"For the continuance of their favours": Women, the public sphere and the print culture in England, 1750-1760

Sharlene Shalimar Sayegh
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

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"For the continuance of their favours": Women, the public sphere and the print culture in England, 1750–1760

Sayegh, Sharlene Shalimar, M.A.
University of Nevada, Las Vegas, 1994
"FOR THE CONTINUANCE OF THEIR FAVOURS":
WOMEN, THE PUBLIC SPHERE AND THE PRINT
CULTURE IN ENGLAND, 1750-1760

by

Sharlene S. Sayegh

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts
in
History

Department of History
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
August 1994
The Thesis of Sharlene S. Sayegh for the degree of Master of Arts in History is approved.

Chairperson, Lawrence E. Klein, Ph.D.

Examiner Committee Member, Colin Loader, Ph.D.

Examiner Committee Member, Jay Coughtry, Ph.D.

Graduate Faculty Representative, Robert E. Parker, Ph.D.

Dean of the Graduate College, Ronald W. Smith, Ph.D.

University of Nevada, Las Vegas
August 1994
ABSTRACT

Focussing on letters from readers of "ladies'" periodicals as well as advertisements placed by women in the provincial newspaper, The Ipswich Journal, this thesis historically examines women's use of the growing print culture in England from 1750 to 1760. Notions that women overwhelmingly accepted and articulated the "domestic sphere" ideology at this time are contradicted by historical evidence. Despite the constraints imposed by prescriptive literature, women who used the print culture in eighteenth-century England asserted their public economic and social lives. Women's public and non-domestic lives were not effectively stifled by the didactic literature and domestic ideology they daily faced, and thus prescriptive literature acted less in the simple hegemonic way that many feminist literary theorists insist. Constructions of "norms" of feminine behavior were constantly contested in the print culture in the 1750s, and women served as active and public historical agents.
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Throughout the thesis, spelling, capitalization and punctuation have been kept in their eighteenth-century form. With few rare exceptions, spelling discrepancies have not been noted. For the early 1750s, the first of the year is taken as January 1. Although everyone mentioned above deserve credit for the support, inspiration and assistance they have given, any errors or faults are entirely my own.
Chapter One

Public Versus Private: A Reevaluation of the Domestic Sphere Ideology

In 1752, Miss Priscilla Termagant, proclaimed editor of The Spring Garden Journal, wrote an open letter to her readers. "Custom," Termagant asserted, "has now made it absurd to hear of a woman's pretending to preach, command an Army, or write Books: How ridiculous the Custom! And I make no Doubt, but I can prove that Women have both more Sense and Wit then Men, from the Nature of Things."¹ According to Termagant, the social distinctions imposed between the sexes unfairly constricted women who wanted to work in the same fields as men. Termagant's critique transgresses the way modern readers usually think about women's attitudes in mid-eighteenth-century England. Indeed, if this modern assumption is the correct view of the eighteenth century then Termagant was a wildly transgressive figure. But hers was not the only voice of discontent. Such a critique against what was perceived to be the historical subjection of women occurred in numerous forms throughout the pages of women's eighteenth-century periodicals.

It has often been assumed by women's historians that the emerging ideology of the "private" (and therefore
respectable) realm of womanhood was widely enforced and accepted in Anglo-American culture by the end of the eighteenth century. Lawrence Stone's *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500-1800* and Nancy Cott's *The Bonds of Womanhood* have influenced this way many feminist scholars have viewed women in history. Stone asserted that the eighteenth century witnessed the rise of "affective individualism" and the privatization of the family, which accentuated growing distinctions between a private and a public social sphere. Cott's analysis of the creation of the domestic sphere in the early American Republic established the current framework of "separate spheres" that American historians are only just beginning to question. She concluded that nineteenth-century women held up the domestic ideology in order to grasp some semblance of sisterly solidarity.

Once Cott's and Stone's work highlighted the "domestic sphere" and its role in enabling as well as hindering women's access to the world outside the home, little room remained for analytical discussions of those women who transgressed such norms and entered the "public sphere." Many women accepted and openly endorsed the new "private" world of the modern household, but the private sphere was not a universal mode of women's existence. Many other women, like Priscilla Termagant, both fictitious and real, openly rebelled against the seclusion imposed on them; others completely disregarded it as a factor of their daily existence.
The ideology of the "private" or "separate" sphere emerged in a century during which proliferated didactic literature aimed primarily at people who no longer needed to concentrate completely on subsistence for their living. The account of the eighteenth-century separation of spheres has been unquestionably grafted onto the economic and social history of industrial capitalism without accounting for complexities in gender relations distinct from economic arguments. The rise of the middling orders, so the story goes, saw a need for husbands to relegate wives to the realm of the home in some patriarchal assurance of power. Popular literature thus aimed at women's "natural" roles as nurturer of the family. With the rise of the "affective family," marriage supposedly became less an economic contract and more a mutually decided engagement based on love and compatibility.³ This reevaluation of women's roles was partly due to the fact that "definitions of 'women' and 'femininity'" in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries "played a crucial part in a wider definition of social categories and social roles."⁴ Women's domestic roles and the ideology of femininity that emerged at the end of the eighteenth century were social constructions designed to maintain power relations in the family and in society.⁵

However, evidence shows that the woman's "sphere" in eighteenth-century England was not an inherently private one. Gender roles were and are assigned in society based on productive and reproductive capacity and notions of the
public man and the private woman are inherent in the ideological social and economic order of modern western society. This ideology is not surprising news to social scientists, who must constantly address gender roles in western history. Assumptions concerning the public and private dichotomy exist in different forms in different historical societies and those differing forms have created manifold definitions of the "the public sphere." Problems of definition are the most significant obstacles to overcome in new attempts to discuss the public and the private. Engels' conception of the privatization of bourgeois society has been fervently debated by twentieth-century women's historians, and the differing definitions emerging in the various schools of intellectual thought have made coherent and unilateral discussion nearly impossible. According to Susan Moller Okin, political theorists, among others, often use "the terms 'public' and 'private'...with little regard for clarity and without precise definition." There are also problems in newer accounts that attempt a wholesale rejection of the public and private ideology because they implicitly deny the ways in which women actively violated this distinction, and how women fought against the emergent culture of female privacy. The public / private, or domestic sphere, is an ideology. As such it is not monolithic; it is subject to change from pressure exerted by emerging and disparate ideologies that want to erode its foundations and replace it with their own conceptions of
order. For women of the middling orders, this dynamic occurred in periodical literature.\textsuperscript{11} Lower middling and working women more often publicized their socio-economic life in the growing provincial newspapers. Even when supposedly working within the confines of ideology or "prescription" they undermined its goals because they worked in the public which supposedly denied them access.\textsuperscript{12} Within that context, there was tremendous room to maneuver and violate "standardized" norms of sexual behavior and roles.\textsuperscript{13}

The most recent and successful attempt to question the pervasive theme of the "private sphere" in women's history is Amanda Vickery's illuminating study of English women's historiography. She questions modern research that "has confidently built on the sands of prescription" despite tremendous evidence that undermines the thesis.\textsuperscript{14} After an examination of women consumers and businesswomen, she concludes that proponents of women's effective public exclusion are guilty of selectively reading their evidence.\textsuperscript{15} Her misgivings extend to the most recent historical writing that, while recognizing the weaknesses inherent in the separate spheres framework, continues to accept its premises nevertheless. She asserts that these historians, "rather than conclude from positive female testimony that women were not necessarily imprisoned in a rigidly defined private sphere,...simply [see] the private sphere in a better light."\textsuperscript{16} Vickery's questioning of the pervasiveness of such a weakened argument is central to new discussions about women
in the public in the eighteenth century. Her criticisms against the selective reading of women's historians explicitly demands further investigation of accounts of women's lives and their relation to the world of print.

Independent of the questions of gender that Vickery raises, however, the ideology of the public sphere has become an important theme in eighteenth-century historiography. The work of Jurgen Habermas in the 1960s on the transformation of the public sphere in modern society accelerated this discussion. Habermas' original discussion of the "multiplicity" of meanings of the public sphere foreshadowed Okin's critiques of definition. Attempting an all-encompassing approach to describing functions of the public sphere (political, social and economic) since the seventeenth century, Habermas necessarily addressed the importance of ideology. His engaging account of the exercise and "equilibration" of consensual politics and the establishment of political hegemony are all important to general discussions of late eighteenth-century politics and economics, yet his brief foray into the "intimate" sphere established with the "world of work and organization" of industrial capitalism, leaves women's historians no closer to defining the public and private.\(^{17}\)

Nevertheless his theme of public discourse in the growing print culture is fertile ground, as Vickery attests, for understanding the complex operations of gender relations in eighteenth-century England. It is obvious that women held
public roles within a developing and expanding print culture, but recent work about women has concentrated primarily on only two modes of printed works: the novel and the periodical. Both genres have been construed as emerging prescriptive forces, which delineated the proper "non-public" role for women even as women increasingly participated in these very public capacities.

Alison Adburgham's *Women in Print* was the first monograph dedicated to the study of women authors during this period. Focussing on only women's writings, Adburgham's history of the print culture investigates women's printed works from essays and newspapers to the mid-century printed libraries and periodicals. In each respect, her conclusion remains that women were important components of eighteenth-century public writing, and their self-supporting actions, "disregarded by social historians," were not "humiliating," but rather a source of empowerment against the "contempt of society." Her premise that eighteenth-century women writers "were all heroines," literally writing for their lives, contradicts later notions that by the mid-eighteenth-century, prescriptive literature by and for women served as a constraining rather than a liberating devise.

These later notions build primarily on the literary framework of New Historicism, modeled after the works of philosopher Michel Foucault and his contributions to French structuralism and anthropologist Clifford Geertz and his contributions to cultural anthropology. As an analytical
framework, New Historicism (and the more recent manifestation, post-modernism) looks at both literary and non-literary texts as producers as well as products of a certain historical context or reality. In other words, textual analysis conveys not only a certain representation of society, but a definite reality as well. That reality is based on constricting opportunity and repression of beliefs or actions.

Highlighting this constriction, the New Historicism has proven another fruitful ground for historians wishing to address women's historical subjection. Elizabeth Bergen Brophy's *Women's Lives and the Eighteenth-Century Novel* analyzes seven contemporaneous texts and concludes that novels represented received notions of restrictive femininity that accepted male hegemony. But Brophy also accepts the idea that female characters were conceived as active agents and that historical agency and decision-making were accepted roles for women. Shari Benstock's edited *The Private Self* and Felicity Nussbaum's *The Autobiographical Subject* provide more class-oriented analyses of ideologically-based writings. Nussbaum's recognition of class, genre and gender is the crucial point in understanding women's representations of themselves. Her conviction that the discrepancy between theory and practice portrays women's lives in a manner where they did not necessarily follow the rigid ideology of "separate spheres" is an important one. She understands and is explicit that class determined the level of entry into the
public sphere. Women of working or lower middling origins felt the bonds of prescription less than their upper middling counterparts, although they still felt them. Her book further underscores the existence of a "sexual division of labor" in autobiographical writings wherein men could and did cross boundaries and write about women, but women who wrote about men "jettison[ed] the established boundaries of sexual difference." Although some texts fell victim to socially constructed notions of "proper roles," others "resist[ed] subordination" and spoke to women's subjectivities. This recognition denies a metanarrative of prescriptive or socially constructed literature. Thus discourse analysis, although useful, cannot be removed from "lived experience."

Following the lead of the New Historicists, Kathryn Shevelow's *Women and Print Culture* examines the eighteenth-century periodical and the construction of the "domestic ideal" through periodical texts from the early eighteenth century. Her analysis rejects what she perceives as Adburgham's somewhat whiggish version of feminist literary history and instead maintains that women's prescriptive literature "remained situated firmly within the dominant patriarchal ideology." Her thesis rests on the assumption that by the mid-1700s the public / private dichotomy was firmly entrenched in English periodical literature. This literature became a conduit for male constructions of female identity rather than an element of liberation for women writers and readers. For Shevelow, the eighteenth century
witnessed a resurgence of the role of woman as mother and protector of the home, a condition that effectively removed her from public life. Although women participated as both writers and readers of popular literature, the periodical press created an increasingly narrow construction of femininity and was a major component in the reformulation of sexual relations between men and women. Discussing female letter writers to periodicals, she states that,

the publication of women's letters...asserted the legitimacy of the translation of the private into the public, manifested as the transfer of women's experience into writing and the assumption of women's authority to tell their own stories. At the same time, however, the periodicals' gender-categorizing of experience and its representation of women's subjectivity within the context of judgment and social regulation...assumed authority over both the range of permissible expression in writing, and, by extension, behavior outside of writing.

In other words, women's access to the relatively new print culture served ultimately to contain them, not liberate them. Like the New Historians discussed above, she also concludes that the print culture created as well as was created by societal norms.

Shevelow correctly recognizes the constricting trend in popular periodical literature between the mid-1700s and the end of the Napoleonic Wars. Women's periodical literature transformed from a genre that dealt with politics and the same issues as men's periodicals to one primarily concerned with morals and manners. The social conflicts beginning in the seventeenth century and the fear they instilled in society successfully contributed to this transition. Many
women also adhered to these changes and openly promoted the new constructions of femininity.  

Ultimately, however, Shevelow relies far too much on textual politics than on "lived experience." Textual analysis enriches historical stories and helps the historian to understand perceptions of society. But textual analysis, "crafted from prescriptive rather than descriptive sources," "represents" perceptions of the past and is therefore only one component in the creation of a coherent historical narrative. Textual analysis is useful, but not monolithic.

Selective reading of these texts is another weakness in the work of Shevelow, Brophy and others. Shevelow seems to accept the idea that theory equals practice and that constructed notions of "proper" behavior were immediately enacted in everyday English life. Actually, the terms "prescriptive" and "didactic" suggested rather than enforced behavior; the ideas inherent in this didactic literature could be and often were rejected or hotly debated. Shevelow dismisses this reality. Although her analysis is eloquently argued and well-documented, Shevelow fails to adequately discuss readers and their persistent struggles to overcome those attempting to control their behavior for two reasons.

First, although she mentions mid- and late-eighteenth-century periodical literature when women more extensively participated as writers, she focusses primarily on the early eighteenth century wherein male writers and publishers dominated the printing of women's periodicals. She further
indicates that it was those early formulations that directly contributed to women's constrained social position, accepting male constructions of female behavior that Amanda Vickery decries as part of "male anxieties." Shevelow thereby ignores the fact that women continued to debate the prescriptive literature they read well into the eighteenth century. She prefers instead to regard such discussion as merely an "occasional voice" in the genre.

However, the "occasional voice" out of the mire of the domestic sphere ideology represented far more than a mere "anomaly." In reality such voices were common in women's literature and evinced debates about women's roles that are still prevalent in western society. Many ladies' periodicals were not wholly "prescriptive" because they involved numerous political, social and economic issues that did not suggest patterns for standardized behavior. Women wrote letters to these journals to issue critiques against what they perceived as their male-inflicted subordinate status. Like Priscilla Termagant, who crusaded against "Custom," women who wrote to the journals, as well as the journal editors themselves, disagreed with the very social constructions they were purported to have accepted.

Second, Shevelow relies solely on didactic periodical literature. By limiting herself only to prescriptive literature, she dismisses the ways women represented themselves in various other public media. Advertisements in provincial newspapers and letters to the "ladies"
periodicals in the middle of the eighteenth century display women who rejected their "prescribed," "private" roles. Vickery's statement that "recent research on real business women" undermines the current framework that the numbers of women engaged in business and work deteriorated extensively in the eighteenth century suggests a new pattern for eighteenth-century women's historians [Emphasis in original]. Assertions that by the mid-eighteenth century all the mechanisms for the acceptance of prescriptive literature and the subsequent retreat of women into the private realm were in place are contradicted by historical evidence.

This evidence is located in material other than prescriptive literature. For example, church, county and apprenticeship records, as well as court proceedings and wills, some of the traditional tools of social historians, are conveniently ignored by those concerned merely with representation. Another source for locating women's public lives is newspaper advertisements. Eighteenth-century provincial newspapers "provide a distinctive and unrivalled insight" into rural English life because they reflect the attitudes and values of English society during a period of political, military and imperial tension. If literature of all types is constructed by as well as constructs the dominant ideology of a culture, then provincial newspapers provide the important lens for understanding eighteenth-century English society.
Investigation of provincial newspapers' advertising sections shows women involved in various public business ventures and places women in a conspicuous position in the male-centered political arena. Women advertised their crafts and trades; but they also sought runaway apprentices, advertised needs for servants within their shops and were rentiers, just like men. In other words, women used the medium of print for their own purposes (social, political and economic) and were not hindered by the "prescriptive literature" they daily faced. Even as women's lives were considered more "private" because of the of new definitions of "family," "femininity" and "domestic," voices emerged through correspondence, advertisements and publishing itself that, by their very existence, denied those same constraints.

This thesis is a double-pronged critique of authors, like Shevelow, who rely solely on textual analysis. It examines critically the prescriptive literature women read and reveals dissenting voices acting against the rising ideology of the private sphere. But it moves beyond this "abstract" world of literature and also examines women's practical, quotidian and public experiences through their use of newspaper advertisements. It is consequently divided into two sections. The first section concludes with Chapter Two, an investigation of women in the public prints in all its aspects: printing, publishing and writing. After a brief discussion of the eighteenth-century novel and women in the business of printing, this chapter directly confronts
Shevelow's thesis by analyzing correspondence to the popular periodicals of the 1750s.

The second section begins with a brief introduction on the development of the provincial book trade and the significance of newspaper advertisements as an historical source for locating women in the public sphere. It then discusses the Suffolk newspaper, The Ipswich Journal, the primary source of my investigation of newspaper advertisements. Chapter Four analyzes all women's trade advertisements placed in The Ipswich Journal. Despite the discrepancies between male and female labor, women participated in the trades as business owners and publicized that fact in order to gain clientele. They did not hide behind male pseudonyms or serve only as "helpmeets" in their husband's business. Chapter Five investigates boarding school advertisements in the budding commercial area. Women who established boarding schools carefully constructed their self-representation in order to obtain business and "sell" their product. The number of advertisements placed by female teachers reflected the growing literacy rates in provincial English society. In addition, the chapter gives an account of the class-oriented nature of the advertisements as evinced by the published tuition costs and the range of classes taught. Chapter Six analyzes how women used their access to this medium to publicize their "misfortunes" and obtain community support; in this respect, provincial newspaper advertisements were a source of "local news" for people in
the hinterland, and women played a decidedly prominent role. Chapter Seven brings together each discussion and concludes that women were active participants in the public sphere in the mid-eighteenth century and did not necessarily contribute to or accept wholeheartedly the didactic and behavioral literature of the time.

