Conduct Books in nineteenth century America:

An evolution from ideology to pragmatism with regards to manipulation.

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Ever since I wrote my BA paper on the American woman in the eighteenth century, I have had quite an interest in the image of American women in the history of the United States of America. This interest turned into a passion when I encountered the genre of the prescriptive literature, more particularly, the category of the conduct books (as written and published in the nineteenth century). I am very grateful that I have been given the opportunity to write my MA dissertation on this subject. During the process of finding the appropriate reading material and writing my thesis, a lot of people have supported me along the way. That is why I would like to thank the following people:

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0. Introduction

The conduct book in its nineteenth century American form is part of what was called the prescriptive literature, also known as advice books. More particularly, conduct books are part of the behavioural books. Other manuals belonging to prescriptive literature are for instance the etiquette manual, the courtesy book, etc. There is however a great difference between the different kinds of prescriptive literature. Whereas the courtesy or etiquette manual is dealing with subjects as to improve the individual’s position in society; the conduct book deals with subjects as to promote social goals for the good of the Republic. The emphasis in conduct books is on the individual improvement (moral and intellectual) so that it would benefit the Republic. These books only had the best interest in mind for women; they did not want to expose them to the dangerous and tempting public sphere dominated by men.

Conduct books were written both for men as for women; however this study will only focus on the conduct books addressed to women.

One of the main misconceptions about conduct books is that they are assumed to be written by men or at least instigated by men. This cannot be farther from the truth; the majority of the authors of conduct books in the nineteenth century are female.

As Jane E Rose states in her essay these conduct books only had one purpose in mind for women: ‘Serving God and the Republic by raising virtuous children and ministering to one’s husband by rendering the home a welcome refuge from the world of commerce.’ Women had to be submissive, their best vocation was domesticity and their best profile was to be a wife and mother.

What readers of conduct books must bear in mind is that in these books the authors posit an ideology of women which is not at all a representation of reality.

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In terms of literary and cultural study (so not in the political sense of the word) James H. Kavanagh defines ideology as such: ‘It offers a fundamental framework of assumptions that defines the parameters of the real and the self. [...] the ideological analysis is concerned with the institutional and/ or textual apparatuses that work on the reader’s or spectator’s imaginary conceptions of self and social order in order to call or solicit him/ her into a specific form of social “reality” and social subjectivity.’ So they created a certain social order and image of the self to which the reader must try to adjust herself. The ideology implies that the authors create the social order which is according to them the most ideal social order.

Kavanagh proceeds by saying that the success of the ideology lies in its effect: ‘the distinctive effect of the ideology is not theoretical but pragmatic; to enable various social subjects to feel at home, and to act (or not) within the limits of a given social project.’ Therefore the ideology in conduct books tries to make the idea of the separate spheres as nice and comfortable as possible for the women and the men so that the women would adjust themselves as easily as possible to the situation.

Since this (i.e. the Cult of True Womanhood) is an ideology and not a reflection of reality, the authors of the conduct books had to manipulate not only the content, but through the content, the reader as well. They had to make the reader believe that whatever was stated in the book, that it was done with the best interest in mind. So their task was to make the content as convincing and believable as possible.

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3 ‘In the case of conduct books the authors posit an ideal of womanhood and present their ideas as to how middle- and upper-class women should lead their lives. In this way, they redefine the nature of women and their vocations; by restricting women to the domestic sphere, they redefine the social order. [...] They do not prove that nineteenth century women really were pious, submissive, virtuous, and domestic or that women served only in the vocation of marriage and motherhood.’ Jane E Rose. “Conduct books for Women: 1830 – 1860. A rationale for women’s conduct and domestic role in America.” 19th century women learn to write. Ed. Catherine Hobbs. (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 1995) 39 – 40.
In order to understand why these manipulations were done and how they were done, it has to be brought into the socio-historical context of that time, which is something that Barbara Welter fails to do in her work.

The period between 1830 and 1860 was dominated by social and cultural reform. Before the 1800s marriage was seen as a relation of inferiority and superiority; the husband was superior, the wife was inferior. After the 1800s there was a shift in this pattern; marriage was seen more as a partnership instead of a superior–inferior relation. However the majority of the restrictions were still imposed on women (e.g. they had little legal power).

As Michael Goldberg mentions these restrictions are partly imposed on women by law, but moreover were they instructed by the various prescriptive literature (especially conduct literature). So the conduct literature was based on the restrictions imposed by law which they enhanced further.

