
Addressing Women: Gender, Credit and the Periodical in Eighteenth-Century England

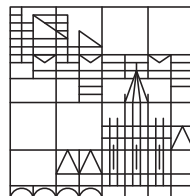
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Lafitte, Caroline – 2013

Introduction

Addressing Women – the double-entendre in the title encapsulates the ways in which I intend to approach Enlightenment women, namely as both the objects of discourse and the producers and recipients of that discourse. In early eighteenth-century England, women became writing and reading social actors, communicating interactively via a new medium, the essay periodical. This development is reflected in the emergence of a journal that explicitly addressed women in its title, *The Female Tatler*, a considerable novelty in a society in which women were generally considered incapable of rational thought.

Harbingers of new literary and cultural forms of expression, essay periodicals constitute the beginnings of the (free) press as we know it. Earlier than in the rest of Europe, a parliament was installed in England which represented those with fortunes, but without titles and granted them a means of political participation. The press, an essential tool for participation, flourished. Launched in post-revolutionary and proto-capitalistic England, essay periodicals were the mouthpieces of a new social class which used them as a forum. They enable us to observe how women “entered” that forum and secured themselves “a place” in the public arena of literary journalism. A relatively open and comparably young genre, the essay offered an opportunity for participation – participation in the formation of a new social class developing new behavioural codices. For the first time in history, topics of common interest could be discussed by a wider, heterogeneous public. Holding a merely marginal position in earlier centuries’ literary and cultural enterprises, women now had their say – As readers and writers, they became involved in both the production and consumption of texts. After the Glorious Revolution, England’s social order dramatically changed, and along with changing social structures, gender roles changed. Women had to find their place in a new society, a process that is clearly reflected in the press products of the time, as my analysis will demonstrate.

In view of the multifaceted quality of the topic at hand, the following analysis will incorporate various dimensions such as social history, media history and a literary analysis of the discourse on commerce. By "discourse

on commerce" I designate the imaginative negotiation of the combined impacts of Industrialisation and the rise of capitalism on English society. The force of the economy and its power to change social relations altered people's everyday lives. This experience influenced the ways in which contemporaries conceived of the world in which they lived, an experience which periodicals captured in their texts. The depiction of social changes took on various forms in journals, which offered their readers diverse and sometimes contradictory representations of their society and its people. Because of this diversity and inconsistency, scholars have long hesitated to pay periodicals the attention they deserve as literary and cultural productions. Undoubtedly one of the reasons for this reluctance was the difficulty to get the disparate materials and representations organised. This obstacle may explain why the journals have never become part of the literary canon.

Mono-methodological approaches are not well suited for the study of such a miscellaneous genre; the texts can only be accessed via a more flexible model. Lacking the appropriate analytical tools for analyses, early studies have dismissed non-mainstream periodicals as unliterary and undeserving of further attention. Although the number of publications dealing with formerly neglected essay periodicals increased from 2005 onwards, as will be shown in more detail in the course of this Introduction, researchers are still struggling for ways to access these materials. In the latest study on the topic, Manushang Powell's *Performing Authorship* of 2012, the author observes: "[While] the variety inherent to periodical literature should never be denied – [,] it is rewarding to look for trends and consistency in periodical works as well. There is something to be gained by treating periodicals, formally, as literary objects, even if the picture this yields of them is incomplete."¹ For Powell, the potential for consistency lies in the unifying figure of the author, or the editor-persona respectively. I share Powell's approach to the extent that I acknowledge the genre's inherent diversity while attempting to identify common denominators. Yet my approach differs from hers. The way I see it, the above mentioned "consistency in periodical works" is discursively constituted rather than being achieved by a unifying author-character. In this context, I will apply the concept of "cultural fable" introduced by Laura Brown.

1 M. N. Powell, *Performing Authorship in Eighteenth-Century English Periodicals* (Bucknell University Press, 2012) 16.

Laura Brown explains how cultural fables emerge from material practices and collective narratives, focussing on the volatility of credit and the transforming effects of capital. Brown's concept of the cultural fable "provides a way of reading not only literary texts, but the relation between literature and history."² Linking together images, tropes and words, the concept establishes a connection between texts and other discursive and material practices.³ According to Brown, the cultural fable is like a story without text, a shared cultural phantasm rooted in the collective imaginary. Brown characterises it further as being underlying, unpronounced and salient. By this she means that the cultural fable exceeds a particular writer or text, as it encompasses and unifies various images and representations. Brown employs the word "fable" to emphasise the collectivity of the phenomenon thus described, its cultural potency and its formal dynamism. The fable's "cultural potency" lies in its power to direct ways of representation and reception, as it establishes sets of assumptions and beliefs. These sets are organised thematically and evolve around central paradigms, commerce being the one on which the present analysis is centred.

Pervading periodical discourse, the trope of commerce is of greatest organisational and conceptual centrality for my work. The narrative of commerce, of credit and credibility in essay periodicals was one of anxiety, set against the background of contemporary economical developments such as the formation of joint-stock companies.⁴ At the beginning of the eighteenth century, many decades before what is commonly considered the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, Britain was already a comparably rich and sophisticated economy.⁵ Along with increasing general welfare, old social orders were overthrown. A new intermediate mercantile class was on the rise. The increasing importance of the stock exchange and the liberalisation of markets lead to the development of a new financial system largely based on credit. Credit, i. e. leap of faith, was a necessary prerequisite for investments. The

2 L. Brown, *Fables of Modernity – Literature and Culture in the English Eighteenth Century* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2001) 3.

3 The following account of the concept is taken from Brown, *Fables of Modernity* 1-15.

4 The South Sea Company was founded in 1711. For a more detailed description of the case: G. Giroux, *Business Scandals, Corruption, and Reform: An Encyclopedia* (Austin: ABC-CLIO, 2013) 550.

5 J. Mokyr, *The Enlightened Economy* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009) 13.

need to vouch for one's credibility, both in the private realm and in that of the economy, became ubiquitous and generated unprecedented social dynamics on which contemporary literary productions reflected. These reflections, I argue, largely took on the form of tropes, represented in allegories, metaphors, comparisons and analogies, collectively shared cultural phantasms. One of these is Lady Credit, an allegory marked by her essential intangibility.

Lady Credit is the most prominent example for how discourse on trade was gendered and her prominence in early eighteenth-century discourse attests to the fact that a link was established between the masculine world of finance and the realm of the imaginary, naturally coded as female. This adds another dimension to the title, as "addressing women" now also comes to mean "addressing the market".

The allegory attests to the status of the nonhuman in a humanist epistemology. Lady Credit functions so well as a discursive figure because her character incorporates shared, historically grown assumptions about sex and gender on the one hand, and commerce and credit on the other. As a symbol for the imponderability of "the real"; Lady Credit was the capitalist successor of ancient Greece's Fortuna.⁶ This is no coincidence: Fortuna stands for hazard, and it is exactly this happenstance which influences the workings of speculative business. The "inventor" of Lady Credit was Daniel Defoe, establishing her as a common and well-known allegory in early eighteenth-century periodicals. In his article "Of Credit in Trade" in *The Review* from June 10th, 1706, he introduces Lady Credit as the daughter of prudence and probity. Lady Credit's characterisation links two discursive fields, that of gender and that of speculative finance. Her character illustrates that the workings of the economy were understood as being in motion, not unlike a living creature, influenced by outside forces. Lady Credit, just like the early eighteenth-century speculative economy of which she is a discursive phantom, causes the circulation not only of monetary assets, but also of people. She leads an independent, promiscuous life, forging alliances and breaking them up in the same instant for no comprehensible reason. It is exactly this promiscuity that has discursively placed credit and speculative business alongside "the feminine". Lady Credit's social inconstancy is also reflected in depictions

6 B. Althans, *Der Klatsch, die Frauen und das Sprechen bei der Arbeit* (Campus-Verlag, 2000) 181.

that allude to her "generative force". While before the Financial Revolution, generation was mainly thought of in terms of progeny, concepts of generation now also came to include money and its translation into goods. Metals came to symbolise the worth of an estate, so natural reproduction now also had a more abstract counterpart, namely symbolical reproduction of assets. Associations with femininity served to capture all these very abstract aspects of trade and speculative business. The character of Lady Credit provided the possibility of structuring events which were otherwise experienced as fragmented and disconnected. A means by which events can be ordered and narrated to an audience, the discursive figure is the cultural fable's protagonist. In what follows, I will illustrate how I intend to get a grip on the text and how I aim to uncover underlying cultural fables.

The first chapter will focus on the new genre of essay as ideally suited to reflect people's experiences in an era of rapid social change. It retraces the emergence of periodicals and places them in the historical context of the early eighteenth century and the rise of capitalism. In situating the periodical in the intellectual and cultural ambiance of its day, special attention will be paid to the new formation of gender roles. The first chapter concludes with a review of former research.

The title of the second chapter, *A Journal of One's Own*, alludes to this literary "land seizure" by women writers. Central questions to be discussed in this context are: What makes *The Female Tatler* a genuinely women's periodical, how did its initial editor demarcate her own "literary space" and how did she establish herself as a writer in the press landscape of the time? It discusses the literary strategies that were used to "gender" the text, to give it a distinctively feminine tone. The inauguration of the new press product for women took place in a competitive setting, as various writers realised that they could make good money in this new segment of the market.

Focussing on female authority in a double sense, the third chapter *The Needle Justly Quitted for the Pen* illustrates the importance of gender as a discursive category for the construction of an authorial subject. It is closely linked to the second chapter, but more emphasis is put on the perceived legitimacy of the female author in the eighteenth century. Firstly, the emergence of *The Female Tatler* will be embedded in the context of previous publications that influenced its development and reception. Especially early proto-feminist Cartesian

discourse and one of the best-known English contributors to that discourse, Mary Astell, will be focused on in order to explain out of which cultural and intellectual context early women's periodicals emerged. What did *The Female Tatler* borrow from earlier writings and in which tradition did it stand?

Another question the chapter will focus on concerns *The Female Tatler's* target audience and the purpose of the publication. How does it present itself as a new product in the first issues? Does it refer to its predecessor and the name it partly adopted from it? And, most importantly, how does it succeed in building a niche and creating interest among a new group of customers, namely women? Which women does the journal address specifically? The objective of the chapter is to show how the periodical constitutes women as writing and reading subjects and as participants in public discourse.

The fourth chapter, entitled *Gendering Credit and Credibility*, introduces the "cultural fable" to describe the dominant theme of credit in the periodicals and the variety of its gendered representations. In the early eighteenth century, credit became a currency in itself, which enabled the assessment not only of financial shares, but also of human beings. The importance of the new currency of credit manifests itself in periodical representations of the marriage market, in which courtship became another form of bargaining for an increasing number of men and women. This development is reflected in drastic and highly satirical journalistic depictions. Apart from "recovering" these harsh and bawdy representations from scholarly oblivion, the fourth chapter also aims at illustrating how Imperial discourse and narratives about England's colonial expansion discursively blended into periodical depictions of the marriage market.

With its special emphasis on men, the fifth chapter focuses on the picture that *The Female Tatler* offered its readers concerning masculine gender roles. Categorising these images into social types, the aim of the analysis is to find out if depictions were comparable to other contemporary texts, especially to other essay periodicals. The chapter engages in the "tale of feminisation" that several researchers, among them Anthony Pocock and Catherine Ingrassia, described as a collective phenomenon in the eighteenth century. How feminine are the men that appear in the texts of *The Female Tatler*? What is the function of dress as a social signifier not only for women, but also for men?

Success in wooing increasingly depended upon costly signalling, as will be shown in the sixth chapter. With the advent of capitalism, consumer goods were made available to a larger number of people than ever before. Because of their role as wise spenders and tasteful consumers, women became the target of advertisements which identified them as key customers. But women were not merely commercial consumers; they were also active as producers of cultural goods. The sixth chapter looks at the ways in which periodicals represented female producers and consumers of both consumer goods and cultural goods. As playwrights and actresses, women came to the fore in a time when most people believed that they were unable to understand, let alone produce art.

The objective of this work is to look out for salient protagonists and untold stories, an undertaking not dissimilar to literary archaeology. The concept of the cultural fable is to be used in order to link allegedly paradox texts, to uncover the literary value of seemingly "undeserving" material and to establish connections between initially unconnected periodical texts and subtexts. But before this can be done, more thorough investigations into the genre of the essay and of the essay periodical respectively must form the basis on which such a project can be developed.

I Development of the Genre and Research Perspectives

In their earliest emanations, newspapers were very different from their twenty-first century counterparts. A double-sided sheet with one long leader essay, the genre is nowadays referred to as "the essay periodical". The essayist's basic idea, namely that one can write about oneself and about one's personal interests spontaneously, was developed in sixteenth-century France, as will be outlined in what follows.

I.1 From the Essay to the Essay Periodical: From Trial to Tatler

Michel de Montaigne's *Essais*, published in 1580, were the first representatives of the essay as a literary form. An essay can be defined as "a short composition in prose that undertakes to discuss a matter, express a point of view, and persuade us to accept a thesis on any subject, or simply entertain."⁷ The word "Essai" is French for "trial" or "attempt", so the title signifies "attempts" and was meant to indicate the tentative and unsystematic nature of Montaigne's commentary on very diverse topics, such as "Of Illness" and "Of Sleeping."⁸ Montaigne's essay became famous for its original and nonconformist ideas on controversial topics, e.g. in "Of the cannibals," Montaigne opposes the conquest of the New World, deploring the suffering it inflicted upon the natives. His essay also engaged critically with torture and confessions obtained under torture.

Devices such as anecdote, striking illustration, and humour are used to increase the essay's appeal. The author assumes a tone of intimacy with his audience and writes in a self-revelatory fashion. Kate Lilley describes the essay genre as follows: "It is both a venue for, and a self-conscious representation of, experiment in thought as a means to self-knowledge. The ethical and practical

7 M. H. Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College, 1999) 83.

8 Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms* 83.

deliberation of conduct in everyday-life is the essay's central concern."⁹ Montaigne's essays raised questions rather than providing answers. Reflecting upon the unsystematic style of his essays, he refers to his own wayward path as "natural drunkenness". The versatility and flexibility of the essay as a genre is reflected in the range of authors associated with it. It encompasses writings as diverse as John Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690), Alexander Pope's *Essay on Man* (1734), and Joseph Addison's and Richard Steele's periodical essays in *The Tatler* (1709-1711) and *The Spectator* (1711-1714).

According to the inventor of the form, the essay is a genre arising from the leisured life: "For many years now the target of my thought has been myself alone; I examine nothing, I study nothing, but me; and if I do study anything else, it is so as to apply it at once to myself, or more correctly, within myself."¹⁰ His stated goal is to describe humankind, and especially himself, as frankly as possible. A predecessor of the novel, the essay's focus on individuality and on leisure reveals a very modern concern, emphasising and reflecting on individual experience. This notion of self-centredness is what has led Kate Lilley to describe the essay as "an atopic genre or, more precisely, an eccentric one" because "its commitment to meta-analysis and formal revision is aligned with the unsystematic nature of thought and experience."¹¹ Montaigne's free floating style contrasts that of his English follower Francis Bacon, who's *Essays*, published in 1597 are more well-organised intellectual queries. His texts were thematically unified and clearly structured. Kate Lilley has outlined that "Montaigne and Bacon belong together as the most influential architects of the essay as an experimental genre devoted to representing the movement of thought and, in turn, moving readers to think."¹² Getting the reader involved is the central specificity of the essayistic genre, no matter in which century. In the one hundred years that lie between Bacon's seventeenth-century essays and the emergence of the essay periodical in early eighteenth-century London, the essay genre has undergone major changes, both in terms of form and content.

9 K. Lilley, "Dedicated Thought: Montaigne, Bacon, and the English Renaissance Essay," *Teaching Early Modern English Prose*, eds. S.B. Monta and M. W. Ferguson (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2010) 96.

10 Lilley, "Dedicated Thought", 100.

11 *ibid.*

12 *ibid.*

In a retrospective assessment of the development from the French essays of Montaigne to the English periodical essays of *The Tatler* and *The Spectator*, William Hazlitt, an English literary critic and essayist from *The Edinburgh Magazine* accounts for it as follows: “The French author is contended [*sic*] to describe the peculiarities of his own mind and constitution,” whereas “the English journalist good-naturedly lets you into the secret both of his own affairs and those of others.”¹³ According to Hazlitt, Montaigne presented “fact” in the form of non-fictional thought, whereas the English periodical essayists of the early eighteenth century did not represent the world as they imagined it, but as they saw it. Not only the authors’ perspective changed, but also the form of their publications. While Montaigne had published his *Essais* in books, “Joseph Addison’s and Sir Richard Steele’s *Tatler* and *Spectator*, with their many successors, gave to the essay written in prose its standard modern vehicle, the literary periodical.”¹⁴

1.2 The Essay Genre

The literary form of the essay periodical, the “essay’s standard modern vehicle,” in the words of Abrams, followed strict rules: Formatted in four columns, with two columns on each side of the sheet, periodicals consisted of one single sheet measuring about eighteen centimetres wide by thirty-three centimetres high. Advertisements and letters to the editor were formatted as to stand out from the main text body. Essay periodicals had no cover-page akin to a twentieth-century magazine cover.¹⁵ The following picture is a scan of a 1709 copy of *The Tatler*. The example illustrates what the single-sheet paper looked like, and it shows how the content was divided into two columns.

13 Hazlitt’s Lectures, in: [The Edinburgh Magazine and Literary Miscellany: A New Series of the Scots Magazine](#) 4 (January-June 1819), p. 147.

14 Abrams, [A Glossary of Literary Terms](#) 83.

15 <http://cache2.allpostersimages.com/p/LRG/17/1751/OFO3D00Z/posters/the-tatler-founded-by-richard-steele-joseph-addison-was-a-major-contributor.jpg>, accessed 08/26/12.

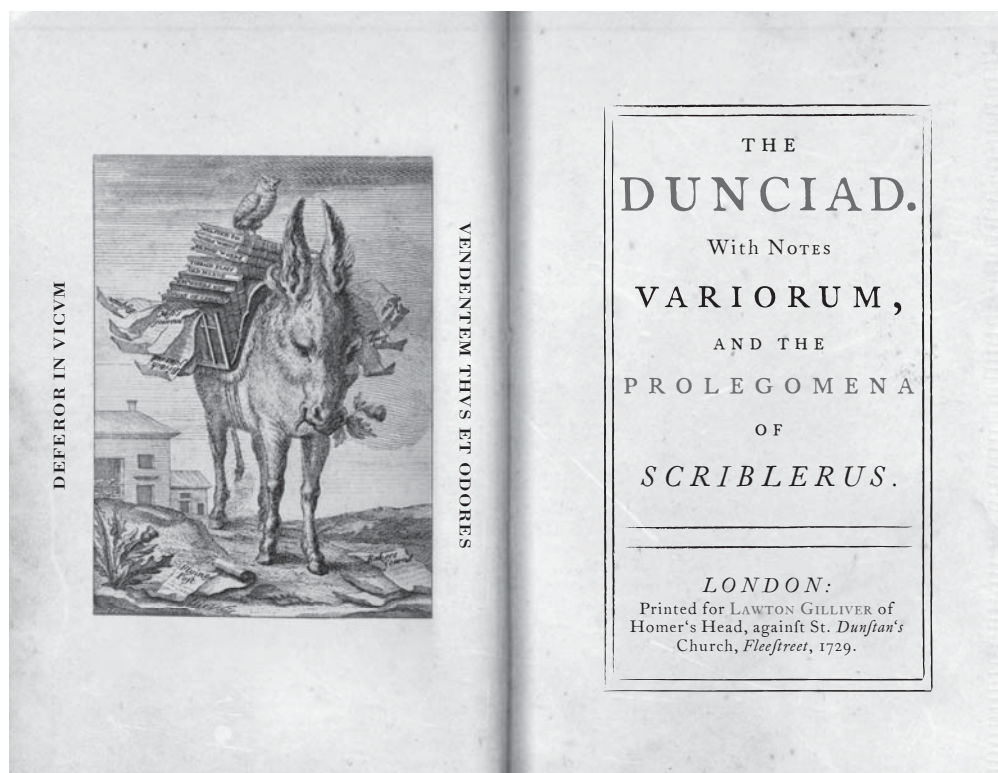


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The periodical genre is characterised by a common concern with manners and culture. A hybrid between literature and journalism, an essay periodical deals with a single topic and can be read without interruption in about

16 Timothy Hughes - Rare and Early Newspapers, <http://www.rarenewspapers.com/view/120306>, accessed 07/11/2014.

15 minutes.¹⁷ Because of the materials used in their production, periodicals were comparably cheap and affordable for many people. Consequently, they also had a large readership and often they were circulated until they crumbled, or, as still done nowadays, they were recycled into food wrappers.¹⁸ As Margaret Ezell has pointed out, “the form of the periodical had much to do with how its content was experienced and consumed.”¹⁹ The transience of the material equalled the transience of the words and contents of a periodical. This also explains why journalism was often regarded as typifying all the worst qualities of the mass market, i. e. mass-consumption, the fast pace of urban life and fugacity. Reflecting all those associations, the frontispiece to the 1729 edition of Alexander Pope’s mock-epic *The Dunciad* offers an insightful account on how people perceived of journalistic products in the early eighteenth century.



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- 17 R. Squibbs, *Urban Enlightenment and the Eighteenth-Century Periodical Essay: Transatlantic Retrospects* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014) 6.
- 18 M. N. Powell, “New Directions in Eighteenth Century Periodical Studies,” *Literature Compass* 8.5 (2011): 250.
- 19 Powell, “New Directions in Eighteenth Century Periodical Studies,” 250.
- 20 http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/a/a0/Pope_dunciad_variorum_1729.jpg, accessed 09/22/2013.

Dunciad Variorum is the second version of *The Dunciad*; "prolegomena" stands for "introduction" in Latin. "Scriblerus" points to the so-called "Scriblerian Club" and the group's fictional founder, Martin Scriblerus. The "Scriblerus Club" consisted of the genre's most prominent writers, namely Alexander Pope and Jonathan Swift, among others.²¹ The title-page of the 1729 edition shows crumpled sheets of periodicals dropping from the donkey's back, being blown away and littering the ground, conveying a vivid image of the short-lived nature of journalism. Even though the *Tatler* and *Spectator* papers were very popular and held in high esteem, journalism itself was often regarded as typifying all the worst qualities of the mass market. Grub Street was the name of a London street famous for its concentration of impoverished "hack writers", aspiring poets, low-end publishers and booksellers. Grub Street writers and print-workers existed on the margins of London's journalistic and literary scene. Referring to the various imitators of his periodical *The Tatler*, Richard Steele satirically proposed that a statue should be erected for him in Grub Street: "I may expect to have my statue erected in Grub Street, as being a common benefactor to that quarter."²² Notwithstanding his personal vexation over what he, in another text, called his "parasites", comparing himself to a whale and writers inspired by his work to organisms living on and off the whale, it needs to be acknowledged that generally telling, phenomena like hack writing enabled writers to publish who would not have had a chance to write in the first place before the advent of the free literary market.

This democratisation of writing, as scholars often describe the development, was subject to heavy criticism by contemporaries. *The Guardian* from 1717 comments on the years 1700 to 1710 as follows: "The age of counsellors, when every blockhead who could write his own name attempted to inform and amuse the public."²³ These early eighteenth century anxieties very much resemble twenty-first century fears related to the Internet and new forms of writing and publishing. The opportunities for publication offered by periodicals extended to amateurs as well as professionals, which was a double-edged sword for female writers: On the one hand it offered them unprecedented opportunities;

21 V. Rumbold, ed., *The Poems of Alexander Pope, The Dunciad (1728) & The Dunciad Variorum (1729)* (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2007) 311.

22 *The Tatler* no. 229 from Thursday, September 26, 1710.

23 R. Steele, J. Addison and A. Chalmers, *The Guardian* (Printed for F. C. and J. Rivington, J. Nunn, 1822) xxix.

on the other hand it devalued their achievements. The periodical illustrates a central tension in eighteenth-century writing: A preoccupation with class and gender, coupled with a blurring of traditional boundaries.

Cartoonist depictions represented periodicals as "disposable literature", as texts not written for eternity, but "for the moment". It is exactly this "easiness" and "spontaneity" which characterises the genre and made it attractive for writers who would not have become a part of the literary world under other circumstances. Publishing texts in a periodical was comparably easy; no large sums of money were required to launch the venture. This is exactly the reason why groups of people who were previously marginal to literary production got involved in periodical projects. Just like modern-day bloggers, who are not professional writers, most of them were unknown and not part of the "literary establishment". Writers of periodicals can therefore be seen as bloggers and tweeters of their time. But who exactly were these people and what did their journalistic ventures look like? In the following section, the periodicals focussed on in this study will be introduced.

1.3 Periodicals and their Publication History

The first essay periodical to be a great commercial success in England was Richard Steele's *The Tatler* (1709-1711), followed by Joseph Addison's *Spectator* (1711-1714).²⁴ Roger L'Estrange's *Observer* papers (1681-1687), Edward Ward's *London Spy* (1698-1700), Tom Browne's *Amusements Serious and Comical* (1700), John Dunton's *The Athenian Gazette* (1690-97) and Daniel Defoe's journalistic essays and pamphlets, especially his *Review* (1704-13), are among the best-known predecessors of *The Tatler* and *The Spectator*.²⁵

A mere three months after the first issue of *The Tatler*, a periodical called *The Female Tatler* hit the streets of London. It seized the well-known title and adapted it in order to address a new readership, namely women. Before *The*

24 I. Italia, *The Rise of Literary Journalism in the Eighteenth Century: Anxious Employment* (London: Routledge, 2005) 3.

25 *The Tatler* and *The Spectator* are very well researched and their publication history is readily available in numberless introductions to bound volumes. Therefore, I will not account for their publication specificities in this study. The main focus lays on *The Female Tatler* and its less known and more turbulent publication history.

Female Tatler, another journal, *The Lady's Diary or the Women's Almanack*²⁶, published in 1706, took on a rhetorically feminine stance. This periodical was, in contrast to *The Female Tatler*, a thoroughly didactic venture, as I will outline in the first chapter. Appropriating *The Tatler's topics and style*, *The Female Tatler* was the first rhetorically feminine representative of literary journalism.

Issued three times a week from July 1709 to March 1710, on days alternating with *The Tatler*, it ran for a total of 111 issues. The paper's first editor-persona was a woman who described herself as middle-aged and medium-sized, named Mrs. Crackenthorpe. Editor-personas were relatively new figures in literary history insofar as they were fictional characters who mixed in the real world of historical happenstance, the public sphere of Enlightenment London. Inducing the reader to the fictional modus of the texts, editor-personas were "masks" employed to achieve a certain effect.

In the very first issue of *The Female Tatler*, Mrs. Crackenthorpe comments on the tactic of publishing her paper on contrary days to *The Tatler*. She holds that her publication was not a rival of her predecessor, *The Tatler*, but a complementary paper. Moreover, she comments on the materiality and outline of her paper, a double-sided sheet. The first issue of *The Female Tatler* was delivered free of charge, a marketing trick explained by Mrs. Crackenthorpe as follows:

I shall follow Mr. Bickerstaff's method to get a footing into the world, and deliver the first paper gratis; afterwards those that will receive them at the price of one penny will [...] repay the charge and trouble of such undertaking.²⁷

It is interesting to note that Mrs. Crackenthorpe explicitly points out that her venture was a commercial one; she is not a leisured or moneyed wife or daughter who writes for fun, but draws a picture of herself as a real author who expects money in return for her literary toil.

26 BiblioBazaar and S. N. M. Contributors, *The Ladies Diary: Or, the Womens Almanack, for the Year of Our Lord, 1708. Being Bissextile, Containing Entertaining Particulars, Adapted for the Use* (London: BiblioBazaar, 2010).

27 F. Morgan, ed., *The Female Tatler* (London: J. M. Dent, 1992) 3.

The Female Tatler was the first periodical to develop and maintain a female editor-persona. *The Tatler* had featured a persona called Jenny Disdaff, Mrs. Bickerstaff's half-sister, but she only appeared in a few issues. In contrast to Jenny Disdaff, Mrs. Crackenthorpe's scope is not limited to the domestic sphere of the home, but she is authorised to comment on public affairs. Following a mysterious signing off at the end of paper number fifty-one, Mrs. Crackenthorpe left the periodical to the joint authorship of "A Society of Ladies", writing under the names of Lucinda, Artesia, Emilia, Rosella, Arabella and Sophronia:

Mrs. Crackenthorpe resenting the affront, offered to her by some rude citizens, altogether unacquainted with her person; gives notice that she has resigned her pretensions of writing the Female Tatler to a society of modest ladies, who in their turns will oblige the public with what ever [*sic*] they shall meet with that will be diverting, innocent, or instructive.²⁸

The fact that *The Female Tatler* introduced a group of editors, namely the Society of Ladies, was an innovative and unprecedented literary strategy that had never before been employed by any other periodical. Nevertheless, she adheres to the moral didacticism that was introduced by *The Tatler*, which then became a constitutive characteristic in the tone of essay periodicals. But "moral didacticism" does not mean preaching against consumption; rather, it means that periodicals sought to manage their readers' consumerist desires in ways they represented as rational, progressive and useful. In accordance with this claim, the ladies adopt the "prodesse et delectare" programme, as Mrs. Crackenthorpe proclaims in the last line. The editorial composition of *The Female Tatler* recalls salons which were also frequented by women. The social mode of the salon with its comparably democratic stance was taken up in the latter half of *The Female Tatler*, while most topics were the area of expertise for one or two members of the group, some topics allowed for comment by all members.

The Female Tatler was the first periodical to transport the social mode of the French mixed-sex salon to the realm of the literary – to transform the salon's polite public-sphere conversations into written discourse. The concept of a club or group of writers co-editing a periodical was actually introduced by

28 Morgan, ed., *The Female Tatler* 117.

The Female Tatler, a fact completely ignored by critics. Therefore, the aim of this work is to highlight *The Female Tatler*'s innovativeness and to show that it has been undeservedly neglected by literary critics for centuries. It was not only a female response to Addison and Steele, but also set its own effectual genre standards. Unfortunately, we do not know who the writers behind the personas Mrs. Crackenthorpe and the Society of Ladies were. The fact that *The Female Tatler*'s authorship remains contested among scholars illustrates that in the early eighteenth century, the publication of such a satirical paper could be a dangerous task, which is why the writers did not reveal their identities.

Even though little is known and scholars can only speculate, various possible authors and authoresses of *The Female Tatler* have been proposed. Because her name was implicitly mentioned in *The Tatler*, one of the most likely candidates for *The Female Tatler*'s authorship is Delarivier Manley. She lived approximately from 1674 to 1724 and was active as an author from roughly 1695 to 1720.²⁹ According to Paula Mc Dowell, Manley was one of the first English writers of political propaganda whose profession earned her a living. She was acknowledged as the author of at least six volumes of political allegory, six political pamphlets, and nine issues of the Tory *Examiner*.³⁰ The publication of the *New Atlantis* led to the arrest of Manley and her publisher on charges of libel. The novel is a political satire that deals with sexual escapades of prominent contemporaries, including courtiers, courtesans, politicians, and aristocrats.³¹ It is important to know that Manley was the author of *The New Atlantis* because *The Tatler* explicitly links *The Female Tatler* to *The New Atlantis*, as the following quote illustrates. Thereby, *The Tatler* alludes to the fact that both were authored by the same person. Telling in the first person and referring to his rivals and imitators, *The Tatler*'s Mr. Bickerstaff states: "I was [...] scolded by a *Female Tatler*, and flandered by another of the same character, under the title of *Atlantis*."³² Evidence for Manley's authorship of *The Female Tatler* not only rests on *The Tatler*'s hint.

29 P. McDowell, *The Women of Grub Street: Press, Politics, and Gender in the London Literary Marketplace, 1678-1730* (Gloucestershire: Clarendon Press, 1998) 19.

30 McDowell, *The Women of Grub Street* 19.

31 C. Lennox, R. Perry and S. Carlile, *Henrietta* (University Press of Kentucky, 2008) 282.

32 R. Steele, "The Tatler," (London: 1709-1711), vol. 4, 153.

After Mrs. Crackenthorpe officially withdrew from the periodical on the fourth of November 1709, Delarivier Manley was arrested for charges of libel. The literary critic Ionia Italia explains that Manley was held in custody from October twenty-ninth, 1709 to February fourteenth, 1710.³³ This time span perfectly matches the officially proclaimed change in editors after fifty-one issues, as the last issue by Mrs. Crackenthorpe was that from October thirty-first, 1709. According to Fidelis Morgan, the editors had to change because the imprisoned Ms. Manley was no longer able to edit the periodical.³⁴ Nicola Parsons dismisses this view and makes a strong case for Baker's authorship: "While the attribution of *The Female Tatler* to Manley rests on the coincidence of dates between her arrest and the paper's change of authorship, it has been ascribed to Baker on the basis of careful reading of the paper's preoccupation."³⁵ The British Library Catalogue credits the playwright and lawyer Thomas Baker with *The Female Tatler's* authorship.³⁶ So, in fact, there is some evidence which points to the fact that a man was the author of the first women's periodical. Proof for Baker's authorship rests primarily on the fact that "the *British Apollo*, which feuded with *The Female Tatler* between August and October of 1709, identifies Baker as the author of *The Female Tatler*."³⁷ The following quote from the *British Apollo* supports Thomas Baker's authorship:

But others will swear that this wise Undertaker,

By Trade's an At—ney, by Name is a B—r,

Who rambles about with a Female Disguise on

And lives upon Scandal, as Toads do on Poyson.³⁸

The line "rambles about with female disguise on" can clearly be read as pointing to the fact that Baker assumed a female pen name. According to John

33 Italia, *The Rise of Literary Journalism* 50.

34 *ibid.*

35 N. Parsons, *Reading Gossip in Early Eighteenth-Century England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009) 109.

36 T. J. Schoenberg and L.J. Trudeau, *Literature Criticism from 1400 to 1800* (Farmington Hills: Gale, 2007) 330.

37 Italia, *The Rise of Literary Journalism* 50.

38 A. Hill, "The British Apollo," (1708-1709), vol., 49, 12 September 1709.

Harrington Smith, “Baker’s authorship can be quite conclusively demonstrated for at least a part of this puzzling and composite periodical.”³⁹ Erin Mackie suggests that *The Female Tatler* could also have been a joint production by Baker and Manley.⁴⁰ More suggestions point to another man, namely Bernard Mandeville, who was probably involved in authoring *The Female Tatler*. According to M. M. Goldsmith, who published an edition of the Lucinda and Artesia-issues of *The Female Tatler*, Mandeville’s authorship of at least thirty-two of the Society of Ladies-issues is an established fact:

On Friday fourth of November 1709, number fifty-two of the Female Tatler, one of the more successful of the many imitators of Richard Steele’s Tatler, appeared. In the previous issue, it had been announced that the paper would henceforth be written by ‘A Society of modest Ladies.’ Female Tatler 52 purported to be written by one of that society, ‘Lucinda’ – she and her sister ‘Artesia’ eventually wrote thirty-two issues. In fact both sisters were a Dutch physician with a fortnight of his thirty-ninth birthday, Bernard Mandeville.⁴¹

According to M. M. Goldsmith, Mandeville was the author of the second half of *The Female Tatler*. Ironically, he points to the literary “drag act” allegedly performed by Mandeville, who took on the roles of two young sisters, both members of the Society of Ladies. Most famous for his work *The Fable of the Bees*, in which he states that individual vice ultimately equals public benefit, Bernard Mandeville was a controversial writer who promoted equal education for men and women, a conviction which is also inscribed in *The Female Tatler*. However, it remains uncertain as to how many issues of *The Female Tatler* were actually written by Mandeville. Literary critic Fidelis Morgan suggests that the playwright Susannah Centlivre may also have contributed to the periodical. The reason why Morgan assumes this is because one entire issue of *The Female Tatler* was devoted to the discussion of one of her plays. Susannah Centlivre was a famous and well known dramatist in her own day, but later fell into oblivion, a fate she shared with many other female writers. She wrote her first plays under the name of Susannah Freeman, before she married Queen Anne’s

39 J. H. Smith, “Thomas Baker and ‘the Female Tatler,’” *Modern Philology* 49.3 (1952): 182.

40 E. S. Mackie, *The Commerce of Everyday Life: Selections from the Tatler and the Spectator* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 1998) 129.

41 B. Mandeville and M. M. Goldsmith, *By a Society of Ladies: Essays in the Female Tatler* (London: Thoemmes, 1999) 11.

cook, Joseph Centlivre, and adopted his name.⁴² Her husband's strong ties to the court may have informed some of her plays.

The Female Tatler mentions Centlivre's plays in several issues; she is a prominent character in the periodical. In the preface of her play *A Man's Bewitched* or *The Devil to do about Her*, Susannah Centlivre comments on speculations concerning her possible involvement in the periodical's authorship:

I should not have troubled my courteous Reader with a Preface, had I not lain under the necessity of clearing myself of what some people have been pleased to charge me with; viz. of being the Author of a Paper call'd, The Female Tatler, consequently of a paragraph in that of the 14th Instant, relating to this Comedy; tho' I think no reasonable person will believe I could be guilty of so much folly. Tho' vanity is said to be the darling Vice of Womankind; yet nothing [sic] but an idiot would express themselves so openly; and I hope the world won't think me guilty of printing, what I must blush to read, nor imagine it wrote even by any friend of mine [...] This passage I happen'd to mention among my acquaintance, for 'tis natural to have a kind of a tender for our own productions, but especially if they have the fortune to divert others. Now, if from this the author of the Tatler gather'd [sic] his accounts, I am guilty of telling, but not designedly, for who they are that write that paper, or how distinguish'd [sic], I am perfectly ignorant, and declare I never was concerned, either in writing, or publishing any of the Tatlers.⁴³

Susannah Centlivre thus explicitly negates any involvement in the authorship of *The Female Tatler*. Nonetheless, she states that the information published in the *Female Tatler* may be the result of a conversation with an acquaintance of hers. Accordingly, she decisively disclaims any authorial involvement while admitting that she possibly contributed information without her knowledge.

42 S. Centlivre, J. Knapton, C. Hitch, L. Hawes, W. Bathoe, T. Lowndes, T. Caslon, G. Kearsley, S.C. Co, J. and R. Tonson, The Works of the Celebrated Mrs. Centlivre: The Life of the Author. Perjur'd Husband. Beaux's Duel. Gamester. Basset Table. Love at a Venture. Stolen Heiress (Printed for J. Knapton, C. Hitch and L. Hawes, J. and R. Tonson, S. Crowder and Co. W. Bathoe, T. Lownds, T. Caslon, and G Kearsly, 1761) xi.

43 J. Pearson, ed., The Dramatic Works of the Celebrated Mrs. Centlivre, with a New Account of Her Life (London: J. Knapton, 1872) 77.

Susannah Centlivre repeatedly takes up the question of *The Female Tatler's* authorship in the prologue to *A Man's Bewitched*:

Our female author trembling stands within, her fear arises from another's sin; one of her sex has so abused the town, that in her score she dreads your angry frown: Tho' I dare say, poor soul, she never writ lampoon, or satyr on the box or pit; a harmless hum'rous play is her extent of wit. Tho' Bickerstaff's vast genius may engage, and lath the vice and follies of the age; why should tender Delia tax the nation; stickle, and make a noise for reformation, who always gave a loose, herself, to inclination.⁴⁴

The prologue of *A Man's Bewitched* includes another literary form, namely poetry. Illustrating the playfulness and stylistic variety of Restoration drama, this excerpt is interesting for two reasons. Firstly, because it points to the fact that *The Female Tatler's* author must indeed have been, or must have been generally perceived as being, a woman; this is evident in the first line. Secondly, Centlivre mentions "Delia" and thereby alludes to Delarivier Manley. In her best-known work, *Secret Memoirs and Manners of Several Persons of Quality of Both Sexes, From the New Atlantis, an Island in the Mediterranean* from 1709, Manley inserts her own autobiography as the story of "Delia".⁴⁵ Thus, the prologue from Susannah Centlivre's play *A Man's Bewitched* is one piece of evidence that makes Manley's authorship likely. What these lines also evidence is that a strong link must have existed between *The Female Tatler* and Susannah Centlivre, as she mentions the periodical twice, both in a preface and in a prologue. So even though she disclaims any involvement, it could nevertheless have been the case that she was the author of at least some issues. The early eighteenth century was the heyday of satire, so Centlivre's strong disclaimers could also have been merely ironic.

To sum up, two women, Delarivier Manley and Susannah Centlivre, and two men, Bernard Mandeville and Thomas Baker, could have been involved in *The Female Tatler's* authorship. There is convincing evidence for all possibilities, so in fact the authorship question will probably never be fully answered. It seems very likely that more than one author, and probably both men and women,

44 Pearson, ed., *The Dramatic Works of the Celebrated Mrs. Centlivre* 79.

45 C. Sussmann, *Eighteenth-Century English Literature* (Cambridge: John Wiley & Sons, 2013) 50.

contributed to the periodical. Just as unclear as the question of authorship is the question of who read *The Female Tatler*. In the following section, I will provide an account of what is known about the readership of periodicals in general and that of *The Female Tatler* in particular.

1.4 Readership

Owing to the lack of sustained evidence, it is difficult to make concrete claims about the composition and size of the contemporary reading public. One of the many reasons for this lack of information is that only few records have survived till today. Moreover, papers were passed on and circulated among friends and family, so one issue could potentially be read by many. The reading audience for periodicals in the first few decades of the century was probably predominantly urban and included shopkeepers, domestic servants and apprentices and their masters. It is likely that a significant proportion of this readership was female.

London's population in the early eighteenth century amounted to approximately 675,000 inhabitants.⁴⁶ It needs to be acknowledged that the majority of them were illiterate and so poor that they could not afford to read. The circles among which periodicals were read and distributed were very small and restricted to the urban centre. One must be aware of this when studying numbers and figures, bearing in mind that they imply generalisation and simplification. Richard D. Altick's *The English Common Reader* has been the primary source of knowledge for generations of scholars interested in historical perspectives on reading. The figures he gives for early eighteenth century periodicals and their readers are as follows:

Among the newspapers published in 1704, the *London Gazette* printed 6000 an issue and the others considerably fewer; Defoe's *Review* had an edition of but 400. It has been calculated that in that year 7600 copies of newspapers were

46 V. Gatrell, *City of Laughter: Sex and Satire in Eighteenth-Century London* (Bloomsbury: Walker & Co., 2007) 6.

printed on Monday, 8400 on Tuesday, 2600 on Wednesday, 1400 on Thursday and 1600 on Friday, and 9600 on Saturday – an average daily sale of 7300.⁴⁷

These data help the modern reader to imagine the extent to which the literary market grew in the early eighteenth century, notwithstanding the comparatively small production numbers. Concerning *The Female Tatler*, it may be argued that the increasing amount of advertisements in the paper, stretching to more than one and a half columns in several issues, thus occupying more than one fourth of the overall space, proves that the journal was actually a financial success; otherwise the entrepreneurs would have published their advertisements in other journals. M. M. Goldsmith has accounted for *The Female Tatler*'s printing and sales numbers as follows:

Female Tatler 74 (23-6 December 1709) says that *The Tatler* was printing about six times as many copies per issue as was *The Female Tatler* – the latter 'wetting' one ream of paper to the former's six times that amount. Taking the estimate that about 2500 copies of each issue of *The Tatler* were then being printed, the ratio suggests that as many as four hundred copies of each issue of *The Female Tatler* may have come off the press.⁴⁸

Though these numbers may appear ridiculously small by twenty-first century standards, they need to be seen in context: A comparably small population with few literate people. But who were the persons behind the numbers? How many men, how many women were there among the estimated daily customers? This question is almost unanswerable, guesses are at best speculative. Wives, for example, are underrepresented in all accounts that may be produced of female readers. The reason for this is that they did not exist legally apart from their husbands and were consequently less likely than widows and unmarried women to obtain credit for themselves. Where women bought any kind of literature, the majority of these were most likely single or widowed. Interestingly, an enormous increase in sales coincided with widowhood. From this, it follows that women gained a greater access to books, periodicals and newspapers once they were in charge of their own finances

47 R. D. Altick, *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public, 1800-1900* (Ohio State University Press, 1998) 48.

48 M. M. Goldsmith, ed., *By a Society of Ladies: Essays in the Female Tatler* (University of Durham Press, 1999) 48.

and households.⁴⁹ In general all women, regardless of their marital status, were likely to have less money to spend on themselves than men who were generally the main wage-earners.

Not only differentiations concerning gender are difficult to make out, but also differentiations concerning class.⁵⁰ Scholars have pointed out that the early eighteenth century witnessed a democratisation of reading; levels of literacy increased markedly in the Enlightenment. As those who had previously not been educated started a higher level of schooling than in earlier generations, and those of the former educated classes were also increasing their learning, the literary public was fast-growing. People had enough free time, money and interest to make reading a part of their daily lives. The success of popular periodicals like *The Tatler* and *The Spectator*, which aimed both to instruct and to entertain their readers, illustrates that the reading public of the early eighteenth century was not only able to read, but also specifically chose to read in their free time.

Reading became a leisure-time activity and people did not re-read the same texts over and over again as was common before prints became mass products. Scholars have accounted for this change by proclaiming a shift from "intensive" to "extensive", from qualitative to quantitative reading that took place around the eighteenth century.⁵¹ In the preceding centuries, those texts available to readers – the main one being the Bible – were read repetitively, especially by Catholics. The aim was to memorise the content and to repeat the words in prayer. Then, in the early eighteenth century, reading became more secular and individualised; reading texts aloud was no longer practiced to the same extent as before. Individual reading was encouraged and texts were only read once. An increase in reading material and the general availability of printed products made repetitive reading superfluous. The increasing importance of the act of reading in this period was closely linked to the post-Reformation Protestant encouragement of individual reading. Reading and writing were considered a means of tallying up one's gifts from God, to regulate the "self"

49 J. Fergus, "Women Readers," *Women and Literature in Britain 1700-1800*, ed. Vivien Jones (Cambridge University Press, 2000) 171 ff.

50 Fergus, "Women Readers," 171.

51 L. Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500 – 1800* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977).

and its conduct. Reflection on one's deeds and convictions was understood as a way of advancing religion.

