does not entirely explain the 'social relation' between producer and consumer, or indeed between that pair and the social totality. A fiction periodical such as the *London Journal* has less obvious use value than the table Marx talks of elsewhere in his chapter. Its use value comprises in fact its stimulation and permission of fantasy of various kinds – 'the mist-enveloped regions of the religious world' – even when, as I shall show in Part 3, it is communicating what seem the facts of 'news'. Its identity as a medium is then precisely equivalent to its status as a commodity fetish indicative of a 'definite social relation' between people. It is this varying and complex relation, apparently with a will of its own, independent of the producer but which the producer is constantly trying to control, that I shall explore in my speculations concerning the pleasures of the text, all the while bearing in mind the material conditions of textual production.

As a medium, a periodical is most obviously concerned with communication between writers and readers. But these are not the only elements involved in the periodical as social relation. As Robert Darnton (1990: 111-13) has pointed out, the communication circuit also involves publishers, printers, paper suppliers, shippers, booksellers, binders, and all their workers and variants, not to mention the complexities of legal, cultural and political sanctions and encouragements, and the various intellectual histories, aspirations and competencies of all involved.

In the Preface, I acknowledged my debt to accounts by previous writers of the nineteenth-century mass market. I feel it now necessary to suggest that the reader turn to them for a panoptical historical overview of mass-market reading, for although such a general history is conventional as an introduction in a book of this genre, I shall not offer one here. I am instead more concerned to formulate the questions such studies have provoked. For through their gaps, ironies, refusals and silent assumptions, they have helped me frame the theoretical questions I shall address and which my historical research will seek to answer. Besides the overarching enquiry into the implications of the periodical as commodity fetish, these questions fall under three main heads: the usefulness, nature and role of class, gender and geography as descriptive categories for a study in this area; the nature of reading; and the operation of the cultural status and location of texts.

The necessity of asking these questions is evident in especially concentrated form in the few lines of the epigraph to this chapter. Ellegård's magisterial description of the *London Journal* in his much-cited monograph, *The Readership of the Victorian Periodical Press*, starts with a bare recital of a few circulation figures that indicate the periodical's mass-market status. He implies through bare juxtaposition that the periodical must perforce be 'trashy', the figures acting as 'proof' of his value judgement. His high-culture attitude towards the text is unabashed; his juxtaposition of literary worthlessness with the 'lower to middle class' and with femininity is unproblematized and unconcealed. But were the *Journal*'s readers simply 'lower to middle class', female and uneducated? And even if they were, what do these terms mean? Is the 'lower to middle class' a unified social grouping? And if so, unified by what? Does it employ the same decoding practices in Leeds as in London? Are all women in that social group alike? Does uneducated inevitably mean stupid and easily led? The remainder of this chapter seeks to refine these lines of enquiry and to sketch out how I shall pursue them in the rest of the book.

Questions of Class, Gender and Geography

Although it is still a commonplace to use the terms working, middle and upper class in work on nineteenth-century media, I regard this terminology as inadequate to describe cultural consumption. Consumers of mass-market products should not be defined by 'class' in the strict sense of head-of-household income or place within the means of production, but should be classified mainly by their places within the means of cultural consumption. Louis James realized this in the early 1960s. Discussing readers of mass-market publications in the 1830s and 40s, he queried the idea that they were necessarily 'working class'.

> But what were 'the working classes'? The factory hand and the miner certainly, but where should one place the small tradesman, or educated and generally respected lower-class men like William Lovett and S.T. Hall? There was a large and growing intermediary class. What was 'the reading of the lower classes'? Starting with the *Poor Man's Guardian* and *Cleave's Penny Gazette* we move up the range until with *Chambers's*

> *Edinburgh Journal* and the *Family Herald* one realizes that some periodicals span two fields. Then, the young Rossetti read [the penny serial] *Ada the Betrayed*, while workmen in coffee houses read *Blackwood's*. There is no neat definition. Fortunately, the problem is less acute here than it would be even ten years later, for the working classes were closely unified by political and class feeling, and poverty meant that the price of literature largely determined the class of the reader, the poor buying the penny part, the middle classes feeling cheap literature had a social stigma. We are therefore reasonably safe to take as 'lower class', literature published at a penny, and some at three half-pence, largely omitting *Chambers's Journal* after 1840, and the *Family Herald*... (James, 1963: xii)