Although, given the nature and limitation of the sources available, this work cannot be anything but an account of women's representations of themselves in the public, it nevertheless finds numerous discrepancies in the public/private dichotomy that adherents of the mid-eighteenth-century "domestic sphere" need to address. Women were not the passive recipients of cultural prescriptions, and the norms established by the domestic ideology did not operate in the simple hegemonic way that Shevelow insists. There was far more contestation in the construction of women's behavioral norms. Nor did women always digest the message of the literature they read each day. Despite these attempts at prescribing normative behavior, women were dynamic agents who constructed their world according to their own needs and used the print culture to assert their practical existence. Although many women did in fact accept notions of female privacy and prescriptions for proper behavior, they supported their views within the public prints. The very ideology they supported was undermined by their own actions. Thus, public debates concerning women's proper comportment flourished in the 1750s and societal prescriptions were often ignored by
women in their daily lives.
NOTES

1 The Spring Garden Journal, 1752, no. 17, 47.


5 For an idea of this, refer to the work Burke and Ruskin. Modern historians have turned away from the strict biological division between male / female to the more socially created divisions that emerge from mere biological difference. Early works positing such theses include Nancy Cott's The Bonds of Womanhood; Gerda Lerner's The Creation of Patriarchy (Oxford, 1986) also stresses the socially created gender dichotomy. For a good history that completely accepts the public / private dichotomy see Glenna Matthews, The Rise of the Public Woman: Woman's Power and Woman's Place in the United States, 1630-1970 (New York, 1992).

6 Roger S. Gottlieb's History and Subjectivity: The Transformation of Marxist Theory (Philadelphia, 1987), especially chapter 9, "Socialist-Feminism," provides a detailed outline of this cultural imposition. Refer also to the work of Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, who, in discussing the moral order of the capitalist system, insists that modern notions of public and private are capitalist creations of individualism and liberal theory; these are two concepts that most postmodernists conveniently ignore in their quest for representations. Fox-Genovese, "From Separate Spheres to


8 For two very useful discussions concerning these lexicographical problems, refer to Okin, especially pages 67-70, and Klein, "Publick" especially his concluding remarks. See also excerpts from Socialist feminist literature which declare public as paid and private as unpaid, or anything that deals with the household economy.

other, contradicting, definitions have emerged from the new cultural historians and post-modernists (fully footnoted elsewhere in this chapter) who deny the strict bipolar oppositions inherent in Engels' critique. It is the debate between these two modes of historical writing that is mentioned in the text.

Okin, 68.

Raymond Williams', Marxism and Literature (Oxford, 1977), and Sonya Rose's, Limited Livelihoods: Gender and Class in Nineteenth-Century England (Berkeley, 1991) stress the necessity for viewing past people as historical agents. Rose's concerns about the inadequacies of post-modernism are accentuated by her belief that, "people construed their experiences in particular ways and...these constructions fit uneasily with the multiple, diffuse, and varied influences on their lives, some of which affected them deeply." Rose, 9-10. For both Rose and Williams, culture affects the processes in which people work. See also Raymond Williams', Problems in Materialism and Culture, (London, 1980). Drawing on Antonio Gramsci's notions of hegemony to discuss the formation of "traditional" culture, Williams concludes that the "dominant" (or emergent) culture selects as its own certain elements from society, and is never all-encompassing. It is constantly in danger of subversion from another emergent culture. Likewise, Carolyn Steedman's reevaluation of English working-class formation, specifically women's experiences within that formation, analyzes texts in order to show "one man using political understanding to understand himself, and as made by the circumstances he was describing: as a historical agent, made by the multifarious histories that produced him, and that he could represent in his prose" [Emphasis in original]. Steedman, "The Price of Experience: Women and the Making of the English Working Class," Radical History Review, no. 59 (1994), 115.


See, for example, Poovey's, Uneven Developments; Rose's, Limited Livelihoods; and Herbst's, "Gender" for discussions of women's "opposition" to dominant culture. According to Poovey, even while the "domestic ideal" remained dominant, more feminist ideals and/or realities rose to subvert it. In this way, the middle-class ideology of the public and private
sphere "was both contested and always under construction."
Poovey, 3.


16Ibid., 386.


19Ibid., 9-10.


23Ibid., 224.

24Ibid., 14.

25Shevelow, Women and Print Culture, 197, 198.

26Ibid., "Introduction."

27Ibid., 90.

For an overview of this belief see Michael McKeon's _The Origins of the English Novel_ (Baltimore, 1987).


Steedman, 113.

Vickery, "Golden Age," 413-414.


_Eighteenth Century Provincial Newspapers_ (Sussex, 1985), "Introduction."
Chapter Two

"Spinsters," "Ladies" and "Gossips": Women and Eighteenth-Century Prescriptive Literature

Direct correspondence to both newspapers and "ladies'" periodicals is a revealing component of women's public writing in eighteenth-century England. Unlike novels, which did not necessarily reflect women's own views, and autobiographies, which are often studied in an historical vacuum, women's periodical correspondence and periodical editorials exemplified women's own views toward current events and "prescribed culture" in England. Notions that women accepted some type of social prescriptions that confined their behavior in the home are misleading. Women's public contributions to periodicals, their advertisements in newspapers, and their public work in the printing business itself all denied the existence of a "separate sphere" in the eighteenth century. Women used the print culture, as men did, for economic, social and in some cases political empowerment and visibility.¹ The importance of investigating periodical literature lies in its insight into the world of women's attitudes and occupations during the middle of the century. Women's lives resonated public at this time and were not subject to the constraints of the idling bourgeois
domestic wife found in studies of late eighteenth- or
nineteenth-century culture.

The role of female novelists and autobiographers in
creating a public persona for the eighteenth-century "middle-
class" woman has been frequently discussed in studies of
women involved in print. Early research, as well as those
work influenced by the New Historicism, suggests that women's
published printed matter prescribed accepted roles for women
built on the developing ideology of the "domestic sphere."
Some New Historicists, however, such as Felicity Nussbaum,
assert that an historical materialist approach creates a more
subtle and nuanced analysis of women's actual "lived
experience." Social position and gender cannot be separated
for these researchers, nor can differing views of what women
of particular classes construed as "proper behavior." 2 After
a brief discussion of the research concerning autobiographies
and novels, this chapter will turn to a more substantive
evaluation of women's periodical correspondence.

The autobiography and the novel are the two primary
vehicles most researchers look to for accounts of female
writing in the eighteenth century. The female autobiography
"purport[ed] to tell an individual's story" or a compelling
account of the woman's life. But according to Shari
Benstock, this common assumption in theories of
autobiographical writing often precluded the genre's most
important component: that women wrote from a social position
supposedly subordinate to men and that unsuccessfully
attempted to exclude their participation in other genres.\textsuperscript{3} In other words, women's use of the autobiography to enter the literary field undermined men's control over their work. The autobiography is the more significant of the two types because it implies a knowledge of the "self" and a subsequent representation of that consciousness. In the autobiography, women presented themselves as public and perceptive creatures of culture rather than mere objects of another's haphazard definitions.\textsuperscript{4} It also suggests modes of public discourse that either subverted or upheld the ideology of the private sphere.

Eliza Haywood, for \textit{The Female Spectator}, and Mary Wortley Montagu, for her poetry and letters, represent dynamic and critical voices in eighteenth-century autobiography. Haywood often engaged in disagreements with Alexander Pope, who detested her political beliefs as she became more closely aligned with Whig writers such as Richard Steele and Daniel Defoe.\textsuperscript{5} Although Montagu did "not seem to be pleased," with her published works since they placed her in the center of political debate, she nevertheless continued to engage in frequent political discussions in her letters and poems.\textsuperscript{6} One glaring example of her political discourse concerned her support for William Pitt over John Murray the Resident in a coalition government. In the ensuing controversy, Murray accused her of being "in the Interest of [the Papacy] and Slavery."\textsuperscript{7}
The importance of the autobiography, whether the "commonplace" mid-century diary characteristic of the bourgeoisie or the familiar letter more prominent among the aristocracy, rests precisely on the fact that it is a characterization of female emotions, attitudes and political motivations by women. Women also used the autobiography to release their private and domestic world to a public dialogue. This writing did not constrict women's movement in the public realm; rather, it accentuated the fact that women participated in the "public" in ways that serviced them and their lives.8

Unlike the autobiography, authorship of the novel was not gender-specific by definition since much of eighteenth-century popular literature aimed at a female audience was dominated by male authors. For example, Samuel Richardson wrote *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded*, one of the lasting books of eighteenth-century feminine virtues and behavior. Many historians look at women's eighteenth-century lives through the lens of these male writers simply because they dominated the field since these writers provided what they inaccurately perceived to be the only significant representations of women. The popular novels of Richardson, John Cleland and Henry Fielding were keen on social issues but their overriding themes concerned what they believed to be proper behavior for women. Margaret Doody, a commentator on Richardson, has declared *Pamela* a "revolutionary" book, that undermined both class differentiation and female
subordination. Doody has even contended that *Pamela* questioned the intense separation between the public and private. After Pamela's marriage to Mr. B., a private and secretive part of his life was forced to become part of his social self and, "what [was] private [had] to become public."  

In other words, the works of male authors were considered to be appropriate for investigations about women's lives.

Regardless of the sensitivity to the position and role of women these writers might have held, these works were not representations of women through women's views. They failed therefore to capture the female notion of society and their position in it and are thus inadequate for studying women. Instead, they were attempts to construct a notion of femininity, either proper or lewd, that emerged from a male-dominated world and a male perspective. These works did not subvert or contradict received ideas of femininity, since they created notions that attempted to reflect perceptions of what they expected femininity to be. Male authors prescribed the roles for women in an attempt to assert superiority over them in both the public (political) and the private (household) realm. Since men defined the parameters for gender relations, their works with female heroines were necessarily tinged with their own perceptions and representations of reality and tradition based on male definitions of norms and cultural morés.

Female novelists such as Charlotte Lennox, Sarah Fielding and Fanny Burney have also been investigated since
they yield an account of women's representations of themselves. By seeing women as central characters in both male and female novels as Elizabeth Brophy has argued, women readers became capable of perceiving themselves as central to their own lives and as active agents in their own destinies.

However, since these authors accepted their male counterparts' notions of feminine behavior, there was no attempt to transform society in any significant way. Women may have seen themselves as central characters, no longer playing the subordinate role, but the characters themselves conformed to societal mores about feminine behavior. For example, Sarah Fielding's characters relied on the support of men in order to obtain "happiness," and the ultimate fulfillment was a marriage that conformed to patriarchal norms. So, even when women wrote the novels, they often subscribed to male notions of their proper behavior.

Women's representations of themselves through the use of the autobiography and the novel were important components of women's break with domestic ideology, despite their roles. But women novelists and autobiographers were only two elements of a larger population of women involved with print in eighteenth-century England. Although providing important examples of women who participated in the public realm thereby hindering the development of supposed lines of gender division, the novel and the autobiography are not the only means of studying women. There were other significant contributions by women that undermine the notion that women
accepted their prescribed roles and were hidden from the public eye.

Into the late eighteenth century, women were active participants in the book trade as printers, sellers and publishers. Women often inherited their positions from their husbands. A good example was Mary Say, a very successful London artisan who published four journals and apprenticed five people in her thirty-year career. One of the many daily she printed was The Gazetteer, the "most famous" of the dailies in eighteenth-century England. In accordance with her husband’s will, she published The Gazetteer under her own name. Even when she married Edward Vint, she printed as "Mary Vint (late Say)." Although she gained control as printer of the paper from her husband in 1775 and became sole proprietor by the end of the century, she also published two other papers. The publication of The Craftsman, or Say’s Weekly, and The General Evening Post (tri-weekly) were recognized as her own papers in the proprietors' and printers' contracts drawn up after her husband’s death.

Mary Say was a fascinating figure in the public print culture in the eighteenth-century. Partly because her personal records have not survived, however, her contribution and her significance are often given scant treatment. Say was twice sued and once convicted for libel in conjunction with The Gazetteer. For the first offense, for which she accepted judgment without a fight, she was fined £50 for printing a satirical letter decrying The Glorious Revolution.
For the second offense she was only one of several master printers who were convicted for reprinting a London editorial that accused the Russian ambassador of being a spy. Say (because of her sex) was fined £50 and sentenced to jail for six months; men were fined £100 and sentenced to one-year terms. She and her second husband were also arrested for printing an advertisement for an illegal lottery office, although they charged their legal fees to The Gazetteer.¹⁸

Say also had a vitriolic disagreement with the journal's proprietors at the end of the century in which the proprietors attempted to remove her, but instead sold her the corporation. They received other offers from men who feared she would combine with her other papers and would force them out of business, but Say nevertheless gained control.¹⁹ Her involvement in these economic and political disputes refutes notions that women retreated from this type of social association as the eighteenth-century progressed.

In 1785 Say was one of the first London master printers to sign the Compositors' Scale, an agreement among London artisans to halt the influx of unqualified workers, which was ultimately "outlawed" by the Combination Act of 1799.²⁰ Say, like the men in her field, was concerned with the entrance of the unskilled into her trade and the consequent protection of the trade based on these concerns. She also suffered the consequences of her disagreement with the British government. In this instance, the maintenance of class distinctions was more important than gender distinctions.
Say was not the only woman in the printing trade. Nor was London the only city in which women successfully plied this trade. Many female publishers used the rising provincial newspaper to advertise their shops and their work. The Ipswich Journal, covering three counties, for example, contained several advertisements by women publishers and booksellers. These advertisements clearly showed women using their access to the printing field to publicize their business. For example, Jane Lee from Norfolk sold books, "in all Faculties" from history to navigation. She was also a stationer and catered to the diverse interests of the borough by selling "Musick-Books, copy and ivory-leaved Books, [and] Letter Files." She and her staff also bound books at her shop. Lee inherited the trade from her husband late in 1758 and her comfort and fluency in advertising suggests that she certainly knew the trade.21

Two other examples support the fact that women used print to publicize their working lives. Mary Steel sold books and stationery from her shop "At the Corner of the Traverse" and Elizabeth Rogers, from "Opposite the Cross" in Bury in Suffolk. Rogers quoted prices ("at the most reasonable Rates") of newly published works including ten volumes of Pope's works and "Heister's Observations in Surgery." She also sold newly published magazines such as Martin's New Magazine and bound books to customer specification.22 This range of titles shows expertise since she carried not only popular literature, but more specialized
works as well. Conducting a business relationship, she had to know how many copies to order for the area in which she worked, what specific titles to order and what the markup would be.

Rogers and Steel also worked together at one point selling tickets to the opening concert of music ("both sacred and prophane"[sic]) dedicating a new organ at St. James' Church in Bury. Tickets to the concert were sold at five shillings each, and they insisted that, "the Publick may be assured, for their more easy and agreeable Entertainment, that no more Tickets will be given out than either the Church or the Rooms will hold." The opening was further promoted by the importation of London's finest musicians. The week-long event included morning shows and evening shows-- the evening shows included a ball after the concert. Although their sales may have included women's journals, women publishers such as these were involved in the general proliferation of culture throughout the provinces and were not relegated exclusively to selling the growing numbers of books and periodicals aimed at women.

Women also directly contributed to the print culture as letter writers, poets and journal editors throughout the eighteenth century. Journals published by women in London in the middle of the eighteenth century emphasized the public role of women as both authors and readers. Often women entered the print trade as authors to supplement or even create their incomes. In order to protect their own economic
interests and maintain their positions in the social world of print, women often maximized their returns by procuring advances from their publishers.  

Periodical literature offered another arena for women to manifest their public interest and work. Women's periodicals shared a similar format throughout the 1750s. Many of these periodicals devoted space to stories and fables and to advice concerning education, politics and society. Readers' letters and editors' farcical accounts of the stereotypical attitudes concerning women both comprised lengthy sections. An element of caution must always be exercised when dealing with eighteenth-century periodicals, however. One cannot assume that letter writers or even the periodical editors were actually women. Since most writers never signed their name or used conspicuously fictitious pseudonyms, it was possible (although not probable) that men wrote many of the letters. Regardless of this uncertainty, the importance of these journals lies in the fact that they projected a feminine voice discussing current events and social issues. By their very nature, these publications violated the norm that women hid within the domestic sphere. Indeed, periodical literature for and by women provided a forum for open dissent with prescribed ideology.

The periodical literature contains many references to the importance of the public. The editors of these journals were quite sensitive to the fact that they wrote for a public audience and needed to cater to its tastes and desires.
According to "Roxana Termagant," the declared publisher of *The Drury Lane Journal*, editors were "always ready to catch every opportunity that offers to oblige the Public." "Mary Midnight," the editor of *The Midwife* agreed. The journal was published from 1751 to 1753 and consistently accepted and published readers' letters. In an open letter to one reader, Midnight claimed that, "ever since I commenced as Author, I have listened with due Difference [sic] to the Opinion of the Public."

In the 1750s, at least, women's periodicals were not limited to accounts of fashion and manners. In many cases, "there was little to differentiate it" from men's political journals of the time. Women's journals were just as concerned as male journals with European and English political developments. *The Midwife* frequently contained accounts of foreign and domestic news. It also included editorials of popular politics and religious affairs to supplement newspaper accounts.

Such accounts of social life also abound in *The Old Maid*, published in 1755 and 1756 by Frances Cooke under the pseudonym "Mary Singleton." The short-lived journal offered advice and instruction but also included a section for public commentary, either responding to her editorials or addressing various societal dictates. One letter-writer, calling herself "Thalestris," asserted that because of their increasingly feminine qualities men were no longer capable of adequately defending the nation. Therefore women ought to
"be formed into a body of troops" since they were braver and more concerned with defense than men. The roles of the sexes were reversed in this critique of the sexual division of labor, which argued that women, "disdaining the narrow circle of female occupations," could "do anything," since they "acquired the courage to defend" themselves. One of Thalestris' acquaintances had her laces washed only by her husband, "who has improved the science of clear-starching, to a surprizing degree of perfection." According to this humorous and satirical letter, the socially constructed roles of men and women were easily overturned. Whether that ambiguity was a good development or undermined more traditional and appropriate roles is left open-ended in this account.

When "Singleton" first began publication of The Old Maid, she stated in her opening editorial that "every body [sic] knows an English woman has a natural right to expose herself as much as she pleases." In other words, women in England were not hindered by societal prescriptions to avoid the public gaze, physically or mentally. She then discussed the marital misfortunes which befell her in her youth and led her to the inferior status of "spinster." She believed that her only vindication was the fact that she raised her niece Julia, whom she often discussed.

This negative attitude was not what her readers had hoped to hear, however. Several issues later, a reader calling herself "Marian Doubtful" chastised Singleton's
apologetic stance at being a spinster in her inaugural address. Claiming first that she was unable to determine what was "fit for the perusal of the publick," she lamented that, "I was sorry to see by your first paper so little encouragement given in it to your own sex to live single." According to "Doubtful," "Singleton" did not need to apologize for her marital status because single women were not at fault for their lack of husbands. Furthermore, marriages arranged in the name of class interests harmed women's positions. "Doubtful" expressed misgivings at such forced or arranged marriages so common in the eighteenth century. She stated, "I cannot but think a single life must be much less disagreeable, than for a state of perpetual union with one, who is perhaps so far from being the object of love and esteem, that he can excite no emotions but those of loathing and contempt." She could make this claim because, unlike married women, "spinsters" retained rights to their own property. Although often excluded from direct or full inheritance, they did retain full rights to any property they inherited or gained through adulthood. "Singleton" thus apologized to her reading public that did not agree with her guilt and shame about her spinsterhood.

