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“To Promote the Reputation of My Sex and Do
Something For My Own Country”:
Nationhood and Gender in Sarah Josepha Hale’s
Godey’s Lady’s Book, 1836-1837

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Introduction

“It is our aim to prepare a work which, for our own sex, should be superior to every other periodical”

-Sarah Josepha Hale, *Godey's Lady's Book*, January 1837

Godey's Lady's Book, a nineteenth-century periodical for women, ran monthly from 1830 to 1898.¹ Today, most people associate *Godey's* with its fashion plates, which are colorful, visually striking, and provide a glimpse into the styles of the nineteenth century. Occasionally, *Godey's* appears as a footnote when a scholar wants to cite an example of a particular aspect of nineteenth-century American life; however, the *Lady's Book* as a whole rarely sits at the center of scholarly studies. The magazine is often considered too frivolous for serious analysis, thanks to its perceived focus on fashion. However, the *Lady's Book's* longest-serving editor, Sarah Josepha Hale, intended it to be about more than just style. Concerned with a number of nationally important issues, Hale ensured such topics were reflected in the fiction, editorials, and general articles of the magazine. As one of the first nationally successful female editors, the ways Hale shaped *Godey's Lady's Book* provide insight into the social and political landscapes of nineteenth-century America.

The first issue of *Godey's Lady's Book* came out in June of 1830. Philadelphia entrepreneur Louis Antoine Godey began the periodical and worked as both publisher and editor for the first six years. Hale became editor in 1837, when *Godey's* merged with the publication she was formerly editing, the Boston-based *Ladies' Magazine*. Around this time, the importance and circulation of periodicals was on the rise. Improvements in literacy, printing, and transportation made it cheaper and easier to mass produce magazines and send them to all

¹ Okker, Patricia, *Our Sister Editors: Sarah J. Hale and the tradition of nineteenth-century American women editors*, (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1995), 37.

corners of the nation. By 1860, *Godey's* claimed that their readership was somewhere around 150,000, this coming at a time when the acclaimed literary magazine *The Dial* had a circulation of about 300.² Especially in an era when periodicals were gaining influence as a medium, *Godey's* impressive circulation numbers show how influential this particular magazine was.

To understand Hale's editorship, one must understand her life and history. Best known for her role in the campaign to make Thanksgiving a national holiday and her authorship of "Mary Had a Little Lamb," Sarah Josepha Buell was born in 1788 in the small town of Newport, New Hampshire. Like many of that era, Sarah was educated at home. In an autobiographical sketch from her 1853 history book, *Woman's Record*, Hale credits her mother with providing her solid educational foundation.³ Though higher education for women was not widely available at the time, Sarah's brother Horatio shared the knowledge of Latin, mathematics, and other upper-level subjects he learned at Dartmouth. For a number of years before her marriage, Sarah taught in the local schoolhouse. In 1813, Sarah married a lawyer, David Hale, who helped continue her education. David and Sarah would spend evenings together, reading and writing. When Sarah was thirty-four, David died of pneumonia, leaving her alone with five young children.⁴

Hale claimed she began a literary career to support her family after her husband's death. She began writing in her hometown of Newport as a member of a local literary club, "The Coterie." Her husband had belonged to the Masons and, when Hale needed support, members of the organization used their influence to get her work published. Hale's first novel, *Northwood*, which highlighted a New England Thanksgiving before Thanksgiving was a national holiday, is

² Okker, 13.

³ Hale, Sarah Josepha, *Woman's Record*. (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1853), Google Books, 687.

⁴ Hoffman, Nicole Tonkovich, "Sarah Josepha Hale (1788-1874)," *Legacy* 7, no. 2 (Fall 1990), 48, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25684398>.

often credited with bringing her to the attention of the publishing world. Soon after *Northwood* was released, in 1827, Hale was offered the position of editor at *The Ladies' Magazine*. In 1828, she moved from Newport to Boston to better fulfill her editorial duties.⁵ For nearly ten years, Hale edited *The Ladies' Magazine* until it merged with *Godey's* in 1837. She apparently enjoyed the job so much that she remained editor until 1877, with an impressive stretch of forty years working on the magazine. She died two years later at the age of 90.⁶

Hale was one of the most publically successful women of her time, and her story represents changing definitions of women's roles. Though Hale's position as a female editor was not necessarily unique, Hale recognized, appreciated, and utilized the power the station gave her. Scholars and writers from the first half of the twentieth century often romanticized Hale as "The First Woman Editor" in an era when "these things just were not done."⁷ However, in her 1995 study *Our Sister Editors*, Patricia Okker points out that women worked as printers and editors both before and after the American Revolution. The majority of these women took over for their husbands after their deaths.⁸ Okker's appendix identifies "over six hundred American women who edited nineteenth-century periodicals."⁹ Clearly, Hale was neither the first nor the only female editor of the era. So why is she remembered as such? Hale was the first woman able to create a strong cohesive message with her periodical. She knew the influence the position of editor gave her, and took full advantage of it. Hale used *Godey's* as a forum to explore subjects that were important to her, including American national culture and women's roles.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Okker, 1.

⁷ Olive Woolley Burt's *First Woman Editor* (1960) and Ruth Ebright Finley's *The Lady of Godey's* (1931) respectively.

⁸ Okker, 7.

⁹ Okker, 4 & 171-220.

In 1788, the year Hale was born, the future of the American nation was anything but certain. The break with England was relatively recent, and American democracy was a fledgling experiment. Hale was born in the height of an era when women were relied upon to help ensure the nation's future. Linda Kerber describes the philosophy of this period as "Republican Motherhood." As Kerber explains, American mothers were responsible for educating their children to be good democratic citizens: "The new republic leaned on the law for structure. In turn, an educated citizenry was expected to maintain the spirit of the law; righteous mothers were asked to raise the virtuous male citizens on whom the health of the Republic depended."¹⁰ Hale acts as a Republican Mother in the *Lady's Book*, encouraging readers to educate themselves and their children, and calling for them to appreciate the advantages they have as Americans. Hale seems particularly interested in the issue of forming American culture. At the time a large question under debate was whether America benefited more from rejecting European tradition and developing a unique national culture or recognizing that Europe would always be the height of Western civilization and attempting to adapt and perfect that culture.¹¹ Members of a new, insecure nation, Americans worried that, if they adopted the same culture as Europe, the efforts that had gone into revolution were for nothing. Throughout her time as editor, Hale worked to form and preserve a national culture, promoting American authorship and rejecting those who too willingly adopted what she viewed as the frivolous fashions of Europe.

As a female editor, Hale did not shy from discussing women's position in society but recognized her duty in helping define women's roles. Hale took over as editor in the interval

¹⁰ Kerber, Linda, *Women of the Republic: Intellect, and Ideology in Revolutionary America* (Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Press: 1980),

¹¹ Howell, William Hunting, "Spirits of Emulation: Readers, Samplers, and the Republican Girl, 1787-1810," *American Literature* 81, No. 3 (Sep. 2009), 506, <http://americanliterature.dukejournals.org/content/81/3/497>.

between the eras defined by modern scholars as “Republican Motherhood” and “The Cult of True Womanhood.” Barbara Welter coined the term “The Cult of True Womanhood” to define the ideal woman from 1820-1860. She identifies four traits that make a True Woman: piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity.¹² Kerber’s and Welter’s arguments imply that, in the nineteenth century, the dominant view of women switched from Republican Motherhood to True Womanhood. Both views involve spheres separated by gender. Both see women as moral protectoresses. However, Republican Motherhood places emphasis on women as educators and, therefore, as strong, influential members of society. The Cult of True Womanhood focuses on women as decorative elements in the home. Women still have an important role to play in moralizing, but a more sheltered demure one. Calling herself an “editress,” Hale was invested in discussions of women’s roles.¹³ Writing on the border of the two philosophies, to a certain degree, Hale subscribed to each. However, the trajectory of Hale’s career conflicts with the idealized images of women—as an editor, Hale did not restrict her influence to the home. Her writing on women’s roles, like the roles themselves, is complex, nuanced, and ever-changing.

For the first six years of *Godey’s* publication, while Godey himself was serving as editor, the magazine’s content, format, and view of its readership were much different than they would be in the future. The magazine from the early years is not entirely cohesive; it lacks definite direction and concrete themes. Receipts (a nineteenth-century word for recipe) for strawberry ice cream, rich gooseberry wine, and linseed cough syrup appear alongside sheet music for such

¹² Welter, Barbara, “The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860,” *American Quarterly* 18, no. 2 (Summer 1966), 151-174, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2711179>.

¹³ Okker, 74

songs as “The Sweet Birds are Singing,” and “The Blind Flower Girl: A Ballad.”¹⁴ All these are interspersed with fashion plates, one-line facts, and fiction and poetry re-printed from other magazines.

In 1836, the year Hale’s editorship would be announced, Louis Godey had improvements in mind, both for his career and his periodical. Throughout the year, he regularly mentions other projects in *Godey’s* editorials. Addressing the readers of his *Lady’s Book* in June of that year, Godey explains, “I am about to engage in a new enterprise...I intend to commence the publication of a weekly family newspaper.”¹⁵ Godey wanted to move to bigger and better things. One might expect that along with such an announcement, Godey would promise readers that the quality of the *Lady’s Book* would not drop. Godey provides no such guarantee. However, the improvements intended for the *Lady’s Book*, which he announces in other editorials that year, show that he does not plan to simply abandon the publication. Godey notes in the January “Editor’s Table,” “It will be seen that our January number appears in a new dress.”¹⁶ Beginning by altering the appearance of the magazine, Godey went on to change a number of things that year, both in structure and content. In his July “Editor’s Table,” Godey promises, “The Lady’s Book will still go on improving,” and announces the switch to original American content, and fashion plates monthly rather than occasionally.¹⁷ With goals of expanding his career and improving the *Lady’s Book*, it is no wonder Godey brought in help.