The only thing one has to keep in mind is that this type of literature is written (in the majority of the cases) by middle-class white women, about middle-class white women, for middle-class white women (hence not for working class women, African-American women, Native American women, frontier women, southern belles, etc.). This major restriction already implies that these conduct books are not at all a representation of reality.

Barbara Welter mentions at the end of her essay that authors of conduct literature in that period wanted to introduce the separation of the spheres as an ideal way of life, the way God intended it to be. Welter relates that women’s magazines and related literature were

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In her essay she explains what is meant by 'The Cult of True Womanhood' and in what way the woman was seen as a 'hostage of the house'. In order to do this, she has analysed women’s magazines, gift annuals and religious literature written between 1820s and 1860s (the period in which, as she believes, the Cult of True Womanhood took form). In general she clarifies the four cardinal virtues of a True Woman (piety, purity, submissiveness and domesticity) and when a woman had control over these virtues, only then was she promised power and happiness.


trying to push their ideology onto the women of the nineteenth century by saying that these conduct books tried to achieve this by convincing the married woman that ‘she had the best of both worlds – power and virtue – and that society depended on her staying within the traditional role’ (emphasis added). However Welter here makes the mistake of letting herself be influenced by the material she has studied by calling the woman’s role, the ‘traditional’ role. The role that conduct books imposed on married women has never been traditional; it is an ideal role.

The 1830s in particular was an important decade for the development of conduct literature because at that time forces from the outside (industrialism, social reform, expansion of education for women, etc) were impelling women to change and to step into public life. However not only forces from the outside, but also forces from within threatened to counteract the ideology: some female readers were able to accept the terms proposed by the conduct books, others were not and they started challenging the ideology. Welter concludes by saying that in this time of change and continuity the True Woman turned into the New Woman.

The main focal point in this study is how exactly the ideology tries to manipulate the readers into adopting the prescriptions in the conduct books. However, in the effort of installing these prescriptions through manipulation there seems to appear certain cracks in the façade of the ideology which defy the ideas posited by the conduct books. Therefore the second focal point will be about these fissures in the façade.

Some of the manipulations and fissures can be seen in all of the conduct books, others are part of only one particular period or even one particular book. All of them will be defined and explained so that the underlying intention will be made clear.

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The thesis is divided into three chapters. The first chapter deals with three conduct books from the 1830s (Height of the Cult of True Womanhood). In this chapter the manipulations and contradictions that appear in the conduct books will be fully discussed given the fact that these conduct books were written and published when the Cult of True Womanhood was peaking. These manipulations and contradictions are located on four levels: level of the author; level of the content (preface, intertextuality, subject matter); level of the form; and level of language.

The second chapter deals with two conduct books from the 1850s (the Cult of True Womanhood under pressure). In this chapter the emphasis is on the evolution that, within the conduct books, can be seen on the level of the content. This evolution will be further clarified within the socio-historical context of the time of publication.

The third chapter deals with two conduct books from the late 1860s (conduct books written after the Civil War). This chapter presents the same kind of progress as the second chapter, i.e. the emphasis is still on the evolution on the level of content.

The basic idea is that in the first chapter the manipulations and contradictions that can be found in conduct books will be explained; in the second and third chapter the focus is on one particular level (the level of the content); and in these chapters a comparison is made with the first chapter as to see if there is an evolution visible in the conduct books. This evolution will then be clarified within the socio-historical context.
1. The 1830s: Height of the Cult of True Womanhood

In this chapter the three works which are compared and investigated are: Domestic duties; or instructions to young married ladies, on the management of their household, and the regulation of their conduct in various relations and duties of married life. (Mrs William Parkes, New York, 1831); The young bride at home or a help in connubial happiness. With a comparative view of the sexes. (Hannah More, Boston, 1836); The young wife or duties of woman in the marriage relation. (William Andrus Alcott, Boston, 1837).

When taking the titles in account, there is already one element visible which none of the other conduct books in the other periods have in common with: the use of specific related words such as ‘duties’ and ‘young married ladies/ bride/ wife.’ The titles of the other conduct books do not show such consistency.

1.1 Manipulating the reader

Manipulations can occur on four different levels; level of the author, level of the content, level of the form and level of language.

1.1.1 Author

On the level of the author the way in which he or she is presented can be highly influential. The three authors are presented as authorities on the subject, each in their own way. William Andrus Alcott is presented as an author with knowledge of the subject as it is mentioned that he is also the author of The Young Mother, The Young Man’s Guide, The House I live in and above the previous he is also the editor of the Library of Health.