Although "Singleton" married shortly after her entrance into periodical authorship, her literary work continued after she abandoned The Old Maid as she provided critiques of theatrical productions and societal norms. Alison Adburgham has suggested that because of Singleton's capitulation to
married life after numerous vitriolic critiques of the system, "it is no wonder that the cause of women's emancipation took so long to get off the ground." However, Singleton's early work represented the more independent and public views women held and retained despite societal restrictions.32

Other periodicals included farcical elements from their contributors. Have At You All, or The Drury Lane Journal, briefly published under the penname Roxana Termagant in the early months of 1752 included both foreign and domestic news, letters and advertisements. One letter, clearly a satire submitted by "Elizabeth Phyzzpatch," was a recipe for female beauty, designed to help women "who are in a hurry for husbands." She further declared that she was capable of "accommodating every widower or batchelor to his satisfaction." This woman alleged to provide all the newest inventions for removing anything unwanted and creating anything desired. Concerning facial imperfections, she stated that, "I cut dimples into the grain, which never wear out: I slit the lips open on each side, if too narrow, and sow them up, when they are too wide, with such nicety, that the seams are imperceptible."33 The "advertisement" was billed as a response to a recent popular, yet anonymous, aristocratic wedding. Using this wedding as a reference point, the author criticized popular conceptions of "beauty" and its societal ramifications. Only by distorting the natural, she seemed to be saying, could "true" beauty be
attained. Although some women subjected themselves to cosmetic surgery in order to improve their looks, the author of this piece condemned society for perpetuating the desire itself. By doing this, the author brought to public display and for public condemnation the aesthetic prescription to which women were subject.

The Female Disputant Society was a fictitious organization which published its "proceedings" in each week's issue of The Drury Lane Journal. It criticized popular assumptions concerning female behavior and attitudes. Mrs. Termagant ostensibly served as the chair of this society when it published its "constitution." Again, the articles outlined by this society satirize stereotypes of women as illogical and temperamental gossips. The constitution included articles providing, "that all Women whatsoever have free admittance, paying only Fourpence at the Door;" that, "each Member...be allow'd to speak only five minutes on each question: but be at full liberty to talk away as fast as she can, and as little to the purpose as she pleases;" and that, "whoever spits in another woman's face...or uses any manual violence whatever be immediately expell'd from this society, and her name, if known, printed at length in the DRURY-LANE JOURNAL." 34 In the guise of outlining policies of the society, the articles instead ridiculed prejudices about women and their behavior. Much of the issues in these women's journals never really concerned "proper" female behavior. Instead, they relentlessly attacked stereotypes
throughout the pages of each issue, and they rejected the societal forces that attempted to curtail their public advancement.\textsuperscript{35}

This scepticism about societal "prescriptions" continued throughout the women's periodicals of the 1750s. Just as "Marian Doubtful" criticized Singleton for her views on spinsterhood, so other women used their access to periodicals designed for them to lament their subordination or to examine their society critically. In 1751, Sarah Maria Smith wrote a political tract to \textit{The Midwife} attempting to release her sex from the chains of male domination. She pointed out first that it was "not the Sex, but the Species" that determined inferiority and women had been unduly denied access to institutions such as education under false assumptions.\textsuperscript{36} Smith then outlined the policy decisions, such as the effectual elimination of women from official politics, that created her perception of the subjection of women throughout history. She believed that women were endowed with the same mental capacities as men and its "implantation" into women's "souls" did not exist so as "to place [them] in a State of Subjection." Women should be provided with the same liberal education as men, and if allowed this education, they would "soon convince Men of [their] Equality."\textsuperscript{37} Smith's critique of the unfair subordination of her sex was read by all (male and female) subscribers and readers of \textit{The Midwife} and therefore held political power as an editorial piece.
This diatribe against male dominance over women was not an anomalous account in The Midwife's pages. For example, the editor of the journal, Mary Midnight, once wrote a tale concerning corrupt legal officials and their manipulation of women's lives. Her poem recounted the story of a judge who forced a woman to relate how she was caught "in the Fact" as he drank ale and became sexually aroused. When the young woman finished her tale, he said that far worse would happen to her: "That Bridewell instant is her Lot, / Unless she'll let him--you know what." Disgusted, Midnight inserted her editorial comments following her poem. "A fine Fellow this to preserve Peace, and protect Virtue and Modesty; I have a great Mind to put the Rogue's name at full length." Midnight was appalled by such unprofessional behavior by someone sworn to protect the interests of all of his constituents. Rather than facilitating justice, he used his position of power, both as a man and as a government official, to sexually exploit women. Midnight used her access to the most important information medium, the public prints, to expose the judge (although he remained nameless) and inform her readers of the maltreatment of English women. In effect, her readers were her constituents since she required their "vote of confidence" to continue her weekly. She thus exercised a form of power through her journal behind whose pages she could criticize her society with relative safety.
Other women wrote to The Midwife in order to deliver what they perceived to be equally important criticisms of their society. The first issue commenced with an emotional critique of debtors' prison by a woman named Martha Johnson. Although she was "but a Farmer's wife," she stated her case against the prisons with eloquence. "'Tis a hard Thing, Mrs. Midnight, for a man to be starving in a jail, while his wife and Family are perishing at Home, only because he has not wherewith to satisfy his angry creditors."[Italics in original] She wrote in behalf of John Williams who "kept the shop upon our Green." Unable to pay his debts, he probably lost his shop and went to jail because the sale of his stock did not equal his payments. Johnson and her husband helped by feeding the children and providing them with appropriate foster care after their mother died. She concluded that no good was accomplished by maintaining the institution. She abhorred the conspicuous consumption of the wealthy and their feigned ignorance of the plight of the poor. She stated that "there was money enough spent at your last [Masquerade], to discharge the Prisoner's [sic] out of half the jails in the kingdom." Her story exemplified the heightened consciousness of the English and their attempt, through accepted means of discourse, to effect some change in society.

Johnson's letter involved two primary issues. The first was quite simply, that Johnson, whether consciously or not, articulated a "class" distinction between the "haves" and the
"have-nots." The answer to Williams' plight was quite plain to her. If the rich gave up their pretentious games, the poor could more easily survive. However, her attitude did not correspond with the prevailing attitudes of those that controlled the government, the society and the prisons.\textsuperscript{40} She did not understand how society could allow a man's family to "starve" merely because he could not pay his creditors.

The second issue was, more significantly, the fact that this very severe and sensitive critique against an established institution of the English state came from the pen of a woman. In the world of the "public sphere" of politics and economics, women traditionally were supposed to play no role; but this common woman very publicly condemned those same institutions. Even though women were officially excluded from the political realm, they could nevertheless effect change, or perceived that they could, by articulating their concerns in whatever matter in which they found possible.\textsuperscript{41}

Other letters convey a similar attitude toward class, yet were written from a far different perspective. "Melissa" wrote an open letter in which she derided wealth and its inability to instill an understanding of society. She wrote that the wealthy, "live in a perpetual Masquerade, in which all about them wear borrowed Characters." Melissa believed that her censure of the upper classes was vindicated since she was a woman of affluence who had to surrender her money in an unfortunate circumstance. An insider writing from the
outside, Melissa concluded that people were treated differently according to their wealth or their lack of it. This treatment was unfair and was built on superficial assumptions of "virtuous" behavior, but it took her fall from wealth to force this realization, since "we only discover in what estimation we are held when we can no longer give Hopes or Fears."[^42]

In *The Old Maid*, Singleton devoted an entire issue to a critique of the lack of what she called the "polite art" of poetry in eighteenth-century England. In this editorial she questioned the "received opinion" that poets had to be destitute. After declaring that the wealthy could more easily concentrate on the art, she qualified her thoughts by accepting that there might exist one reason that poets were so often poor. She believed that the poetic muses demanded solitude for better concentration, and, since "being poor is the most infallible means of being left alone," modern poets fit the prerequisites.[^43] Her statement was expressly concerned with reinstating poetry as a modern art, but her comment concerning poverty can not be overlooked. She told her audience what everyone already assumed-- no one wanted to recognize the poor or associate with them. They were detached from the rest of society merely because of their economic situation.

Socially, women asserted their right to remain unmarried attempting to dispel the stigma attached to "spinsterhood." Most women who did not marry and who wrote to the periodicals

[^42]: 42
[^43]: 43
affirmed their independence, and placed the burden of proof concerning their supposed lonely lives on precisely those people who perpetuated the story. In The Lady's Curiosity, a "Complaint of an Old Maid" tried to address the issue of why young men ridiculed unmarried women. This "old maid" did not take the view that women were spinsters by misfortune--that no man wanted them. But she built her argument on precisely that premise. She stated, "I will suppose, for arguments' sake, that the reason why most of us were never married was, what your sex generally imagine, that we could not get husbands." [Emphasis mine]44 By phrasing her argument in this manner, she placed a charge on the editor to "correct such prejudices as these." If men were to blame for women's hapless state, and if the male formula was used, then men should by no means make comments. According to her, women's "unfortunate" position was men's fault. Her underlying point was that men do not unquestionably understand the reasons or reasonings behind women's single station, since they could never penetrate the minds of women. These men should therefore keep their opinions to themselves and stop fostering misconceived stereotypes.

This is not to say that all readers who contributed to the correspondence pages of these journals were confirmed enemies of the domestic sphere or of women's "special place" in society. Many women wrote concerning marital problems and their inability to correct them. The Ladies' Curiosity, or Weekly Apollo, published ostensibly by "Nestor Druid,"
received a letter by "Penelope Heartfree" who could not sleep with her husband because he insisted on smoking, and the stench made her ill. Druid replied that the husband ought to oblige her request since if he refrained, "he will I believe be more considerate [sic] than obstinately contribute to the Uneasiness of her, whose whole study is to give him pleasure." Druid's advice supported the moral position women held in marriage according to "domestic" norms, and he clearly catered to readers who accepted such views. This ideological stance reflected that of the moral reformers from Richard Steele's time in the early eighteenth century. The writers from this era placed women on a pedestal, in an albeit subordinate position, because of their reproductive role. However, Druid also believed that marriage was a mutual endeavor and that only cooperation from both sides created an amicable atmosphere.

This idea of the mutuality of marriage contracts also occurred in The Old Maid. "M.C." wrote to Singleton describing the miserable state of her marriage to "one of the honestest fellows in the world." She was married to a drunk who avoided the house from noon until after midnight, and then, when no longer able to remain at the club room, subjected her to loud bantering until "he very quietly resign[ed] himself to the sweets of that repose, which he has so effectually banished from his wife." As a woman of a "sociable conversable humor" who "married for a companion," M.C. possessed only a maiden aunt-in-law for companionship.
If England were as liberal a state as ancient Rome, she asserted, she could sue for a divorce, since she "consider[ed herself]... unmarried in conscience." Her final query to Singleton was whether she should begin an affair with a man down the street. Singleton's response to this woman was that the husband deserved whatever treatment he received, but "she will certainly find the remedy she proposes, much worse than the disease." 47

This type of public discourse about "private" and "personal" affairs was the aspect of women's increased access to the print culture that disturbed Kathryn Shevelow in her account of prescriptive literature. For her, although what was private had turned public, it served merely to strengthen men's social stranglehold on women rather than to liberate them. Women's active participation in the public prints by the end of the eighteenth century was undermined by the types of literature and writing in which they participated. 48 These women who wrote to the ladies' journals did not use their access to the print culture to refute their historically subscribed inferior positions. Rather, Shevelow argued, their writing displayed a curiously more constricting view of women's roles and their proper behavior. Their work consisted of what modern readers perceive as the very private details of home life (what would today be found in advice columns).

The crucial point, however, was that they did display their private business and did cross the supposed boundaries
of the domestic sphere by involving the public (and perfect strangers at that) in their affairs. Whether subverting or upholding the "feminine ideal" these women undercut the notion that they existed in silence and failed to adequately address properly "feminist" issues. In fact, women often used this genre to criticize the social structure of eighteenth-century England-- its class stratification, gender subordination, and their own personal place in it.

Women were dynamic and active participants in the budding eighteenth-century English print culture and their work set important precedents for women's persistent struggle to remain in the public sphere after the Victorian consensus of female privacy. Women continued to write and critique society, although they often wrote, like the Brontë sisters or George Eliot in the nineteenth century, through male conduits or with male pseudonyms. Although women most assuredly did not face a steady "progression" in the eighteenth century, they were not confined, by the middle of the century, to uncompromising constraints of prescriptive and didactic literature as Shevelow and other women's historians have argued. Most mid-century periodicals were the tools of women that enabled them both to criticize and enlighten their society on the intellectual and creative strength of the female sex. Even when women invoked the domestic sphere in letters or editorials, they did so in a manner that worked within the public world and was answerable
to that public. Women's writings therefore served a form of empowerment.51

The existence of female publishers also refutes the notion that women who engaged in the print culture in the eighteenth century served to undermine any sense of independence. Female publishers encouraged education and literacy as well as public cultural activities. These booksellers also faithfully served both their female and male patrons. Other women printers, such as Mary Say from London during the 1770s, actively participated in English politics without remorse. In all respects, women catered to their own needs and desires in their writings and publications.
The investigation of women's voices in periodicals uses the method of scanning eleven years worth of issues, 1750-1760, of various periodicals found in the Women Advising Women series, edited by Amanda Vickery. This series is a collection of eighteenth-century women's periodicals published in London. Most of these periodicals had extremely brief runs, and in order to provide an adequate sampling of women's attitudes toward public life in the mid-century, a large number of journals needed to be searched.


Nussbaum, "Commonplaces" and Subject. See also Cynthia Lowenthal's Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and the Eighteenth-Century Familiar Letter, (Athens (GA), 1994), "Introduction."


7 Ibid., 24.

8 Lowenthal, 4.

9 Margaret A. Doody, "Introduction" in Samuel Richardson *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded*, 20.

10 Henry James was aware of this fact when he wrote *Daisy Miller*. Daisy is never seen through the eyes of a woman or from her own perspective. Instead, the reader is subject to a man's idea (James') of another man's perception (Winterwood's) of Daisy. His point, like the point of this section, is that the reader never receives an accurate gendered representation of the heroine of the book since she is not allowed to represent herself on her own terms.


13 Brophy, *Women's Lives*, 39-40; 235-238. Brophy, like Moody, asserts that *Pamela* was a revolutionary novel that surpassed even many women's attempts to vindicate women and release them from a perceived position of inferiority. This view is also held by some multicultural writers and historians who believe that although a person may not share the same "lived" experience of a particular group of people, they may be perfectly capable of expressing their own representation of that group, regardless of the "accuracy" or level of understanding.

14 Brophy, 245, 246.


It is interesting to note that he gave Mary one-eighth of the profits and divided the rest among his daughters. Although their son was supposed to assume printing the journal after his twenty-fourth birthday, Say retained control until 1797.


Ibid., 259.


The Ipswich Journal (hereafter, TIJ), April 7, 1759; September 9, 1758.

TIJ, September 25, 1756; March 29, 1755.

TIJ, August 2, 1760; March 8, 1755. Mary Masters' volume of poetry was sold by subscription by the booksellers in Ipswich, Norwich and Lynn. Although no women were included among the publishers of her work, there are some examples in the Bath newspapers, since the city was more of a haven for cultural developments. Another, equally economic reason was simply to preserve the continuity of a business and reduce unnecessary confusion. The initial London Compositors' list registered women who maintained their husband's name for a period after his death. There were thus many more numbers of women involved in the business of print than may at first be quantified since they may not have used their own name, for whatever reason. The success of women such as Say, Steel and Rogers reveal that many women used their own names and did not suffer an economic setback. Most women directly involved in the print culture did not rely on pseudonyms for their economic stability.


The Drury Lane Journal; *The Midwife*, vol. 1 no. 3, 122.


Regular columns in *The Midwife* included "The Midwife's Politicks: Or Gossip's Chronicle of the Affairs of Europe,"
"Foreign" and "Domestic" News. See also "Of Politics and Parties," "Of the People, as a Body" and "of Religion and the Clergy" vol 3? no. 1, 7-11.

28 Thalestris, in *The Old Maid*, no. 15, 1756, 87-88

29 *The Old Maid*, no. 1, 1755.

30 *The Old Maid*, no. 9, 1756, 52.


33 *Drury Lane Journal*, 130-133.

34 *Drury-Lane Journal*, no. 5, 149-150.

35 Kristina Straub, *Sexual Suspects: Eighteenth-Century Players and Sexual Ideology* (Princeton, 1992). Her work concerning the "spectacle" can be used here to detail a sort of Foucauldian empowerment. Because women had a knowledge of these stereotypes and understood them as such, they could play on them to their own advantage.


37 Sarah Maria Smith in *The Midwife*, 2 no. 5 1751?, 223-228.


40 In *The Ipswich Journal* there were occasional advertisements to return "criminals" to the Bury Jail. The interesting point to note is that the "reward" was more for a debtor than for a thief or a murderer. I can not answer the question with any degree of accuracy. I am sure that studies exist concerning this. My impression is that those to whom the debtor owed
money paid for his (or her) reward. Since they also worked to release themselves, they were more economically viable.

41 One is reminded of women protesting Parliament during the English Civil War, and women engaging in bread strikes during depressed times. Although excluded from Parliamentary affairs, women nevertheless participated in popular politics and were taken seriously. Refer to Cynthia Lowenthal's biography of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's dilemmas.


43 The Old Maid, no. 3.

44 The Editor of The Lady's Curiosity was Nestor Druid. "Complaint of an Old Maid," 268-269.

45 The Lady's Curiosity, 229-30.


47 The Old Maid, no. 15, 1752, 86-87. Singleton's first response to the husband's behavior was, "if a centinel will leave his post, he cannot wonder at finding it occupied by another."

48 Shevelow, 90. Also briefly argued in Jane Marcus, "Invincible Mediocrity: The Private Selves of Public Women," in The Private Self: Theory and Practice of Women's Autobiographical Writings, Shari Benstock, ed., (Chapel Hill, 1988). Women purposely focused on the "mediocrity" of domestic literature in order to place themselves in a "separate but equal" position with male literary workers. They could not compete with men in already created fields, so they created their own fields. This is a double-edged argument. Women were empowered by this move, but they could also be, as Shevelow insists, subject to the walls which such literature builds against the public world.

49 Fergus and Thaddeus, 201.

50 Shevelow, Women and Print Culture. Shevelow, as argued in the introduction, asserts that although they increasingly participated in the print culture, women were subject to and followed the didactic constraints of popular literature. See also Jane Marcus, "Invincible Mediocrity."

51 Marcus, 141; Adburgham, 9-10.
Part II
Chapter Three

Ipswich and the Provincial Book Trade

As chapter two showed in its investigation of women's correspondence to "ladies" periodicals, women existed in and publicized themselves in the public sphere in the 1750s and often reproached domestic "norms" and their consequences for female behavior. However, periodical literature was by no means the only area in which women successfully crossed the barriers of the domestic sphere. Indeed, women were vital and prominent parts of the urban economy in the trade town of Ipswich, Suffolk in the 1750s and were not confined to the "domestic sphere" that the ideology attempted to perpetuate. Their use of printed advertisements that heightened their visibility further suggests that they molded the print culture for their own purposes, and often for their own survival.

As briefly discussed in the section concerning women publishers, women used advertisements in local newspapers such as The Ipswich Journal to present themselves to the English citizenry. This presentation had several dimensions. Women advertised their trades and crafts to potential
consumers (female and male). They advertised their teaching qualifications to a growing population of literate people wanting education for their children. Finally, they posted public notices within the advertisement sections about their personal lives and their legal affairs. The history of the print culture, therefore, contains a history of women's very public lives in the eighteenth century.