Evidence suggests that, though Hale was a woman, and it would have been somewhat novel for the time, Godey gave her more or less free reign as editor. Hale had autonomy over

¹⁴ Various *Godey’s* issues from 1836. Note that issues of *Godey’s Lady’s Book* are available in a number of formats. For the purpose of these citations, the electronic transcribed versions online at *Accessible Archives* were used.

¹⁵ Godey, Louis, “Editor’s Table,” *Godey’s*, June 1836.

¹⁶ Godey, Louis, “Editor’s Table,” *Godey’s*, Jan. 1836.

¹⁷ Godey, Louis, “Editor’s Table,” *Godey’s*, July 1836.

nearly all aspects of the magazine's content, with the exception of fashion, which she did not wish to edit, as she thought fashion was frivolous and immoral. Godey still served as publisher, taking care of the business aspects of the magazine. It was Godey who ensured subscribers paid their fees, that the magazine was printed and sent out in a timely manner, that the fashion plates came in from France, that the plates were adequately colored, that those who needed to be were paid, etc.¹⁸ The only indication that Godey ever censored Hale came over the issue of slavery. Okker explains that, in an 1856 issue of the *Lady's Book*, Godey "notified his readers that the printing office had orders to inform him of any political allusions, because, as he explained, 'the ladies object.'"¹⁹ Other than occasional vetoes from Godey on topics that might offend readers, it seems Hale more or less had control over the majority of material in the *Lady's Book*.

With Godey supervising as publisher, Hale worked to shape the magazine to meet her ideals, including the formation of a national spirit and the uplift of women. In the process, Hale made the magazine the grand cultural success it would become. The values Hale wished to highlight in the magazine come across directly in the first piece she wrote as editor, "The *Conversazione*." Rather than use the purely English-sounding word, "conversation," Hale chooses an Italian word her readers would no doubt find exotic and sophisticated. Implying that the magazine is a "conversation" approaches women in a friendly tone that had been lacking in previous issues. In "The *Conversazione*," Hale notes three subjects that the magazine will focus on improving: literature, women's education, and fashion.²⁰ Hale's goals of promoting nationalism and wider definitions of gender roles correspond perfectly to the sections mentioned in "The *Conversazione*." By fostering American literature, Hale encouraged national culture. By

¹⁸Okker, 51.

¹⁹Okker, 76

²⁰ Hale, Sarah Josepha, "Conversazione," *Godey's*, Jan. 1837

discussing women's education in every issue, Hale attempted to expand roles available to women. Fashion, which Hale did not approve of, corresponds with her willingness to compromise on certain issues in the spirit of coming together and getting things accomplished.

This study, comparing the twelve issues from before Hale became editor to the twelve first issues she edited, examines correlations of literature and nationalism, women's education and roles, and fashion and compromise. Numerous differences appear from 1836 to 1837, from the simple—receipts and sheet music no longer appearing in every issue, to the complex—cohesive themes beginning to emerge. The content changes, with short stories becoming increasingly American, original, and honest. Sections become streamlined, with distinct foci on American writers, women's education, and fashion plates. There can be no doubt that Sarah Josepha Hale's involvement in *Godey's Lady's Book* changed the periodical in a number of important ways, making it both more sophisticated and more popular. In addition to changing the *Lady's Book*, Hale's editorship changed society. Hale forced subscribers to consider issues of nation and gender, helping to bolster American culture, and expand roles available for women as the century progressed.

Literature and Nationalism

In her “Conversazione,” Hale notes literature as a point of concentrated improvement for her editorship. In light of her personal principles, it becomes apparent that Hale’s goal of enhancing the literature of the publication is closely related to her goal of fostering national culture. Both in the authorship and the content of the stories she includes, Hale proves that creating a strong American literary culture is foremost on her mind. By expanding the base of acceptable authorship and readership to include women, explaining the educative value of literature, and promoting patriotism in the context of short stories published, Hale repeatedly suggests that literature represents a path to a robust, civilized, and educated America.

Hale’s “Conversazione” discussion of literature begins by addressing the common nineteenth-century argument that fiction was a distraction from the domestic role, something that might expose women to influences that were less than wholesome, and therefore something women should avoid. Hale combats such arguments, saying of fiction, “There is in these compositions, when rightly managed, the wisdom of the world, which is necessary to be known, without the perils and temptations which actual experience must have encountered.”²¹ Here, Hale acknowledges the argument of the opposing side, accepting that literature often includes “perils and temptations.” However, Hale puts her faith in women, believing they can read something in a book without incorporating it into their daily lives. In Hale’s view, women must be aware of the dangers of the world. In fact, she implies that knowledge of these evils will make women more content with remaining in the home. In addition, she suggests allowing women to read fiction exposes them to “the wisdom of the world,” which could no doubt help them in their

²¹ Hale, Sarah Josepha, “Conversazione,” *Godey’s*, Jan. 1837.

Republican Mother roles. The more these women learn, the better they will be at educating their children to be exemplary citizens of a republican nation.

Hale believed the power of literature extended beyond that of an acceptable outlet for impure impulses to something capable of real moral uplift. Later in “The Conversazione,” Hale advises, “Read them young lady—the novels of Miss Austen should have their place in your library, beside the moral essays of Miss Hannah More. One will convince the understanding of the beauty of virtue, the other will draw the heart to practice it.”²² Both authors Hale cites are female, showing she believed women should have a place in authorship, especially if they are writing something that improves society’s morals. From Hale’s perspective, moral writings have their place, but literature is the force that shows women how to put moral principles into practice. Recognizing that fiction was more likely to appeal to a wider audience, Hale suggests it may be the more effective medium for conveying the details of practical morality to the masses. Hale encourages American women to read these books in order to become better citizens, better educators, and better Republican Mothers.

Just as Hale’s biography illuminates her editorial choices, a basic knowledge of the literature she read provides insight into how she incorporates literature into the *Lady’s Book*. The works that came to influence Hale’s own life can be seen in the closest Hale comes to writing an autobiography: the brief sketch she includes of herself in her nearly 900-page exhaustive 1853 collection of biographies, *Women’s Record or, Sketches of All Distinguished Women, From ‘The Beginning’ Till A.D. 1850*. The choice to produce this work, which celebrates successful women throughout history, says a great deal about her personal goals and aims. She wanted to celebrate the history of women, a history she believed had long been neglected. Her profile, falling

²² Ibid.

alphabetically between “Hahn-Hahn, Ida Maria Louisa Frederica Gustava, Countess of” and “Hall, Anna Maria,” begins as follows: “**Hale, Sarah Josepha**, as author of this work, “Woman’s Record” may hope that her name here will not be considered out of place.”²³ Though modest, Hale already considers herself a woman worthy of history. In the autobiographical sketch that follows, Hale explains her literary influences saying, “A few words respecting the influences which have, probably, caused me to become the Chronicler of my own sex...I was mainly educated by my mother, and strictly taught to make the Bible the guide of my life.” She goes on to explain, “Next to the Bible and *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, my earliest reading was Milton, Addison, Pope, Johnson, Cowper, Burns and a portion of Shakespeare.”²⁴ These works and authors are classics, cited by many in early America as some of the works that influenced them the most. Often, these might have been the only works available to Americans, especially to individuals living in small towns. Hale suggests that these books were the basis of her education. They are varied in form and time period, suggesting that they provided Hale a well-rounded education. Presented to her by her own Republican Mother, Hale portrays the combination of these books and her own initiative to read and absorb them as the key to her success.

A list of classic literature that informed one’s education is a common trope of early American autobiography. This statement, in Hale’s self-consciously image-shaping portrait, is reminiscent of *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* when Franklin explains the effect books had on his life: “Pleased with the *Pilgrim’s Progress*, my first collection was of John Bunyan’s works in separate little volumes. I afterwards sold them to enable me to buy R. Burton’s

²³ Hale, *Woman’s Record*, 687.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

Historical Collections.”²⁵ Both Franklin and Hale feel compelled to include a list of the formative books of their early years in their autobiographical pieces. The similarities between Hale and Franklin do not end there. Both mention *Pilgrim’s Progress*, a staple of early American bookshelves. Both describe books as their primary form of education. Both rely on the assumption that one can better oneself by reading. And both hold goals of building a thriving United States by telling the story of how they educated themselves and became successful. Hale, like Franklin before her, sets herself up as a model for the achievement of the American Dream, and therefore, for the continued success of the nation as a whole.

Hale’s influences were not all those stereotypically considered formative to American culture and citizenship. Hale describes other influences, saying, “The first regular novel I read was ‘The Mysteries of Udolpho,’ when I was quite a child.”²⁶ *The Mysteries of Udolpho* is a Gothic work written by Englishwoman Ann Ward Radcliff in 1794. In scholar Terry Castle’s introduction to the 1998 Oxford World’s Classics edition of the book, Castle calls *Mysteries* “The greatest (or at least most famous) of Gothic romances.”²⁷ True to Gothic form, the novel involves an orphaned main character, imprisoned in the Italian villa of her evil uncle, Count Montoni.²⁸ The influence of this novel on Hale helps explain why Hale’s *Godey’s* contains so much Gothic literature. Edgar Allan Poe contributed to the publication, and his famously disturbing story, “The Cask of Amontillado,” about a man who bricks his drunken rival into a wine cellar, was first published in the November 1846 edition of the *Lady’s Book*.²⁹ This Gothic

²⁵ Franklin, Benjamin, *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*, Ed. J.A. Leo Lamay, (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1986), 10.

²⁶ Hale, *Woman’s Record*, 687.

²⁷ Castle, Terry, “Introduction,” In *The Mysteries of Udolpho* by Anne Radcliffe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), vii.

²⁸ Castle, viii.

