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UNROMANTIC AUTHORSHIP

The Minerva Press and the *Lady's Magazine*, 1770–1820

Jennie Batchelor



THE TRIALS OF ASPIRING AUTHOR MISS MORTIMER, a minor character in the anonymous *The Follies of St James's Street* (1789), have sparked enduring scholarly interest despite the best efforts of the *Critical Review*, and several of its brethren, to damn the novel 'to oblivion'.¹ The 'Printers and Publishers' chapter of the novel offers a rare instance not just of a novelist in the text, but also of a novelist dealing with a publisher of novels in a work of eighteenth-century fiction. That publisher is the 'polite' and 'liberal' William Lane, who published *Follies* a year before adopting the Minerva brand.² Lane's brief interactions with Miss Mortimer are commonly read as a revealing 'portrait', if not of the still enigmatic publisher himself, then of the commercial savvy and brazenly self-promotional strategies that made his publishing house so successful.³ Little more than an eighteenth-century advertorial for Lane's business, this interlude sees Miss Mortimer abandon her aspirations for the 'pecuniary advantages' enjoyed by the 'excellent author of *Evelina*' after an unnamed publisher rejects her manuscript, only for her to travel to 'Paternoster-row', where 'magazines' and 'reviews' are the 'fort', and where she is 'equally unsuccessful' in placing her fiction. Nonetheless, her journey to the Row bears fruit in the form of helpful advice: "go to Leadenhall Street", strangers there tell her. Miss Mortimer obeys by 'instinct' and is rewarded by a meeting with Lane that results in a sale of copyright (II, 16–17). Subsequent paragraphs underline the 'free, generous and encouraging' manner of the Leadenhall Street publisher, and elaborate on the sense of 'public spirit' that drove his literary ventures by way of puffing references to four of his recently published works (II, 17).⁴

A suggestive blurring of fact and fiction, this episode epitomises several of the challenges familiar to anyone researching the Minerva Press. Without a publisher archive, and given the obscurity of many of the authors who wrote (often, like that of *Follies*, anonymously or pseudonymously) for Lane and A. K. Newman (Lane's partner and eventual successor, *fl.* 1801–1858), attempts to understand the Minerva's day-to-day operation require us to work deductively and sceptically with scraps of evidence, including: shreds of biographical information; surviving catalogues and advertisements; scattered letters; personal anecdotes; prefaces to and episodes in novels; and the Reviews and their dismissals of the 'pernicious' trash 'that load the shelves of a circulating library'.⁵ Since the publication of Dorothy Blakey's *The Minerva Press* (1939), much of the still

small body of scholarship on the publishing house has sought to interrogate and correct the myths about its readers, writers and publications perpetuated by the Reviews and, in some cases, by Lane and Newman themselves. This essay challenges these myths further by taking its cue from an unacknowledged lead in Miss Mortimer's trials: the undocumented relationship between Minerva and the magazines that were the 'fort' of Paternoster Row. I turn to one of the Row's most successful ventures, George Robinson's *Lady's Magazine; or, Entertaining Companion for the Fair Sex* (1770–1832), to uncover the rich connection between the periodical press and Minerva that, once visible, refocuses our understanding of the magazine and Lane's and Newman's publishing practices and ambitions.⁶

If we follow Nicholas Mason's lead in reading this passage from *Follies* as an example of 'hucksterism' on Lane's part, then the novel's allusion to Row magazines is among its shrewdest strategies.⁷ Attempts to undermine the appeal of periodical publishing appear elsewhere in the Minerva catalogue, most notably in Mary Charlton's *Rosella, or Modern Occurrences* (1799), in which another minor character submits a poorly written sonnet to the *Lady's Magazine* in the hopes that it will appear alongside similarly 'sublime', but in reality inferior, 'effusions' on trivial subjects.⁸ In *Follies*, as in *Rosella*, allusion to the *Magazine* allows the Minerva author to confront and displace prejudices against the lowbrow, popular literary output with which Lane's imprint was becoming synonymous. After being denied, first, the 'advantages' of an *Evelina* (1778), and then the more modest achievement of magazine serialisation, Miss Mortimer is compelled to make the short journey eastwards across the city from the Row to Leadenhall Street. Yet what might be interpreted as a regressive move is portrayed as an 'advantageous' one that results in a swift publication at a fair price before a large audience among whom 'Novels [...] are universally read and esteemed' (II, 18–19). If, as Blakey suggests, the experience of Miss Mortimer signals a general 'policy' on Lane's part 'to attract young and timid writers', then it reads also as a concerted effort to poach aspiring and established fiction writers for magazines for his catalogue.⁹ Lane's strategy, as we will see, was not without success, although writers who left the magazine for Minerva did not necessarily make a permanent break.

The rivalry implied here between magazines, particularly the *Lady's Magazine*, and Minerva was so acute because the affinities between them ran so deep and wide. Both metaphorically worshipped the same goddess (pictorially represented in the magazine's frontispieces and linguistically in the Minerva imprint) and both privileged women writers and female readers even while counting many men among their authors and purchasers. Minerva novels featured in the *Lady's Magazine* and some of the magazine's fiction found an afterlife in Minerva reprints. This collective body of work evidences numerous shared thematic preoccupations (particularly around questions of gender, work, money and inheritance), and much of it occupied a mutually antagonistic stance in relation to increasingly normative notions of the literary and of professional authorship that, as Clifford Siskin has demonstrated, consolidated at the turn

of the nineteenth century.¹⁰ Finally, the *Lady's Magazine* and the Press shared a number of authors and cultivated similar publishing cultures and communities.