Along with the rise of Protestantism, literacy as the prerequisite for reading increased markedly at the end of the seventeenth and at the beginning of the eighteenth century. According to J. P. Hunter, "in the eighteenth century, female literacy is typically about two thirds of male literacy. By 1750, male literacy was around 60 per cent, female literacy was around 40 per cent."⁵² The usual measure of literacy at the time was the ability to sign one's name on a legal document. It is important to bear this in mind when dealing with statistics. John Brewer has argued that the percentage of literate women in London changed more dramatically than elsewhere in the country, increasing from 22 to 66 percent between the 1670s and 1720s.⁵³ He points out that of the members of the lower classes, shopkeepers were most likely to be literate, as ninety-five percent of them could read and write by 1775.

What is significant about these numbers is that they show how the reading public had expanded beyond the traditional limitations of class and gender, a prerequisite for the landmark success of periodicals. The aristocracy, gentry, and upper levels of the professional classes were not the only ones who could afford casual reading. Professionals, commercial farmers, merchants, tradespeople, skilled craftsmen, domestic servants and even labourers became part of the reading public.⁵⁴ Kathryn Shevelow sees this change as a "transformation in the social definition of reading, in the cultural consciousness of who readers were and what they read."⁵⁵ As a consequence, the entire conception of the terms "reader" and "reading" changed. What had often been referred to as the periodicals' "levelling function" by contemporaries was actually a democratising force: Periodicals tried to gain a readership made of both men and women, so they adopted their content appropriately. They were "initially

52 J. P. Hunter, Before Novels: The Cultural Contexts of Eighteenth-Century English Fiction (London: Norton, 1990) 72.

53 J. Brewer, The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century (London: Harper Collins, 2004) 167-68.

54 K. Shevelow, Women and Print Culture: The Construction of Femininity in the Early Periodical (London: Routledge, 1989) 27.

55 Shevelow, Women and Print Culture 28.

directed at a readership which included a mixture of classes and both sexes.”⁵⁶ Periodicals were affordable for a greater number of people and in contrast to lengthy books, they could be read in one sitting. Periodicals popularised reading, thereby blurring earlier boundaries of class and gender. In her account of this change, Kathryn Shevelow outlines: “The reader as a sign was being reformulated, no longer signifying the exclusive practices of an upper-middle class or university-educated, predominantly male elite.”⁵⁷ What occurred was a change in the collective conceptualisation of reading matter and the reader him- or herself. According to Ionia Italia “the audience for periodicals in the first few decades of the century, then, was probably predominantly urban and included some shopkeepers, domestic servants and apprentices and their masters.”⁵⁸ Why were these hard-working members of the lower middle class interested in periodicals? According to Ionia Italia, “early journals frequently describe their role as that of disseminating knowledge to those without the leisure, money or education to read books.”⁵⁹ Thus, readers hoped to benefit from their leisure time activity, to be "shaped" by what they read and thereby to improve their social standing. The byname "moral weekly" points to the didactic claims of periodicals.

Commonly believed to be in need for special instruction and guidance, women were "spied out" as a specific target group. By spreading literacy among the women of a class which had previously been indifferent to female education, periodicals helped to enlarge the eighteenth century reading public. Prospering and socially ambitious tradesmen began to encourage their daughters' learning, as a basic education was also desirable for women on the marriage market. In the course of my analyses, I will demonstrate how this fact is also reflected in *The Female Tatler*. More and more women were relieved of their domestic duties. As Richard Altick has pointedly stated, reading replaced needlework.⁶⁰ In *The English Common Reader*, he analyses which other factors stimulated the taste for reading in the early eighteenth century, emphasising the steadily growing need for information and guidance in everyday affairs. He links the ever greater economic importance and civic responsibility of the new

56 Shevelow, Women and Print Culture 3.

57 *ibid.*, 22.

58 Italia, The Rise of Literary Journalism in the Eighteenth Century 10.

59 *ibid.*, 11.

60 Altick, The English Common Reader 45.

middle class to the growing popularity of books of utility, holding that they were more important in ordinary life than they had been a century earlier.⁶¹ Altick argues that *The Tatler* was so successful because of its

[...] tolerant humour, beneath which rested moral principles as solid as any citizen could wish, a learning that never smelled of the lamp; a relish for life that was never tinged with Restoration profligacy, a prose style that was simple, yet never condescending.⁶²

The early essay periodical amplified the specifically literary interest of the new middle class. Kathryn Shevelow sees the key function of periodicals in the construction of a new "bourgeois self" as that of transmitters, promoting "genteel" codes of conduct and values explicitly associated with the upper classes. She stresses the interplay that periodicals held up, oscillating between the construction and assertion of such morals, addressing readers represented as being in need of such instruction in manners.⁶³ This specific instruction can be seen as audience-building in its literal sense. Because the interaction with readers was so important, periodicals also had to "stage" it. The stage for the performance of interaction was the coffeehouse, a forum for public discourse inaugurated by, facilitated by and based on periodicals.

1.5 The Coffeehouse

The coffeehouse was an institution central to the organisation of public life in early eighteenth-century London. The close connection between the essay periodical and the coffeehouse becomes especially clear in the very first issue of *The Tatler*:

All accounts of gallantry, pleasure, and entertainment, shall be under the article of White's Chocolate-house; Poetry, under that of Will's Coffee-house; Learning, under the title of The Grecian; foreign and domestic news, you will

61 Altick, *The English Common Reader* 45.

62 *ibid.*, 46.

63 Shevelow, *Women and Print Culture* 2.

have from St. James's Coffee-house; and what else I have to offer on any other subject, shall be dated from my own apartment.⁶⁴

The subject matter is divided and ordered in the text according to different sections, each emanating from the particular place – coffeehouse, chocolate house, or private apartment – where the topic in question is most likely to be discussed. The paper's design thus traces London's social geography: The coffeehouses stand as newsprint analogues of actual places, public and private.⁶⁵ As Erin Mackie has stated, "at the coffeehouse, every man could take up the mantle of statesman, politician, and critic."⁶⁶ A new kind of public disassociated from the pre-existing sphere of public authority surrounding the state and court was housed in the new urban coffee venue. Here, all types of news became generally accessible and were opened to questioning and rational debate. The coffeehouses presented a microcosm of London's social world, which in turn was compiled in the essay periodical. Linking the periodical to the coffeehouse was a necessity which was not only acknowledged as such by *The Tatler*, but also by *The Female Tatler*. As a woman, however, Mrs. Crackenthorpe faced a severe problem: She was not allowed to frequent coffeehouses, but as a "proper" editor persona, access to coffeehouse circles was essential. Emphasising her popularity as a hostess, she solves the problem as follows:

Not that my drawing room ever had the least ill character, tho' a foolish baronet once call'd it the scandal office. But as I am courteous to all persons, and strangers have the same respect paid 'em as my former acquaintance, half the nation visits me, where I have a true history of the world; and to oblige those who are absent from me, by turns, shall endeavour to give it 'em again. I shall date all my advices from my own apartment, which comprehends, White's, Will's, the Grecian, Garraway's, in Exchange-Alley, and all the India houses within the Bills of Mortality. Since grave statesmen, airy beaus, lawyers, cits, poets and parsons, and ladies of all degrees assemble there, each person delivers himself according to his talent, which gives me a superficial smattering of all of 'em.⁶⁷

64 Mackie, *The Commerce of Everyday Life* 50.

65 *ibid.*, 45.

66 *ibid.*

67 Morgan, ed., *The Female Tatler* 2.

The account that Mrs. Crackenthorpe gives of her own venture starts with a self-deprecatory comment, indirectly associating her locus of gathering, her drawing room, with a scandal office. She plays with the image and title of her own paper, arousing interest while performatively distancing herself from scandal. She brings up the trope of gossip, inextricably linked to women's conversation, to make clear that this is not what she is interested in as an editor. An utter paradox, as my analysis will show. But this proclamation serves to reassert Mrs. Crackenthorpe's discursive authority, to show that she "is someone", that she has "her proper place" in the social world of her time. She presents herself as a generous, open-minded hostess, welcoming old friends and new guests, thereby emphasising the variety of her social conduct, a stratagem which serves to create interest in her paper. The self-confident claim "half the nation visits me," though clearly a hyperbole, serves to demonstrate her social standing, to demarcate her role as an "intelligencer of the public sphere". Mrs. Crackenthorpe holds that she has "a true history of the world," repeatedly stressing her competence and social pre-eminence. Like the initial issue of *The Tatler*, the first *Female Tatler* is urged to establish a link between itself and popular coffeehouses. Mrs. Crackenthorpe thereby shows that she does not "stand back" from *The Tatler* by mentioning the same coffeehouses, namely White's, Will's, The Grecian; she even names more than were listed in the debut-*Tatler*.

Instead of her frequenting coffeehouses, she imports coffeehouse-culture and its actors to her private apartments: The coffeehouse comes to her and gathers in her drawing room, not the other way round. It is understood that she does not mention the fact that as a woman, she was not admitted to coffeehouses: She gallantly circumvents this tiny obstacle on her way to becoming a premier society lady and periodical editor. Putting the rule to the test, she gives a representative selection of her company, mentioning statesmen, lawyers, poets and others. By asserting how varied and widely stratified her social conduct is, she again emphasises her qualification and authority as a periodical writer. It is interesting to note that neither statesmen nor poets are frequent focuses of *The Female Tatler*, and lawyers are mostly represented in a very bad light. But those paradoxes will be the subject of analyses in later chapters. *The Female Tatler* mentions these professions because their representatives constitute the social groups that in turn make up the coffeehouses' clientele and the periodical's readership.

The main underlying paradigm that organises social spaces is the juxtaposition between public and private: Mrs. Crackenthorpe's private apartments in juxtaposition to the public world of the coffeehouse. Private, coded as female, and public, coded as male, are contradistinctions that organise contemporary thought, allowing the rhetorically feminine narrative voice, the speaker of *The Female Tatler*, to either reassert or transgress present boundaries, as will be shown in the analysis parts of the dissertation. Before focusing on these questions, however, the history of the coffeehouse will be briefly summarised in order to explain why it was of such great social importance.

Coffeehouses became the centres of literary and political criticism between 1680 and 1730. First introduced to Europe as a drug, coffee was reported to effect major transformations in the drinker. In the early seventeenth century, travellers to the Near East gave reports of an aromatic drink with invigorating effects. A travel book from 1609 that contains descriptions of coffeehouses in Arabia, Turkey and Egypt explains: "Their coffa houses are more common than Ale houses in England; but they use not so much to sit in the houses as on benches on both sides of the streets [...] if there be any news, it is talked of there."⁶⁸ From the start, coffee drinking was understood to be primarily a social experience, associated with the spreading of news and the burgeoning of open public discussion. The coffee-house experience arrived on the scene in England in 1650, when a Jewish immigrant from Turkey set up a shop in Oxford. It was in the capital, however, "that the institution really took off and became a vital part of the fabric of urban life."⁶⁹ Equally exotic were tea and chocolate, which were also advertised in periodicals.

The coffeehouse was characterised by special rules of conduct that discouraged swearing, gambling, rowdiness and sedition, and encouraged relaxed sociability and the improvement of conversation. No alcoholic beverages were sold. Because coffee was cheap and customers were welcome to linger for an hour or two without ordering more, the coffeehouse was a

68 Anonymous, *A Collection of Voyages and Travels, Consisting of Authentic Writers in Our Own Tongue: And Continued with Others of Note, That Have Published Histories, Voyages... Relating to Any Part of the Continent of Asia, Africa, America, Europe... With a Great Variety of Cuts, Prospects, Ruins, Maps, and Charts*. (London: T. Osborne), 1745, 797.

69 Mackie, *The Commerce of Everyday Life* 15.

place where members of the various social classes met. In his famous study *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, Jürgen Habermas explains:

There was a certain parity of the educated, between members of the aristocracy and bourgeois intellectuals. The coffeehouse not merely gave access to the relevant circles less formal and easier; it embraced the wider strata of the middle class, including craftsmen and shopkeepers.⁷⁰

A very diverse clientele came together to discuss about politics, news, and other matters of public interest. Periodicals acted as facilitators for these discussions. They initiated what Erin Mackie has called a closed circuit of production and consumption. Thereby, she means that the commercial periodical press and coffeehouse society entered into a mutually fruitful dialogue: “Presumably written, and even generated in the discussions at particular coffeehouses, each section in *The Tatler* is in turn circulated and read in coffeehouses, refuelling the conversation.”⁷¹ This interdependency between periodical and coffeehouse is an important communicative element, framing the relationship between writer, authorial voice, and reader.

The omnipresence of printed material and the advent of new discursive spaces like the coffeehouse in turn produced new discursive forms. But how exactly did the "newly enlightened public" discuss and debate? Which were the discursive frameworks members of the "polite enlightened public" adapted their mode of behaviour, their choice of topics and vocabulary to?

1.6 The Generation and Dissemination of Discourse in Periodicals

The word "discourse" is used in my study to denote the act of public speech. “Public discourse” may be defined as encompassing the communicative processes necessary for the formation of public opinion.⁷² A discursive structure

70 J. Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (MIT Press, 1991) 33.

71 Mackie, *The Commerce of Everyday Life* 45.

72 R. Post, *Constitutional Domains: Democracy, Community, Management* (Harvard University Press, 1995) 302.

can be detected because of systematic and cohesive ideas, opinions, concepts, ways of thinking and behaving which are generated within a particular context. The aim of my analysis is to detect patterns in *The Female Tatler's* discursive structure and to relate them to other major contemporary discourse, using the concept of the cultural fable as explained in the preliminaries of the introduction.

When using the word "discourse", recourse to Foucault's work is crucial. Thus, before continuing with the idea introduced above, I would first like to give a brief account of my usage of the term. The term "discourse" is, as Sara Mills points out, not rooted within a larger system of fully worked-out theoretical ideas.⁷³ This lack of system may be one of the reasons that there are so many definitions of the term "discourse" and so many meanings. Foucault's use of "discourse" encompasses different aspects. The first definition that Foucault gives in *The Archeology of Knowledge* is the broadest one: "the general domain of all statements"⁷⁴, that is, all utterances or texts which have meaning and which have some effects in the real world. The second definition that he gives – "an individualisable group of statements"⁷⁵ – is one which is used more often by Foucault when he discusses the particular structures within discourse.

The third definition of the term "discourse" that Foucault gives is "a regulated practice which accounts for a number of statements."⁷⁶ Most works on discourse theory employ those definitions almost interchangeably and one can be overlaid on the other. A very productive way of thinking about discourse for the specific needs of my analysis is to see discourse not as a group of signs or as a stretch of text, but, as Foucault famously stated "practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak"⁷⁷ Thus, in telling about men, women, and the way they ought to behave, periodicals contributed to the formation of new gender-roles and -stereotypes. In the case of *The Female Tatler*, this is especially interesting because of its pragmatism, i. e. the fact that it claimed to be written by a woman.

73 S. Mills, *Discourse* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2004).

74 M. Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge* (London: Routledge Classics, 2002) 90.

75 *ibid.*, 90.

76 *ibid.*

77 *ibid.*, 54.

1.7 Rhetorical Femininity

It is part of *The Female Tatler's* outline to make the readers think that there is a woman "telling" to them. Thus, *The Female Tatler* uses a literary device in its texts that has been termed "rhetorical femininity" by Tedra Orsell.

Rhetorically feminine periodicals employ women personae [...] symbolically to represent both generic affiliation and the relationship between publication and the public sphere. In the process, rhetorical femininity explores the ways that gender and by extension sex enable debates about public and private spheres, the meanings of family and their relationship to publicness and privacy, particularly for women, and the opportunities and possibilities of the developing print culture as a founding element in the emerging public sphere. [...] Rhetorical femininity is not exclusively the province of women writers. It is not, however, purely symbolic: rhetorical femininity genders the text generally, not specifically, claiming to represent women as a class rather than specific women writers.⁷⁸

I will use Orsell's concept and terminology in my study in order to account for the fact that we do simply not know if it was a biological woman or man who wrote *The Female Tatler*. Nevertheless, its texts are clearly gendered in that they address a female reading audience. Moreover, they claim to include material specifically written for women. The term "rhetorical femininity" encompasses these circumstances and provides the appropriate terminology to talk about the texts' gendered pragmatics. The gendering of a text organises discourse in a new way. Because of their strong interconnectedness with contemporary social contexts, the analysis of gender-specific essay periodicals reveals how they constructed gendered social realities.

My study sees periodicals as written discourse and I am interested in the question as to which types of discourse *The Female Tatler* draws upon and how it combines them. The aim is not only to extract from it sets of ideas that circulated in eighteenth-century England, but also to see how *The Female Tatler* draws from, and feeds back into, this existing discourse. Written accounts of polite conversation in London's public spheres, i. e. coffee shops, tea houses

78 T. Orsell, "Tatling Women in the Public Sphere: Rethorical Feminity and the English Essay Periodical," *Eighteenth Century Studies* 38.2 (2005): 283.

and debating clubs, periodicals are written reflections of contemporary social practices. The periodical models the production and representation of contemporary discourse and it illustrates how language-use adapts to a changing socio-political environment in the early eighteenth century. The present study thus explores the links between social and discursive phenomena not only by focusing on essay periodicals, but also on other influential texts and literary genres of the period. It is the aim of the present study to find out which discourse strands were taken up, how this happened and how they were subverted. The way in which *The Female Tatler* engages in contemporary discourse or opposes them allows the modern reader to retrace a crucial moment in history – a moment when women became part of the writing and reading public.

But why did women so prominently and vehemently "intervene" in contemporary discourse in the early eighteenth century, why not earlier or later? The reasons for this are closely related to changing concepts of sex and gender during that time. What follows is a brief summary of contemporary developments and possible implications they might have had on the time's cultural ambiance.

1.8 Pigeonholing Gender in the Eighteenth Century

The term "gender" is employed in this study to distinguish biological differences between male and female bodies, i. e. sex, from socio-culturally constructed attributions of "meaning to sexed bodies and the behavioural expectations that result from these ascriptions (gender)."⁷⁹ The aim is to illustrate how gendered social roles developed in the early eighteenth century and how they were articulated in its media. The terms "masculine" and "feminine" are used in this study to describe characteristics typically associated with men on the one hand and women on the other hand. However, it is understood that these terms are not necessarily linked to a person's sex and, as a consequence, are not necessarily used corresponding to it: A man can be described as feminine, a woman can be described as masculine. Thus, it is important to distinguish between "male" and "female" on the one hand and

79 D. Herman, M. Jahn and M.L. Ryan, *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory* (London: Routledge, 2005) 195.

"masculine" and "feminine" on the other hand, as the one category refers to sex, the other category refers to the performance and construction of gender.

Essay periodicals constituted sites of cultural constructions of gender, as text and social practice merged in them. They provided information about the way that contemporaries conceptualised and talked about gender. In the early eighteenth-century, the body and sexual difference were describable in ways that were relatively open, in comparison to those that prevailed towards the end of the century.⁸⁰ Many critics have argued that the early eighteenth century was in fact a time of transition in which the older one-sex model was replaced by a new two sex-model. Thomas Laqueur accounts for this fact as follows:

Sometime in the eighteenth century, sex as we now know it was invented. The reproductive organs went from being paradigmatic sites for displaying hierarchy, resonant throughout the cosmos, to being the foundation of incommensurable difference: "women owe their manner of being to their organs of generation, and especially to the uterus," as one eighteenth century physician put it. Here was not only an explicit repudiation of the old isomorphisms but also, and more important, a rejection of the idea that nuanced differences between organs, fluids, and physiological processes mirrored a transcendental order of perfection. Aristotle and Galen were simply mistaken in holding that female organs are a lesser form of the male's and by implication that woman is a lesser man. A woman is a woman, proclaimed the "moral anthropologist" Moreau in one of the many efforts to derive culture from the body, everywhere and in all things, moral and physical, not just in one set of organs. Organs that had shared a name – ovaries and testicles – were now linguistically distinguished. Organs that had not been distinguished by a name of their own – the vagina, for example – were given one. Structures that had been thought common to men and women – the skeleton and the nervous system – were differentiated so as to correspond to the cultural male and female.⁸¹

80 See: I. Schabert, Englische Literaturgeschichte: Eine neue Darstellung aus der Sicht der Geschlechterforschung (Stuttgart: Kröner, 1997) 336-40.

81 T. W. Laqueur, Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud (Harvard University Press, 1990) 150.

According to Laqueur, the eighteenth century a time that experienced a more thorough division between male and female bodies and characters than this had previously been the case. Against the backdrop of new developments such as the growth of the middle classes and the rise of capitalist mercantile cultures in the London metropolis, the question of what determined masculinity and femininity was open to negotiation and less routed in assumptions of innateness than before. Not only economical innovations, but also intellectual advancement influenced the time's concepts of masculinity and femininity, as Laqueur describes:

By the end of the seventeenth century, the various intellectual currents that made up the transformation of human understanding known as the scientific revolution – Baconianism, Cartesian mechanism, empiricist epistemology, Newtonian synthesis – had radically undermined the whole Galenic mode of comprehending the body in relation to the cosmos. This meant the abandonment, among other things, of the anatomical isomorphisms between men and women and also the purging from scientific language of the old metaphors that had linked reproduction to other bodily functions, to the natural world, and to the Great Chain of Being itself.⁸²

In contemporary philosophy, power hierarchies between the sexes were taken less for granted than before the late seventeenth century; the natural order, exemplified by the Great Chain of Being, had lost its prevalence: “For Hobbes as for Locke, a person is essentially a sentient being, a sexless creature whose body is of no political relevance.” Divine law and nature, the same manifestations of God's will that partly lost their validity in the eighteenth century, were now taken into account concerning sex and gender roles. The transcendent cosmic order that had justified not only royal authority, but also the power of a slaveholder over his slave lost its influence. Even though philosophers like Locke and Hobbes questioned these power structures and outlined the arbitrariness of these mechanisms of subordination, they did not question male hegemony, neither in the public sphere of the state nor in the private sphere of the home. Nevertheless, women's subordination was no longer seen as built into the world order. According to Laqueur, it was no longer based on “old-fashioned reasons like the superiority of spirit over matter

82 Laqueur, *Making Sex* 154.

or the historical dominance God granted Adam.”⁸³ Instead, the subordination of women was represented as having arisen because of the fact that they were disadvantaged owing to their reproductive functions. Women with children were represented as being in a vulnerable position, “which allows the man to conquer her and her children and thereby create paternal rights by contract, by conquest in Hobbesian terms.”⁸⁴ My work is based on the accounts of gender construction Laqueur formulated for the eighteenth century. His theory emphasises the importance of the early eighteenth century as a point in time when concepts and convictions about sex and gender that were valid for centuries began to lose ground. This change is neither comprehensive nor abrupt, but can be understood as a process, observable in political, medical and, of course periodical discourse of the time.

Changing conceptions of sex and gender and the question of how they were reflected in contemporary texts has been of interest for generations of scholars, but only recently have researchers paid more attention to periodicals as a genre in their own right. In the following, I will summarise the most important cornerstones, paying particular attention to the research-history of *The Female Tatler*.

1.9 Review of Former Research

Periodicals, especially *The Tatler* and *The Spectator*, have been the objects of scholarly research since the beginnings of English literary studies. *The Female Tatler*, however, has only been of marginal interest to the field until the late twentieth and early twenty-first century. Research on *The Female Tatler* can be divided into three phases. The earliest papers on the journal, published around the 1930s, were solely interested in the publication history of *The Female Tatler*. The texts themselves were rarely looked at, which was not un-normal before the advent of modern literary studies as we know them. The second research phase starts much later, in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Interest in *The Female Tatler* increases markedly during that time, the first modern edition of the primary texts was published in 1992. However, this modern edition was highly selective, poorly transcribed and soon out of print. With the increasing digitalisation

83 Laqueur, *Making Sex* 152.

84 *ibid.*, 156.

of manuscripts and rare prints, early eighteenth-century texts became readily available and more detailed studies of primary texts were facilitated.

The very first paper written on *The Female Tatler*, namely *The History and Authorship of Mrs. Crackenthorpe's "Female Tatler"* by Paul Bunyan Anderson was published in 1931. As the title suggests, Anderson discusses possible authors, explains the specificities of the periodical and its evolvement.⁸⁵ In 1933, Bertha Monica Sternes, one of the few female literary scholars of the time, published a paper under the title *Early English Periodicals for Ladies (1700-1760)*.⁸⁶ In this study, she discusses various periodicals, including *The Female Tatler*. Like her predecessors, she does not analyse the journal's contents, but is mainly interested in its publication history. Walther Graham published an essay on the authorship of *The Female Tatler* in 1937, thereby also engaging with Anderson's earlier study.⁸⁷ In the same year, Paul Bunyan Andersen published a paper entitled *La Bruyère and Mrs. Crackenthorpe's "Female Tatler"*.⁸⁸ The last of these very early accounts of *The Female Tatler* was published in 1952 by John Harrington Smith, entitled *Thomas Baker and The Female Tatler*.⁸⁹ The papers published during the first half of the twentieth century mainly focused on questions of authorship and assessed the various possibilities, but they did not primarily engage with *The Female Tatler* on a content-level. Modern scholars are nevertheless highly indebted to these pioneers because they were the first to assess the journal's authorship, to gather information, to structure and evaluate data.

After the Second World War and up to the 1980s, scholarly interest in *The Female Tatler* was fairly limited. One of the first feminist studies of women's periodicals was Kathryn Shevelow's *Women and Print Culture* from 1989.⁹⁰ She mentions *The Female Tatler* in a subordinate clause, stating that it merely

85 P. B. Anderson, "The History and Authorship of Mrs. Crackenthorpe's Female Tatler," *Modern Philology* 28.3 (1931).

86 B.M. Stearns, "Early English Periodicals for Ladies (1700-1760)," *Publications of the Modern Language Association*.48 (1933).

87 W. Graham, "Thomas Baker, Mrs. Manley and the Female Tatler," *Modern Philology* 22.1 (1937).

88 P. B. Anderson, "La Bruyère and Mrs. Crackenthorpe's Female Tatler," *PMLA* 52.1 (1937).

89 J. H. Smith, "Thomas Baker and the Female Tatler," *Modern Philology* 49 (1952).

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

focussed on scandal and was not to be taken seriously.⁹¹ Labelling it "unworthy" of a more detailed analysis was certainly a misjudgement, as later studies confirmed. A doctoral dissertation by Gillian Teiman, entitled *The Female Ideal and the Female Voice: Ideology, Resistance, and Accommodation in the "Tatler" and "Spectator," the "Female Tatler" and the "Female Spectator,"* was published in 1992.⁹² It is, however, not the first dissertation on *The Female Tatler*; Robert B. Jr. White published his in 1966 under the title *A Study of The Female Tatler*.⁹³ Whereas Teiman employs Marxist theory for her readings of eighteenth-century periodicals, White's work was published before the feminist movement. Both works are out of print nowadays and only available on microfiche. Especially Teiman's study is important because it is the first systematic comparison between *The Female Tatler* and other early periodicals, especially *The Female Spectator*.

Up to 1992, when Fidelis Morgan's modern edition of *The Female Tatler* was available on the market, academics had no chance of reading *The Female Tatler* as a primary text, unless they were willing to travel to Oxford to see the originals.⁹⁴ Fidelis Morgan's edition is selective, and not very accurately transcribed. Nowadays, her edition of *The Female Tatler* is out of print, and only few university libraries own a copy of the book. Nevertheless, owing to the great advantages of the digital age, all students whose university library subscribed to online platforms that provide readers with digitalised copies of archival material, have the possibility to read *The Female Tatler* and numberless other periodicals of the time. Before digitalisation, scholars had to travel long distances in order to get to see the periodical, as the Bodleian Library in Oxford is the only one that archived *The Female Tatler*. Scholars had scarcely the chance to read it; students had no opportunity at all.

Since Shevelow's and Teiman's early studies in the field in the late 80s and early 90s, periodical studies have decidedly moved on. In 2000, Sarah Prescott

91 Shevelow, *Women and Print Culture* 212.

92 G. Teiman, "The Female Ideal and the Female Voice: Ideology, Resistance, and Accommodation in the Tatler and Spectator, the Female Tatler, and the Female Spectator," Dissertation, York University, 1992.

93 R.B. Jr. Wite, "A Study of the Female Tatler (1709-1710)," University of North Carolina, 1966.

94 Morgan, ed., *The Female Tatler*.

and Jane Spencer published an article entitled *Prattling, Tattling and Knowing Everything: Public Authority and the Female Editorial Persona in the Early Essay-Periodical*.⁹⁵ They point out that the significance of periodical literature to the public sphere is double, consisting both in enactment and representation. Moreover, they illustrate how the female editor-persona of early to mid-century periodicals did significantly not turn into a domestic retreat, but was authorised to comment on public affairs.⁹⁶ They are thus among the first scholars to promote the idea of a paper's rhetorical femininity. Another landmark work was published in 2005 by Ionia Italia. Her book *The Rise of Literary Journalism in the Eighteenth Century: Anxious Employment* is the first sustained study of periodicals as a genre in its own right.⁹⁷ Against the backdrop of the genre's cultural history, Italia explains its topical specificities, as well as its formal and stylistic characteristics. She also shows how the periodical was increasingly substituted by the magazine towards the end of the century. Thus, she provides a conclusive study of the periodical genre from its beginnings till the end and is therefore a very valuable source of information not only for scholars, but also for students. Italia devotes one chapter to *The Female Tatler*, subsuming important information concerning the periodical's authorship, publication details, marketing and materiality. She also presents conclusive readings of selected issues and interprets the periodical's usage of the motto. In the same year in which Italia's study was published, a paper entitled *Tatling Women in the Public Sphere: Rhetorical Femininity and the English Essay Periodical* appeared in the journal *Eighteenth-Century Studies*.⁹⁸ In this paper, Tedra Orsell focuses on the construction of the female editor persona, paying particular attention to her function as a rhetorical device. Defining "rhetorical femininity" and the "eidolon", her paper established the terminology to be used when dealing with periodicals like *The Female Tatler* and *The Female Spectator*.

Another recent work on the periodical was published under the title *Reading Gossip in Early Eighteenth Century England* by Nicola Parsons in 2009. The book illustrates how important the trope of gossip was for early eighteenth-century

95 S. Prescott and J. Spencer, "Prattling, Tattling and Knowing Everything: Public Authority and the Female Editorial Persona in the Early Essay-Periodical," *British journal for eighteenth-century studies*.23 (2000).

96 Spencer, "Prattling, Tattling and Knowing Everything," 54.

97 Italia, *The Rise of Literary Journalism*

98 Orsell, "Tatling Women in the Public Sphere"

periodicals, especially in *The Female Tatler*. According to Kathryn Temple, her reviewer, Parsons' contribution does not provide an "extended discussion of the differences between gossip and other forms, like scandal and tattle."⁹⁹ She criticises that Parsons does not offer a review of sociological approaches to gossip. Moreover, she holds that Parsons did not pay enough attention to the many ways in which gossip was represented. Rightly so, she points to the fact that Parsons could not access the actual gossip exchanged at Anne's court, but only written representations thereof. But by and large, her comments are very positive, emphasising that Parsons offered much to readers interested in the history of print culture and its relationship to the public sphere.

Anthony Pollock published another book on periodicals and the function of the editor-persona in 2010, entitled *Gender and the Fictions of the Public Sphere, 1690 – 1755*. According to his reviewer Brian Cowan, Pollock represents the public sphere as a normative and imagined space, a space he analyses with the aim of finding out how gender was thought to figure in the construction of this public sphere.¹⁰⁰ Pollock offers a very political reading of *The Female Tatler*, emphasising its alleged proximity to the Tories, an assumption he mainly bases on speculations of authorship – though paradoxically disclaiming exactly this:

This analysis will refer to "Manley" as the author figure behind the project of *The Female Tatler*, less to make an argument about the historical Delarivier Manley's involvement than to emphasise the value of assuming that there was an ideologically unified editorial group guiding the periodical's construction and self-presentation.¹⁰¹

But to assume any sort of unity or systematic outline for periodicals is difficult or even impossible. The variety of topics, contents and styles featured in *The Female Tatler* illustrate the sheer impossibility of a unitary account. As Manushang Powell has pointed out, periodicals tend to make fun of their own claims and principles. She explains: "One of their main charms is that whatever

99 K. Temple, "Gossip and the Public Sphere," *Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation (E. Cent)* 2012 4.53 (2012): 509.

100 B. Cowan, "Gender and the Fictions of the Public Sphere, 1690-1755, by Anthony Pollock," *English Historical Review (2011)* CXXVI.518 (2011): 172.

101 A. Pollock, *Gender and the Fictions of the Public Sphere, 1690 – 1755* (New York, London: Routledge, 2009).

they claim to be their guiding principle (politics, no politics, men, women, art, etc.), they are almost sure to violate it.”¹⁰² *The Female Tatler* by the Society of Ladies was not as modest as it claimed to be; many issues contained strong language and sexual innuendos, and issues like no. 88 and 111 even have a strong proto-feminist impetus.

Many interesting and innovative studies on periodicals and especially *The Female Tatler* were published in the twenty-first century, the most recent of them being *Performing Authorship in Eighteenth-century English Periodicals* by Manushang Powell, published in 2012. In this book, she explains how the periodicals’ fashioning of their editor-personas inaugurated new performances of literary authority and new cults of authorial personality. The present study is highly indebted to her work, especially in the chapter that discusses *The Female Tatler*’s authorial feuds.

Around the year 2010, various works on periodicals were published, attesting to the generally high and ever increasing interest in the genre. In an essay from 2011, Manushang Powell has clearly stated: “We very much need more work on *The Female Tatler*”¹⁰³, a request met in this study. Contributing to what could be termed third-phase-research, i. e. works published from the mid-2000s till today, it provides an in-depth analysis and contextualisation of *The Female Tatler*, situating it alongside other periodicals and literary works of its day. In what follows, the journal’s introduction on the literary market will be assessed, paying particular attention to the question of how it fought for being on a par with other journals of its day, *The Tatler* respectively.

102 Powell, “New Directions in Eighteenth Century Periodical Studies,” 241.

103 *ibid.*, 251.

II A Journal of One's Own: The Female Voice and the Gendering of the Periodical

This chapter is devoted to the question of how *The Female Tatler* stages the female voice that is so constitutive for the outline of its texts and how it demarcates its own discursive space. After the old patronage system declined and gave way to a more market-oriented one, there were few regulations on who could publish what and this unprecedented freedom offered new opportunities for writers, printers and booksellers.

II.1 Female Authority and Grub Street Pen-Fights

In her study *The Work of Print*, Lisa Maruca outlines that in the early eighteenth century, views on genius, individualism, property and literary production changed. She argues that the concept of authorship slowly gained currency throughout the eighteenth century in England, stressing that concepts of "intellectual property" are historically relatively new phenomena.¹⁰⁴ *The Female Tatler's* publishing history attests to these interesting developments, showing how easy it was to copy an entire periodical before the advent of copyright laws.

Between the issues numbered 19 and 44, two *Female Tatlers* existed. The first issues of *The Female Tatler* were printed by Benjamin Bragge in Pater Noster Row, as indicated at the end of the last page of every issue, along with the notice "where advertisements are taken in." However, after only five weeks, *The Female Tatler's* editor-persona, figuratively telling, took her paper to the printing house of Mrs. Anne Baldwin and consequently her name was put on the last page of issues 19 to 111. Benjamin Bragge had, however, clearly benefitted from printing and selling *The Female Tatler*: Despite the loss of the genuine author, he went on to print his version of the paper, labelled "the Bragge-published

104 L. Maruca, *The Work of Print: Authorship and the English Text Trades, 1660-1760* (University of Washington Press, 2012) 16.

Female Tatler" henceforward, feigning the name of the editor-persona Mrs. Crackenthorpe. So for several weeks, two Mrs. Crackenthorpes were active as intelligencers of the public sphere for *The Female Tatler*.

The quarrel between the two versions of the journal illustrates an important contemporary development which led to the passing of Queen Anne's Copyright-Act. As Lisa Maruca has explained, the early eighteenth century witnessed a shift of paradigms, in which the author was increasingly seen as the creator of the text, whereas the printers increasingly became dissociated from the idea of textual production. Their work was increasingly perceived as the mere technical element, when previously everyone involved, be it the author, the printer or the bookseller, was comprehensibly seen as a producer of text. In her book *The Work of Print*, Maruca described the shift from the cultural privileging of the print worker to that of the author.¹⁰⁵ She states that the early eighteenth century constituted a point of transition: The collaborative and collective nature of manuscript culture gave way to the more proprietary system of the marketplace.¹⁰⁶ This development is unmistakably reflected in the publishing history of *The Female Tatler* and the following analysis will illustrate how the quarrel between the two versions of the journal attested to a concept of original intellectual property and the solitary author. This concept gained importance during the early eighteenth century: The Copy Right Act, implemented in 1710, brought into effect that for an initial period of 14 years, the rights of the author were protected and the bookseller could no longer dispose of the material as he or she pleased.¹⁰⁷

Most likely, Bragge employed a hack writer to make up for the loss of his earnings after *The Female Tatler* had been taken to Anne Baldwin's publishing house. The following analysis focuses on the ways in which the two versions of the periodical maligned one another, aiming at identifying reasons for the ultimate success of the version printed by Anne Baldwin.

105 L. Maruca, *The Work of Print* 26.

106 W. Wall, *The Imprint of Gender: Authorship and Publication in the English Renaissance* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1993) 347.

107 P. Baines, J. Ferraro and P. Rogers, *The Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia of Eighteenth-Century Writers and Writing 1660 – 1789* (London: John Wiley & Sons, 2011) xxvii.

The Female Tatler's publication history and the case "Bragge-published *Female Tatler* vs. Baldwin-published *Female Tatler*" have been of interest for generations of scholars working on the journal. The editor of the first and up to now only semi-comprehensive, but highly selective and poorly transcribed edition of *The Female Tatler*, Fidelis Morgan, stresses the stylistic inferiority of Bragge's papers and its dubious contents in a short introduction.¹⁰⁸ The latest publication on the topic, Manushang Powell's *Performing Authorship* situates the quarrel for authenticity amidst various paper wars in which *The Female Tatler* and other periodicals engaged. Her account is more comprehensive and enables scholars to contextualise the fight. She holds that the general perception that it has a more literary tone than its rival is also key to its survival, though distancing herself from her predecessors when it comes to questions of originality, pointing out that the Baldwin paper is merely the one "dubbed authentic" by modern scholarship.¹⁰⁹ One early critic, Bertha Monica Sterns, has argued that probably, "the quarrel between the papers was only a device to entertain the public."¹¹⁰ In this reading, the pen-fight was merely a show, and the only aim was to sell more issues in total. This is an interesting idea and I will return to it. But firstly, the initial numbers of the original *Female Tatler* will be analysed in order to see how its editor-persona demarcates herself as a new "player" in the scene of literary journalism.

II.2 Challenging *The Tatler's* Sole Lead: The Inauguration of the Female Editor

After the Glorious Revolution in 1688, England's print culture began to flourish; it offered unprecedented opportunities for writers, printers and booksellers, both male and female. *The Female Tatler* is an excellent example of the creativity of its time, as it was the first periodical to address women exclusively in its title. As a new journal brought onto the market by a woman, *The Female Tatler* was automatically confronted with stereotypes. Public women, a category to which female authors were definitely counted, aroused serious suspicion. It was a virtual impossibility in the eighteenth-century mindset that a woman would launch a project on her own, let alone earn a living by means

108 Morgan, ed., *The Female Tatler* viii-xi.

109 Maruca, *The Work of Print* 70.

110 B. M. Stearns, "Early English Periodicals for Ladies," *PMLA* 48.1 (1933).

not of physical, but of intellectual labour. Because *The Female Tatler's* product statement "by women, for women" was a promise of female authorship, its editor persona was urged to position herself as a female writer, thus as an active agent of the public sphere. The description Mrs. Crackenthorpe gives of herself in the following quote is a strategic step: She asserts that she writes neither for profit nor for fun, thereby avoiding associations with literary drudgery or writing as a vain woman's leisure time activity:

I would intreat [sic] those who are not particularly acquainted with me, that they would not imagine I write this paper merely for the profit that may accrue to me by it; for all I have the honour to be intimate with, know that I have an estate of £ 300 per annum and always kept two maids and a footman; but if I should happen to succeed beyond my expectation, it might so far advance my fortune that I may be able to keep a coach [...]¹¹¹

On the one hand, Mrs. Crackenthorpe creates the image of the leisured female writer. On the other hand, she assures her readers that she is not "too rich" either, thus warding off associations with the aristocracy. She emphasises the importance of "financial compensation" for the effort she puts into her work. Presenting herself as a wealthy lady, conversant in London's polite circles, she can afford to have servants, but no coach of her own. Mrs Crackenthorpe tells her readers about her assets in absolute numbers, consciously warding off reproaches that might portray her as a wretched Grub Street writer who only "scribbles" for money. As a woman, she is in particular peril: On the one hand, she cannot possibly admit that she writes to earn a living because that would label her a "fallen woman" in the eyes of contemporaries. On the other hand, stating that writing was merely a leisure time activity for her would not justify the price of the journal. Moreover, it would call into question her credibility as a writer. Thus, she has to present her readers with some kind of middle ground between a moneyed and leisured author. The fact that she addresses the issue straight away illustrates how delicate a business it was to establish oneself as a female writer in the public sphere. The fight for the readers' credit that is going on between the two rival *Female Tatlers* is clearly gendered in that it is the persona's femininity that is the touchstone. The paper's authenticity was based on the assumption that its author was a woman, as Nicola Parsons explains: "Those who sought to undermine the paper's credibility did so by insinuating

111 Morgan, ed., *The Female Tatler* 3.

the paper's true author was a man."¹¹² Both versions of *The Female Tatler* tried to disclaim the other's female authority, thereby trying to discredit the respective rival. Stereotypes had to be acknowledged, reflected, and opposed; hostile reactions had to be anticipated and thwarted, as the following quote illustrates:

Whereas several ill-bred critics have reported about town that a woman is not the author of this paper, which I take to be a splenetic and irrational aspiration upon our whole sex, women were always allowed to have a finer thread of understanding than the men, which made them have recourse to learning, that they might equal our natural parts, and by an arbitrary sway have kept us from many advantages to prevent our out-vying [sic] them; but those ladies who have imbibed authors, and dived into arts and sciences have ever discovered a quicker genius, and more sublime notions. These detractors must be a rough-hewn sort of animals that could never gain admittance to the fair sex, and all such I forbid my drawing room.¹¹³

Mrs. Crackenthorpe calls those sceptics who believe that, in fact, a man is the author of *The Female Tatler* "detractors" and "a rough-hewn sort of animals" who have never had the chance to enjoy social interaction with women. Their attacks severely threaten the main underlying concept and the outline of *The Female Tatler* as a rhetorically feminine journal. Mrs. Crackenthorpe interprets this reproach as an affront not only against her, but against women collectively. She holds that men can only equal women's "natural parts" by way of learning. *The Female Tatler* thereby reiterates contemporary discourse on "women's nature," but simultaneously reinterprets it by holding that this "female nature" was somehow superior to "male nature" and can only be made up for by way of learning. Women's submission to men is not accepted as a given, but represented as an "arbitrary sway," a kind of historical hazard. The phrase "to prevent our out-vying them" implies that women "would if they could", if men would only let them. In order to make her point clear, Mrs. Crackenthorpe uses a strong metaphorical language that adds a lively dynamic to what she says, e.g. in the words "imbibed" and "dived". She employs a very strong – and decisively female – authorial voice, as is also powerfully illustrated in the following quote:

112 Parsons, *Reading Gossip in Early Eighteenth-Century England* 110.

113 Morgan, ed., *The Female Tatler* 25.

Why should a book or a pen be more appropriate to a man than a woman, if we know how to use them? [...] 'Twas the tyranny of mankind that condemn'd us to the glass and needle, or we had sat in Parliament long before this time.¹¹⁴

The text starts with a rhetorical question and a strong claim for female authorship. It is interesting to note that the book, recalling the passive act of reading, and the pen, recalling the productive activity of writing, are discursively intermingled here. The phrase "they condemn us to the needle" is very suggestive, as the needle was the emblem of what was considered a proper female preoccupation at the time, i. e. the polar opposite of writing. This is exactly how the text constructs its line of argumentation: By juxtaposing binaries, or what was commonly perceived as binaries, it builds up a tension, a dynamic, that underlines the text's central message: Women are as capable as men of intellectual activity, both in the private act of reading and in the public act of writing. The juxtaposition between the needle – a symbol for the domestic, the private and the female – and parliament – coded as male and public evokes a strong and surprising image. Thus, the text constructs contradistinctions between male and female, alongside the binaries of public and private, but only to question the validity of the distinction.

Apart from the needle, the glass is introduced as an epitome of women's confinement. In their influential study *The Madwoman in the Attic*, Gilbert and Gubar devoted an entire chapter to the significance of the glass as a collective symbol of female vanity and narcissism in the fairytale *Snow White*.¹¹⁵ To sum up, two gendered binary pairs, the book and the pen on the one hand, and the needle and the looking glass on the other hand, are juxtaposed and come to symbolise two separate worlds or ideologies, coded as male and female. In a nutshell, *The Female Tatler* is very much aware of the fact that its sheer existence as a rhetorically feminine periodical requires justifications and a self-positioning of the author-figure, the editor-persona.

The real author or author created an "alter ego", the editor-persona, a figure which not only entertained the readers, but also protected the writer(s) from possible law suits. Compared to earlier centuries, writers in the early eighteenth

114 Morgan, ed., *The Female Tatler* 25.

115 S. Gilbert, S. Gubar ed., *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (Yale University Press, 2000) 39.

century faced fewer dangers and annoyances: It was a period that experienced significantly fewer restrictions concerning pre-publication censorship than had been the case in the seventeenth century. Authorised by the Licensing Act, a guild of printers called the Stationer's Company had the exclusive power to print and censor printed products. In 1694, however, Parliament refused to renew the Licensing Act, and as a consequence the monopoly of the Stationer's Company ceased.