²⁹ Charis-Carlson, Jeffery A, “‘You, Who So Well Know the Nature of My Soul’ Poe and

influence on Hale, and her publications, embodies the model of risk-free experience of the world that Hale describes in her “Conversazione.” Obviously, the ideal domestic woman will not have been held captive in a European castle in her youth. However, by reading Gothic stories, every woman could experience the dark excitement and adventure of such an occurrence. Hopefully gaining these experiences vicariously would make women more content with their domestic roles.

As Hale explains, it was not so much the content of *The Mysteries of Udolpho* as the authorship that had such an influential effect on her:

I had remarked that of all the books I saw, few were written by Americans and none by *women*. Here was a work, the most fascinating I had read, always excepting ‘The Pilgrim’s Progress,’ written by a woman! How happy it made me! The wish to promote the reputation of my own sex, and do something for my own country, were among the earliest mental emotions I can recollect.³⁰

This quote may be the best possible summary of Hale’s career and aims. Observing in her readings that American authors were rare, and American women authors non-existent, Hale finds her calling in promoting both. By advocating American authorship, Hale tries to create an American cultural landscape distinct from that of Europe. Like Franklin, Hale felt called to do something to enrich her country. However, for Hale, improving things for her country and her gender are inextricably linked. By improving the position of women, Hale believes the nation will improve as well, and that all this can be accomplished with the help of authorship and literature.

As a result of her nationalistic goals, Hale ensured that original and American works were the primary material published in the *Lady’s Book*. Whereas the majority of poems, stories

the Question of Literary Audience,” *American Periodicals* 12 (2002), 198, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20770904>.

³⁰ Hale, *Woman’s Record*, 687.

and articles from earlier issues are subtitled with phrases such as “From *The British Lady’s Magazine*,” “From the *American Monthly Magazine*,” and “by an English Lady lately published in London, but not yet re-printed in this country,” most pieces from the 1837 edition proudly proclaim, “Written for the Lady’s Book.” Patricia Okker gives Hale a great deal of credit for helping authorship become a profession in the US, rather than a gentlemanly hobby, as it had been viewed previously. Okker points to three specific policies Hale put into place upon becoming editor as particularly influential on the American literary landscape:

First, while most magazine editors relied on pirated material, Hale accepted only original submissions. Second, she rejected the ideal of the anonymous writer and encouraged attribution, thereby allowing writers to build the reputation necessary for professional status. Finally, Hale supported an author’s right to be paid for their written work.³¹

Hale’s policies, progressive for her time, show the real impact she had on the American publishing world. In 1845, during Hale’s time as editor, *Godey’s* became the first American periodical protected under copyright law.³² All these facts fit with Hale’s ideas of creating a unique American cultural landscape. Promoting originality, Hale’s policies also allowed Americans to pursue authorship professionally, knowing they would be recognized and compensated for their work. These facts also support Hale’s goal of creating an educated American populace. To educate people, you need books. To ensure that educative books are available, authorship must be a viable profession.

Looking at the stories from before and after Hale’s editorship helps show the effect these policies had. On a quantitative level, the average number of stories in each issue hardly changes from one year to the next. The twelve issues from 1836 contain 75 short stories, for an average of 6.25 stories per issue. The twelve issues from 1837 hold 81 short stories, bringing the average up

³¹ Okker, 87.

³² Okker, 91.

only half a story to 6.75 per issue. However, another quantitative factor, the gender of the main character, shows a significant difference. Looking through the stories in the magazines, each can be sorted into one of five categories: those with a female main character, those with a male main character, those with a family focus, those which center on young love, and those with a somewhat ambiguous focus. The ambiguous category includes allegories, broader histories, and stories that focus not on characters but more collective segments of the population. The breakdown of foci from the two years is as follows:

Year	Female	Male	Family	Young Love	Ambiguous	Total
1836	31	31	5	5	3	75
1837	33	19	5	4	20	81

The foci of the stories represent the most compelling evidence for changes in *Godey's* fiction. Proportionally, the stories with female characters, those of young love, and those of families stay relatively the same. What really changes between the two years is the number of stories following men and the stories with a more ambiguous focus. A large number of stories formerly centered on men shift to the ambiguous category.

Overall, the stories in the ambiguous category have a more social bent. They are not about individuals, male or female, but about universal themes and collective groups. The stories have a variety of characters in different stages of life. For example, the “Tale of the French Revolution” includes a heroic wealthy merchant from Lyons who escapes execution, the peasant woman who helps him, and the miller who gives him a job and encourages him to change his identity.³³ The story criticizes the violent actions of the revolutionaries, but at the same time,

³³ “A Tale of the French Revolution,” *Godey's*, Jan. 1837.

advocates the idea that good can come from citizens at all economic levels, if they only work together and help each other. “The Two Graves” tells the story of no one in particular, but is a fictionalized account of loss, a theme that everyone can understand.³⁴ Most stories in the ambiguous category are relatable; everyone can find a connection. This shift of stories to the ambiguous category suggests a more societal focus than was previously in the magazine. Rather than include great numbers of stories of masculine war campaigns or business adventures, Hale adds stories that speak to a wide range of readers, advocate morality, and encourage citizens to come together. These themes work towards promoting Hale’s goals of creating educated, moral citizens and a cohesive national spirit.

Particularly after the shift, it can become difficult to distinguish between stories written as fiction and those that are non-fiction. Like literary reality television programs, many of the stories seem scripted to make things that did not exactly happen a certain way seem real. Some are tightly interwoven conglomerations of history and historical fiction, like June 1837’s “The Last Days of Louis XVI.” Some appear to be diary entries, such as February 1837’s “Idalia or What do you think” by Miss C.E. Gooch. A great number of stories are told in the first person, leaving readers wondering if this is the author’s first-hand account or a work of fiction. Stories from the first category work to educate readers, while keeping their interest. American women readers could relate to material in the second and third categories, especially in contrast to some of the works included before Hale’s editorship. Before the shift, many stories fit a genre of upper class European social drama, which could be enjoyed as escapism but does not relate directly to the lives of female readers. After the shift, stories focused more on the daily lives of middle-class women in America. This change indicates that Hale viewed the purpose of literature differently

³⁴ “The Two Graves,” *Godey’s*, March 1837.

than did her predecessor. She saw it as something that could aid women in getting through their everyday routines, not as something that helped them briefly forget their troubles.

The first short story during Hale's time as editor, "The Heart's Ordeals" by Mrs. Woodhull, shows a move towards more honest, relatable material. It includes a crisis of faith, which though perhaps a taboo subject, was something women of the time undoubtedly experienced. The omniscient, third-person narrator describes of the main character, Caroline Benson, "Even her confidence in God was fast-failing. She felt his power to crush, but not to uphold: to destroy, but not to save; and she shrunk back from committing herself to His sure guardianship."³⁵ A new mother, Caroline has moved from her home to a place full of strangers to be nearer her husband. No particular reason is given for her crisis, though hints of postpartum depression appear, as the narrator explains, "Young mothers generally have many trials to encounter on first taking up their arduous cares."³⁶ This seems an exceptionally honest portrayal of life. It is neither romanticized nor escapist, but is real in a way that shows women they are not alone in an era when feeling this way did not necessarily have a name. There is no action or adventure in the tale, just a description of the mental crisis Caroline undergoes. The story ends with Caroline's faith in God restored and more resilient as a result of her crisis. In the end, traditional values are upheld, but the story recognizes the inevitability of questioning. It allows that periods of wondering and thinking can be a good thing and can even make one stronger in the end.

Comparing this to a story from before Hale's editorship that would theoretically have the same theme, "The Young Family" by Henry Neele, shows a great deal about the changes Hale's editorship helped bring about. The most obvious difference is the authorship, with "The Heart's

³⁵ Mrs. Woodhull, "The Heart's Ordeals," *Godey's*, Jan. 1837.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

Ordeals” written by a woman and “The Young Family” written by a man, an Englishman no less, as the English setting proves. Hale hoped to promote American and female authors; the author of “The Young Family” is neither of these. “The Young Family” is prefaced by a disclaimer, “The following story is a happy illustration of Mr. Neele’s humorous style,”³⁷ so that readers will not be offended by the content. The story, narrated from a bachelor’s perspective, describes his visit to the home of a friend from school days. He explains the harrowing experience of having to meet the friend’s gaggle of dirty, obnoxious children and having to suffer the incapable hostess-ship of his friend’s wife, a former “journey-woman.” The wife character lacks depth; readers are only meant to laugh at her ignorance of the ways higher classes entertain. Given her circumstances, it is not unlikely that this young wife has many of the same concerns as Caroline Benson, and yet the story is unsympathetic to the difficulties young wives face. Though “The Young Family” is a different genre than “The Heart’s Ordeals,” and will therefore naturally be less serious, a story can be comic and not belittle women and their work. The narrator ends by completely writing off domestic ideals, saying, “I felicitated myself, that I was *not* the happiest fellow in the world; that I had *not* married a journey-woman; and that I was *not* blessed with a sweet young family.”³⁸

Though the “Heart’s Ordeals” and “The Young Family” have similar themes, they could not be more different. Hale would not approve of the way Neele belittles women and domesticity in his story. His bachelor character feels no sympathy, especially for a woman of a lower class. This is not an American attitude. This is not a woman’s attitude. This is not Hale’s attitude. As editor, Hale wanted to foster American authorship and a distinctive American character that was decidedly moral. The path to achieving this lay not in reprinting works that glorified the culture

³⁷ Neele, Henry, “The Young Family,” *Godey’s*, Jan. 1836.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

and values of European society, but in publishing original works by American authors that portrayed American landscapes and American culture in a moral light.