That such connections have not been scrutinised is surprising given the uncannily similar ways in which both the *Lady's Magazine* and Minerva productions have been long and damagingly aligned with the feminine, the derivative, the ephemeral and the amateur.¹¹ Close attention to the unacknowledged points of contact outlined in this essay is multiply illuminating, I argue, not least because they force us to challenge these enduring but misleading associations. Tracing connections between the magazine and Minerva also sharpens our understanding of the writing cultures that these rival, yet also strangely collusive, publishing outlets promoted. The picture that emerges is unRomantic in several senses. Most obviously, it is one that brings into focus a group of extremely popular, often economically vulnerable yet endlessly resourceful, writers who have been all but overlooked in Romantic literary history. The authorial types these writers represent and the kinds of work they produced—magazine contributions and circulating library novels—fail to subscribe to the conventional hierarchies of authorship, genius, gender and genre that were formalised in the Romantic period itself. At precisely the moment that literature and authorship were being professionalised and normalised around these hierarchies, the *Lady's Magazine* and Minerva presented aspiring authors with competing, but complementary, mass-media outlets that were eagerly exploited by hundreds of Romantic-era writers. Scrutinising these opportunities—how they were presented and by whom, and on what terms they were seized—dispels myths about the periodical and the Minerva Press and enables us to uncover alternative, yet ubiquitous, stories of authorship in the Romantic period that merit the telling precisely because they recalibrate our sense of this analytic category.

Worshipping at the Foot of the Same Goddess

Although explicit connections between the *Lady's Magazine* and the Minerva Press have not yet been uncovered, it is striking how frequently suspected continuities between them are registered in extant scholarship. In a brief discussion of Lane's periodical and occasional publications, for instance, Blakey speculates that his *Pleasing and Polite Instructor* (1786) was likely inspired by two former publications: *The Polite Instructor* (1761), published by T. Becket, and *The Pleasing Instructor* (1770), published by George Robinson and John Roberts, the business partners who bought the right to publish the *Lady's Magazine* in the spring of 1771.¹² A more suggestive connection is drawn by Alison Adburgham, who notes that 'it was about the time when the *Lady's Magazine* was founded [in 1770] that the owner of the Minerva Press [...] started his first circulating library'. Adburgham stops short of implying a causal relationship between these initiatives, except to identify both as evidence of a concerted rise in publications 'for women and by women' in the century's final decades.¹³ Edward Copeland has similarly identified both *Lady's Magazine* and Minerva fiction as participating in a larger conversation about women's economic position and anxieties,

although from different vantage points.¹⁴ The only explicit connection made between the magazine and the press, to my knowledge, concerns the ubiquitous Minerva novelist, translator and half-sister of Frances Burney, ‘Mrs Meeke’, who is frequently identified, following a lead in the Corvey catalogue, as the author of the first three parts of the *Lady’s Magazine* serial, ‘The Monks and the Robbers’ (1794–1805).¹⁵ The still frequently repeated attribution is spurious, yet along with the observations of Blakey, Adburgham and Copeland, it is nonetheless revealing in its underlying suspicion that Robinson’s periodical and Lane’s publishing house must have been linked in some way.

Speculation is unnecessary, however, since concrete evidence links these outlets. Although Minerva novels such as *Rosella* openly disparaged the *Lady’s Magazine*, the 1798 Prospectus for Lane’s Circulating Library reveals that it stocked the periodical, while the Minerva catalogue additionally reveals that the Minerva Press was happy, indeed proud, to publish several of Robinson’s authors.¹⁶ Its list includes many later editions of works first published by the Robinson firm, many of which were excerpted in the *Lady’s Magazine*, including: Thomas Holcroft’s translation, *Caroline of Lichtfield* (1786); Charlotte Smith’s *Desmond* (1792); Frances Peck’s *Vaga; or, a View of Nature* (1813); Barbara Hofland’s *Iwanowna; or, the Maid of Moscow* (1813); and Catherine Cuthbertson’s *Romance of the Pyrenees* (1802), *Santo Sebastiano: Or, the Young Protector* (1806) and *Adelaide: Or, the Countercharm* (1813). *The Romance of the Pyrenees* was, in fact, first serialised in instalments in the magazine after a printer’s fire all but destroyed a first print run intended for volume publication, as was *Grasville Abbey*, George Moore’s popular Gothic serial which ran in the magazine between March 1793 and August 1797, before being published in volume form by the Robinsons (1797) and then in a second edition by Minerva.

Extracts from the works of writers associated partly, but not exclusively, with Minerva also appeared with relative frequency in the *Lady’s Magazine*. Many of these—such as reprintings of the works of Sarah Green (*fl.* 1790–1825), Barbara Hofland (bap. 1770, d. 1844), Frances Peck (*fl.* 1808), Anne Plumtre (1760–1818) and Marianna Starke (1761/62–1838)—were not taken from works published by Lane and Newman. A smaller number, however, were taken directly from Minerva novels, such as the extract of Eliza Parsons’s *Errors of Education* (1791), which appeared in June 1794. Additionally, when the magazine initiated regular reviews in the late 1810s, various Minerva novels including Hofland’s *Integrity* (1823) and Regina Maria Roche’s *Contrast* (1828) were noticed and excerpted admiringly.¹⁷

These borrowings and extracts are unsurprising given the culture of appropriation, reprinting and remediation that was endemic in Romantic publishing. A more striking overlap between the *Lady’s Magazine* and the Minerva Press emerges via their shared iconography and associated branding. It was not until 1790, some twenty years after Lane’s circulating library had opened, that he adopted the Minerva imprint. It was an astute move. Minerva’s symbolic association with wisdom and learning had long been exploited in eighteenth-century

print and visual culture by the time Lane adopted it. As James Raven notes, Minerva was a 'crucial emblem' in transatlantic enlightenment iconography, connoting the civilising effects of reading through acts of 'bibliographical benevolence' that appeared on library bookplates and the title pages of educational works, and that featured ubiquitously in the periodical press.¹⁸ The frontispiece to the *London Magazine* for 1750 is typical in its depiction of the 'genius' of the magazine (here its 'Author') carrying a pile of volumes that represent its back catalogue in the company of 'MINERVA' as guide. The 'Endeavours' of 'ENVY' to tempt the Genius to his rival cause prove fruitless and he and his volumes are successfully shepherded by the Goddess to an allegorical representation of 'FAME' who 'consequently makes them IMMORTAL'.¹⁹ Year after year, hundreds of such frontispieces adorned periodicals, including the *European, Hibernian, London, New London, Town and Country, Universal* and *Westminster Magazines*. None of these publications had particular associations with women although all boasted content written and read by both sexes.