The lapse of the Licensing Act marked the beginning of a free press in England. However, the Act did not lapse because the government was committed to freedom and liberalism; the two party system required a free press in order to promote its ideas, so those in power were against a renewal of the Act. Over the next decade, the guild advocated bills to re-authorise the old licensing system in order to regain their former influence, but all failed. A new bill was passed which emphasised the benefits of licensing to authors rather than to publishers. This bill became known as the Statute of Queen Anne, owing to its passage during her reign. It prescribed a copyright term of 14 years and was passed on the tenth of April 1710. The Statute of Queen Anne is the first modern copyright law, establishing various principles such as the rights of authors and the notion that libraries function as repositories of knowledge.¹¹⁶

The Female Tatler was published between the end of the Licensing Act and the Statute of Queen Anne, a time during which comparably few regulations applied and the launching of a (rival) periodical was easy. Moreover, the periodical was also published before the Stamp Act of 1712, which required a name and address to be listed on every periodical, newspaper or pamphlet. Lisa Maruca contextualises these developments as follows: "This period between the Restoration, when the Stationers lost monopolistic control of the print and publishing market, and the mid-eighteenth century, which witnessed the consolidation of large capital-intensive publishing houses, was also a time of fruitful indeterminacy within English print culture."¹¹⁷ Because this period was also a time of indeterminacy, it allows the modern reader to draw parallels to the twenty-first century, where digitalisation and file-sharing complicate the concepts of intellectual property generated during the time of *The Female Tatler*.

116 L. Bently et al., Global Copyright: Three Hundred Years since the Statute of Queen Anne, from 1709 to Cyberspace (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2010) 14.

117 Maruca, The Work of Print 10.

The fact that the writer and printer melted into one character or persona in the fight for originality between the two *Female Tatlers* shows that in the early eighteenth century, the practices of writing, technologies of printing and also the business of planning, marketing, and selling print commodities were all seen as equally productive and creative aspects of text making. The pen-fight between the two *Female Tatlers* must be seen as representing contemporary struggles for textual ownership and control that ensued as a new concept, that of the solitary author and of original intellectual property. The author(s) and the bookseller(s) involved in the production of *The Female Tatler* were no opposed parties; instead, they worked in tandem. What changes in the early eighteenth century is that a hierarchy is established and a differentiation between art on the one hand and business on the other hand is generated, when previously the roles of the writer, printer and bookseller were closely intertwined. *The Female Tatler* with its unruly history of publication nicely exemplifies these circumstances, as will be illustrated in the following section.

II.3 Situating the Emergence of the Female Editor in a Changing Print Culture

In the early eighteenth century, modern notions of "intellectual property" did not yet exist, which explains the fact that Bragge continued to publish the periodical in the first place. Against this backdrop, the feud between the two versions of the periodical can be better understood: It complicates predetermined ideas about what Maruca has termed "proprietary authorship" and highlights the importance of seeing *The Female Tatler* as a product of its time. Seen from this perspective, both versions were legitimate in that none of them could rely on any legal claim to obtain a prerogative. So the only way to convince the readers was to either assert the superior quality of one's venture or to downgrade that of the rival periodical, a tactic favoured by the Bragge-published *Female Tatler*. It presents the other *Female Tatler* as being the product of Mrs. Crackenthorpe's footman Francis, who robbed her of several issues: "Mrs. Crackenthorpe acquaints the public that her man, Francis, has of late deserted her service and carried away with him several letters and papers."¹¹⁸ In presenting the footman as the true author behind the rival version, Bragge clearly tries to discredit "the other" Mrs. Crackenthorpe. Powell has commented

118 Morgan, ed., *The Female Tatler* 205.

on this tactic by pointing out that the Bragge-published *Female Tatler* relied on metaphors and domestic betrayal in order to denounce its rival.

Not only Bragge's *Female Tatler* maligned the Baldwin-published version of being the spurious periodical, but also its opponent.¹¹⁹As the following quote taken from Baldwin's *Female Tatler* number twenty-eight illustrates, the original version did not rely as much on calumny and libel as Bragge's version, but tried to convince its readers by using more substantial arguments:

And Mrs. Crackenthorpe thinks she may, without vanity, desire those who are still imposed on by the spurious paper, whensoever [*sic*] accidentally met with, to compare two or three of 'em [*sic*] with hers, and she fancies they'll be soon undeceived."¹²⁰

While Baldwin's Mrs. Crackenthorpe repeatedly stresses the superior quality of her papers, the Bragge-version seems to mainly adhere to the principle "offence is the best defence". But he not only wanted to stir up rivalries, he also aimed at implying continuation, by using the same motto that had been used for the previous three numbers. Interesting variations occur when the motto changes, as will be shown in the following chapter.

II.4 The Function of the Motto in the Pen Fight

Numbers 1-12 have the original motto "sum canna vocalis"¹²¹, but 13-15 have different ones, and 16-18 all have "aliter vitium vivitque tegendo"¹²². The Bragge number 19 uses this same motto, while the Baldwin 19 opts for a Latin quotation. But for Bragge 20 a new motto is chosen, "ramo uno avulso non deficiet alter"¹²³ and Baldwin 20 goes back to "sum canna vocalis" which is

119 A. Baldwin, properly Anne Baldwin, was the wife of Richard Baldwin, who was, according to Cathy Hartley, among the most important Whig publishers of the 1690s. After his death, she took over his business and published around 240 texts between 1698 and 1713. After 1713, nothing was published by her anymore; she probably died. In: C. Hartley, A Historical Dictionary of British Women (London: Taylor & Francis, 2004) 61.

120 Morgan, ed., The Female Tatler 69.

121 "I am the singing reed"- trans. Fidelis Morgan

122 "Otherwise vice survives by concealment" - trans. Fidelis Morgan

123 "I pluck one branch but do not miss the other" - trans. Fidelis Morgan

retained thereafter, while Bragge uses the motto "ramo uno avulso non deficiet alter" a couple more times, and then changes again. Thereafter, he uses a string of different mottos, but never again "aliter vitium vivitque tegendo", even though he does use "sum canna vocalis" once more.

The motto is important because it illustrates how Mrs. Crackenthorpe confirmed her gender and advertised the benefits of her gendered editorship to her readers. In order to achieve this, she appropriates the gendered trope of gossip by introducing the motto "Sum canna vocalis," which means "I am the singing reed" in Latin.¹²⁴ The motto is to be understood as an allegory that points to Mrs. Crackenthorpe's function as an editor-persona. Nicola Parsons explains the underlying myth that gives the motto its meaning:

The motto recalls the myth of a man who digs a hole in a riverbank in which to whisper a secret he is unable to keep. Nearby reeds take up his secret and broadcast, or publish, it with each gust of wind. This story provides a motif for the *Female Tatler's* approach to its subject matter: rather than suggesting the intimate communication that is established and sustained by gossip, it emblematises communication that is indiscriminate and thus relatively democratic.¹²⁵

Just as the wind "publishes" the secret the man is unable to keep, Mrs. Crackenthorpe first gathers information in her drawing room assemblies and subsequently broadcasts it. The motto is the programme of the periodical and illustrates the function of the editor-persona, who is the mediator and disseminator of news, gossip and scandal, and therefore assumes a role traditionally associated with femininity. The motto comes to define the periodical and is therefore also employed by the rival version of *The Female Tatler*. However, it is interesting to note that the motto fulfils a different function in Bragge's version of the periodical. He does not use it in order to underline his editor-persona's rhetorical femininity, but, in accordance with his publication's general tone, to attack his rival. The Bragge-published *Female Tatler* adopts the textual strategy of using a motto in order to stress its entitlement to ownership and to present itself as the genuine paper. The first edition by Bragge is introduced with the motto "Aliter vitium vivitque

124 Morgan, ed., *The Female Tatler* 1.

125 Parsons, *Reading Gossip in Early Eighteenth-Century England* 111.

tegendero”¹²⁶ which means "Otherwise the error survives by its concealment".¹²⁷ This implies that he claims that the genuine periodical is his and only his. He does not try to establish his venture as a complementary paper, as *The Female Tatler* had done in its very first issue. I mention the first issue of *The Female Tatler* because the situation is comparable: *The Female Tatler* was not an innovation in itself, but an adaptation of its predecessor, *The Tatler*. In its first issue, *The Female Tatler* had to comment on the relationship between it and its predecessor, whose name it also partly adopted. A comparison between the first issue of *The Female Tatler* and the moment when two *Female Tatlers* were sold in the streets of London is of interest because similar mechanisms were at work: The publications did not stand alone, but evolved out of strong inter-textual relations. Central to the debate were new notions of competition and imitation in an unprecedented economic field, the market. New rules that obeyed the laws of the economy shaped the relations between authors and their works.

The most important difference is that while the first issue of *The Female Tatler* was an adaptation, but undoubtedly a new venture distinct from *The Tatler*, the second version of *The Female Tatler* was allegedly identical with the first one. Gender thus became the trump card in the pen-fight for authenticity because it was the journal's number one distinctive feature.

II.5 “Pirating Printers”: Negotiating Gender

Immediately after the split from her former publisher, Anne Baldwin's Mrs. Crackenthorpe continued in the habitual manner. The only comment that indicated the change is a remark that concerned the receiving of mail and the posting of advertisements: “Mrs. Crackenthorpe desires her friends hence forward, when they have anything to insert, that they direct their letters to her, at Mrs. Baldwin's at the Oxford Arms in Warwick-Lane.”¹²⁸ The change of address is an argument that strongly supports the assumption that the split between writer and publisher actually took place and that it was not merely

126 Morgan, ed., *The Female Tatler* 205.

127 Morgan, ed., *The Female Tatler* 205.

128 *The Female Tatler* by Mrs. Crackenthorpe, (A. Baldwin) (London: 1709) Wednesday August 17, to Friday August 19, 1709.

a marketing-trick, as Bertha Monica Stearns has suggested. The publication of an address was financially important because that was where advertisements were received. Maintaining two addresses would not, therefore, have made any sense. Baldwin's Mrs. Crackenthorpe does not mention any reason, but simply announces her change of address. In the second issue, however, she turns to her rival for the first time:

Mrs. Crackenthorpe, finding herself disingenuously treated by the first printer, thought she might take the same liberty of removing it, as a gentleman that is tricked does his tailor or periwig maker. But such is the probity of pirating printers, that authors can't demand even their names and titles, and this fellow has set up some pitiful scoundrel, whose principles are as wretched as his circumstances, to impose upon the town a sham paper, upon other person's foundation, and talks of ladies drawing rooms, who was never yet admitted into tolerable company.¹²⁹

In the voice of Mrs. Crackenthorpe, the writer of *The Female Tatler* – whoever that might have been – complains about the loss of her "print identity" and the unrestricted circulation of her venture. She explains herself by telling her readers that she had been ill-treated by the first printer and therefore changed to another printing house. The usage of the word "printer" needs special clarification here. Powell labels it "the common parlance of the day," "a frequent cry of booksellers, printers, and frustrated authors alike."¹³⁰ The term "printer" as most likely used in a sense analogous to the modern day publisher, a person who oversees the print, binding and distribution of texts.

Before the Age of Industrialisation set in [...] there was not the modern division between an intelligentsia, working in elegant retired seclusion, and the noisy thudding of the machinery. Thinking, writing and printing were often performed on the same premises.¹³¹

This also explains why Mrs. Crackenthorpe refers to the printer treating her disingenuously: The eighteenth century usage of the word printer implies

129 Morgan, ed., *The Female Tatler* 47-48.

130 Powell, *Performing Authorship in Eighteenth-Century English Periodicals* 66.

131 J. Richetti, *The Cambridge Companion to the Eighteenth-Century Novel* (Cambridge University Press, 1996) 95.

a person whose task is not only to print the text on paper, but to organise and oversee various stages of production, including the distribution of the finished paper product. Interestingly, Baldwin's Mrs. Crackenthorpe used the word "piracy", an expression that has rhetorically prevailed up to the twenty-first century, e.g. in the term "product piracy". She accuses her former printer Benjamin Bragge of making a sham of her paper, thus linking a claim of originality with a claim for her inherent proprietorship. Powell's reading of the excerpt emphasises that Mrs. Crackenthorpe, while arguing for her rights as an author, nevertheless frames her complaint in terms of economic hierarchies. She compares her desire to change booksellers to that of a gentleman discontented by his merchant.¹³² By putting her complaint in purely economic terms, she engages in contemporary economic discourse centred on credit and credibility, the touchstones and common denominators that link all themes and aspects dealt with in *The Female Tatler*.

Stressing her authorial trustworthiness, Mrs. Crackenthorpe of the Baldwin-published *Female Tatler* advertises her abilities as a writer to her readers while downplaying the skills of her opponent. In a rhetoric that resembles Bragge's later libellous accusations, Mrs. Crackenthorpe questions his social standing and publicly offends him. Here, social class is the paradigm around which she constructs her argument, depicting her rival as being socially inferior to her. Even though she does not call him by his name, she mentioned her former printer and as a consequence, her readers could infer his name from earlier issues.

Having been openly attacked in this way, Bragge is forced to retaliate. The public pen-fight between the first and the second version of the paper makes Benjamin Bragge employ radical measures. He uses the same persona and in order to differentiate his version of Mrs. Crackenthorpe from Baldwin's, he pokes fun at an image of her that was incorporated into the title page of his rival's periodical.

132 Powell, *Performing Authorship in Eighteenth-Century English Periodicals* 65.



From **Monday** August 22, to **Wednesday** August 24, 1709.

133

To publish the periodical adorned with Mrs. Crackenthorpe's portrait was a tactic that Anne Baldwin first employed in *The Female Tatler* no. 21 from the 22nd of August 1709. The promise of authenticity was the motivation behind this radical measure. Portraits, especially miniature portraits had been very popular for centuries; they were means by which people could represent themselves to the outside world in order to create the desired appearances. W. Pritchard has outlined how important portraits were as a means of self-display and self-presentation:

Portraiture ... was extolled as an art that manifested interior selves on bodily surfaces, and painting manuals frequently figured as female the secrets that portraiture brought to the surface. Like portraiture, the ever-expanding medium of print promised to make women (literally) legible, and various popular genres offered textual anatomies of individual and collective women. In all of these realms – science, portraiture, print – authors insisted upon the apparency of things, and women (either explicitly or by implication) were among those things that could be seen or seen through.¹³⁴

Portraiture was seen as an art that extolled interior selves; the bodily surface should reveal the "inner self" and make it creditable and legible. The portrait of Mrs. Crackenthorpe was used to persuade readers that this was the "real"

133 Screenshot from the original *Female Tatler*

134 W. Pritchard, *Outward Appearances: The Female Exterior in Restoration London* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2008) 181.

Female Tatler because it featured the "real" author-character. The counterfeit of Mrs. Crackenthorpe indeed heightened her "legibility", made her more accessible for her readers. The aim of this illustration was clearly to set her paper apart from the Bragge-published version. The picture should persuade the readers of the author's femininity by providing ocular proof.

Mrs. Crackenthorpe's portrait is framed by the paper's motto and her name is emblazoned across the bottom. According to Nicola Parsons' interpretation of the picture, Mrs. Crackenthorpe "could well be any of London's fashionable ladies."¹³⁵ The portrait of a woman of higher social rank was presented to the readers, and the material that they were reading was allegedly written by this town-beauty. Thus *The Female Tatler* makes visible a process in which an author figure in the Foucauldian sense is actively engendered. Foucault describes the term "author function" in terms of a discursive figure that inscribes the author as a source of meaning. It helps the critic to acknowledge the underlying process of construction that defines the figure of the author.¹³⁶ The underlying principle could be described as "showing before telling" because of the emphasis that is put on directing the readers' expectations via visual means.

The notion of the "author function" being a discursive figure is perfectly applicable to *The Female Tatler* because authority is aggressively negotiated between the two versions of the journals; it is therefore actively constructed, even if in the case of *The Female Tatler*, it is the author-figure that matters, not the author or author. The construction of the figure of the author in the texts relies on the interaction between the periodical and the reader. To have an actual picture of the editor persona, moreover a proof of her higher rank, surely must have strengthened the imaginative ties between Mrs. Crackenthorpe and her readers. Baldwin's rival Benjamin Bragge, of course, acknowledged this radical measure on her part. His reaction to the illustration is highly satirical and harsh, befitting the overall tone of the slurs in his version of *The Female Tatler* from August twenty-four – i. e. immediately succeeding the publication of Mrs. Crackenthorpe's counterfeit – whose sole aim was to disclaim his rival's femininity.

135 Parsons, *Reading Gossip in Early Eighteenth-Century England* 112.

136 M. Poster, *What's the Matter with the Internet?* (University of Minnesota Press, 2001) 66.

Mrs. Crackenthorpe, seeing herself affronted by spurious paper, published in her name declares that she never had a hair lip, wry-neck, cataract on her eyes, or cancered [*sic*] breast, as people will generally believe, seeing her exhibited like a patient on a mountebank's bill¹³⁷, and takes it very ill.¹³⁸

While the Baldwin-published *Female Tatler* took social class as the number one category of attack, it is gender in the case of the Bragge-published *Female Tatler*. The quotation illustrates that not literary genius and the quality of the text were the cornerstones of authenticity, but a compelling performance of gender. This is exactly what he denies Baldwin's Mrs. Crackenthorpe.

Manushang Powell has interpreted the fight over the portrait as follows:

Obviously the engraving is not highly skilled, but the portrait is by no means particularly deformed. The mouth is shadowed and the head perhaps tilted a bit ungracefully, but the breasts are not readily apparent.¹³⁹

To me the quality of the portrait itself is of no importance. It could well have been any portrait, skilled or unskilled. The satire functions like a caricature: It exaggerates and inflates in order to pull the Baldwin-published Mrs. Crackenthorpe's leg. The emphasis on gender, especially the lack of professional performance thereof, constitutes an important difference from preceding feuds among writers, like the one between *The Tatler* and *The Female Tatler* described earlier.

Interestingly, Bragge's Mrs. Crackenthorpe assesses her rival's portrait by employing a scrutinising male gaze that focuses on her femininity. The Bragge-published *Female Tatler*'s male gaze is at least partly rejected by the addressed Mrs. Crackenthorpe, who propagates the genuineness of her paper, not by insisting on her female beauty, but on her abilities as a writer. Thus, major importance is assigned to the readers as co-producers of meaning: They are

137 The mountebank or quack doctor and his assistant would perform an act on a stage in order to sell the wonder-working drugs by which they made their living, before moving on, long before their clients had time to realise they had been duped. See: <http://www.bpi1700.org.uk/research/printOfTheMonth/september2008.html>, accessed 08/07/2012.

138 Morgan, ed., *The Female Tatler* 209.

139 Powell, *Performing Authorship in Eighteenth-Century English Periodicals* 69.

the ones who ought to decide over true and false, over authentic or copycat. Baldwin's Mrs. Crackenthorpe does not engage in the portrait-fight, a tactic which helped to assert her professionalism and which eventually helped her to prevail.

In a nutshell, Baldwin and Bragge followed two differing stratagems. Whereas Baldwin's Mrs. Crackenthorpe stresses her originality and the high quality of her writing, Bragge mainly aims to degrade his rival and to attack her verbally. Rhetorical femininity became the trump card in the fight for authenticity between the two papers. This is reflected in the fact that Bragge tried to destroy his rival not as a writer, but as a woman, depicting her as ugly and moribund.

Apart from gender, social class was a major organising principle in the journals' fight for authenticity. Both Bragge's and Baldwin's Crackenthorpe assume the privilege of class in order to malign their respective rival, assigning one another a lower social status and lower morals. All comes down to the common denominator of (social) credit: Which of the two Crackenthorpes is trustworthy?

By constructing a stable, marketable persona, *The Female Tatler*, though published anonymously, adopted a model of proprietary authorship that eventually could neither be challenged nor imitated by another writer. The reasons for the initial version persisting are manifold. Firstly, Baldwin's *Female Tatler* not only relied on rhetorical femininity, but also provided ocular proof by printing a picture of Mrs. Crackenthorpe's counterfeit. Bragge could only react to the picture by ridiculing it. Baldwin's paper was superior in terms of content and therefore the readers preferred it.

In the fight for authenticity between the two versions of *The Female Tatler*, gender difference itself was being produced in the debate surrounding authorship. Baldwin's version of the paper prevailed in the end because she not only employed the stratagem of rhetorical femininity, but she also provided ocular proof in the portrait. However, authority was primarily constructed not based on images, but on the texts themselves.

Concluding, it needs to be stressed that the paper-war was not fought between actual authors, but between the two fictional editor-personas. This shows that authority was constructed as purely textual before the advent of

the Copyright Act. Apart from illustrating these contemporary developments, the quarrel between the two Mrs. Crackenthorpes also attests to a growing presence of the female voice in public discourse, as both editor-personas performed assertions of authenticity in public. In the following chapter, I will focus on the question of how the female journalistic voice appropriated this discursive space for herself.

III “The Needle Justly Quitted for the Pen”

Many scholars have described the long eighteenth century as a time of transition, “moving from a time of comparative freedom for women into a world of separate spheres.”¹⁴⁰ “Separate spheres” denotes the assumed dichotomy between public and private, a dichotomy which would thoroughly exclude women from eighteenth-century public domains. But as various feminist critics have outlined, “public” and “private” realms were not necessarily mutually exclusive. Scholars like Nicola Parsons, Anthony Pollock and Ionia Italia emphasised the inclusion of women in the public sphere rather than their programmatic exclusion.¹⁴¹ Even though all three acknowledge the leading role of rhetorically feminine periodicals, they only slightly touched upon *The Female Tatler* and the richness of evidence for women’s inclusion in the public sphere its texts offered. It is the aim of the following analysis to fill this gap, to show how *The Female Tatler*, at least in some of its essays, passionately advocated the inclusion of women in the public sphere. The inclusion of women in polite circles and enlightened public discourse was not only performatively enacted in rhetorically feminine journals, but also in other texts of the time. Especially those periodicals that implied a female authorial voice relied on these early forerunners without which women’s public appearance, be it merely a performative, rhetorical act, was impossible.

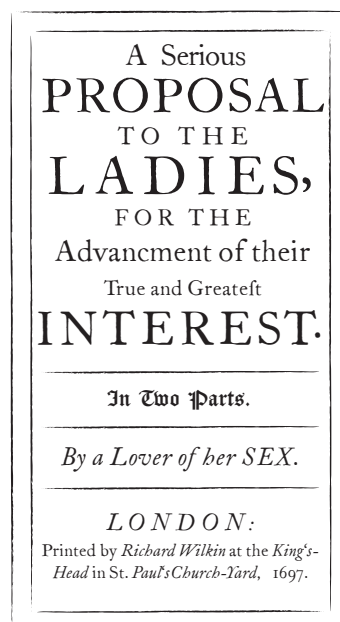
140 E. Eger, C. Grant, C.Ó. Gallchoir and P. Warburton, *Women, Writing and the Public Sphere, 1700-1830* (Cambridge University Press, 2001) 1.

141 Many scholars have examined these transformations and redefinitions of the public sphere, Jürgen Habermas being one of the “pioneers”. Since the first publication of his book *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* and the translation of the German original into English twenty years later, a whole generation of scholars has read and developed Habermas’ ideas. One of these elucidates his work as follows: “In Habermas’ account, the public sphere is founded in its simple accessibility to individuals, who come together without hierarchy in an equality of voice.” E. Eger, *Women, Writing and the Public Sphere, 1700-1830* (Cambridge University Press, 2001) 27.

Revisionary readings criticise Habermas’ unitary account of the public sphere as being over-generalised and reductionist. Particularly feminist scholars have responded critically to Habermas’ programmatic exclusion of women from the public sphere.

Prior to the landmark success of periodicals, the role of women in society had been subject to intense debate for centuries. Joan Kelly holds that "there was a 400 year-old tradition of women thinking about women and sexual politics in European society before the French Revolution."¹⁴² According to Kelly, Christine de Pisan was the first such feminist thinker, but she also mentions the great importance and impact of François Poulain de la Barre. Kelly explains that de Pisan inaugurated a four-century-long discussion known as the "querelle des femmes". Most early feminist thinking evolved in the course of this "querelle", establishing a frame of discourse that not merely influenced writers from continental Europe, but also from England.

In the late seventeenth century, Mary Astell started writing about women and the challenges they faced in their day-to-day lives. Employing a strictly religious framework, she criticised the intellectual atrophy of women, comparing them to tulips in a garden. She was one of the first women in England to take advantage of the flourishing print culture of the age, to use its tools in order to disseminate her own ideas. The image below shows the front page of her work *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies*, one of the earliest examples for the deployment of a new discursive space by women writers who address women's concerns.



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142 J. Kelly, "Early Feminist Theory and the Querelle des Femmes, 1400 - 1789," *Signs*.8.1 (1982), p. 5.

143 <http://archive.org/stream/seriousproposalt00aste#page/n3/mode/2up>, accessed 06/30/2014.

A declaration of commitment and devotion, the statement “by a lover of her sex” serves to demarcate an exclusively female discursive frame of reference. Owing to its performative “annexation” of gendered discursive space, it can clearly be seen as a forerunner and latent influence on later periodicals, including *The Female Tatler*.

Mary Astell was an influential figure in the early eighteenth century. Not only was she a writer herself, but she also encouraged other young women to take up their pens, especially Mary Lee Lady Chudleigh, who published a poem about marriage in 1701, entitled *The Ladies’ Defence*. Set against this backdrop, *The Female Tatler* could possibly have borrowed from these earlier writings. Most certainly they influenced not only the development of *The Female Tatler*, but also its reception. In the following quote, Mary Astell satirically comments on the confinements women faced at the time. Moreover, she accuses women of colluding in their own oppression.

But if Reason is only allow’d us by way of Raillery, and the secret Maxim is that we have none, or little more than Brutes, ’tis the best way to confine us with Chain and Block to the Chimney-Corner, which probably might save the Estates of some Families and the Honour of others. I do not propose this to prevent a Rebellion, for Women are not so well united as to form an Insurrection. They are for the most part Wise enough to Love their Chains, and to discern how very becomingly they are set.¹⁴⁴

Given the fact that this text was published in the early 1700s, when ideas about sexual equality were virtually nonexistent, this quote is astonishing. Astell bewails the fact that women are denied any form of reason, she infers that this amounts to the same thing as denying them their humanity entirely. The common practice of degrading women is called a “secret maxim,” which illustrates that ideas about women and their role in society were set in stone and non-negotiable. Her ironic suggestion to chain women to the chimney corner and the equally tongue-in-cheek statement “which probably might save the estates of some families and the honour of others” illustrates that women were not seen as individuals, but only in relation to their kith and kin. To get involved in an insurrection would mean a severe loss of face for the women’s

144 M. Astell and P. Springborg, *Astell, Political Writings* (Cambridge University Press, 1996) 29.

families. In this context, it must be acknowledged that the early eighteenth century was a time when women had absolutely no legal rights. Women were so far from standing up against oppression that the publication of such a text must have caused great confusion among the few who had access to it. Astell eventually attenuates her own argument by conciliating her imaginary (male) reader who might be shocked by such an advance. She holds that, in any case, women will not form an insurrection, as they are “wise enough to love their chains,” which in fact means that they are afraid, that they do not dare to revolt and thus, according to Astell, they collude in their own oppression. Her ironic remark “how very becomingly the chains are set” is at once an allusion to and a deconstruction of the stereotype of female vanity. A model of alterity is the driving force behind her argument: The devaluation, negation and marginalisation of the vain and superficial woman as “other” serves to reaffirm her point of view, namely that women are intelligent and should not forcibly be confined to the domestic sphere. Strikingly witty, pointedly exaggerated and passionately provocative, Mary Astell’s writings illustrate that *The Female Tatler* did not emerge out of fully uncharted waters. It was launched during a time in which women increasingly participated in print culture, during which they left the private sphere of the home in order to become members of the (literary) public. Mary Astell was one the first women writers to discursively invade this sphere, to publish her non-fictional, socio-critical texts that were devoted to improving the life of women in general. The following excerpt is an example of how *The Female Tatler* engaged in contemporary discourse on women in the public sphere and how it gendered this discourse accordingly.

The French nation have so complaisant a regard for the fair sex, that they always mix with ’em [sic] in conversation, entertain ’em [sic] with discourse on every topic, which gives them a short knowledge of the world, what other nations are agitating as well as their own; and if a lady has the misfortune to lose a husband, or brother in the field of battle, it must in very great measure abate her grief to know he died honorably in the service of his country. But English ladies, the moment they rise from dinner are pack’d [sic] off to their tea-tables, where they spend half their live’s [sic] time in talking of fans and tea-cups, sugar-tongs, salt shovels and gloves made up in walnut-shells.¹⁴⁵

145 Morgan, ed., *The Female Tatler* 5.

Using a witty and highly satirical linguistic register, the text compares French women to English women. Remarkably, the claim that is made here is situated in the Habermasian public sphere, which means the political realm, as opposed to what has been termed the "social public" by critics like Paula Backscheider, who counts the realms of education and healthcare in this category. Thus, *The Female Tatler* discursively intervenes in an explicitly male realm, namely that of politics and the nation.

According to *The Female Tatler*, the major difference between French and English women is that the first mix with men in conversation, whereas the latter are “packed off to their tea tables” after dinner. This remark alludes to French salons which not only included women, but were also mostly organised and hosted by women.¹⁴⁶ French women thus acted as a paragon for English women.

Combining politics, patriotism and private gatherings, the quote on the previous page serves to illustrate how closely entangled the private and the public sphere in fact were. The view expressed here is astonishing, given the fact that, as Paula Backscheider has mentioned in another context, “only a few examples of eighteenth-century women writing about war are familiar even to feminist specialists.”¹⁴⁷ Even though the topic of this excerpt is war, the realm within which it is negotiated is explicitly not public; private loss and grief are the focus of the text. But it is not a common elegy that bemoans the victims of war.

Because they are allowed to stay, to be present while the men discuss current political issues, or maybe even to actively engage in the discussion, French women are afforded insights into both domestic and international politics. It is suggested that they can be proud of their country because it allows them to participate in public discourse, whereas English women are kept away from the information that would allow them to be patriotic. When they lose a

146 J. Wilkes, *Women Reviewing Women in Nineteenth-Century Britain: The Critical Reception of Jane Austen, Charlotte Brontë and George Eliot* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2013) 75.

147 P. R. Backscheider, “Hanging on and Hanging In: Women's Struggle to Participate in Public Sphere Debate,” *Everyday Revolutions: Eighteenth-Century Women Transforming Public and Private*, ed. Marta Kvanne Diane E. Boyd (Cranbury: Associated University Press, 2008) 38.

husband or a son in battle, they do not know what his death was really for; they are not informed about the political situation that caused the death of a beloved male family member. Explicitly claiming women's inclusion in assemblies that celebrate the nation state, the speaker also criticises women for excluding themselves from serious conversation. The background that enables this politicisation of gender roles is the War of Spanish Succession which was being fought at the time. *The Female Tatler's* editor-persona implicitly argues that the French have a moral advantage over the English: Their women are not as apolitical as English women, and they therefore have a stronger moral backbone and are more willing to make personal sacrifices. Times of war and the commitment it demands not only of men, but also of women, form the backdrop against which the editor-persona argues for women's inclusion in public gatherings. The degree to which women are allowed to participate in public discourse is put into an interdependent analogy to the well-being of the nation. Thus, discourse about gender and the nation intersects and the formation of the latter is represented as being dependent on the inclusion of women in the public sphere.

The argument is that only women who know about politics and current debates are in a position to afford their country moral support in times of war. The editor-persona pokes fun at the emptiness and insubstantiality of tea table conversations; they are constructed in juxtaposition to the men's serious conversations. Lamentations or direct accusations are not to be found in the text, its tone is humorous and highly satirical: In oversubscribed exaggeration, the editor-persona states that women waste their time in talking about vain things, e.g. basic commodities and articles of daily use. The polar opposite, the antithesis of sophisticated discussions about politics and the ongoing war is the satirical image of “gloves made up in walnut-shells”. By juxtaposing epitomes of male and female conversation and by reducing both to exaggerated extremes, the editor-persona adds zest to her basic argument: That the process of nation-building in times of war would benefit from including women in public discourse. This quote illustrates the discursive intermingling of gender and the nation state, a rhetorical combination that functions as a recurring, structuring principle in *The Female Tatler*.

III.1 Between Promotion and Defence: The Female Editor-Persona

The following paragraph is devoted to the question of how *The Female Tatler's* gendered rhetorical perspective was reflected in its texts. How did it implement its female voice in the public and male-dominated realm of journalism? As the preceding section has shown, women's involvement in public sphere activities became more and more common in the early eighteenth century. The following analysis seeks to identify how, as a consequence, women "inhabited" the public sphere, how they "invaded" it, appropriated it for themselves and for their writing. The basic question is how the "woman in the journal", the decidedly female narrative voice, enters into a relationship with her reading public and how she demarcates herself as an active agent within it.

The Female Tatler was the first journal to employ a female editor persona comprehensively, i. e. throughout its entire run. So what could readers expect from this new literary product? Who was intended as its target? *The Female Tatler's* first editor-persona, Mrs. Crackenthorpe, comments on the image she has of her prospective readers in the first issue. What she claims is surprising, given the programmatic gendering of text which the journal's title implies:

The society I aim at, are those above the common level, gentlemen that not only talk good common sense, but can state an argument in any art or science and dispute with learning, judgement, and force of reason. Wit is entertaining, but people are not obliged always to be upon the grin. I would have the ladies to relish somewhat above mere tittle-tattle and tho' they want the benefit of profound learning, yet conversing with ingenious persons would so far improve their natural parts, as to give'em a more noble idea of things, and create in'em at least a value for matters serious and instructive, which would stifle a world of scandal and detraction.¹⁴⁸

Why does Mrs. Crackenthorpe assert that she aims at gentleman even before mentioning female readers? There is no programmatic gendering of text apparent here, as the periodical appears to target both sexes alike. This is even more astonishing when one considers that most of the issues of *The Female Tatler* tended to address or primarily speak to a female audience. Nevertheless,

148 Morgan, ed., *The Female Tatler* 5.

The Female Tatler also featured various letters to the editor by male readers in order to create some interaction between the sexes. Therefore, including men in the target audience was a strategic move. Still, this proclamation cannot be taken at face value: Arguments in “any art or science” are rarely to be found in *The Female Tatler*.

The female readers are supposed to relish somewhat more than mere “tittle-tattle”; thereby learning the art of conversation. However, in the same text, the editor-persona claims that tattling was something that was “ever adjudged peculiar to our sex”. The phrase “conversing with ingenious persons” allows various readings. It could be interpreted as “reading *The Female Tatler*”, or fictionally conversing with the editor-persona, e.g. in letters to the editor. *The Female Tatler*’s programmatic claim also includes giving its female readers a “more noble idea of things” and providing them with “matters serious and instructive”. The last part of the sentence is definitely satirical because it is exactly this world of “scandal and detraction” that *The Female Tatler* – at least for the greater part of its run – celebrates. Like Manushang Powell has nicely stated, essay periodicals rarely live up to their own didactic pretensions, and this excerpt from *The Female Tatler* provides a good example to sustain this argument.¹⁴⁹ In the course of the text, a stronger claim for female authority is made and the rhetorical gendering of the periodical is articulated more explicitly. In the initial issues, the paper demarcates its own “territory” by positioning itself alongside established periodicals and, most significantly, its predecessor, *The Tatler*. In the following, Mrs. Crackenthorpe mentions Mr. Bickerstaff, *The Tatler*’s editor-persona, and states that she does not intend to challenge him in any way:

I hope Isaac Bickerstaff, Esq. will not think I invade his property, by undertaking a paper of this kind, since tatling was ever adjudged peculiar to our sex, my design is not to rival his performance, or in the least prejudice the reputation he has deservedly gained: but as more ridiculous things are done every day than ten such papers can relate, I desire leave to prate a little to the town, and try what diversion my intelligence can give'em.¹⁵⁰

149 Powell, “New Directions in Eighteenth Century Periodical Studies.”

150 Morgan, ed., *The Female Tatler* 1.

This passage is taken from the very first issue of *The Female Tatler*, in which the editor-persona Mrs. Crackenthorpe introduces herself and her venture. In an oversubscribed gesture of female demureness, she does not seek overt competition, but humbly praises *The Tatler* based on its merits. However, she does not only adhere to, but also purposefully exploit contemporary mainstream discourse centred on normative constructions of femininity by stating "tatling [*sic*] was ever adjudged peculiar to our sex?" She thereby claims the realm of gossip as her own, justified by her female gender, with which the activity is generally associated. She thus reiterates mainstream discourse on loquacious women, but gives them an alternative twist so that they fit her own line of argumentation. In reverting to gendered stereotypes, she demarcates her own literary realm, but not by overtly challenging her predecessors and laying claim upon their "sovereign territory". Even though she modestly asserts that her journalistic venture is merely a trial, she uses the apology to establish herself as a stand-alone public persona. This self-reflexive attitude, and the demonstrative claim of literary autonomy it entails, reflects that she engages in questions of authority, specifically through her production of narrative voice. She claims public authority and therefore employs the narrative voice as an articulator, or a mouthpiece of the "social world", as the following quote illustrates.

Mrs. Crackenthorpe does not negate her paper's close ties to Steele's *Tatler*. On the contrary, she promotes the link between her paper and its predecessor and claims a place next to *The Tatler* rather than trying to act as a substitute for the original. Moreover, this strategy serves to awaken interest among *The Tatler*'s readership in her supplementary offer. By rhetorically linking her paper to a highly successful and well-known periodical, she also sheds a favourable light on her own publication. By stating that there is enough scandal in London for ten such papers, she pragmatically avoids pen-rivalries with Steele and Addison. Moreover, she asserts that she will not invade the "holy" domain of *The Tatler*, thereby preventing possible hostilities. Her distinctive feature is her female voice and the rhetorical femininity of her papers, on which she also self reflexively comments, as the next quote will illustrate.

'Pray Madam, how do you like the Female Tatler?' 'Like?' said she. 'I should like it well enough if the authors would not be so much upon the reserve. There was once scandal sufficient to have pleased our end of the town, but why should I confine myself to that. The court dotes on scandal, and, should they

not, we should quickly hold it in disgrace. ‘But of late the authors of the *Female Tatler* set up for morality and are as insipid as anything in print. Well! This morality is a wicked mistake in writers. ‘Tis monstrous and abominable to pretend we want their monitions. Mrs. Emilia, we want diversion, instruction apart for our children. Pray who would give half a penny to read what they know already, or what they are certain they can never be the better for. Yet, if they are severe, ’tis [sic] on some general vice. They give one very rarely to know who they aim at, and that is what we hate. I love to find an acquaintance exposed or a neighbour ridiculed. It is not a farthing matter whether they deserve it or not.¹⁵¹

This quote presents the periodical as a venture full of conflicts, stressing instruction and morality on the one hand and offering diversion, entertainment, and scandal on the other hand. It is also surprising because it features a careless, ruthless and shameless female reader hungry for scandal. No signs of modesty and discretion, an antidote to angelic femininities. To what end is this unruly female character employed? One answer would certainly be this: It guarantees *The Female Tatler* attention. The self-referential comment in the beginning of the quote can be seen as "house advertising" or as self-congratulatory "fishing for compliments". This letter to the editor discusses the differences between Mrs. Crackenthorpe’s more scandalous papers and the Society of Ladies’ allegedly more serious version of the same venture. Two distinct "performances" of literary femininity are juxtaposed, and the reader decisively favours that of Mrs. Crackenthorpe.

Satirically exploiting the mass readership’s thirst for scandal, the reader calls morality a “wicked mistake in a writer.” This statement can be interpreted in two ways. Firstly, as adhering to negative contemporary stereotypes concerning writers, holding that they were mere literary drudges and innately immoral. Or, it could also be interpreted as making fun of "modesty" and "morality" as female-coded virtues, fulminating against the didactic approach of the moral weeklies in general. The reader refuses to pretend that she endorses the periodical’s moralising pretensions and bluntly admits that the only thing she is interested in is scandal. Her remark “The court dotes on scandal” is interpretable in various ways; it can either be taken at face value or it can be read as a satirical hyperbole. In both readings, the gossipy aristocracy is

151 Morgan, ed., *The Female Tatler* 187.

juxtaposed with the modest bourgeoisie. This, I argue, should however not be read as social criticism, but as a mere satirical observation. Moreover, it introduces different spheres of public communication. A reference to living persons, scandal is the opposite of fiction and instruction; it welds groups together and thus enforces the common bonds of a social group. As Nicola Parsons has shown in her book *Reading Gossip in Eighteenth Century England*, gossip was more than just vain entertainment; it was a means of social ex- and inclusion, a means to strengthen bonds between members of a social group or to distinguish a social group from another. Pointing to the social function of gossip, the reader's letter expresses more than a thirst for scandal.

In a mocking voice, the reader states that moral instruction is for children and not for adults and, interestingly, she says that she is not willing to pay for representations of exemplary, angelic femininities she cannot live up to anyway. This letter to the editor is powerful because it features a woman "writing back" to the periodical. This active engagement of the reader is typical of the periodical genre, but the way it is done in this excerpt from *The Female Tatler* is unusual because the reader takes a stand against idealised femininities and role models prescribed in periodicals no woman could live up to. On the other hand, the woman draws a picture of herself as being thirsty for scandal, which can simultaneously be seen as conforming with typical gender stereotypes or as satirically mocking them: Angelic models of femininity are clearly de-idealised here. In the last sentences of the quote, the reader articulates her interest in gossip about real, identifiable persons, thereby alluding to the fact that many periodicals of the time featured texts in the "à clef" model. She criticises the Society of Ladies' "decision" to stop exposing contemporaries. This can be interpreted as a self-deprecating step taken by the Society of Ladies to demarcate their "version" of *The Female Tatler* against Mrs. Crackenthorpe's. It is a necessary requirement that the editor-persona constructs a distinct self-image, a public image of herself as a writer.

This letter to the editor proves how proudly women claimed their place in the public sphere: They not only launched periodicals, but also became active as readers in correspondence. Even more remarkably, she takes up the periodicals' programmatic maxim "prodesse et delectare", to teach and delight. In disclaiming angelic models of femininity and asserting that rules and regulations are for children and not for grown-up women, *The Female Tatler's* reader opposes the genre's moral didacticism. Because the reader satirically

and thoroughly longs for scandal, she articulates a counter-position that could be interpreted as rebellious. Thinly veiled as satire and double-entendre, this text provides an original reaction to contemporary press products and moreover, it features a highly unusual female character. This reader negates the eighteenth-century maxim of self-improvement; moral didacticism bores her because, as she asserts, she cannot live up to perfectionist examples anyway. This noncompliant attitude is amazing not only in an eighteenth century context: Imagine a letter to the editor, printed in twenty-first century journals like *Cosmopolitan* or *Glamour*, stating that their advice on fashion, jobs and matters of love is so unrealistic and exaggerated that no one can live up to it anyway, which makes it a boring read. Such a letter to the editor would arguably be hard to find nowadays. Yet in the early 1700s, as *The Female Tatler* admirably demonstrates, such a satirical and self-deprecatory ironic hint was possible; which does not, however, mean that contemporaries might not have considered it an affront.

III.2 New Forms of Inclusion vs. Structural Exclusion

In the midst of a shifting English philosophy of the national and economic order, *The Female Tatler* makes strong claims for women’s inclusion in the broader public sphere, thus creating a new discursive space. Its editor-persona fights to be admitted to the “world of letters”, which should now be opened up for women as well. The two issues that I will concentrate on in what follows, numbers eighty-eight and one hundred-eleven, are the most astonishing and powerful of the entire *Female Tatler*. They illustrate the journal’s great potential and enable the modern reader to get acquainted with the specific intellectual ambiance of the early eighteenth century, in which surprisingly progressive ideas could be uttered more freely than ever before and probably for a long time after. The following quote is the beginning of one of the most remarkable texts in *The Female Tatler*, one in which it decisively stands up for women’s right to artistic and intellectual self-expression:

Why should we be treated almost as if we were irrational creatures? We are industriously kept from the knowledge of arts and sciences, and if we talk politics we are laughed at. To understand Latin is petty treason in us, silence is recommended to us a necessary duty, and the greatest encomium a man can give his wife is to tell the world that she is obedient. The men, like wary

conquerors, keep us ignorant, because they are afraid of us, and, that they may the easier maintain their dominion over us, they compliment us into idleness, pretending those peasants to be tokens of their affection, which in reality, are the consequences of their tyranny.¹⁵²

As if to rouse the reader, this quote starts with a rhetorical question. According to *The Female Tatler*, men try to keep women ignorant and therefore urge them to “lose themselves” in vain self-indulgence. The phrase “keeping ignorant” is employed in a radical sense here. It is not merely basic schooling the editor persona wants for women; learning Latin, an exclusively male privilege in the early eighteenth century, is indirectly claimed as part of the “feminine curriculum”. The argument is that men consciously screen women away from education and exclude them from serious conversations by ridiculing what they say. Laughter as a social practice that asserts or denies power within a group and as a consequence leads to inclusion or exclusion was the means by which women were redlined. It is interesting to note that the vocabulary which the editor-persona uses in order to speak up for women is drawn from the linguistic register of power structures, which is illustrated by words such as “tyranny,” “conquerors” and “dominion.” These political terms are used to criticise the status quo and the inferior position women held in society. Surprisingly, *The Female Tatler* interprets women’s susceptibility to fashion not as an “innate female vice”, like previous writers, but in terms of “male tyranny”. What is meant by “tyranny” here and how was the term employed in an eighteenth-century context? Critics have linked the emergence of the idea of domestic tyranny, i. e. physical and psychological violence in the private sphere of the home, to the demise of political tyranny, i. e. absolutism and feudal peonage, as is explained in the following quote:

The tyranny of the overweening monarch who threatened the prerogatives of privileged males would naturally be far more easily recognisable in eighteenth-century culture than would be the tyranny of the father of the family who threatened the prerogatives of his wife, children, and servants. Yet the patriarchal prerogative was identified as tyrannical regularly, if cautiously,

152 Morgan, ed., *The Female Tatler* 177.

during the century. [...] The concept of domestic tyranny was therefore already in circulation at the start of the century.¹⁵³

It is interesting to see how the idea of "domestic tyranny" suddenly became a topic firstly mentionable at all and secondly one worth debating. Before the Glorious Revolution, such claims for (sexual) equality were hardly conceivable. *The Female Tatler* thus appropriates contemporary political discourse and adapts them in order to articulate its progressive ideas on women in contemporary society. Moreover, *The Female Tatler* deconstructs mainstream notions of "vanity" as the primary female vice: The editor-persona represents vanity not as "innate" or grounded in "woman's nature", but she holds that it is a behaviour fixed on women by men, allegedly to make them more desirable, but in fact to keep them submissive and docile. This idea is discursively linked to the word "peasant," which is used metaphorically in the sense of "chess pawn." The essay continues as follows:

But what enrages me most is to see our sex so stupid as to believe themselves better treated than the women of other nations, because we are more egregiously cheated out of our rights and liberties than they. A man is called prudent for not trusting anything of moment to his wife, and makes her believe that to be his co-partner in the management of his estate would be an insufferable trouble to her; whilst by his folly or extravagancy, she is often made a beggar at the same time when she considers herself a wealthy woman.¹⁵⁴

This quote is a plea for the inclusion of women into spheres of action and responsibility. Significantly not written in a satirically playful manner, it expresses rage and suggests political insurrection. The beginning of this essay recalls another passage from *The Female Tatler*, in which the editor persona praises "the French nation" for not "packing their women off to tea-tables" after dinner. This excerpt expresses the same idea in a similar way: Realms of nation and gender are discursively intermingled in order to illustrate how the state would benefit from not excluding women. Indirectly, the editor of *The Female Tatler* holds that England lies to its female citizens, bearing in mind

153 B. Rizzo, *Companions without Vows: Relationships among Eighteenth-Century British Women* (University of Georgia Press, 2008) 11.