Hale provides examples of her ideals for literature when she includes her own works in the *Lady's Book*. A prime example of this is “An Adventure at the West,” which appeared in June 1837. The story begins with a Byron quote: “He who loves not his country can love nothing.”³⁹ Before the narrative even begins, this quote sets the stage for a show of patriotism, characteristic of Hale’s nationalistic aims. The story focuses on a group of young people—Mr. and Mrs. Hubbard, Miss Cunningham, and Captain Austin—walking in the wilderness of the American West. The exact location is not specified, but by the title, one can assume it takes place somewhere in Louisiana Purchase territory. Captain Austin’s character is portrayed as traveled and worldly. A remark of his on the superiority of the American landscape causes Mrs. Hubbard to note: “You are still a true American, I find, notwithstanding your long travels and residence in foreign lands.”⁴⁰ Captain Austin goes on to explain how living in a land of freedom is far better than any natural beauty found in Europe. A military man, Captain Austin is the image of the ideal American—educated, experienced, traveled, and fiercely patriotic.

The discussion continues with Captain Austin providing a metaphor for the superiority of the American political landscape. Austin explains that much of the European continent is overrun with vicious wild animals, while American wildlife is much more temperate. In a moment of extremely contrived irony, right as Captain Austin says this, Miss Cunningham looks up to spot a gigantic panther lurking in the tree above her. The brave Captain Austin coolly brings out his rifle and shoots the creature. A stereotype-breaking scene of literary gore, written by Hale, follows:

³⁹ Hale, Sarah Josepha, “An Adventure at the West,” *Godey's*, June 1837.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

...the panther, which had fallen, struggling and shrieking, lay wallowing in his gore on the ground. Captain Austin, to make sure of his work, placed the muzzle of the loaded barrel (it was double-barreled) close to the head of the animal, and discharged it; the creature was dead in a moment.⁴¹

This is not a story of a happy family sitting by the hearth. Hale unflinchingly gives the details of the scene, right down to the shot in the head. Words such as “struggling,” “shrieking,” “wallowing,” and “gore” form a truly ghastly image of death and violence. What motive could Hale have for including details like this in a story written for a domestic women’s magazine? Perhaps this harkens back to the idea of literature allowing women a wider range of experiences, without the dangers of actually undergoing them. The fact that Hale herself wrote this scene implies she approves of roles for women beyond that considered acceptable by nineteenth-century society. These expanded roles included, but were not limited, to western adventurers and authors capable of portraying bloodshed and violence.

The story ends with a speech that shows Hale had an agenda as she wrote, employing both awkward connections and heavy-handed allegory. The group has just had their life threatened by a panther, which they then saw brutally murdered, and yet Captain Austin takes this moment as a lesson in political philosophy. Mrs. Hubbard asks if Captain Austin’s theory on the mild nature of American wildlife has not just been disproved. The Captain responds, “By no means, madam—this is only an exception, which will, you know, prove the rule.”⁴² He explains how European philosophers he had spoken with “always sheltered themselves under the exceptions, whenever I contended that a republican government was the best and most conducive to human improvement and happiness.” Captain Austin paraphrases these philosophers, saying, “Such a government...may be best for your nation—but your people are not like others. Freedom

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

may be a blessing to the free, virtuous and intelligent, but cannot be conferred on the ignorant, degraded population of old governments.”⁴³ He asserts that these philosophers are incorrect in assuming that their pasts of aristocracy and monarchy exclude them from the ability to develop a democracy. Through Captain Austin, Hale suggests that the superior political system is democracy, and that all societies can aspire to it, showing the early days of American attempts to spread democracy throughout the world.

As the conversation reaches the topic of the spread of democracy, Mrs. Hubbard returns to the panther, making the incident an allegory. Mrs. Hubbard’s mention of the panther prompts Captain Austin to remark, “Not merely panthers, but lions are in the path of the reformers of the old world. And we should feel that our lot is a blessed one, placed as we are in a land where no tyrant has ever ruled, and scarce a single species of ferocious or poisonous animals is found.”⁴⁴ This is a lesson to Americans to be grateful that their nation, which was formed as a democracy, is not, like Europe, constantly wondering how to deal with its complex, aristocratic past. According to the story, democracy is the ideal state of a society. This is Republican Motherhood at its best. Hale serves as the storyteller, the educator, letting readers know the value of democracy. At the same time, Hale fights for an expansion of women’s roles, proving that they too are capable of writing not only about domestic scenes but also about violence, gore, and political philosophy. By today’s standards, Hale is not a good writer. Her panther metaphor gets twisted around and seems to mean something different in every paragraph. Her purpose of promoting patriotism becomes troublingly blatant by the end of the story. However, she does not need to be the greatest writer. Hale gets her point across and maintains a readership rate higher than most other periodicals in the era.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

Hale's opinions on the purpose of fiction made the literature in *Godey's* more original and complex. Hale argued that literature was particularly suited for women because of its ability to expose them to otherwise dangerous temptations of the world, and its ability to teach them how to live out the moral ideals they learned from other sources. Hale includes literature she thinks women would enjoy and benefit from, with relatable themes that promote national pride and collective spirit. Hale also used literature to support her Republican Motherhood-oriented goal of creating a strong American nation. Hale recognized that it was not just military strength that would ensure the nation's future, but a thriving national culture that served as a source of pride. Hale suggested that women, with their high moral standards, were equally capable creators of such culture. In her editorial role, Hale enacted innovative policies to encourage authorship among American citizens, which would hopefully create a thriving American literary scene. Overall, Hale's editorial role helped improve the literature in *Godey's*, transforming the magazine from what was largely a re-print of foreign materials to a serious American literary forum.

Women's Education and Women's Roles

Of all Hale's objectives, the one arguably the most important to her is that of women's education. The era in which Hale was writing saw great progress in female education, with women's schools opening around the nation. The year Hale took over as editor, 1837, was the same year Mount Holyoke College (then Mount Holyoke Female Seminary) opened its doors. In Connecticut, Catherine Beecher's Hartford Female Seminary was thriving.⁴⁵ In the earliest days of her career, Hale was as a teacher in her hometown schoolhouse. Throughout her time as editor, Hale constantly argued for the need to educate women. In her later years, Hale was an influential force in the founding of Vassar College. Her editorship represents a drastic change in *Godey's* discussion of education in that the discussion exists in the issues she edits. In the editions of the *Lady's Book* before Hale's time as editor, education is not mentioned at all. The magazine, in the first six years, did not have such a cohesive focus or outright political goals. The very issue in which Hale becomes editor immediately shows the importance education had for Hale. She introduces a new segment, "The Ladies' Mentor," which discusses philosophies of and developments in women's education. The column appears in the magazine every month for this first year. Hale's advocacy for the expansion of women's education coincides with her goal of expanding acceptable roles for women. Hale believed education helped ensure that women could live happy, fulfilled lives regardless of their circumstances.

In "The Conversazione," Hale frames the need for women's education using rhetoric characteristic of the Cult of True Womanhood. She points to women as the protectoresses of society, claiming it is their high influence that keeps the world grounded in morality. She goes on to describe the necessity of education in relation to the moralizing power of women, saying,

⁴⁵ "The Rise of Women's Colleges," *Barnard.Columbia.edu*, <http://beatl.barnard.columbia.edu/students/his3464y/iyobe/higher4.htm>

But this influence of women can only become permanent and truly beneficial, when sustained by firm Christian principles and faith, enlightened and adorned by an education which brings her reason as well as feelings to the support of those principles and that faith. There must be intelligence or there can be no virtue.⁴⁶

Hale portrays women's education as something not necessary for the beneficial effect it will have on women, but for the beneficial effect it will have on society. Whether or not she actually believes that women's education is a worthy goal in itself, she knows that putting education in terms of the good it can do for society overall will do more to accomplish her objectives. She suggests that true virtue is impossible without knowledge, and that educated women will be better able to fulfill their roles as the wholesome and nurturing mothers of society.

In addition to explaining why the nation should educate its young women, Hale describes how to interest the nation's young women in becoming educated:

Who would succeed in persuading a young lady to study mathematics, philosophy, and rhetoric by informing her of the utility of these sciences in the business world—in obtaining wealth, fame, and power? But tell her that this knowledge will discipline her own mind, and make her more capable or promoting the happiness and success of those she loves...and the severest studies will be a pleasure, if, by the aid of these, she can increase and serve her empire of the heart⁴⁷

Though Hale does not address young women directly, this is essentially a plea for them to recognize the benefits of studying and learning. Hale realizes that the traditional motivations for men to become educated would not resonate with many women. She turns to the rhetoric of separate spheres, suggesting that men, out in the world looking for personal success, are interested in education for their own sakes. Using the phrase, "the empire of the heart," Hale offers women a domain that they can reasonably aspire to rule over. She implies that women cannot be attracted to education by the same selfish means men are, and instead appeals to them

⁴⁶ Hale, Sarah Josepha, "Conversazione," *Godey's*, Jan. 1837.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

through the idea of helping others. Hale's contrast of selfish men with selfless women shows that, in Hale's mind, men and women are decidedly different. And women are better.

Also underlying "The Conversazione" is Hale's belief that education for women should be by women. She explains: "If men are, by their position and knowledge of the world, better qualified to instruct men, it can hardly fail to be conceded that a woman is more susceptible of those delicate traits of feeling and sympathies of the soul which predominate in her own sex."⁴⁸ Though here, she is speaking of the validity of her own editorship of a magazine for women, the statement applies directly to her views on education as well. With the idea of separate spheres as the guiding principle, Hale attempts to open up respect in the field of educational careers to women. The idea is that men, theoretically the more rational thinkers, are better at instructing the type of traditionally academic thought required of members of their own sex, while women are better at providing the moral instruction that young women require.