The *Lady's Magazine* also enjoyed mixed-sexed author and reader demographics. This was in spite of the periodical's insistent, if disingenuous, marketing of itself as a 'by-women-for-women' periodical. Key to its marketing as a not merely 'entertaining' but also educational companion for the 'fair sex' was its re-visioning of Minerva, which recuperated her as a goddess of specifically female wisdom and learning. Serial publications had, in fact, long mobilised Minerva in arguments about female education. The Society of the *Athenian Mercury* (1690–97), the title of which alludes to Minerva's Greek counterpart, used the goddess to suggest the propriety of the 'learn'd' woman, who was always 'Chast[e] and Continent', in response to a reader enquiry on the subject.²⁰ By mid-century, the association was utilised in the growing number of magazines marketed specifically at women and whose editorial rhetoric foregrounded the public utility of journals devoted to a supposedly overlooked female readership. Abandoning the more controversial Sappho, who had appeared in the frontispiece of Eliza Haywood's *The Female Spectator* (1744–46), Jasper Goodwill's bi-monthly *Ladies Magazine: Or, the Universal Entertainer* (1749–53) featured an ornate engraving in which Minerva, overseen by a flying Mercury (god of eloquence and trade), points a seated woman, quill in hand and surrounded by books, in the direction of a temple of fame. It was a formula followed, with variations, by Charlotte Lennox's *Lady's Museum* (1760–61).

Both Goodwill's and Lennox's titles were short-lived. The more enduring *Lady's Magazine* took this iconography and by adaptation and force of repetition made Minerva the figurehead for the aspirations of a women's magazine that advocated the individual and cultural benefits of women's reading and writing. In fifteen of the twenty frontispieces it published between 1770 and 1789, Minerva takes centre stage as guide, counsellor and protector of its female reader, muse of its authors, and as precedent for the ideal of virtuous female learning the periodical promoted (see Figure 1, opposite). While the iconography followed a similar pattern to that of the *London Magazine*, there are important

differences, not least the fact that the magazine's 'Genius' and its reader-votaries are always female. Moreover, the temptations that beset these readers are gender-specific. The devilish figure who seeks to undermine the treacherous path to virtue on which the magazine's reader walks with Minerva in its 1773 frontispiece represents moral (potentially sexual) temptations that it would be hard to imagine featuring in the *London* or *Universal*. More explicitly still, in 1780, 'Folly' is imagined in the guise of fashionably dressed woman, holding a hand of cards. A re-rendering of Hercules at the crossroads, the image sees Folly flanking the adoring magazine reader at the image's centre, while Minerva tries to direct the woman's wavering attention to the more enduring and hard-won virtues of wisdom the magazine espouses. By 1789—when *Follies* was published—such temptations had been banished and the magazine could confidently imagine that the battle for its readers' hearts and minds had been won. Here, an 'elegant Female Figure'—an embodiment of 'Study'—is 'seated in her Library', contemplating the magazine. Minerva, who stands behind the figure, is ready to crown her with 'a Chaplet of Laurel' assisted by Cupid, who carries 'the Torch of Hymen' signalling the compatibility of women's learning with their domestic responsibilities.²¹

The 1789 frontispiece epitomises the magazine's self-conceptualisation as a publication uniting the values of female propriety with a projected (pre-Wollstonecraftian) 'revolution in female manners' that would see its female readers and contributors striving to 'excell [*sic*] each other' as much in mental accomplishments ('scientific studies') as much as 'formerly' they did 'in the trifling of dress, and in the arts of dissipation'.²² This was an ambitious project that the magazine attempted to realise through various mechanisms: the space it gave to the question of women's education and extracts from educational works in the



FIG. 1. FRONTISPIECE TO THE *LADY'S MAGAZINE* FOR 1774. PHOTOGRAPH: AUTHOR'S OWN.

fields of history, geography, chemistry and zoology; the biographies of learned women it contained; the translation exercises and tests of female ingenuity it presented in riddles, enigmas and charades; and, most importantly, via its conversational, dialogic magazine form and its open invitation to all readers to become contributors.²³ As the *Lady's Magazine's* editors repeatedly claimed, the talent exhibited by the volunteer authors who produced most of the magazine's original content was indisputable confirmation that the periodical's pedagogical aspirations had been achieved. According to the 'Address to the Public' that opened the January 1781 issue, the magazine's success 'concenter[ed]' in its 'Correspondents' who had 'abundantly convinced the world that no *Salique* law can be introduced in the *Republic of Letters*' by not only 'aspir[ing] to the laurel, but having 'snatched it from the temples of those who call themselves the Lords of the Creation'.²⁴ Their victory was authorised by the ubiquitous Minerva, who provided a powerful model for the values the magazine upheld.

Why Lane decided to adopt the sign of Minerva for his printing office and associated library remains unknown. Whatever his motives, it is highly unlikely that Minerva's association with the *Lady's Magazine* and the periodical's arguments for women's education and for the propriety and public utility of women's authorship and reading would have been lost on readers. Indeed, Lane leaned heavily on such associations. Early advertisements for the Minerva published in newspapers such as the *Star* borrowed liberally from the familiar rhetoric of the public addresses in the *Lady's Magazine*.²⁵ The oft-reprinted 'Description of the Minerva Office', establishes a relationship between the publisher, its readers and putative authors that could have been cut and pasted from Robinson's periodical. Lane opens by expressing 'gratitude' for the 'encouragement and support' extended to his Press by a 'generous Public' receptive to its commitment to publish works on such 'subjects [...] as are founded on the basis of virtue, and have tended to improve the understanding, and to amend the heart' and by those 'Authors' who choose to place their work with him.²⁶

Such commitment to the ubiquitous Horatian twin imperatives of pleasure and utility is hardly surprising, but the language Lane uses to characterise his Press is distinctive. To publish with Minerva, Lane suggests, is not simply to usher an individual work into the world of print, but to contribute to a bigger, collective enterprise.²⁷ Lane's metaphors are drawn directly from those long-established by Minerva's periodical devotees. His catalogue is imagined not as a list, but as a 'Museum' and 'Repository', two words that had entrenched associations with women's magazines.²⁸ The Minerva Library, meanwhile, is imagined as the magazine project writ large: a 'Repository of Sciences, Arts, and Polite Literature', in which the extracts and textual snippets and serials that fill periodicals are realised in 'One Hundred to Five Thousand Volumes' that might be 'had at a few days notice'.²⁹ The conceptualisation of Lane's Press and Library as enterprises designed to collect distinct texts to form a composite store of entertainment and knowledge bigger than the sum of its parts, wears

its debts to its periodical precedents as loudly in this marketing rhetoric as it does in its adoption of Minerva as its idol.