154 Morgan, ed., *The Female Tatler* 177.

that women were not even counted as citizens in the early eighteenth century. According to *The Female Tatler's* editor-persona, England “cheats women out of their liberties,” dupes them with speciousness. The editor persona dramatises herself as a narrator-agent who uncovers lies and pretences in order to reveal the truth to her readers. Her wish is to open her reader’s eyes and to disclose thinly veiled mechanisms of oppression, and her critique is voiced in a tone characteristic of the Enlightenment, passionate and decisive.

Apart from the overarching political system, questions of credit and credibility are the main structuring paradigms here. What do women believe? What should they believe? What are they made to believe? How do these salient and unspecified “persuasions” work? Beneath its surface, the text offers its readers another version of the recurring trope of “the bubble”, namely the bubble of women’s existence, constructed for them by men, who make the arrangement “creditable” for their female subjects. The aim of *The Female Tatler* number eighty-eight is clearly to de-mask men as double-dealers and to deconstruct common and unquestioned assumptions, thereby depriving them of their credibility. In an exclamation of an almost literary nature, the editor-persona complains about women’s collusion in their own oppression. However, the text’s addressee is not clearly specified; the text mentions “people,” and “anybody.” Still, the sisterly tone that rhetorically prevails throughout issue eighty-eight purports a unification of women, and thus targets them primarily. The editor-persona’s passionate appeal continues as follows:

How can people in their senses think that the fine clothes and all the trinkets that are given to us are bestowed upon the sex any other ways than playthings are given to children, to amuse, keep their thoughts employed and their hands from doing mischief. Does anybody believe that rich men are at the charge of sumptuous liveries, because they love their servants, or bestow fine harnesses upon their coach horses, because they value them?¹⁵⁵

An open social critique, this excerpt is significantly not satirical like the majority of *The Female Tatler's* texts. Various comparisons are used in order to illustrate the main point: The editor persona places women on the same level as servants and horses. The argument is that horses, servants and wives are not adorned with fine harnesses, sumptuous liveries and fine clothes because

155 Morgan, ed., *The Female Tatler* 177.

the men appreciate them, but because the outer appearance of his inferiors – and this includes women as well as horses – reflects his own social standing. Jewellery for women and harnesses for coach horses are thus not gifts, but signals sent out to the man’s social entourage with the aim to manifest the social class he belongs to, or strives to belong to.

Moreover, material goods are presented as a means of women’s appeasement, given to them as pacifiers are given to crotchety children. Women are thus “chained”, which introduces the subtext of slavery. The text likens women to children and equals fine clothes and cheap jewellery with toys, given to them not only for entertainment, but also to “keep their hands from doing mischief,” which could be paraphrased as “keeping them from messing around”. In the case of children, this could mean keeping them away from potential sources of hazard. But what hazards awaited adult women? What the editor-persona in fact implies here is that women were kept away from more serious occupations and, first and foremost, from a proper education which would enable them to participate in activities of the public sphere, such as politics. Thus, the text concludes, women are lured into colluding in their own oppression, veiled and sold to them as love and affection, but in fact only a means to prevent women’s self-determination and to keep them in the position of dependent inferiors.

It must be acknowledged that issue eighty-eight was one of the instalments that featured the most progressive claims in *The Female Tatler*. To be precise, there were three issues numbered eighty-eight¹⁵⁶; my analysis refers only to one of them. Unfortunately, no contemporary reactions to its postulations survived. Along with issue eighty-eight, issue one hundred-eleven professes the most surprising ideas, given the fact that it was published almost one hundred years before Mary Wollstonecraft’s groundbreaking work *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*. The following excerpt is the beginning of one cohesive line of argumentation and it constitutes the last issue of *The Female Tatler*. It starts off very satirically, thus making a stronger use of double discourse and double-entendre as was the case in issue eighty-eight.

The needle is justly quitted for the pen, and the spice box removed to make room for the scrutore; ask a lady for a receipt [recipe] she knows nothing of

156 There are three issues numbered 88, two numbered 94, 98 and 110 and some numbers omitted.

the matter, 'tis probable her servant may, but she desires you to read such a pamphlet, and give her your thoughts on how it is writ, and what you think is meant by those letters and dashes. The first question in a morning, is not what conveniences the family may want, but if the Tatler be come in.¹⁵⁷

The beginning of issue one hundred-eleven affords a double reading: It could be read both as a positive reinforcement, stressing the importance of women's education, and as a reproof, making fun of the "learned women". On a word-level, juxtapositions like needle vs. pen, spice box vs. scrutore and recipe vs. pamphlet suggest that the "old" realms and preoccupations of women are replaced by "new", more intellectual activities. However, certain markers in the text suggest an alternative reading. The phrase "what you think is meant by those letters and dashes" indicates that the woman does not in fact understand the satire or get the point because she is allegedly too uninformed or unintelligent, as letters and dashes were used in satirical texts to veil which names and places were actually meant. Moreover, the last sentence suggests that reading periodicals made the woman neglect her duties as a housewife. The idea that women's primary duty was the management of the household and her children was commonplace and remained unquestioned, even though some of those women who could afford to read could also afford to employ servants to perform these tasks for them. Nevertheless, the beginning of issue one hundred-eleven could also be read as completely self-deprecating because it alludes to so many general stereotypes. Read this way, the passage could be paraphrased as follows: "Women neglect their household chores because of reading; of course they do not even get the satirical twists of what they read!" But what is the implication of this parody?

Taken at face value, the quote cited above could be interpreted as adhering to widespread misogynist discourse. But I argue that it offers a reading beyond the literal level and that it could be interpreted as a highly self-deprecating caricature. There is a very clear element of exaggeration in the above quote, which provides a clue that alerts the readers to the trace of irony. Because of its exaggerated nature and its explicit recourse to widely held stereotypes, the text could be read as ironically echoic. However, there is no proof whatsoever to indicate how contemporaries read *The Female Tatler*. Nevertheless every reader, including the modern one, is invited to form hypotheses about the speaker's

157 *The Female Tatler* from Wednesday March 29, to Friday March 31, 1710.

ironic or non-ironic intentions and to gather evidence for one reading or another. In the course of the text, clues become more explicit:

How much better do arts and sciences becomes [*sic*] a lady than salves and potions? What a figure does *The Tale of a Tub*¹⁵⁸ make on a toilet¹⁵⁹ beyond a herbal, which, with a book or two of devotion, used to be our allowance? 'Tis true indeed there are some accidents not altogether so advantageous as might be wished attendant on these privileges we have taken. Fond of arithmetic, we have given a loose to gaming, that we might know it thoroughly, in a practical as well as a speculative way.¹⁶⁰

This quote makes reference to two literary works of its time. The first is Jonathan Swift's early satire *The Tale of a Tub* and the second is a periodical called *The Ladies' Diary, or, Complete Almanack*, from which some issues appeared under the name *The Ladies' Diary; or, Women's Almanack*. The journal primarily focused on mathematics and was published in 1704. To modern readers, it seems strange that an eighteenth-century periodical devoted to mathematics would primarily target a female readership. Craig Smorynski explains: “Educational opportunities for young women were limited and the *Ladies' Diary* was designed to help fulfil the gap. Its readership would certainly have had algebraic and computational background.”¹⁶¹ More research on how popular the journal was and what kind of impact it had on the social world of its time is most certainly required. The reference *The Female Tatler* makes is very subtle, but definitely recognisable for contemporaries who knew the *Ladies' Diary; or, Women's Almanack*.

The second literary work that is mentioned here is Jonathan Swift's *Tale of a Tub*. This work by Swift has frequently been described as his most accomplished and most complex. It is full of digressions and there is no one topic that prevails. The narrator of the work is extreme in every direction, attacking both over-figurative and over-literal readings of all forms. This work marks the invention

158 A satire by Jonathan Swift, published in 1709.

159 A dressing table

160 Morgan, ed., *The Female Tatler* 201.

161 C. Smorynski, *History of Mathematics: A Supplement* (Berlin: Springer, 2007) 188.

of prose-parody, as all preceding parodies were written in verse mainly.¹⁶² What Swift's satire and *The Female Tatler* have in common is that they both offer no resolutions. They both ridicule what they represent as "foolish habits", but they do not offer the reader a positive set of values to embrace. This form of satire became popular because other writers imitated Swift, and the impact of his satire is clearly discernible in *The Female Tatler*. The indentation between the *Tale of a Tub* and arithmetic is the following line taken from the parody:

Besides, it is reckoned, that there is not at this present, a sufficient quantity of new matter left in nature, to furnish and adorn any one particular subject to the extent of a volume. This I am told by a very skilful Computer, who hath given a full demonstration of it from Rules of Arithmetick.¹⁶³

This quote is an ironic depiction of modern science. It is interesting and relevant here because it fits to the allusion in *The Female Tatler*. But as the satire in *The Female Tatler* is not resolved via a direct comment on the *Tale of a Tub*, the link is merely alluded to. Eventually, the rhetorically feminine self-deprecatory comment is resolved in the following sentences:

But what are these trifles in comparison with invincible ignorance? Who would not rather mistake sometimes than never think at all?¹⁶⁴

This twist could theoretically be read on both a literal and a satirical level, but given the way the issue concludes, it is more likely that it was intended to be understood literally. When the narrator-persona says "these trifles", she alludes to the "accidents" mentioned in the preceding quotation. By calling them mere trifles, she admits on the one hand that there are "accidents not so advantageous" when it comes to "learned women", but at the same time, she minimises the relevance of these "accidents" and highlights the benefits of learning for women. The "trifles" are juxtaposed to "invincible ignorance", which means that in the process of learning, errors are normal. Worse than making minor mistakes is never to improve at all; this is what is meant by

162 Swift, J., and M. Walsh. *A Tale of a Tub and Other Works*. (Cambridge University Press: 2010), xxi-xxii.

163 J. Swift and M. Walsh, *A Tale of a Tub and Other Works* (Cambridge University Press, 2010) 97.

164 Morgan, ed., *The Female Tatler* 201.

"invincible ignorance". In a nutshell, the editor-persona expresses the view that equal education for women is crucial, and that it is not a major problem if they make mistakes or err in the process of learning. The last extant issue of *The Female Tatler* brings all the previously expressed ideas to a closure by making a final, very powerful statement:

All that I have heard of the women of our family, as worthy memory, is that they looked upon the ground when they spoke, were frightened at the appearance of a stranger, and fled to their several recesses. But if compelled to stay by the authority of parents, they sit confused, blush if they were spoke to, and answered nothing. This was called modesty and discretion, and often preached to me by way of example, but for their fear I ever looked on it as proceeding from their opinion of themselves, their blushes from conscious guilt, and their silence from a perfect stupidity, not knowing what to say. Therefore I ventured to take my own way.¹⁶⁵

This passage provides the readers with a radical reinterpretation of normative gender roles and typically female "virtues". One of the primary ones, the virtue of modesty, is radically reinterpreted in this passage, namely as fear and insecurity; as the women's negative opinion of themselves. This is significant because it emphasises the woman's individuality, or lack thereof. Moreover, it implies that women should indeed have an opinion of themselves. Blushes are reinterpreted as "conscious guilt" and thus linked to vice, whereas blushes in mainstream contemporary discourse were interpreted positively as a sign of modesty and subordination. Karen Harvey explains: "The trait regarded as the indisputable marker of modesty was the female blush."¹⁶⁶ It is interesting to examine how exactly the editor-persona proceeds in her deconstruction of norms that were widely agreed upon. Firstly she gives a personal account of her own family, and by stressing the fact that it is "memories" that she recalls, she skirts the anticipated reproach of malicious gossip. She tells the reader what her female family-members did when people unknown to them came to their house: They escaped the strangers' looks so as to ward themselves off from their gaze; they were frightened and wanted to get escape from the scene. Thus, they behaved in an ideal manner, like prey before the hunter's musket. When forced

165 *The Female Tatler* from Wednesday March 29, to Friday March 31, 1710.

166 K. Harvey, *Reading Sex in the Eighteenth Century: Bodies and Gender in English Erotic Culture* (Cambridge University Press, 2005) 218.

to stay because their parents tell them to, they behave as is expected from them: They display female virtues, they blush and hold their tongues. This was how the editor-persona's family members behaved, and she was expected to follow their example, which was, she says, “preached to her.” But she does not abide by the sermon; instead, she consciously breaks away from it and eventually, she self-determinately reinterprets the role models of her family. A clear indicative for social change, this excerpt illustrates the emergence of a new generation of women who deviate from their prescribed role models.

Issues eighty-eight and one hundred-eleven provide the most powerful declarations of women's intellectual power in *The Female Tatler* and are the journal's definite "highlights" in this regard. The ideas and claims these issues brought forward were unprecedented at the time, as the real beginnings of feminism in England are commonly believed to have been initiated much later; Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* was only published at the end of the century. Issues eighty-eight and one hundred-eleven significantly lack the tropes of commerce, credit and credibility. They are not over-satirised and, for the most part, they lack the double-entendres so significant of other depictions. Double discourse is only used in the beginnings of the essays of issues eighty-eight and one hundred-eleven. How can these two exceptional numbers be situated in the context of the time? Did *The Female Tatler* really make a difference and jolt a counter-discourse concerning women's roles in contemporary society? There is no concrete evidence to sustain this view, as no record of any written reception exists. Even twenty-first century literary scholars have rarely included them in their studies, not even those researchers who have worked on *The Female Tatler*. Because we do not know what contemporaries thought of these issues of *The Female Tatler*, attempts at clarity are of course mainly speculative. Nevertheless, conclusions can be inferred: The increasing amount of advertising in *The Female Tatler* suggests commercial success and a comparably high amount of readers. Following on from this, it could be deduced that a certain, not insignificant amount of women, and probably also men, got to read these claims. Regular readers were very likely also familiar with Mary Astell's and other Enlightenment texts that articulated strong claims for gender parity. Still, we do not know if these texts did in fact trigger the modification of quotidian behaviours, if they really inaugurated resistance in women's everyday actions and movements. One could easily argue that it is more than likely that they did not.

Nevertheless, it could also be speculated that *The Female Tatler's* thought-provoking texts did have a resonance in their own day, even if there are no remains of it that survived till the twenty-first century. The issues raised in this context probably did influence women in their day-to-day lives, even if they only served as "consciousness-raising exercises". The importance and impact of issues eighty-eight and one hundred-eleven should not be underestimated. Critics like Paula Backscheider have warned the academic world not to see these kinds of texts as insular, marginal occurrences, by-products of literary history so to speak: "Scattered journal articles about a few individual women demonstrate important publications, but they are often seen as anomalous."¹⁶⁷ Following on from this, I see these texts as emanating from a social and political context that enabled such a decisive discursive intervention. One of the most important aims of this work is to reevaluate these texts and to see them as evidence for social change and first steps towards strives for gender equality.

The issues discussed above are remarkable because they express unprecedented demands. Firstly, the inclusion of women at dinner tables is an important aspiration in *The Female Tatler's* parity-agenda. The key to this postulation is that women should not be excluded from serious, i. e. male, conversation. This proposition, however progressive it may sound in the first place, can also be read as an assertion of woman's dependence on men's intellectual instruction. The possibility that women could also start this kind of sophisticated conversations at their tea-tables is not even considered. Nevertheless, *The Female Tatler's* claims are astonishingly powerful for modern readers who believe that first attempts at gender parity took place only towards the end of the century. For instance, it explicitly holds that women are just as capable of being writers and artists as men: "Why should a book or a pen be more appropriate to a man than a woman?"

Moreover, *The Female Tatler* postulates several times that girls and boys should be granted access to the same education. In this context, the idea that men were afraid of women and as a consequence tried to keep them away from the education they themselves had enjoyed keeps on recurring. The line of argumentation in *The Female Tatler* is clearly reminiscent of political ideas of the time: Just like despotic patriarchs and monarchs greedy for power were

167 D. E. Boyd and M. Kvande, *Everyday Revolutions: Eighteenth-Century Women Transforming Public and Private* (University of Delaware Press, 2008) 31.

labelled tyrants in philosophical discourse of the time, so men who denied women equal education were referred to as tyrants, keen on stabilising their power by keeping their inferiors and dependents down. *The Female Tatler* thus draws an analogy between the philosophical, political realm and the more private realm of gender and education. It takes up major societal discourse of the time and adapts them for its female target audience, the result of which are clearly gendered texts that illustrate that decisively proto-feminist claims were uttered in England as early as in the first decade of the eighteenth century.

The Female Tatler had a certain potential that would retrospectively allow labelling some of its texts proto-feminist. Jill Locke and Eileen Hunt Botting define the term "proto-feminist" as follows: “[It] simply describes terms and agreements that anticipate modern feminist terms and arguments, but were employed prior to the rise of the use of the term feminist in the late nineteenth century.”¹⁶⁸ *The Female Tatler* was a periodical that, although it was not what we would nowadays call "feminist", did in fact controversially discuss women's roles in society and especially in the public sphere. Using the term "feminist" in an eighteenth century context would be highly anachronistic. "Proto-feminist", on the contrary, helps to capture that which makes *The Female Tatler* so special. The term "proto-feminist" serves as a sobriquet and can be used as a comprehensive concept, integrating seemingly unconnected excerpts. Proto-feminist impulses can be observed not only in periodical discourse on education, but also in discussions of more personal matters such as marriage. For the first time in history, personal happiness in marriage is a topic worth debating, and, most interestingly, women's happiness in marriage, as the following analysis will illustrate.

168 J. Locke and E. H. Botting, *Feminist Interpretations of Alexis De Tocqueville* (Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009) 101.

IV Gendering Credit and Credibility

This chapter focuses on the question of how women and men, both single and married, were represented as "economic" factors and actors. A marriage was an undeniably commercial affair in early eighteenth century England; the choice of an appropriate marriage partner being, at least for the majority of women, the only way to escape parental authority, or, in the worst case, to exchange it for the conjugal form of subjection. Marriage for love was unusual; agreements were settled by parents interested in engrossing the family's financial assets. Various texts from the early eighteenth century illustrate the extent to which "a consumerist ethos had infiltrated courtship rituals."¹⁶⁹ Concepts of companionate marriage were not yet existent; matches were usually arranged by parents, as the following quote from John Osborne's *Advice to a Son*, published in 1656, illustrates. It represents marriage as an impertinence that needs to be properly compensated.

The true extent of her estate therefore is to be first surveyed before you entaile your selfe upon the owner [...] the yoke of marriage had need be lined with the richest stuffe, and softest outward conveniences, else it will gull your neck and heart.¹⁷⁰

Osborne's advice stresses the commercial aspects of wedlock and foregrounds it as a necessity to prevent conjugal unhappiness. His account of marriage is that of an aristocrat, as he emphasises the accumulation of goods and material possessions, presenting them as compensation for conjugal hardship. This is a concern typical of the aristocracy because they were the only ones who could significantly increase or decrease their riches by means of marriage; the common man's primary focus was not the accumulation of goods, but mere survival. However, with the Glorious Revolution and the advent of a new political and financial system, frames of reference underwent significant transformations.

¹⁶⁹ Pritchard, *Outward Appearances* 165.

¹⁷⁰ *ibid.*, 165.

Courtship culture and concepts of marriage and family changed radically after 1688, a development that was evident not only in social, but also in philosophical discourse of the time. When he contended that a voluntary contract for the begetting and raising of children was the basis of conjugal society, John Locke extended the contract theory of government to the family. The practices of courtship were radically altered with the advent of capitalism. Owing to the financial impact of the decision, choosing and negotiating the terms of a possible marriage were likely to take more than a year: Each family pointed out their desired terms, presenting themselves positively and sometimes employing inflated claims. These were checked by investigators behind the scenes, who nevertheless displayed good manners up front.¹⁷¹ These arbitrators were central to the process because they could save the family's face if negotiations failed.¹⁷² Once the choice was made, the brokers had the task to finally settle agreements. What followed was the strategic planning of the alliance by fathers and lawyers. The bride's father gave a cash sum called "a portion" to the groom's father. In eighteenth-century London, money was available at lower rates of interest than in the preceding centuries, when land had to be sold in order to be able to pay the portion.¹⁷³ An annual allowance called "jointure" that was paid in the case of widowhood was the only social security provided for women.¹⁷⁴ The ratio between portion and jointure was bargained between the male representatives of the respective households; women were not allowed to sign documents.¹⁷⁵ Before an alliance could be forged, the financial income that the prospective spouse would contribute was to be verified which made the assertion or dismissal of credit a major factor that decided over the success or failure of a match.

The term "credit", as used in the title of this chapter, encompasses two distinct dimensions. On the one hand, it denotes the quality of a person's character; on the other hand his or her stability of income. The dynamics of the marriage market required that competing future wives and husbands had to earn themselves credit in the social sphere. The final decision over an alliance

171 S.E. Whyman, *Sociability and Power in Late-Stuart England: The Cultural Worlds of the Verneys, 1660-1720* (Oxford University Press, 1999) 114.

172 Whyman, *Sociability and Power* 115.

173 *ibid.*, 124.

174 *ibid.*, 114.

175 *ibid.*, 114.

depended not only on the two parties involved; society as an ungraspable, undefined, but ubiquitous force was a major cornerstone in the process of courtship. Being a not clearly defined entity of social actors, the social sphere had the function of a collective "tribunal", as the following quotes will illustrate. Because the allowance of "social credit" was so crucial, excrescences of display were frequent among wooers. Outward appearances were a major means to actively influence one's social credibility. This is exactly what essay periodicals were concerned about: How can "real" quality be inferred from outward appearances? How can tricksters be identified? What differentiates mere pretension from "true class"?

Because outward appearances were so prevalent, the associated vice of vanity was a natural accompanist. The biblical vice had for ages been attributed primarily to women. But because the early eighteenth century produced so many new social types, male characters like the beau and the fop amongst them, vanity in men was a shared cultural concern. Periodicals discussed these fashionable new lifestyles, thereby not only establishing behavioural guidelines for the new middle class, but also illustrating how formerly aristocratic modes of dress and behaviour could be appropriated by the new middle class. Periodicals were thus an active force in the creation of a new social class, channelling class-codes into gender roles.

IV.1 Gendered Anxieties and Periodical Discourse: The Marriage Market

In the early eighteenth-century, marriage was a deal with terms to be agreed upon by both parties, i. e. the parents of the prospective spouses. Because an engagement was a matter of public interest, marriage was a public topic, omnipresent in various contemporary discourse. As Misty G. Anderson explains, this reflects "historical changes in marriage law that elevated and then diminished women's standing as agents within the institution."¹⁷⁶ In 1695, the Marriage Duty Act was passed which levied taxes on births, marriages, and

176 M.G. Anderson *Female Playwrights and Eighteenth-Century Comedy: Negotiating Marriage on the London Stage* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002) 9.

death. Moreover, it imposed a pole tax on bachelors.¹⁷⁷ This tax urged young men to marry and it illustrates how the state actively tried to direct its inhabitants' private lives. This legislation established patriarchy and primogeniture as the cornerstones of eighteenth-century society.

Marriage from the late seventeenth century onwards was not merely a private, but an increasingly public affair; a major concern of the state. As the nature of the state was radically redefined after the 1688 revolution, the social significance of marriage also underwent major changes. Interrelated developments such as the advance of consumer capitalism and the expansion of international trade had made London the centre of commerce. In 1700, London had about 675000 inhabitants and was the fastest growing city in Europe. One in ten of all people in England lived in the metropolis and by the end of the century, about 3000 to 4500 aristocratic and gentry-families.¹⁷⁸ Not only the aristocracy now increasingly chose London as their principal residence, but also thousands of wealthy merchants and their families were primarily based in the city. Thus, London's public places and particularly its marriage market provided a membrane for the exchange of old titles and new capital.

In early eighteenth-century London, social boundaries were fluid and often subject to a strategic alliance: "As people gossiped about the morality of prospective marriages, they were simultaneously engaged in a larger discourse about the unsettled social and political order."¹⁷⁹ The locus around which these discussions were centred was the capital city. The majority of prosperous London tradesmen had not inherited, but accumulated wealth. Consequently, these non-landed, but wealthy representatives of the bourgeoisie sought access along with the landed elite. Mutually beneficial alliances between members of the old upper class and the newly rich caused old social boundaries to blur, which had an immediate impact on the marriage market. Finding a wealthy husband was the only way for women to climb the social ladder; as a consequence, the choice of a marriage partner was a stratagem in itself. *The Female Tatler* humorously comments on the common practice of "marriage

177 E.A. Wrigley, *English Population History from Family Reconstitution, 1580-1837* (Cambridge University Press, 1997) 139.

178 Gatrell, *City of Laughter* 6.

179 Whyman, *Sociability and Power* 124.

transactions" and thereby engages in contemporary discourse about the morality of the new marriage market.

IV.2 Contemporary Female Writers' Accounts of Marriage

Before the great success of the periodical press set in towards the end of the first decade of the eighteenth century, Mary Astell and Judith Drake had already brought critical questions about marriage on the table, pointing to the negative effects it had for women. It is worthwhile to first consult these pioneer writers before then moving on to periodicals and *The Female Tatler*. In *Some Reflections Upon Marriage*, Mary Astell provocatively asks: "If all men are born free, how is it that all women are born slaves?"¹⁸⁰ This famous aphorism is a direct reference to the work of John Locke, namely to his *Two Treaties*. According to Patricia Springborg, Mary Astell is "the Achilles heel of the marriage contract-social contract analogue as first made by Hobbes and Locke."¹⁸¹ The *First Treatise* by John Locke is dedicated to the refutation of two principles developed by Robert Filmer in his work *Patriarcha*. Filmer defended the "divine right" of the king and compared it to the natural and unquestioned prerogative of the father over his family. In his critique of Robert Filmer's work, Locke holds that this book was based on two preliminary assertions, the first being "That all government is absolute monarchy"¹⁸², the second being "That no man is born free."¹⁸³ Owing to Thomas Jefferson's *Declaration of Independence*, the phrase "all men are created equal" is world-famous today and most modern readers instantaneously associate it with the American Revolution. The values of the American Revolution, namely life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, are apparent in enlightened early eighteenth-century discourse as well, however less pronounced. And parallels do not end here.

180 M. Astell and P. Springborg, *Astell: Political Writings* (Cambridge University Press, 1996) 4.

181 P. Springborg, *Mary Astell: Theorist of Freedom from Domination* (Cambridge University Press, 2005) 25.

182 K.L. Deutsch and J.R. Fornieri, *Lincoln's American Dream: Clashing Political Perspectives* (University of Nebraska Press / Potomac Books, 2005) 91.

183 L. Ward, *The Politics of Liberty in England and Revolutionary America* (Cambridge University Press, 2004) 215.

Mary Astell's use of the term "slave" and the analogy between women and subjugated peoples it draws up was as perspicuous as it was provocative in early eighteenth-century discourse. A major influence that must be named in this context is Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko*, in which the protagonist realises that her status has changed from free white woman to that of a slave, thus establishing an explicit link between the two.¹⁸⁴ With her comparison between early modern married women and "our Negroes in our Western Plantations"¹⁸⁵, Judith Drake was one of the first writers to acknowledge the cross connection in her work *An Essay in the Defence of the Female Sex*. It is very likely that Mary Astell employed the term "slave" in a similar way. Just like Drake, Astell seriously questioned the one-sided power structures that marriage imposed upon women, as the following quote from *Reflections upon Marriage* illustrates:

Let the business be carried as prudently as it can be on the woman's side, a reasonable man can't deny that she has by much the harder bargain: because she puts herself entirely into her husband's power, and if the matrimonial yoke be grievous, neither law nor custom afford her that redress which a man obtains. He who has the provocations of a rebellious subject [...].¹⁸⁶

Marriage is unmistakably represented as a business here. Astell stresses the fact that women must be prudent in the choice of a marriage partner, but even if the husband is "reasonable," inequality in marriage is represented as the norm. In the course of the text, Astell denounces marriage, especially the marriage contract, as a private act of tyranny. She expresses her anger about the imbalance of power in marriage and the many disadvantages conjugal life implied for women. In this part of the text, Astell stresses the fact that there is no redress once the two partners were married. The decision was inalterable, no matter how unbearable the conditions. Astell's concern with women's well-being is not something that goes without saying in the early eighteenth century. The wants and needs of women were not considered a topic worth contemplating on by most authors who wrote about marriage, which makes Astell's account even more fascinating.

184 M. Rubik *Aphra Behn and her Female Successors* (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2011) 142.

185 A. Hager, *Encyclopedia of British Writers* (Facts On File, Incorporated, 2009) 123.

186 Astell and Springborg, *Astell: Political Writings* 46.

The brief discussion of Astell's and Drake's texts served to illustrate in which context periodical texts about marriage stood. Providing a cultural and discursive framework, Astell and Drake undoubtedly influenced the thinking of their contemporaries and thus helped to bring up new ideas about matchmaking and women's interests in married life. The account given in the preceding paragraph is far from comprehensive; yet, it attests to the vivacity of discourse and the heat of debate. In the following analysis, I will turn from Astell and Drake to the more heterogeneous genre of periodicals and the question of how they represented the marriage market in their texts.

IV.3 Sold by the Dozen: Imperialism, Credit, Exchange and the Marriage Market

Humour, in contrast to strict moralising, was the "tone of choice" in periodical representations of marriage. The topic was not discussed in form of treatises, as this might be expected, given the programmatically didactic approach of the so-called "moral weeklies". The topic was taken up in the main body of text, the essay, but also peripheral appendixes were used to express ideas about it. The following paragraph will focus on the question of how *The Female Tatler* engaged in contemporary discourse about marriage by means of mock advertisements. The illustration on the next page shows what a mock advertisement looked like and how it was incorporated into the page. The mock advertisement was placed between the main body of text, the essay, and the commercial, real advertisements. Because the mock advertisements were to be found between the essay and the actual advertisements, they were visually separated. This made the transition from essay to mock advertisement easier for the readers.

Gaming is what I always detested, the Consequences of it having been the Ruine of several Families, and the Lois of several Gentlemens Lives: and yet it shall bear a sort of Reputation; for at *Tunbridge* I have seen Persons, that are known to live by it, respected by the best Company, who ought rather to be booted off the Walks, as they do Women of ill Fame: nay, even their Wives shall visit; and at the same time Mr. *Cogdic* is drawing away Sir *George's* Thousands, Mrs. *Cogdic* shall be throwing at my poor Lady's Pin-Money. Estates thus vanisht, Reputation takes its flight; and when a Gentleman shall, at the Expence of his whole Fortune, have let himself into the Secret of Play, he is obliged to turn *Sharper*, and ensnare others; I know some Great Men have stoopt so low as to bubble a Merchant's Cash-keeper out of fifty Guineas.

No Pretence can be made for this sort of Diversion, nor will it bear any other Denomination than distracting Avarice. A Man of a plentiful Estate has no occasion for Play, and to sacrifice a Serenity of Mind to a lordly Covetousness, very much exposes his Understanding; and he that has but a Personal Competency, how perplexing must his Thoughts be to see impending Ruin.

When the Governours of a Family are addicted to Gaming, the whole House is in disorder. Mr. *Traffick* in the City comes home late and has lost; Mrs. *Traffick*, having won, pacifies him. The next night Madam storms at her ill Luck; the Husband having had good Fortuue, appeases her. If they both win, their Harmony is inexpressible; if they both lose, the Neighbourhood soon hears it,---Tongs, Fire-brands, Stools, Candle-sticks, China Images, and what not.--- They had a Prentice, and with him eight hundred pounds; but the opportunity he had of keeping late Hours, led him into extravagant Courses. From good or ill Precepts young People form their Habits; but to such as these Arguments are fruitless. Some *Unaccountables* there must be to help freight our Ships to the *East-Indies*.

* * Mrs. Y.---g at Chiswick, who has sixteen *Lap-Dogs*, that lie in Beds, Blankets, and fine Quilts, and have every day *Reas-Pullets*, and a Footman to attend 'em; would have *Madamoiselle Javillot* to teach them to dance. She has try'd several English Masters, that have begun 'em in Minuets and Rigadoons, but they have given 'em no Air. As she pays for their Learning, tho' they are Dogs, she expects to have 'em civilly treated, since they are dear Creatures to her; for several that have lately affronted 'em she has had before their Betters.

In few days will be published,
The Art of Tautology, written by Valentine Verbose of the Inner Temple, Esq; who is a wonderful Proficient in the Fluency of Words; can, by needless Recitals, extend a Bill in Chancery to six hundred Sheets, and has made considerable and approved Additions to the Introduction of an Answer, &c. This Defendant saying to himself, &c. and to the Conclusion, as Without that that, &c.--- To which will be added a small Treat, entitled The Art of saying Something upon Nothing, very useful to those who draw Preambles to Noblemens Patents.--- A Poem in praise of Sine Cures; by Timothy Tunbely, Vicar of Cellar-ton in Derbyshire. To be sold by the Booksellers of Westminster-hall.

A Person who has got an Estate by Ingressing Coffee, has a quarter of a hundred of Daughters to get rid of. He is willing to give 'em two Thousand pounds apiece, and would dispose of them by Inch of Candle, to those that bid the fairest Settlements.

†† The Lady Stingy is very well pleased with her new Chaise, but thinks it too dear. She desires her Coachmaker to send home the Top of the old one, to make her an Umbrella.

ADVERTISEMENT.

* The Accountant's Assistant in Vulgar and Decimals Arithmetick. Wherein the Principles and Practical Rules of both are so plainly (tho' concisely) deliver'd, as to qualify every Capacity, not only for her Majesties Revenues of Excise, Customs, &c. but also for the Recreation of Gentlemen, Practice of Merchants and Bankers, and use of Tradefinen, Schools, &c. By Tho' *Ward* Accountant to the Honourable Commissioners of Her Majesties Revenues of Excise. Printed on a large Sheet of Royal Paper, Price 1 s. Sold by *W. Hawes* at the *Rose and Crown*, next the *Dog Tavern* on *Ludgate-hill*; and Mr. *Gosling* at the *Mitre* in *Fleet street*.

* A Letter to the Curate of *Stepney*, in Answer to the Would be Bishop, or Lying Lean Printed for *W. Hawes* at the *Rose and Crown*, next the *Dog Tavern* in *Ludgatestreet*. Where are to be sold Archbp. *Lead's* Funeral Sermon preach'd by himself on the Scaffold on *Tower hill*, 1644; and all sorts of Sermons, Poems, &c. that are printed for a Penny.

†† Proposals for a Map 20 Miles round *Cambridge*, like that of *Oxford*, to be done by the same Hand, with Alphabetical Tables, the whole about a Foot wide and 3 deep, after a new Method; shewing the Civil and Ecclesiastical Divisions, and by Squares in the Map, how to find any place in a Minute, which will be published with all possible Speed. Proofs are as follows eth. 1. The Map will contain 1000 Square Miles, 48 Market Towns, 9 Counties in whole and in part, on fine large Paper nearly colour'd. 2d. each Subscriber to pay 1 s. down, and 1 s. d. more at the Delivery. 3d. He who subscribes for six shall have a seventh gratis. The Bearings of Towns, &c. being newly taken by an actual Survey, is now Engraving by Mr. *Harris*, who Engraves all *Capt. Halkys* Maps and Sea Charts. Subscribers are taken by *William Hawes* Book-seller, at the *Rose and Crown* next the old *Dog Tavern* in *Ludgate-street*. Mr. *W. Mose* Picture-seller under the North Pillar of the *Royal Exchange*. P. *Varenes* Book-seller at *Seneca's Head* in the Strand. J. *Harris* Print-seller at the Coffee-house in *Ormond street* near the Chapel. Mr. *Dickenson* Book-seller in *Cambridge*. And by the Undertaker *Benj. Cole*, near the Theatre in *Oxford*. At the Places above-mentioned may be had that of *Oxford*. And Proofs at large for this Undertaking.

* The Common-Prayer in the British, or Welch Language, in 12 s. with Singing Psalms, and 39 Articles, Compleat, approv'd by the Right Revd. the Bishops, as by Act of Uniformity is directed, with a set of fine Cuts, exactly fitted to it, for those that please to have them bound up with it. Also all sorts of Bibles, Common-Prayers, with Cuts or without, Rul'd or Unrul'd, Mr. *Starr's* Cuts curiously engrav'd; likewise *Walker's* Particles and his Idioms. Bp. *Beveridge's* Works, 8 vol. The Statutes at large, last Edition, 3 vol. Ld. *Clarendon's* History, Fol. 3 vol. in Octavo 6 vol. Dr. *Gibson* on the Sacrament, and Family Prayer-book. *Stanhope's* Works. All sold by R. *Whitledge*, at the Bible and Ball in *Ave-Mary lane*, near *Ludgate*.

⊕ The History of the Present Jews throughout the World. Being an Ample tho' Succinct Account of their Customs, Ceremonies, and manner of Living, at this time. Translated from the Italian, written by *Leo Modena*, a Venetian Rabbi. To which are subjoined two Supplements, one concerning the Samaritans, the other of the Sect of the Carraites. From the French of Father *Simon*, with his Explanatory Notes. By *Simon Ockley*, Vicar of *Swavesey* in *Cambridgeshire*.

The Improvement of Humane Reason, Exhibited in the Life of *Hai Ebn Tokhan*: Written in Arabic above 500 Years ago, by *Abu Jaasar Ebn Tophal*. In which is demonstrated, by what Methods one may, by the meer Light of Nature, attain the Knowledge of things Natural and Supernatural; more particularly the Knowledge of God, and the Affairs of another Life. Illustrated with proper Figures. Newly translated from the Original Arabic, by *Simon Ockley*, A. M. Vicar of *Swavesey* in *Cambridgeshire*. With an Appendix, in which the Possibility of Man's attaining the true Knowledge of God, and Things necessary to Salvation, without Instruction, is briefly consider'd.

Ockley's Introductio ad Linguas Orientales, 8vo. Sold by *Edm. Powell* in *Black-fryars* near *Ludgate*.

Sold by B. Brage, in Pater-Noster-Row; where Advertisements are taken in. 1709.



Mock advertisements are, in the words of one critic, “supple and flexible periodic tools.”¹⁸⁸ The first parodist advertisements came up during the time of the English Civil War from 1642 till 1651. They point the finger of scorn to conventional contemporary advertisements, especially advertisements for quack products, making fun of self-publicising charlatans. In publishing such parody, journals partly bite the hand that feeds them because ads for quack products make up a considerable part of the promotion part of the periodical. *The Female Tatler’s* mock advertisements allude to contemporary advertisements, but they do not deal with them per se; their focus is more on social satire. The genre of mock advertisements is characterised by oversubscribed satirical images and confrontational messages mocking not the content, but the style of advertisements, their circumlocution and their empty promises. The preliminary requirement for the functioning of a mock advertisement is that the reader is familiar with real advertisements. Familiarity with the original is necessary for the conveyance of the mock advertisement’s humour and message. The message is the most difficult part in grasping the humour of a mock advertisement. Especially in *The Female Tatler*, most mock advertisements do not have a clear message. They mock the social world of their time without teaching their readers a lesson. At the same time, they illustrate the way in which satire played an important role in contemporary social debate. As John Strachan has pointed out, “satire is often at the polemical centre of discussion rather than being an adjunct to more orthodox debates in the form of journalism.”¹⁸⁹

The Female Tatler’s mock advertisements are more entertaining than didactic, more sharp and oversubscribed observations than thoughtful social analyses, as frequently to be found in *The Tatler*. The following mock advertisement, which is also depicted in the facsimile, illustrates how the genre worked and how it was employed in *The Female Tatler* in order to express certain ideas about marriage.

A person who has got an estate by ingrossing [*sic*] coffee, has a quarter of a hundred of daughters to get rid of. He is willing to give ’em two thousand

188 J. Strachan, *Advertising and Satirical Culture in the Romantic Period* (Cambridge University Press) 74.

189 Strachan, *Advertising and Satirical Culture in the Romantic Period* 76.

pounds apiece [*sic*], and would dispose of them by inch of candle, to those that bid the fairest settlements.¹⁹⁰

[...] his daughters a couple of ill-natured things, 'tis well he can give'em ten thousand pounds.¹⁹¹

The rhetoric of exchange pervades the depiction of the relation between the sexes in *The Female Tatler*, as these mock advertisements illustrate. They point to many contemporary developments that led to great social changes: Imperialism, new markets, new products that resulted in new riches. For those who had no direct access to these riches, the daughters of the well-to-do and the dowry they bestowed in marriage provided an inlet to a share in this new-found wealth.

Goods from the colonies were made available to interested clients at newly created commercial forums. In order to better understand the historical context that provided the frame of reference for *The Female Tatler's* humorous depictions, a brief excursion to London's contemporary trading places will facilitate interpretations. The most famous and renowned marketplace in London was the Royal Exchange, a wholesale market. Its successor, the New Exchange, was a trading centre where fashionable and luxury items were sold. As a marketplace for vain and unnecessary treats, the latter was linked to the feminine, as William Pritchard explains.¹⁹² He goes on to argue that the Royal or Old Exchange, where goods necessary for daily life were traded, was represented as more substantial and thus as masculine. The New Exchange was famed for the women who shopped there as well as for those who worked there. The place was not only the eighteenth-century equivalent of a shopping mall; it was also a place where men courted women. Women were central to the workings of the New Exchange, and this was one point of distinction between it and the Old Exchange.¹⁹³ The Old Exchange was the Royal Exchange in the City and, as Pritchard explains, there was a major difference in the ways in which people perceived of the two "Exchanges".

190 *The Female Tatler* by Mrs. Crackenthorpe, (A. Baldwin) Monday July 25 to Wednesday July 27, 1709.

191 *The Female Tatler* by Mrs. Crackenthorpe, (A. Baldwin) August 26, to Monday August 29.

192 Pritchard, *Outward Appearances: The Female Exterior in Restoration London* 148.

193 *ibid.*

Thus the opposition between Old and New Exchange quickly begins to map itself onto other familiar oppositions: city versus town, industry vs. idleness, old-fashioned vs. à la mode, and male vs. female.¹⁹⁴

His observance is particularly important for my analysis of *The Female Tatler* because he focuses on the dichotomies that constitute the journal's organising principles. Places where people shopped were more than ordinary marketplaces; they were places to see and be seen, places of observance and performance. The Old and New Exchange were metaphors for the entanglement of the social and the economic sphere and its gendered nature. Marriage and the economy were seen as linked by a causal nexus: An alliance first of all had to be profitable, at best an amalgamation of capital and titles. This is exactly what *The Female Tatler* focuses on in the previously quoted mock advertisement. The commerciality of the form pointedly underlines the extent to which "a consumerist ethos had infiltrated courtship rituals."¹⁹⁵

The Female Tatler reveals the economisation of marriage and identified it as a realm of fierce competition. As the excerpts from *The Female Tatler's* mock advertisements will illustrate, the commodification of women was a central concern. Daughters became the subject of promotion and bargaining. Fathers were in the position of customers and choosers. Apart from depicting these developments, *The Female Tatler's* mock advertisement might also have been an ironic hint at *The Tatler's* editor, Richard Steele. His play *The Tender Husband; or, the Accomplished Fools* from 1705 features a soldier, who, as the protagonist of the play, pursues and marries an heiress. Steele himself proceeded to do exactly that by marrying the widow of a Barbados plantation owner, Margaret Stretch, who died a year later. In 1707, Steele married Mary Scurlock, having met her at his first wife's funeral.¹⁹⁶ This anecdote illustrates the explicit economic implications marriage had at the time and that the intermingling of courtship and bargaining was an essential part of many people's lived experiences.

Representations of the contemporary marriage market were highly satirical and humorous, moralistic tractates and didactic instructions were rare. *The Female Tatler's* mock advertisements did not stipulate a normative point of view

194 Pritchard, *Outward Appearances: The Female Exterior in Restoration London* 150.

195 *ibid.*, 165.