Just as Hale's nationalist ideas correspond with those of Franklin, the educational ideals she lays out in the "Conversazione" are similar to those outlined by another founding father, Benjamin Rush. In Rush's 1787 commencement address at the Young Ladies' Academy of Philadelphia, Rush proclaims, "...let the ladies of a country be educated properly, and they will not only make and administer its laws, but form its manners and character."⁴⁹ Speaking the year before Hale's birth, Rush introduces the same sort of rhetoric in favor of female education on which Hale would come to rely. Rush argues for women's education not because it is good for women, but because it is good for the nation. Rush is willing to put his trust for the future into the hands of women because, he admits, they are often the ones who truly shape character and influence political affairs. He suggests that if women are educated properly, they can be trusted

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Howell, 497.

to help run the nation. Like founding fathers before her, Hale puts much of her faith for the success of nation's future in the female population and suggests that education is needed for women to reach their full potential.

Intertwined with the idea of women's education is that of women's roles. Whether or not a woman is educated, and what purpose she is educated for, plays a great part in both determining and illustrating acceptable women's roles. Hale's personal view of women's roles is complex, nuanced, and constantly in flux. In a way, Hale regressed over her time as editor. In her study, Okker points out two contrasting quotes from Hale editorials. In an 1828 issue of the *Ladies' Magazine*, Hale claimed, "There is no sex in talent, in genius,"⁵⁰ while in an 1857 edition of *Godey's*, Hale stated that, "The proposition 'genius has no sex' is preposterous as well as false."⁵¹ How could two such directly contradictory sentiments come from the same author? How could the second sentiment come from a woman who was, herself, the embodiment of an intelligent and successful woman in the public eye? Okker explains part of this contradiction, saying Hale believed in separate spheres for men and women, but that these spheres were not necessarily delineated as public or private. Okker argues that Hale was attempting to create a public sphere specifically gendered female.⁵² The difference in these quotes also exemplifies the switch from ideas of Republican Motherhood to those of the Cult of True Womanhood. In Hale's mind, this change occurred completely at some point in the years between these two quotes. The year Hale took over as editor, 1837, sitting in between these two quotes and seemingly opposing beliefs, provides a great point to examine the process Hale went through to transition from one viewpoint to another.

⁵⁰ Hale, Sarah Josepha, *Ladies' Magazine*, Nov. 1828.

⁵¹ Hale, Sarah Josepha, "Editor's Table," *Godey's*, Feb. 1857.

⁵² Okker, 38.

Throughout her time as editor, Hale often discusses women's political rights as a part of her exploration of acceptable women's roles. Her support of expanded rights, or lack thereof, for women adds another level of complexity to her views of women. Hale never was in favor of women's suffrage but did believe in extending certain political rights. In the May 1837 issue of *Godey's*, Hale includes an opinion piece she wrote, "The Rights of Married Women." In the piece, Hale writes in favor of a bill under debate in the New York House of Assembly. The bill has three main sections. The essence of the first is that women who come into a marriage owning property retain rights to that property. The second allows men a *dower* in the case of the death of a wife in the same way that a wife would get a dower upon her husband's death. The third forbids the transfer of a wife's property to her husband without her consent. Hale claims if the bill were passed, it would "prove of inestimable benefit to society, by promoting the security and happiness of domestic life."⁵³ Indeed, the bill provides benefits for both men and women in marriages, expanding rights normally afforded men to women and expanding rights normally afforded to women to men. Like her arguments for women's education, Hale explains that the benefit does not apply to women alone, but also to men, couples, and society as a whole.

Hale does not end there in justifying her support for the law. She goes on to list different reasons it is important, from political to social, reflecting the gauntlet of different arguments one might make against it:

The barbarous custom of wresting from a woman whatever she possesses, whether by inheritance, donation, or her own industry, and conferring it all upon the man she marries... is such a monstrous perversion of *justice by law*, that we might well marvel how it could obtain in a Christian community.⁵⁴

⁵³ Hale, Sarah Josepha, "Rights of Married Women," *Godey's*, May 1837.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

The use of terms like “barbarous,” “wresting,” and “monstrous” show Hale’s opinion of men as compared to women. Where Hale points to women as moral and civilizing influences, she portrays the men in charge as cruel, violent, and barbaric. Here, women are shown as victims of evil, greedy men. Hale appeals to people’s religious and secular sensibilities, explaining that no matter how people guide themselves morally, the current law makes no sense. Though Hale may have not supported extensive expansion of rights for women, she did believe they were entitled to a certain measure of political respect and human rights.

It is not just what Hale says, but the stories she publishes that reflect her views of women. Lauren McCall analyzed *Godey’s* stories empirically, using the four Cult of True Womanhood traits famously outlined by Barbra Welter—piety, purity, submissiveness and domesticity. McCall’s analysis of 120 randomly selected *Godey’s* stories from between 1830 and 1860 proved,

...eighty-five (36.3%) did not possess any of the four characteristics (40.6%) possessed one of the traits, forty (17.1%) had two, and only fourteen (6%) held three of the four supposed determinants of ideal womanhood...*not one* possessed all four features that purportedly made up the ‘true woman’ of antebellum America.⁵⁵

These facts again reflect the sophistication Hale brought to the magazine. Though Hale did, to a large extent, ascribe to True Womanhood principles, she also recognized the nuanced lives most women lived. Hale’s ideal women is not simply pious, pure, submissive, and domestic. She is more importantly, educated, nurturing, humble, and effective. This is apparent in that first short story, “The Heart’s Ordeals.” Caroline does not fulfill any True Womanhood qualifications with her crisis of faith. What matters is that she overcomes her crisis to become a wonderful mother to her child. Hale’s short story choices confirm the fact that she was less concerned with promoting

⁵⁵ McCall, Laura, “The Reign of Brute Force Is Now Over: A Content Analysis of ‘Godey’s Lady’s Book,’ 1830-1860,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 9, No. 2 (Summer 1989), 235, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3123204>.

True Womanhood values and more focused on creating a true picture of honest and good women with which most American women could relate.

Another format Hale uses to explore women's roles and education is the column, "Outlines of Life and Character," which profiles great women in history. As with her encyclopedic *Woman's Record*, Hale tries to honor those women she feels history has forgotten. Before Hale's editorship, each 1836 edition of the *Lady's Book* highlighted a great male figure—Milton, Shelley, Hume, etc. Beginning in 1837, the switch from biographies of men to biographies of women represents yet another way in which Hale tightened the magazine thematically to make it a cohesive women's periodical. Hale's first profile is of Lucretia Maria Davidson, a nineteenth-century poetic prodigy who died at the age of seventeen. Hale praises Davidson's moral poetry and focuses on her educational experiences and how they helped form her talent. Davidson attended the Troy Female Seminary, under principal Mrs. Emma Willard, who is mentioned in "The Conversazione" as someone who will eventually contribute to the discussion of education in the *Lady's Book*.⁵⁶ Hale's profile of Davidson describes how, for her, the Seminary represented "the fountain for which she had so long thirsted, and her spiritual eagerness could not be restrained."⁵⁷ By spotlighting women who have had great educations, describing what those women have been able to do with those educations, and celebrating what their educations meant to them, Hale is furthering the idea she outlines in the "Conversazione." If women were not enticed to undertake education for the same reasons men were, Hale provides them with alternative examples of the value education can have for an individual.

The most important tool Hale has for discussing the value of women's education is her monthly column, "The Ladies' Mentor." The title of the column is significant, though

⁵⁶ Hale, Sarah Josepha, "The Conversazione," *Godey's*, Jan. 1837.

⁵⁷ Hale, Sarah Josepha, "Lucretia Maria Davidson," *Godey's*, Jan. 1837.

ambiguous. Does Hale view herself as The Ladies' Mentor? Or does she see the need for women to find mentors of their own in their quests for education? Regardless, the title implies women advising and teaching their fellow women. With a "Mentor" every week, Hale tries to keep the column fresh and interesting, highlighting different institutions of female learning throughout the nation, comparing the American educational system to those abroad, and bringing in alternative voices. Through all these different formats of argument, the theme that women's education will contribute to the improvement of the nation, both political and moral, is never forgotten.

Hale's first "Mentor" column represents a common theme, highlighting triumphs of American women's education through specific examples. This particular column focuses on the education system Hale knows best, that of her home state of New Hampshire, where she herself was a teacher. Hale shows her bias towards the state when, in the first few lines of the column, she says of the citizenry, "the whole mass of the people are, we believe, better instructed than in any other state in the confederation. There can rarely be found an instance of neglect of a common school education among the children of the Granite State"⁵⁸ Hale attributes the success of education in New Hampshire to the idea that schools there had always been equally open to both sexes: "From the first settlement of the state, common or free schools was [*sic*] established in every town and district, where both sexes were admitted to equal advantages."⁵⁹ Hale portrays the coeducational model followed in New Hampshire as the ideal, despite also claiming that gender-separated education is best. Hale implies that it is better to have mixed gender education than no education for women at all. She goes on to discuss two "principal female institutions in the state"—Miss Fiske's Seminary at Keene and the New Hampton Female Seminary. She gives

⁵⁸ Hale, Sarah Josepha, "The Ladies' Mentor," *Godey's*, Jan. 1837.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

a brief overview of the history and mission of each institution, extols their virtues, and sets them up as models for the nation.

Hale's February "Mentor" column has an entirely different focus, representing another common theme, women's education internationally. Hale brings world comparisons into the discussion by quoting famous Indian social reformer of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Ram Mohun Roy, on his theory "that both Britain and America owed their greatness and glory to the character of their females."⁶⁰ Hale tries to show that the rest of the world is jealous of the education provided in Anglo-Saxon nations. Hale describes her use of India in the column, saying, "We have introduced the subject of education in India in our Mentor this month, to awaken our American ladies to the great and glorious opportunities granted them of benefiting their sex."⁶¹ Again showing her nationalism, Hale wants American women to appreciate and take full advantage of the opportunities afforded to them as US citizens. Though Hale believes women's education has a long way to go, she often brings up the idea that women's education in America is the best in the world. For Hale, the education of women helps make a town, state or nation great. By increasing educational opportunities for women, the logic goes, these communities can only become greater.