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In her essay she explains what is meant by ‘The Cult of True Womanhood’ and in what way the woman was seen as a ‘hostage of the house’. In order to do this, she has analysed women’s magazines, gift annuals and religious literature written between 1820s and 1860s (the period in which, as she believes, the Cult of True Womanhood took form). In general she clarifies the four cardinal virtues of a True Woman (piety, purity, submissiveness and domesticity) and when a woman had control over these virtues, only then was she promised power and happiness.

10 This edition was published in America in 1836; three years after Hannah More had died.
The mention of these works is not just informative; it enforces the fact that Alcott is by no means a layman with regards to the subject of duties of the married state.

A whole other approach is applied by Mrs William Parke. She introduced herself as the wife of William Parke; which meant that she is not only situated within the position of marriage, she has a lot of experience with the duties of a married lady. She is therefore the firsthand witness to the difficulties and pleasures which the married state can bring forth; thus making her an authority figure. Furthermore she enhances her authority by including in the ‘Advertisement to the third American edition’ appraisals by four magazines and newspapers which are: The New Monthly Magazine, The Critic, The Chronicle of Times, and The Enquirer.

The book written by Hannah More displays neither of the characteristics mentioned above yet she is convincing in her own way. The publisher has included at the very end of her book the ‘Comparative view of the sexes’ in which Hannah More praises women’s position by means of linking it elaborately with Christianity. By doing this she has touched upon a vital issue within this ideology; the use of religion was one of the most important manipulations to be found in these texts. The decision of adding exactly this short essay is not coincidental; it forms part of one of her greatest conduct books, namely Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education (1799) which was also sold and read in America since 1802. Therefore the addition of a part of one of her most famous conduct books presents a direct link between herself and the subject, thus giving more credit to the content of this conduct book.

1.1.2 Content

On the level of the content the focus of manipulation is set on three elements: the preface or introduction; the use of other texts (intertextuality), and subject matter. In this section only the preface and intertextuality will be discussed; the topic of subject matter will

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11 Hannah More. Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education. With a View of the Principles and Conduct prevalent among Women of Rank and Fortune. (Boston: Joseph Bumstead,1802)
be further explained within the second and third chapter when a comparison is made between the conduct books.

There is one manipulation which appears in the preface or introductory remarks of these works, but which does not appear in the other books: the burden-manipulation. This manipulation implies that the young wives had a duty or responsibility that is hard to bear.

‘In dwelling at length, as I sometimes do, on the duties of a wife, it may be thought that I impose too heavy a burden on her, and too little on the husband. [...] And that however weighty, or important, or responsible the duties of the former (husband) may be, those of the latter (wife) are by no means the less so on account of my silence respecting the husband. (Emphasis added)’

The excerpt above implies that although the duties which Alcott proposes seem like a heavy burden, they are equally important as the duties which are to be upheld by the husband.

‘Some of my fair readers may perhaps imagine that in some points I attempt to impose too hard a task upon them. But let them reflect on the vast emolument, the accumulated benefits, attending the performance. (Emphasis added)’

The previous excerpt again implies that the task young wives stood for were heavy, but More eases them down by immediately suggesting that with the sacrifice comes good benefits afterwards.

‘Such alterations in habit may at first be regarded as sacrifices, but, in the end, they will meet their compensation in the satisfaction which always results from the consciousness of acting with propriety and consistency. (emphasis added)’

In this excerpt Parkes suggests that the sacrifices will be rewarded afterwards.

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12 William Andrus Alcott. The young wife or duties of woman in the marriage relation. (Boston: George W. Light, 1867) 18 – 19.

13 Hannah More. The young bride at home or a help in connubial happiness. With a comparative view of the sexes. (Boston: James Loring, 1836) 7.

14 Mrs William Parkes. Domestic duties; or instructions to young married ladies, on the management of their household, and the regulation of their conduct in various relations and duties of married life. (New York: J. And J. Harper, 1831) 10.
In these three excerpts it seems that the women are placed in an unfavourable position yet the authors immediately ease down the negative sense of the duties. This manipulation can furthermore be seen in the light that young wives are capable of undergoing such a burden, that they are ‘chosen by God’ to fulfil this duty.