196 Baines, Ferraro and Rogers, *The Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia* 324.

by either approving or disapproving of common practices found in the context of the marriage market. The mock advertisements are humorous observances without any didactic or critical purpose. Their humour is based on the ridicule of marked behaviours and the use of stock characters that function as social denominators, as the following example will illustrate:

My Lady Butterfield at Nightingale Hall, near Mob's-Hole at Wanstead, who has so often challenged her own sex to ride a horse, leap a horse, run a foot, or hollow, having lately buried her husband, and being apprehensive that this winter may prove as sharp as the last, does now challenge any man twenty years younger, but not a day older, to be her bed-fellow in an honourable way. Note that this is her own request.¹⁹⁷

The detailed description of the locality in the beginning of the mock advertisement could be a hint that it referred to an actual person probably recognisable for contemporary readers, but this is merely a speculation. The underlying paradigm of the mock advertisement, the inversion of gender-roles, is a consistent trope that not only arises in *The Female Tatler*, but also in other periodicals of the time, as will be shown in the following subchapter which focuses on masculine types and the question of how they transgress gender boundaries. The woman in question overstepped boundaries because she engaged in physical activities that were considered "unwomanly" at the time, horse-riding in particular. This is a rhetorical hint that points to her being unchaste. Jennifer Mason explains:

Riding for genteel women had always been problematic because codes of decorum proscribed the parting of female legs as well as the straddling of large objects, riding astride –as the Wife of Bath is pictured in the Ellesmere Manuscript – marked a woman as unrefined or unchaste.¹⁹⁸

Not only is the woman in *The Female Tatler's* mock advertisement represented as being unchaste, she is also linguistically assigned an active role when it comes to her widow status, as the reader learns that she "recently buried her husband". Moreover, she is represented as being sexually aggressive, allegedly

197 Morgan, ed., *The Female Tatler* 101.

198 J. Mason, *Civilized Creatures: Urban Animals, Sentimental Culture, and American Literature, 1850–1900* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005) 36.

looking for a dashing young lover. Her lasciviousness is emphasised many times, e.g. in the oxymoron “her bedfellow in an honourable way”. Her active sexuality is repeatedly asserted. The editor-persona performatively distances herself in the last sentence when she states that “this is at her own request”. This puts the woman in question in a very active role: She is not the prey, but the predator. Her almost “monstrous” sexuality is formally and linguistically linked to the realm of the economy. The form of the mock advertisement serves to emphasise the commerciality of the issue, their language register being the same as in the actual advertisements they subvert. Style and diction remain unchanged; what makes it comic is the choice of unsuitable content. This highly satirical version of what we would nowadays call a lonely-hearts ad expresses contemporary anxieties by discursively intermingling gender and the economy. The image of the sexually aggressive widow was a common feature of contemporary texts, exemplified in the character of Widow Blackacre from the play *The Plain Dealer* by William Wycherley, first performed in 1676. Helen Burke has outlined the social significance of the character as follows:

Widow Blackacre also represents the more specifically economic threat posed by married women at this time because of changing property doctrines. She is the embodiment of the contemporary patriarchal nightmare, an image of the newly empowered female subject.¹⁹⁹

The Female Tatler engages in this contemporary discourse by using the same stock character. The image it evokes of the widow epitomises an undesirable femininity; she is the reverse of the chaste, accomplished woman. The lascivious widow who rides horses definitely represents a monstrous type, but she also brings out a counter-discourse to *The Tatler*. How can the fact that *The Female Tatler* is much more drastic in its depictions be accounted for?

The characters impeach normative femininities because they are oversubscribed; their unruliness is puzzling and withstands one-sided interpretations. It is likely that these bawdy characters emerged in *The Female Tatler* because they were the outcome of lived experiences: The entanglement of the commercial and private realms in marriage and thus the close proximity to prostitution generated such frivolous images. All that *The Female Tatler*

199 J. D. Canfield and D. P. Fisk, *Cultural Readings of Restoration and Eighteenth-Century English Theater* (University of Georgia Press, 2010) 96.

alludes to in the mock advertisements that satirise arranged marriages became more pronounced later, in the mid-eighteenth century to be precise. William Hogarth's series of six paintings entitled *Marriage à la Mode* illustrate the disastrous results of an ill-considered marriage for money. Contemporary novels illustrate that arranged marriages were the norm in the mid-eighteenth century. These novels and Hogarth's paintings are widely known today, they are an essential part of the literary curriculum in schools and universities.

However, only few know that the topics treated in these works were already anticipated in early eighteenth-century periodicals. In fact, early eighteenth-century periodicals form an important medium of transition: On the one hand, they feature sexualised and frivolous contents that would suit the monarch and the court, and, on the other hand, they are the mouthpieces of a newly emerged middle class, not only articulating their anxieties, but playing a considerable role in the creation of a distinct class identity. The negotiation between older, aristocratic, frivolous behaviours and new, bourgeois, modest behaviours is the driving force behind *The Female Tatler's* mock advertisements and short anecdotes. They can therefore be seen as discursive means articulating newly modified class identities, as the following example will illustrate:

The Lady Well-bred, at Eltham, in Kent, is willing to dispose of a romping daughter, aged fifteen years. Her Ladyship passing thro' the hall last week to order some whipped syllabubs²⁰⁰ when a great deal of company was there, saw Miss sit very quietly in the footman's lap to be kiss'd [sic]. She took no notice of the matter, but when the girl came into the dining room: 'See me no more this month,' says my Lady 'you confident thing, to let a nasty fellow that stinks of the stables flop you at that rate. I perceived you, but said nothing, being resolved to shame you before all this company.' Miss stared her in the face and cried – 'Well, what if he did? I like it.' My Lady instead of dashing her daughter was so out of countenance herself, she knew not which way to look, which, the girl perceiving, made mouths at her, and hoyden'd [sic] out of the room. Whoever can like her person with two thousand pounds, may have a full view of her at Eltham-Church, where by her manner of behaviour, she distinguishes herself from the whole congregation.²⁰¹

200 A syllabub is a traditional English dessert that is made from cream sweetened with sugar and flavored with wine.

201 Morgan, ed., *The Female Tatler* 7.

This mock advertisement features an act of "public shaming". As in the preceding short narratives and mock advertisements, a telling name is employed, in this case to stress the protagonists' social status and to emphasise how class and behaviour diverge. Like the preceding mock advertisement, the primary concern of this text lies in (re-) definitions of class boundaries. The exemplary tale features a precocious daughter, whom her mother ridicules in front of the whole household, assuming that she might be ashamed. But the opposite is the case, as the daughter defends herself and proclaims that she enjoyed being kissed by the footman. Her representation is reminiscent of contemporary fears of social levelling.

The increasing commercialisation of the marriage market evoked harsh criticism by many contemporaries, especially by those who saw it as a facilitator of social mixing. An anonymous pamphlet from 1703 entitled *The Levellers* illustrates these developments by stating that "Matrimony is indeed become a mere trade; they carry their daughters to Smithfield, as they do horses, and sell to the highest bidder."²⁰² The reference to London's trading place Smithfield shows the inextricable link between the city and the practice of forced encounters between prospective spouses: According to Susan E. Whyman, "by 1700 London's marriage market was the national locus for matchmaking."²⁰³ The term "leveller" was originally used in the seventeenth century for rural rebels; it suggested that "Levellers" aimed at bringing all members of society to the lowest common level.

The usage of the term in the context of the marriage market illustrates that in early eighteenth-century London, upward social mobility that was suddenly possible for members of the bourgeoisie. These possibilities were unprecedented and the capital was the place where these mutually profitable alliances were made. The urban metropolis provided various places for matchmaking. Smithfield, the locus referred to in the quotation from *The Levellers*, was not a place of polite sociability like Hyde Park, but a major wholesale produce

202 Taken from T. Southerne, M.E. Novak and D.S. Rodes, *Oroonoko* (Univ of Nebraska Press, 2003) xxiv.

203 Whyman, *Sociability and Power in Late-Stuart England* 110.

market, like Billingsgate or Bear Key.²⁰⁴ This serves to emphasise the commercial aspect of the "marriage-trade" and its alleged boorishness and disrespectability.

The Female Tatler's cautionary tale is marked by a commercial language register: The mother is "willing to dispose" of her daughter, whose worth in terms of the marriage portion is estimated to be about 2000 pounds. Her representation is not incomparable to that of the horses in *The Levellers*. The daughter is an anti-character, the opposite of what was considered an "accomplished woman" at the time: she is precocious, disobedient, unchaste, and impious. But this is only one side of the coin: Because she is everything that role models prescribing ideal femininities forbid her to be, the character of the daughter is a rebel, and, I would argue, a rebel with a cause. She is an anti-role model; her character clearly functions as a catalyst: In opposing her mother and in being not only sexually, but also socially promiscuous, she breaks numerous eighteenth-century taboos. Her unruly and unstable character can be interpreted as a mouthpiece of contemporary fears and anxieties concerning social change. The social mobility that was suddenly possible within English society was less embraced than feared in the early eighteenth century. Whereas mid-century writer Samuel Richardson celebrated upward social mobility, essay periodicals feared "social chaos" and articulated anxieties about permeable social boundaries. These were channelled into representations of unruly, unstable and promiscuous female characters. Herein lays the common concern of *The Tatler* and *The Female Tatler*: Whereas the first aims to educate women to be modest, submissive and dutiful, *The Female Tatler* provides its readers with non-normative anti-models, as the following quotation from a poem included in one of *The Female Tatler's* periodical essays will further illustrate.

The narrator addresses the reader directly, disillusioning her by negating the charms of youth and beauty. This poem is an excerpt from a text that bemoans the fact that the female accomplishments that were regularly prescribed in periodicals are in fact not of any interest, because, as the narrator explains, all that is important is the woman's worth in money.

204 R. Brown, *Society and Economy in Modern Britain 1700-1850* (London: Taylor and Francis, 2002) 241.

Attend ye fair, who boast of wit and youth,

And learn from me, this melancholy truth:

'Tis fruitless all what you so highly prize,

Depend not on your shape, your voice, your eyes,

All charms but wealth can sordid man despise.²⁰⁵

This quote from *The Female Tatler* evokes a new question, namely wherein the true "value" of a woman lies. Is it her status and assets, her beauty, or her female accomplishments? The poem's message is clear: Moneyless future brides have to accept offers from men they probably do not favour, no matter how "accomplished" or "well-shaped" they may be. This could be interpreted as questioning the worth of the "accomplished woman", an ideal image promoted in periodicals.

It is my argument in this chapter that, as this poem exemplarily illustrates, *The Female Tatler* undermines contemporary discourse, especially the one launched by *The Tatler*. Steele and Addison were significantly involved in the construction and divulgence of ideal femininities in their journals. Here, *The Female Tatler*, on the other hand, offers a counter-discourse that challenges or even provokes *The Tatler* by stating that men's interests are directed exclusively towards money, disregarding female beauty and decorum. In the foreground is the commercial aspect of marriage; in place of personality are monetary assets. This idea is also evident in *The Female Tatler's* mock advertisement, especially in the final remark that outweighs the daughter's unsuitability for marriage with her over-average dowry.

It is part of *The Female Tatler's* humour to base courtship in localities where it is not meant to take place, e.g. in a church. Choosing the church as a locus also emphasises the hypocrisy of those involved in the bargain. The places where matchmaking would have been more likely to take place were representative of London's polite public sphere: ballrooms, operas, the theatre, the park and the New Exchange.

205 The Female Tatler by Mrs. Crackenthorpe, (A. Baldwin) issue no. 88.

Apart from its primary usage as a trading place for luxury goods, the New Exchange was also a meeting point for the city's affluent new middle class. Besides, it was a place where women received "offers", and, as a consequence, where their worth was negotiated, as William Prichard explains:

Offers, or even the report of offers, can increase the value of women's commodities (commodity was a seventeenth-century slang term for the female genitals). The Exchange, and by extension the world, is not a place where value is fixed, but rather a market wherein the worth of goods and selves can be negotiated and manipulated.²⁰⁶

The question of a woman's worth is subject to a completely new and unprecedented debate in the early eighteenth century. As Prichard emphasises, the cornerstone of the debate can be brought down to the juxtaposition between "goods" and "selves", two cornerstones that were subject to intense negotiation. The ideal would be a perfect congruence between "goods" and "selves", which means between character and capital. This is the underlying ideal to which *The Female Tatler's* mock advertisements are directly opposed because they ridicule the newly rich, denying them true class and character. The mock advertisement's humour is based on the presupposition that the worth of "goods" and "selves" is never balanced. In *The Female Tatler's* mock advertisements, it is usually the case that the woman is moneyed, but unrefined and of questionable character. If there is no balance between character and capital, the match is ultimately doomed a misalliance. In this mode of representation, women are inlets to the middle class's new-found wealth: Because they are affluent, they are in the position to choose a partner. But as they are as far from being "accomplished women" as they are wealthy, they lack the key requirement that decides over failure or success on the marriage market, namely true class. Their financial assets constitute their "admission ticket" to the "circus" of the marriage market; but as their personal qualities did not broaden as significantly as their capital increased, they are in the end not fit for the "deal". This does not only hold true for courtship, but also for marriage itself. The woman's unruliness being a common denominator that links all mock advertisements in *The Female Tatler*, this character trait is also represented as the key problem in the following excerpt from a mock advertisement.

206 Prichard, *Outward Appearances: The Female Exterior in Restoration London* 154.

Arabella Tickle-Pulse, wife to Tho. Tickle-Pulse, doctor in physick has eloped from her husband; she's a little blackish woman, has a languishing eye, a delicious soft hand, and two pretty jiggeting [*sic*] feet: She's supposed to be gone her husband knows not where, nor has she sent him word, when she will return; therefore, all Templers, and other general lovers, are desir'd not to harbour her, for the doctor will not pay for her board. She'd no occasion to run away, having a sufficiency of everything for a reasonable woman: However, though this be her third elopement, if she submits herself by the end of the dog-days, the doctor has good nature enough to receive her again.²⁰⁷

It is interesting to see how the editor persona describes Arabella Tickle-Pulse's body-parts in the first sentence. The enumeration reminds the reader of a blazon, a poetic listing of the woman's body-parts. But the mentioning of the feet only serves to satirically point to the fact that she ran away from her husband. She is constructed as the "Other" of the accomplished woman because she is unfaithful and gives in to her desires. Significantly, she is not a lone, poor woman, but the wealthy wife of a physician. This is a detail that gives the satire another twist, as *The Female Tatler* frequently makes fun of "quack-doctors", especially in the mock advertisement section. The journal contains various jokes directed against doctors, so the thoughtful reader may be led to think, no wonder the wife ran away.

Representations of aberrant femininities in *The Female Tatler* rarely depict women who belong to the lower classes. This is interesting because before the advent of modernity, ridicule was reserved merely for the lower classes, as exemplified in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* and his account of the Wife of Bath. The woman in the excerpt from *The Female Tatler* is not only represented as bawdy, she is also compared to a dog.

This mock advertisement equates women with animals in a similar manner to that with which the anonymous pamphleteer equates women with horses. The female sexualities depicted in *The Female Tatler* are equally as unruly as the market was perceived to be by contemporaries. In periodical discourse, the wish to regulate the market and commerce is channelled into the wish to regulate women and female sexuality. The telling names, personifications and

207 *The Female Tatler* by Mrs. Crackenthorpe (London: B. Bragge, 1709) from Monday August 8. to Wednesday August 10, 1709.

exaggerations are typical ways in which *The Female Tatler* depicts social types. Its satire is not merely about vices and virtues, but it explores the dangers of insatiability and inconstancy in both economic and social terms.

As has been outlined in the Introduction, the time's anxieties concerning economical insatiability and social inconstancy were frequently expressed by the allegory of Lady Credit. *The Spectator's* account of Lady Credit is not as sexualised as the mock advertisements of *The Female Tatler*, but nevertheless the fluctuating, unstable and capricious nature of women is asserted rhetorically by the name "Tickle-Pulse". With her telling name, Arabella Tickle-Pulse is a character that expresses the anxiety that neither women nor the market can be regulated anymore in an age of fluctuate exchange. In the following excerpt from *The Female Tatler*, a similar anxiety is expressed. The cautionary tale alludes to the contemporary credit-based economy and its inextricable links to the marriage market:

Marriage is not a thing to be jested with, yet false reports have occasioned pleasant conjunctions. A lady, with three suits of clothes, gives herself out a great heiress. A beau that carries his whole stock about him talks of an estate in North Wales. Conscious of their several designs, the match is huddled up before it could be whispered at the tea tables. They visit in great splendour, have noble lodgings at Pall-Mall – but madam's guardian is not yet come to town; Welsh tenants pay very ill, tradesmen bring their bills; 'What's to be done my dear?' 'Why really, my dear, hypocrisy is what I always hated, and to be plain with you, I have no fortune, but your estate is sufficient to clear all and to maintain me, my mother and my sister Judy, who are just upon leaving off shop lifting.' 'Estate, the devil! An acre have I [...]'²⁰⁸

After their marriage, it transpires that the only thing either of them possesses is a poker face; they are both moneyless and had relied on the other's wealth in order to survive. It is significant that the lack of social control is stressed in this cautionary tale, "before it could be whispered at the tea tables," the two were married. To contemporary readers, this remark makes it clear that the couple did not adhere to the proper courtship procedure customary at the time. It was common to rely on marriage-brokers to bring the two interested parties together and to verify the claim's "credibility", just as a commercial

208 *The Female Tatler* by Mrs. Crackenthorpe, (A. Baldwin).

creditor would do before approving a loan. Here, public and private discourse, marriage and commerce intersect. In the cautionary tale related by *The Female Tatler*, this step was disregarded; as a consequence, the "bubble" cracked. The bubble, as drawn from commercial rhetoric, was a pervasive metaphor in *The Female Tatler's* satire of social types, as the following excerpt will illustrate. The "liquidity crisis" featured in the satirical cautionary tale about marriage was adopted from the realm of commerce, where it was prominent: Liquidity crises were recurrent and constantly feared. In this period, the participation in exchange, rather than the possession of real property, became the preeminent basis of economic advancement. The trope of exchange is the leading principle in contemporary discourse on social and economical change. The marriage-satire of *The Female Tatler* reflects that in early eighteenth-century London, social boundaries were fluid and often subject to a strategic marriage. Susan Whyman has pointed out that "as people gossiped about the morality of prospective marriages, they were simultaneously engaged in a larger discourse about the unsettled social and political order."²⁰⁹ *The Female Tatler* humorously comments on the common practice of "marriage transactions" and thereby engages in contemporary discourse about the morality of the new marriage market. A key interpretative paradigm for the analysis of *The Female Tatler*, credit shaped a whole new world of political, social, and cultural ideas.

Periodical representations of vain women and effeminised men mirrored the perceived dangers of the new speculative economy based on credit. The new economic system of stock markets, speculative investments and paper credit found its way into literature, as the language of credit and speculation entered the cultural narratives of essay periodicals. The stock characters that *The Female Tatler* depicts express the ambivalence of its time concerning the increasing importance of the (international) marketplace, as the following excerpt from *The Female Tatler* will further demonstrate:

Therefore as I would avoid reprimanding anybody in my own apartment, I take this opportunity to entreat the absence of all effeminate fops, that drink milk and water, wear cherry colour'd stockings and stitch'd waistcoats and, in a counter-tenor voice, complain of vapours and the spleen; impudent beau-Jews, that talk obscenely in modest women's company, then stare'em in the face and burst out a-laughing, who, so far from being admitted into civil society, ought

209 Whyman, *Sociability and Power in Late-Stuart England* 124.

to be expell'd from the nation; all comic gentlemen that act in tragedies for diversion; designing persons, that make assignations at public drawing-rooms, and foreign beaus, that assume the title of counts, who just make an outside show to engage some great fortune, and when they have received her money, fly away with it into their own country.²¹⁰

Overt anti-Semitism as expressed in the above quote from *Female Tatler* number three was omnipresent in eighteenth-century England. Todd Endelman has argued that “much anti-Semitism that had been expressed in an exclusively religious framework underwent transformation and reappeared in a variety of secular forms.”²¹¹ *The Female Tatler's* account of Jewishness is a representative stereotype for usury and therefore for credit, commerce and trade. Moreover, the pervasive stereotype of Jewish effeminacy is evident in this passage. Apart from evoking fears of “the Other,” the commentary by Mrs. Crackenthorpe features the Restoration character of the fop.

The fop is a stock-character and social type derived from Restoration plays, most notably from George Etherege's *The Man of Mode*, staged in 1676. He is trivial, fashionable, leisured, sociable, delicate, exhibitionist; and displays traditionally undesirable features in a male: vanity, ignorance and irresponsibility. In *The Female Tatler*, the fop is not represented as a naïve and superficial “man about town”, but as a refined social actor. He is by far more than a vain caricature of superficiality.

By the eighteenth century, fashionable dress was not necessarily a marker of great fortunes; credit and debt could easily be used to create the desired appearance, as in the preceding quote from *The Female Tatler*, where lodgings at Pall Mall were used to persuade the prospective partner of actually non-existent riches. In the earlier quote, the lack of social control, the fact that the alliance was not approved of at the tea-tables, was represented as the reason for its being doomed to fail. The present quote features fops, the most sociable of types. Because of their foreign background, they can create whatever appearance they wish; it cannot be checked by polite society. A true incident and a representative case that occurred in late seventeenth-century London,

210 Morgan, ed., *The Female Tatler* 6.

211 F. Felsenstein, *Anti-Semitic Stereotypes: A Paradigm of Otherness in English Popular Culture, 1660-1830* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999).

namely that of Mary Carleton, also known as the German princess, provides an interesting frame for interpreting the text. The case contains many aspects which could explain and which underline the anxiety expressed in *The Female Tatler*. Mary Carleton was accused of having given herself out a noblewoman from Cologne and of marrying John Carlton under false pretences.²¹² Because credit was granted more readily than ever before, outward shows were not necessarily representative of a person's actual financial situation, a new development that is clearly reflected in *The Female Tatler's* satire of social types.

The fact that Mary Carleton was able to earn herself credit on the marriage market mirrors the speculative economy of the time: As long as the "bubble" did not burst, the system ran smoothly. For numerous tradesmen, the 1720 South Sea Bubble was the pernicious outcome of the great increase in speculative investment.²¹³ Because of their outer appearances, fops were linked to this credit and speculation-based economy, as the inner-being could not be inferred from outward appearances. Their being effeminate is significant of the feminisation discourse that intersected with discourse on trade in the early eighteenth century, exemplified in the image of the bubble.

The Female Tatler engaged in contemporary fears and anxieties that were related to the economy and channelled them into related constructions of gender. The link between the economy and the feminine is reflected in the allegory of Lady Credit, a discursive figure whose shadow is clearly retraceable in the excerpts from *The Female Tatler*. The character of Lady Credit became increasingly popular after Daniel Defoe invented her in his periodical *The Review*. Adopting the character inaugurated by Defoe, Joseph Addison developed the allegory further. In *The Spectator* number three, he tells his readers about a dream he had that involved Lady Credit, a gendered allegory on the contemporary world of finance. He describes her as sitting on a throne, troubled with vapours²¹⁴, a fashionable nervous disorder marked by anxiety, depression and fainting. Lady Credit is described as sickly, timorous and insecure. Her mental state and physical health depend on news read out to her by secretaries. These series of images are typical for depictions of Lady Credit;

212 Pritchard, *Outward Appearances: The Female Exterior in Restoration London* 35.

213 L. Brown, *Fables of Modernity* 100.

214 C. Nicholson, *Writing and the Rise of Finance: Capital Satires of the Early Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge University Press, 1994) 47.

earlier images by Defoe also portrayed her in this manner. Her symptoms are meant to correspond to interpretations of the reactions to events in English business and banking. According to Paula R. Backscheider, Lady Credit is reminiscent of emblems of Britannia, “closely related to the principles of 1688, and the mercy of political events.” She explains: “Britannia had been used to comment on political events, and her depiction often served to portray the state of the nation.”²¹⁵ Just like Britannia had been used to comment on the state of the nation, Lady Credit was used to comment on its financial well-being. In his representation of modern trade, Mr. Spectator intersects unaccountable, markedly feminine emotions with an evocation of risk, loss and uncertainty. This is also reflected in *The Female Tatler’s* Mrs. Tickle-Pulse and her unfaithfulness. While Mrs. Tickle-Pulse’s unruliness is limited to the private sphere of the home which she leaves, Lady Credit is an allegory on the commercial and financial institutions of the day: The Bank of England and the credit economy, the lotteries used by the government to finance the War of Spanish Succession, commercial imperialism and its domestic effects. The creation of a gendered allegory enabled writers to express complex concepts and ideas in a simplified manner. The female gender of the allegory is of major importance because it provides a familiar frame of reference for the readers and makes the complex and abstract concept of credit more graspable.

The fop evokes questions of credibility to contemporary readers; it is an allusion to the increasing contemporary importance of international markets and foreign wars that could affect both the national and the domestic economy in England. The foreign beaux that “assume the titles of counts” are male versions of Mary Carlton. Femininity, with which adorned outward appearances and consequent problems of legibility were traditionally associated, was now also frequently to be found in men. In their function as signifiers without signified, femininity and effeminacy become equals.

In a nutshell, *The Female Tatler’s* rhetoric simultaneously borrows from two separate, but closely related fields of discourse, namely commerce and gender. *The Female Tatler* describes problematic femininities by using the nouns “immoderateness”, “insatiability”, “infidelity”, “deceitfulness” and “vanity”, which are also used for critiques of the financial system in other contemporary texts, such as Roger Coke’s *A Discourse of Trade* from 1671 and

215 P. R. Backscheider, “Defoe’s Lady Credit,” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 44.2 (1981): 96.

Daniel Defoe's *Review of the State of the British Nation* that ran from 1706-1713. The same programmatic virtues are postulated for the market and for idealised femininities: modesty, sincerity and obedience.

The feminine gender is applied to the male sex in the figure of the fop. *The Female Tatler* underlines the fops' effeminacy: They drink milk and water, suffer from hysteria, the vapours and the spleen, just like Mr. Spectator's Lady Credit or Mrs. Tickle-Pulse. To make the excesses of their effeminacy even more suggestive, the periodical reports that they "speak in a counter-tenor voice". Their outer appearance is described in exaggerated details: The fops wear cherry-coloured stockings and stitched waistcoats, apparel which marks them as urban "men about town", in the language of the time. They are represented as being influenced by material culture and thus by commerce, trade and an economy that relied on appearances for its speculative business. The aim is to "engage a great fortune," in the macrocosm of the economy as well as in the microcosm of the private realm, as epitomised in marriage. The fops assume the role of speculates. Eventually, "they have received their money, and fly away with it into their own country". This statement epitomises fears of the "Other" and of both economical and cultural interferences from outside.

To summarise, *The Female Tatler* contains various dramatic depictions of men and women trapped in the claws of the marriage market: Firstly, there is the plantation-owner's daughter who is for sale and can be examined during Sunday services. Then, there is the lascivious widow who is in search of a younger lover, followed by a precocious teenage-girl who ought to be married off before she can start having a fling with one of the servants. The list goes on with Arabella Tickle-Pulse, a wife who ran away but is expected to be back by the end of the dog-days. Players and liars in search for moneyed and landed spouses render the London marriage market uncertain; and foreign, effeminate men who are also looking for a future bride, but are in fact only interested in disappearing with their money, complete the list of agents in the public sphere of the marriage market. So how can these satirical depictions be accounted for, how could they be interpreted not only as individual examples, but as expressions of common contemporary concerns?

In poking fun at the marriage market and the falsity of its pretensions, in showing how credit in the social sphere does not necessarily involve credibility in the private realm, *The Female Tatler* negotiates the in-betweens of public and

private spaces and their interconnectedness. It saliently and satirically calls into question the rules by which the contemporary marriage market abided because it depicts characters that deviate from this norm. Its language register is one of commerce, and so are the arguments put forward, exemplified in the following advice by Mrs. Crackenthorpe: “Upon the whole, an ingenious lawyer, a man in vogue, and business, who will not only get an estate, but knows how to preserve it, whose profession is honourable, and whose parts must be acute, is the person I would choose to make an alliance with.”²¹⁶ This pragmatic rationale of the ideal husband explicitly stresses the economical dimension of the "alliance". The key requirements are always the same: The prospective husband should have an "honourable" profession, good looks, money and land. Mutual affection is not yet on the agenda. But *The Female Tatler* also provided its readers with another view, mainly in the issues by the Society of Ladies, as I will explore in the following part of the chapter.

IV.4 Turning the Tables on Marriage: The Society of Ladies

In the midst of the journal's run, *The Female Tatler's* authorial personas changed; the middle-aged Mrs. Crackenthorpe was followed by a group of young editors, the Society of Ladies. Along with the authorial set up, the periodical's perspective changed. While Mrs. Crackenthorpe maintained a very satirical and at times gossipy tone, the Society of Ladies used significantly less satire and hyperboles to speak to their readers. As I have outlined in the introductory chapter, it has been suggested by various scholars that Bernard Mandeville was the author of the Society of Ladies-issues. Though merely a hypothesis, changes in the periodical's overall tone and approach support claims of his authorship. One pillar on which this idea rests is the fact that in the second half of *The Female Tatler*, marriage is represented in ways that correspond with Mandeville's progressive thinking. In his most famous work, *The Fable of the Bees*, he presents ironic arguments about the liberating economic effects of female desire. Being in fact a subtle critique, these ironic arguments exploit conventional misogynist sentiments in order to articulate critical ideas about institutions like marriage, thereby defending women and their

216 The Female Tatler by Mrs. Crackenthorpe, (A. Baldwin) issue 47.

abilities.²¹⁷ Owing to the limited scope of this chapter, accounts of Mandeville's works and of his ideas about women's roles in society can merely be sketchy and non-comprehensive. His works, particularly *The Virgin Unmask'd* from 1709 form an important backdrop against which the *The Female Tatler* can be read and interpreted. The title *The Virgin Unmask'd* tricks the male prospective book-buyer into believing that he just bought a work of pornography, a marketing trick typical of Mandeville's: In fact, *The Virgin Unmask'd* is a moral dialogue devoted to the defence of women, an actual proclamation of their rights.²¹⁸ Though Mandeville's achievements cannot be fully discussed here, it needs to be acknowledged that he articulated ideas that were opposed to most of his contemporaries' convictions: Misogyny was widespread, the status quo. But around the eighteenth century, with the advent of Enlightenment thought and world outlook, times were changing. Thinkers of the day started to contemplate on topics like personal happiness, a development which is also highly reflected in periodicals, which focus on individual experience and the place of the individual in society. Increasingly, negotiations of individuality also included women, as the following example from *The Female Tatler* will illustrate.

The excerpt quoted below is taken from a letter to the editor addressed to a member of the Society of Ladies called Emilia. In this letter, a young girl tells Emilia her personal love story. One day, her secret lover came to her window at night and was mistaken for a thief by her father. The father scared him away and as a consequence, the two could not be together anymore. The reader laments that her father would never understand the young people's love for each other, so she had to tell her beloved not to come to her house any more. She writes:

My father, who ever understood these methods, but married out of pure compliance to his honoured parents, and does not know love though he should meet him in a full light!²¹⁹

217 E. J. Hundert, *The Enlightenment's Fable: Bernard Mandeville and the Discovery of Society* (Cambridge University Press, 2005) 244.

218 G.S Vichert, "Bernard Mandeville's the Virgin Unmask'd," *Mandeville Studies*, ed. Irwin Primer, vol. 81, Archives Internationales D'histoire Des Idées / International Archives of the History of Ideas (Springer Netherlands, 1975) 2.

219 Morgan, ed., *The Female Tatler* 179.

Almost as if it were a Shakespearean love story, she juxtaposes her heartfelt love to her father's coldness. The fact that Emilia is represented as a young editor persona opens a whole new range of possibilities when it comes to the design of the journal. Emilia, the member of the Society of Ladies to which this letter is addressed, is young and unmarried, unlike Mrs. Crackenthorpe. This enables a different mode of communication and other topics can be addressed by the readers who allegedly send letters to *The Female Tatler*. The topic of this letter is the affection a young unmarried couple feels for one another; their love is constructed as pure and not as related to financial interests or parental obligations. It thus stands in stark opposition to the mock advertisements of Mrs. Crackenthorpe's *Female Tatler*, in which she mainly discusses alliances and misalliances.

Representations of marriage and courtship in *The Female Tatler* thus include mere rationales for mutual financial benefit as well as pleas for companionate affection and love. This shows that in the years 1709 and 1710, ideas of romantic love, clearly reminiscent of models of courtly love, existed alongside views that stressed the financial impacts of wedlock. The letter to the editor not only illustrates that various concepts of marriage and differing criteria for the choice of a marriage partner coexisted, but it also attests to a generational conflict that has persisted as the driving force behind the majority of all literary plots, namely the young lovers vs. parents, conventions and society in general. Though the topic itself is timeless, *The Female Tatler's* accounts of it are reminiscent of major social changes.

The historian Lawrence Stone has traced a shift in the basic patterns of family life during the eighteenth century, from a "restricted patriarchal nuclear" family at the turn of the century to a "closed domesticated nuclear" family by the end.²²⁰ Stone explained that the domestic sphere of the home became increasingly private, and accordingly the relationships within increasingly affectionate. He refers to this phenomenon as the emergence of companionate marriage.²²¹ *The Female Tatler* encompasses varying concepts of marriage, compromising between both the "older" and the "newer" models, as exemplified in the generational conflict between father and daughter.

220 L. Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage: In England 1500 – 1800* (London: Penguin Books, Limited, 1990) 7.

221 P. Poplawski, *English Literature in Context* (Cambridge University Press, 2007) 239.

Tone and overall approach vary significantly between the first editor-persona, Mrs. Crackenthorpe, and her successors, the Society of Ladies, who took over after fifty-one issues. As mentioned above, their different approaches can be explained by taking into account the narrative constellations they feature. The collaborative nature that defined *The Female Tatler* by the Society of Ladies was innovative and unprecedented; Steele and Addison adopted the model of the editors' club afterwards. *The Female Tatler* was "trend-setting" in this respect, although this fact has never been seriously acknowledged by scholars. A group of editors affords the opportunity for various perspectives: Depending on their age and marital status, the sort of counsel the members of the Society of Ladies give to their readers varies.

In the answer that she gives to her reader's letter, Emilia enquires why the young gentleman waited outside her house in winter, when those "sort of lovers [...] have been frequently observed about July and August."²²² By answering only to a trivial detail in the letter and by not even touching upon the main problem the reader describes, she makes fun of him. Emilia thus avoids giving advice on the topic. Taking sides would indeed have been difficult: Adhering to the didactic morals so characteristic of periodicals, she would have had to advocate the father's view because encouraging the young unmarried couple would have been considered an offence at the time. When she says "this sort of lovers" she, however slightly, questions the relationship and foregrounds the amatory pretensions of the reader's beloved.

If it were *The Tatler*, one could speculate that its editor persona would actually have vehemently discouraged the young girl and her aspirations. But *The Female Tatler* by the Society of Ladies does not fulfil the genre's moralist ideals: Instead, the editor-persona extricates herself from the situation by not abiding to any expectation, neither to the reader's, which would have meant a concrete answer to her question, nor to the genre's, which would have required a clear didactic message and discouraging of the couple's illicit romance.

Because they refuse to give a clear answer, the Ladies negate general expectations. Concerning questions of courtship and marriage, *The Female Tatler* edited by the Society of Ladies differs a great deal from the one by Mrs. Crackenthorpe. The Ladies' way of treating the subject is much more

222 Morgan, ed., *The Female Tatler* 180.

humorous and critical, as the following example from issue number eighty-two will illustrate. It is an excerpt from a letter to the editor that does not deal with the topic of marriage explicitly, neither is it an account of the reader's love-life, as the previous example. Instead, it is a query concerning the marital status of the editorial club, the Society of Ladies.

Ladies, For since your names are unknown to me, I am obliged to direct you all, my request is, that you be pleased in your next *Tatler* to inform the public, consequently including your humble servant, whether your society be maids, wives or widows? If maids, how old and how wealthy? If wives, how your husbands are qualified, if they are sufficiently patient to be admitted in the citizens credit of cuckoldom? And if they are, how well their coffers are lined to pay for the honour? If widows, how handsome, and what jointure?²²³

The fact that the author of the letter does not know the Ladies' names is a carefully positioned device to indicate that he is not a regular reader. Apart from stressing his indifference, this could provide an explanation for why he acts the way he does. The letter's tone is not intimate; it reminds the reader of a public interrogation. The need to classify women in this way was a common practice, as girls and women could only be defined in relation to men. As he goes through the three identity-models possible for women at the time, he expresses the commonplace view that as soon as women were married, they should withdraw from the public sphere. As writers, the women were clearly what was called "public-spirited" at the time, and thus subject to contemporary stereotypes that linked them to promiscuity. The phrase "*credit of cuckoldom*" joins in the leitmotif of this work, namely credit and credibility. Significantly, the trope of credit is intermingled with gender, or appropriate behaviour according to the demands thereof. Men and women could only be "credited" and "creditable" in the public sphere if they adhered to prescribed norms. As periodicals were the mouthpieces of contemporary discourse, they were the main "prescribers" Therefore, it is interesting to see what happens in *The Female Tatler* by the Society of Ladies: They reiterated contemporary stereotypes, but with a clearly ironic twist, as the following excerpt from the Ladies' answer to the query illustrates.

223 Morgan, ed., *The Female Tatler* 164.

You desire to know if we are maids, wives or widows, to which I answer, we are all maids, but I doubt out of the latitude of your pretensions. Some of us are young and handsome, but no gold, dear Sir. Some well-shaped and witty, but horridly proud, and could no more live upon half matters than yourself. Some very rich, but very cunning, not part with a shilling without a valuable consideration [sic]. Now if you could have brought five hundred acres, besides fine country seats, with gardens, parks, and manors, instead of laundresses, sergeant's ladies, and burgher's daughters to vouch for your abilities, you had done your business effectually. For everybody likes your picture, and we could let it rest in the frame of levity too, were there gold enough to set it off, but the mischief ou't²²⁴ is we are all a little whimsically inclined to like that shining metal in our pockets more than upon the outside of a husband; nay, some of us are so tasteless as to declare openly that the plainer the man the finer the wife, and have taken the resolution not to marry anything with a lacked coat, or full wig.²²⁵

This quote shows nicely the confinements of a woman writer's existence: Female writers could either be widows or maids; married women were not believed to be in the position to write because writing was considered a public activity. The Ladies construct themselves as young, handsome, and some of them are even described as "very rich". Money plays an important role in the excerpt quoted above; "the shining metal", i. e. money, is the focus of attention. These female editor-personas draw up an image of themselves as beautiful, independent and fashionable, eighteenth-century It-Girls. Moreover, they describe themselves as cunning, thus making self-deprecating fun both of the letter to the editor and of the general expectations concerning women writers. In a very self-confident manner, they tell their suitor that he is not good enough for them, and the fact that he is not a land-owner is emphasised here. Not only is he not prosperous enough, but he also has the wrong social conduct, definitely too impolite for the Ladies. Their account of their reader's lonely-hearts-club-letter emphasises the huge importance of social class in the courting process. Social conduct is of major importance, as it vouches for one's "abilities", thus following the ever-recurring pattern of defining credit – in the realm of marriage – as credibility in the social sphere.

224 Onomatopoeic use of language in the original

225 Morgan, ed., The Female Tatler 171.

To return to the Ladies' reaction, it is interesting to note that they ironically describe themselves as "tasteless" and "money-grubbing". This is of course very self-deprecating. They state that they would prefer to shine next to a "plain" husband rather than having a husband who could be described in modern parlance as "bling-bling". "The plainer the man, the finer the wife," in fact, means the fewer luxury items the man buys for himself, the more money remains for his wife. This decency on the husband's side is also an indicator for his not being newly rich, as social upstarts were commonly reproved because of their opulent outer appearances.

The Female Tatler features exaggerated, over-commercialised representations of courtship and marriage, in which the boundaries between ideal femininities and their counterparts are consciously blurred. The issues by the Society of Ladies appear much more modern to twentieth-century readers. They are just as satirical as Mrs. Crackenthorpe's, but they sympathise more with the women they portray. Deviations from normative prescriptions of femininity and female behaviour are frequently found in *The Female Tatler* by the Society of Ladies. In the following example, the Ladies explain to their readers how to seduce and keep a man, and they do this in an explicit, unveiled manner, normal for twenty-first century readers, but undoubtedly a novelty and very unusual for eighteenth-century readers.

The lion forgets his strength, the tiger his fierceness and the fox his cunning, the horse tamely submits to his rider and the ox to his yoke; and all this is done by management. Why then may not feeble women as easily curb the power of insulting men? Bring the great, the beautiful, the wise and the wealthy to their lure; make the first lay aside his grandeur, the next neglect his shape, a third forfeit his wisdom, and the fourth his riches to please a woman that has artifice enough to make herself every way agreeable to his expectations. [...] That is the artifice I talk of, that's the knowledge we are to study, the language of the eyes, the motion of the hands and feet and all the little turns of seducing men to catch us. [...] If we ward ourselves off from their snares, we surely catch'em in our own and there the slenderest thread of art, if fairly woven, will secure them.²²⁶

226 *The Female Tatler* by Mrs. Crackenthorpe, (A. Baldwin) from Wednesday November 9, to Friday November 11, 1709.

Allegories and personifications are the dominating stylistic devices in this excerpt. It shows the reader the workings behind the façade, an eighteenth-century "how to catch him" guideline that very much resembles the contents of contemporary women's periodicals. Like preceding excerpts, this one can be interpreted in different ways. Precisely because it reveals the tactics and workings from "behind the scenes", it could also be read as revealing women's "evil plots against men". However, Rosella's view, in which she defends women and advocates "female cunning", is given the main emphasis in the text as a whole. Interestingly, the word "cunning" comes up again in a similar context as in the preceding quote. In the context of an animal metaphor, the adjective "cunning" is linked to the fox. But in general, bigger and more powerful animals prevail: the lion, the tiger, the horse and the ox. This allocation is no coincidence: It begins with the strongest and most powerful of all animals, the lion, which is followed by the tiger, also a beautiful and energetic animal. Then, the listing of animals becomes more domestic, as it continues with the horse and the ox.

What these wild and domestic animals have in common is that they are all manageable, and, most significantly, they are tamed and ruled over by human beings, who are physically weaker than they are. In allegorically linking the animals to men and the human beings to women, *The Female Tatler's* editor-persona aims to show that weaker and allegedly inferior subjects can obtain a prerogative if they have the right "management skills". The range of stylistic means used to express this idea is much more varied than similar reasoning in the issues by Mrs. Crackenthorpe: In a striking chiasm, the narrator-persona illustrates how the greatest, most beautiful and wisest of men can be "conquered", how the "hunter" can become the "prey". She calls this skill an "artifice", making women "artisans". The artifice consists of masking the agitation so that the prey, i. e. the desired husband, will not see the agitations behind the performance, but will merely experience its effects as genuine. In the end, it is still the man that "catches" the woman, but by unmasking or revealing the workings and agitations behind the scenes, *The Female Tatler's* editor-persona literally breaks a taboo or oversteps a boundary, as the following reaction by her colleague Lucinda shows.

‘[F]or at this rate we suffer ourselves to be exposed and I think the conquest is not worth the purchase, if we have no other way to gain it but at the expense of our modesty, and prostituting our own virtue to collogue, flatter and dissemble. I hate a woman of so mean a spirit. If I thought I had not charms enough to command a husband without that artifice you talk of, I would despise the addresses of any man that I was not assured gave me some promising hopes to expect such a rule as I would desire in a marriage life.’²²⁷

Lucinda plays the role of what Lisa Jadwin has termed the “domestic model” and the “paradigm of female virtue.”²²⁸ She is the “true believer” who takes on the angelic stance and emphasises the validity of innately female virtues, such as modesty. For her, it is even possible to “prostitute” virtue. By postulating this, she engages in age-old binary constructions of nature versus art. Discourse on femininity has always emphasised women’s natural beauty. But simultaneously, there has always been the notion of the necessary “cultivation” of the female mind and body. To de-mask these dynamics is the declared aim of Rosella, who counters:

‘I cannot tell,’ says Rosella, ‘what Lucinda may expect, but I can tell what she’ll be disappointed in if she trusts to her native charms and virtue without the assistance of female policy and innocent dissimulation; for I call that so which cheats a man into his own happiness. Now I beg the favour of you, ladies, to undeceive Lucinda in her false notion of those lines I have repeated, which, though they are not directly aimed at a modest virtuous woman, they may be of use to ladies of the strictest virtue, to let us know what cullies men are, and how they are to be used, since we may be permitted under the closest ties of religion, to make use of politic stratagems, to engage the love and fidelity of our husbands towards us, tho’ the same are made use of by bad women to ill purposes, and it can never hurt us to know what allurements are the strongest to bind our husbands in the most pleasing ties of affection and civility towards us, and the most effectually to control with them to put their utmost trust and confidence in us.’ ‘I doubt not, ladies,’ says Emilia, but the happy turn Rosella has given to this argument will convince you entirely she is in the right on it,

227 Morgan, ed., *The Female Tatler* 124.

228 L. Jadwin, “The Seductiveness of Female Duplicity in *Vanity Fair*,” *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 32.4 (1992): 663.

and that what I have advanced on this subject will, if pursued, be much to the advantage of our sex.²²⁹

Rosella re-inflects and exaggerates her co-editor's arguments and rhetoric. She takes up Lucinda's concern, but only to give it an ironic twist. Her language is clearly satirical and uncommonly harsh, considering the historical background of the time during which the paper was published. "Under the closest ties of religion" could possibly have earned her reproaches of blasphemy, because she uses it as a satirical synonym for marriage. Tie-metaphors prevail, e.g. when she describes marriage in terms of "pleasing ties". In Rosella's representation of courtship, the woman obtains a prerogative, "cheating" her man "into happiness". Assigning the woman an active role as the main driving force behind the process of courtship, Rosella provides her readers with a counter discourse, opposed to the general model "man courts woman".

The Female Tatler's discursive engagement with the workings of the contemporary marriage market is not monolithic and can simultaneously be interpreted as adhering to and subverting the mainstream-discourse, i. e. ideas disseminated by major journals such as *The Tatler*. The Society of Ladies differs a great deal from Mrs. Crackenthorpe – the issues they address and the way in which they address them are very different to her representations. Whereas the grotesque dominates in Mrs. Crackenthorpe's papers, the Ladies bring up generational conflicts that complicate marriage plans; they encourage their female readers to become active and to take matters into their own hands. The Ladies instruct their readers in, to use Rosella's words, the "artifice" of managing men.

However, Mrs. Crackenthorpe's accounts also afford multiple readings and interpretations. Depictions of monstrous types, e.g. the lascivious widow who rides horses, can also be read against the grain, i. e. not necessarily misogynist, but as a discursive opposition to *The Tatler*. It is important to note that *The Female Tatler* is much more drastic in depicting the outgrowths of the marriage market, and, taking into account its different, decidedly feminine rhetorical stance, this can be interpreted as a form of discursive resistance. Depictions of the marriage market illustrate how closely discourse of marriage and the economy were intertwined, as human beings were sold as reproductive

229 Morgan, ed., *The Female Tatler* 124.

commodities. *The Female Tatler's* harsh and cynical representations can be seen as both reiterating and asserting contemporary discourse, but also as opposing it: They show an ugly, de-masked, deteriorated and degenerated version of the marriage market which can be interpreted in terms of a protest and as resistance in the form of satire. These findings can insightfully be used in order to investigate the particular role masculinity played in contemporary negotiations of gender boundaries.