Ipswich is the county borough of East Suffolk, sixty-five miles north-east of London. In the eighteenth century, Ipswich was a thriving port town that would become the administrative and market center for Suffolk and Norfolk. Before industrialization, Ipswich was a major cloth center, but by the eighteenth century, the clothing trade was undercut by the rise of manufacturing to the north. Ipswich itself possessed "no settled manufacture" and many of the local poor worked at piecework in the woolen industry. Other clothing trades and forms of piecework continued to be practiced throughout the eighteenth century.

As a port town and a center for business and trade, Ipswich also gained a position as a major communications center. It possessed a large shipping industry that was only somewhat stifled by migratory labor to London. In his tour of England in the 1720s, Daniel Defoe declared that Ipswich suffered a "decay of business" because London "suck[ed] the Vitals of Trade in the Island to itself." Regardless of this "depressed" condition, according to Defoe, Ipswich suffered far less than other port towns farther north from the capital
that were better situated geographically for economic shipping prosperity.³

Eighteenth-century Ipswich was also an affordable town that attracted a large influx of people (migrants and immigrants alike) from both modest and aristocratic society.⁴

This influx was partly because Ipswich had "Good Houses, at very easie Rents," was clean and "well govern'd," and had "Provisions very Cheap." Hence, Defoe concluded that "a Family may live cheaper here, than any Town in England of its bigness."⁵ [Emphasis in original]. The area also had a population more educated and knowledgeable of affairs outside of Britain because of its locale as a port town. Eighteenth-century Ipswich therefore possessed favorable economic, demographic and geographic circumstances to witness the arrival of a weekly newspaper and advertiser.⁶

John Bagnell, a London-trained printer, began publication of The Ipswich Journal in 1720 after his London apprenticeship. The journal's introduction marked the first time in two centuries that the town had had a printer.⁷ By the 1740s, William Creighton was publishing the journal, which remained in continuous publication until 1902.⁸ The contents of the journal were characteristic of most provincial newspapers. Because of this similarity to other provincial papers, therefore, The Ipswich Journal was shipped to and read in other counties such as Norfolk and Essex and in the colonies.⁹
Despite Ipswich's importance as a center for the proliferation of news, it has often been warranted secondary treatment in journalism histories. Most of these histories are actually general surveys of the book trade rather than tightly focussed works of a specific paper or area. G. A. Cranfield's *The Provincial Newspaper, 1700-1760*, published in 1962, was one the first of these surveys of the development of the newspapers in English provincial life and their importance to English political development. However, much work remains to update his research as provincial newspapers remain a rich and relatively unexamined source. Part of this problem might be that until recently, newspapers were not put into full collections nor were they available on microfilm. Therefore, because the work tended to be tedious and often lacked completeness, research was avoided in lieu of sources more readily available. Michael Harris and Jeremy Black's work on the provincial book trade has increased the research done in this field as has the most recent concise history, John Feather's *The Provincial Book Trade in Eighteenth-Century England*. In a similar vein, Charles Clark's work on the history of the Anglo-American newspaper draws on the important groundwork accomplished by these journalism historians.\(^1\)

The English provincial newspaper emerged in Britain around 1700 and proliferated until reaching maturity around 1760.\(^2\) Only then did it become a major component of social and intellectual life. By that time over one hundred and
thirty papers had begun publication. Despite the economic pressures on the provincial publisher, the number of successful papers never fell below thirty after 1737. The circulation of the major provincial newspapers could reach approximately 2000, but, given the oral culture in which the English still lived at the time and the importance of the coffee-house and the tavern for conveying important news, the papers could be read and heard by far more people (perhaps twenty per paper). Furthermore, the information contained in each could extend well beyond the city. The provincial paper was often the only reading material available to the increasingly literate people in the hinterland. Because of the development of these weeklies, the communication of national and foreign affairs extended beyond London.

News from London and the colonies and social information on topics such as etiquette and manners comprised the primary material of the early provincial newspapers. Guidelines for social behavior ultimately transferred to periodicals more focussed on social roles. According to Cranfield, the provincial newspapers "were mere parasites on the London Press" and printed no important local (county or town) news within their pages. But according to John Feather, this "uniformity" of papers throughout the provinces suggests, more than anything else, the growing demand for newspapers during a period when London could not feasibly distribute to all counties. The provincial book trade served to supplement London's news efforts as well as displace much of the London
printers' distress at being unable to cater to the entire United Kingdom.

Even more important however, was the demand for local advertisements that London could never incorporate successfully. This demand proved the primary source of profit for provincial booksellers. The success of the provincial newspapers at first depended heavily on agents from other towns, and especially London, to supply them with advertisements, and their readers with a range of options beyond their local community. The bulk of the proprietors for provincial newspapers lived in London as well; so there was always a network maintained with the City. This reliance on London agents, booksellers and proprietors, however, depended significantly on the locale of the newspaper and its own distinctive culture. If a province was well developed enough, than it relied less on London and more on its own agents for obtaining subscriptions and advertisements.

Regardless of London's economic role, the provincial publisher ultimately made her (or his) own choices concerning the insertion of important and relevant material, and all but the most important national news varied from town to town. Cranfield considers this development to be the strong point of the papers by mid-century, enabling them to adopt Radicalist perspectives before the advent of the French Revolution. This is an important development considering the fact that for many people in provincial England, the provincial paper was the only source of news available to
them. Since the provincial publisher chose the material for publication, the consciousness of the surrounding population would be affected by the paper's contents. The provincial publisher was both free from London's political stranglehold and free to develop his own political perspectives.\textsuperscript{18}

The most visible manner of attracting an audience or a specific consumer group was through the use of advertising. In the twentieth-century, advertisements bombard the potential consumer through the technology of mass media: billboards, playbills, flyers, television, radio and telephone. The older preserves of commercial dissemination, newspapers and periodicals, have also remained a successful venue for advertisers. In the increasingly commercial milieu of early modern England, the "advertisement" took four primary forms. There were town criers, shop signs, word of mouth and handbills.\textsuperscript{19} By the early eighteenth century, the proliferating provincial newspaper trade by London booksellers accelerated the use of advertisements in the print media. Advertisements not only paid many of the printing expenses resulting from the Stamp Acts in the early part of the century, but they also served a distinctly cultural function as well.\textsuperscript{20}

The development and rapid spread of provincial newspapers such as \textit{The Ipswich Journal} is a major component of the eighteenth-century "urban renaissance" that occurred throughout the provinces.\textsuperscript{21} But the provincial paper also preserved old traditions in new form. There were equally
developed commentaries discussing social norms and economic growth in the provincial newspaper, and in many respects it served as an important transition from early modern to modern informational practices.

Given the growth of provincial England since the seventeenth century, advertisements are an important field for historical analysis. By 1801, Ipswich had roughly 11,000 inhabitants, excluding migratory workers who occasioned the town due to shipping. The Ipswich Journal extended to neighboring counties and so covered a larger geographic area than the town itself. Given this geographic range, people who chose to advertise could expect a fairly wide audience of potential customers. Since the advertisements reflect such demographic characteristics, they are therefore a valuable source that has not been fully exploited by historians.

Recent studies of early modern English advertisements give women only peripheral treatment though they were participants in this aspect of newspaper publishing. J. Jefferson Looney investigates provincial newspaper advertisements in both Leeds and York and subsequent developments in the urban culture of these towns. As he readily admits, studies that rely wholly on a particular source without other quantitative data are, by nature, sketchy, yet they remain, he notes, "obvious starting points." He refutes other historians' claims that the historical study of advertisements is flawed as a guide to cultural attitudes because trends in culture may have been
the creation of the publisher. Despite these problems, he insists, advertisements from the eighteenth-century English provinces are a rich historical source that have yet to be exhausted, especially for the often neglected eighteenth century. The availability and cohesiveness of this source, both over time and geographic area, is conducive to the historical examination of entertainment, economics, work and social structure. Publishers knew what entertainment appealed to a given population and catered to their needs. A sound local historical study can be developed by looking at how publishers furnished those needs of a given population through their knowledge of what forms of entertainment appealed to them. Another study is the use of advertisements by women. Women's trade or business activities evinced in the advertisements display trends in occupational structure and the material needs of a community.

American historians have successfully exploited colonial and early Republic advertisements to trace and ultimately quantify numbers of merchants, shipping records and runaway slaves in a given community in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. But eighteenth-century English provincial newspapers remain unexplored in terms of the use of advertisements and their significance in the social history of the area. Although Cranfield's survey includes a study of the social component of the advertisement section of provincial newspapers, it does not investigate women or explain women's issues in significant detail.
Furthermore, his equally significant claim that the provincial papers never printed any local news is not accurate. The Ipswich Journal published what modern readers consider to be "local news" within the advertising section itself, which he readily admits. For example, Bury jail-keeper Elizabeth Sumpter advertised in 1753 that the felon John Chandler broke from the Bury jail and placed a reward for his return.26 There were also numerous accounts of domestic disputes, property violations or other problems. There were mutual indictments about the state of marital relationships when a man advertised to creditors not to accept his wife's purchases as "she ha[d] made elopement" from him; the wife often advertised in return that she left because of "his harsh and cruel treatment." There were still others in which parish officers described the physical and mental characteristics of fugitive husbands in order to force them to return and provide for their families.27

There were "advertisements" that recited Acts of Parliament, from concerned citizens about the misuse of public land, by tradesmen advertising runaway apprentices and for "Benefit Balls" for people in particular trades who fell on "hard times."28 In all these instances, the provincial newspaper, and The Ipswich Journal in particular, showed itself to be more than a "mere parasite" on London newspapers, as Cranfield concluded. Rather, provincial newspapers are a prime source for finding publication of local events and their subsequent importance in the town.
The contents of The Ipswich Journal included general items found in all provincial newspapers— that is, London news, foreign and domestic affairs and sections on marriages, births and deaths— and it also contained within each weekly edition at least two pages of advertisements. These advertisements were just as diverse and informational as the "official" news for there were descriptions of runaway apprentices, advertisements detailing which shops were infected with the smallpox epidemic and advertisements on the provincial horse races. There were also advertisements for lost or wanted goods and advertisements for services.

England did not conduct an occupational census until the mid-nineteenth century, and quantitative studies of work in general, let alone laboring women, are thereby few and speculative. However, quantification of women's trade advertisements provides historians with a relatively accurate portrayal of the most frequent trade entered by women as well as their brief entrance into occupations other than those obviously considered women's work. Newspaper advertisements, like "autobiographies" and "ladies'" periodicals, provide information concerning women's occupational and social status in the eighteenth century. Women who advertised in The Ipswich Journal clearly perceived themselves as business people and trades people equal to the males who advertised their trades and occupations. In other words, they believed themselves just as entitled to participate in this new area of print as men. The existence of their records proves this
belief was widespread. Furthermore, each advertisement tells a story and shows how women used and perceived the developing print culture to their own advantage. The advertisements found in *The Ipswich Journal* are therefore sound historical artifacts of women's public nature in eighteenth-century England.

Such remnants from the past show women leaving apprenticeships and creating shops of their own. It is reasonable to use the language of the advertisements to speculate where women's shops were situated in relation to men's. Many women's shops were located either next door or downstairs from men's shops—often their husband's. Advertisements placed by men who purchased shops from the estates of deceased women or who inherited shops from female relatives also suggest that women's shops were centrally located within the business district of each of the towns.

In 520 issues of *The Ipswich Journal* between 1750 and 1760, there are over 300 discrete advertisements involving women. This number of course does not include "runs," or repeat ads that jumped months. By far, the most prominent advertisement came from women engaged in the millinery trade. Other occupations that occurred regularly include those from inn and tavern keepers, widows who maintained their husband's business, renters and various other advertisements that range from Elizabeth Sumpter the jail-keeper to Ann Brome who opened the Bowling Green each spring. Advertisements
concerning education and women's legal issues comprise the other points of study.

The number of first-time advertisements remained relatively constant throughout the period. There was a relatively large jump in 1756 with thirty-five advertisements and a considerable drop the next year with only nineteen. Part of the reason for the disparity in numbers after 1755 was due to the fact that the publisher William Creighton devoted more space to foreign affairs because of the Seven Years' War. In a letter to his readers on August 7, 1756, he stated,

Of late, the Advertisements that I have Receiv'd have been more than usual; and at the same Time (by Reason of the War) I have had less Room to Spare for them; so that of course, I have been Under a Necessity of leaving out a still greater Number...

Another reason Creighton reduced the numbers of advertisements he published was the inability of his clients to pay their bills. Publishers often did not clearly articulate the parameters or terms of their contract with advertisers. Advertisers also did not always live near the publishing headquarters, and thus communication between client and patron was a definite problem. For example, The Derby Mercury clearly outlined the terms of advertising on the bottom of the front page of each issue as did the St. James Evening Gazette. The Ipswich Journal, however, did not. In a similar predicament as Ipswich, The Newcastle Journal announced that,
Whereas great Losses and Inconveniences have been experienced and many losses sustain'd, by allowing Credit to Persons for Advertisements...for the Future no Advertisement will be inserted in this Journal but what is paid for upon its being deliver'd into the Printing Office.\textsuperscript{32}

Despite this warning, women and men continued to place advertisements and Creighton continued to accept them for publication. It is therefore within the framework of the retention and consistency of these advertisements that the discussion of women in them begins.
NOTES


3 Ibid., 46.


5 Defoe, 46.


9 An advertisement that attests to the geographic expanse of The Ipswich Journal was placed by Joshua Steel advertising for Mrs. Sarah Steel from, "the Island of Barbadoes," and offered a reward for the return of her runaway slave. The Ipswich Journal (hereafter, TIJ), February 8, 1752.

Press in English Society from the Seventeenth to Nineteenth Centuries (Madison, 1986); Charles E. Clark, The Public Prints.


12Ibid., 21, 170-1; Feather, 16-17.

13Ibid., 22, 177; 190-206.


15Cranfield, 28-9.

16John Feather, Provincial Book Trade, 16-17. Robert L. Haig, The Gazetteer, 1735-1797: A Study in the Eighteenth-Century English Newspaper (Carbondale, 1960), 59. The second part of Haig's argument was that advertisements were not so popular as to justify dailies in the provinces. Provincial printers could at best afford tri-weeklies.


18Cranfield, vi, 271-272.

19Ferdinand, 397.

20Haig, 58-62.


22Sessions, 2-4; In the sixteenth century, Ipswich ranked eighth and in the mid-seventeenth century ranked seventh of "number of hearths taxed."

23One area of research in which I am engaged in the most preliminary and vague stages is a comparative study of English and American advertisements and the evolution of any
significant patterns of cultural (or more significantly, political) change during the American Revolution and the period of the early Republic.


26TIJ. January 6, January 13 and April 28, 1753.

27TIJ. March 27, 1756; May 29, 1756.

28For benefit balls, TIJ. September 7, 1754, July 26, 1755; for a "public notice" by concerned citizens, including Mary Clark of Bredfield, to keep people and their dogs off of their land, TIJ. September 29, 1750; for an account of three women condemned at a meeting of master woolcombers for "Reeling of short or false Yarn," TIJ, October 22, 1757.

29Cranfield, 236.

30TIJ. August 7, 1756.
Eighteenth-Century Provincial Newspapers Series. Papers from Derby (Derby Mercury); Papers from Ipswich (The Ipswich Journal). Many issues of The St. James Evening Gazette and The London Daily Advertiser are interspersed with Ipswich issues.

Newcastle Journal in Cranfield, 228.
Chapter Four

"For the Continuance of Their Favours": Women and Work in The Ipswich Journal

In October 1759 Susanna Smith "acquaint[ed] the Publick in general" that she had moved her millinery shop. She then continued her advertisement that, "she returns her most sincere Thanks to those whose Favours she has successfully experienced, [and] hopes for a Continuance thereof."1 Her business, located in the urban city of Colchester, Suffolk required her participation in the social and economic public spheres. Asking for the "continuance" of business favors, Smith's advertisement addressed two issues pertinent to the study of the domestic sphere. It showed first that she already existed in the public realm and second, that she wished to remain in that milieu. This theme occurred countless times throughout the advertising sections of The Ipswich Journal.

The study of eighteenth-century advertisements yields important discoveries in the relationship between women and their work. This chapter details how women workers disrupted the barriers built against their access to the public world and existed in many public dimensions: as independent
businesswomen, as consumers, and as purveyors of culture. It is an account of women's representations of themselves to a reading public and how they did not conform to prescribed roles either in their daily or their printed lives. These women defined the parameters of their advertisements and controlled the information disseminated to those they tried to gain as customers. Many of these advertisements, combined together, also provide the seedling of the reconstruction of women's continued public existence and their public communication with each other as workers. Thus, in addition to showing how working and business women presented themselves to the public, this chapter will, to the extent possible with available sources, reconstruct their actual public lives.

It is no historical news that women have always worked. Regardless of their prescribed roles or ideal status in society, economic factors have dictated women's continued existence as productive, indeed public workers. It is also no surprise that work has been gendered with woman playing a decidedly subordinate role to her male counterpart. Focussing on women's "natural" roles within the household economy, the ideology of the "private sphere" was one formulation of this gendering of work in the eighteenth century. Even working-class political movements in the nineteenth-century incorporated a "domestic" rhetoric, such as that concerning the "living" or "family" wage, to gain political rights for half the class. Domestic ideology
changed the formulation of power relations and transferred the official political notions of paternalism and patriarchy to the home. This transfer, however, was fluid and subject to much debate and controversy. It has therefore been recognized that women have gone "out to work" and participated in realms other than those prescribed by domestic ideology.

Since the private sanctuary of the home was never a reality for most women in eighteenth-century England, it remains to be noted how women who did not take their domestic prescription represented themselves. Although women of the upper middling orders no longer needed to "contribute" to family subsistence, they were clearly not the only class of women. Their public lives have been documented in periodical literature, autobiographies and novels. Although the women of most middling and all lower orders daily faced the same ideological barriers to public existence, they usually publicized their non-domestic lives in far different forms. For middling women, the newspaper advertisement served as their voices and their door to the public sphere.

Subject to the dictates of English Common Law, married women in eighteenth-century England legally possessed no financial independence and subsequently encountered many difficulties establishing their own business. Despite such traditional impediments to business activity, the married woman, or the feme coverta, could obtain the status of the feme sole merchante, or a married woman with legal access to
the trades. But this position was only available to a wife who did not engage in the same trade as her husband. This rejection of "shared occupations" was the result of early exclusionary tactics by men to remove women from the craft tradition.5

In contrast, the woman who never married, especially one over the age of twenty-one, "was quite capable, both financially and legally, of setting up in business."6 Because she had fewer familial responsibilities and because her property belonged wholly to her, the single woman had more economic opportunity than her married counterpart. A widow also had better opportunities to run a business, either her own or her late husband's, for two primary reasons. First, the period of marriage was generally accepted as an adequate apprenticeship since the wife would have familiarized herself with various aspects of the trade. Second, a widowed woman with children could threaten to submit herself and her children to the parish, which would then be required to provide support for them.7

Regardless of the varying degree of "ease" of entering a trade, women participated in business ventures throughout the eighteenth century. Trade was not restricted to one cohort of women, nor was visibility confined solely to those who worked with their husbands. Advertisements placed by working and business women in The Ipswich Journal display women's working lives in eighteenth-century England. Although these newspaper advertisements were not "literature," they were a
written record of women's public existence in the eighteenth century. Women owned businesses that catered to a growing urban population in provincial England and used newspapers to increase their business.