Clearly of the same thinking as E.P. Thompson (1963) in this passage, James did not want to jettison the political implications of 'class' terminology, even while his evidence contests it. Almost three decades later, Sally Mitchell also found a class-based social organization highly problematic when explaining what group magazines such as the *London Journal* appealed to. '[P]eople between the two nations', 'the petty bourgeoisie and the labor aristocracy' characterized by 'aspiration for respectability' (Mitchell, 1989: 29, 33, 34) – these are descriptors that fit uneasily a vision of society organized in terms of place in the cycle of production. Later again, Patricia Anderson (1994: 156) wrote that the consumers of penny fiction magazines were 'a socially diverse cultural formation of women and men, the youthful and the mature, the middle and the working classes. It was in this sense that the mass made itself. Working people had played a large part in this process ...'. Like Mitchell and James, then, Anderson continues using the terminology of class even though for her it has become vague and almost detached from a politicized analytic framework.

As Patrick Joyce (1994, 1995) amongst many others has observed, 'class' has become increasingly problematic as an explanatory category, even when describing place in production, let alone consumption. This has been brought about in the late twentieth century both by huge shifts from production to consumption in employment and investment patterns in wealthy regions of the world, and, more recently again, by changes in the nature of communications technology. Realization that a much more complex social organization and hierarchy exists in the present than the old tripartite or even binary structure has also enabled us to see the multifariousness and hybridity of nineteenth-century society. Not only income levels and how these were generated, but also gender, geography, ethnicity, religion and attitudes to specific cultural formations were key determinants in their constitution. If we are to concern ourselves with the historical study of the markets of cultural consumption – in other words media history from the point of view of the consumer, reader or audience – then we need to heed the lessons of business studies and social anthropology on the social as comprising mobile overlapping structures. One has only to consider the 54 categories of ACORN neighbourhood segmentation, a sociological mapping much in use for product placement in 2004 and easily available on the Internet. While I am not at all suggesting a simple retrospective application of these 54 or any other categories to the nineteenth century, I do think that either a more precise sociology of consumption is necessary, or, as I do here, at least an attempt to identify the imaginary relations that the product as commodity encourages. Jonathan Rose's magisterial *Intellectual*

Life of the British Working Classes (2001) actually concentrates on the reading habits of a very specific social group, the poor male industrial autodidact, who was much more likely to try to legitimate himself by consuming what he thought high-status texts. Although Teresa Gerrard (1998) and Patricia Anderson (1994) have combed correspondence columns of nineteenth-century penny fiction magazines, material on mass-market textual consumption remains very scarce and unreliable. While I have made use of what there is, I have mainly concentrated on the imaginary, fetishistic, relations that the commodity text encourages.

The *London Journal*, when it was successful as a mass-market magazine, refused to ally itself with any income group and reached out beyond specific geographical areas. Its complex relation to gender changed as perceived demography and the political landscape mutated. Its readers can instead be characterized in terms both negative – by their non-consumption of the exclusive culture of the quarterlies and other representatives of 'difficult' culture – and positive – by their desire for a literary culture that welcomes them. The common term in this opposition is the ambiguous and contested one of 'culture', key both for the many nineteenth-century groups who assigned themselves the attributes of either present or desired power, and in the repeated insistence in the late twentieth century on the *Journal*'s unstable, ambiguous but always median cultural position. 'Salisbury Square Fiction' and its non-respectable ilk took on board the techniques of material production from respectable producers of culture, but then used them to broadcast images and narratives that resisted the cultural codes issuing from their respectable ancestors. This resistance, rather than any notion of 'incompetence', is what is indicated by the extremely non-naturalistic prints and stylized narratives that James (1963, 1976) and Anderson (1994) reprint and comment on. Consumption of such culture meant rebellion, at least for the duration of the consumption. The *Journal*, on the other hand, discovered a reader that wanted the exclusivities of neither the resisting nor sanctioned cultures. Obvious as that may be as a general conclusion, its specificities are complex and unexpected, and my analysis has created the necessity for a new terminology that will be introduced and defined in due course. As befits the mobility of the market, this terminology is only local in its explanatory effects and requires constant redefinition if it is to be applied to different areas of the field and to different time periods.