V Masculinity, Trade and Tales of Feminisation

While great attention was paid to representations of conform, "proper" female types during the eighteenth century, there was at least equal, perhaps even greater concern about the masculine character. G. A. Pocock has stated that the economic man of the early eighteenth century was frequently seen as "effeminate" by contemporaries, "wrestling with his own passions and hysterias."²³⁰ The economic man took advantage of the new possibilities that the "financial revolution"²³¹ offered: He dealt in stocks, invested speculatively and was therefore "seen as relying on the imaginative forces necessary for financial investment in a fluctuating market."²³² This means that outer appearances and signals such as expensive clothing or exclusive housing were of great importance to this new social actor. According to Pocock, "production and exchange are regularly equated with the ascendancy of the passions and female principles."²³³ With "female passions and principles" Pocock means the unprecedentedly great importance the new economic man assigned to his dress and looks in general, a concern he shares with the innately vain woman. In the world of speculative business, appearances were the key to the creation of the desired (self-) image. Self-display and -representation are features the new economic man shares with the aristocrat.

What characterised the new economic man and differentiated him from an aristocrat was that he was part of the moneyed elite, not of the "old" landed

230 J. G. A. Pocock, *Virtue, Commerce, and History: Essays on Political Thought and History, Chiefly in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge University Press, 1985) 114.

231 The English financial revolution was sparked by the Glorious Revolution of 1688. With the ascendancy of Parliament, property rights in England became more secure, and government gained credibility in its commitment not to renege on debt (North and Weingast 1989). In 1694, Parliament created a public bank, the Bank of England." From: P. Alessandrini, M. Fratianni and A. Zazzaro, *The Changing Geography of Banking and Finance* (London: Springer, 2009) 253.

232 C. Ingrassia, *Authorship, Commerce and Gender in Early Eighteenth Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) 3.

233 Pocock, *Virtue, Commerce, and History* 114.

elite. “Like his perceived abandonment of the land, the feminised economic man’s preoccupation with his own fantasies, desires, and imagination caused him to circulate as a vision of an undesirable socio-economic future.”²³⁴ But this version of the future was already an everyday reality, as Laura Brown explains: “In this period, the participation in exchange, rather than the possession of real property, became the preeminent basis of economic advancement.”²³⁵ The new economic man became a central figure in discourse about social action, property, and the economy. He was often represented as the antagonist to the landed citizen, who was constructed as a paternal, stable figure, whereas the new economic man was vain, shallow and feminised. His success in the marketplace depended a great deal on public estimation of his credibility, as his reputation and assets were the means by which he lived. Therefore, it was essential for the “new economic man” to keep up appearances, a characteristic he has in common with another eighteenth-century social type, the fop.

V.1 The Fop

George Etherege’s play *The Man of Mode* from 1676 features one of the first and best-known representatives of the type, namely the character of Sir Foppling Flutter. Etherege’s play provided what would later become a stock character, the fashionable, leisured, sociable, superficial, delicate and exhibitionist fop. Another example among many contemporary representations is to be found in John Vanburgh’s play *The Relapse* and the figure of John Foppington. As these two examples illustrate, the character of the fop was frequently adorned with a telling name. The fop is characterised by features traditionally seen as undesirable in a man, such as vanity, ignorance, and irresponsibility. Philip Carter defines the stock character of the fop as follows.

Men who displayed characteristics such as vanity, pride and foolishness during the 1700s were usually described as ‘fops’. Nathan Bailey’s *Universal*

234 Ingrassia, *Authorship, Commerce and Gender* 21.

235 Brown, *Fables of Modernity* 102.

Etymological English Dictionary (1721) defined the fop as ‘a fantastick [*sic*] fellow, one who is over nice and affected in his Dress, Speech and Behaviour²³⁶ [*sic*];²³⁷

Carter goes on to explain that fops were believed to be principally concerned with the “effect that their exhibitionism had on women.”²³⁸ He also stresses that the fop was subject to ridicule because of his social misdeeds.²³⁹ The fop could be described as a refined social actor who actively blurred social distinctions by means of fine clothing. His alleged ‘levelling-activities’ fed back into contemporary anxieties pronounced in essay periodicals, as will be shown in the subsequent analysis.

Many scholars have done research on the social significance of the fop as a stock character. Philip Carter has argued that “The durability of the image of fops as vain individuals preoccupied with fashion indicates that satirists considered some forms of appearance and social behaviour incompatible with early modern notions of acceptable masculinity.”²⁴⁰ According to Erin Mackie, “Masculine integrity of the new model gentleman depends on his difference not merely from women but also from the invariably overdressed and effeminate fop, beau and pretty fellow.”²⁴¹ Thus, the fop served as a foil against which ideal masculinities could be constructed.

Various scholars have attested a general tendency of “feminisation” to the period comprehensively. In *Authorship, Commerce and Gender in Early Eighteenth-Century England*, Catherine Ingrassia outlines how inextricably the feminine and commerce were linked in contemporary cultural discourse. Referring to the 1743 edition of Alexander Pope’s *Dunciad*, she states: “His representation of the intertwined activities of the literary and financial spheres emphasizes what

236 N. Bailey, *An Universal Etymological English Dictionary* (1724).

237 P. Carter, “Men About Town: Representations of Foppery and Masculinity in Early Eighteenth-Century Urban Society,” *Gender in Eighteenth Century England*, ed. Hannah Barker and Elaine Chalus (London and New York: Longman, 1997) 41.

238 Carter, “Men About Town,” 44.

239 *ibid.*, 34.

240 *ibid.*, 41.

241 E. S. Mackie, *Market À La Mode: Fashion, Commodity, and Gender in the Tatler and the Spectator* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997) 168.

he regards as the absence of masculinity.”²⁴² In order to define what is meant by "feminisation", constraints on its validity must be considered: “Feminisation is not absolute nor can the term be applied uncritically; nevertheless it is a consistent, albeit shifting, pattern of representation that stems, in part, from the older practice of gendering feminine that which is devalued.”²⁴³ In order to retrace these shifting patterns of representation, the times’ historical changes need to be contextualised.

The end of the seventeenth century and the beginning of the eighteenth was a time during which structures of inherited, patriarchal power declined. “In the Hanoverian Settlement of 1689, England’s rulers agreed that dynastic inheritance, and the patriarchist principles on which it is based, may be overruled.”²⁴⁴ These landmark changes led to an “early modern disenchantment with aristocratic ideology.”²⁴⁵ As has been outlined by Norbert Elias, the dawn of the eighteenth century was the time when new codes of manners and civility emerged. This is not only evidenced in periodicals, but also in conduct books, a very popular genre at the time. Both literary journalism and conduct books shared a fundamental concern with masculine behaviour and the question of its potential development, both in a positive and in a negative sense. Moreover, both genres were preoccupied with the question of what limits should be imposed on masculinity and which ideals should guide its most desirable manifestations. At a great distance from an ideal manifestation was the gender-compromised, i. e. effeminate figure of the fop. His time-consuming self-fashioning, his self-indulgence and his extensive leisure time activities were seen as being at odds with other, particularly with older models of masculinity, rooted in Puritan work-ethics. The fop’s “irresponsibility was explained in terms of an innate foolishness that distanced "men of fashion" from the more disciplined, rational and learned "men of sense", as worthy males were often referred to in the period.”²⁴⁶ Narratives of a perceived "decline of true masculinity" pervaded the press, as the following analysis will show.

242 Ingrassia, *Authorship, Commerce and Gender* 1.

243 *ibid.*, 2.

244 E. Mackie, *Rakes, Highwaymen, and Pirates: The Making of the Modern Gentleman in the Eighteenth Century* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009) 6.

245 *ibid.*, 6.

246 Carter, “Men About Town,” 41.

V.2 "Tatling" Masculinity

"Tatling" masculinity could take on different forms. Apart from exposing social types in commentaries, essay periodicals also criticised theatre plays and the characters that appeared in them, thereby indirectly judging right from wrong gender performances. Richard Steele attacked Etherege's play *The Man of Mode* in *The Spectator* number sixty-five from the fifteenth of May 1711, denouncing it as "a perfect contradiction to good manners, good sense, and common honesty."²⁴⁷ Steele and Addison proposed the "ideal of the refined man of taste and urbane address who is neither libertine nor fop."²⁴⁸ Thus, periodicals "prescribed" ideal masculinities, deeming certain modes of behaviour unacceptable and unmanly to the highest degree.

The following analysis focuses on the question of how *The Female Tatler* depicted masculinity, which contemporary gender-ideals it appropriated and from which it deviated. The aim is to see which contemporary discourse-strands were taken up by *The Female Tatler* and which were left out or even subverted. The journal provides its readers with unconventional representations of masculinity, as it does not paint black and white pictures; instead it draws up characters which incorporate characteristics of both the new economic man and the fop, as the following example, an excerpt from a cautionary tale, will illustrate:

Mr. Christopher Copsy-wife, solicitor in Chancery, is certainly the most accomplish'd of cavaliers. He is so equally divided between beau and business that neither of 'em gains the superiority, having the same genius, and giving the like thought, concern, and strenuous application to both.²⁴⁹

In the very first sentence, the narrator locates the character Christopher Copsy-wife within a social geography. It is no coincidence that Chancery is being chosen as a locus; for contemporary readers, the mentioning of it evoked associations with trade and commerce: "The decline of the Ecclesiastical

247 J. Addison, *The Works of Joseph Addison: The Spectator, No. 1-314* (Harper & Brothers, 1837) 111. From M. Cordner, *The Plays of George Etherege* (Cambridge University Press, 1982) 211.

248 Mackie, *The Commerce of Everyday Life* 11.

249 Morgan, ed., *The Female Tatler* 47.

and Admiralty Courts had benefitted Chancery by allowing it to extend its jurisdiction in testamentary cases and by giving it a wide range of mercantile jurisdiction.”²⁵⁰ This is important because it enforces the character’s link to the realm of the economy. Moreover, the profession of the solicitor symbolically stands for the new post-Revolution era, when England became a more secularised state in which formal rights were granted to citizens. The tale told about Mr. Copsy-wife is highly satirical and ironic: His telling name alludes both to the solicitor’s outer appearance and his social conduct, namely the fact that he spends too much time with married women, whose style he allegedly mimics. This ironic comment could be interpreted as a hint to his effeminated way of dressing and behaving. In the second sentence, the dichotomy between “beau” and “business” is introduced as the “leitmotiv” of the text. The statement that Mr. Copsy-wife is “equally divided between beau and business” is clearly ironic, and merely serves to depict him as a vain and superficial “man about town”, as is outlined in the course of the narrative.

He’s at threescore coffee-houses three times ev’ry day, enquiring for letters and messages, and seems to have as much employment as if he were solicitor to all the litigious widows in the kingdom. Meet him in the street, he can’t possibly speak to you [...] and is as industrious about nothing, as a beau that calls at chocolate houses for letters he wrote to himself.²⁵¹

The next locus that is used as a common social denominator is the coffeehouse, as it is both – a place of business and of polite sociability, thus of representation and appearances. The link between the two activities in eighteenth-century coffeehouses was quite close. The coffeehouse was not only the primary forum of the new “public sphere”, but it also functioned as a stock exchange. After stock dealers were officially expelled from the Royal Exchange for rowdiness in 1698, they started to operate in the streets and coffeehouses in the vicinity. In the same year, a list of stock and commodity prices called “The Course of the Exchange and other things” was displayed at a coffeehouse.²⁵² On the official webpage of the London Stock Exchange, this incident was labelled

250 G. R. Potter, *The New Cambridge Modern History* (Cambridge University Press, 1971) 263.

251 Morgan, ed., *The Female Tatler* 47.

252 <http://www.londonstockexchange.com/about-the-exchange/company-overview/our-history/our-history.htm>, accessed 07/01/2012.

the “birth” of the company, thus assigning the coffeehouse a major role in the “geneses” of the modern speculative economy. In the early eighteenth century, the coffeehouse was a social forum where the “publick-spirited” [*sic*] men met to do business, to read periodicals and to engage in lively discussions. It is interesting to note that women were not admitted to coffeehouses, yet *The Female Tatler’s* editor-persona, Mrs. Crackenthorpe, gives an account of the proceedings there. This indicates that even though the coffeehouse was a gendered space, women increasingly “invaded” this space discursively.

The Female Tatler draws on the contemporary image of the coffeehouse as a social venue by presenting it as a stage for the solicitor, in juxtaposition to the street, where he allegedly talks to nobody, pretending to be busy. At the coffeehouse, the solicitor enquires after letters that were left there for him to collect, a common practice at the time. “Coffeehouses were so popular that they often were given as places of address.”²⁵³ The number of letters received indicated one’s popularity in polite society and in order to increase it, the beau wrote letters to himself.

The beau, another contemporary social type, is comparable to the fop in that he puts a lot of effort into his clothing. External appearances are very important to him; however, there is one distinctive feature that separates the beau from the fop, namely that the first is successful and therefore not ridiculed, whereas the latter is subject to ridicule by convention.

Even though outer appearances are important for both, only one of them is labelled effeminate. Gendering as feminine that which is devalued was a common discursive practice in the eighteenth-century, most frequently employed by writers of satire, e.g. Alexander Pope. The “litigious women” of the tale, widows who allegedly make up the solicitor’s clientele, are mentioned in order to emphasise Mr. Copsy-wives’ idiocy. The knowledgeable and litigious woman was a stock character in the eighteenth century, exemplified by Widow Blackacre in Wycherley’s *The Plain Dealer* from 1676.²⁵⁴ This is only one of the many instances in which *The Female Tatler* borrows from other misogynist writings of its time. Moreover, this passage deepens the link between the

253 P. S. Miller, *Conversation: A History of a Declining Art* (Yale University Press, 2007) 98.

254 A. Fletcher, *Gender, Sex, and Subordination in England, 1500-1800* (Yale University Press, 1999) 258.

solicitor and the wives and widows, a link that is to be made more explicit over the course of the narrative.

When the hurry of the day is over, as men cannot toil incessantly, Mr. Copsy-wife becomes the reverse of himself. The tailor, the hosier, the seamstress, the barber are in an uproar to equip him. You see him in lac'd linen, pearl-colour silk stockings, silver long pockets, and a French night-cap. He is invited to a dancing bout, going to Spring Garden, or engag'd at cards with some fine ladies. Ask him to go to the tavern, he has appointed ladies, ladies are impatient for him, and all that you can get out of him is, ladies. His chambers at Lincoln's Inn are a perfect ladies' apartment, he has a toilet, his pier glasses, his tea-tables, his French print, and a fine set o'window curtains of his own stitching. Ladies admire his niceties, he makes elegant entertainments for 'em, and his collations are all in china. The Chancery Office are alarm'd at his proceedings. He has no estate, his traversing the town is but business in appearance, yet they envy his happiness in the fair sex, and fancy some great lady who has an uncommon regard for him is the fund of his extravagances.²⁵⁵

This cautionary tale is full of irony and satire. Mr. Copsy-wife's masculinity is called into doubt in almost every sentence. "As men cannot toil incessantly" in fact means that the solicitor is lazy, he is not as industrious as he should be and as contemporary, Puritan ideals of masculinity required. Like some predecessor of Dr. Jekyll's, Mr. Copsy-wife "becomes the reverse of himself," and the transformation from businessman to beau requires the help of various professionals, who are all "in uproar to equip him." In another lengthy list, Mr. Copsy-wife's dress is described in detail, which evokes a rather ridiculous image in the reader's mind. It is neither a gentleman's dress, nor can the conglomeration of fashion-articles be taken at face value, as the list also includes a night-cap. What is significant about this night-cap is that it is described as a French one, and the attribute "French" is also assigned to Mr. Copsy-wife's prints. Michael Cohen has argued that in early eighteenth-century England, there was a strong fear of the effects of "French seductiveness upon the English nation."²⁵⁶ During the time in which *The Female Tatler* was published, England was at war with France. The War of Spanish Succession lasted from 1701 until

255 Morgan, ed., *The Female Tatler* 47.

256 D. M. Cohen, *Fashioning Masculinity: National Identity and Language in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Taylor & Francis, 1996) 7.

1714, and during the reign of Queen Anne, England achieved ground-breaking victories. Amidst the war, in 1711, *The Spectator's* Joseph Addison comments on the issue as follows:

There is nothing which I more desire than a safe and honourable peace, though at the same time I am very apprehensive of many ill consequences that may attend it. I do not mean in regard to our politics, but our manners. What an inundation of ribbands and brocades will break upon us? What peals of laughter and impertinence shall we be exposed to? For the prevention of these great evils, I could heartily wish that there was an act of parliament for prohibiting the importation of French fopperies.²⁵⁷

Gender and the nation are discursively intermingled in this issue of *The Spectator*, as fashion and dress are turned into the nation's moral touchstone. Addison's ironic exaggeration is an utter paradox. On the one hand, it suggests a collective rejection of everything French, labelling it effeminate and degenerate. On the other hand, it proves the popularity of French goods and their cultural import in England. To come back to Mr. Cobby-wife, who epitomises all that Joseph Addison so vehemently criticises, it can be observed that he not only dresses according to the latest fashions, but that he also engages in fashionable leisure-time activities. The reader learns that he likes to go dancing and that he enjoys spending time in the park. In the early eighteenth century, the park as a place to see and be seen became increasingly popular. This is also illustrated in a changing "social geography", as the former hunting grounds of the aristocracy were now transformed into pleasure grounds that afforded the possibility of social mixing. In the course of the tale, Mr. Cobby-wife is represented as overly effeminate: He prefers spending time with his female acquaintances and does not frequent ale-houses and other "proper male" localities: "All that you can get out of him is, ladies." Even his private apartment is allegedly equipped with everything a woman needs, as Mrs. Crackenthorpe, *The Female Tatler's* self-proclaimed intelligencer of the public sphere, tells her readers. The excesses of Cobby-wife's effeminacy are "window curtains of his own stitching." Even though he is depicted as hyper-effeminated, it seems that Mr. Cobby-wife is not a salient homosexual, but a lady's man, someone who not only enjoys women's company, but is also overtly promiscuous. This is where his private conduct becomes the subject of public attention: "The Chancery Office are alarmed"

257 J. Addison and R. Steel, *The Spectator* (George Long, Printer, 1809) 202.

The Female Tatler informs its readers that Mr. Cobby-wife's colleagues envy him because of the success he has as a philanderer. By depicting Mr. Cobby-wife as a ladies' man, *The Female Tatler* links him to another stock character, the rake. It is interesting to see how, in the subsequent sentence, the protagonist's sexual promiscuity is discursively linked to his financial situation. Owing to his effeminacy and consumerist indulgences, Mr. Cobby-wife is indirectly labelled a male prostitute: The reader learns that a "lady who has an uncommon regard" for him allegedly finances his decadence. In the course of the narrative, it becomes apparent that the women with whom Mr. Cobby-wife converses are, for the most part, shop-owner's wives. The story concludes: "Cobby-wife, it seems, has run himself deeply into debt, and frequently entertains these creatures, that they may persuade their husbands to give him further *credit*."²⁵⁸ Cobby-wife's excess in dress equals his excess in the social sphere, where he has to keep up appearances in order to be "creditable". The binary division between being and appearance was clearly gendered, being as masculine and appearance as feminine. Mr. Cobby-wife's case illustrates that credit is the major discursive paradigm around which constructions of gender in *The Female Tatler* and in other periodicals evolve.

As Joel Mokyr has outlined in *The Enlightened Economy*, "early modern Britain [...] like all commercial societies in which credit played a central role depended on trust and credit became synonymous with reputation. Even if we have no really good interpretative measure of it, credit was omnipresent in eighteenth-century Britain."²⁵⁹ Early eighteenth-century England's economy was heavily dependent on trust as the basis for speculative investment or the advancing of a loan. Of course this trust between different members of the mercantile class was not given, but had to be earned. Mokyr explains that trust required focal points and costly signalling. "Dress, housing location, the inside of the home, modes of transportation, membership in societies and clubs, and the labour force status of women were crucial to the middle-class existence because they indicated their social position."²⁶⁰ Thus not only apparel, but also domestic display helped to enhance a family's credit in the social sphere. The fop's excesses in the social sphere are the main focus of the final part of the text:

258 Morgan, ed., *The Female Tatler* 47.

259 J. Mokyr, *The Enlightened Economy: An Economic History of Britain 1700-1850* (Yale University Press, 2010) 373.

260 Mokyr, *The Enlightened Economy* 373.

But to leave the man of business and speak a little more to the fop, what shall we say of a set of people, men of real estates, whose natures are so grovelling, souls so uninform'd, and are so very destitute of ambition, that they have no notion of society above tradesmen and trollops, who ask the tailor to drink tea with 'em, the spruce barber is invited to dinner, and make dancing bouts for the second hand fry, seamstresses and ladies' women, and sometimes a tragedy actress does 'em the honour of her company. These wretches pay 'em homage [...] Such persons discover more pride in associating with the vulgar sort, than those who aspire to the first rank. They had rather be the leaders o' the mob, than the fag of the gentry.²⁶¹

In the first sentence, a clear dividing line is drawn between the businessman and the fop, whereas the two characters were intermingled in the previous depiction of Mr. Cobby-wife. The separation between the old elite, the landed "men of real estates," and a new, un-landed class is reiterated and emphasised. The editor-persona criticises landed men who mix with their social inferiors instead of trying to enhance their status even more by socialising with their social superiors. This perceived "social deterioration" of land-owners illustrates that their position was also subject to change, as Laura Brown explains:

Even the most venerable source of wealth and stability, landed property, came under the influence of modern finance in this period. Through sales, mortgages, enclosures, innovations in agricultural production, and other means, land was tied increasingly to trade, innovation, and speculation.²⁶²

More and more estates were dependant on credit in order to be maintained. As John Barrell has argued:

The ownership of land was inevitably and increasingly involved in an economy of credit, where values and virtues were unstable, and where a man was estimated not by an "objective" standard, but in terms of an opinion of his credit worthiness.²⁶³

261 Morgan, ed., *The Female Tatler* 47.

262 Brown, *Fables of Modernity* 101.

263 J. Barrell, *English Literature in History, 1730-80: An Equal, Wide Survey* (London: Hutchinson, 1983) 40.

As a consequence, socialising with the representatives of this credit-based system, the new mercantile middle-class was crucial in order to obtain credit and to maintain an estate. Notwithstanding this necessity, *The Female Tatler's* editor-persona reprimands members of the landed class who socialise with their non-landed "inferiors". According to the periodical, they prefer to be admired by their social inferiors than to be the "fag of the gentry". Instead of behaving with humility towards someone who is socially superior, the stock character in question prefers to be admired by "the vulgar sort", and that is what the editor-persona criticises.

The fop is not only subject to criticism because of his dress, but for being "socially promiscuous". This reproach is linguistically sustained by a sexual language register, i. e. the use of the word "trollop", which is directly linked to the word "tradesmen". In discursively linking tradesmen and trollops, i. e. prostitutes, the text follows the ever-recurring pattern of feminising that which is devalued. The most interesting aspect about this quote is the way in which it illustrates perfectly that *The Female Tatler* defines both ideal masculine and feminine characters in negative relation to a type of "bad femininity". Thus, femininity is detached from the female sex itself and is used independently from the word "woman".

Commerce, trade and credit are responsible for major social changes at the time and the discourse about these social changes was primarily centred on gender. Frequently, anxieties resulting from social change were epitomised in gendered representations, as the tale of Mr. Coppy-wife shows nicely. The women with whom Mr. Coppy-wife converses could be seen as emanations of Lady Credit: He has to entertain them and keep them in a good mood in order to obtain credit from their husbands.

Lady Credit was used to get to grips with the rather imaginative proceedings of speculative ventures. The intangible, imaginative, airy and unstable is discursively gendered as feminine and therefore devalued in periodical discourse. It is important to point out that "the feminine" here has nothing to do with sex, but can be ascribed to both men and women, as the case of Mr. Coppy-wife and the following quotation illustrate:

He has a soft, sickly drawling way of speech, like Lady Dainty in the comedy; has his vapours, hectic, and hypocondraick [sic], thinks the spleen as pretty a

companion for a fine gentleman, as squeamishness for a fine lady, and that a month's illness in great state, is like a woman of quality's lying-in.²⁶⁴

This excerpt from *The Female Tatler* clearly demarcates the boundaries between sex and gender by satirically blurring them. The performativity of the man's behaviour is emphasised when the reader learns that he acts just like a coquettish female character on the Restoration stage. In a satirical climax of effeminacy, the man in question even imitates a woman's parturition. He thus not only transgresses gender boundaries, but also the boundaries of physical sex, which increases the ridiculousness of the scene. The allegory of Lady Credit reflects in this depiction because of the man's sensitivity to illness. In most contemporary depictions, e.g. in *The Tatler* or *The Review*, Lady Credit is represented as being a sickly woman, susceptible to the latest news, to which she reacts accordingly by either cheering or falling "into a fit," i. e. feeling unwell.

Just like hers, his humours are obviously in disequilibrium as he suffers from typically female distresses. In the eighteenth century, it was believed that women acting in a bad-tempered manner were afflicted by the spleen, or by the vapours of the spleen. The term referred to hypochondriacal and hysterical affections, as well as to melancholia and gloom.²⁶⁵

In *The Female Tatler*, the adjective is used to characterise both female and male characters, thus poking fun at the common attribution of the term to women.

V.3 Women as Men: Deviant Representations of Gender in *The Female Tatler*

The Female Tatler not only ridicules men who act as women, but also women who act as men. As many contemporary texts illustrate, women could also be assigned a masculine gender. In his *Essay on Publick Spirit* from 1711 John Dennis, one of the so-called "coffeehouse-wits", expostulates against the

264 *The Female Tatler* by Mrs. Crackenthorpe, (A. Baldwin) Friday August 26, to Monday August 29, 1709.

265 P. Spacks, *Reading Eighteenth-Century Poetry* (Hoboken: John Wiley and Sons) 23.

imitation of foreign fashions and the dangers the adaptation of those habits allegedly bore. According to Dennis, luxury and vanity have severely affected society.

Nor has luxury only changed our natures, but transformed our sexes: We have men that are more soft [*sic*], more languid, and more passive than women. On the other side we have women who, as it were in revenge, are masculine in their desires, and masculine in their practices.²⁶⁶

John Dennis complains about his contemporaries and their inappropriate behaviour. The alleged inversion of gender roles is a popular topic in contemporary discourse. *The Female Tatler* also participates in this discourse, as the following quote illustrates.

The young lady in the parish of St. Laurence, near Guildhall, that lately went to the Coffee-House [*sic*] in man's clothes with the two 'prentices [*sic*], called for a dish of Bohee, smoked her pipe, and gave herself abundance of straddling masculine airs, is desired to do so no more.²⁶⁷

In the first sentence, the editor-persona proclaims the name of the place where this woman with decidedly masculine traits is allegedly to be seen. Unfortunately, speculation as to what effect this might have had on contemporary readers would be just that – speculation. Perhaps this information served only to increase the readers' interest; probably a person utterly recognisable to contemporaries was the subject of this caricature. While we can only surmise as to the relationship between this woman's actual existence in the eighteenth-century social world and *The Female Tatler's* exact description, this mock advertisement reveals a lot of interesting details concerning eighteenth-century gender roles. Women were not admitted to coffeehouses at the time, which is probably the reason why the woman in question put on men's clothes.

Cross-dressing had been known to English audiences for centuries; it arises in many of Shakespeare's plays and enables female characters to cross

266 T. Cibber, *The Lives of the Poets of Great Britain and Ireland 1753 V4* (Whitefish: Kessinger Publishing, 2004) 170.

267 Morgan, ed., *The Female Tatler* 88.

boundaries. By dressing up in men's clothes and frequenting a coffeehouse, the woman in the text crosses two gendered boundaries. She thus "invades" an exclusively masculine space. The hint that the woman frequents the coffeehouse together with "the two apprentices" is suggestive because it implies that she is somehow involved in a trade. As women could only be defined in relation to men at the time, she is either the wife, daughter or widow of a tradesman. It is likely that she is actively involved in the business, which adds to her "masculine airs" as represented by *The Female Tatler*. Apart from being a businesswoman, she smokes in public, a very unusual thing to do for a woman in the early eighteenth century, just as uncommon as going out on her own and frequenting a coffeehouse. It is no wonder that the voice of the moralist has to interfere: "She is desired to do so no more." But should this statement merely be taken at face value? What are the cause, effect and function of this masculine female character?

On the one hand, the text cited above could be seen as a reiteration of other contemporary discourse, as has been demonstrated. But there is also another side to it. In the act of depicting a smoking woman who wears men's clothes, *The Female Tatler* opens up a space for deviant femininities. Even though the narrator-personas tone might be disapproving, the non-conformist character is nevertheless given this space and import in the text. Notwithstanding the fact that she is clearly devalued and disapproved of, she is still the centre of attention. Such a depiction of masculine women would never be possible in *The Tatler*, where gender is inseparably linked to sex and the basic underlying concept of "sex in souls".

I do not mean it an injury to women, when I say there is a sort of sex in souls [...] the soul of a man, and that of a woman, are made very unlike [...] The virtues have respectively a masculine and a feminine cast.²⁶⁸

The significance of dress and appearance cannot be over-emphasised here. Erin Mackie explains: "While gender is being more completely understood as natural, inalterable biological condition, its dependence for its representation on external, artificial, transferable signs, especially clothes, becomes newly problematic."²⁶⁹ The realm of outer appearance, of signification is represented

268 G. A. Aitken, *The Tatler* (Charleston: BiblioBazaar, 2007) 336.

269 Mackie, *The Commerce of Everyday Life* 561.

as a primarily feminine one; nevertheless, there are also "signs of the masculine", i. e. smoking in public, and of course men's clothes. Due to major economical changes taking place in the eighteenth century, e.g. the financial revolution and the rise of private banking and credit, social hierarchies became increasingly unstable. Social class is not a common denominator anymore, as outer appearances and dress can be purchased on credit in order to achieve the desired effects in the social world. Instead of class, gender becomes the benchmark, as the following excerpt from *The Female Tatler* illustrates.

An express from Peckham gives an account that Mrs. Margaret and Mrs. Millicent Trott are grown so very ridiculous not a neighbour will receive a visit from them. They affect everything that's masculine, their shifts are called shirts, their headclothes are their periwigs, their wapper is their double-buttoned coat, and their furbelow-scarves their roquelaures. They are very intimate with Obediah Subpoena, an impudent attorney, and Frank Fore-castle, a ranting sea-captain, are frequently dressed in man's clothes, and gallop with them to the Palatines, where, tho' they have not taught them English, 'tis suspected they have given some of 'em to understand that conversation may be held between people of different nationals [sic] without knowing one another's language. But the worth of the matter is, they have seduc'd Miss Lack-it from the boarding school, who steals out when her mistress is a-bed [sic], to ramble with 'em [sic]. They'll sit down tightly to a bowl of punch, and then scour the streets, break windows, and have so little regard to their own sex as to abuse every woman they meet. They are women of condition as well as fortune, and their relations, having in vain [sic] us'd all arguments to reclaim 'em, were forc'd to entreat a public reprimand.²⁷⁰

The two ladies in question, Mrs. Margaret and Mrs. Millicent Trott, allegedly sisters, are marked as social outcasts in the very first sentence, where they are reported to have been excluded from gatherings in their vicinity. The reader learns that they like to behave and dress in a "masculine way". The description of their dress is organised around an interesting juxtaposition between items of women's clothing and the corresponding item for men, which the Trotts allegedly prefer. They not only wear men's clothes, but also have male friends, an attorney and a sea-captain, both adorned with telling names and thus marked as caricatures and stock characters that serve to illustrate the disrespectability of

270 Morgan, ed., *The Female Tatler* 16.

their social conduct. Again, a lawyer is portrayed as a person of loose manners and morals, comparable to the depiction of Mr. Coppy-wife.

Lawyers might have been used as stock characters because they were sent to the London courts for formal training at a relatively young age. In using the lawyer as a stock character, *The Female Tatler* adheres to contemporary discourse, as the following excerpt from *The Spectator* shows: “Those young men [...] frequent the Play-House more than Westminster Hall, and are seen in all publick [*sic*] Assemblies, except in a Court of Justice.”²⁷¹ Thus, the perceived volatility and lack of industry in young representatives of the profession was a commonplace concern and a stereotype.

To come back to the quote from *The Female Tatler*, the reader learns that the women in question dressed up in men’s clothes and went to see the Palatines. The “Poor Palatines”, as they were called at the time, were German Protestant Refugees from the Palatine Region in the Rhineland. More than ten thousand of them arrived in London in 1709 because Queen Anne had granted them asylum and financial support.²⁷² They lived in poor settlements outside the city walls and were despised and avoided by English mainstream society, but not by the two ladies in question. The fact that the Palatines did not speak English is emphasised here in order to indicate that the contact between the Palatines and the two English ladies was merely physical, i. e. sexual.

The Female Tatler’s editor-persona keeps up a sexualised linguistic register when she tells the readers how the two women have “seduced” a young girl, a boarding school pupil, to “ramble with them”. Boarding schools for girls were a very controversial issue at the time, closely entwined with contemporary discourse about femininity, female education, women’s duties and feminine accomplishments. The two older women and the pupil drink alcohol and then go on a rampage in the streets, vandalising property. It is reported that they even “abuse every woman they meet,” thus behaving like aggressive, drunken men. And now the most interesting detail: They are wealthy, married women who obviously do not behave the way they are expected to with respect to

271 J. Addison and R. Steele, *The Spectator; with Notes, and a General Index* (J.J. Woodward, 1826) 28.

272 P. Otterness, *Becoming German: The 1709 Palatine Migration to New York* (Cornell University Press, 2007) 37.

their social class. The editor-persona reports that their relations care about them and try to bring them to reason, but this apparently did not help. Thus, the exposure to the press is seen as a last resort and *The Female Tatler's* alleged moralising pretensions are enacted in that the women are publically exposed in the paper.

Many scholars, most notably Thomas Laqueur, have noted that the early eighteenth century was the time when new types of femininities and masculinities emerged as counter-models to the old and, most importantly, the landed aristocracy. Following from this, accounts of desirable and undesirable masculinities in *The Female Tatler* can be understood as cultural negotiations of masculinity in a time of major social change. As stated by Geneviève Fraisse, social change always requires changes in the relations between the sexes.²⁷³ I argue that these are negotiated in *The Female Tatler* and that the journal can be read as a "report", documenting a time of transition. In her study *Fables of Modernity*, Laura Brown has outlined the "link between the financial revolution of the eighteenth century, its innovations in financial instruments and the nature of exchange, and its provocative relation to mystery, imagination, and the female body."²⁷⁴ This link is evident in many cultural texts of the time, and also in the first periodical that directly addressed women in its name, *The Female Tatler*. The present analysis shows that even though it was a new and unprecedented venture, it still relied heavily on earlier representations of women and the feminine. This pre-established discourse influenced or even dictated how *The Female Tatler* represented gender. The passages analysed revealed that *The Female Tatler*, especially in the first half of its run, shared collective phantasms and anxieties with regards to the "new economy" and the effects it might have on society.

I see the texts of *The Female Tatler* as protocols of "cultural negotiations", as written testimonies of ongoing discourse. The texts analysed in this chapter illustrated that gender was used as a common denominator, as a way of grasping the historical phenomenon of a credit-based economy. I hold that representations of sexual changeability, as most impressively illustrated in the texts that dealt with inverted gender-roles, are emanations of that experience.

273 G. Fraisse, *Geschlecht und Moderne: Archäologien der Gleichberechtigung* (Berlin: Fischer-Taschenbuch-Verlag, 1995) 77.

274 Barrell, *English Literature in History* 13.

Out of what Laura Brown describes as “the mysteries of capitalism, its practices, its powers, and its consequences”²⁷⁵, figurations of volatility emerge which are highly sexualised. Volatility and the capricious nature of credit are key-signifiers in *The Female Tatler*’s repertoire of gendered representations. This becomes highly evident in the collective allegory of Lady Credit: In the issue analysed above, *The Female Tatler* participates in this cultural fable because credit can, allegedly, not be obtained via the tradesmen themselves but only via their wives, who as women embody the volatility and capricious nature associated with credit and the new speculative economy. In a last example for inverted gender-roles in *The Female Tatler* and the way in which they are linked to the economy, a man who assumes a task traditionally associated with women is subject of ridicule.

Mrs. Flounce, the mantua maker near Surrey Street, is allowed perfectly to understand her trade, several dear creatures have been dressed and undressed at her house, she knows the nicety of the mode, and thinks herself perfectly well bred in having a mortal hatred for her husband. Poor Flatbottom, as the neighbours have nicknamed him, is so henpecked, because madam maintains him, that he is forced to ask pardon on his knees for light offences, and the gentleman that tips him half a crown to support his spirits with a glass of Burton must be truly noble, who not only generously relieves him, but employs his wife, an industrious woman that makes night gowns for gentlemen, as well as roppers for ladies. About a month past, madam turns away her maid, and honest Flatbottom has cleaned her house, washed her dishes, and been her man-cook ever since, while she, sewing on her furbelows, sings ‘I was born of a Royal Race.’ [...] ²⁷⁶

The short narrative is constructed according to the set formula perpetually used in *The Female Tatler*: telling names, explicit account of the locality and hints to the woman’s unchastely behaviour. The reader learns that many people have been dressed and undressed at her house, which is a double-entendre that could both refer to her actual profession, a seamstress, and to a prostitute. Women who were the main wage-earners were virtually non-existent in the early eighteenth-century, and if women had to maintain themselves and their family, associations with prostitution were common. A married woman being

275 Brown, *Fables of Modernity* 97.

276 Morgan, ed., *The Female Tatler* 91.

the main wage earner was not only a phenomenon outside the norm, it was a virtual impossibility.

The telling name Flatbottom epitomises the image of the impotent, useless, henpecked husband. Not only is he hated by his own wife, he is also despised by his neighbours, who invented the nickname for him. Like all the figures employed in *The Female Tatler's* cautionary tales and short narratives, he is merely a stock character who is represented as being the most wretched of men, submissive to his wife and allegedly an alcoholic. The fact that he is ironically described as "honest" Flatbottom serves to stress his absolute stupidity and ridiculousness. This short narrative not only deals with an inversion of gender roles; but is an over-inflated caricature of an undesirable economic future in which women might obtain a prerogative. The financial revolution of the late seventeenth century and the following change from a feudal to an industrial society evoked various fears, many of which are reflected in the texts of *The Female Tatler*.

She considers her husband as her steward, and looks upon discretion, and good housewifery, as little domestic virtues, unbecoming a woman of quality. She thinks life lost in her own family, and fancies herself out of the world when she is not in the ring, the play-house, or the drawing room: She lives in a perpetual motion of body, and restlessness of thought, and is never easy in any one place when she thinks there is more company in another. [...] She pities all the valuable part of her sex, and calls every woman of a prudent modest retired life, a poor-spirited, unpolished creature.²⁷⁷

The woman described in this excerpt despises housewifery and sees it as being below her status. Comparable to Mrs. Flatbottom the seamstress, she mixed up gender roles, burdening her husband with domestic chores. She considers herself a "woman of quality", but the tone of *The Female Tatler* makes clear that the editor-persona is of another opinion. The text draws up a binary opposition between the active, public woman and the housewife. Misinterpreting femininity, setting the wrong ideals, condemning women who rightly perform her gender is what the woman in question is culpable of. The account that the editor-persona gives of her is clearly indicative of the constantly recurring obsession with the dangers of female capriciousness.

277 Mackie, *The Commerce of Everyday Life* 493.

Body and mind are shown to be restless: For the woman in question, being at home means being "out of the world". The ideal indirectly juxtaposed to this restlessness is a total control not only of the female body, but also of the female mind, fragile and susceptible as it was imagined to be, in the domestic, conjugal sphere of the home.

But it is exactly this sphere that the woman in the text tries to escape from as often as possible: Her desire for going out, literally for leaving the house, her ideologically assigned sphere – and thus for social mixing – is seen as highly problematic. Her lifestyle is juxtaposed to the prudent, modest, retired life of an ideal wife. The ideal of domesticity is the centre of the argumentation and the foil against which the character of the bad mother and bad wife is constructed. The loci drawn up in juxtaposition to the house are places of public amusement like the playhouse. Ironically, Mrs. Crackenthorpe presents drawing room assemblies as a source from where she gathers the material for her paper. The following account offers an ironic inversion, thereby eventually reaffirming the values of the new bourgeois class.

Scandal and detraction are diseases out of fashion, which people of rank have bequeathed to the middle sort, whose family affairs confining 'em from the world's agreements. Their sole pleasure is to pry into one another's concerns, suspect one another's conduct, and carry little reflecting stories from one house to another. But these ladies have the French taste of ease, humour and satisfaction; they talk without consideration, act without decorum, and divert themselves just as immediately fancy prompts 'em without caring two pinches of snuff what the most malicious tongue can say of 'em. They have a notion that a true enjoyment of the world does not consist in court-drawing rooms, operas and Hyde Park, to be always displaying their tissues and asserting their quality. They are for more familiar diversions [...]²⁷⁸

This excerpt is interesting because it can be read and interpreted in two different ways. On the one hand, it could be taken literally; on the other hand, it could be read as subtle criticism of the aristocracy. In a literal reading, exactly that which is devalued in the first quote, i. e. the open, public, leisured woman who goes out and does not celebrate her domestic life is, allegedly, presented as the ideal in this behavioural account. Read in this way, the editor-

278 Morgan, ed., *The Female Tatler* 72.

persona advocates revelry. She states that real, authentic ladies do not care “two pinches of snuff” what the others have to say about them. In the majority of its accounts of women who consume tobacco, *The Female Tatler* presents the habit as a trigger to evoke associations of looseness and licentiousness; actresses take snuff, and women who “ramble about”. This is the first hint that this excerpt should not be read literally. In fact, it presents an ironic inversion and its hidden message articulates disgust and opposition against the degenerate and arrogant aristocracy. The ladies in question are actually described in a negative way, notwithstanding the alleged arrogance against the middle class that the text expresses. Thus, it helps to reaffirm the values that *The Female Tatler* so vehemently defends: decorum, chastity and modesty.

The double discourse which is evident in this passage is typical of the playful way in which *The Female Tatler* wraps its moralising pretensions. Allegedly, the fact that the women consume tobacco characterises them as fashionable, as having a “French taste of ease”. In this reading, the attribute “French” is used to denote true style and *savoir-vivre*. Most periodical accounts of everything French were negative, which is not surprising, given the fact that England was at war with France at the time. As illustrated previously, *The Tatler* blamed France for an alleged degeneration in England’s morals and values. This is another hint that the text cannot be read on a merely literal level. Actually, it is an ironic inversion: French mentality and the “French way of life” are not presented as true style, not as the antidote to bourgeois smugness.

Nevertheless, this short excerpt is not as easy to decipher when it comes to the social significance of public places. Seemingly coded as square, middle class and bourgeois, the drawing room, the opera and Hyde Park, thus places of polite social gathering, are ironically presented as loci of lame self-display, of stiff show-off, devoid of any real amusement and true fun. Self-deprecatorily, the moral weekly plays on the stereotypes the aristocracy held against the middle class. In contrast to the bourgeois world stands the aristocratic one: Opulent, thoughtless and careless.

Bourgeois leisure-time activities are presented as essentially public, as directed towards an audience: The opera becomes a stage for the performance of bourgeois identity, of riches and financial blessings. The park is not a locus of private leisure; it is a catwalk, a forum of display for expensive clothes, jewellery and other luxury wares. Aristocratic women, on the contrary, do not

care about libel and slander, they cannot be bothered to stick to conventions, despise places of "polite" social gathering. Their leisure time does not consist of display, but of unrestricted enjoyment. In the end, the discrepancy between the two accounts of stylish vs. appropriate leisure time activities illustrates that *The Female Tatler* was really published during a period of transition.

The Female Tatler's two accounts of appropriate leisure time activities illustrate how unstable and fluid gender roles were. Women's leisure time activity becomes the touchstone of clashing concepts: bourgeois vs. aristocratic, new vs. old, modest vs. opulent, public vs. private. In its prescriptions of becoming leisure time activities, *The Female Tatler* clearly bases aristocratic leisure time activity in a secluded, law- and order-less private sphere, whereas it bases duteous and status-conscious bourgeois leisure in a decisively public realm, where display and self-fashioning are the primary activities, not private enjoyments.

To sum up the findings, it needs to be stressed that *The Female Tatler*, though the first periodical to address women in its title, did also adhere to pre-established discourse on gender. However, *The Female Tatler* also discursively "invaded" gendered spaces like the coffeehouse, but only to reassert traditional boundaries and to prescribe proper "gender-behaviour". The periodical assigns and demarcates gendered spaces, vigilantly patrolling along "gender-borders", stipulating acceptable and unacceptable femininities and masculinities. Moreover, *The Female Tatler* participates in the common practice of gendering commerce and credit as female by using the image of volatility. The periodical not only actively engaged in discourse about commerce and gender that was prominent at the time, but also in the gendering of fashion and in contemporary anxieties over French cultural influence. This fear is exemplified by the periodical's predecessor, *The Tatler* which even calls for an act of parliament against French fopperies. Thus, *The Female Tatler* takes part in the discursive amalgamation of gender and the nation, a recurring phenomenon and an organising principle in essay periodicals.

Overtly, *The Female Tatler* does not approve of the crossing of gender-boundaries; it promotes and defends gendered spaces against intrusion. But in presenting these deviant masculinities and femininities, the journal also inaugurates new debates. Depictions of deviant, nonconformist and sometimes even independent femininities must have been a surprise for contemporary

readers. Of course they are not harbingers of a new era because they are represented in an overtly negative way. But, nevertheless, they are represented and spoken about, and this is new, unprecedented and interesting.