Authors

An important strand of Lane's marketing of Minerva as an extension of the project of publications such as the *Lady's Magazine* was the rhetoric of authorship he borrowed from it. Just as successive editors of Robinson's magazine invited content from reader-contributors to fill issues, Lane openly solicited authors to send works to him to expand his catalogue. Provided that these works were calculated to 'improve the mind' and be of 'utility', Lane promised 'an asylum'. Yet unlike fugitive contributions to the magazines, which (with notable exceptions described below) went unremunerated, Lane offered the security of payment: a share of 'five hundred pounds [...] placed at an eminent banker's for the sole purpose of purchasing literary productions'.³⁰ Under the auspices of Minerva, Lane appealed to aspiring Miss Mortimers seeking magazine publication by promising them a better deal.

The tactic worked. Several writers produced original work for the *Lady's Magazine* and Minerva, with some publishing simultaneously in, and others moving back and forth between, the two as opportunity or necessity demanded. Laureate odes by poet, novelist and playwright Henry James Pye (1745–1813), for instance, appeared regularly in the magazine from 1791, four years before the publication of his anti-Jacobin Minerva novel, *The Democrat* (1795). A reverse trajectory (from Minerva to the magazine) is evidenced by Amelia Opie (1769–1853), whose first novel *The Dangers of Coquetry* (1790) was published by Lane. Opie was a firm favourite of *Lady's Magazine* readers, which published extracts of many of her novels and reprinted numerous of her poems between the 1800s and 1830s.³¹ Between 1831 and 1832, Opie submitted an original travelogue-cum-memoir to the periodical, the brilliant, if nostalgic, 'Recollections of a Visit to Paris in 1802', which catalogues Opie's four-month stay in France and her encounters with and impressions of artistic, literary and political figures including Helen Maria Williams, Minerva novelist Anne Plumtre, Maria Cosway, Napoleon and Kosciusko. Pye and Opie are only two of several writers who we can securely identify as having published with the *Lady's Magazine* and the Minerva Press. Countless other examples, because of the periodical's and Minerva's encouragement of pseudonymous and anonymous publication, remain matters of speculation. It is possible, for instance, that Jane West (1758–1852) began her career writing for the *Lady's Magazine*. As Jenny DiPlacidi discovered, an 1815 epistolary novel attributed to West, *Vicissitudes of Life* (1815), is a verbatim reprinting of the anonymous *Memoirs of a Young Lady*, one of the magazine's longest-running serial fictions in the 1780s. If the attribution is accurate, West seems to have begun her career, aged twenty-five, in the *Lady's Magazine* some ten years before she published *The Advantages of Education* (1793) for Minerva as 'Prudentia Homespun'.³² *Memoirs of a Young Lady*, one of hundreds of fictions by unidentified writers for the magazine, suggests the tantalising possibility that

there might be much authorial crossover between the periodical, the *Minerva* and other presses that has yet to be uncovered.

Where longstanding connections between Robinson's periodical and Lane's press can be tracked, the relationships are instructive and challenge persistent mischaracterisations of their writers as unambitious amateurs or literary hacks who produced popular works of little literary merit. Moreover, these writers' movements between the *Lady's Magazine* and *Minerva* illuminate how both outlets played in the lives and careers of Romantic-era writers whose enduring, but frequently precarious, careers as authors were often anything but romantic in practice. The first of two such examples I want to detail here is that of novelist Catherine Day Haynes (1793–1851), later Mrs Golland. Haynes made her debut using the signature 'C. D. H.' in the *Lady's Magazine* in the opening instalment of her Radcliffean gothic novel, *The Castle of Le Blanc*. Haynes's serial is mentioned on the title pages of several of her later works, and is a frequently presumed lost text because no extant volume publication exists. It very much exists, however, in the sole form of its publication: the nineteen instalments that appeared in the *Lady's Magazine* between October 1816 and its 1818 Supplement issue. The identity of its author, C. D. H., was an open secret to a handful of the periodical's readers able to decipher veiled references to her identity in poems, songs and rebuses that she also contributed to the magazine.³³ It was not until January 1821, however, that the magazine retrospectively attributed the novel to Haynes in an announcement of her marriage: 'At St. Bride's, Mr John Golland, of the New Kent Road, to Miss C. D. Haynes, author of the *Castle of Le Blanc*, *Foundling of Devonshire*, and several other works'.³⁴

Minerva readers, however, learned Haynes's identity three years earlier with the publication of *The Foundling of Devonshire; or, What is She?* (1818), a novel preoccupied with the consolations and difficulties of work and female friendship, and published by Newman while *The Castle of Le Blanc* was still appearing in the *Lady's Magazine*. The title page of this, the first of six novels by Haynes/Golland for *Minerva*, ascribes the work to 'Miss C. D. Haynes, "Author of the *Castle of Le Blanc*, &c. &c."' ³⁵ The '&c. &c.' probably signals nothing more than publisher enthusiasm, as *The Castle of Le Blanc* seems to have been Haynes's debut and sole fiction between 1816 and 1818. Newman marketed *The Foundling of Devonshire*, then, on the basis of the merits of a magazine serial, the title of which he had sufficient confidence readers would not only recognise, but which he also felt sure would sell the work to readers eager to devour its author's next production. For all its disavowals of Paternoster Row magazines, the *Minerva* happily capitalised upon the *Lady's Magazine*'s popularity when doing so served its interests, just as the magazine was not averse to acknowledging its authors' moves to *Minerva*, as it did in Haynes's case.