Now in arguing that we move on from the language of class when analysing cultural consumption, I am not suggesting we abandon politics as a social engagement that seeks more equitable distribution of power and resources. On the contrary, my concerns about the many books today that continue to use terms such as 'middle-class periodicals' or 'working-class serials' lie precisely in the contradiction between the attenuation of such engagement while still clinging on to its language. Employment of the language of class seems an archaism, a residuum of a previous age whose politics have become tame, dutiful, a badge of belonging to specific academic sectors of the arts (cf. Bourdieu, 1988: 66-9). My rejection of the language of class is based not only on its descriptive inadequacy for my purposes, but also on my belief in the urgent necessity for the revival of political intervention in specific and focussed areas.

Just as class has proved inadequate as a descriptive category for the reader of the mass-market text, so the category of gender also needs refinement away from a simple binarism of products labelled as either 'men's' or 'women's'. As exemplified by the epigraph from Ellegård, the *London Journal* has usually been described in the twentieth century as 'feminine' in some way. But just because the *Journal* published a coloured fashion plate as an optional supplement from 1868 (not 1865, *pace* Ellegård), this does not mean that it was in any easy sense a 'woman's magazine' by then – which is what Mitchell (1989) later claims. Patricia Anderson (1994) is less direct in her gendering of the *Journal*. Although she maintains that mass culture is not class- or gender-specific, she feminizes its reader in a way suggestive of the melodramatic seduction of an ambiguously willing or stupid heroine by a villain skilled in the arts of pleasure. In the overall narrative that Anderson tells, the *Journal* jointly plays the role of villain with *Reynolds's Miscellany* and *Cassell's Illustrated Family Paper* in perverting the artistic taste of the masses that the virtuous *Penny Magazine* had started to educate and raise. But are the illustrations of these later publications as 'low' as Anderson claims? Elsewhere I have shown the *Journal*'s indebtedness to gallery art (King, 1999 and 2000). In the same way that Mitchell repeatedly describes the *Journal*'s fictional women, Anderson concludes that the illustrations in penny fiction magazines present an unambiguous vision of women as helpless and pneumatic sex objects (Anderson, 1994: 124-9). Even if this is true, is the reader necessarily a virtuous victim who reads as she – or he – ought to? Can a reader not gain pleasure by resisting, twisting or ignoring an overt message, as Menocchio did in Carlo Ginsberg's *The Cheese and the Worms* (1980)? One is tempted to see in this feminization the subtle influence of the twentieth century's pervasive and implicit gendering of the mass market as documented by Andreas Huyssen (1988).

At this point I need to clarify what I intend by gender. As I use the term in this book, it comprises three interrelated components: the gendering of the implied reader (and thereby of the periodical itself); the gender dynamic between producers and the implied reader; the discursive construction of gender ('Man' and 'Woman'). To these I append a fourth, closely related to gender even if, strictly speaking, not subsumed into it, the textual construction of sexual desire.

What I mean by these components can most easily be explained by referring to how they will be used. In the last four chapters of the book, where I concentrate most on gender and sexual desire, I shall show how the *Journal* was initially a magazine implying predominantly masculine readers and writers who colluded to control a gender-ambiguous domestic space and language. As a gendered discursive object, 'Woman' fulfilled two main functions at this time, as an image that was passed between men to create homosocial solidarity and as an allegory for the condition of the unenfranchised male. I shall argue that state regulation of the periodical field was a major determinant in these gender relations between readers and producers, with the market as another. As long as profits resulted, gender blurring could quite easily be accommodated, together with what may seem to us as constructions of sexual desire at variance with common images of Victorian morality (King, 1999). In Chapter 9, *Lady Audley's Secret* (serialized in the *Journal* in 1863) will be considered in this light, with attention to how homosocial