This notion of being capable of undergoing these sacrifices and setting the example is furthermore enhanced by Mrs William Parkes in her introductory notes: ‘By a “daily beauty” in her life, she may present a model by which all around her will insensibly mould themselves. (Emphasis added)’ This type of flattery can be linked to the Puritan idea of being a model to which all others are to look up at. A woman hereby is chosen to set the example, a position which is above all instructed to her by God. With this one sentence Parkes is able to touch upon the general sense of history and American Republicanism.

A second item in which manipulation can take place is intertextuality. All three authors make use of referring to other works or authors which help them with their theory or suggestions. Mrs William Parkes often refers to Miss Edgeworth or to biblical traits; William Andrus Alcott often refers to medical works and the Scripture; Hannah More most often cites poetry or the Scripture. Besides these types of reference there is one type which they all have in common: they interweave anecdotes about people they are acquainted with, with the content they are discussing at that time. It is this type of intertextuality which is interesting in the light of this study.

Hannah More includes eighteen anecdotes; Mrs Parkes includes thirty three; Mr Alcott includes twenty eight. These anecdotes range in length from a couple of lines to several pages. In all three of the books these anecdotes appear to take on the same form. Three types of form can be distinguished: anecdotes originating from their own knowledge about acquaintances;

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15 Mrs William Parkes. Domestic duties; or instructions to young married ladies, on the management of their household, and the regulation of their conduct in various relations and duties of married life. (New York: J. And J. Harper, 1831) 11.
anecdotes which they have heard from another person; and anecdotes which are generally known either by members of the same society, or by all.

The first type, consisting of anecdotes deriving from their own recollection, contains the same system of words:

- **To know**
  - ‘I once knew a couple, who, when they first saw company on that occasion, could look only on each other...’ (More 12)
  - ‘I knew a lady formerly, who during her life, might be thought to anticipate the torments of another world...’ (Parkes 207)
  - ‘I knew a young couple who set out in life with the most determined resolution to make it a part of their daily duty to study some favourite science.’ (Alcott 304)

- **To be acquainted with**
  - ‘I dined one day at the house of a gentleman and lady, with whom I have been long acquainted; ...’ (More 97)
  - ‘I remember a young couple, with whom I became acquainted during a season I spent at Cheltenham, ...’ (Parkes 92)
  - ‘This was the conclusion of a newly married couple, among my own acquaintance.’ (Alcott 30)

The second type of anecdotes which the authors came to hear via another person appears with a similar system of words as well:

- **To have heard**
  - ‘I have heard of a fine city dame, ...’ (More 106)
  - ‘I remember hearing of a married couple, ...’ (Parkes 206)
• A certain
  - ‘There is a certain tradesman in the city...’ (More 69)
  - ‘A certain young man of the utmost external neatness, was united for life ...’ (Alcott 119)

The third type of anecdotes deals with anecdotes which are either known to a part of society;
  - ‘Everyone knows the story, I fancy, of the old gentleman who left a very large fortune to a lady, ...’ (Parkes 380)
  - ‘Lucius and Emilia were trained as most young people are among us.’ (Alcott 102)
  - ‘It was the fate of a very deserving young lady to be married to a man ...’ (More 99)

Or known by all (i.e. in the case of William A Alcott, known in New England; in the case of Hannah More and Mrs William Parkes, known in England.):
  - ‘Among too many others, the world has been presented with a very memorable instance of the unhappiness which vanity of this kind brings upon whole families.’ (More 188)
  - Those who remember the history of the celebrated Duchess of _, will remark, in it, an illustration of the picture I have attempted to draw.’ (Parkes 342)
  - ‘The case to which I refer, is that of Sir James Mackintosh, whose fame as a jurist, a statesman and a writer is well known, ...’ (Alcott 354)

These anecdotes serve for two purposes: either they are put in to verify the suggestion or theory which is just been given by the author;
- Anecdote type 1: ‘I am the more anxious to enforce this great principle, because, though generally assented to, it seems to me very little understood in its full extent, and still less enforced in practical life, whether in the married or single relation. For this purpose, you will indulge me in one or two familiar illustrations.’ (Alcott 72 – 73)

- Anecdote type 2: ‘My medical friend has informed me that he saw this experiment succeed with a lady who had six children, not one of whom she had been able to suckle before.’ (Parkes 285)

- Anecdote type 3: ‘yet I cannot put an end to the section without adding one example, which the last age furnished us with, and which I heartily wish to see many imitators of in the present.’ (More 99)

or to exemplify the danger if the suggestion/ theory is taken for granted:

- Anecdote type 1: ‘[on the importance of cheerfulness and the danger of lacking it] I recollect most distinctly a family of this painful description, not a hundred miles from the place of my nativity.’ (Alcott 42)

- Anecdote type 2: ‘[on the danger of being too talkative] But first I shall take the liberty to repeat a little passage which I met with some time ago. [...] A young lady who had more wit than judgement, and more words than either, ...’ (More 60)

- Anecdote type 3: ‘[on the danger of hiring an ignorant sick-nurse] I remember a melancholy instance, in proof of the danger which may result from an illiterate nurse giving medicines to a sick person.’ (Parkes 265)
In total there are 79 of such anecdotes to be found in all three books; 46 of them are of type 1 (= 58, 2%), 12 are of type 2 (= 15, 2%), and 21 are of type 3 (= 26, 6%). It appears that type one is the most popular while the second type is the least popular in use. Anecdotes originating from personal experience and general knowledge are considered to be more effective. Type one verifies that the theory or suggestion the author had just made can actually happen in reality; while type three is useful when the author wants to illustrate that the suggested principle is not only achievable in private society but that it is already established in public society (i.e. that public figures have taken up the same principles).

1.1.3 Form

Not only through content but also through form can conduct literature be manipulating. The conduct book can appear in two forms: either the book is divided into chapters or it is a combination of sermons and essays. This seems trivial but it has a purpose; a conduct book that is divided into chapters is (in the majority of the cases) written by one person. The author selected the chapters him or herself and gave his or her own opinion on the chosen subjects. This creates the sense of closeness between author and reader. The reader is addressed directly as if being given advice and talked to by a friend. This type of form can be seen in all the conduct books discussed in this dissertation but especially in the case of the book written by Mrs William Parkes. The chapters in her book are based upon the conversation between herself and a young married lady. The resulting effect is that the reader thinks of herself as being part of the conversation and feels personally involved.

The latter type of conduct book (i.e. the combination of sermons and essays) does not imply the sense of closeness or direct address. Since female education became more and more important in the 1830s and 1840s16, this type of form was influential as well.

The combination of more critical types of work, such as essays and sermons, allows the reader to receive the opinion of different persons from different perspective instead of the single perspective one gets from the previous form of conduct books. This form evokes a sense of being present at a seminar; a sense of being educated in the topic. The distance that the form adopts or has created between author and reader is comparable to the relation between a tutor and student.

1.1.4 Language

Manipulation can occur on the level of language as well. The following paragraphs are dedicated to the use of particular words or particular expressions which empower the meaning of the statement as introduced by the authors.

One of the first and foremost manipulations that can be found in these books of this period is the angel-manipulation. Women are portrayed as angels who were sent by Providence to assist their (future) husbands.

- ‘Here, in this state of peril, on the sea of human life, divine Providence sends a messenger for our rescue, in the form of a female friend. [...] She is an angel of mercy.’ (Emphasis added; Alcott 62)

- ‘There are no duties on earth so nearly angelic as those which devolve on woman.’ (emphasis added; Alcott 87)

- ‘Let her resolve to be what she is made to be – a messenger – an angel.’ (Emphasis added; Alcott 87)

Another manipulation is seen when describing the bond between husband and wife through the union of marriage. It is represented as something harmonious, natural, and installed by God, the Creator:

- ‘[on marriage] it is the cement of friendship between families, and the greatest blessing Heaven could bestow on mortals. [...] the blissful
union of hearts, indicated by the union of hands, […]’ (emphasis added; More 5)

- ‘[on duty of a wife] She is to be, in one word, “a help-meet” to her husband. She is to assist him – cooperate with him – in the work of self-education.’ (emphasis added; Alcott 22)

One of the most peculiar linguistic manipulations that can be found in all three of the books is the reference to animals either to indicate a good quality or to indicate a bad quality.

- ‘[…] it is our duty to be “wise as serpents” in the selection of our associates.’ (emphasis added; Alcott 328)

- ‘[…] let her follow the laborious ant to its granary, there behold what indefatigable pains it bears and hoards its winter store, and from this insect learn industry and economy; let her admire the charms of constant love in the ever-cooing turtle; […]’ (emphasis added; More 178 – 179)

In the examples above the reference to animals is applied to indicate the good judgement of the serpent, the frugality and diligence of the ant, and the soft sweetness of the turtle; characteristics which would adorn a wife if she persisted in cultivating them.