Hale does not just rely on her own views and opinions for "Mentor" columns; the April 1837 edition shows Hale's willingness to bring in alternate voices and start debates on women's education. In this column, Hale welcomes a dissenting voice in a reprinted letter to the editor from Reverend Henry Jones, the male principal of the Greenfield High School for Young Ladies. Given his occupation, Jones takes offense at Hale's assertion that women's education should be overseen almost exclusively by women. Reverend Jones explains his view of boarding school

⁶⁰Hale, Sarah Josepha, "The Lady's Mentor," *Godey's*, Feb. 1837.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

education as a family, saying, “In view of the kind of education we have been contemplating, the idea seems fraught with absurdity [*sic*] is a father’s influence to be regarded as useless in the formation of a daughter’s mind and character and so be superseded and excluded?”⁶² Reverend Jones subscribes to traditional dual-parent, patriarchal ideas of child rearing. He believes both families and schools require a strong male influence to be effective. A woman’s influence is not enough, he claims. A father must be at the head of the unit, whether it be a family or a school.

Though Hale brings in alternate viewpoints, a capable and determined editor, she ensures that her opinion stays most prominent on readers’ minds. She prefaces the Reverend’s letter by pointing to the problems she has with it. Taking issue with the Reverend’s argument for male leadership of women’s schools, Hale brings debate to the next level by claiming that, if women’s schools need both male and female influence, “surely we may claim that the *mother’s moral influence* being so indispensably necessary in the formation of her sons, *women* should be employed as teachers in the Colleges for your young men.”⁶³ Hale is not actually suggesting women be included as teachers at men’s schools, but argues that if men want to hold sway over women’s schools, women should have equal power over men’s schools. She knows it is unlikely that women will soon be accepted as necessary components of men’s education, but simply asserts that men cannot have it both ways; either the gender spheres should be completely separated or completely integrated.

Hale’s “Mentor” columns are often topical, or fit a theme upon which a particular magazine issue is focusing. For example, in the issue with Hale’s story “An Adventure at the West,” the “Mentor” column reflects upon female education in relation to the spirit of westward expansion gripping the nation at the time. Hale considers the case of Michigan, which officially

⁶² Hale, Sarah Josepha, “The Lady’s Mentor,” *Godey’s*, April 1837.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

became a state in January of 1837. Hale explains of her musings, “We have hope, we still do hope, that the new-formed states will be more just, more wise in discerning the true policy of enlightening.”⁶⁴ She then outlines a plan by the new state to open a university for men and expresses her distress that no such plans are in the works for a women’s university. Much like pro and anti-slavery Americans who believed the west was a land of new opportunity to promote and spread their personal values, Hale viewed the American west as a land of promise for female education. Hale looks to the west as a place where her ideals of education for women can take root.

In the November “Mentor” column, Hale addresses the idea of separate spheres directly, saying, “A great anxiety is now manifested, in certain quarters, to determine precisely the *‘sphere of woman.’*”⁶⁵ Hale implies that the exact role of women need not be narrowly defined; it can be kept open to include a number of different things. After a lengthy discussion of the question, with examples of women’s roles in other nations, including India, Hale concludes in the final paragraph, “Yes it is woman’s mission to educate, and she will yet be qualified to discharge her high calling. As surely as moral power gains the ascendancy over physical might, so surely will her sphere be enlarged...”⁶⁶ This column most openly shows Hale’s goal of expanding roles for women. In previous columns, it is hinted at, but never so precisely stated. As in the April “Mentor” column, Hale suggests that women are ideal educators, but here gender of the pupils is not specified, implying both genders would benefit from female tutelage.

With a “Mentor” column every month, and additional articles in each issue, such as “Thoughts on the Happiness of Woman as Connected with the Cultivation of her Mind,” and

⁶⁴ Hale, Sarah Josepha, “The Lady’s Mentor,” *Godey’s*, June 1837.

⁶⁵ Hale, Sarah Josepha, “The Lady’s Mentor,” *Godey’s*, Nov. 1837.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

letters to the editor on female education in the nation of Colombia,⁶⁷ one might imagine there would be a shortage of new and exciting arguments in favor of women's education. Indeed, the cases presented for women's education are extremely repetitive, always advocating the same ideas of women as the moral, nurturing influence on citizens of the young nation. Maybe the arguments are not new, but Hale and those who agree with her are willing to repeat the same things over and over until the nation listens and improves the education available to women. The views of women's roles that come across in Hale's discussions of education are complex and sometimes contradictory. In the end, it comes down to the fact that Hale wants to give women the chance to be happy and fulfilled in their lives, whether this comes from helping form a national culture, being a dedicated wife and mother, or editing a periodical. To be fulfilled, women need to be flexible, capable, and most importantly, educated. Hale's ideas of women's roles connect very closely to her ideas of nationalism. Hale knows women make up half of the nation's population, and in order for the nation to be successful, women must be intelligent, fulfilled, and happy.

⁶⁷These articles can be found in November 1837 and June 1837 respectively.

Fashion and Compromise

Fashion plates were an exciting prospect for many receiving periodicals in nineteenth-century America, and were often the most anticipated part of receiving a magazine. They were the only part of periodicals in color, after all. The plates in *Godey's* came from the French periodical *Les Modes Parisiennes*, giving readers a taste of the foreign and glamorous. The plates were shipped across the ocean and printed in the US. Each individual print was then hand-colored by a team of watercolorists.⁶⁸ Of all the things to change when Hale became editor, the fashion plates changed the least. This is not because Hale thought that they were perfect as they were. In fact, Hale considered fashion an immoral endeavor, believing it interfered with other virtuous aims. However, Hale was willing to give up some control over the magazine's fashion-related content in exchange for more autonomy in other areas. In an era before magazine advertising had taken hold, magazines had to rely on income from subscriptions.⁶⁹ Fashion plates, as the portion of the magazine readers got most excited about, had to stay to ensure the magazine's success. Though she promoted nationalistic and quasi-feminist goals, Hale was still editing under a variety of constraints, some economic, some gendered, and therefore would not have gotten far without willingness to compromise. As editor, Hale accepted the magazine's reliance on fashion, and even managed, through editorial commentary, to subvert the magazine's fashion sections to promote her ideals of increased nationalism and broader roles for women.

Godey often discusses the state of the fashion plates in his editorials, both before and after Hale became editor, showing the importance of fashion to the magazine. For example, in 1836, discussing the improvements of the magazine set to take place, Godey explains the

⁶⁸ Bohleke, Karin J., "Americanizing French Fashion Plates: *Godey's* and *Peterson's* Cultural and Socio-Economic Translation of *Les Modes Parisiennes*," *American Periodicals* 20 No. 2 (2010), 120, <http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/amp/summary/v020/20.2.bohleke.html>.

⁶⁹ Tonkovich, 74.

changes to illustrations, saying, “The embellishments will probably be the same, perhaps, the Steel Engravings may be dispensed with and a FASHION PLATE GIVEN EVERY MONTH.”⁷⁰ The emphasis in capital letters indicates this is something readers would get excited about. Godey often takes the time to assure or brag to readers about the quality of *Lady’s Book* plates and the advantage they give subscribers to the *Lady’s Book* over subscribers to other periodicals. Often in his editorials, Godey writes about the expense and effort that goes into producing the plates with surprising honesty. In a plea for subscribers, Godey gives exact details of the expenses related to the plates saying, “. . .our business involves a variety of expenses, and the *thousands* we have to pay for Engravings, Printing, Paper, &c. . .It will scarcely be believed that the coloring of our Engravings amounts to One Hundred and Fifty Dollars.”⁷¹ Godey’s concern over the cost of the fashion plates shows that a measure of compromise was required from him as well. Certainly, his life and business would run much more smoothly without the concerns caused by the fashion plates, however, the plates attract the most subscribers, so Godey has no choice to include them. His rants on the difficulties the plates pose represent his attempts to ensure readers understand and appreciate the effort that goes into publishing them, hopefully making lifelong subscribers out of that appreciation.

The history of fashion in nineteenth-century America relates closely to the women’s roles Hale explores in *Godey’s*. Throughout the nineteenth century, fashion and the fashion industry went through great changes, in which magazines like *Godey’s* played a large role. In Carol Mattingly’s study *Appropriate[ing] Dress: Women’s Rhetorical Style in Nineteenth-Century America*, she discusses changing women’s fashions in terms of women who spoke publically. As more women begin orating and taking on political roles, the more gendered and restrictive

⁷⁰ Godey, Louis, “Editor’s Table,” *Godey’s*, Jan. 1936.

⁷¹ Godey, Louis, “Editor’s Table,” *Godey’s*, Nov. 1936.

women's fashions became: "Midcentury saw women's assigned place in society change as reform efforts began to flourish. At this time, dress further exaggerated the differentiation in physical body."⁷² The basic assumption Mattingly relies upon is that elaborate female dress serves as a means of patriarchal control. The more decorated a woman is, the more she has to worry about restrictive garments, the less men have to be concerned with her trying to gain power or change society. Indeed, as the century progressed, women's dresses, which began as simple and flowing, continued adding more and more fabric and structure to create shape.⁷³ There is certainly evidence suggesting that, as women's roles progressed and became less rigidly defined in the nineteenth century, women's fashion traveled in the opposite direction.

At the same time that evidence seems to show women are restricted by fashion, the rules governing style are multifaceted and complex. Nicole Tonkovich, in her book *Domesticity with A Difference*, attributes changes in women's fashion to less sinister factors:

Such attention to fashion resulted from a matrix of social, economic, and technological factors, including urbanization; mechanized weaving; the home sewing machine; the availability of ready-made clothing; an increase in disposable cash; and the ease with which commodities, including clothing, dry goods, and magazines could be circulated nationwide⁷⁴

This view of the increasing importance of fashion takes into account a wider range of influences, showing it cannot be accredited only to keeping women in their place. Tonkovich's theory recognizes the fact that magazines like *Godey's*, which could suddenly be produced cheaply and distributed to all corners of America, contributed to the increasing importance of keeping up with

⁷² Mattingly, Carol, *Appropriate[ing] Dress: Women's Rhetorical Style in Nineteenth-Century America* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 2002), 8-9.