elements common in fiction a decade previously were revisited, as well as to how the figure of the supposedly 'subversive woman' was actually a well established part of the mass market. In Chapter 10 I shall suggest that the debates around the time of the 1867 extension of the male franchise, along with demographic changes and the commercial success of new rivals aimed specifically at women consumers, caused the demise of vestigial appropriations of 'Woman' as allegories of unenfranchised men. The *London Journal* now locked the signifier 'Woman' more firmly onto the female (as opposed to the earlier feminine), offering women consumerism in place of enfranchisement. In the last chapter, I shall look at Zola's *The Ladies' Paradise* (serialized in the *Journal* in 1883) as an exploration of sales strategies that the *Journal* itself employed. By examining the original French version I show how masquerade and narcissism were as key to the *magasin* as to the magazine. I shall end by comparing Zola's original with the *Journal*'s considerably rewritten version. This enables me to reconsider the struggle between the consumer and the producer over knowledge, and to show how, by the 1880s, gendered producer-consumer relations had metamorphosed from an uneasy homosocial expulsion of 'Woman' as third-person Other to a troubled second-person address to women.

There remains the question of the gendering of the literary field in terms of production, a sub-set of the second component of gender. What proportion of *London Journal* novels was written by women and by men in which periods? Tuchman (1989) suggested that the novel was increasingly colonized by male writers who raised its status, while the devalued mass market was left to women – a material investigation by sociologists that supports Huyssen's more literary approach. While my bibliographical research on penny fiction weeklies has confirmed this, related biographical work has enabled me to determine how much men and women authors were paid, clearly a key aspect of gender differentials. This I explore in Part 2 where I concentrate on the *Journal*'s production history. Furthermore, bibliographical techniques I outline there help to determine the status of each novel and novelist within the periodical. What has emerged is the huge importance of American women authors in the British mass market more or less continuously from 1855. This is the year that 'Fanny Fern' started to receive $100 per column in a New York fiction weekly modelled in many ways on the *London Journal*, the *New York Ledger*. Prefigured by the extraordinary sales of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, this turn to America was caused not least by changes in the 1852 copyright agreement with France, the country that had previously been the principal source for (pirated) cheap fiction.

Fifty years ago, in a neglected but exceptionally well-informed book, Mary Noel pointed out the close connection of British and American literary markets, and Louis James soon after remarked the popularity of American literature in Britain in the 1830s and early 1840s. There has been in fact a two-way traffic in mass-market fiction between London and New York in continuous operation since the 1830s, intensifying from 1855. In the second half of the nineteenth century, not only was work by American women imported in large numbers into Britain, but British writing was as much, if not more, imported into America (Johanningsmeier, 1997; Law, 2000a). Recent work on the Australian mass market has confirmed a

globalization of mass-market fiction from the 1860s, with the massive import of American and British fiction into Australian periodicals, (Morrison, 1995; Johnson-Woods, 2001). The ongoing work of Law and Morita (2000) on the global syndication of serial novels in newspapers is revealing the importance of translations of western mass-market fiction, including Braddon, Dumas and Hugo, as far afield as Japan from the 1880s. By the early 1870s, the *London Journal*, like other major British penny weeklies, was on sale all over the British Empire and North America. Advertisements on its monthly covers from 1870 (volume LI) list the 'Colonial Agents':

Australia – Castlemain, Mrs E. Vale, Mostyn St
Victoria, Mr W.M.K. Vale, Jas. T. Hall, Sandhurst
Melbourne, Geo. Robertson, Robert Mackay
Sydney, Gordon and Gotch, F. Kirby, G. T. Sandon, Reading & Co.
Cape of Good Hope – J.C. Juta, Cape Town
Canada – A.S. Irving, Toronto
Jamaica – Geo. Henderson, Kingston
New Zealand – Mr Jesse Hounsell, Trafalgar Street, Nelson
New York – Willmer & Rogers, Nassau Street
Tasmania – J. Walch & Sons Hobart Town, Walch Bros & Birchall, Launceton
Nova Scotia – G.E. Morton & Co.