Shortly after the birth of her first child in 1822—another life event noted in the columns of the *Lady's Magazine*—and after publishing two further novels for Newman, Haynes, now publishing under her married name, Golland, went back to the periodical to place a new 'tale, called the "Single Gentleman, or a

Flight of Fancy”.³⁶ Her efforts were fruitless; the editor rejected the novel on the grounds that it did not suit the publication’s ‘present system’. The nature of its unfitness (perhaps related to readers’ decreased appetite for serial fiction, the manuscript’s quality or editorial pique) is not articulated. In any case, the fiction seems never to have seen the light of day. Between 1823 and 1841, Golland would give birth to four more children and publish three more multi-decker novels with Newman. She appears not to have written for the *Lady’s Magazine* again, but her interactions with it, even after her move to Minerva, make clear that she did not define her authorial identity in terms of her association with the Press and she saw no conflict of interest between the two outlets. As DiPlacidi contends, it seems that she saw her paid work for Minerva as ‘contiguous’ to her probably unpaid periodical work.³⁷ Moreover, she attempted to use her success with each as a tradable commodity with the other.

A different triangulation of the magazine and Minerva via a shared writer emerges from the example of novelist, poet, children’s writer, journalist and biographer Mary Pilkington (1761–1825). Pilkington has left more of a biographical trail than many, although several key details given in standard reference works are incorrect and none mentions her work for the *Lady’s Magazine*.³⁸ Pilkington made her first appearances in the periodical and the Minerva catalogue in 1809. The timing of the double move is no coincidence. By 1809, Pilkington had been trying to support herself by writing for over a decade. Defrauded of a paternal inheritance by her uncle, soon to be widowed by her naval surgeon husband and bound to care for her elderly mother in fragile physical and mental health, while in her twenties Pilkington took up a position as a governess. After eight years, ‘Ill-health’ compelled her to resign from this ‘comfortable Situation’, and she attempted ‘to convert those Talents which had been cultivated for Amusement, into the mean’s [*sic*] of Support’.³⁹ Her first published work, *Miscellaneous Poems*, was published by Cadell & Davies in 1796, and was swiftly followed, in 1797, by three works for children published by Elizabeth Newbery. Pilkington’s industry was as acute as her financial need. The next decade saw her publish an impressive range and volume of educational works for children, both original and abridged, as well as her ambitious biographical work, *Memoirs of Female Characters* (1804) and three novels: *Parental Duplicity* (1797), *The Child of Hope* (1800) and *Crimes and Characters* (1805).⁴⁰

Pilkington supplemented this income throughout her career with periodical writing. Her best-known work in this genre was for one of the *Lady’s Magazine*’s most tenacious rivals, and eventual partners, Vernor & Hood’s *Lady Monthly Museum* (1798–1828). Pilkington wrote numerous articles and essays under various signatures (‘M., P.’, ‘M. P.’ and possibly ‘M. S.’) for the *Museum* in addition to undertaking editorial work for Vernor & Hood, who had been involved in the publication of some of her children’s work and *The Child of Hope*. By early 1810, however, Pilkington was challenging Vernor & Hood about the fact that she was not being paid adequately for her editorial work. Confronting her publishers was not simply a matter of principle but of acute need following the

double body blow of the bankruptcy of another of her publishers in 1804, and the death, in 1808, of her cherished companion and financial supporter, Lady Gertrude Cromie.⁴¹

Following these tribulations, in 1809 the ever-resourceful Pilkington struck relationships with two new publishers—Newman and Robinson. Pilkington's connection with Minerva began with the publication of *Sinclair; or, the Mysterious Orphan* (1809).⁴² *Sinclair* takes up many themes engaged by other Minerva writers. The novel's peripatetic central male protagonist is of obscure origin, and struggles to establish his birthright in a world corrupted by others' self-interest. Eventually, after making an imprudent first marriage, the hero's noble birth is confirmed, and he is able to marry his first love and retire to Scotland where the couple founds a Millenium Hall-style community. The novel appeared under the author's legal name and traded, as was common for first-time Minerva authors, on her reputation as an established novelist beyond the Press: 'Mrs. Pilkington, Author of Crimes and Characters, Parental Duplicity, &c.'

One of the novels not included in this ascription is Pilkington's 1809 adventure novel for 'young readers', *The Ill-Fated Mariner: Or, Richard the Runaway*, which was published near simultaneously with *Sinclair* by George Robinson Jr (who took over his father's firm and publication of the *Lady's Magazine* after his death in 1801). The *Ill-Fated Mariner* is an uneven tale featuring heavy-handed narratorial interpolations. It follows the escapades of an Eton schoolboy who runs away to sea, only to be captured by Barbary pirates. For all its extraordinary drama, the novel bears many of the characteristics that unify Pilkington's fiction for children and adults alike, much of which centres around male protagonists whose fates are bound up with those of their deceased fathers, and in which the author makes extensive use of her knowledge of the medical profession and naval life garnered from her dead father and husband. The novel was swiftly puffed by way of an extract from the novel's centerpiece, 'The Shipwreck', in the *Lady's Magazine* for October 1809. This issue, which also saw the publication of the opening instalment of an 'original' two-part moral tale entitled 'The Resuscitated Mariner' by 'Mrs. Pilkington', marked the beginning of an at least six-year relationship between Pilkington and the *Lady's Magazine* to which she was 'a constant contributor to the amusement of [its] readers'.⁴³

November 1809 saw the launch of Pilkington's first serialised novel for the magazine, *Benedict. A True History*, a first-person narrative inspired by Hannah More's *Coelebs in Search of a Wife* (1808), and which begins by decrying precisely the kind of publication associated with the Minerva Press, to which Pilkington had so recently turned to publish *Sinclair*: 'I never peruse the common herd of novels with which the Country as well as the London Circulating Libraries are infested'.⁴⁴ Alongside *Benedict*, Pilkington was working on a shorter serial entitled *Fleet Prison*, which began in February 1810. Neither *Benedict* nor *Fleet Prison* was published under Pilkington's name, perhaps to conceal this considerable body of work for the *Lady's Magazine* from Vernor & Hood for whom she was contracted to work on the *Museum*.