However in the following examples the animalistic characteristics are not at all meant to be positive:

- ‘Indeed I cannot help heartily pitying the husbands of those butterfly wives who are every day flaunting in the Mall, […]’ (emphasis added; More 33)

- ‘As we so frequently change our modes, and by turns ape those of every nation round us, […]’ (emphasis added; More 34)
‘One is more ready to accuse them of a simplicity only excelled by the ostrich, which fancies itself hidden from its pursuers, if it thrust its head in the midst of a thicket.’ (emphasis added; Parkes 358)

These women, who flaunt like butterflies from one store to another, or imitate the fashion of the month blindly, or believe that by manoeuvring they can get themselves out of a certain embarrassing situation, are to be avoided at all times and are by no means to be regarded as praiseworthy.

1.2 Cracks in the façade of the Ideology
The cracks that can be found in the conduct books appear on the same levels as the manipulations do (with the exception of the level of the form).

1.2.1 Author
One of the first and foremost cracks that can be found is on the level of the author. These conduct books were quite popular in their days and were printed widespread. For instance, in the case of the conduct book written by Mrs William Parkes there is a two-page ‘Advertisement to the third American edition’ imprinted which states the following:

‘The publishers are happy to state, that the rapid sale of the work in this country, clearly evinces that its merits are duly appreciated. Notwithstanding it has been before the American public but a few weeks, two editions have been sold during that short time, and this, being the third, is now called for.’

(Emphasis added; Parkes 4)

Rephrasing this quote, it states that Mrs William Parkes’ book was so popular that within weeks two editions have been sold out and the third edition is already available. This meant that she had stepped out of her domestic sphere and entered the commercial public sphere. She received an income by writing books which promulgated that women should stay within
their private sphere and let the public sphere be a male thing. In the first conversation she has with her pupil she describes the ideal wife as such:

‘In portraying the beau-idéal of a married woman, I should describe one not absorbed in any single part, but attentive to the whole of life’s obligations; one who neglects nothing, - who regulates and superintends her household concerns; attends to, watches over and guides her children, and yet is ever ready to consider, in moderation, the demands upon her time, which the numerous and various claims of society may make.’ (Parkes 16)

She defies herself the ideal of a wife she posits in her work; she has become a public figure who makes profit by writing a book about a content which she does not herself can abide by.

Mrs Parkes is praised in an Advertisement to the American edition yet Hannah More is mentioned and praised in another book, more particularly she is mentioned in Alcott’s conduct book:

‘Hannah More, and Felicia Hemans, and Harriet Martineau, and Miss Somerville are lauded not so much because they are excellent wives, mothers, daughters, or sisters, as because they are excellent poets, moralists, or mathematicians.’ (Alcott 360)

This excerpt proves that Hannah More was known as an author within the genre and was above all praised for her work.

So, as a result, all three writers were successful in their days, although in the case of Alcott it was acceptable because he is a man.

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17 This concept is backed up by Jane E Rose: ‘Ironically, female authors of conduct- to-life books argued for a limited separate sphere for women at the same time as they enlarged their own sphere of influence by becoming well-known authors.’ Jane E Rose, “Conduct books for Women: 1830 – 1860. A rationale for women’s conduct and domestic role in America.” 19th century women learn to write, Ed. Catherine Hobbs. (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 1995) 38.

18 ‘On her death it was found that she had earned nearly £30,000 from her books. In view of the large sums of money she gave to charity during her lifetime, this figure is probably an under-estimate. She was one of the most successful writers, and perhaps the most influential woman, of her day.’ <http://www.victorianweb.org/authors/more/bio.html>
In the beginning of this chapter it is stated that the manipulation on the level of the author involves in proving that the author is an expert in the subject; in all three of the books it is clearly visible how the authors try to establish this. However there is one sentence in Alcott’s book that does question the authority of Hannah More’s words:

‘And it has been publicly asserted as a blessing to the world that Hannah More never entered into married life!’ (Alcott 360)

Furthermore Alcott openly admits that these women, including Hannah More, ‘however valuable to the world they may be, would be more valuable if more devoted to their appropriate sphere.’ (Alcott 360)

So Alcott not only reveals that Hannah More was not married at the time she wrote her conduct book, thus making her advice less believable/ convincing; but he also implies that she has neglected her proper sphere. The latter implication is the severest: by suggesting that she has neglected her duties, the reader can interpret this that she is not an authority on the subject.