I do not wish to suggest that similar gender or other dynamics of social hierarchy operated the same throughout the world. Though many of the same serials were circulated in different magazines, they were inserted into different contexts, surrounded by different advertisements and miscellaneous matter, juxtaposed with other stories and news items, placed in relation to various narrative traditions. Often the names of characters and the setting of the plot were changed when a serial migrated from one publication to another: the Adirondacks in the American versions of Southworth novels usually became Wales in the British (see Figure 6.5 for a striking visual example); New York was renamed London, and so on. More disturbingly, slaves became servants even while their original and characteristic patois was retained. Then again, while the *London Journal*, like other similar British periodicals, tended to import woman-centred romances by American female writers, the *Australian Journal* preferred adventure narratives with male heroes, written by authors with masculine signatures (Johnson-Woods, 2000). The same broad set of authors and stories may have been read around the globe, but in different proportions, with different emphases, different connotations and contexts.

Even when we are talking of the same periodical or novel, I cannot think that their depictions of social relations, in all their complexity, operated in the same way in Castlemain as in New York, Nova Scotia, or London. What of issues of 'race', that third element in the hellish trinity of inequality? That would certainly have had widely different political resonances in the Cape and Jamaica, Toronto and Manchester. While 'race' is discussed to some extent in Part 3 (and nationality figures in Part 2), I have chosen not to concentrate upon it in this work, as it is a much less frequent issue than gender during the time-frame I cover. This is most

assuredly not the case in the last two decades of the nineteenth century in the related cultural zone of the syndicated newspaper novel, as Law (2000) and numerous studies of the fin-de-siècle adventure romance remind us. Even though the *London Journal* survived until 1928, it still continued the kind of fiction – and indeed often repeated the very same novels – that had been new in the 1850s, 60s and 70s. In that sense it never moved on from the third quarter of the nineteenth century. Furthermore, most of the material about reading I have uncovered was written by and about white British city-dwellers, for whom 'race' probably operated as little more than an allegory of social oppression in general. As a result, I have read mainly as a literate white British urbanite since, while the *Journal* and its fellow fiction magazines were certainly consumed in the country as well as abroad by a wide variety of social groups, it is such a reader with a corresponding imaginary that the magazine invokes and through which it defines and sells itself.

Questions of Interpretation

One of my *a priori* assumptions is that meaning lies not in a text but is an effect in readers created through their interactions with texts. Even if meanings vary from place to place, and from person to person, this does not imply that they are entirely arbitrary or irrecoverable. Modern-day empirical studies, in which readers and audiences are interviewed, find general tendencies in meanings generated from a text according to a variety of factors: age, gender, socio-economic group, education, geographical location, and so on (see, for example, Radway, 1984; Taylor, 1989; McCracken, 1993; Hermes, 1995). I do not intend to engage here in depth with arguments about the validity of the various ways audiences can be conceptualized and studied (see Ang, 1991, 1995, 1996; Abercrombie, 1998) except to say that I agree in my own way with Ang that the context of media consumption is vital (cf. King, 2000) and that I disagree with the Althusserian leanings of Feltes (1986), for I do not believe meaning to be entirely coextensive with the magic of the fetish although it is certainly closely related to and overlaps with it.

A major problem for the cartographer of the nineteenth-century mass market lies in the dearth of sources for direct qualitative research of readers which might reveal context and decoding strategies. *What* was read is guessable, for circulation figures provide quantitative data (of varying reliability); *how* readers read or what else they did with the texts they bought is much less certain. We know that illustrations were cut out and pasted on the walls of a cottage, a trapper's shanty, and a county asylum (Mountjoy, 1985: 51-2), but what precise meanings were adduced from them remain hypothetical. Kate Flint (1993) has comprehensively discussed 'The Woman Reader' in the nineteenth century, but her sources for 'real readers' are almost exclusively taken from those with sufficient cultural confidence and education to write down their reading. Such people were unlikely to admit to enjoying mass-market periodicals. 'Slumming', whereby a culturally respectable reader takes pleasure in mass-market reading, was in the nineteenth-century a love that dare not speak its name. When the great psychiatrist Sir Shadwell Rock in