Apart from illustrating the crankiness of eighteenth-century gendered subjectivities, the findings of this chapter can be employed in order to make twenty-first century readers more susceptible to general modes and mechanisms of gender construction. My work is based on a constructivist approach to gender and it not only seeks to reveal how gender was depicted in the past, but also to bring more general patterns to light, which then enable us to detect similar dynamics in twenty-first century representations. One example for these dynamics is double discourse, the idea that a text offers various, even contradictory readings and can thereby be saliently subversive. This effect is independent of the author's intention or the reading suggested by the text's rhetorical markers. Although *The Female Tatler* demonises aberrant men and women, it nevertheless makes them the subject of its texts and by articulating unprecedented ideas about them, it eventually inaugurates a new ordering of gendered discourse.

It is understood that the "literary value" of frivolous tales about Mr. Copywife, Mrs. Margaret and Mrs. Millicent Trott and other stock characters is debatable. But there is more to these texts. *The Female Tatler's* mock advertisements attest to the great tension between the holy sacrament of marriage and the venality of prospective spouses. Because courtship rituals evolved around monetary interests, satirical social commentators were tempted to realign the institution closer alongside prostitution than linking it to the holy sacrament of marriage. Therefore, *The Female Tatler's* bawdy style is not merely sensationalist and pulp fictionist, but it is de-masking and revealing the "human trafficking" that in fact drove the marriage market of early eighteenth-century London, where old titles merged with new capital.

The Female Tatler complicates over-generalised notions of femininity and politeness. In the early eighteenth century, women writers who wrote incognito could be brash, tartly, even disrespectful. It was a time of comparably few restrictions; the blushing, silent virgin of the Victorian era was not yet on the rise, as one might be lead to believe after having read *The Tatler*. In its dauntlessness, *The Female Tatler* was an alternative draft and should therefore not be overlooked by scholars for its admittedly unconventional style that can

at times hardly be called literary. Nevertheless, it is a pearl for researchers who strive not only to include women in the writings of literary history, but also to do away with the idea that eighteenth-century women writers were necessarily prodigious and angelic, as one might be led to believe when focussing on mid-century novels. *The Female Tatler's* texts thwart common expectations and illustrate that notions of literaricity are not only subject to common practices, beliefs and ideologies, but also to constant change. The following chapter also focuses on the ways in which eighteenth-century women participated in public-sphere activities, enquiring on the role of "working women".

VI Periodical Accounts of Female Producers and Consumers of (Cultural) Goods

Focussing on the topic "production and consumption", this chapter aims to answer the question of how the "economic woman" was represented not merely as a consumer, but also as a producer. In the early eighteenth century, women working outside the home were the exception rather than the norm. Seeing women in public places, let alone being served or waited on by a woman, was certainly unusual, although the percentage of women who had to leave their homes to earn a living increased markedly in the early eighteenth century. Reflectors and mouthpieces of the public sphere, periodicals commented on these developments; they reported on the ways in which women "appropriated" public domains and worked not only as vendors and waitresses, but also as actresses and playwrights. Women increasingly participated in the "working world", becoming active as employees. But their roles as consumers were just as active, as my analysis of contemporary advertisements will illustrate. The late seventeenth century and the early eighteenth constitute a caesura which put women in new public spaces. On the one hand these were cultural spaces like the theatre; on the other hand they were also commercial spaces like shops. Because women were new to both spheres, their involvement was a matter of the utmost public interest and therefore discussed in periodicals. Women were no longer merely passive consumers, but also active generators and distributors of manufactured goods, and, as the following section will show, of cultural products.

VI.1 Women on Stage and Behind the Scenes

This section focuses on the question of how periodicals represented actresses and female playwrights. The stage offered a new platform for the performance of gender once actresses were officially allowed to work in their profession in 1660. But women also acted in mystery plays as early as in the fifteenth century. Mystery plays or miracle plays were medieval enactments of Bible stories in churches. They developed from the tenth to the sixteenth century

and reached the height of their popularity in the fifteenth century, before the rise of professional theatres.²⁷⁹ But English women were never regularly employed in a commercial theatre until the Restoration. Before women were officially appointed as actresses in theatres, boys had played the female parts. Elisabeth Howe points out that even though the verification of this information is problematic it is commonly assumed that the first of these appointments was on the eighth of December 1660, when a woman officially played the role of Desdemona in Shakespeare's *Othello* as a member of the performing group, Thomas Killigrew's King's Company.²⁸⁰ By the turn of the century, women acting on stage were established in theatres, but nevertheless, they were generally not held in high esteem, as the following excerpts from *The Female Tatler* will illustrate.

VI.I.I The Actress

The Female Tatler expresses a very negative opinion on actors in general, as the following quotation shows.

There's a vast difference between what the world in general thinks of players, and the opinion they have of themselves. If the town would not tantalise 'em further than to give 'em loud claps on every just performance, and despise 'em when the play's over, they'd value themselves upon good action only: but when people of note shall caress 'em [sic], and embrace 'em [sic] ('do me the honour, dear Hamlet, to let me have you this evening,' 'I was charmed with you in such an act;'), they forget they are but parrots of other men's elaborate studies.²⁸¹

Mrs. Crackenthorpe stipulates to "the town" how it should behave towards actors, fashioning herself as an urban intelligencer and a member of the "social police". The picture she draws of actors is one that denotes them as superficial, vain, and self-congratulatory "players" in a double sense. She ordains that

279 H. J. Diller and F. Wessels, *The Middle English Mystery Play: A Study in Dramatic Speech and Form* (Cambridge University Press, 2005).

280 E. Howe, *The First English Actresses: Women and Drama, 1660-1700* (Cambridge University Press, 1992).

281 Morgan, ed., *The Female Tatler* 13.

the audience, i. e. “the town” – her readership – should clap for every good performance, but should ignore the artists afterwards. This means that she acknowledges the value of a good performance, but paradoxically, she goes on to assert that it is merely a mechanical reproduction, devoid of any ingenuity, calling actors “parrots of another man’s elaborate studies”. This illustrates that representations in *The Female Tatler* value the achievements of the playwright higher than that of the actors, a point I will come back to in the course of my analysis. In the excerpt quoted above, no differentiation is made in terms of gender; both actors and actresses are the target of Mrs. Crackenthorpe’s criticism. The following account from *The Female Tatler* illustrates how negatively especially actresses were conceived of in the general public, a fact that might also have had to do with Restoration plays and the slovenliness of the female characters.

Several good-for-nothing actresses being reduced for want of plays are desirous to be admitted into families. ’Tis true they are so far from the housewives that they are not capable of setting a stitch in their ragged head-clothes, having been altogether bred for coquetry, intriguing, revelling and taking a prodigious deal of snuff. They think themselves fit companions for noblemen’s daughters, having as high a taste of breeding, diversions and entertainments. They’ll call lords fellows, rail at tawdry damasks in dirty calico roppers and talk of champagne and ortelans with as good a grace as e’er a lady at St James. Therefore if any person of quality, for they ha’n’t their healths in the city, is willing to entertain such cattle, they hang out every Sunday night at the Birds Nest in Vinegar Square, which every gentleman that brings tea, sugar ad an ounce or two of orangery, will be received with utmost civility, fulsomely flattered to his face, and the moment he is gone, scandalously taken into pieces, perhaps having refused one of ’em his silver snuff-box.²⁸²

Actresses were frequently equated to prostitutes because they were, in the words of William Pritchard “spectacularly available.”²⁸³ As illustrated in the quote from *The Female Tatler*, the actresses’ failure to base their identity in the most elementary realms of female existence, i. e. the family and the household, marks them as loose and prodigious hussies. Earning their own living and

282 *The Female Tatler* by Mrs. Crackenthorpe from Wednesday August 13 to Friday September 2.

283 Pritchard, *Outward Appearances* 33.

literally allowing themselves to be exposed on "the public stage", actresses were far from corresponding to the norms of their time, which prescribed women a conjugal, domestic way of life. The freedom of self-expression, the public presence and the overall visibility of actresses were the opposite to the ideal models of eighteenth-century femininity. The picture that is drawn in the excerpt from *The Female Tatler* establishes a binary opposition between the actress and the housewife. Their offence consists of the fact that they tried to involve themselves in two realms they were not supposed to enter – the bourgeois home on the one hand and aristocratic circles on the other hand. They transgress boundaries not only concerning their gender, but also concerning their social class.

According to *The Female Tatler*, a lot of actresses were on good terms with nobleman's daughters and the deprecatory tone used to report on this state of affairs illustrates the editor-persona's strong objections. Similar reprehensions were expressed by contemporary anti-theatrical writers, who attacked aristocratic women for allegedly encouraging actresses to pursue their "immodest way of life". Patrons were not only men, but also women. It seemed likely that friendships would develop among those who enjoyed the consumption of cultural products and who had enough leisure time in order to engage in social gatherings. Friendships with aristocratic women were very beneficial for actresses, who not only gained financial subsidies, but also efficient advertising. It was understood that any kind of alliance with an aristocrat would enhance the popularity of the actor or actress. *The Female Tatler* does not comment on this, but mainly stresses the actress's material interests. Mrs. Crackenthorpe even calls them "cattle" whose company can be bought and paid for in kind. They are reported to consume tobacco in public, which shows them to be immoral, impious and unchaste in the eyes of their contemporaries, i. e. *The Female Tatler's* readers. The consumption of snuff is a symbol of their flightiness; their friendship with aristocrats is represented as inappropriate and unbecoming because of their lower social status. In its clearly negative account of actresses, *The Female Tatler* expresses the idea that they act as facilitators for social mixing: They "call Lords fellows," which illustrates their strong disregard for social hierarchy.

An actress's ability to imitate the social elite on stage simultaneously evoked fear and admiration in contemporaries. For anti-theatricists, this ability meant latent social upheaval; for positive commentators, it was an artistic skill. In

any case, both actors and actresses were persons of public interest, and, as Kimberly Crouch attests, “any personal details of lovers, children, or any special association beyond the realm of the theatre or within it was of interest to the public.”²⁸⁴ Just like today, the private lives of actors and actresses were of major interest to the media. *The Female Tatler*’s accounts are representative of a time when actresses automatically evoked associations with prostitution. It is interesting to note how periodical discourse on actors and actresses changed over time, as the profession became more dissolved from associations of loose sexual morals. *The Tatler* of 1710 did not pay great attention to actresses, but a later version of the journal from the nineteenth century gave a completely different account of the profession and its social significance. The following excerpt shows how representations of actresses changed and became more complaisant:

In all the circumstances of life, women labour under disadvantages. To none does this remark apply so strongly as to actresses. Subject to sneers, insinuations, and opprobrium, their virtues are by many held to be as factitious as the gems which, in the article of stage-costume, serves as well as the real brilliant. There is no analogy in this. No imitation will answer for the diamond-spark of genius or the pearl of modesty, both to be found of the first water, and as priceless, among actresses, as among any order of women. If the stage be not the situation in which these gems can be best set, it is the one in which they are most tried; and when preserved uninjured, notwithstanding all that abounds in a theatre to cloud and corrupt, they have passed an ordeal that entitles their possessors to the admission they so frequently find in the circles of aristocratic dignity, the honours of which they the more adorn by having given proof that they have an honour in themselves incapable of debasement. The drama does not, as yet, hold its destined place among the arts, for want of institutes [*sic*] to protect and support it [...]²⁸⁵

This quote from the nineteenth-century *Tatler* subsumes the reproaches so frequently brought forward against actresses: Just as they wear imitation

284 K. Crouch, “The Public Life of Actresses: Prostitutes or Ladies?” *Gender in Eighteenth-Century England*, ed. Hannah Barker and Elaine Chalus (London and New York: Longman, 1997) 65.

285 L. Hunt, *The Tatler: A Daily Journal of Literature and the Stage* (London: J. Onwhyn, 1832) 163.

jewellery, their virtue is merely a sham. *The Tatler* holds that imitation jewellery serves as well as the real gems on stage because it is only a tool, a signifier, a costume. The theatre was commonly perceived as a locus where female virtue was constantly at risk. In conclusion, the narrator-persona holds that those actresses who have "passed an ordeal" deserved the encouragement and friendship of the aristocracy. *The Tatler* expresses a strong belief in merit: The aristocracy will only favour an actress who deserves it because she has proved her virtue and defended it against the temptations of the theatre. The nineteenth-century *Tatler's* account of actresses is clearly reminiscent of Richardson's "Virtue Rewarded" tale. It shows how prominent the "virtue-virginity-value" formula continued to be in the nineteenth century. Not merely a "defence of the actress", the nineteenth-century *Tatler* promotes drama as a genre, arguing for greater appreciation.

The "lateral cut" from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century illustrates how discourse changed superficially, but it also shows how a core of ideas was maintained concerning the social role of actresses and their susceptibility to (socially) promiscuous behaviour. As clearly outlined in the very first excerpt quoted in this chapter, the achievements of playwrights were valued above the merits of the actor or actress: According to *The Female Tatler*, actors and actresses were merely parrots of other people's elaborate studies, i. e. the playwright's achievements. The following section will deal with the question of how *The Female Tatler* represented the female playwright working behind the scenes.

VI.1.2 The Female Playwright

One entire issue of *The Female Tatler* is devoted to the discussion of a play by the contemporary playwright Susannah Centlivre. Born Susannah Freeman, she lived from 1669 to 1723. Centlivre was not only a dramatist, but also a Whig political activist and poet. Her earliest publications, e.g. the tragicomedy *The Perjured Husband*, appeared under the surname Carroll, which was the name of her first husband. Centlivre wrote several comedies of manners and intrigue two of the most famous are *The Gamester* and *The Bassett Table*, both from 1707. Notwithstanding these achievements, she reportedly suffered undervaluing by actors and booksellers, who rejected her work because she was a woman.²⁸⁶

286 Baines, Ferraro and Rogers, *The Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia* 56.

The lack of respect of many of her contemporaries was also discussed in *The Female Tatler*. Centlivre herself famously released her anger and frustration in the preface to *The Platonick Lady* from 1707.²⁸⁷

In 1707, Susannah married Joseph Centlivre, Queen Anne's cook, an incident in London's social life and therefore also mentioned in *The Female Tatler*, which proclaimed: "She is somehow related to one that serves the Queen's kitchen."²⁸⁸ Though it sounds like a pseudonym, given its idiomatic qualities and the fact that it means "one hundred books" in French, "Centlivre" actually was her real name. After the marriage, she continued to write for the stage, which was not a usual occurrence in the early eighteenth century. Centlivre's plays were very popular in Britain and America in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and some of them were also translated into other European languages. Lessing reviewed the French translation of *A Bold Stroke for a Wife* and used *The Perjur'd Husband* as one of the sources for his domestic tragedy *Miss Sara Sampson*.²⁸⁹

Susannah Centlivre was affected by the boundaries that society imposed on her because of her female gender, and she often made this confinement the topic of her works. This is illustrated in the following excerpt, taken from the epilogue to her play *The Wonder a Woman keeps a Secret*.

Custom with all our modern laws combin'd [sic], has given such power despotic to mankind, that we have only so much virtue now, as they are pleased in favour to allow. Thus like mechanic work we're used with scorn, and wound up only, for a present turn; some are for having our whole sex enslav'd, affirming we've no souls, and can't be sav'd; but were the women all of opinion, we'd soon shake off this false usurped dominion; we'd make the tyrants own, that we could prove, as fit for other business as for love. Lord! What prerogative might we obtain, could we from yielding, a few months refrain! How fondly would our dang'ling lovers doat! What homage would be

287 S. Centlivre, *The Platonick Lady a Comedy as It Is Acted at the Queens Theatre in the Hay-Market by the Author of the Gamester, and Love's Contrivance* (Charleston: BiblioBazaar, 2010).

288 *The Female Tatler by Mrs. Crackenthorpe* from Friday September 9 to Monday September 12.

289 S. Staves, *A Literary History of Women's Writing in Britain, 1660-1789* (Cambridge University Press, 2006) 162.

paid to petticoat! 'Twou'd be a jest to see the change of fate, how we might all
of politics debate [...]²⁹⁰

In this epilogue, Centlivre refers to a contemporary pamphlet by Timothy Constant who stated that women had no souls.²⁹¹ She writes back in opposition to this affront and calls for the unification of women by holding “were the women all of opinion”. Her appeal is memorable because of the rhymes and the metaphorical language, e.g. in “shake off this false usurped dominion”. Centlivre states that women were capable of more than just caretaking; women are “as fit for other business as for love”. This comment reveals the author’s conviction that women were not predestined merely for the “business of love,” that “the loving caretaker” was a role that society had assigned to them, merely a performance of gender not freely chosen. Centlivre’s claim is very passionate, as she even calls for women to obtain a right to use their own prerogative. Advocating civil rights for women, Centlivre’s *A Gotham Election* from 1715 criticises corrupt voting-practices. It comes as no surprise that her work soon became subject to censure.²⁹²

In a very open, female-only atmosphere, the Society of Ladies discusses the debut performance of Centlivre’s *The Man’s Bewitched, or, The Devil To Do About Her* by the Queen’s Company in the Haymarket from the twelfth of December, 1709. While Mrs. Crackenthorpe condemns actresses, the Society of Ladies devotes an entire issue to praising a female playwright. Interestingly, the positive depiction of the female playwright is accompanied by a negative depiction of the actors and actresses involved in the performance of her play, an almost symptomatic circumstance.

This evening the ingenious Mrs. Centlivre did me the favour of a visit. All the ladies concerned in this paper happened to be there and with several others of fashion and both sexes. We, having appointed a dancing bout, her business then was chiefly to have my opinion of her new comedy, for that she spied me out the first night in the box. I asked her, smiling, whether she took the title for her play from the characters she had drawn, or from the

290 Pearson, ed., *The Dramatic Works of the Celebrated Mrs. Centlivre* 73.

291 T. Constant, *An Essay to Prove Women Have No Souls Compos’d of Several Arguments Publish’d by S Clarke* (London: BiblioBazaar, 2010).

292 Schabert, *Englische Literaturgeschichte* 233.

persons that played those characters, since a certain theatrical gentleman is often bewitched and there is a stage lady about whom there has been the devil to do.²⁹³

The account of this meeting starts with a ironic hint: Apparently, there have been some disagreements between Mrs. Centlivre and the actors. The hostess Emilia alludes to the quarrel. However, she does not discuss it in detail, but brushes away her own remark by saying: “But setting raillery apart [...]”²⁹⁴ Here, *The Female Tatler* lives up to its name and presents its readers tasty morsels of scandal, before coming back to more serious matters. Nevertheless, critics have taken this ironic hint as indicative, as the following excerpt from the *Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia of Eighteenth Century Writers and Writing* illustrates:

[Centlivre’s] plots tended to pit liberty-loving young couples against the obstacle of old-fashioned Tory patriarchs, with Catholics and Jacobites also featuring as regular targets; the clear political agenda of such satire in *The Man’s Bewitched* (1709) prompted a skit on her authorial vanity in the Tory journal *The Female Tatler* (14 Dec. 1709).²⁹⁵

The encyclopaedia presents a very political reading that does not do justice to the text from my point of view. The ironic hint on Susannah Centlivre is not to be understood as merely politically-motivated, but more as an interest-raising introduction to the topic, tempting readers with gossip and scandal before then offering a very positive and completely apolitical account of Centlivre’s work. The text continues as follows:

But setting raillery apart, the whole company congratulated her on the success of her performance, and were rejoiced to see the inimitable Mrs. Behn so nearly revived in Mrs. Centlivre.²⁹⁶

The fact that *The Female Tatler’s* editor-persona establishes a genealogy of successful female playwrights, of which there were very few in the early eighteenth century, shows how benevolent the journal’s attitude towards

293 Morgan, ed., *The Female Tatler* 140.

294 Morgan, ed., *The Female Tatler* 140.

295 Baines, Ferraro and Rogers, *The Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia* 56.

296 Morgan, ed., *The Female Tatler* 140.

Centlivre and her work actually was. *The Female Tatler* provides a forum for the discussion of female playwrights and their oeuvres. The skit in the beginning can also be read as self-deprecatory, introducing the trope of gossip only to deconstruct it in the subsequent sentences. The barbed remark is no destructive criticism, but an introduction typical of *The Female Tatler* – highly satirical and not to be taken at face value. It goes without saying that the general tone in the text is overtly positive. The sisterly atmosphere at Emilia's lodgings, where the conversation between the editors and the playwright is said to have taken place, produces an ambiance that actively promoted female literary and artistic skill: "The ladies highly commended the author, as what could they expect less from one of their own sex."²⁹⁷

In publishing a review of Centlivre's plays, *The Female Tatler* actively promoted her art. At the beginning of the text, the periodical takes up the problem that Centlivre self-referentially reflects upon in the preface to *The Platonick Lady* from 1707, where she complained about the unjust prejudices she faced as a female writer and about the fact that her two earliest works had to be published anonymously in order to be successful. She thus explicitly admits her frustration concerning the anonymity she had to assume, and makes it clear that she is now unwilling to publish more works anonymously, purporting an active claim on authorship.

The Female Tatler provided one of the first "women only" forums for discussion, offering a gendered perspective on art and those who produce it. The journal decisively advertised Centlivre and her work, celebrating women's literary and artistic skill and claiming women's share in the cultural market. While celebrating the female playwright, *The Female Tatler* does not speak up for actors, and especially actresses – an utter paradox?

The devaluation of actresses certainly had to do with their common association with slovenliness and prostitution. Moreover, it must be acknowledged that in the early eighteenth century, women had only been officially allowed on stages for a few decades; it would take more than a century before a periodical vouched for their merits, as the example from the nineteenth-century *Tatler* has shown. In the early eighteenth century, theatres were the favorite hunting-grounds of prostitutes; they encountered their customers there. It took more

297 Morgan, ed., *The Female Tatler* 140.

than a century after the first official appearance of a woman on stage before actresses were officially recognised as artists in periodicals. In the beginning, i. e. in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, they were automatically equated to prostitutes because they also "exposed" themselves publically. This is comparable to the situation of female shop assistants or bartenders: As long as women remained behind the scenes, like playwrights, their virtue, i. e. chastity, was not called into doubt. But as soon as they assumed a thoroughly public stance, as soon as they left the semi-public position behind the scenes and the curtain, associations with wantonness and prostitution seemed likely. Not merely actresses, but also other women working in public realms and loci of social gatherings were subject to such harassment and libel, as will be illustrated in the next section.

VI.2 Gender, Consumption and Class

In a letter to Mr. Spectator, a young woman who works as a bartender complains about her customers.

Mr. Spectator, I keep a Coffee-house and am one of those whom you have thought fit to mention as an Idol some Time ago: I suffered a good deal of Raillery upon that occasion; but shell heartily forgive you, who were the Cause of it, if you will do me Justice in another point. What I ask of you, is to acquaint my Customers (who are otherwise very good ones) that I am unavoidably hasped in my Bar, and cannot help hearing the improper Discourse they are pleased to entertain me with. They strive who shall say the most immodest things in my Hearing: At the same time half a dozen of them loll at the Bar staring just in my Face, *ready to interpret my Looks and Gestures, according to their own Imaginations*. In this passive condition I know not where to cast my Eyes, place my Hands, or what to employ myself in: But this confusion is to be a Jest, and I hear them say in the End, with an insipid Air of Mirth and Subtlety, Let her alone, she knows as well as we for all she looks so. Good Mr. Spectator, persuade Gentlemen that this is out of all Decency. Say it is possible a Woman may be modest, and yet keep a publick House.²⁹⁸

298 Mackie, *The Commerce of Everyday Life* 213-14.

This letter is interesting because it is an original, and probably one of the first ever, written accounts of sexual harassment in the workplace. However, this terminology describes the issue in purely modern terms; contemporaries would not have conceived of it in this way. Debates concerning sexual harassment were virtually non-existent in early eighteenth-century public discourse. If a woman was insulted, it was common to believe that she herself was the one to blame, e.g. for her dress, behaviour, or for being in the wrong place at the wrong time. This is also the reason that the reader self-deprecatorily signs her letter with the words “the Idol”. Mr. Spectator used the word “idol” in his periodical essays to indicate that the female character in question was a coquette, a woman who uses her attractiveness to toy with men, and, by convention, to deceive them. The barwoman is linked to the social type of the coquette because she interacts with men in public on a regular basis.

The stock character of the coquette was an emblem of the changing nature of social relations in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Cultural products of the day, including periodicals, plays and satirical pamphlets, featured her as an embodiment of female capriciousness. The coquette is the character around whom the plot revolves in Restoration comedies such as John Dryden’s *Marriage A-la-Mode* from 1671.²⁹⁹ Her image is that of a pretentious, vain and superficial social actor, in the plays she is the distracter and heartbreaker par excellence. The barwoman signs her letter “the idol”, i. e. “the coquette” because she acknowledges that the stereotypes she is confronted with in her workplace resemble the character traits commonly associated with the coquette.

In her letter to the editor, the barwoman asserts that she knows about the stereotypes concerning her profession as an innkeeper. She blames Mr. Spectator for disseminating the rumours and clichés that double back on her when waiting on customers, making her work behind the counter unbearable. Confronted with indecent and non-ambiguous advances from morning until night, she is not willing to accept this kind of behaviour any longer: Mr. Spectator should make up for the wrong he has done to her by rescinding his accusations. She suggests that he should launch a public appeal, a public reprimand telling his readers to treat waitresses respectfully: “Say it is possible

299 L. L. Linker, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro. College of Arts and Sciences: English, *The Female Libertine from Dryden to Defoe* (The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 2008) 1.

a woman may be modest, and yet keep a public house.”³⁰⁰ Here, the alleged binary opposition between the public woman and the virtuous woman is the subtext that explains the predicament in which the waitress finds herself. The tone of her letter is overt and self-confidently arrogating, openly challenging Mr. Spectator.

The young woman is fully aware of the power structures that her customer’s gazes generate: “Half a dozen of them loll at the bar staring just in my face, ready to interpret my looks and gestures, according to their own imaginations.”³⁰¹ She is not only very conscious of the fact that she is being gazed at and examined by her guests; she also recognises the ways in which they make her the subject of their imagination, how they make her the target of their wishful thinking. The letter is exceptional because it features a remarkably strong female voice, and is not written from the point of view of Mr. Spectator’s male gaze.

Even though she accuses him of enforcing negative stereotypes of women who wait on customers, Mr. Spectator’s reaction to her letter illustrates that he understands her situation. Firstly, he adds meaning and value to her letter by stating that it is not the only one of this kind he has received recently. Allegedly, he got “long letters both from the Royal and New Exchange on the same subject.”³⁰² The Old and New Exchange were markets where new ways of doing business were epitomised, they were the places where new goods were sold and where members of a new social class consumed luxury wares. These had only recently been made available to members of a social class other than the aristocracy. The trading places that Mr. Spectator mentions, the Old and New Exchange, were not only essentially bourgeois but also a locus of interaction between male and female traders and customers. The reader’s workplace, an inn, is different in that it is not necessarily bourgeois. More likely, it was frequented by members of several social classes. The way in which she describes her workplace in the letter makes the modern reader think of it as a locus of “gender trouble”; dominated by the male gaze to which the female reader is no longer willing to subject herself. Mr. Spectator acknowledges this and points to the ubiquity of the issue by asserting that she is one among many readers to address the problem. He does not downplay the seriousness of her

300 Mackie, *The Commerce of Everyday Life* 214.

301 Mackie, *The Commerce of Everyday Life* 214.

302 Ibid.

concern – he does not make fun of her because she is "only" a waitress – but he equates her to shop-women and thereby establishes a general equality among female service-employees. Not only is the male gaze the perceptual antidote to the female reader's perspective, but at the same time it is also her addressee's, Mr. Spectator's, point of view. In his account of the matter, he acknowledges that power structures between male and female participants in trade activities are far from being equally balanced. The rhetorical cluster he draws upon in order to articulate ideas about what happens when men and women interact in trade is none other than credit.

Credit in the social sphere and credit among customers was very important in the early eighteenth century, as Nicholas Barbon explains in his treaty entitled *A Discourse of Trade* from 1696: "Credit is a value raised by opinion, it buys goods as money doe's [*sic*]; and in all trading cities, there's more wares sold upon credit, than for present money."³⁰³ The power of credit and thus the urgency for credibility was all-pervading in the early eighteenth century – everything comes down to this recurring common denominator. Mr. Spectator answers his reader's letter by pointing to the inestimable importance of social credit: "Her [,] whose credit is certainly hurt by it, tho' their own may be strong enough to bear it."³⁰⁴ This comment illustrates that within their interactions in the public sphere, men and women can increase or decrease one another's social credit, of which gender and sexuality are the benchmarks. Different standards are applied to men and women; what damages the one's social credit is of no effect to the other. The commercial world of shops and public houses constitutes a new array of interactions. But, as Mr. Spectator explains, power structures in this new array of interaction are far from being equally balanced. Whereas the female shop assistant's credibility in the social sphere is fragile and dependent on the way in which men behave towards her, men's credibility in the social sphere is not affected by their own behaviour. Credibility in the social sphere is not granted according to the same standards to all its participants. A woman's credibility in the social sphere, thus also among her customers, is severely damaged when she is treated with disrespect, whereas the man's credibility remains untouched, no matter how rude or disrespectful he behaves towards others, especially towards women waiting on him. Trade and the kind of social interaction it affords is an entirely new concern that invites

303 Mackie, *The Commerce of Everyday Life* 235.

304 *ibid.*, 214.

periodicals, the mouthpieces of the public sphere, to negotiate conventions and boundaries. This is exactly what happens in *The Spectator*: Gender- and power dynamics in new social spaces are being (re-)negotiated; power-structures and boundaries are being (re-)assessed. Commenting on interactions between men and women in the public sphere, periodicals make themselves instruments for the rehearsal of civility, politeness and manners. The localities for these rehearsals were new trading places that afforded new forms of interaction between men and women.

Civility was increasingly transformed into a bourgeois virtue in the eighteenth century. A regulator of social interactions, it was stylised as a new "art of behaviour". Modes of civility underwent significant transformation from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century.³⁰⁵ As a consequence, concepts of sociability changed drastically. As London grew faster and faster, from 675.000 inhabitants in 1700 to the world's largest metropolis fifty years later, the cultivation of new modes of civility became a necessity, and periodicals offered a forum for reflection and instruction in the new art of politeness. Negotiations of new social roles also implied the negotiation of new codes of civility between male and female actors of the public sphere, as the quote above has shown.

The character of the female innkeeper illustrates the dynamics that public spaces generated, thereby revealing controversial negotiations of gendered power structures. Before *The Spectator*'s account of working women fighting for respect among their customers, *The Female Tatler* gave an account, however very different, of working women, as the following quote illustrates:

These bacon beauties have for many years been the ridicule of Leaden-Hall Street, they are the reverse of anything that's well bred, the burlesque of every new fashion, and the gaze of ev'ry body that knows what's decent and regular, yet they pretend to wit, having perus'd the covering of several band-boxes, and talk of plays and operas, when 't would be more commendable in 'em to study

305 A. Assmann, "Höflichkeit zwischen Geselligkeit und Gesellschaft," *Höflichkeit – Aktualität und Genese von Umgangsformen*, ed. Thomas Macho Brigitte Felderer (München: Fink, 2002) 194.

weights and scales, debtor and creditor, and manage their father's shop, with an obliging and submissive carriage to its customers.³⁰⁶

Shop owner's daughters are constructed in stark contrast to what is represented as normative, as constitutive of polite society. They are antagonists, the burlesque reverse, mere pretenders. A binary opposition is drawn up between plays and operas on the one hand and weights and scales on the other hand, thus implying that the world of "high" culture is allegedly not for social upstarts. The trope of credit and credibility arises here when Mrs. Crackenthorpe holds that they ought to study "debtor and creditor" instead of trying to be accepted among more polite circles. Their involvement in the business of credit is represented as a hindrance, as an obstacle to them becoming respectable members of polite society. Paradoxically, they are not to obtain credit in the social sphere themselves, whereas they are the ones to "study debtor and creditor" in the economic sphere of their family's shops. It follows that in this case, credit in the sphere of the economy did not equal credit in the social sphere. In order to be admitted to "polite circles", candidates had to be more than newly rich. The "invisible gates" that demarcated the boundaries between the old social elite and the new social upstarts were more permeable than ever before in the early eighteenth century. The deciding factors for in- or exclusion, admission or refusal, were the subject of intense debate in the early eighteenth century, not only in periodicals, but also in more programmatic texts that focussed solely on this topic.

Manners, Opinions, Times, by Anthony Ashley Cooper, the Earl of Shaftesbury, is a guide to polite sociability that was very popular in the early eighteenth century. The book was published in 1711 and discusses various topics, all centred around new gentlemanly ideals, outlining the thought and culture of Enlightenment Europe. Shaftesbury's work is fundamental to understanding the intellectual and cultural aspirations and achievements of the eighteenth-century civilising process. What it has in common with periodicals is the idea that self-knowledge can be attained through (inner) conversation; this introspection is a means both to establish and to confirm norms. The technique of self-fashioning, a major topic both in Shaftesbury's work and in essay periodicals, requires a "withdrawal from the world" in the first place,

306 *The Female Tatler* by Mrs. Crackenthorpe, (A. Baldwin) from Monday August 29 to Wednesday August 31.

a time one spends in ascetic and solitary retreat, in order to be able to then "re-enter" the world as a more sophisticated social actor. Both periodical writers and Shaftesbury focussed on the opportunities that emerged from the complex relationship between power and displays of manners. The early eighteenth century was a time during which criteria denominating social class were reassessed. Meaning "good manners" in general, "politeness" could also have a more idiomatic meaning, referring to matters of refined conversation, emblematising negotiations between the "old" and the "modern" world. The new, post-revolutionary social order was one that included the new middle class, a class still in search of its "identity", and this quest for identity is articulated in periodicals.

The Female Tatler's concern for social boundaries and questions of in- or exclusion reflects these considerations and negotiations of new social orders. It is an example of how a rhetorically feminine journal takes part in this discourse, how it takes up contemporary concerns and anxieties. Representations from *The Female Tatler* differ a great deal from those in the later *Spectator*. Whereas *The Spectator* asserts its reader's right to be treated with civility by telling the men off, *The Female Tatler* publically shams the two women.

Mrs. Crackenthorpe contemptuously calls them "bacon beauties", alluding to their opulent lifestyle and indicating that they are guilty of the sin of gluttony. They thus fit in the series of unruly femininities *The Female Tatler* repeatedly ridicules. The alliteration not only serves to make fun of the two, but also makes it unmistakably clear that the journal positions them in the social periphery rather than in its centre. The main topic of the quote is social class and mechanisms of in- and exclusion, whereas in the quote from *The Spectator*, questions of civility and behavioural standards are at stake.

A comparison between representations of sales-women in *The Spectator* and in *The Female Tatler* illustrates that whereas the first gives a direct account from the woman's point of view, the latter makes its editor persona ridicule them, stressing their inferiority. Whereas *The Spectator* lets the woman speak for herself in a letter to the editor, *The Female Tatler's* aim is ridicule.

This comparison between the two demonstrates that *The Female Tatler's* rhetorical femininity does not necessarily imply a programmatic "privileging" of women. Modern readers may also find it surprising that *The Spectator*,

though primarily concerned with the male perspective, not only takes interest in the situation of female shop assistants, but also actively induces its readers to pay them more respect. *The Female Tatler*, in contrast, rhetorically enforces their inferiority and reasserts social boundaries, vigilantly patrolling along borders. Mrs. Crackenthorpe strengthens common beliefs, whereas *The Spectator* calls the status quo into question and tries to redirect the reading public's behaviour. More explicitly than its predecessor, *The Female Tatler* negotiates the in-betweens of social change and upward social mobility. The two shop women that Mrs. Crackenthorpe describes as "bacon beauties" belong to a new social class who mixes with representatives of the "old" system, they gather in the same representative places. Social mobility is suddenly possible; social events are frequented by both aristocratic and non-aristocratic guests. The ability to consume is what differentiates the new middle class from the labouring poor; consumption is the epitome marker of social mobility and therefore a central organising principle for texts negotiating social boundaries and commenting on social change. The centrality of consumption for the formation of a new class is not only evident in periodical essays, but also in the advertisements that are a part of every periodical.

VI.2.1 Advertisements

Advertisements added to and were an essential part of the experience of reading a periodical. The following analysis focuses on advertisements that feature products which belong to three distinct, but closely inter-related discursive categories, namely gender, commerce and the nation. Notwithstanding their ubiquity, advertisements are rarely the subject of scholarly research; they are usually erased from modern edited volumes of periodicals. The reason for that is obvious, as their literary value is doubtful. Not connected to the main body of text in terms of content and form, they are still an essential part of the periodical as a product that does not merely consist of an essay. Readers find them on the last page, just after the last word of the essay. Even though the main body of text and the advertisements are in fact divided entities belonging to different genres, can they still be connected? Were advertisements read as a "side-dish", accompanying the main text? An important question that needs to be posed in this context concerns intertextual relationships. Were there any links?

For the first time in history, goods were advertised to the prospective buyer in print, reaching a far more stratified audience than had previously been possible. Before the advent of print culture, mountebanks were responsible for promoting goods to customers directly. The linguistic skills that were needed for the formulation of written advertisements were not yet fixed or subject to conventions; periodicals provided the "testing grounds", a forum where new linguistic varieties were probed, concerning both advertising and journalistic practices. The medium through which goods were advertised was new, but the products themselves catered to old needs and anxieties, as the following analysis of quack advertisements will illustrate.

The Famous Royal Essence for the Hair of the head, perriwigs [sic] being the most delightfully charming perfume in nature, excellently beneficial to health, and the best preserver of hair in the world, keeping that of perriwigs [sic] in the curl, and all hair from fading or changing colour, makes the hair of the head grow thick, strengthens and confirms roots, and infallibly keeps it from falling off, or splitting at the ends. By its incomparable perfume it strengthens the brain, revives the spirits and quickens the memory.³⁰⁷

The hair essence is advertised as a holistic treat for body and soul. The text continues as follows: "Since it has been so exceedingly admired and valued by the nobility and gentry, it has been basely counterfeited, therefore take notice that the true is to had [*sic*] only at Mr. Alcraft's, a toy shop."³⁰⁸ The advertisement presents the product as a means that enables the customer to actively perform upward social mobility: The fact that the gentry and nobility apparently liked the hair essence was believed to have a strong effect on the general reading public, namely the wish to purchase this very product in order to be like their social superiors. The same mechanism is still used in modern-day advertisements; celebrities acting as advertising icons are frequently the centre of marketing campaigns. The "Royal Essence" is presented not merely as a means to beautification, but also as being beneficial for its consumer's health. In a way typical of quack advertisements, it promises to "strengthen the brain", to "revive the spirits" and to "quicken the memory", allegedly benefitting both real hair and artificial hair, i. e. wigs. It is not enough to state that the product has beautifying effects; it must also offer some added value

307 The Female Tatler Monday September 12, to Wednesday September 14, 1709.

308 *ibid.*

to the bourgeois customer. Early eighteenth-century marketing strategies for cosmetics had to address their customers not merely as vain individuals, but as responsible citizens whose wish was not just to look good, but who also wished to "strengthen their brains". It is interesting to note how Puritan bourgeois paradigms of utility and profitableness "invaded" the language of advertisements. The advertisement is addressed neither to men nor to women exclusively; it seems to target both sexes. This illustrates that beauty ideals were to be followed by both men and women, as both sexes increasingly "inhabited" the public sphere and acted as agents within it. As a consequence, ways to positively influence one's reputation were welcomed by both men and women.

The promotion of luxury goods in *The Female Tatler* illustrates that its readership formed a key market for what was considered vain and unnecessary products. The readers of periodicals were a promising target group: Reading was their leisure-time activity, meaning that they were not living in poor conditions and could afford an above average lifestyle that included the consumption of luxury goods. Although the rise of the middle class meant increasing wealth for some, the majority of England's citizens lived close to or below the subsistence level. Hygiene and ventilation were poor in most households, overcrowded rooms and a poor diet, stretching sometimes even to hunger, was part of most contemporaries' day-to-day lived experience. The majority of the population was subject to diseases, pain and suffering. Standards in middle class households were not necessarily better; mortality rates were also high, especially among children. Untimely death and suffering were omnipresent, but even though it was so common, it was understood that most people were more than willing to change their fate if they only could. This is what quack medicines exploited, as those involved in the trade tried to make a living out of other people's misery. The two following quotations are excerpts from advertisements published in *The Female Tatler*, illustrating how absurd promotions for quack products could be.

A most excellent strengthening electuary for the back or reins, whose balsamick [sic] healing properties in all weaknesses and pains of the back in both sexes, whether from wrenches, strains, falls, blows, or secret injuries, are beyond compare; it likewise strengthens the womb in women, prevents miscarriage, and for those that cannot hold their water, is of wonderful and

noted efficiency. Sold for 3 s. 6 d. a pot, at Mr. Spooner's at the golden half moon in Lemon-Street Goodman's Fields.³⁰⁹

Dr. Jackson's Worm-Powder which has neither taste nor smell, cures pain, gnawings, sickness at the stomach, striving to vomit in the morning, faintness, sinking of the spirits, palpitation of the heart, twisting of the guts, intermitting fevers, hot and cold fits, shivering and trembling in the limbs [...] creates good appetite, prevents fearful dreams and adds a lively colour to the face, the former and most other defilements incident to man, woman or child proceed from worms, and are cured by this excellent worm powder.³¹⁰

Both ads promote quack products, as is clearly indicated by the language they use: a "strengthening electuary" to cure a "secret injury". "Secret injuries" were usually venereal diseases.³¹¹ Advertisements for quack products typically consisted of "long sentences, superfluous linking passages and a generally long-winded style," overloaded with "clumsy Latin compound words and Greek neologisms."³¹² Featuring long sentences and a pseudo-scientific, inflated language, the two texts illustrate that the patient's sex played an important role in the advertising of treatments. Both ads stress the remedy's use for men and women, and the second even mentions children. The potion – remarkably easily – offers relief and help with a variety of troublesome conditions. The first promises to cure back pains in both women and men. But the remedy also has more gender-specific effects, as it allegedly strengthens the womb in women and prevents miscarriage. The question that arises here is how specialised advertising in *The Female Tatler* in fact was, to what degree women were introduced as a separate target group with a distinct anatomy and distinct needs.

In order to be able to answer this question fully, one would have to compare advertisements in an entire run of a periodical which is not gender-specific, i. e. *The Tatler*, with *The Female Tatler*. This would probably provide an answer

309 *The Female Tatler by a Society of Ladies* (London: A. Baldwin, 1709-1710) from Monday December 5, to Wednesday December 7, 1709.

310 *The Female Tatler by a Society of Ladies* (London: A. Baldwin, 1709-1710) from Monday November 28, to Wednesday November 30, 1709.

311 F. C. Doherty, *A Study in Eighteenth-Century Advertising Methods: The Anodyne Necklace* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press Limited, 1992) 147.

312 G. Dyer, *Advertising as Communication* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2003) 24.

to the question as to whether women were less often addressed as a separate target group in a periodical that did not exclusively address them in its title. If women were more often targeted in advertisements in *The Female Tatler* than in *The Tatler*, this would show that ads were used to promote goods to women exclusively, that advertisers saw them as a separate target group which could be addressed using a separate literary forum, namely *The Female Tatler*. Unfortunately such a far-reaching comparison exceeds the scope and focus of this dissertation. In my account of the advertisements, I can only offer a glimpse at what they tried to sell, how they tried to do it and to whom.

Until now, most studies have not taken advertisements into account, but because they were such a vital part of every issue, they merit to be a subject of analysis in their own right. A scan on the following page illustrates what advertisements looked like, showing how they were embedded in the periodical. The excerpt is a direct transcript from the scan, providing another example for gender-specific promotion in *The Female Tatler*. Because this advertisement targets women specifically, it deserves special scholarly attention. The scan depicts one of the first examples for gender-specific advertising. Moreover, it attests to a growing interest in women's health and a striving to overcome deadly illnesses by means of medicine.

A fam'd liniment for womens [*sic*] sore breasts, whether hird, [*sic*] sweld'd [*sic*] or cancerated [*sic*], or whether broken or whole, either from blows, cold, or the curdling of milk in lyings in [*sic*], being a most certain safe and expeditious remedy; it giving immediate ease to admiration, and curing beyond all expectation, and the book of detections which it manifests, wherein is an account at large of the nature & c. of sore breasts, showing which are cancerous and which not. Written for the benefit of women under those sad indispositions or perplexing fears thereof. Sold for 5 shillings the gallpot [*sic*], at the Golden Key in Warrons Coure near Holbourn Bars.³¹³

313 The Female Tatler Monday December 5 to Wednesday December 7, 1709.

In *Physick* there have been abundance of Systems, and a world of new Methods of curing Diseases have been invented in all Ages, by the Learned Professors of it; but as to the benefit they have done to Mankind of acute Diseases, even the most slight ones, People Die daily under the Hands of the most able Physicians, if Nature refuses to assist them, and the most malignant are overcome without Physick by a strong Constitution; the *Chronic* Distempers are not cured sooner than heretofore, and these that were counted incurable in *Hyacraet's* Days, as the *Gout*, *Sore*, &c. remain to this: They may talk of *Anatomy*, *Occasomy*, *Chymistry*, *Philosophy*, *Pathology*, *Theraputicæ*, and make as many barbarous Divisions of their Art as they please, but it is very plain, that all these Branches of Univerfity Learning are very unnecessary, if not frivolous, as to the Cure of the Patients; because every *Apothecary*, who by his Trade needs to know no more than the Simples when he sees them, and *Latin* enough to understand the Directions how to Cook them as soon as he is out of his Time, will tell you, that he can do the same without all that *Heaven* Knowledge; nay, for a further Demonstration, be but pleas'd to mind, that to a Dozen or Fourteen Physicians of Note that get Estates, there are a Hundred Eminent Apothecaries in this Town that are Rich already, with this Difference between Learning and Prudence, that the Doctor sets up his Coach in hopes of getting Money to keep it, which if it fails he breaks, as it will happen sometimes; but the *Apothecary* seldom pretends to keep one before he has secured Money enough to maintain it as long as he lives.