A longstanding assumption about *Lady's Magazine* contributors—one linked to the accusations of amateurism levelled against them and one that Lane exploited for his own ends—is that they engaged in a form of vanity publication and were unpaid for their efforts. Non-payment certainly was the reality for most of the magazine's contributors, including Haynes.⁴⁵ This business model generated administrative as well as ethical problems. Many authors failed to finish serials, leaving readers clamorous for the conclusions of tales they had invested months or even years reading. Pilkington's serials, however, were written in batches, an arrangement the editor was presumably happy to enter into given that the established, yet financially distressed, Pilkington must have bucked the trend and been paid for her work. From the editor's point of view, the payments, though likely small, would have been assumed to be sufficient to guarantee her future labour. Poor health disrupted this arrangement, however, and a prolonged illness from the spring of 1810 until late 1811 meant that both of her serials were suspended while Pilkington recovered from a violent nervous fever. The desperation of her situation led her to make the first of fifteen years' worth of applications to the benevolence of the Royal Literary Fund—a charity for impoverished writers and their dependents—in January 1810.

Once recovered, Pilkington finished her serials for the magazine. The hero of *Benedict* winds his way through the trials resulting from his disputed inheritance and marries his first love, while *Fleet Prison* similarly (but more perfunctorily) concludes with the hero resolving the economic and associated moral difficulties that arise from his father not leaving a will, an unfortunate oversight of which Pilkington had painful first-hand experience. Over the next three years, she continued to write for the periodical, but moved away from serial fiction to produce occasional tales, moral essays and biographies. Her most sustained contribution, though, was 'The Old Woman' (February 1812–May 1813), another work inspired by More, possibly her *Hints to a Princess* (1805). It nodded also to the long-running and sometimes abrasive agony aunt column (July 1798–April 1808) of the same name in the *Lady's Monthly Museum*. The *Lady's Magazine's* 'Old Woman' featured occasional reader letters, but functioned primarily as an advice column on matters including marriage, child-rearing, filial responsibility, female celibacy and the perniciousness of modern novels. The general tone is conservative. Nonetheless, the Old Woman is intolerant of abuses of power (the tyranny of husbands who do not deserve their wives' respect) and of cultural strictures (against female learning or spinsterhood, for instance) that seem to deny women value outside of marriage.

Pilkington's contributions continue until at least 1815, during which time she was working for the *Female Preceptor* and writing novels, tales and educational works for children published by John Harris (Newbery's successor) at the Juvenile Library. Finding Harris was not inclined 'to purchase [her] Productions as fast as [she] could compose them', Pilkington was once more 'induced' to turn to Minerva and put 'greater Confidence in a species of Novel' associated with 'Mr Newman'.⁴⁶ That collaboration yielded two final Pilkington works

for Minerva: *The Novice; or, Heir of Montgomery Castle* (1814), published under the pseudonym Matthew Moral; and *Celebrity; or the Unfortunate Choice* (1815), a novel about a hero whose head is turned by the specious attractions of fashionable excess and which was published under her legal name. In the very last decade of Pilkington's life, the last six years of which she spent tending to her dying friend Louisa West, daughter of Lady Gertrude Cromie, Pilkington was able to write only a few 'Communications' presented to the proprietor of an unnamed 'Periodical Work', perhaps the *Lady's Magazine*.⁴⁷

Pilkington was indefatigably industrious and a proud professional who negotiated with care and pride with her publishers over the content, production and distribution of her works. Her contributions to the *Lady's Magazine* and her Minerva novels encompass a fraction of her three decades long career and prolific multi-genre output. Much less is currently known about Haynes's/Golland's motives for and navigation of her career, and precious little is documented about her life. Piecing together what we can about the works and lives of these two quite different women and other writers who moved between the magazine, the Minerva and, in Pilkington's case, many other publishers besides, is illuminating. Doing so unsettles assumptions that have held fast in scholarship on these outlets and underscores and extends recent efforts to undermine them.

First, their examples challenge accusations of amateurism levelled at *Lady's Magazine* contributors and Minerva Press authors. In the case of the magazine, such arguments have partly been tied to the assumption that its writers were universally unpaid volunteers. Unpaid labour might be accurate in the example of Haynes, but could not have been so for Pilkington and would not have been so for Opie in 1831. The slur of amateurism is also symptomatic of a wider sleight, faced also by Minerva novelists, that these writers were unprofessional in the senses: that their attitude to their writing was workmanlike; that they were cynically and, in the case of Press authors, mercenarily motivated; and that they failed to take their writing or readers seriously. Such contentions are, as I suggested earlier, the erroneous, often unacknowledged legacies of the new, gendered and ideological formulation of the 'work of writing' that consolidated in the Romantic period. In this climate, the atmosphere of which was partly generated by the Reviews, literary professionalism signalled not only paid intellectual labour, but also the possession of a particularly defined work ethic and set of writerly aspirations.⁴⁸ Non- or low payment does not necessarily preclude the possession of these behaviours and hopes, but is commonly assumed to do so when applied to writers for publications such as the *Lady's Magazine* and the Minerva Press. It is more commonly assumed to preclude them when the writers in question are women and even more so when the authors in question cultivated a 'protean' authorial identity, constituting a 'labyrinthine' web of named, anonymous and pseudonymous publications, as so many magazine and Minerva authors did.⁴⁹ Heeding Margaret Ezell's call to attend to the 'the lived material conditions of [...] writing' for women authors in this period in


the form of the specific examples discussed in this essay, and others beyond its scope, shows strikingly that such notions do not bear scrutiny.⁵⁰

Second, attention to the particularity of individual careers counsels against attempts to homogenise these writers as ‘*Lady’s Magazine* contributors’ or ‘Minerva novelists’. Where, originally, such identities were cultivated by the magazine and the Press to suggest the collective enterprise of their publication, more recently they have been used to typecast their authors as if they were all cut from the same social or political cloth, were possessed of similarly low levels of ambition and expertise, and produced work by numbers. My representative case studies demonstrate that writers viewed their relationship to these outlets on their own terms. Their interactions in and negotiations of the literary culture of the day—their movements between publishers at key moments in their lives and to turn to different modes of publication as and when it suited them to do so—were signs of their precarity, but also of their professionalism and persistence.