Sarah Grand's *The Heavenly Twins* (1892) derives pleasure from detective novelettes with female criminals, this marks him out as both exceptional and of dubious credibility when he is supposed to advise on curing the hysteria of a woman who as a girl had read the classics and John Stuart Mill. More typical is the silence of E.S. Dallas, the otherwise notable theorist of pleasure, who, when writing about 'Popular Literature' in *Blackwood's*, omits the mass market altogether to concentrate on works just below his own cultural preferences. This is not to suggest that Dallas was a closet consumer of penny fiction, but to mark that silence was the norm. Rose's (2001) study has one incidental reference to a penny fiction weekly in 534 pages. Similarly, if Flint's section on the reading of the 'working class' is only four pages long (and there is no mention of the mass-market periodical), this need by no means indicate an indifference to this area of the market; there is simply little material that reveals how 'real readers' read such publications. While there has been an attempt to use correspondence columns in mass-market magazines to determine reading strategies (Gerrard, 1998), there are actually very rarely any comments on reading that reveal information that is not already well known: most published comments comprise queries about when a particular serial started. As with circulation figures, the columns can be used as a gauge of what was read, then, not as a window on readers' decoding strategies.

In any case, studies of recent media suggest extreme caution here. For instance, despite a plethora of correspondence with readers published in today's women's magazines, it is impossible to tell from that alone that substantial numbers of men read them (Ballaster et al., 1991: 45, 113). While I discuss the little I have glimpsed of the decoding strategies of 'real readers' at various points in Parts 2 and 3, most of my comments regarding reading and readers must perforce operate in the subjunctive mood, hypothesizing the complex, often contradictory and vaguely structured roles of a modified version of Wolfgang Iser's 'implied reader'.

Iser (1978: 36) proposed a 'conditioning force' that the text sets up, a transcendental, ideationally structured field within which a real reader is offered a choice of roles and positions. Iser's implied reader is a transhistorical concept that seeks to answer the question of what enables us today to read and enjoy texts written in the past. Under the influence of later reader response criticism I have tended to localize my version of the implied reader to one situated in a particular cultural field at a particular moment. Thus I read *Lady Audley's Secret* as a serial read after others in the *London Journal*. In this sense my model of signification has elements of linguistic pragmatics, influenced in general terms by the criticisms and modifications made by Fish (1980), Said (1991) and Eagleton (1983). Such a model seeks negotiation between the real and the abstract, historical empiricism and media studies theory, and, following the *Journal*'s similar median cultural location, recognizes its instability and its need for constant refinement.

The periodical I describe throughout Part 2 is an artefact located through an investigation of its production: origins, costs, market conditions, networks of writers, determination of authorship, and so on. I wish this materialist approach not only to contrast with the discursive orientation of Chapter 2 but also to resonate over those sections of Parts 2 and 3 that deal at length with the metaphysics of reader-text relations that the implied reader depends on. Although reading and

consuming, I do not wish to fetishize the fetish and forget the commodity. A good deal of Part 2, then, and especially Chapter 4, is intended to stick in the throat, a burr preventing the easy consumption and assimilation of yet more textual interpretation.

Further expanding my point concerning the necessary interrelatedness between the commodity and the fetish, I feel it incumbent upon me to add that the claim that a production history should offer an exclusively producerly and positive perspective, somehow more 'real' than the hermeneutic, forgets that producers of a successful commodity must constantly shift their viewpoints to those of consumers and to speculation. To be successful, producers must have bifocal vision shared between production costs and possibilities on the one hand, and actual or potential consumer desires, fantasies and interpretations on the other. An interesting example of the interplay between the two is available in Chapter 8, where legal constraints and the consumerly aspects of 'news' are put into play against and with each other in an edgy, seductive tension.

Of course one can object that the hypothetical pleasures of the implied reader that I propose below are grounded ultimately in a personal – my – subjectivity. I would argue that it is necessary to reflect upon the subjective experience of reading these texts and to try to abstract general principles from it. In order to do that I engage directly in interpretation, for all the risks it runs of further fetishing the text (Feltes, 1986), for it is only thus that the magic seductions of the fetish can be understood. In other words, what I am aiming to do is offer a phenomenology of the nineteenth-century mass-media fetish, as exemplified by the *London Journal* and its fellow magazines.