1.2.2 Content

On the level of the content, more particularly within the category of intertextuality, there appears to be an interesting contradiction.

One of the main vices that all three authors consider as one of the vilest vices is the act of gossiping (i.e. talking about other people’s behaviour and their private lives):

‘A woman who indulges it can neither be easy herself, nor suffer her neighbors or acquaintance to be so; […] Besides, those who love to hear, love also to report; they want not to make discoveries, but for the pleasure of revealing them; […] I have advised all wives to refrain the company of such a woman, […]’ (emphasis added; More 176 – 177)
'Intimacies with them would be ill-advised, and might be dangerous. [...] It is very seldom that a story gains nothing in its course, and what was of pigmy birth grows quickly in its progress through any circle to gigantic stature.' (emphasis added; Parkes 35)

‘There is in both sexes, an unreasonable willingness to hear and even propagate remarks which are unfavourable both to individuals and collective bodies. [...] The more we allow ourselves to dwell on the defects in our neighbor’s character, the more those defects rise in magnitude.’ (emphasis added; Alcott 334 – 335)

As mentioned in the part on manipulation in intertextuality, these authors make use of anecdotes, which they have encountered themselves or heard from others, to empower their statement. Like so, not including the positive anecdotes, the negative anecdotes either came from their own experience (which makes them the gossips) or from another person (which makes the authors liable to listen to the gossips).

In this light it is quite hypocritical to state that gossip is a vice that women should eagerly avoid while these authors derive their theory partly from gossip.

Furthermore as both Parkes and Alcott mention these stories can take on gigantic proportions when in the process of being retold again and again the details become enlarged. This factor is of interest as well in their books since, in the case of Hannah More and Mrs Parkes, these books were then sold nationwide in America which resulted that more and more people had become acquainted with these stories.
1.2.3 Language

On the level of language there is one main contradiction and one contradiction particular to Mrs Parkes.

The contradiction that all three authors have in common is that they sometimes use active language, which is often associated with the masculine sphere, to indicate a passive content. In the case of Hannah More she often uses the phrasal verb *to guard against something* in the sense of pulling up a barrier against something:

- ‘[…] but to those who are at present entirely free from all inclination to so detestable a vice, to the end they may always keep so, which can only be done by guarding against the very beginnings of all temptations to it.’ (emphasis added; More 157)
- ‘[on boasting to others about the advice given to husbands and the resulting behaviour of these husbands] Among numberless proofs I have been witness of in relation to this humor in married men, which I am now admonishing all wives to guard against, […]’ (emphasis added; More 96)

William Alcott and Mrs Parkes make use of terms related to the realm of combat:

- ‘It is of great consequence to ourselves to obtain the complete command over our thoughts, and this would enable us also to disarm trivial impressions of their power to divert us at any time from a serious and worthy employment of our minds.’ (emphasis added; Parkes 389)
- ‘She is to wield the sceptre, first over her husband, and next over the children whom God may give her.’ (emphasis added; Alcott 37)
- ‘You will need to be armed for battle; otherwise you will surely be swept along in the full tide of a wretched and despicable fashion, till
your end is destruction – I mean, morally so.’ (emphasis added; Alcott 109 – 110)

In this way it seems quite contradictory to indicate a wife’s role as passive when she is to be prepared to actively take charge against all vices that could come her way.

Besides this principal contradiction, there is one particular contradiction as well in the case of Mrs Parkes. In the chapter in which she discusses the consequence of temporary customs she describes the origin and outcome as follows:

‘What commences and establishes many customs in polite society? The caprice or will of some leading personage, who has the power of acting independently of public opinion, together with the influence of fashion in leading those who strive [...] to include themselves within the sphere of polite life without examining the propriety of the act as it may affect themselves. I would not by these remarks urge a young married woman to become a Quixote in morals, and declare war against custom; but her aim should be to obviate the evil that may arise from it.’ (emphasis added; Parkes 56)

So along these lines, she claims that these temporary customs or trends are launched into society by some leading ladies, who have seen such modes in other societies (e.g. in foreign societies), together with the influence of fashion and are therefore copied or ‘aped’ by others. Thus she concludes that it is not at all proper to follow these ‘caprices’ of the leading ladies and keep being sincere.