Because of its public nature and expansive distribution, the print media are an accurate means to obtain information on women in the trades at this time. England held no occupational census before 1841; apprentice records often effectively ignored women in their record books; and many women actually did fear the loss of business if they gendered their advertisements and so used male names or only initials. Therefore any precise enumeration of women's participation in trade in the eighteenth century is difficult.

The advertisements published by women in The Ipswich Journal from 1750-1760 underscore several points. First, they suggest that women remained public and worked outside of the typical "family economy" not out of pure necessity. Second, they show how women used the medium of print and their publication in a political paper to heighten their popularity not only with women but with men as well. These advertisements obviously precluded those working women who could not afford to advertise such as those involved in the sweated trades as well as those business who women simply chose not to. The presence of craftswomen and merchants and their visibility in print should not obscure the very rough conditions under which other women (and children and men) worked in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.
Advertisements are nevertheless good indicators of those women who chose to use the print medium, and the relatively large sample displays women craftspeople, tradespeople and merchants of culture who used the advertisement for their own economic gain. This chapter focuses on those areas women appeared most prominent in advertisements: as milliners, inn keepers, medical practitioners, and finally, various other trades they often maintained after the death of a spouse or a father. These trades were by no means "revolutionary" in any respect of the term. They were common to women, and were the trades that figure most prominently in general labor histories of women. They are, however, by their "common" nature, areas wherein women represented themselves in a positive way in print to the "Publick in general."

According to recent historical research, there was no reduction of women's employment opportunities from the beginning of the eighteenth century through the mid-Victorian period. Much of the evidence for this continued contribution to the Suffolk economy in the eighteenth century emerged in the clothing trade advertisements. Eighty-three of the advertisements in The Ipswich Journal were placed by women in the clothing trades, including, but not limited to, millinery, haberdashery and linen-drapery. The clothing and drygoods trade was one area which middling women felt that they could enter and not face what they perceived as significant downward mobility. There were a number of single or widowed women involved in the clothing trades as
well as married women who worked in order to supplement the family income. Women's involvement in these trades did not "complement" the husband's work, as in the case of spinners, but was an "entirely separate form of employment." This work, independent of men, characterized eighteenth-century female employment.

Many factors accelerated women's continued entrance into the workforce during the eighteenth century, and an apprenticeship in the cloth industry provided them with an economic outlet and an element of independence in a frustrating economic and social climate. The Seven Years' War only exacerbated this trend. Most single women could not support themselves by staying at home to live with infirm parents. They further could not reasonably expect to governess other family members' children. Families could not support themselves without all members working in some manner, and single, unemployed women felt themselves a burden. They saw more opportunity outside the family setting, and often entered the service occupations or apprenticed themselves to pieceworkers. Poor living conditions of the young, single servant also heightened her desire to leave and look for more "independent" work in later life. Thus, historians should not dismiss the public work of tradeswomen merely because it was not work in which men participated. Women's roles in these trades were important components of their public lives in eighteenth-century England.
Women may have been steered into gendered occupations, but they took those professions and created a working sub-culture of their own. The notion that women's public and individual trade activity in the mid-eighteenth century was a result of the economic insufficiency of the family economy, although an important component of women's historical "work" experience, is inadequate for an evaluation of the public sphere. The framework promulgated by proponents of the "Separate Spheres" thesis focusses either on how women were forced out of the home economy into the wage economy of the factory system because their dispossessed artisan husbands could no longer provide a family wage, or on how women were segregated from men in the domestic realm. Consequently, these studies overlook women as public workers who, for example, underwent the rigors of apprenticeship just as men did. Women were intelligent and dynamic participants in the working economy of the eighteenth century despite the fact that they engaged in business that was not "fit work for men."16

II.

K.D.M. Snell has noted that, contrary to historical commonplace, women were excluded neither from apprenticeship nor from contracting an apprentice, and this access was publicized in the Ipswich advertisements. For example, Isaac
Johnson placed an advertisement for the return of Mary Haw, his apprentice in the painting trade. He declared, as was his legal right, that anyone who harbored her would be prosecuted. Another advertisement sought a female apprentice from ten to twelve years of age for a woman whose name and occupation were not posted. The apprenticeship required £10 for entrance into apprenticeship, £5 of which would be returned at the expiration of the contract. In 1758, the "Miss Fairlies" from Great Yarmouth "had...an Opportunity" to take an apprentice in their millinery trade because their business was growing and in the same year, Sarah Jay, also from Great Yarmouth, wanted "a few" apprentices for her hat trade. Although few in number, the existence of these advertisements shows that in the mid-eighteenth century women were not excluded from apprenticed trades.

The most prominent trade advertisements were placed by milliners. Millinery was a traditional women's occupation for designing and making women's headdresses and ribbons. It was therefore a specifically female occupation that catered to a distinctly female consumer. Of women shopkeepers in Peter Earle's study of London's female labor market, millinery, chandlery and haberdashery were the most common, corresponding to the Ipswich findings. Apparently, millinery was one of the better-paying vocations for women, even though their wages were mere pittance compared to men's wages; according to Richard Campbell's 1747 study of London tradesmen, a milliner could expect to earn from five to six
shillings per week. Staymakers could not "earn above a crown or six shillings a week." Thus provincial female trade in the eighteenth century did not conform to Alice Clark's depiction of the seventeenth-century symbiotic trade in marriage transforming into the idling domestic.

The milliners' advertisements offer a picture of the public lives of apprentices and the trajectories of their careers that dispute others' assumptions that women's use of the print culture inhibited their public action and flexibility. For example, Isabella Mylne ended her apprenticeship with Mrs. Elizabeth Randall in late 1751 and established her business in the Butter-Market in Ipswich. When she first opened shop, she supplied stock in both millinery and drapery and furnished funerals "at the lowest price." In March 1753 she announced that she maintained "a large stock" of drapery goods, but by December of that same year she advertised to sell this entire part of her trade, retaining only her millinery shop.

One week later, however, she appeared again; this time to sell a tenement, the estate of "Captain Mylne, deceased." Her relationship with Captain Mylne is indeterminate with sources available. However, since she labelled herself Mrs. Isabella Mylne at this time, it is assumed that he was her husband. In February of the next year, she still attempted to rid herself of this property, but now tried either to rent or to sell it. It was probably easier to rent property than sell an estate, and Mylne apparently understood that fact.
Finally, in May 1755 she advertised for the last time. In her last found post, Mylne announced that she desired to sell both her late husband's property as well as her entire millinery trade and shop.

Cross examination of the Ipswich advertisements displays a networking system in the millinery business common among most apprenticed trades. Isabella Mylne's master was Mrs. Elizabeth Randall. Randall also apprenticed Ann Gooding. Two months after Elizabeth Randall "declined business" in February 1754 and sold her entire stock in trade, Ann Gooding opened a shop in Tankard-Street publicizing herself (as Mylne did) as "late apprentice to Mrs. Randall." Her advertisement also announced her trip to London in order to supply her stock with the "newest styles and fashions." Placing her advertisement so soon after Randall's retirement, during the spring season with Randall's name affixed for added legitimacy, Gooding sought to obtain many of Mrs. Randall's previous customers.25

Ann Gooding did not place another advertisement until November 1755, when she announced her move to Isabella Mylne's former shop in the Butter-Market.26 Her business was not confined solely to millinery goods, however. She also furnished funerals and provided clear-starching, and this added expertise served her well when her fortunes reversed. By 1759, Gooding left the millinery business and Ipswich because of debts and worked only as a clearstarcher in Beccles. Such repetition of names affirms that milliners
trained and worked with each other in public settings, and that they accentuated those connections in order to obtain the former clientele of former masters or competitors.

The relationship between Mylne, Gooding and Randall further affirms the notion of a community of milliners in Ipswich, which served to heighten the networking process. The connections established during years of apprenticeship were invaluable sources of income for emerging shopkeepers. Women who attempted to enter the trade in connection with their husband's tailoring shops or without apprenticeship usually sold off their trade shortly after their first attempts. Printed newspapers and advertisers, however, helped to erode such traditional community-based notions of work and trade. Women competed for limited trade in a limited geographic area, and advertisements potentially created the conditions necessary for success. Clearly, use of the Ipswich advertisements heightened the economic networks associated with apprenticeship and generated a new audience for tradeswomen.

More importantly, these advertisements showed women engaged in public business activities. It is reasonable to assume that women who placed advertisements in The Ipswich Journal believed that their use of the print culture heightened their visibility with potential and regular customers. Women such as Ann Gooding and Isabella Mylne clearly understood the nature of occupational networking when they advertised themselves as "late apprentice" to Mrs.
Elizabeth Randall. The business they hoped to gain from using their connections with Mrs. Randall reflected the same attitudes found among men who left apprenticeships. They probably worked as journeymen for Mrs. Randall, performing much of the sewing and designing for their "master." As a result, they would have developed a clientele distinct from Randall's.

Despite the fact that women in the cloth trade could generally support themselves with their income, they still fell victim to the rather glutted economic environment. To guard against these predicaments, women established the same type of assistance allotted to male tradesmen and organized self-help organizations. Besides being the beneficiaries of aid, women organized events such as benefit balls for both female and male colleagues. They used advertisements to publicize these social events and to encourage the local community, the consumers of the goods produced by these tradesmen, to attend-- or at least buy a ticket. In 1753, Elizabeth Randall, the milliner discussed above, and Mrs. Potter, a coffee-house owner, sold tickets to this type of ball for the benefit of Mr. Bransby Goldson. Another example of women who organized benefit balls for self-aid were Penelope Henchman and Sarah Keer, who shared a millinery business. These two were the beneficiaries of such an engagement, organized by themselves, on July 9, 1760.28 Their advertisement proclaimed,

We think ourselves extremely obliged to the Gentlemen and Ladies for the many Favours we have
already received, and humbly hope for a Continuance of them...by giving us the Honour of their Presence at the above-mention'd Concert and Ball; we shall see it our constant Endeavor to deserve this...29

Henchman and Keer, however, further elaborated that they had recently returned from London with a new stock of goods, suggesting that the benefit ball could be less than altruistic. Jan McDonald discussed such mutual-aid balls benefitting those who were not in dire need of economic support in her analysis of the Victorian stage and the development of mutual help societies. She stated that "benefits" were designed to alleviate economic stress and provide a modicum of supplementary income for the continuing or the retiring actor, "but...the 'stars' were the principal beneficiaries."30 Nevertheless, some form of financial alleviation existed for downtrodden shopkeepers, and women both organized the social engagements and benefitted from them.

Another large group of women who advertised in The Ipswich Journal were widows who inherited their husband's business. Widows were often considered to be appropriately trained in the trade by virtue of their years of marriage.31 Of course, this idea assumes that these women worked side-by-side on the shop floor with their husbands and did not work independently or engage in their own business. Nevertheless, women did take over their deceased husband's business regardless of their technical ability, and few of these women worked in what could be described as trades "amenable" for women.32
Although the existence of women in these trades reflected "society's greater preparedness to countenance the widow in a 'man's' job," rather than a single, apprenticed woman, many widows could not run these occupations on their own accord because of their lack of formal training and the sheer physical requirements of the job. Very often they recognized the need to maintain hired hands. When Elizabeth Hayward published her intention of keeping her husband's plumbing business in 1751, she qualified her remarks by claiming that she,

\[
\text{ha[d] supply'd herself with able and sufficient Hands, [and] she intend[ed] carrying on the Business of a Plumber and Glazier, as her late Husband did.}^{34}
\]

So, although society could more easily endure a widow in such positions, they were very often less qualified than Alice Clark assumed in her investigation of trades.

Other widows solved this predicament by entering into co-partnerships with male relatives or former journeymen already involved in the trade. As single women, these widows were no longer subject to the economic restrictions of marriage, although they were under societal mores to remain unmarried and chaste. Because of this double standard, these women worked with male relatives who doubled as their "watchdogs."\^35 Amy Newman ran the cabinet and chairmaking business "with the Assistance of her Son, (who is able to execute the said Business in all its Branches)."\^36

Another instance of a widow who continued her husband's business was Elizabeth Turner, who intended to keep her
husband's whitesmith and gunsmith trade with John Turner, a relative of her husband's. Turner provided a compelling socio-economic argument in her advertisement when "she propose[d] (with proper and able Assistants) to carry on the said Business, hoping thereby to provide for herself and her three children." There were two issues involved in Turner's publication. First, she probably had no trade of her own before her husband's death, and second, she clearly understood the "system" and provided incentive for patrons to "favour her" with business. She needed the community to help her by frequenting her business or the parish would be forced to provide economic relief. A similar issue was discussed by Olwen Hufton who argued that widows, in order to remain in certain occupations that were specifically "male," could and often did appeal to the parish constables (or to the general public as in the case of Elizabeth Turner) to stay in business.

Although there are numerous women who advertised the opening of shops, or whose careers span a series of years, like Isabella Mylne or Ann Gooding, a good number of these women "declined business wholly" and attempted to sell their entire "stock in trade." Women were not necessarily subject to exclusionary tactics of men in these fields, since at this time, urban textile shopkeeping was more gendered towards women anyway. However, men were certainly not excluded from the millinery and "under-goods" business. For example, Thomas Baker advertised in 1760 "for the Ladies" his new
stock of muslins, laces and edgings, and silk and cotton stockings; he also sold men's woven stockings. But more frequently men worked as tailors, upholsterers, linen or woolen-drapers and did not extend into the more exclusively female-dominated, and thus less economically successful, areas of the cloth industry. Women who worked as tailors often took on the business of deceased husbands, like Mary Carver, who inherited her husband's tailor and sales shop. Women were also involved in shared occupations, such as Thomas and Mary Peacock, despite legal restrictions. The Peacocks' advertisement, however, clearly delineated two separate occupations; Thomas was "taylor... and Habit-Maker" and Mary was noted as a mantua-maker-- "his wife being of that business."  

Some women who left off trade merely stated that they would be "declining business." Others were more explicit in their desire not to work any longer. When Mrs. Sarah Martin left her trade as a grocer and draper in Cratfield, she wanted to sell her shop and stock immediately. Martin was not forced out of her occupation unwillingly; she simply no longer wished to maintain her trade. She demanded,

that no Person with whom she has had Dealings, will for the future send her any Goods under any Orders that they may receive; and she requests her Creditors to acquaint her with their several Demands, in order to their being very soon discharged; and all Persons indebted to her, are required to pay their several Debts forthwith to her, at her House in Cratfield aforesaid.

These women were not necessarily forced out of business because of excessive obligations to creditors since the
obligations to creditors were explicitly outlined in such cases. When Ann Gooding, the apprentice to Mrs. Randall, was forced to sell her millinery business in 1758, she noted that it was "for the Benefit of the Creditors, in order to make a final End."  

Most of the women shopkeepers who "declined business" were woolen-drappers. This exodus was partly due to the gendered nature of clothing work in the eighteenth century as men frequently advertised as woolen drapers. Clearly, however, men were not overtaking women's occupations in industries such as woolen and linen shops, although there were some instances when men hired their former shops. Even when men did purchase or inherit women's shops, they did not engage in the same trade. In February 1753 it was published that the recently deceased Mrs. Turner's stock of woolen-drapery and linen-drapery goods was to be sold and that anyone indebted to her should then pay their respective debts. She was also a milliner. One year later, Thomas Crawley, a brazier, entered her shop "opposite his former Dwelling-House."

Women's occupations simply were not economically lucrative enough to sustain even single women; thus men did not feel threatened by women's domination of certain areas of the clothing market. Women's work was quite degraded compared to men's work and even the more "prestigious" trades paid little in relation to men's work. Once distanced from domestic services, which provided food and living quarters,
single working women faced the challenge of inadequate wages which barely provided a weekly food allowance. At five shillings a week as the average pay, the incentives for men infiltrating these trades were marginal at best.

Women who began, supported, inherited or "declined" business acted as individual agents in a purely social context. They were neither excluded nor discouraged from participation in business or public representation in print. Their advertisements reflected the need in eighteenth-century provincial England for women to remain in the public sphere and cater to a class of female and male consumers. The success of their campaigns to address these consumers, whether appealing to a competency or to sympathy, dictated their continuance in the public sphere.

III.

Although millinery and widows' occupations comprised the majority of women's trade activities in The Ipswich Journal, women were not confined solely to these business ventures nor were they secretive about their other work. The following section analyzes women's advertisements in a wide array of occupations ranging from stable, traditional and often lucrative female employment such as midwifery, innkeeping, and coach driving to more tenuous odd-jobs such as selling river oysters and weeds. In each respect, regardless of the prestige of the trade, women addressed the public through the
advertisement, the form of print that promised the widest dispersal of their information.

Although few advertisements were placed by women medical practitioners, their existence provides another development of women's public representation. Given the still locally-based nature of provincial England in the mid-eighteenth century, it is not curious that so few midwives advertised. There are numerous advertisements by "man-midwives" and by surgeons who advertised for male midwives, suggesting that the male gendering of the medical profession had begun. Recent studies state that in the eighteenth century, midwifery became increasingly confined to less educated and wealthy women who could enter the trade with no training at all. This downward trend partly resulted from the professionalization and reformation of medical practices with the rise of obstetrical instruments. Once women were relegated to attending people who could not pay for services rendered, many women left the trade. These reasons partly account for the lack of female midwives in The Ipswich Journal. As men entered the field, and subsequently more prestige became attached to the practice, women were subject to exclusion and relegation to less prestigious areas. Male doctors and physicians, with university degrees unavailable to women, wrote treatises explaining pregnancy and birthing. Women were also not helped by the legal system, which refused them admittance to medical lectures and subsequently education, and further undermined their positions.
Despite this removal, women still practiced medicine in the eighteenth century. Historians of midwifery insist that it was an artisan culture, where training was necessary and, at least in the larger towns, where affidavits were required to assure that women were properly qualified. If the nature of provincial England was still based primarily on the networking system, midwives would not generally advertise, as they catered to a group of families in primarily rural areas. According to Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, "this was [also] the era of 'social childbirth,'" when entire female communities attended births. Although her study concentrates on the early American Republic, the analysis can be easily transferred over the Atlantic into the English provinces since colonial American culture was still representative of life in provincial England.49

Reputations acquired over time and through networking were far more important for women than for men in the medical "trade." Even apothecaries, fairly low on the medical status scale, benefitted from length of time served and success in curing ills and assisting births. As with most professions, higher pay (in money or in kind) was allotted to the best and more mature practitioner. As a result, a midwife would not want to lose her clientele. One midwife, who moved to Ipswich from London in 1750 "on the Account of her Health," closed her announcement with the following remark:

She would sign her Name to this Advertisement, but if her Expectations in this Place should prove abortive, it would hurt her in her Practice in London; for she must leave a Person to act in her
Absence, and her Ladies must not know that she intends to stay in the Country.\textsuperscript{50}

This anonymous woman relied on the customers she gained over twenty years in the practice and she did not want to jeopardize those relationships by publicizing her name in the event that her plans in her new town were unsuccessful.