Questions of Culture

In order to explain the specific cultural status of the mass market in general and of the *London Journal* in particular, I have found Pierre Bourdieu's example of mapping cultural consumption in France the most illuminating model. According to Bourdieu, every society is organized according to sets of 'fields', economic, cultural, political, geographical, and so on. Each field has its own laws that determine the position of its participants in a hierarchy. It is firmly situated in time and space and is not necessarily applicable anywhere else. Each field is relatively autonomous, but exists in dialogue with others. For example, the analysis of Flaubert's *L'Éducation sentimentale* (Bourdieu, 1996) locates various kinds of cultural production in different parts of Paris, overlaying the cultural field with the geographical – a procedure I adopt most intensively in the last part of Chapter 3. In theory, it might also be possible to extend such work to mapping decoding practices, not just production, onto a global geography, but so far there is insufficient evidence to permit this.

As Bourdieu portrays it, the literary and artistic field is a sub-set of the 'field of power', which is itself a sub-set of the 'field of class relations'. The literary field is governed by two principles. The first is concerned with the hierarchization caused by market forces. This Bourdieu calls 'the heteronomous principle' which rules the

mass market: here economic capital – money – rules. The second principle he terms 'autonomous'. This creates a hierarchization based on prestige, which Bourdieu also calls 'symbolic capital' or 'consecration'. Symbolic capital is granted by limited groups who, to use Bourdieu's deliberate solipsism, 'recognize no other criterion of legitimacy than recognition by those whom they recognize' (Bourdieu, 1996: 38). In its ideal form this kind of hierarchization is autonomous and independent of normal market forces, being a market for objects created by producers of culture for their fellow producers. Nineteenth-century France came to produce a field determined largely by a logic of 'loser wins'. Poetry, from which there was usually little financial gain to be made, was granted the most symbolic capital (one thinks of Mallarmé's wonderfully impenetrable experiments), whereas the theatre, which was economically profitable, had the least prestige (a Feydeau farce). The novel hovered over a wide area in between these two extremes. Although rather too simple a mapping – there was, for example, commercial poetry in France (as described by Kavanagh, 1847) – the general principle remains helpful in understanding how certain texts are granted status and others not.

Beside economic and symbolic capitals, there are two other forms of capital that Bourdieu describes: social and cultural. Social capital comprises that power conferred through belonging to certain families or other social networks that lend support of various kinds. As repeatedly emerges in Bourdieu's work, France is still governed by quite a small set of 'great families', but there are many less powerful social networks that also struggle to maintain or advance their positions. Cultural capital consists in educational or intellectual qualifications, experience or knowledge that can be deployed and converted to other forms of capital. It should not be confused with symbolic capital, although the two are intimately related, for cultural capital comprises a set of skills that a person might 'own' and exploit, while symbolic capital is the status that is granted by others to those skills and their products. A form of capital that Bourdieu tends to play down but which has been commented on in recent years is 'gender capital' (Fowler, 1997, esp. ch. 6; Armstrong, 2000: 156). Obviously, I think this so important that I have already devoted a separate section to it, although I do not tend to use the language of capital when referring to it. It work in ways that analogy to finance does not always illuminate.

Each sub-field (which I prefer to call a 'zone') is related to what Bourdieu calls a 'habitus'. A habitus is a system of 'principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary to attain them' (Bourdieu, 1990: 52). The habitus is learnt unconsciously from early childhood from a variety of sources, from institutions such as schools, but also from the family and from all kinds of social and cultural contact. It determines a person's rhetoric concerning and attitudes towards objects, and indeed, to a large extent their perception and actions in relation to them. A recent book (Hillier and Rooksby, 2002: 5) has summed up the habitus as 'a sense of one's (and others') place and role in the world of one's lived environment ... an embodied as well as a cognitive sense of space'. Thus people whose habitus supplies them with criteria which predispose them towards the restricted market of