⁷³ Mattingly, 9-10.

⁷⁴ Tonkovich, Nicole, *Domesticity with a Difference: The Nonfiction of Catherine Beecher, Sarah J. Hale, Fanny Fern, and Margaret Fuller* (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 1997), 73.

nationwide trends.

Hale came down solidly to one side on the issue of fashion in forming women's roles; she never approved of using her periodicals to promote the blossoming fashion industry and ideology. Indeed, while Hale was editor of *The Ladies' Magazine*, she hoped to keep fashion plates out of the periodical. Tonkovich explains Hale's attitude during her early editorial days, saying, "Hale, who conceived of the *Ladies' Magazine* as an antidote to decadent European taste, refused to print fashion plates during the first three years of the magazine's run."⁷⁵ Economic necessity, however, eventually forced Hale and the magazine to adopt the plates. The practical Hale saw her publishing career as a chance to do away with the frivolities of style she believed were coming from the European fashion industry. Again, Republican Motherhood comes in, as Hale tries to shape a unique American culture, wrestling it away from that which she sees coming from Europe. However, Hale's dedication to compromise as a means of getting things accomplished ensures that she accepts the fashion plates when circumstances necessitate it.

Fashion represented the one area of *Godey's* that Hale did not have a hand in and evidently did not wish to. Repeatedly reminding readers of this fact, Louis Godey instructed them to address material related to fashion to him, saying in an 1865 editorial, "We really must beg of our subscribers not to address letters for the Fashion Editor to Mrs. Hale. She has nothing to do with that department."⁷⁶ This seems like a role reversal of what might reasonably be expected of nineteenth-century division of labor. Generally, domestic women are assumed to be the ones most interested in fashion. The fact that readers were still addressing letters to Hale, and the exasperation that seems to come across in the "really must" in Godey's plea implies that readers too believed that, as a woman, Hale would naturally be the one to work with the fashion

⁷⁵ Tonkovich, 74.

⁷⁶ Okker, 51.

section of the magazine. Breaking stereotypes and expanding acceptable roles for women once again, Hale genuinely disliked the fashion the magazine promoted, in contrast to nineteenth-century expectations.

As something the magazine was particularly known for, Hale could not leave fashion out of her editorial manifesto, the “Conversazione.” Fashion serves as one of the main areas of focus and improvement mentioned there. Hale explains the purpose of the magazine’s continued inclusion of fashion, saying, “We intend to show that the true taste in dress is an intellectual accomplishment, requiring mental faculties of a high order to understand, and great moral power of mind to practice.”⁷⁷ Hale takes fashion and turns it into an issue of displaying moral character. She connects it back to her ideas of women’s betterment and education, implying that truly dressing in a sophisticated manner requires knowledge, effort, and a sharp mind. For the purposes of providing an editorial voice that agrees with the magazine as a whole, Hale finds a way to fit fashion into the framework of her true beliefs and values.

Just because Hale managed to rationalize the inclusion of fashion plates in *Godey’s* does not mean she entirely accepted it. Even within the “Conversazione,” Hale takes small jabs at the idea of fashion. In describing the problems with the ever-changing nature of style, Hale explains, “Now all these vagaries of fancy are not merely ridiculous, but mischievous: because they involve the waste of time, and the expenditure of cash; without securing the object for which the study of dress is intended...the promotion of comfort and comeliness.”⁷⁸ In Hale’s view, not only is fashion silly, but it is also a moral evil. She suggests clothing should primarily be employed for practicality. The use of the word “comely,” rather than “beauty” or “style,” suggests that, in terms of effect on appearance, clothing should flatter women in a way that is timeless. According

⁷⁷ Hale, Sarah Josepha, “Conversazione,” *Godey’s*, Jan. 1837.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

to this outlook, following the whims of fashion opposes ideas of practicality, beauty, and morality.

Hale includes waste of money as one reason she disapproves of fashion. The year Hale took over as editor, 1837, is a particularly striking year to examine fashion in relation to money spent. In May of that year, an economic crisis began that led to a seven-year depression. Hale addresses readers who may have lost money in the crash in the June “Editor’s Table,” asking, “And what if your husband has failed, my dear lady?”⁷⁹ According to Hale, it is not women who fail with the economy, but men. She goes on to ask, “Shall the poor, perishing gauds of fashion so engross the soul, as to render us blind to the thousand social and moral enjoyments still within our reach, in this free and fertile land?”⁸⁰ Hale continues, explaining how women could see the economic downturn as a form of freedom—freedom from social obligations, from that which is demanded of society people, from the whims of fashion. Hale refers to fashion not only in the sense of clothing, but as a whole host of expectations, including traveling and entertaining, for a certain class of people. Again, Hale wants women to be happy regardless of circumstances. Women who can be happy in any economic situation are those who have had the education that allows them to deal with change. Yet again, women’s roles are shown inextricably linked to nationalism, as Hale suggests that the joy that women previously took from fashion can now be acquired from other sources, specifically that of the beautiful American outdoors.

In the “Conversazione,” Hale also criticizes the fashion plates specifically in terms of her nationalistic ideals. She points to the unoriginality of American women’s fashion saying, “...exercise of individual taste is sadly neglected by our countrywomen. We seem willing to

⁷⁹ Hale, Sarah Josepha, “Editor’s Table,” *Godey’s*, June 1837.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

adopt almost any and every frippery ornament, invented by French and English milliners...”⁸¹

Hale asserts that, as a separate nation, America should develop its own fashion. In a call for American individualism, Hale suggests each woman figure out what style of dress is best suited for her and pay no attention to ever-changing trends. Using the term “frippery ornament” for the styles coming out of Europe also shows a preference for the American way of life. Hale wants American women to be more discerning, less subject to the whims of fashion than their European counterparts. The fact that Hale writes this in a magazine which continues to publish French fashion plates implies a degree of subversion on her part.

An interesting note related to the idea that America should have unique fashions comes ten years after Hale takes over editorship, in the form of Americanized fashion plates. Until 1846, *Godey's* was theoretically producing exact copies of plates imported from France. A brief, unattributed explanation of the edited fashion plates, says, “Many ladies have expressed to us their pleasure in seeing that our dresses are always those that a modest woman might wear. Such will always be our rule—therefore our title of ‘Paris Fashions Americanized’”⁸² These edited plates appear under the heading, “Improved French Fashions.” The idea that the plates have been improved by being Americanized represents a definitive value judgment of the two cultures, calling American culture superior. The edits of plates included the removal of select frills and bows, the implication being that American fashion is more simple, and therefore more moral and acceptable than French fashion.⁸³ For women like Hale, the practical, frugal American character they were promoting simply did not mesh with ideas of elaborate, indulgent fashions.

⁸¹ Hale, Sarah Josepha, “Conversazione,” *Godey's*, Jan. 1837.

⁸² “We are happy to find that our model cottage plan has succeeded,” *Godey's*, Oct. 1846.

⁸³ Bohleke, 121.

The term “Americanization” is an important one, showing Hale mirroring yet another founding father with her attempts to strengthen American culture. In this case, Hale’s effort to create a unique, simplified, and practical fashion for Americans echoes Noah Webster’s attempt to create a unique, simplified, and practical American language. Webster worked to simplify European imports, removing the “u” from words like “colour” and shortening words such as “programme.” With goals of improving on an inherited European culture, public figures such as Hale and Webster attempted to alter elements of British heritage and popular aspects of continental culture to create an American way of life. The word “Americanization,” used by *Godey’s* to describe what they do to the French fashion plates represents this process perfectly. “Americanization” is often thought of as a modern word, meaning the spread of American culture around the world. However, according to Merriam-Webster itself, the first known use of the word “Americanization” was in 1797. It is even included in Webster’s original 1828 edition of the *American Dictionary of the English Language*. At that time, it meant, “To render American; to naturalize in America.”⁸⁴ Like Webster, Hale believed America needed a unique culture to make its separation from Europe complete and permanent. Yet again, Hale positions herself as a founding mother, with much the same ideas and goals as founding fathers, but a generation later and specifically concerned with women.

The principles of fashion Hale outlines in the “Conversazione” come across again in the first description of a fashion plate in the January 1837 issue of *Godey’s*. In the introduction accompanying the plate, Hale explains,

We have, in another article, see the *Conversazione*, explained the principles we intend to inculcate by our illustrations of the “Fashions.” The first plate in the present number, is a

⁸⁴ Webster, Noah “Americanize,” *American Dictionary of the English Language* (1828), 1828-dictionary.com, <http://www.1828-dictionary.com/>.

fancy sketch, while displaying the latest innovations in costume, is intended to show the influence of maternal example (Fig. 1).⁸⁵

Hale suggests that it is not just the clothes in fashion plates that make an impact, but also the scenes in which the models are portrayed. Each month, *Godey's* could choose plates to publish from a variety sent over by France. Often, they rejected plates that were specific to French Catholic society—Easter dresses and the like. However, they could also pick plates with scenes that promoted certain values.⁸⁶ The plate described by the above passage shows an elaborately dressed mother and daughter standing by a table with a mirror. The mother, holding a piece of paper, gazes down at the daughter, who holds a book. Again, the idea of education for women appears in the form of a mother providing a literary example for her young daughter. By calling a fashion plate portraying literacy an example worth emulating, Hale finds yet another forum in the magazine to promote her agenda. Though Hale may not approve of the fashions these plates promote, she shows here that she is capable of using the scenes to showcase her own ideals.