Midwives relied on the same networking processes as women who opened shops in the clothing trades. In 1752, Mrs. Goodrick of Colchester refuted charges that she "left off waiting upon Women in Child-Bed in the Country." This was important because women outside of the immediate urban areas often faced a shortage of capable midwives since many midwives refused to work the "country" because of the inability of these families to pay immediately. Goodrick further elaborated that she was the daughter of Mrs. Chapman from London "who ha[d] been in the Business fifteen Years." As the daughter of a midwife, Goodrick would have received an appropriate "apprenticeship" (which generally consisted of watching births until forced to deliver); this further legitimized her appeal as a midwife and her right to conduct business.\textsuperscript{51}

Midwifery was accompanied in part by partnerships with surgeons and practice in folk medicine. Two women advertised as co-partners with men in their occupations. Sarah Long worked as a midwife in association with the surgeon and apothecary Samuel Hamilton to continue her late husband's business. Mr. Hamilton came to Ipswich from the London Hospital and probably possessed the most sophisticated
methods of surgery. Five years later, Elizabeth Smith announced for unknown reasons that she dissolved her co-partnership with Thomas Firmin. Midwifery, then, although an expected traditional role for women, was another area in which women felt the need to represent themselves to the public.

Women also worked in such "non-traditional" occupations as passenger and delivery drivers throughout the provinces. Such an occupation put them in direct contact with the world outside their local province. Their representation of themselves also contradicts notions of women's relegation to purely "domestic" duties. One such driver was Martha Hearn, who drove the Stowmarket Wagon. In 1754, Hearn travelled from Stowmarket in Suffolk south to London to deliver Christmas and New Year's packages. Since she departed from and arrived at inns, she probably delivered mail as well. In many respects, then, Hearn was an important communications link for many people in eighteenth-century England. Another instance of a woman who offered her services as a passenger carrier (or coach driver) was Deborah Gooding who not only drove, but rented out coaches, hearses, chariots and horses to "any part of England." Deborah Harcourt, a widow from Attleburgh, maintained her husband's business of renting post-chaises. The language of her advertisement indicates that she managed the business and retained "careful drivers" whereas Deborah Gooding and Martha Hearn actually participated in the transportation aspect of the trade.
Finally, women advertised as independent entrepreneurs to sell sundry items such as hair, oysters and weeds. These also include women who owned tea-warehouses, who ran public baths, or who engaged in animal husbandry. Ann Brome advertised annually for eight years and ran the Bowling Green at the Black Lyon Inn. Brome was clearly an innkeeper. She concluded each advertisement with "Dinner will be ready at Two o’Clock, as usual, by your humble Servant." This advertisement was another example of how this section of The Ipswich Journal served both commercial and social purposes. Her advertisement reinforced community social traditions, in that the green’s opening always coincided with spring; it also served as a place of community gathering.

Jane Taylor, a vintner from London, was another woman who placed an advertisement in this miscellaneous area. She placed a notice to the inn-keepers and victuallers of the provinces that she not only sold wine but provided the necessary license to those who possessed no “Spirit License.” It was definitely in the best interest of these people to take a license from her as those who had licenses paid approximately half the rate as others (£2 compared to £5). Sarah Johnson, the owner of the tea-warehouse in Ipswich, provided the prices of her stock which included (besides tea) coffee, sugar, cocoa and chocolate.

These two advertisements were aimed, in the most indirect of ways, at women since they dominated the innkeeping business and would need to purchase both supplies.
Innkeeping, like millinery, was a primary occupational route that exemplified women's public lives in the eighteenth century. Although an accepted form of female employment because it was an extension of their "domestic" duties, their role in the public was also important. Sometimes these women worked in partnership with their husbands, but more often they were self-employed or were widows who kept the inns.

Many new innkeepers previously worked in service or domestic jobs. For example, Thomas and Margaret Moor opened the White Hart Tavern in Wickham-Market in 1752 after he served as a butler and she a cook to John Ruth, Esquire; John and Elizabeth Ayliffe, former servants to John Rush and Nicholas Bacon, respectively, took the Swan at Southwald; Robert Sack, a cook for "the Right Honourable the Lord Maynard" and his wife Ann took the Swan Inn in Hoyxne. James (servant to Elizabeth Sheldrake from Norfolk) and Elizabeth Porter (servant to John Sheldrake in Suffolk) took control of the Scole Inn. Attesting to the impact of the Seven Years' War in the provinces, Elizabeth ran the business on her own after 1760 when her husband "died in his Majesty's service in the Militia." She subsequently sold the Scole and took the "Sign of the George" in the same town. Each of these advertisements displayed attempts by members of the working service class to begin independent service in their province. Since women played a primary role in these attempts, the advertisements also articulated women who worked in the economic world as both consumers and "entrepreneurs."
Ultimately, they showed that women used the print media to heighten and assert their public roles.

Many couples who ran inns did so as part of familial obligations. John and Catherine King (daughter and son-in-law to Mr. Godfrey White, the previous owner) took the White Hart Inn in Brandon after their father died. They used the advertisement to acquaint their "late Father's Friends and Customers, that everything in their Power will be done to merit the Continuance of all their former Favours." When John Hepworth opened the Old Crown Inn at Brentwood, William and Mary Hepworth signed the advertisement; although he conceivably held controlling interest in the inn, William and Mary performed the tasks where the "favours" of customers would be "greatfully [sic] acknowledged, and kindly entertained" by them. Charles and Ann Trott ran the Griffin Inn in Ipswich, previously owned by Ann's late father Stephen Kirby.54

Ann Tippin frequently advertised her inn in The Ipswich Journal. In 1752, she sold the Griffin Inn in Attleburgh and purchased the Cock, "an old accustom'd Inn" in the same town. Tippin again advertised for several weeks in 1754 for her business at the Cock. Other widows included Elizabeth Walker, at the Three Cups Inn, previously operated by her husband Robert; Deborah Harris left the Crown after her husband's death and took the Three Tuns Tavern where she hoped "to have the pleasure of seeing her old Customers; and as many new ones as please to make trial;" Mary Linton kept
the Green Man Inn, the location of the Newmarket post office. However, she encountered rumors, which she wholeheartedly denied, that because of her husband's death, the office "was about to be remov'd." The Widow Harper ran the post-office and excise-office in Brentwood at the White Hart and provided transportation as well. The more established and more "respectable" inns served as the central location for delivery of goods and mail. As a central location for town social life, inns were the most conducive spots for the center of provincial communication networks. When the Widow Hearn ran her Stowmarket Wagon, the drop-off and pick-up points were taverns, often the central locations of a town.65 Thus, Harper, Linton and Harris each expressed a desire to remain a central facet in their town's social world.

Finally, other women placed advertisements sporadically or seasonally in order to capitalize on community wants. Susanna Tunmer, for example, advertised like Ann Brome once a year from her tavern near Ipswich. She sold river oysters. Mrs. Mary Halls from Colchester sold imported bullrushes at 30s a load; Ann Lawley sold hair from the "Locks of Hair" to peruke makers and hair-sellers.66 It is obvious then that these women worked in areas that ranged from "stable" trades with shops, to jobs not only more tenuous occupationally, but economically as well.
The use of advertisements by women within "trades" was not an anomalous activity by rich widows or spinsters. Women of all occupations and marital statuses chose to publicize their work in the hope that customers would continue "favouring" them with orders or business. They did not conform to accounts of domestic privacy. A married woman who engaged in business activity most often worked in a different occupation than her husband, although her work could easily complement his-- such as a tailor and a mantua-maker. Women were active participants in business activities during the middle of the eighteenth century and were not subject to nor denied the "idle" life of the middling orders as Alice Clark depicted. Her assumption that the decline of women's economic opportunities was the result of "the decline of the family and domestic industry-- which shattered the interdependent relationship between husband and wife" is misleading. The idea that women worked in conjunction with their husbands before the seventeenth century neglects women's prominent roles in distinct trades, and the English laws that restricted "shared" occupations with husbands. It also overlooks the prevalence throughout history of gendered occupations and the consistent relegation of women to occupations considerably less prestigious, both economically and socially, than men's, no matter how public they may have
been. It ignores the importance of women's public and independent work entirely.

Women who took on their late husband's business often did so with the assistance of male relatives or former journeymen partly to address societal concerns with their "independent" status as well as to make up for lack of expertise. With the major exception of inn and tavern keepers, married women who entered business were not involved in "shared" occupations. Their work was quite different than men's, and although less prestigious and economically substantive, they nevertheless provided women with a certain economic independence that would be shattered with the advent of the factory system.68

Most important, the trade advertisements reflected women's access to the developing print culture. Even as some historians assert that prescriptive literature and the growing pervasiveness of the print culture effectively moved women out of the public arena by the mid-eighteenth century, the existence of these advertisements proves women worked in trades outside their prescribed domestic sphere and used the print culture to assert that involvement. Although newspaper advertisements were not literature per se, they were a written testimonial to women's public existence in eighteenth-century English business life.
NOTES

1 TIJ, October 27, 1759.

2 For analyses of women and work, refer to: Alice Kessler-Harris, Out to Work: A History of Wage-Earning Women in the United States (New York, 1982), which traces the continuation and degradation of women's work in the United States from colonial to "modern" times; Nancy Cott's The Bonds of Womanhood (New Haven (CT), 1977), discusses the continuation of women's work in nineteenth-century America in the context of the "domestic sphere"; Bridget Hill's Women, Work and Sexual Politics in Eighteenth-Century England (Oxford, 1989), is an excellent survey of women's labor history building primarily on the work of Alice Clark; Alice Clark's Working Life of Women in the Seventeenth Century, (New York, 1968) is one of the seminal works on women's employment and posits the "Golden Age" thesis that before the seventeenth century, women's work was somehow more glorious, fulfilling and equitable to men's work; Ivy Pinchbeck's Women Workers and the Industrial Revolution, 1750-1850 (1930) addresses the same themes as Clark but looks at a later period; Louise A. Tilly and Joan Scott's Women, Work, and Family (New York, 1987) and their article, "Women's Work and the Family in Nineteenth-Century Europe," Comparative Studies in Society and History, 17 (1975), 36-64, both address the changing nature of work and its affects on the family. According to them, the factory system aided the change from a familial to an individualistic economy.


4 Many historians and sociologists have debated the fluidity and even the legitimacy of these power relations and the dynamic it played in the "private sphere." Elizabeth Fox-Genovese's numerous works discount patriarchy in favor of the more overarching idea of capitalism as creating a morality for society. See, for example, "Placing Women's History in History," New Left Review, no. 133 (1982), 5-29, Feminism Without Illusions (Chapel Hill, 1991), and "From Separate Spheres to Dangerous Streets: Post-Modernist Feminism and the Problem of Order," Social Research, 60 (1993), 235-254; Geoff


6Peter Earle, Middle Class, 158.

7Earle, Ibid., 160; Hufton, 366.

8Hill, ch. 5 is a solid survey of female apprenticeship, as is K.D.M. Snell's chapter on female apprenticeship in Annals of the Labouring Poor.

9This is a common and unavoidable problem in this sort of investigation. See, for example, Jeanne A. Calhoun, Martha Zierden and Elizabeth Paysinger, "The Geographic Spread of
Charleston's Mercantile Community, 1732-1767," South Carolina Historical Magazine. 91 (1990), 182-220.


11 Earle, "The Female Labour Market in London in the Late Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries," Economic History Review, 2nd. ser. 42 (1989), 328-353; Earle, Middle Class; Snell, "Apprenticeship."

12 Amanda Vickery, "Golden Age," 404.

Such advertisements, although rare, imply that women were not relegated to domestic chores or were yet subject to exclusionary tactics by men.

Of the eighty-three trade advertisements found in the cloth industry, thirty-seven were milliners. Millinery was not the only clothing occupation for women, however. For example, there are seventeen woolen-drapers, twelve linen-drapers, seven clear-starchers, five haberdashers and three lacemakers. Also included in this group of trades are two rug-makers or upholsterers, a mantua-maker, a worsted-weaver and a woman who sold bedding.

These trades accounted for twenty-nine of forty-seven of women shopkeepers.


Mylne's late husband was a captain. Mrs. C. Catchpool, a milliner from Ipswich, advertised in 1758 the selling of her late husband's business as well as his shop; he was a plumber and glazier. She obviously, then did not work from her husband's shop as she continued her millinery business, although his shop may have been situated next door or on a
different floor. Lucy Leeder from Beccles also worked a
different trade than her husband. She was a milliner and her
husband was a surgeon. However, she advertised to sell her
entire business of millinery and haberdashery goods, but
would let the shop "to no other business" (9-8-59). Later
that year, she opened a boarding school in Beccles.

22TIJ, December 14, 1751.
23TIJ, March 3, 1753; TIJ, December 15, 1753.
24TIJ, December 29, 1753. Any reliance on the term "Mrs."
during the eighteenth-century is quite tenuous, since many
older, unmarried women took the "title." At this time, the
term was more a symbol of status of age than one of marital
status. Such recognition sheds light on discrepancies over
years in advertisements. For example, a boarding school
teacher, Margaret Meen opened her school in 1754, and used
the term "Miss" Meen. Three years later, she was given, or
chose to use "Mrs." providing her with further legitimacy to
parents of potential students.

25TIJ, February 2, 1754; TIJ, April 6, 1754.
26TIJ, November 8, 1755.
27Lucy Leeder for example (footnote 23). Snell,
"Apprenticeship."
28TIJ, September 8, 1753.
29TIJ, June 28, 1760.
30Jan McDonald, "Lesser Ladies of the Victorian Stage,"
31Earle, 168.

22Hufton, 367. It was noted that one woman blacksmith could
lay the anvil on her chest and pick it up by her hair. Such
characteristics are crude male assumptions on women's positions within "male" trades and reflect the beginnings of the exclusionary tactics of men in the craft unions in the nineteenth century. In Snell, "The Apprenticeship of Women," 297.

34TIJ, February 16, 1751.


36TIJ, September 21, 1754. The same situation occurred with Betty Bacon, the widow of a lock and gun smith; Susan Deaves, who entered into the trade with her son-in-law; Susanna Smith who "entered into Partnership" with Edward Steel, the former apprentice to her late husband.

37Amy Newman, TIJ, September 21-54; Elizabeth Turner, TIJ, December 15, 1759.

38Katrina Honeyman and Jordan Goodman, "Women's Work, Gender Conflict, and Labour Markets in Europe, 1500-1900," Economic History Review, 2nd ser. 44 (1991), 608-628. They argue that the gendered segregation of work and exclusionary tactics of men were responses not to industrialism or capitalism, but to perceived lessening of their patriarchal power as men. The main problem with their thesis is that they do not even provide a cursory treatment of the eighteenth century and its social and economic significance.

39TIJ, February 16, 1760.

40TIJ, April 3, 1756; July 22, 1758.

41TIJ, October 18, 1755.

42TIJ, August 12, 1758.

43A woolen-drafter was a drygoods shopkeeper who primarily worked with woolen goods, as opposed to linen or silk. Of the women who left business, either through death, debt or voluntary retirement, one was a haberdasher, seven were milliners, and fifteen were woolen-drapers.

44TIJ, February 10, 1753; March 16, 1754. A "brazier" is a brass worker.

45Hufton, 361.

Seven advertisements were placed by women in medical occupations which included four midwives, and one advertisement announcing the dissolving of a co-partnership, a woman engaged in folk medicine and an apothecary.


TIJ, June 23, 1750. She arrived in Ipswich in July and announced could be found at Mr. Borret's, a silversmith.

TIJ, July 18, 1752; July 25, repeated.

TIJ, May 12, 1753.

TIJ, March 18, 1758.

Of the ten advertisements for passenger and delivery drivers, three were widows and two, who advertised with the abbreviated form of their first name (Deb.), are unable to be accurately identified.

TIJ, August 3, 1754; September 14, 1754.

TIJ, April 14, 1753 (and other years).

Of the twenty-four advertisements by women in business, fifteen were self operated, six of those being widows, and nine were "shared" partnerships with husbands or other male relatives. Four of the couples who operated shared occupations ventured into business after some time in domestic service to others.

Elizabeth Sheldrake was an animal husbander and she advertised in The Ipswich Journal for her "sheep and lamb shew."

Other couples who ran inns and taverns merely as business ventures included Henry and Mary Gosling (TIJ, July 15, 1758) and Robert and Elizabeth Hide (TIJ, September 23, 1758).

Advertisements were placed by women in TIJ on the following dates (some advertised for consecutive weeks): March 3, 1750; October 5, 1751; February 8, 1752; June 20, 1752; June 23, 1759; May 10, 1760. Martha Hearn placed her advertisements in March 1750, December 1754 and October 1759.

Chapter Five

"Where Young Ladies Will be Carefully Taught": Boarding School Advertisements in The Ipswich Journal

Anne Campbell's 1750 advertisement to provide the "young ladies," with "NEEDLEWORK of all sorts, ...READING, WRITING, ARITHMETICK, and ENGLISH GRAMMAR," was representative of a primary component of female advertising in The Ipswich Journal in the 1750s. Advertisements like these for boarding schools popularized education in the 1750s and accentuated women's visibility in the public realm. Women served as proprietors of these businesses, as well as the consumers of this product, and in all respects this exchange of services occurred in a public setting. Like the advertisements for women in trades, boarding school advertisements reflected more than female representation, however. They obviously addressed class issues and the limitations of such "public" education.

Nevertheless, women's participation in this field, and their publication of their participation disputes stereotypes of home, and thereby completely private, education for the middling orders that dominated nineteenth-century literature. These advertisements also display a careful self-
representation by women who attempted to assuage criticisms about their competency for teaching. In this respect, they show women manipulating the print culture for their own advantage.

During the eighteenth century, the seventeenth-century trend toward increasing literacy was extended. This extension was made possible primarily because of the development and spread of printing, through which written works, previously available to a select minority of church and aristocratic members, were more prevalent throughout society. Educational enterprises benefitted from this expansion and also advanced it. In much the same manner as the other more distinctly called "trades," education was not regulated. Before the nineteenth century, most schools catered to the children of parents from the upper middling orders and the gentry. Most narrative histories of English education therefore discuss the development of popular education, its methods and the expansion of its curricula after the beginning of the nineteenth century. Such histories concentrate primarily on the social reform movements after the Great Reform Act and the consequent attempt at providing women with "greater economic and political freedom" through education.³ Nineteenth-century female education was built on the same utilitarian principles as boys' education and the extension of knowledge was perceived by some as merely an avenue for understanding and accepting the existing social order.⁴
The rich history of the Dissenting academies and their role in the popularization of English education has been an important development to this historical narrative. Dissenting academies expanded curriculum throughout the eighteenth-century and provided the framework for the nineteenth-century regulations that receive most historical attention. The academies' emphasis on a broader range of subjects taught in the vernacular undermined the aristocratic monopoly on education. The Dissenting academies were more democratic than schools for classes able to privately educate their children. Some of its emphases, such as mathematics and accounting, relied more on the pragmatic aspects of living in a commercial society, than on those aspects of living in polite society, although it also included studies of the Classics (especially the Old and New Testaments) in its curriculum.5

After the French Revolution, English education articulated notions of "self-help" and working-class "industry." This laissez-faire attitude undermined successful reform of the institution before the mid-1800s since working-class autodidacts operated their educational institutions according to their own class biases. Thus, historical discussions of education in mid-eighteenth-century England have been unfortunately subject to neglect due to its pre-industrial, pre-revolutionary, pre-statutory status.6

Discussion that has ensued, however, often precludes women in any significant manner even though they were obvious
and necessary participants in eighteenth-century education. For example, P.J. Miller's account of female education focussed on the "imitative" qualities of the proliferation of education rather than the extension of genuine, if perhaps untrained, attempts to provide education for young girls. John Money's recent article on the marketing of education only included female education as an addendum.