From what I have said I hope it is evident, how insignificant the Lucubrations as well as the Day-light Labours of the Learned have been in the main to Human Society, and consequently how unjust the Pre-eminence is, which with so much Arrogance they Claim over others, that can give hourly Instances of their improving the Arts and Professions to which they belong, for the Publick Good.

Mind to what Perfection Clocks and Watches are come in our Age, that not so long ago had no more nicety bestowed upon them than our better sorts of Jacks have now; but I won't speak of great Artists, Ship Builders, Millwrights, Engineers, &c. let us reflect only on the insides of our Houses, you shall hardly cast your Eyes upon any piece of Furniture, but in a little time it has received something by which it is become more useful or commodious than it was before: In what Palace would you have found Thirty Years ago a Seat so judiciously contriv'd for the Ease and Repose of the Body, in almost every Position, as the Easy Chair in which you sit? Cane Chairs of any other Fashion than those you have, would have rub'd off, or at least foil'd the Cream colour'd Paint of your Wainscot, and yet they have hardly been a Dozen Years in Vogue. If you would speak of Inventions that are altogether new, I defy the Learned World to shew me any of theirs within this Five Hundred Year, that considering the Silk it consumes, and the numbers of People it employs, can for usefulness be compar'd to that of Furbelow'd Scarves:

†† There is now in the Press and will be speedily published, *The Case of Passive Obedience, truly stated in a Sermon preached in the Chief Mosque of Constantinople in the Christian Time, call'd St Sophia; shewing, that the Deposition of Mahomet in the Year 88. was contrary to the Rules of the Alcoran. By Sache-ali-Verello, a Seditious Priest, that having no other Merit, would fain have dy'd a Martyr for the Cause, but was preserved by the Lenity of the Successors. Translated by a Non Juror.*

N.B. In the Tatler of last Friday Column 1. for Tibertius, be pleas'd to read Vitellius.

ADVERTISEMENT.

†† The History of the Imperial and Royal Families of Austria and Bourbon, traced down from their Origin to this present time. With an Account of their Rise, Advancement and Decay, their Differences, Wars and Quarrels, their Treaties, Alliances and Marriages; and the Considerable Incidents and Alterations that have happen'd to either; with a View of the present State of their Countries, Cities and Affairs; and of their several Pretensions to the Crown of Spain. By an Impartial Hand. Printed for Isaac Cleave near St. Dunstons in Gates, in Chancery Lane.

†† The Charitable Surgeon: Or, the best Remedy for the worst Ulcers, never us'd; altogether without Mercury and wholly new in Method and Practice, wherein both Scars may with privacy and small Charge, without any other Medicines, or being expos'd to Quacks, cure themselves of those Distempers, which (if neglected) are dangerous as well as ignominious. By T.C. Surgeon. Sold by E. Carl Bookbinder, removed to the Dial and Bible against St Dunstons Church in Fleet-Street, Pr. 1 s.

The Pulmonick Effence for all sorts of Coughs and Colds, being the most effectual Medicine ever yet made use of; it infallibly curing them in Old or Young, the never so violent or of long standing: It admirably relieves Consumption, Asthmatical, Physickal Coughs, and perfectly removes Hoarseness, Wheezing, shortness of Breath, and in short all Distempers of the Lungs whatsoever; and not only restores and strengthens them, but defends them from Defluxions and Diffusions of Rheum, which by falling thereon would soon cause Consumption. 'Tis exceeding pleasant and comfortable, and may be taken going abroad in the sharpest Weather, without the least fear or danger of Cold. Is sold only (to prevent Counterfeits) at Jacob's Coffee-house in Threadneedle-Street near the Royal Exchange, London, 2 s. 6d. the Bottle, sealed up with Directions.

The Greenierman Spirit for Deafness, Thickness of Hearing, Nettle or Pain in the Ears, &c. a few drop of which drop warm into the Ears every night and morning, cures to admiration. With this Spirit a certain Nobleman cured several that were born deaf: For it being of a volatile and congenious Nature, pervades or enters into the Membrane of the Tympanum or Drum of the Ears, and removes all the Impediments or Obstructions thereof, being a Medicine powerful, safe and easy, fully cures, if curable, and many times cures those that have been deem'd incurable, after Syringing, Fumig and the use of all other external as well as internal Application. Is sold at 2 s. 6d. a Bottle, at Mr Spooner's at the Golden Half Moon in Lemon-Street in Goodmans Fields near White Chappel.

A Fam'd Liniment for Womens Sore Breasts, whether hard, swell'd or cancerated, or whether broken or whole, either from Blows, Cold, or the curdling of Milk in Lying in, being a most certain safe and expeditious Remedy; it giving immediate ease to admittance, and curing beyond all expectation, as the Book of Directions with it manifests, wherein is an account at large of the Nature, &c. of sore Breasts, shewing which are cancerous and which not; written for the Benefit of Women under those fit Indispositions or perplexing fears thereof. Sold for 5 s. the Gallipot, at the Golden Key in Wartons Court near Holbourn Bars.

The most excellent Tablets of a delightful Flavour and Taste, one of which at a time being only chewed or held in the Mouth, rowling it about with the Tongue, wonderfully (without the least offence or hindrance of Business) purges the Head and Brain, curing all the Distempers thereof, by evacuating the Rheum or humours by moderate spitting that cause them, when all inward Medicines, Blisters, Issues, Scators, &c. are ineffectual; in Rheumatism, Gouts, King's Evil, Leprosy, Red or Pimpley Faces, Itches, Scabs, &c. one of them used as aforesaid, an hour or two will discharge near a Pint of Rheum, which continued, may save the Trouble and serve for the same end as a Salvation in many Cases, and by spitting out any time the Tablet (which never strikes to the Mouth or Teeth) the Flux immediately ceases, being very harmless, and as small (only flattish as Peas, leaves the Mouth moist, cool and refresh'd. Are to be had only at Mr Vares's a Bookbeller at Seneca's Head near Somerset-House in the Strand, at 3 s. 6d. the Box with Directions.

A Most Excellent Strengthening Electuary for the Back or Reins, whose Balsamick healing Properties in all Weaknesses and Pains of the Back in both Sexes, whether from Wrenches, Strains, Falls, Blows, or Secret Injuries, are beyond compare; it likewise strengthens the Womb in Women, prevents Miscarriage, and for those that cannot hold their Water, is of wonderful and need efficacy. Sold for 3 s. 6d. a Pot, at Mr Spooner's at the Golden Half Moon in Lemon-Street Goodmans Fields.

The Balsamick Restorative Elixir, which for all decays, weakening, wasting, declining, or Consumptive habits of Body, is the most prevalent Medicine upon the Earth; in all disorders of the Lungs, it proves the most Balsamick Remedy that can be taken, for it Lubricates the Passages, preserves the Lungs from all injuries of the Air and Humours, and so nourishes, refreshes, and restores Nature in all her declensions, enriches the impoverish'd Blood, and gives such Nutritive supply to the whole Body, as is not to be imagined. Sold only at the Golden Key in Warton's Court near Holbourn Bars, at 3 s. 6d. the Bottle with Directions.

Sold by A. Baldwin at the Oxford-Arms in Warwick Lane.



Breast cancer is history's oldest malaise, a horror known to every culture and every age. In contrast to other forms of cancer, breast cancer is, at least in later stages, clearly visible, progressing from a small lump to a large tumour. The advertisement for the "fam'd liniment" begins by describing breasts in different stages of the disease, hurt, swollen, or already subject to cancer. It even promises to cure "broken breasts", probably not only to the surprise of modern readers. The liniment is accompanied by a "book of detections", a guideline for self-diagnosis. It thus targets women who cannot afford the help of a physician, or who are afraid that they might have breast cancer.

In contrast to the advertisements discussed previously, this one addresses women exclusively; its primary and only concern is women's health. It exploits the horror of the disease with its widely known fatality: Women knew it meant a gradual decay of the body and a painful death. Contemporary medicine was still heavily influenced by Galen, even though his influence began to decrease in the course of the eighteenth century, as James Olson has described in his book on the history of breast cancer. In the late seventeenth century, it was believed that "cancer came not from an excess of black bile but from a chemical process transforming lymphatic fluids from an acidic to an acrid nature."³¹⁵ A physician from the 1730s believed that cancer developed when "nerve and glandular tissue mixed with lymph vessels."³¹⁶ Knowledge about cancer was scarce, and so were the chances of survival. No wonder quack products like the "fam'd liniment" were successfully advertised and sold to worried women.

This advertisement is deserving of special attention because it is one of the earliest examples of gender-specific advertising in a gender-specific periodical. Women form a target group of their own, also when it comes to quack products. Moreover, this advertisement testifies to an interesting intermediary stage: On the one hand, it shows how poor knowledge about cancer was in the early eighteenth century and how susceptible people were to the promises of quacks; on the other hand, the brochure for self-diagnosis testifies to a certain "empowerment" of women – Rates of literacy among women increased markedly during the period; by means of the "book of detections", women were, at least in theory, instructed in how they could help themselves. However,

315 J. S. Olson, *Bathsheba's Breast: Women, Cancer, and History* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005) 332.

316 Olson, *Bathsheba's Breast: Women, Cancer, and History* 332.

it is highly unlikely that this book was truly beneficial for women at the time. Most likely, it was merely a means to make money, oversimplified and not to be taken seriously, just like the "fam'd liniment". Unfortunately, to my knowledge, no copy of the "book of detection" has survived.

Goods advertised in *The Female Tatler* were not objects of daily use; they were not products that were included on people's weekly shopping list. Before hoping for a sale, customers' interest needed to be generated, which is why advertising them was so important. Not only quack products, but also cosmetics were advertised in *The Female Tatler*:

The royal chymical [*sic*] wash-ball for the hands and face, six years experienced and daily commended by all that use them, and that for making the skin so delicately soft and smooth, as not to be parallel'd by either wash, powder, cosmetick [*sic*], &c. it being indeed a real beautifier of the skin, by taking off all deformities, as tatters, ring-worms, morpew, sun-burn, scurf, pimples, pits or redness of the small-pox; &c. keeping it of a lasting and extreme whiteness, it soon alters red or rough hands, and is admirable in shaving the head, which not only gives a more explicit sharpness to the razor, but so comforts the brain and nerves, as to prevent catching cold, and is of a grateful and pleasant scent, without the least grain or mercury. Is sold only by Mr. Allnut, glover, the corner of Pope's Head Alley against the Royal Exchange.³¹⁷

Like the preceding advertisements discussed in this chapter, this one features flowery and over-the-top language, long sentences, enumerations and listings of attributes that allegedly characterise the appraised product. The word "chymical" [*sic*] is introduced to make it sound more scientific. Abbreviations imitate spoken language in order to make the prospective buyer more familiar with the product and its value in the social world. It allegedly smoothes and beautifies the skin, it smells nice, and it takes off all deformities with the promise of extreme whiteness. Moreover, it can even sharpen the razor, which probably means it can be used as some kind of shaving balm. Even more remarkably, it comforts the brain and nerves and prevents its user from catching a cold, possibly one of the most exaggerated claims of all the advertisements discussed

317 *The Female Tatler* by Mrs. Crackenthorpe from Monday December 26, to Wednesday December 28, 1709.

in this chapter. Interestingly, the addressee's gender is not stated explicitly, but the "shaving of the head" is clearly aimed at men, as the act of shaving the head of a woman would have been an act of public shaming in the early eighteenth century. However, other attributes mentioned in the advertisement indicate that it was very likely also targeting prospective female buyers: it promises delicately soft and smooth skin, beautification of the skin, lasting and extreme whiteness. The following addendum, part of another ad for the same product in an earlier issue, offers interesting insights:

This wash [*sic*] is daily used by many Ladies of quality, is mightily esteemed by the fair sex in general; the Ladies at Venice (great quantities being yearly sent hither) [...]³¹⁸

The advertisement's closing shows that even though the product can also be used for shaving the head, the main addressees of the advertisement are women; it was published in a gender-specific periodical for a reason. The advertisement works very similarly to modern-day advertisements for cosmetics, linking the product to a vibrant metropolis in order to evoke the idea that with the product, the spirit of the city is purchased, as in "L'Oreal Paris". Probably the ad aimed to interest female readers and shoppers in the product by showing how it could be beneficial for them and for their husband. As Nancy Armstrong has noted, the woman was supposed to "complement his role as an earner and producer with hers as a wise spender and tasteful consumer."³¹⁹ The familiar pattern of associations between womanhood and economic management is reflected in the advertisements of *The Female Tatler*, anticipating the pre-eminence of this discursive intermingling in mid-century novels. Periodical advertising stylised women as caretakers of domestic wealth, superintending household resources. As those responsible for household finances, women were the main target audience of advertisements. This might also explain why *The Female Tatler* featured a comparably large percentage of advertisements: Because it was a gender-specific periodical, it provided access to the commercials' target group. This image of the "new economic woman" anticipates later representations of Victorian women as prudent economic overseers. *The Female Tatler's* negative representations of the marriage market and its female agents present the polar

318 *The Female Tatler* Monday September 12, to Wednesday September 14, 1709.

319 N. Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (Oxford University Press, USA, 1987) 59.

opposite to representations of the economic woman in the advertisements, characterised by her positive consumerism. On the one hand there is the "economic woman", the tasteful consumer and wise spender; on the other hand the spendthrift, excessive wife-prostitute.

The advertisements attest to the mixed gender of *The Female Tatler's* reading audience. Promoting new commercial products that exemplify the emergence of a new social class and a new commercial culture, advertisements illustrate that in early eighteenth-century England, luxury goods were no longer reserved for aristocrats. The close ties between the social performance of gender and the development of a new social class are reflected in the advertisement sections of *The Female Tatler*; in the one discussed above, the purchasable product is discursively linked to the idea of upward social mobility.

This new social class uses printed products as a forum for the negotiation of their new class identity, as a bourgeois cultural marketplace. Here, the etymological roots of the word "culture", namely to foster³²⁰, become apparent: The new middle class cultivated their own "consumer culture". On the one hand they tried to distance themselves from the "decadent" aristocracy; on the other hand they imitated the very lifestyle they criticised. The mindset was decidedly Protestant and critical of aristocratic extravagance; but the articles consumed were the same. Fashionable, luxury wares, for centuries the privilege of the nobility, were now affordable for those without titles. The increasingly wealthy new middle class spent money on new goods that enforced ideals of beauty they adopted from the aristocracy, e.g. the ideal of paleness, as the following excerpt from an advertisement shows: "[...] after a few days so visible [*sic*] changes the brownest complexion into a pure and delectable whiteness, as is amiable to behold."³²¹ Interestingly, this cream, "worth its weight in gold"³²², was sold at a coffeehouse, as the advertisement specifies: "[...]to be had only at Jacob's Coffeehouse."³²³ In the early eighteenth century, beauty products like creams and essences for the hair became increasingly popular. The commodification of beauty and its value on the marriage market increased the

320 A. Assmann, Einführung in die Kulturwissenschaft: Grundbegriffe, Themen, Fragestellungen (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 2006).

321 The Female Tatler Monday September 12, to Wednesday September 14, 1709.

322 *ibid.*

323 *ibid.*

merchandising of cosmetics in periodicals, which mirrors the change from a society that consisted largely of subsistence farming, to a capitalist consumer society. Outer appearances became increasingly important for an increasing number of citizens, as they were the benchmark for the allowance of social credit, an ever-recurring paradigm.

Not merely the social performance of class and gender, but also the key link between the newly upcoming consumer culture and the nation becomes evident in advertisements, as the following example illustrates:

A Silk Handkerchief Printed, with a draught of the roads of England according to Mr. Ogelby's survey, showing the roads and distance in measured miles, from London to several towns and cities in England. Also the victory handkerchiefs, which gives [*sic*] an account of the success of five most glorious victories obtained by the Confederates over the French, ornamented with the arms of the Empire and Great Britain, Prussia and Holland.³²⁴

As this advertisement clearly shows, *The Female Tatler* also featured advertisements for other consumer goods, not merely for cosmetics. The handkerchief comes in two different styles: Attesting to the growing importance of infrastructure in the fast-growing economy of the early 1700s, the first features England's roads. A handkerchief with the imprint of a map, its design is based on John Ogilby's road map. He was a Scottish cartographer best known for publishing the first British road atlas. In 1674 he was named "His Majesty's Cosmographer and Geographic Printer". Ogilby's Britannia atlas of 1675 set the standard for the road maps that followed, creating and documenting the English territory and landscape. Moreover, he set the scale of one inch to a mile.³²⁵ Changes in traditional topographies were also generated by a new method of enclosure, namely enclosure by private Parliamentary Act: "Enclosure by this method seems to have begun as a general practice only with the eighth year of Anne – Private Act No. 20 (1710)."³²⁶ Enclosures had major effects on England's landscaping and the formation of roads, and the early eighteenth century marks the beginning of surveys and typography, developments that are reflected in the advertisements of *The Female Tatler*.

324 *The Female Tatler* Wednesday October 19, to Friday October 21, 1709.

325 <http://www.heatons-of-tisbury.co.uk/cumberlandmaps.html>, accessed 04/22/2013.

326 N. Riches, *The Agricultural Revolution in Norfolk* (London: Frank Cass, 1967) 49.

The second model of the handkerchief comes with a victory-commemoration imprint. Against the background of the war of Spanish Succession and the ground-breaking victory of Lord Marlborough in the Battle of Blenheim in 1709, the euphoria that the advertisement expresses can better be understood. To show her gratitude, Queen Anne rewarded Lord Marlborough with a palace, Blenheim Palace, in Oxfordshire. This advertisement, like many others, was not published only in *The Female Tatler*, but also in other periodicals of the time. As it does not specifically address male or female prospective customers, it can be assumed that it targeted both men and women. It aims at encouraging readers of periodicals to buy a product that celebrates the glory of the nation, its victory. The Glorious Revolution of 1688 was, significantly, not followed by political turmoil; though party quarrels were the norm, severe uprisings and political instability did not follow the social and political changes brought about by the peaceful revolution. The relatively new political situation and England's involvement in the war of Spanish Succession formed the background against which the advertising promoted "nation-building".

The advent of capitalism in the early eighteenth century accelerated the development of advertising. Product promotions were not as ubiquitous as they are nowadays, and the language and style of advertisements were still in the state of being developed. Periodical ads were one of the first representatives of a genre inextricably linked to modernity and the emergence of capitalism. Addressing readers as potential buyers, promotions in *The Female Tatler* illustrate how products, especially quack products, were discursively gendered. As is the case nowadays, the objective of advertising was to generate a need for largely unnecessary – needless to say, useless products like the victory-commemoration-handkerchief. Exaggerated claims show how a new kind of language is being probed, the language of advertising. When the economic woman is addressed as a customer, this is done in a very positive way, obviously. As a "manager of private wealth", she is the one to target. But representations of the economic woman differ according to their context: Periodical discourse expresses approval and encouragement of the woman as a manager of private wealth, but it discourages and criticises the public economic woman. This is reflected in periodical depictions of shop women and other female service employees, who naturally evoke slovenly associations for readers. As "tasteful consumers", women involved in the public sphere of trade were welcome; but as sellers, they were not. Periodicals engage in a lengthy – if not overtly proclaimed – negotiation of male vs. female spaces in the public sphere. They

can be understood as a "public forum for rehearsal", where polite manners can be learned and acquired, a forum of negotiation for guidelines determining the ways in which women and men ought to interact as agents of the public sphere, negotiating rules of politeness between the sexes, who, in the new capitalistic age, are both involved in commerce and trade. These new public men and women strive to attain social credit, and for the latter, social credit depends largely on their sexual reputation, i. e. their chastity. As Mr. Spectator has explained, men can ruin women's social credit, but not the other way round. In the letter to the editor, the female reader reflects on these power structures, which is remarkable and shows that periodicals were a "marketplace of social change" where behavioural rules were mediated.

Outer appearances were crucial for the allowance of social credit; anything that can help to improve this credit is absorbed by the members of the bourgeois public sphere, or those who would like to become a part of it. Consumption is the key common denominator here; the ability to consume is what differentiates the new middle class from the labouring poor. But women's and men's roles as consumers and actors on the public stage of trade were not fixed yet; they were still very much in the process of being negotiated. What is startling about this process is that women had their say in it; periodicals gave them a voice, even if depictions were inconsistent and sometimes even directed against the women instead of taking sides with them. Nevertheless, women were incontestable members in the public sphere of trade; they were active both as sellers and as consumers. They were not merely the counterpart of the new economic man, but they made their own buying decisions and cared for their own needs, as is reflected in the advertisement for the "book of detections". *The Female Tatler* offers an original glimpse at the beginnings of consumer culture in England and the overtly gendered nature of contemporary discourse on trade. The following section focuses on another aspect of early eighteenth-century "consumer culture" which is regularly discussed in the journal, namely fashion and its function as a social signifier.

VI.2.2 Fashion

The ubiquity of fashion and "the mode" was a popular topic of discussion in the early eighteenth century. In periodical discourse, fashion was not primarily discussed in terms of what to wear and what to buy, but instead the function

of fashion as a social signifier was the main focus. The excerpts chosen for this chapter reflect that fashion was a means not only of self-profiling, but also of exerting social control, a tool for social ex- or inclusion. Not only periodicals, but also texts of other genres contemplated on its utility or futility. A contemporary writer who is also believed to have contributed to at least some issues of *The Female Tatler*, Bernard Mandeville, expressed yet another view on fashion and its "right to exist". The core of his argument is that individual vice, in the case of fashion self-centredness, self-indulgence and vain self-love, can also lead to public benefit.³²⁷ By public benefit, Mandeville means that fashion can be a "motor" for consumption and therefore a driving force for economic growth. Changing fashions and consumerist desires generate needs that in turn stimulate the economy. Mandeville's equation of private vice with public benefit is not necessarily reflected in the moral weeklies of the time.

Reports about fashion in *The Female Tatler* did not aim at showing their readers what was en vogue; their main purpose was to emphasise the function of fashion as a social signifier, to illustrate which effects it had in the social world of the early eighteenth century, a time of rapid changes. In the following excerpt from *The Female Tatler*, the susceptibility of "the fair sex" to fashion is discussed.

When the women get into so high a clack, that forty tongues run together, without hearing each other, the subject is certainly fashions, how they edge their heads, line their scarfs [*sic*], rowl their sleeves, pink their aprons, and cut their petticoats, as if to commit a solecism in dress, were as unpardonable a crime, as for an orator to break *Priscians* head at the university. Lady Kill Chairman, who is one of the greatest gossips in the kingdom, and knows ev'ry [*sic*] body but herself, introduc'd this discourse, which like wildfire flew thro' the company; they talk'd how ev'ry body ought to dress themselves, but the sum of their tittle-tattle was scandal.³²⁸

In a humorous exaggeration, *The Female Tatler* makes it clear that fashion and women – to paraphrase Frank Sinatra – go together like horse and carriage. But because of the ironical distance in the editor-persona's tone, the reader knows

327 D. Fulda, *Schau-Spiele des Geldes: Die Komödie um die Entstehung der Marktgesellschaft von Shakespeare bis Lessing* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2005) 422.

328 Morgan, ed., *The Female Tatler* 209.

that the following account will not be a good-humoured report on fashion. In satirical hyperbole, the editor-persona compares committing a *faux-pas* in terms of dress to the failing to abide by the rules of grammar at university. Hereby, the university is coded as a male realm. Adjectives associated with it could possibly include "serious", "grave" and "important", whereas fashion, a women's realm, is coded as vain, trivial and superficial. The satirical integration of opposites juxtaposes the refined world of the university to the empty world of fashion, which is shown to be entirely devoid of meaning, a signifier without signified, and therefore marked as essentially feminine.

Fashion is presented as a topic of greatest interest among women; it dominates conversations, "spreads like wildfire," with "forty tongues running together without hearing each other." The examples that *The Female Tatler* gives include the draping of a scarf, the colouring of an apron, and the cutting of a petticoat. Conversations are, however, not actually centred on fashion itself. They do not merely focus on fashion, i. e. on what should be worn at the moment and what should better be left in the wardrobe. Rather, the text stresses the fact that fashion can also function as a marker of in- or exclusion in or from a social group; it can serve to exclude people from certain circles. The name of the woman dominating the conversation, and assessing people's popularity, is Lady Kill Chair-men. A telling name that could probably allude to her obesity, it serves to ridicule her. Moreover, it is an allusion to Jonathan Swift's *Description of a City Shower*, a poem that first appeared in *The Tatler* in October 1710.³²⁹ In the poem, the chairman is killed, which provides a frame of reference for well-read readers of *The Female Tatler*.

Fashion is presented as a means to consolidate power and influence and to decide over social in- or exclusion. Notwithstanding the ubiquity of fashion and its social importance, it was always something associated with "the feminine" and thus linked to vanity, self-indulgence and superficiality. This is reflected in the highly satirical account that *The Spectator* gives of it. In a letter to the editor, a reader suggests building a sphinx-shaped museum of fashion:

At last the subject seemed so considerable, that it was proposed to have a repository builded [*sic*] for fashions, as there are chambers for medals and other rarities. The building may be shaped as that which stands among the

329 Brown, *Fables of Modernity* 19.

pyramids, in the form of a woman's head. This may be raised upon pillars, whose ornaments shall bear a just relation to the design.³³⁰

Fashion is compared to items usually displayed in museums; it is suggested that it needs to be conserved, catalogued, and ordered. According to Erin Mackie, fashion poses a "sphinx-like mystery" because it is constantly and abruptly changing, being in a continuous process of evolvment. A museum – a repository, enables a standstill – a snapshot. Mackie explains: "In the sphinx, fashion is possessed and known – its riddles solved and rationalised."³³¹ The museum of fashion provides the unique opportunity to "capture" it, to stop it from re-forming and dissolving into something new. In its capriciousness and intangibility, fashion corresponds to femininity: Seen as two discursive entities, fashion and femininity draw from a common "well", a common linguistic register that describes them as unstable, unregulated, unruly and constantly changing. For fashion, the museum provides a means of regulation; the means by which unruly femininities can be regulated is marriage, as shown in the preceding chapter that focussed on representations of the marriage market.

To sum up, the representation of working women varies with the degree of publicness they assume. Owing to the particularly high "degree of exposure", actresses were commonly believed to be immoral women, as is reflected in the depictions of *The Female Tatler*. The same holds true for waitresses and shop assistants. Contemptuously, *The Female Tatler* calls them "bacon beauties", a rhetorical means signifying to its readers that they are members of the new middle class who does not yet know how to behave correctly in the social sphere. Because of the very triviality of the depiction, a political reading can be dismissed: Though vigilantly patrolling the borders of fashion and behaviour, *The Female Tatler* is not a Tory party-mouthpiece. The journal's very negative accounts of tradeswomen and actresses contrast its very positive image of Susannah Centlivre, the Whig playwright. Here, Mrs. Crackenthorpe even draws up a genealogy of female playwrights, putting Centlivre in Behn's footsteps.

If one combines these findings with the ones in the previous chapter which dealt with the proto-feminist elements in *The Female Tatler*, a new picture

330 Mackie, *The Commerce of Everyday Life* 398.

331 Mackie, *Market À La Mode* 100.

arises. The journal takes sides especially with the writing woman, which could have to do with the journal's rhetorical stance. *The Female Tatler's* rhetorical femininity automatically implies that it was written by a woman; thus, the journal acts in defence of the guild of writing women, not only of periodical authors, but also of female playwrights. However, it does not take sides with actresses and it does not support female shop assistants. On the contrary, *The Female Tatler* ridicules them. The intellectual, thinking woman sitting at her desk is presented as an ideal, whereas the toiling woman, who assumes a more public role that affords direct interaction with customers, is presented as loose. In a nutshell, the paradigms that organise the topic "production and consumption" in *The Female Tatler* can be mapped according to familiar binary oppositions: public vs. private, loose vs. modest, and "working class" vs. intellectual. The "degree of publicness" a woman assumes correlates with her "social credit", which is inextricably linked to her reputation for chastity. According to this logic, actresses and shop women cannot be chaste, whereas the intellectual and solitary labour of the female playwright is represented as virtuous. Interestingly, *The Tatler* promotes a more progressive view on "public women" such as vendors and bartenders, advocating their right to be treated with respect, whereas *The Female Tatler* represents them as utterly disrespectful. While it promotes female playwrights, it decidedly does not take sides with female workers.

Conclusion

Products of their period's social and intellectual climate, early eighteenth-century periodicals are written testimonies, offering the modern reader insights into a special moment in history. It is a moment when new "currencies" came up. Money circulated more than ever before because both domestic and international trade flourished. On its way to becoming not only a capitalist state, but also a democratic one, England relied on a credit-based system for economical growth. Credibility in the economical, but also in the social sphere became a sort of currency itself: It was the basis on which business and personal relations functioned. Along with the trope of commerce, the symbolical and social dimensions of credit formed major interpretative paradigms that informed my study of *The Female Tatler*.

The Female Tatler challenges the notion that women were excluded from public life. My investigations complicate Habermasian accounts of the public sphere by showing that the latter was not as homogeneous as Habermas assumed. In fact, it was diverse and heterogeneous, consisting of various actors and actresses, including women and texts that deviated from *The Tatler's* prescribed models and norms. *The Female Tatler* provides the written proof that women were not simply repressed and silenced, but that they were active, engaged participants in both the economical and cultural spheres as early as 1709. Clearly influenced by Enlightenment thought and world outlook, *The Female Tatler* does not merely feature stock characters that express retrograde ideologies and world views. On the contrary, it poses unprecedented questions by enquiring on the new role women were to play in England's post-revolutionary society. Especially issues 88 and 111 are of momentous importance because they offer the modern scholar new insights. In these issues, the Society of Ladies argues for equal education for girls, explaining that girls and boys are equally intelligent. The Ladies also celebrate the fact that with the advent of print culture, reading material became available for women that had been denied them before, i. e. satirical writings. Swift's *Tale of a Tub* is the

example they give for women's new reading material, juxtaposing it to "books of devotion that used to be our allowance."³³²

Some excerpts from *The Female Tatler* can retrospectively be labelled "proto-feminist" because they advocate women's rights and general equality between the sexes. Featuring both lascivious accounts still reminiscent of Restoration tastes and texts that advanced Enlightenment ideas, *The Female Tatler* can be seen as a hybrid: Published between the end of the Licensing Act and the Statute of Queen Anne, a time during which comparably few regulations applied, the periodical was both progressive and reminiscent of older models and ideas. Hence, it testifies to the time of fruitful indeterminacy during which it was published.

Along with the advent of a periodical that exclusively addressed women in its title, literary conventions that *The Tatler* had established for essay periodicals were overthrown. *The Tatler* introduced Mr. Bickerstaff as the prototypical editor-persona: He is the patriarchal, asexual, granddad-type whom readers owed respect to. The personas that *The Female Tatler* presented as editors in the second half of its run, the young and unmarried members of the Society of Ladies, are far removed from conventional images because their identities are not based on their relationship to fathers, brothers or husbands. The Ladies are represented as independent young women, defined by their relations to other women, e.g. as siblings, cousins or friends, significantly not in relation to men. The first editor-persona, Mrs. Crackenthorpe, represents a more commonly accepted type: That of the experienced matron from whom readers can learn. *The Female Tatler* deviated from prescribed models in more ways than one. The characters depicted in the texts are as surprising and unusual as the editor-personas: romping and/or precocious daughters, bossy and/or unfaithful wives, submissive husbands, effeminate proto-dandies and lad-like young women. *The Female Tatler's* use of stock characters, e.g. the cuckold, usually marked by a telling name like "honest Flatbottom", illustrates the proximity to the fabliau.

For ages, English audiences had been familiarised with texts that narrated the excesses of aristocratic women. They were commonly known to indulge in debauched activities and feasts, interested in everything that was splendid, vain

332 Morgan, ed., *The Female Tatler* 201.

and trivial. Moreover, representations of aristocratic women in earlier genres tended to emphasise their susceptibility to (sexual) intrigue. With the advent of a new social class and new media in the early eighteenth century, the role of women within this class needed to be negotiated: In which ways should their lifestyle resemble that of the well-to-do? And in which ways should it differ from that of the "decadent" and "degenerate" aristocracy? Periodicals are fascinating because they offer the textual "battleground" on which new class and gender roles were probed and assessed. As will be outlined in what follows, the question of how men and women were to behave in a new society evolved around one central paradigm: the (well-being of the) nation.

The Female Tatler's interest in masculine women and feminine men has a decidedly political dimension to it. In times of rapid social and political change, sexual freedom was perceived as paralleling other kinds of "dangerous" independence. The country's proto-democracy was still young and vulnerable, so that all kinds of experiments were seen as dangerous. This concern is symptomatic of a larger historical shift from inherited, aristocratic and feudal identities to more mobile, bourgeois identities. Dress no longer functioned as an accurate indicator of status, and this is reflected in *The Female Tatler's* stock-characters. In one exemplary excerpt from *The Female Tatler*, Mrs. Crackenthorpe warns her readers not to trust in "foreign beaus". Set against the background of the representative case of Mary Carlton, the German princess who in fact was a common woman, the allowance or refusal of social credit was crucial in the case of an alliance. These anxieties reflect fears of cultural and financial intervention from outside, an anxiety that is clearly rooted in the economy.

The Female Tatler makes the link between gender and nation explicit in one issue by the Society of Ladies. They argue passionately for the inclusion of women at formal dinner tables, lamenting that they are usually sent away to sit apart, left alone to talk about trivia. Comparing English women to French women, who are not only allowed to stay at dinner tables, but also welcomed to take part in serious political conversations, *The Female Tatler* concludes that the French definitely have an advantage over the English in the War of Spanish Succession. This advantage consists in the way they treat their women and in the fact that they allow them to participate in debates, informing them about current political matters. Because they are so well informed, French women can, according to the Society of Ladies, better cope with personal losses, i. e. the death of a male family member in the battlefield. They know what their relative

died for and because of that, they are more willing to make personal sacrifices, they have a stronger moral backbone. In *The Female Tatler's* rationale, the "state of gender" is the "state of the nation". It argues that England would benefit if its women were no longer excluded from state affairs, thereby assigning the private, i. e. the dinner table, a decidedly political, i. e. public importance. Concerning dress, however, interferences from outside seemed dangerous and doubtable, producing new social types, who could in turn cause social uproar or "disappear with English money", like the beaus mentioned in *The Female Tatler*.

International trade increased along with England's dominance on the world map. *The Female Tatler*, just like *The Tatler*, reflected on these circumstances by projecting the needs and requirements of "the nation" onto gendered representations of social actors. It posed the question of what these new requirements were and how England's citizens could adopt to a new situation. *The Female Tatler's* representations of gender roles are in fact negotiations of the ways in which men and women ought to behave in order to adopt best to the new conditions. But *The Female Tatler* does not offer models that are set in stone. On the contrary, it almost playfully experiments with attributions and norms.

The fact that unusual gender performances were a topic of interest not only in *The Female Tatler*, but also in other periodicals, illustrates how important and prevalent the topic of gender roles was in contemporary public discourse and how vigilantly "the public" patrolled along "gender borders", thereby naturalising gender difference and telling right from wrong. This demonstrates that gender was seen as the touchstone of early modern society and that the "right performance of gender" had the function of an indicator from which "the state of the nation" could be inferred.

Establishing a link between public and private, the new print culture offered various possibilities. Still in its fledgling stages, it was the period's "intellectual playground" where new ideas could be discussed without having to fear severe consequences. Essay periodicals like *The Female Tatler* challenge our primary assumptions about the period and the assumed "datedness" of essay periodicals. Especially the connection that *The Female Tatler* draws between the public and the private sphere is of great importance today because it reminds

the modern reader of late twentieth-century feminist theories and the famous statement that "the private is political".

This attests to the surprising similarities between the two periods. Both the early eighteenth and the early twenty-first century can be accounted for as times of transition that witnessed the emergence of new media. In the early eighteenth century, this was the essay periodical, in the early twenty-first, it is the internet, especially online blogs, chat rooms, forums etc. The early eighteenth century witnessed the rise of capitalism and the development of new media; the early twenty-first witnesses a transformation of the "old" capitalistic system, new forms of labour and a vastly increasing growth of the service-sector.

Both periods are marked by subjective experiences of "chaos" as "side effects" of new media and cultural forms. While eighteenth-century commentators complained that in their age, "every blockhead" could take up the pen³³³, conservative twenty-first century voices argue for more restrictions on who can publish what online, complaining not of blockheads, but of blog-heads. Then as now, the new, not yet censored and restricted media landscape offers a means of participation for those who were previously banned from established discourse communities, i. e. non-professional writers and, in the eighteenth century, women. This brief and tentative comparison illustrates that whenever new media come up, they offer a means of inclusion and thereby help to democratise discourse, to take it off the established, hegemonic routes. Individuals marginal to mainstream society are given a voice and the opportunity to contribute, and, most significantly, to be heard, to provide readers with alternative views and counter-discourse. Both eighteenth-century periodicals and twenty-first century online literary forms such as blogs offer the opportunity to involve the public by means of letters to the editor in the first case and by direct comments or tweets in the second. The link between past and present, between eighteenth-century block-heads and twenty-first century blog-heads is an interesting topic that deserves more scholarly attention in future periodical studies.

333 N. Drake and Rambler, *Essays, Biographical, Critical, and Historical, Illustrative of the Rambler, Adventurer, & Idler, and of the Various Periodical Papers ... In Imitation of the Writings of Steele and Addison* (London 1809) 33.

Another interesting parallel between past and present is the cult of the persona. Eighteenth-century periodicals as well as twenty-first century blogs feature a prominent character that guides the readers, offers his or her opinion on current topics and comments on popular concerns. What is central to the personas in both cases is their fictionality, the fact that their character need not necessarily correspond to an author or author in the real world. Both eighteenth- and twenty-first-century personas rely on a self-image that is purposefully constructed and not necessarily congruent with the author's or authores' identity. The twenty-first-century case of Amina and her blog *A Gay Girl in Damascus* nicely illustrates the high degree of fiction involved in the creation of such a persona, as the homosexual girl from Damascus actually was a male American.³³⁴ The hoax was discovered when news were spread that Amina had been abducted, a feigned incident that eventually led to the insight that Amira was in fact Tom McMaster. The creation of a fictive editor-persona is a phenomenon definitely comparable to the cryptic signing-off of *The Female Tatler's* first editor-persona, Mrs. Crackenthorpe. After fifty-one issues, the journal's editorial set up changed from the single editor Mrs. Crackenthorpe to the Society of Ladies, a group of editors. Interestingly, the reading public that these personas address is as shadowy as the persona itself. Both types of new media offer direct communication between sender and receiver of text, at times these roles even intersect, but nevertheless both operate "behind curtains", veiled and incognito. This generates spaces for projection; identities can be freely drawn up and frequently also involve the swapping of gender roles, as the case of Amina vs. Tom has illustrated. The same holds true for eighteenth-century periodicals, as it is also very likely that *The Female Tatler* was authored by a man, at least partly. In a few issues of *The Tatler*, a man, Richard Steele, took on the role of a female editor-persona called Jenny Disdaff. This illustrates that eighteenth-century periodicals formed the beginning of a tradition of gender-swapping in certain journalistic forms, a tradition that is being maintained till this day. Even though the importance of the persona is a topic in all scholarly works that deal with periodicals, up to now no researcher has attempted to compare eighteenth-century periodical personas and the use of the persona in twenty-first century blogs, a promising subject for future studies.

334 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/syria/8572884/A-Gay-Girl-in-Damascus-how-the-hoax-unfolded.html>, accessed 08/25/2013.

Deutsche Zusammenfassung

Die Dissertation untersucht englische Wochenschriften des frühen achtzehnten Jahrhunderts. Im Mittelpunkt des Interesses steht eine Zeitschrift namens *The Female Tatler*, welche drei Mal pro Woche in London von 1709 bis 1710 erschien. Als erste Zeitschrift in der Geschichte des Journalismus wendet sie sich explizit an ein weibliches Lesepublikum. Die vorliegende Arbeit untersucht, welche Strategien angewendet werden, um eine neue Leserschaft nicht nur zu erreichen, sondern dauerhaft an das Blatt zu binden. Dabei spielt die Bezugnahme zum prominenten Vorgänger *The Tatler* eine besondere Rolle, denn als Wegbereiter und Mitbegründer des Genres der »Essay Periodicals« übt dieser großen Einfluss auf das Journal aus. Vom *Tatler* als Parasit belächelt und degradiert, emanzipiert sich der *Female Tatler* von seinem Vorgänger, dem er offenkundig Respekt zollt. Die Arbeit zeigt, wie sich der *Female Tatler* durch »rhetorical femininity«, durch eine explizit weibliche Pragmatik von seinem omnipräsenten Vorgänger abhebt und so eine Nische im Zeitschriftenmarkt erfolgreich zu besetzen vermag.

Die Zeit, in der der *Female Tatler* vertrieben wurde, war eine Zeit der Umbrüche und Neuanfänge. Nach der unblutigen Revolution von 1688 wurde England offiziell zu einer konstitutionellen Monarchie, die das sich ohnehin auf dem Vormarsch befindende Bürgertum noch weiter erstarken ließ. Als ein Sprachrohr dieser neu entstandenen Mittelschicht künden die »Essay Periodicals« vom stetig wachsenden Selbstbewusstsein einer sich neu formierenden Gesellschaftsschicht, die sich einerseits klar von der als dekadent empfundenen Aristokratie abzugrenzen wünscht, zum anderen um Abstand zur Arbeiterklasse bemüht ist. Diese Bestrebungen spiegeln sich in vielen Blättern der Zeit wider, so auch im *Female Tatler*. Das besondere an diesem Journal ist, dass es diese Agitationen explizit über Konstruktionen von Geschlecht kanalisiert. Das Blatt beschreibt, wie sich Frauen und Männer in der Londoner Gesellschaft (nicht) zu verhalten haben. Insbesondere die Frauen stehen ganz oben auf der Agenda, denn sie sollen ihren Platz neben dem »new economic man« finden. Das Interessante am *Female Tatler* ist, dass das Blatt nicht präskriptiv neue gesellschaftliche Normen entwirft und diese der Leserin

in didaktischer Manier unterbreitet, sondern dass die Verhandlung des neuen Platzes der Frau in der Gesellschaft vor allem über den Humor funktioniert. Das frühe achtzehnte Jahrhundert ist die Hochzeit der Satire, und das macht sich in den bisweilen harschen, für die damalige Zeit durchaus anzüglichen Texten des *Female Tatler* bemerkbar. Da finden sich beispielsweise betrunken herumgrölende, ihren Ehemann unterjochende Frauen, Frauen auf der Suche nach jungen Liebhabern oder solche, die in parodistischer Überzeichnung auf dem Heiratsmarkt feilgeboten werden. Aber auch die Männer scheinen von den Irrungen und Wirrungen ihrer Zeit nicht unberührt zu bleiben. So finden sich im *Female Tatler* verweiblichte Beaus, die sich nach der neuesten französischen Mode kleiden und denen die Leserin bloß nicht über den Weg trauen soll.

Mit überzeichneten Bildern, die bisweilen dichotome Geschlechtermodelle sprengen, beteiligt sich der *Female Tatler* am großen Thema seiner Zeit, dem Kredit. Im achtzehnten Jahrhundert wird Kredit zu einer eigenen Währung, von unschätzbare Wichtigkeit nicht nur für Geschäftsabschlüsse, sondern auch für das Eingehen einer Ehe. Allianzen sollen gewinnbringend sein; für höhere Töchter ist die Heirat zumal die einzige Chance, sozial aufzusteigen. Mit dem Aufkommen einer neuen Gesellschaftsschicht werden Verbindungen zwischen Männern und Frauen zum Politikum. Bereiche des Privaten und Öffentlichen verschwimmen immer mehr, eine Entwicklung die im *Female Tatler* in vielerlei Hinsicht thematisiert wird. Das Blatt macht sich einen Spaß daraus, die Absurditäten und Ausuferungen des damaligen Heiratsmarkts satirisch aufs Korn zu nehmen. Die Frage nach dem Kredit sozialer Akteure steht dabei im Mittelpunkt des Interesses. Der schöne Schein trägt oftmals; Spekulationsblasen sowohl privater als auch ökonomischer Natur stellen eine fortwährende Bedrohung dar. Der *Female Tatler* übersetzt die Ängste seiner Zeit in Darstellungen von Frauen und Männern, die als soziale Akteure auftreten und somit eine Projektionsfläche, aber auch eine Möglichkeit zur Verhandlung von Geschlechterrollen in einer neuen Gesellschaft bieten.

Doch der *Female Tatler* ist mehr als nur ein reines Satireblatt. Die vorliegende Arbeit zeigt, wie provokant und progressiv einzelne Ausgaben sind, in denen, dem Geist der Aufklärung entsprechend, gleiche Bildung für Frauen gefordert wird. Der *Female Tatler* macht ganz konkrete Vorschläge, beispielsweise indem gezeigt wird, wie unsinnig und moralisch verwerflich es ist, dass englische Frauen nach dem Essen nicht an Konversationen teilnehmen dürfen, sondern

an gesonderte Tische gesetzt werden, wo sie sich über Nichtigkeiten zu unterhalten haben. Vor dem Hintergrund des damals tobenden Spanischen Erbfolgekriegs argumentiert der *Female Tatler* für die Inklusion der Frauen bei Tischgesprächen und somit indirekt für ihre Politisierung. Mit dem Argument, der Feind Frankreich wäre moralisch im Vorteil, weil französische Frauen den Tischgesprächen beiwohnen und sogar an ihnen teilnehmen können, rückt der *Female Tatler* bisher unhinterfragte Konventionen in den Fokus seiner Kritik. Teilnahme an politischen Tischgesprächen eröffnet den Frauen, laut *Female Tatler*, ein tieferes Verständnis für die Hintergründe des Krieges und würde so ihre persönliche Opferbereitschaft fördern. Beispielsweise würden sie es so besser verschmerzen können, ein männliches Familienmitglied zu verlieren, weil sie ja wüssten, für was er kämpfte und starb. Dieses Beispiel ist symptomatisch für die diskursive Verknüpfung zwischen Gender und Nation, wie sie im *Female Tatler* auch an anderen Stellen zu finden ist. Diese Arbeit erörtert, wie der *Female Tatler* »Nation-building« geschickt mit Geschlechterprogrammatik zu verknüpfen weiß und auf diese Weise den Nerv seiner Zeit trifft.

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