Conclusion

The November 1804 *Lady’s Magazine* featured an article entitled ‘On Criticism’ signed by a contributor who went by the signature ‘A Lover of Candour’. Its author’s attack on the old-boy networks, suspect credentials, cowardice and misogyny of reviewers sounded recurrent refrains that were echoed throughout the magazine’s history. What distinguished this essay was its allegiance to a publishing house its author knew few would defend: Minerva. The catalyst for the defence was a recent issue of the *Monthly Magazine* which had concluded a ‘short article’ on a handful of ‘*Novels*’ published in the previous six months by noting that ‘Lane might furnish a list of a hundred more’ for possible review but that the periodical had declined to notice them since they had paid attention to all, ‘perhaps more than all, that are worth reading’.⁵¹ Likening the *Monthly’s* dismissal of Minerva and its habit of ‘damning books in the lump’ to the ‘revolutionary system of government’ in France, the article goes on to condemn such ‘tyranny’ as ‘an injustice [that] should least of all be tolerated’ in the ‘republic of letters’.

‘A Lover of Candour’ assures readers that ‘no connexion whatever with Mr. Lane’ motivates his article and, with no evidence either way, we must take him at his word. To my knowledge, no archival material has yet been uncovered to illuminate personal or business connections between Robinson and Lane and Newman. In the absence of such evidence, it is hard to answer questions such as why so many Minerva reprints are of works originally published by Robinson’s firm or why Robinson’s magazine so often publically supported Lane’s and Newman’s enterprise, despite many Minerva authors’ disavowals of those who contributed to the ‘fort of Paternoster Row’. Yet, in their shared iconography and branding, and through attention to the experiences of their shared writers, we can begin to uncover multiple connections between these two phenomenally popular Romantic-era publishing ventures that bring to the fore the unromantic and unRomantic culture of authorship that was ubiquitous in this period.

‘[D]amning in the lump’, as we have tended to, those writers and their publishers who exploited these conditions distorts our understanding of the particularities both of the lived experience of writers in this period and of the work they produced for periodicals and the circulating libraries under the auspices of Minerva. 

NOTES

1. *Critical Review*, 67 (Appendix 1789), 554. Pejorative reviews also appeared in the *Monthly Review*, *English Review* and *Town and Country Magazine*, the latter of which dismissed the novel in one line: ‘The vilest of vile productions’—21 (Aug 1789), 358.
2. *The Follies of St James’s Street*, 2 vols (London: Lane, 1789), II, 16. Subsequent references are given parenthetically in the main body of the essay.
3. See e.g. Dorothy Blakey, *The Minerva Press, 1790–1820* (London: Bibliographic Society, 1939), p. 71; Deborah Anne McLeod, ‘The Minerva Press’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Alberta, 1997), p. 9; Elizabeth A. Neiman, ‘A New Perspective on the Minerva Press’s “Derivative” Novels: Authorizing Borrowed Material’, *ERR*, 26 (2015), 633–58 (pp. 640–41) <<https://doi.org/10.1080/10509585.2015.1070344>>; and Nicholas Mason, *Literary Advertising and the Shaping of British Romanticism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013), p. 122.
4. The novels are: Robert Bage, *James Wallace, a Novel* (1788); Mr Nicholson, *The Village of Martindale: A Novel* (1787); Anna Maria Bennett, *Anna; or, Memoirs of a Welsh Heiress* (1786); and *The Duke of Exeter: An Historical Romance* (1789).
5. Review of *The Follies of St James’s Street* (1789), *Monthly Review*, 2nd ser. 4 (Jan 1791), 92. Following Derek Roper, I use ‘Review’ to refer to Review periodicals and ‘review’ to signal individual articles—see *Reviewing Before the Edinburgh, 1788–1802* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1978).
6. For ease of reference, I am referring to the magazine as Robinson’s. George Robinson (1736–1801) was the publisher of the magazine (along with other family members and partners) until his death, when it passed to his son, George Robinson (d. 1811), and then his grandsons George (dates not yet verified) and Samuel Robinson (d. 1834).
7. Mason, *Literary Advertising*, p. 122.
8. Mary Charlton, *Rosella; or, Modern Occurrences*, 4 vols (London: Minerva Press, 1799), IV, 306.
9. Blakey, *Literary Advertising*, p. 71.
10. Clifford Siskin, *The Work of Writing: Literature and Social Change in Britain, 1700–1830* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), pp. 218–25.
11. See e.g. Robert Mayo, *The English Novel in the Magazines, 1740–1815* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press and London: OUP, 1962), esp. pp. 317–21; and Gillian Hughes, ‘Fiction in the Magazines’, in *The Oxford History of the Novel in English, Volume 2: 1750–1820*, ed. by Karen O’Brien and Peter Garside (Oxford: OUP, 2015), pp. 461–77.
12. Blakey, *Minerva Press*, p. 33. John Roberts died just months later in January 1772.
13. Alison Adburgham, *Women in Print: Writing Women and Women’s Magazines from the Restoration to the Accession of Victoria* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1972), p. 153.