However, female education and the role of women governesses were significant components of education for the "middling orders" during the middle of the eighteenth century. Advertisements placed by female "teachers" and "governesses" in The Ipswich Journal suggest a desire for standardized and "liberal" education for daughters. Girls' schools were perceived as an avenue for women to develop their own talents and served to remove at least some of the barriers that attempted to block women's participation in the public realm.

The schools advertised in The Ipswich Journal, like most boarding schools, required payment upon entrance. Thus children of the lower orders were effectively excluded from participation. The publication of prices shows women's competition with each other as well as accents the audience to be addressed. Average prices for boarders often amounted to £16 per year; if French was not taught, £2 was subtracted. In some cases, boarders were also required to provided half a guinea, a silver spoon and a pair of sheets when they entered the school. Of those women who posted tuition rates, the
least expensive school, run by Mrs. Goodwin, cost £10 per annum with no entrance requirement. Prices were also reduced if laundry was excluded.

Day scholars paid less, but they still paid. Parents were required to submit half a guinea at entrance to the school, and seventeen shillings per quarter. If they chose not to take French, costs went down to seven shillings per quarter. The entrance fees generally covered the expenses of providing for the boarder. For example, in 1755, Mrs. Chauncy, a frequent advertiser, announced that her school required two guineas upon entrance "or one Pair of Sheets, six Towels, six Napkins, and a Silver Spoon."

Nevertheless, £16 per annum was fairly cheap compared to schools for those from the upper ranks, and publication of tuition rates branded the social class that the schools served. The typical boarding school for the upper middling orders and the gentry averaged £200 per annum; in the mid-nineteenth century, some reached £1000. Tradesmen and artisans could never afford this type of luxury for education. Thus, the schools in The Ipswich Journal serviced those families who also used the journal to publicize their business-- tailors and milliners, woolen-drapers, victuallers, and shopkeepers. In this respect, then, the provincial papers, or at least the advertising section, catered to a specific class and gender of people.

The subjects taught ranged from "mathemetics" to dancing, reading to needlework. In the schools advertised in
The Ipswich Journal, there was equal emphasis on reading, writing and history, as on needlework and morals. Women may have engaged in school "teaching" because they saw a profit in "baby-sitting" the children of the middling orders, rather than providing "students" with access to education; in this respect, they "taught" more practical types of education such as needlework. In Money's comments on the Birmingham advertisements for girls' schools, needlework was never advertised unless he omitted that category in his table of educational opportunities. According to Money, the primary subjects taught were writing, drawing, English and dancing.

Travelling east to Suffolk and Norfolk, the focus changed slightly. For girls' schools, needlework was one of the more prominent courses taught, and other areas such as French, music and dancing were "electives" that cost extra. The reasons for this circumstance in Ipswich are unclear. As a center for business and trade, and as a port town, "practical" aspects of education may have predominated. By virtue of its position in English provincial business life, parents of the lower middling orders in Suffolk may well have been able to afford education for their children. Girls also required this knowledge as part of their domestic education and since they were not at home to learn from their mother, the school served as a surrogate. This became especially important once the routine patterns of learning a craft--apprenticeship or indenture--"declined" as a viable avenue of vocational training. Nevertheless, the chances of a
young girl of this class being supported economically by her family were slim; therefore, an education that led to a potential occupation as a seamstress, milliner or mantuemaker was the most practical decision a middling parent could make in providing for a child.\textsuperscript{16}

Many of the teachers were apparently highly successful since they advertised consistently throughout the 1750s. Mrs. Drusilla Jackson and Mrs. Chauncy were the most regular advertisers. Drusilla Jackson announced the beginning of each new term for the parents of her students as well as for new customers. Jackson arrived in Dedham from London in January 1750 and appropriated the boarding school previously run by Mrs. Elizabeth Wood (who, the advertisement states, recently married Mr. Green).\textsuperscript{17} She asked Wood's former students to continue their studies at her school which included both needlework and French. Her school also offered arithmetic, music and dancing, and she retained the teachers previously engaged by Mrs. Wood.

Most important, she entered the town with letters of reference. She affixed these endorsements to her preliminary advertisement declaring that she was, "exceeding well qualified, in every respect, to be a Governess of this or any other School." Four men, perhaps parish magistrates, signed the other reference and they assured her potential customers that she was an "unexceptionable Character...in regard to her Gravity, Prudence, Capacity, and proper Age for a Governess of a School." The advertisement certainly was successful
since she continued to place notices concerning her school at least through 1760.

Jackson's advertisements generally announced that she continued her school or that it would open again after the winter break. In 1755, however, she announced that she "engaged a Gentleman" to teach the young ladies dancing two days every week. For this added course, "[n]o new Entrance [was] required for Dancing from those Ladies who have already entred [sic] with [her]." Her success (or at least advertising consistency) was rivalled only by Mrs. Chauncy.

Mrs. Chauncy came to Diss in Norfolk from London in 1752 to open a boarding school whose main subjects were needlework, reading, writing and dancing. The cost for her school was £14 per year with a two-guinea entrance fee. A separate master, Mr. Barnard, taught the girls reading, writing and arithmetic at six shillings per quarter. Music and dance were taught by Mr. Aylmer.

Mrs. Chauncy also publicized her prices for the school more extensively than other governesses. Whereas Drusilla Jackson mentioned tuition rates only once, Chauncy used every advertisement to publish her rates. She continued this practice throughout the fifties. In 1759, she refuted rumors that she intended to leave the school insisting that,

she had no such Design, but hopes to merit a Continuance of the Favours and Trust reposed in her; that she boards young Ladies on the same Terms as before, and will use her utmost Endeavors to forward their Improvements...in all necessary Acquirements.
Both were the most prominent and probably successful boarding-school governesses in the Suffolk area.

Taken at face value, boarding-school advertisements show the increase in literacy and concern with female education in the eighteenth century. Their wording also revealed many attitudes of the growing middle class toward education and educational qualifications. Although regulations were not strict and were probably not enforced, initial advertisements by potential governesses contained some type of affidavit such as a personal reference or a voucher by the vicar. Drusilla Jackson held two ready-references when she entered Dedham. When Miss Meen hired Mrs. Williams to teach English and needlework at her boarding school in Suffolk, John Chauvet, the Vicar of Stowmarket offered the following reference:

I have known Mrs. Williams, the French-Teacher to Miss Meen's Boarding-School, several Years; she is a Person of a very good Character, and fully qualified to instruct young Ladies in the French Tongue.20

Reference letters were crucial in stifling standard criticisms that these schools were run by incompetents. In The Heiress, a novel published in 1786, Miss Alscrip lamented that "we have young ladies...boarded and educated...upon blue boards in gold lettering in every village, with a strolling player for dancing master, and a deserter from Dunkirk to teach the French grammar"21 [Emphasis in original]. This woman's comments exemplified reasons why new teachers carried ready-references attesting to their unflawed capabilities.
For the same reason, governesses carefully worded announcements both of their own and their staff's capabilities and character. For example, Mr. and Mrs. Justinier and Ann Guilledeau emphasized their qualifications as French teachers since they were natives. Guilledeau further legitimized herself, for not only did she teach French at "Mrs. Tomlinson's" for an extended time, but she was also a "Protestant refugee," which enhanced her political appeal to those concerned about her qualities. These women, then, used their control of their self-representations to produce spotless public characters and gain business.

The most prominent advertisers among the married couples were Mr. and Mrs. Justinier. They first placed an advertisement in November 1750. Their primary accomplishments included French (their native language), needlework, English, and such linguistic feats as spelling, "an Accomplishment very much wanted in Young Ladies," and the use of the dictionary. They also taught map reading, music, dancing and writing. The subjects taught in their school provided girls with accoutrements that surpassed the basic domestic and "industrious" knowledge in other schools of similar stature. The subjects also suggest that women who left their school were expected to participate in realms outside the private home.

Their advertisements continued throughout the early 1750s, but in 1755, Mr. Justinier submitted a solitary entry for two "half-boarders," "[n]one [of which] will be taken for
less Time than two Years certain, and none under fifteen Years of Age." Mrs. Justinier's name no longer appeared and the tone of the advertisement differed from those of previous years. It was more barren than the others. It was also the last time he placed an advertisement. He probably continued teaching until 1758, however, because at that time Margaret Meen purchased his house in Ipswich and stated that she would "be much obliged to the Friends of the Young Ladies lately of Mr. Justinier's School...for their Favours." 

Although numerous, these boarding-school advertisements were quite standardized and told essentially the same story. Except for moves,hirings and deaths, each instructor hinted that her school could best take care of the children of the merchant class. Their significance lies in the fact that for Suffolk and Norfolk at least, girls were offered the opportunity for practical education. Although the women who placed the advertisements worked within the economic constraints of the lower end of the middling orders, their advertisements emphasized social prerequisites for success in polite society, such as reading and writing in English, cursory knowledge of French, needlework and music lessons. There were also sparsely situated advertisements of other subjects including mathematics, bookkeeping and accounts keeping. They therefore advertised to a group of people who could afford some type of "education" for their children, but could not risk removing its practical aspects.
Eighteenth-century education also conveyed a moral message as well as a further segregation of boys and girls that would only be enhanced after industrialization firmly took root in the nineteenth century. Mrs. Ablett's 1754 views accurately represented the trend in society since her school taught:

true Spelling, Reading, Writing in all Hands, Arithmetic in all its Parts, the Mathematicks, Algebra, Geometry, Navigation, &c. and Girls are taught a Variety of Needlework.25

Mrs. Loder, whose son was a writing-master and accountant, taught only plainwork; when she sought an assistant, it was not to aid in the intellectual development of the students, but rather to assist her in the practical education of plainwork.26 Her live-in son ran a school for boys. Despite the emphasis on needlework, girls were generally offered relatively the same educational options as boys. Although development of proper roles and "lady-like behavior" was not precluded in female education, it merely represented continuing traditions of female social position; such emphasis also occurred more frequently in the more expensive private schools designed for the gentry.27 Needlework, especially in a large trade town, could prove to be useful for girls left without an inheritance or dowry; it also provided a supplementary income for married couples.

Although Money performed a quantitative analysis of girls' schools advertisements from The Birmingham Gazette, he focussed only on the advertisements for the use of mathematics in provincial education. The analysis provides a
nice comparative standard for the same type of advertisements in *The Ipswich Journal*. His aggregate listings for the 1751-1760 period include the same categories found in Ipswich, with the major exception of the needlework that was so prominent in the Ipswich advertisements. Perhaps, and this is again speculative, needlework was considered the most natural and expected educational "subject" and was thereby omitted. To be sure, one can not ignore the significance of needlework as a prominent and enticing form of "education."

The use of the advertisement to "popularize" education, at least for those who could afford it, enhanced women's visibility in society and their role as dynamic contributors to English culture. They worked alongside male instructors in the schools, and in some cases, oversaw them, so they were not condemned to the home as propagators of family education or moral values. Women were active in this medium of print, and their message was not one of female seclusion, but of societal acceptance. Women advertisers manipulated the print culture to create a positive representation of themselves to a group of people seeking educational opportunities for their children. Their use of the news medium reflected the expansion of the literacy rates of these classes and the consequent need for their children to be formally schooled. In order to dispel fears among middling parents that incompetency flourished in boarding schools designed for their children, governesses carefully constructed their own image and, like all advertising, successfully sold that image
to the public.
NOTES

1TJ, April 21, 1750.

2Even Jane Eyre used the advertising section of her local paper to obtain a position as a governess. Charlotte Brontë, Jane Eyre, Barnes and Noble Edition (New York, 1993), 84-86.


4See, for example, John Ruskin’s "Of Queens' Gardens," in Sesame and Lilies.

5Smith, 237-268.

6Most monographs concerning the history of British education were published before the mid-1970s and reflect the progressivist and modernist attitudes of many historians of the time. According to Richard S. Tompson, the work of Lewis Namier in the 1940s served as the model to reverse the trend of looking at the eighteenth century as "corrupt" and "miserable" and therefore "further examination of English social institutions seems likely to prove fruitful." In Classics or Charity? The Dilemma of the 18th century Grammar School (Manchester, 1971), vii. Other works that incorporate this belief include David Wardle's, English Popular Education, 1780-1970 (Cambridge, 1970); Barnard's History of English Education; and J.W. Ashley Smith, The Birth of Modern Education: The Contribution of the Dissenting Academies, 1660-1800 (London, 1954). See also, David Cressy, "Literacy in Context: Meaning and Measurement in Early Modern England," John Brewer and Roy Porter, eds., Consumption and the World of Goods (London, 1993), 305-319.

11 P.J. Miller's account focuses on the imitative nature of the lower orders. Despite this imitation, schools differed extensively between the classes. Although the education offered by these advertisers was more accessible to the laboring ranks-- artisans, tradesmen and other laborers-- they ultimately served an exclusive function as well. Since they charged a fee, education was still commodified and in many respects conveyed an illusion of social mobility. Charity and Sunday schools were designed for the more economically deficient families. Once education began to proliferate in the eighteenth century, distinctions between educational quality emerged to such an extent that by 1868 a commission on English education reported that "...all the sharp lines of demarcation which divide a society into classes...are seen in their fullest operation in Girls' Schools...[B]each school is obliged to content itself with pupils of a particular social grade." Quoted in Miller, 313.

12 In the eleven years examined, there were sixty-one advertisements placed by women who ran boarding schools in the provinces. Fifty-five were for female education, five were co-educational and only one advertised for a boys' school. Only eight were co-partnerships. Of these eight advertisements, five were spouses (three were from the same couple), two were relatives such as sisters, and one was a partnership between acquaintances.

13 Barnard's account of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century "dame" schools levies an appraisal of them as harsh baby-"minding" institutions with cruel mistresses. Barnard, 22-23.

14 Money, unpaged table.

15 Wardle, _Popular Education_, 29.

16 Economic factors predicated this decision. Discussions of the options available for lower middling girls are found among the numerous recent women's labor histories. For a brief discussion of these works, see chapter four, footnotes two and ten.

17 _TIJ_, January 27, February 3, February 10, 1750.


21. quoted in Miller, 303.


23. [T.I.J.] March 29, 1755. Hypotheses concerning this deletion of Mrs. Justinier's name include she died, she divorced him, or she simply moved back to Paris.


27. sources cited in Miller.
Chapter Six

"To Obtain Satisfaction": The Public Affairs of Private Women

One of the secondary themes of this study is that provincial newspapers were more than mere "parasites" on the London dailies during the eighteenth century and that the advertisements contained within their pages were more than just the most economical means of producing a provincial paper. Although publishers believed that the advertisements were the only way they could sustain business, the reading and advertising public clearly perceived advertisements as a means of conveying news. Indeed, the social commentary found in The Ipswich Journal was rich in evidence of attitudes toward marriage, work and parish "welfare." This brief chapter will investigate advertisements placed by women that dealt with these issues and conclude that women used the public prints to publicize their supposedly private lives.

Recent revisionary work on the public sphere has found that women performed public functions for redress of various grievances. These efforts often met with exceptional success. For example, during the seventeenth-century Interregnum, women publicly appealed to Parliament for peace in order to stifle the ravages of the war in England. The
politically and socially "powerless" such as these women effectively used the public realm for opening forums of legal, social and economic discussion. Even though women possessed no access to "official" political (and public) culture, they nevertheless voiced their concerns in extremely political and public ways. One means of accomplishing this political action was through newspaper advertisements. In the mid-eighteenth century, women, especially those from the lower and conceivably less powerful ranks of society, were not condemned to domestic or private segregation from men. G.A. Cranfield, who categorized these advertisements as "miscellaneous," believed that that they were not only the most amusing sections of the newspapers, but also the area in which to find "the most intimate glimpses" of early modern provincial society. Ultimately, the advertisement section of The Ipswich Journal was a public arena in which women in the provinces conveyed their perceptions about marriage, debt and business closures.

The advertisements in The Ipswich Journal proved to be a battle ground in public debates concerning "proper" behavior in marital relations. For example, men frequently posted notices to creditors not to accept a wife's purchases on credit as "she ha[d] made elopement from him." According to Common Law practice, a husband was required to pay or provide credit for his wife's purchases since she lost economic independence with marriage. According to Peter Earle, she could "make a contract as her husband's agent or servant" but
she had no legal individuality, and lived through her husband's name. Despite this restriction, women were afforded some legal protection. By the middle of the eighteenth century, wives possessed an element of fiscal control with the legal consolidation of "pin-money" into marriage settlements. Pin-money enabled a woman to retain a certain amount of her husband's income for her own use. It was literally an allowance, but it was also designed to protect her in the event that her husband amassed enormous unpaid debts. Most contracts insisted that this money, "be for her own sole and separate Use and Benefit...not to be liable or subject to his Controul, Debts or Incumbrances."4

Despite this protection, a man could refuse to support his wife whenever he chose by claiming that she had been unfaithful or had merely left him. On January 20, 1754, mariner Eli Crickmore placed an advertisement in The Ipswich Journal accusing his wife of taking,

\[
\text{since her Elopement, several Sums of Money, on [my] Credit...; therefore all Persons are hereby desired to take Notice not to harbour, entertain or Credit, the said Frances Crickmore, on any Account whatsoever;...I will not contract any Debt that shall be contracted by her.}^{5}
\]

Not only did Crickmore refuse to pay his wife's debts, but he instructed people of the town not to keep her, effectively denying her a place to stay except his house. Since a woman's only economic sustenance was her husband's credit, a woman who left her husband was still subject to her husband's economic control.
This same theme occurred countless times throughout each issue of the journal, reflecting that marital bliss was not all that it was purported to be in the eighteenth century. In 1755, Charles Steadman exceeded the standardized format usually found in "elopement" charges when he forewarned Mr. W[illia]m Tutty and Martha his Wife, likewise the Widow Hunt, of Bury aforesaid, not to harbour or conceal her, or her Daughter; for in so doing they will be prosecuted as the Law directs.⁶

This prosecution included, at least into the early nineteenth century, imprisonment not only for those who housed the wife, but for the fugitive herself.⁷ This advertised elopement was the third time Martha escaped from her husband. She had purportedly "used him with Injustice in all her Elopements" and various other persons than those mentioned by name in the advertisement had and would continue to "conceal" her. Given these facts, it is assumed that Charles was not the kindest of husbands. However, he asserted that "She and her Daughter have a Home to come to when they like, if she will be debar herself from bad Company."

The easiest way of preventing a woman from leaving or from receiving her "allowance" if she did, was to accuse her of elopement in this manner. In some cases, this may have been justified, as when Sarah Keer left her husband Edward for a journeyman barber.⁸ However, it was unlikely that Martha, at least, ever desired to return home. The significance of this type of advertisement rested on the fact that the provincial newspaper reached a relatively large audience spanning at least three counties. Thus, husbands
attempted to stigmatize wives and humiliate them in order to force their return. If the wife faced an unsympathetic world because of her actions, her only recourse was to return home.

Although husband's accusations comprised the most forceful and vocal accounts of separations in The Ipswich Journal, women were not excluded from participation. They possessed the right to advertise (especially since their advertisement defrayed the costs of printing) and on a few occasions, women retaliated with as much fervor as their husbands. In 1751, Daniel Massom issued a notice that creditors not take his wife Mary's purchases nor should any person entertain her. More important than Massom's forceful legal argumentation was Mary's willingness to publicize her marital situation in order to justify her separation from him. In the same issue (his second post), Mary vehemently responded to his accusation,

This is to give Notice,  
That I MARY MASSOM, the Wife of DANIEL MASSOM, have been many Times cruelly used by my Husband, and often in Danger of my Life by his Inhumanity and Barbarity-- I was once forc'd for my Safety to swear the Peace against him, upon which he was sent to Goal [sic]; out of good Nature I had him released; notwithstanding, he threatens my Life, that I dare not live with him.  
MARY MASSOM.