For the most part, however, both before and after Hale's editorship, commentary on the fashion plates is limited to a basic description of the clothing. Moral concerns rarely enter into discussion. Beginning in the February 1847 *Lady's Book*, the outfits are explained with short, paragraph-long overviews of color and material, things viewers may not get a sense of just by looking. For example, in the May 1837 issue, the description of the outfits runs as follows, "Dress of black poux de soie. The corsage made low, (see plate); it sits perfectly tight to the bust and is without drapery" (Fig. 2).⁸⁷ This writing on fashion is extremely empirical. There is no moral musing or value judgment attached, just hard facts. After the first explanation of the moral

⁸⁵ Hale, Sarah Josepha, "Editor's Table," *Godey's*, Jan. 1837.

⁸⁶ Bohleke, 125.

⁸⁷ "Description of Fashions," *Godey's*, May 1837.

potential of the plates, readers had to extract their own messages, or at least be subconsciously influenced by the images.

The plates generally show scenes of idealized demure domestic women. The women do not look directly at the viewer in the confident, alluring way modern fashion models do, but shyly look off to one side, or at one another, safe in their women's sphere. There is hardly ever a solitary woman. Generally women are shown in pairs, or with children. Often the ladies depicted carry props fitting to their place in society, sometimes holding a flower, a fan, a handkerchief, or as in the case of the January 1837 plate, a book. Occasionally, the plates will show a man. One rather absurd plate from May 1836 depicts a fashionable riding outfit. The woman, with her billowing skirts, stands at least a head taller than the man, who gazes up at her, admiringly (Fig. 3). The only image of a man in 1837 is in the October plate, which shows an entire family—a woman, her husband, and two daughters (Fig. 4). It is an idyllic domestic scene, showing the way a True Woman should live. The 1837 plate with a man is more consistent with messages of domesticity and motherhood than the 1836 plate with a man, which is just bizarre. Once again *Godey's* proves more cohesive after Hale takes over as editor.

Beyond the fashion plates, Hale's own ideas of beauty can be seen in some of her short fiction. In August 1837's "The Lost Bride: A Legend of the White Mountains," Hale describes the female heroine first in terms of her fine education, then in relation to her domestic skills, and finally, with a nod to appearance: "Mary's beauty was not of the kind that is 'unchangingly bright;' it was the loveliness of sentiment, the benignity and purity of the soul within, which gave to her countenance its irresistible charm."⁸⁸ Hale explains that beauty is not something that comes from following the fashion of the day, but from one's personality and soul. The fact that

⁸⁸ Hale, Sarah Josepha, "The Lost Bride: A Legend of the White Mountains," Aug. 1837.

outward beauty is the last thing addressed in describing the character, almost as an afterthought, also indicates that to Hale, education and skills are more valuable than appearance. The ideas of beauty Hale asserts in stories like this run directly counter to the concepts of style and appearance represented by the fashion plates.

One of the best ways to tell about Hale's beliefs relating to fashion is to see how she put them into practice with her own appearance. In *Domesticity With A Difference*, Tonkovich highlights four nineteenth-century women who were vital contributors to discussions of domesticity and women's roles, including Hale. Tonkovich makes a sweeping claim describing the attitudes of the four women towards dress: "As women who lived blatantly public lives, they monitored their own attire to declare their feminine approachability...they did not, however, endorse the equation of fashion and character, recognizing the mutability of both"⁸⁹ These women recognized that others would judge them for their fashion choices, and therefore chose carefully. However, they refused to judge others on the basis of dress and appearance.

It is difficult to find a description of how Hale dressed; she never spoke publically, and thus, contemporaneous media found little cause to comment on her appearance. There are few images of Hale, and those that do exist are portraits from the waist up. An 1831 portrait of Hale shows her with bare shoulders, in a decidedly fashionable outfit (Fig. 5). Theoretically, Hale would have been in her forties at the time, but she looks youthful and vivacious. Subsequent portraits are more subdued. A portrait of Hale from 1850 (Fig. 6) shows her with a high neckline and collar that might reasonably be considered an example of Quaker dress, which Mattingly suggests was adopted by many woman in the public eye to call attention away from their

⁸⁹ Tonkovich, 73.

appearance and encourage people to take them seriously.⁹⁰ It is significant that, before rising to prominence, Hale appears much more fashionable than after achieving fame. Of course other factors, including age and purpose of the portrait, figure into this change as well. But the fact that in her later portraits, Hale does not dress in frills and bows suggests she wanted to be respected as a professional woman. Her opinions on, and actions related to, fashion reflect this.

Hale's relationship to the fashion plates in *Godey's* is the perfect example of how she managed to navigate the difficult issues of her era. She recognized her limitations in ability to shape gender roles and worked with the dominant culture around her, adapting and subverting where she had to in order to get her point across. Though she decidedly disapproved of fashion and the implications it had for women, she accepted the need to include it in her periodical. Though she includes them reluctantly, she finds ways to use the fashion plates to support her own ideals, managing to portray fashion as an academic exercise which can be used to display one's own morals, and occasionally including small criticisms of fashion as a whole. Hale even manages to use the Americanizing of fashion to channel her inner founding father and promote national culture. A large part of Hale's success as a female editor comes from her willingness to compromise. Because Hale accepted the fashion plates, her forum for advocating her true ideals, American nationalism and expanded women's roles, became and remained one of the most successful and popular publications of the era.

⁹⁰ Mattingly, 17.

Conclusion

Upon becoming editor of *Godey's Lady's Book* in 1837 until her retirement in 1877, Sarah Josepha Hale worked to create a cohesive, high-quality publication for women that supported her own broad political goals. The changes between the issues of 1836 and 1837 demonstrate Hale's skill, both in creating a cohesive publication that readers would enjoy and promoting her own ideals. Through the details of Hale's editorship, it becomes apparent that the two topics she cared about most were American nationalism and women's roles. In the "Conversazione," Hale describes the areas she hoped to improve in the *Lady's Book*—literature, women's education, and fashion. These goals of editorship correspond with Hale's principal objectives of promoting national culture and expanding women's roles. Hale's efforts to fill *Godey's* with original material helped make authorship a respected and viable profession in the US. Her work to promote women's education opened up discussion on the proper place of women in society. The economic necessity of fashion plates directly conflicted with Hale's ideas and values, and yet she found a way to use the plates to her own advantage. With editorials intended to spark debates over the value of fashion, and fashion plate scenes that promoted a certain domestic and educative role for women, Hale shows her extraordinary skill as editor.

Hale viewed nationhood and gender roles, the two issues she cared about most, as inseparable. Of the first generation born in an independent America, Hale hoped to aid in the effort to keep the young nation strong. With much in common with male intellectual predecessors, including Benjamin Franklin, Benjamin Rush, and Noah Webster, Hale helped promote lasting success for the nation through encouragement of literature and learning, creation of a coherent national culture, and recognition that at least one half of the nation's success relied upon women. Looking at all these issues from a woman's perspective and speaking to women

directly in the first nationally successful periodical by and for women, Hale represents one of the nation's preeminent founding mothers.

Despite her nationalistic tendencies, Hale never supported women's right to vote, and believed women should not directly become involved in politics. Hale struggled with a variety of complex factors to develop her personal philosophy of gender roles. Through helping to make editorship a viable profession for women, Hale expanded gender roles to a point they had never reached before. Yet, still she believed in certain limitations on women's place and involvement in society. Essentially, this is because Hale believed that women were morally superior to men and that politics were inherently immoral. She believed politics would erode women's natural morality, and that this would prove detrimental to society. Combining the philosophies of Republican Motherhood and True Womanhood, Hale argued for the need to educate women from the perspective of the moral benefits this would have for the nation. Despite seeming contradictions in her philosophies of gender, what becomes apparent is that overall, Hale wanted women to have the ability to be happy, regardless of their circumstances, regardless of what dominant society expected of them. She believed that happy, educated women helped ensure the success of the nation.

Though today, many get a limited picture of Hale, the two things she remains known for, Thanksgiving and "Mary Had a Little Lamb," reflect the issues she cared about most. Thanksgiving, a time to come together as a nation, celebrates American culture and heritage. "Mary Had a Little Lamb" represents a unique and lasting contribution to national culture and children's literature, making Hale an enduring female educator of America's youth. Though Hale's legacy encompasses much more than these two things, at least they fairly represent Hale and her life's work.

Today, “Americanization” implies the seemingly unstoppable spread of American culture throughout the world. Women have had the vote for nearly a century, have almost every career path open to them, and are actually outstripping men in many cases when it comes to education. It seems that Hale’s goals have been fulfilled. That perhaps the lessons of Sarah Josepha Hale and *Godey’s Ladies Book* no longer apply. And yet, America risks losing its sovereignty more and more with each “Made in China” label and dollar borrowed from other nations. Each new McDonald’s that opens in Africa or Europe makes American culture a little less unique. All things considered, a century is not very long for women to have had the vote, and recent Congressional debates have proven that women’s rights and roles in American society are anything but fixed. *Godey’s Lady’s Book* is the undeniable predecessor of fashion magazines that today spur debate on the body image issues they produce. Knowing that Hale did not ever approve of the fashion aspect of what is considered the first American fashion magazine casts a new light on this problem. Hale’s editorship of *Godey’s* shows she dealt with many of the same problems we do today. Seeing how Hale handled these issues can help us understand why society is the way it is now and give us a model for how to view such issues as we move forward.

Images



(Fig 1.) Godey's, Jan. 1837.



(Fig. 2) Godey's, May 1837.



(Fig. 3) Godey's, May 1836.



(Fig. 4) Godey's, Oct. 1837.



(Fig. 5) Lambdin, James Reid. *Sarah Josepha Hale*. JPG, http://en.wikipedia.wiki/File:Sarah_Hale_portrait.jpg.



(Fig. 6) Chambers, W.B. *Sarah Josepha Hale*. JPG, http://www.librarycompany.org/women/portraits/images/Ports/Large_Ports/hale_lg.jpg.

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