14. See Edward Copeland, *Women Writing about Money: Women's Fiction in England, 1790–1820* (Cambridge: CUP, 1995), esp. pp. 117–58 and 205–12.
15. The serial was completed by the unknown 'A. Percy'. On Elizabeth Meeke (1761–1826?), see Anthony Mandal, 'Mrs Meeke and Minerva: The Mystery of the Marketplace', *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 42.2 (Apr 2018), 130–50 <<https://doi.org/10.1215/00982601-4384591>>.
16. Blakey, *Minerva Press*, p. 314.
17. Other Minerva novels reviewed in the magazine include *The Sailor Boy* (1800), *Allan M'Dougal* (1831), *The Eve of St Agnes* (1831) and *The Doomed One* (1832).
18. James Raven, *London Booksellers and American Customers: Transatlantic Community and the Charleston Library Society, 1748–1811* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2002), p. 49.
19. 'Explanation of the Frontispiece', *London Magazine*, 19 (1750), 3.
20. Qtd in Clare Barlow, 'Virtue, Patriotism and Female Scholarship in Bluestocking Portraiture', in *Bluestockings Displayed: Portraiture, Performance and Patronage, 1730–1830*, ed. by Elizabeth Eger (Cambridge: CUP, 2013), pp. 60–80 (p. 63).
21. 'Explanation of the Frontispiece', *Lady's Magazine*, 20 (Jan 1780), 2.
22. 'Address to the Public', *Lady's Magazine*, 9 (Jan 1778), iii.
23. See Jennie Batchelor, "'[T]o cherish Female ingenuity and to conduce to Female improvement": The Birth of the Woman's Magazine', in *Women's Periodicals and Print Culture in Britain, 1690–1820s: The Long Eighteenth Century*, ed. by Jennie Batchelor and Manushag N. Powell (Edinburgh: EUP, 2018), pp. 377–92.
24. 'Address to the Public', p. iii.
25. 'Description of the Minerva Office' was a widely reprinted advertisement that circulated for several years in the newspapers. See e.g. *The Star*, 24 Jan 1791. Lane became proprietor of *The Star*, the first evening daily, in 1788—See Blakey, *Minerva Press*, pp. 10–14.
26. 'Description of the Minerva Office'.
27. Here, Lane anticipates the culture of 'collective authorship' that Neiman identifies with Minerva, a culture 'engendered (and eventually effaced) by Romantic-era print culture'—see 'A New Perspective', p. 637.
28. Such titles include the *Lady's Museum* (1760–61), *Lady's Monthly Museum* (1798–1828), *British Magazine, or Monthly Repository for Gentlemen and Ladies* (1760–67) and *Town and Country Magazine; or Universal Repository of Knowledge, Instruction, and Entertainment* (1769–96).
29. 'Description of the Minerva Office'.
30. *Ibid.*
31. Opie may have written original poetry for the magazine, too. Several poems bearing Opie's signature have not yet been identified as previously published.
32. Jenny DiPlacidi, "The No Longer Anonymous "Memoirs of a Young Lady"", *The Lady's Magazine* (1770–1818): Understanding the Emergence of a Genre <<https://blogs.kent.ac.uk/ladys-magazine/2016/01/14/the-no-longer-anonymous-memoirs-of-a-young-lady>> [accessed 12 Mar 2018]. *Memoirs of a Young Lady* ran from Apr 1783 to Nov 1786.
33. Henry's 'Answer to the Rebus by C. D. H. in the Magazine for February', for instance, deciphered the identity of C. D. H.'s absent lover and future husband: 'Golland's the swain beloved by thee'—*Lady's Magazine*, 48 (May 1817), 233. On Haynes/Golland, see Jenny DiPlacidi, 'C. D. H. or Catharine Haynes: A Gothic Author for the *Lady's Magazine* and the Minerva Press', *The Lady's Magazine*

- (1770–1818): Understanding the Emergence of a Genre <<http://blogs.kent.ac.uk/ladys-magazine/2015/08/19/c-d-h-or-catharine-day-haynes-a-gothic-author-for-the-ladys-magazine-and-the-minerva-press/>> [accessed 12 Mar 2018]. See also Robert B. Mayo, 'Gothic Romance in the Magazines', *PMLA*, 65 (1950), 762–89 (pp. 783–84) <<https://doi.org/10.2307/459573>>.
34. 'Marriages', *Lady's Magazine*, 52 (Jan 1821), 56.
 35. Her other novels were *Augustus and Adelina; or, the Monk of St Barnardine* (1819), *Eleanor: Or, the Spectre of St Michael's* (1821), *The Ruins of Ruthvale Abbey* (1827), *The Maid of Padua, or, Past Times: A Venetian Tale* (1835) and *The Witch of Aysgarth* (1841).
 36. 'Address to Correspondents', *Lady's Magazine*, 53 (Nov 1822), n.p.
 37. Jenny DiPlacidi, "'Full of Pretty Stories': Fiction in the *Lady's Magazine* (1770–1832)", in *Women's Periodicals and Print Culture*, ed. by Batchelor and Powell, pp. 263–77 (p. 274).
 38. Pilkington's death date is misidentified in all major biographical sources as 1839: she died in Hammersmith in late 1825. See London Metropolitan Archives, DL/T/031/042
 39. Letter from Mary Pilkington to the Secretary of the Royal Literary Fund (RLF), 2 June 1810—*Archives of the Royal Literary Fund, 1790–1918*, 145 reels (London: World Microfilms, 1981–84), case 256: item 1.
 40. Of these works, Pilkington was most proud of *The Asiatic Princess* (1800), which was dedicated with permission to and written expressly for Princess Charlotte.
 41. Pilkington's financial negotiations are documented in her letter to Thomas Vernor, 22 Jan 1810—see 'Original Letters Collected by William Upcott of the London Institution. Distinguished Women', ed. by William Upcott, 4 vols—London, British Library, Add. MS 78688, vol. III. The bankruptcy of her publisher, J. F. Hughes, lost Pilkington a 30-guinea commission as she explained in her letter to the Secretary of the RLF, 2 June 1810. Lady Gertrude Cromie, whom Pilkington attended during a long illness, had provided apartments for the author in Brook Green Hammersmith. Thomas Faulkner, *The History and Antiquities of the Parish of Hammersmith* (London: Nichols, and others, 1839), pp. 163–64.
 42. Three earlier Minerva Press novels by 'Miss Pilkington', sometimes still misattributed, were not her work.
 43. This quotation is from an obituary to Pilkington's mother—*Lady's Magazine*, 48 (May 1817), 240.
 44. [Mary Pilkington], *Benedict. A True History*, *Lady's Magazine*, 40 (Nov 1809), 489.
 45. Sophia Troughton (later Hendry) explained that she had not received 'pecuniary aid' for any of her fiction for the magazine, nor did she 'expect' it. Sophia Troughton to Lady Margaret Spencer, 13 Apr 1813—London, British Library, Althorp Papers, Add. MS 75727.
 46. Pilkington to the RLF, 5 Feb 1815 (item 8).
 47. Pilkington to the RLF, 4 Jan 1825 (item 10).
 48. Siskin, *Work of Writing*. See also Paul Keen, *The Crisis of Literature in the 1790s: Print Culture and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge: CUP, 1999); and Jennie Batchelor, *Women's Work: Labour, Gender, Authorship, 1750–1830* (Manchester: MUP, 2010), esp. pp. 144–84.
 49. On this 'protean' model of authorship, see Mandal, 'Mrs Meeke and Minerva'.

50. Margaret J. M. Ezell, *Social Authorship and the Advent of Print* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), pp. 19–20.
51. 'A Lover of Candour', 'On Criticism', *Lady's Magazine*, 35 (Nov 1804), 578.

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