Yet another poignant and lengthy rebuttal to a husband's accusation occurred when Margaret Cooke, "thought it proper to certify to all persons" that she left his house with, just Provocations...I having daily met with very bad Usage from my Husband, began to think that Cruelty was then going to displayed in Perfections, and thought it most adviseable to fly for Refuge, - with my dear Babe with me, to my own
Father's... tho' he is pleased to call it an Elopement.\textsuperscript{10}

Cooke's public request for arbitration, either by discussing "Family Affairs by Arbitration of Friends and Gentlemen" or by meeting personally with her and her father, again exemplified women's access and use of the public "sphere." Men may have attempted to stigmatize their wives into returning home, but many women refused to submit to such malicious public indictments concerning their personal behavior. Here again, women possessed the path to legal recourse if they knew the proper channels to take. They also effectively used the same media as their husband to refute public accusations levied against them. In this way, a woman was virtually guaranteed the sympathies of the community when she sought justification for her stance because family, friends and other community members frequently interested themselves in "family issues" and enjoyed serving as arbiters in domestic disputes.\textsuperscript{11}

Women also possessed legal rights concerning rape, spousal obligations and illegitimacy and used the news medium to publicize them. This type of publication refuted domestic norms and the so-called "privacy" of the eighteenth-century affective family. When Elizabeth Hutchill gave birth to an illegitimate child, she made public accusation that the father was Samuel Lincoln, the servant to Mr. Nightingale from Roxwell. The Church-Warden sought his return in order remove the child from parish support, and implored that any person who knew of his whereabouts to inform "the Church-
Warden, or either of the Overseers of the Poor of the Parish of Hatfield Broad-Oak, where he is, so that he may be brought to Justice," and they would receive two guineas as reward. Also included was a detailed description of Lincoln's physical and verbal features.

Women traditionally named the father at childbirth and the named man was given one year to attend to his declared duties. Even when a woman did deliver an illegitimate child, the community looked for proper support and sought action in order to receive that child care. The parish could often prosper from paternal child care since they were paid in lump sums and the child frequently died before ten months.

Although the Marriage Act of 1753 sought to eliminate illegitimacy found in common law marriages, it instead served to stigmatize ordinary people who continued what they perceived to be traditional and acceptable social practices. The act merely increased the official numbers of babies designated as illegitimate. These people believed that familial obligations superseded "written contracts" and continued their practice. Parish authorities understood this unspoken agreement among the non-gentry and worked the system to provide support. Thus, into the mid-eighteenth century, the parish posted notices with the woman's consent in order to ensure proper, albeit unofficial, paternal care. These notices placed women and women's issues directly in the social realm for public consumption.
Accusations against men for rape, although rare, were another public, legal avenue for women. In 1756, Elizabeth Green from Suffolk issued an affidavit to the Reverend Dr. Young that the tinker John How "commit[ted] a Rape" against her. An announcement was consequently placed that issued a warrant declaring that his return to the county constable would be well rewarded. Parish leaders clearly saw the necessity to bring How to justice and Elizabeth Green understood her rights within the law. In March 1756, parish officers from Rendham issued an announcement for the return of John Snowden and Nathaniel Osborn who, "have absented themselves from their Families, and left them to the Charge of this Parish." The parish explicitly gave these two men a choice; return to their families in which case, "all past Offenses shall be forgiven," or be "brought to Justice" if they resisted their return.17 These advertisements provide not only a basic reconstruction of the social life of the eastern provinces but reflect the legal rights (however small) of women in the eighteenth century. They certainly possessed rights of prosecution and of family protection. Whereas the husband could only proclaim that anyone who harbored a wife who left him illegally would be prosecuted, the wife, by virtue of the fact that she had children to support and could potentially surrender herself to the mercy of the parish, had the parish legal structure behind her quest for her husband to return.18
Domestic problems were certainly not the only legal issues pertinent to women in eighteenth-century England. They were also not the only items that received public attention in the provincial press. Women also used these newspapers to receive debts owed to them after a husband's death, after they left their own business or "to obtain satisfaction" for property violations. Unfortunately, women also used advertisements to sell stock and shop holdings to satisfy their creditors when a business venture was not as successful as anticipated.

First, widows were often the "executrix's" of husband's wills. When a husband left no will, she became his "administratrix." Either way, she was left in charge of his effects after his death, to decide their fate as she saw fit. As long as a wife did not remarry, she was entitled to his property as a "dower," especially if children did not receive majority portions. Often times, her dower served to protect the interests of inheritance for their children. When Mary Say's husband died, he left one-eighth of his assets in The Gazetteer to her and the rest was divided equally among their daughters. This action served to protect the economic interests of the girls when they entered marriage.

When a widow chose not to engage in trade, or maintain the husband's business, the widow sought economic closure of the husband's estate. Economic factors often precipitated this closure, but it may also have occurred to remove excess holdings. When Isabella Mylne's husband died in 1753, she
advertised to sell his "estate"-- a tenement with "yards, gardens and orchards, containing two acres." She possessed her own shop and assets and may have been unable to adequately maintain both areas. More often, a widow who did not retain the business was forced to close all open accounts rather than merely sell excess property. These women used the advertising section of The Ipswich Journal in order to publicize this closure.

Most advertisements were fairly tame directives, asking for those that have "demands" on the deceased to bring their accounts in order to be paid, and that others should pay their "respective Debts." Others issued injunctions to debtors to pay their debts "otherwise they will immediately be sued for the same." Mary Brewster issued a harsh dictate against those who remained indebted to her husband's estate when she named Crofts Gould from Norfolk as indebted to her "to the Assignment of a Mortgage, and also to the Ballance of an Account; being together, above one-third Part more than the real Value of the mortgaged Premisses." She further claimed that he would be given one month to "relinquish his Right of Inheritance" and her demands against him would be discharged. If he did not comply with her, she was "determined to use my utmost Endeavors to discover him, and to spare no Charge to compel him to pay what is due me." Quite vitriolic in this indictment against Goulds, Mary Brewster used her dower rights within the English legal framework and could afford to prosecute him. Women were
unafraid to use the public sphere to obtain their economic rights regardless if such use countered received notions familial privacy.

Second, women used the same legal premises when selling their own stock and closing business. When Martha Laing, a woolen-draper from Woodbridge left her trade in 1751, she asked for a payment from those in debt to her or they "will be sued without further Notice given." Lydia Harper advertised in precisely the same manner when she "left off trade" in 1751. She owned a woolen-drapery shop, as well as a grocery shop; thus, outstanding debts would have been fairly numerous. In 1750, Mrs. Mary Foulser left her woolen-drapery business. At that time, her shop and her dwelling-house were to be rented and she desired her debts to be paid in full. Answers to her advertisement were to be directed to three men besides herself including Mr. Lott Knight, Attorney at Law. Women who threatened legal suits in The Ipswich Journal most often were single.

As discussed in a previous chapter, women engaged in large numbers in trade, either individually or as a widow carrying on her husband's trade. Consequently, they were subject to the same economic pitfalls as men. Ann Gooding lost her stock of millinery goods to creditors in 1758 after four years of trade in Ipswich as both a milliner and a clearstarcher. As mentioned in chapter four, she consequently moved to Beccles and attempted to maintain herself only in clearstarching. Advertisements therefore
served also to announce bankruptcies in business ventures. For example, the "Commissioners in a Commission" issued a "bankrupt" against the grocer Ann Hasbert from Norwich in 1752. This commission posted a date in the newspaper when creditors could prove their debts so that it could "make a final Dividend of the said Bankrupt's Estate." Women were also forced out of business when acts of Parliament issued edicts against their participation in a certain trade. Margaret Purkis, a pawnbroker for many years in Colchester, placed an advertisement that any person with any goods left with her could "have them out at any Time before the late Act of Parliament takes place, which will be on the 29th of this Instant September." In both of these cases, women, although not willing authors of their own publicity, were not hidden from the public economy. Announcements concerning women's economic disasters sat side-by-side men's announcements for the entire reading public to peruse. Their failure, as well as their success, occurred in the public realm.

Women also used The Ipswich Journal to assert their authority and their legal rights over those who worked for them or over those who violated their personal property. There were varied advertisements placed by property owners whose horses had been "stolen or stray'd" from their grounds. Ann Brooks from Bradwell did not equivocate, however, when she insisted that her horse had been stolen from her property. She, as well as other women, offered a reward for
the safe return ("or intelligence of his whereabouts") of her horse.

In 1758, Sarah Archer indicted James Jones, a former worker at her business, because he illegally advertised from her shop. She provided the public with a negative endorsement of his abilities and character, stating that she "turned him away" in 1756. He consequently sought revenge by doing "all in his Power to ruin my Trade, by enticing away my Servants, raising false Reports, and sticking at nothing Malice could invent." She concluded her accusation with the request that those who had regularly patronized her business continue their favors. Mrs. Elizabeth Carthew also issued an indictment through advertisement of infringements made against her and her property. Apparently, the infringements included hawking, vending and selling meat, butter, cheese, eggs and poultry "contrary to the known Custom and Usage of the same Market." She ended her announcement by stating that anyone found, "offending in any of the above Particulars, that he, she, or they, so offending, will be prosecuted (as the Law directs) at the Expense of the said Proprietrix." This advertisement clearly showed two issues at work. The first was the maintenance of traditional institutions and understanding of "public" markets. The second issue was that Carthew "cornered the market" on this public access. She owned the rights to this public business area and determined its use.
Elizabeth Sumpter served as jail-keeper in Bury during the mid-1750s while also running an inn and tavern. During her tenure at the Bury jail, she placed advertisements for runaways twice. John Chandler, a blacksmith, was in the jail for committing a felony offense, and Sumpter promised a two guinea reward and any "handling" charges for anyone who returned him to the prison. In 1754, William Pratt, a fifty-five year old prisoner of debt, broke from the jail and Sumpter offered a ten guinea reward for his return or a five guinea reward for news concerning his location (supposed by her to be the "Hundreds of Essex"). As already mentioned, Sumpter ultimately took over the operation of the Red Lyon Inn, near the jail as it turns out, early in 1756. The inn was furnished with liquor and a good stable for gentlemen to house their animals.

Advertisements concerning society flourished in The Ipswich Journal in the 1750s. Women used their access to advertising to claim their legal rights or to obtain, what many called, "satisfaction" for their grievances—social, economic or political. Women and their dilemmas were not hidden from the public in some proto-Victorian quest for privacy. Women engaged in very public functions, as the beneficiaries of the proceeds from benefit balls, as executrixes of wills, as vital citizens of the towns, given as much legal recourse that the Common Law would afford. In fact, women's rights under the law in cases of "elopement" and illegitimacy were not as tenuous as popularly thought.
Nor was their action. They used the advertisements for their own purposes, and very often those purposes were public-oriented. Finally, an investigation into this aspect of advertising in provincial journals displayed a social commentary of provincial society, and in effect, serves to aid in the reconstruction of the social history of eighteenth-century town life.
NOTES

1Cranfield stated that the publication of advertisements would never have accounted for a majority of profits even though he quoted the publisher of the Reading Mercury as saying, "The profits of a newspaper arise only from advertisements." Clearly, what publishers perceived about their profits and what actually created their profits are two distinct areas.

2Susan Herbst, "Gender, Marginality, and the Changing Dimensions of the Public Sphere," Communication Research, 19 (1992), 381-392. Cranfield, 219, 223. Although Cranfield earlier asserted that these newspapers were "parasites" on the London press, his chapter concerning advertisements concluded with the sentence, "Eighteenth century life, particularly in its seemier aspects, is here depicted perhaps even more vividly than in the news-columns proper." 223.

3Earle, 159.


5TIJ, February 16, 1754.

6TIJ, May 10, 1755.


8TIJ, October 19, 1754. It is indeterminate whether this is the same Sarah Keer who placed an advertisement in 1760 with P. Henchman for a benefit ball for their millinery business.

9TIJ, May 4, 1751.

10TIJ, February 15, 1755.

12 *TIJ*, July 10, 1756.


14 Louise A. Tilly and Joan Scott, "Women's Work and the Family in Nineteenth-Century Europe," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 17 (1975), 36-64. Their discussion about the cultural values of working women who "got engaged," bore children and then saved up for marriage is one example of distinctions between the classes that were often misunderstood. In Vienna, it was mandatory to prove economic self-sufficiency before couples were permitted to legally marry. Tilly and Scott, 57-61.


17 *TIJ*, March 27, 1756; May 29, 1756.


19 Amy Louise Erickson, *Women and Property in Early Modern England*. (London, 1993). Okin, "Patriarchy." Mary Say's dower was supposed to cease when her son, trained as a printer, reached twenty-four years of age.

20 *TIJ*, December 29, 1753.

21 The language used and the feeling of import in closing the matter are important undercurrents. Widows often chose to close all accounts in order to remove themselves from the burden of the husband's work, and more precisely, to have a certain amount of "pocket money" if they had no occupation themselves.
22TIJ, May 3, 1755.

23TIJ, June 9, 1750; October 15, 1751 (Laing); April 20, 1751 (Foulser); January 5, 1751 (Harper). Other dates of women advertising leaving trade and desiring debts to be paid include (but are not limited to): Mrs. Elmy, a woolen-draper, September 14, 1751; Elizabeth Randall, milliner, February 2, 1754; Mrs. Sarah Martin, grocer and draper, October 18, 1755; Catherine Nichols, linen and woolen-draper, April 23 and May 5, 1757; and Mrs. Mary Chapman, December 13, 1760.

24Erickson, Women and Property; Hunt, "Wife-Beating."

25TIJ, August 29, 1752.

26TIJ, September 10, 1757.

27TIJ, December 14, 1754; February 15, 1755.

28TIJ, June 3, 1758.

29TIJ, January 20, 1753.

30TIJ, January 6, 13, and April 28, 1753, (Chandler); August 24, 1754 (Pratt). An interesting question, but not relevant for this study, is the discrepancy in rewards offered for the two men.

31This social engagement is discussed in more detail in chapter four.

32Laurel Thatcher Ulrich's A Midwife's Tale discussed earlier in this chapter is a prime comparative study of the legal recourse for women who engaged in adultery or delivered illegitimate children. Even in a "puritan" society, where a woman was considered the guilty party, the man was also complicit and obligated to conform to the dictates of the community, as it prescribed to him.
Chapter Seven

Conclusion: A Public Sphere?

What first began as an attempt to "place" women in men's history has turned, in recent years, into discussions concerning the historical subjection of women based on masculine notions of gender relations. One of the most significant theses to emerge from this discussion is the ideology of the public and private dichotomy. Based on notions of modern liberal theory and capitalist society, the "domestic ideology" helped explain women's subordinate position in the public legal world as well as the private world of hearth and home.

Despite the strength of this argument, however, recent works have unmasked equally significant ideas concerning women's roles in eighteenth-century England. Women often fought for equality, and against what they perceived to be proper notions of their roles in society. In many respects, women ignored this ideology entirely in their daily lives. Women who worked in trades or who wrote novels and letters undermined ideas about the private, segregated woman.

This analysis has been aided by the New Historicism. Based on careful readings of texts and "objective" sources,
the New Historicism has found within women's writings outlets of female discontent. More than this, it has found women to be dynamic participants in a very public aspect of modern society-- the print culture. Historians have played upon women's representational practices and the study of them, finding discourse analysis to be an important framework for women's history. It shows how women perceived their society and themselves within that society. It has also established a new methodological source for examining women's past lives. The New Historian framework, however, focuses more on repression and oppression and therefore discounts stories of women's activities that transgressed the normative behavior established by the dominant culture.

But textual analysis is not, nor should it be, the only framework for women's history. Representation, like theory, is not the same thing as practice. Furthermore, discourse analysis often betrays a subtle and one-sided ideological view. As Amanda Vickery concluded in her discussion of English women's historiography, "it is particularly vital for feminists to cast their nets wider than the over-used didactic sources if they are to approach a history of women's lives, not simply to reproduce a catalogue of male anxieties."¹

Social historical methods are still useful and crucial to fully understanding and placing women in the public sphere. The examination of newspaper advertisements is a preliminary start to this investigation. Although often the
victim of critiques from "quantitative" historians in the field because of their somewhat "sketchy" nature, advertisements nevertheless show actual lived experience of women's public lives in the English provinces in the middle of the eighteenth century. But women's publicized work experiences are not the only significant components of provincial advertisements. Provincial advertisements display aspects of local history to which the historian can look to find examples of family, marital and economic relations. Advertisements by booksellers, publishers, boarding-school teachers and governesses also reflected the social development and the growing literacy of provincial England.

This does not dismiss ideology as an important determinant in cultural structure. It is terribly important. The ideology of the private or domestic sphere affected women's position and economic opportunities throughout the modern period, regardless of their public functions. The fact that an ideology emerged from the revolutionary ideas of capitalism and liberalism that attempted to codify women's subjected status and remove them entirely from defined realms of publicity shows the importance of studying prescriptive literature. Even when women "took" the "prescription" offered by their society, their acceptance took revolutionary forms. Women wrote about domesticity in England, fraternité in France and Republican motherhood in the United States, but those very writings served as a form of empowerment for women. Just as Kristina Straub suggested that the actor was
empowered by his own "humiliation," so women were empowered by their public writing and representation. Kathryn Shevelow's belief that women's entrance into the print culture as public writers only served as a hindrance to women's more fruitful feminist development is not substantiated. Rather, Jane Marcus' conception of women's power in "resigning" themselves to a "lesser genre" than men's writings more fully exemplifies women's dynamic contributions to the print culture and to their own subjected status in the eighteenth century. Oppressed groups like women are active agents in their histories and stories of their resistance to oppression, as hallmarks of their agency, should not be eschewed. Michael Messner noted that women, as "creative agents, have often challenged the oppressive structural and ideological constraints they face." Just because eighteenth-century women's goals differed from modern feminist notions of "liberation" and freedom does not make their attempts any less significant or historically viable. In an interview with the Mid-Atlantic Radical History Organization, historian Natalie Zemon Davis stated that women's historians should not look for a teleological explanation of twentieth-century feminism. Instead, they should "see the varieties of ways of being a woman and the varieties of ideas people have had [in the past] about why the relations between the sexes were wrong and how they could be changed."
Women's legal, political and social status worked against them in eighteenth-century society, but ultimately these factors did not impede women's active ignorance of prescribed roles. Women's lives were placed side-by-side men's lives in the pages of *The Ipswich Journal* for the entire reading public to examine. They also wrote to periodicals expressing their discontent with, and sometimes acquiescence to, their society. In any respect, the debate concerning the public and the private in eighteenth-century England occurred in public domain; thus contemporaneous proponents of the domestic ideology undermined the very goal they sought to achieve. Women were, in this respect, anything but "hidden from history."
NOTES


2. The idea that oppressed groups are active against and resistant to forces attempting to subject them is a mainstay of the New Left History. Refer to Henry Abelove, et. al., eds., Visions of History. Interviews by MARHO (New York, 1984), ix-x.


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