However she actually contradicts her own assertion by giving in to such a folly; throughout the book she habitually makes use of French words which she inserts time and again in her narration:

- ‘to be of ton’ (emphasis added; Parkes 36)
- ‘to give éclat’ (emphasis added; Parkes 37)
- ‘entrées’ (Parkes 63)
- ‘coup-de’œil’ (Pakres 67)
- ‘belles …beaux’ (Parkes 83)
- ‘tout ensemble’ (Parkes 335)
2. The 1850s: the Cult of True Womanhood under Pressure

This chapter is focussed on two conduct books published in the 1850s; namely The Behaviour Book: a manual for ladies (New York, 1853) by Miss Eliza Leslie, and The Lady’s Manual for moral and intellectual culture (New York, 1854) by Rev. Hubbard Winslow and Mrs. John Sanford.19

2.1 A break between practicality and theory

At first glance there is a striking difference between both conduct books; Miss Leslie’s book is more practical, informing about behaviour in specific situations. The second book is more of a strictly moral kind, focussing on the correct behaviour according to the Christian courtesy or duties. This difference forms the basis to this chapter as these two are quite representative as how conduct books themselves can differ when society changes.

This break in conduct books can be attributed to the social and religious tumult which has risen in the 1840s and early 1850s. At the time of publication of these two conduct books the American Transcendentalism was already afoot in American society and was gaining more and more followers. Their ideology was based on the more liberal idea of individualism and that each person ‘must answer to his or her own conscience and act upon the guidance of his or her own “inner voice”’20 the Transcendentalists ‘called for an independence from organized religion; they saw no need for any intercession in the relationship between God and the individual man. Divinity is self- contained, internalized in all beings.’(Emphasis added)21

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19 Rev. Winslow has written the first part of the book, Mrs. John Sanford has written the second part of the book. When referring to both of them, both their names will be mentioned; when quoting only one of them, one name will be stated.


So to summarize, American Transcendentalism believed in the potential of each individual to make the (morally) correct decisions without the interference or “guidance” of the organised religion such as Puritanism or Christianity.

Furthermore, especially in the late 1840s and early 1850s, the Transcendentalists took an interest in the defence of women’s rights. They were of the opinion, since they believed in the potential of every individual, that women should have the same opportunities with regards to education and political rights as men have; and they became activists for the Rights of Women.

Next to the influence of American Transcendentalism, the Women’s Rights Movement also drew inspiration from spiritualism; ‘a religious movement that aimed to prove the immortality of the soul by making contact with the spirits of the dead’. Harriet Sigerman further illustrates in what sense spiritualism was so appealing to the Women’s Rights Movement:

‘Like believers in organized religions, such as Christianity and Judaism, Spiritualists claimed that women were pious by nature. But unlike organized religion, Spiritualism thrust women into visible leadership roles and supported the most progressive reform movements of the day. Spiritualists envisioned marriages in which women were equal partners, controlled how many children they had, and were free to earn their own wages. [...] Spiritualists

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22 In 1848 the First official convention on Women’s Rights took place in Seneca Falls; a convention in which they had finally set forth the topic of inequality between the sexes. Then in 1850 the first National Women’s Rights Convention took place in Worcester, Massachusetts. By the end of the 1850s the movement was able to pass an amendment to the NY State 1848 Married Women’s Property Act which stated that married women could keep their own earnings, invest money, transact a business in their own name without the husband’s permission, keep property inherited or given, sign contracts and instigate lawsuits. However since the nation was on the verge of commencing a civil war, the attention was diverted to the abolitionist cause and the (medical and laborious) support of women in the warfare industry. Nonetheless, the fight was not yet over for it would still take another 60 years for women to receive the right to vote.


voiced these enlightened views because they believed that women as well as men had the ability to grasp the truths without the guidance of a religious authority such as a minister or rabbi.' (Emphasis added)²⁴

Spiritualism attacked the same political, social, legal, and economical principles which the reform movements were attacking and became hence a powerful alliance for them.

It is in this time of religious and social turmoil that a split can be seen within the group of conduct books. On the one hand there emerged conduct books which leaned more towards the etiquette books in terms that the emphasis was no longer on the intrinsic duties of women but was more preoccupied with behaviour in specific situations; on the other hand there rose conduct books which focussed on the religious character of women and their Christian duties and courtesy. The former type is only interested with the conduct of women in public appearances in the sense that as to what happens in the private sphere remains private. As will be shown in this chapter this type of conduct book offers guidelines which the reader can follow; the suggestions made in the book are no longer considered as rules or principles. The latter type is only focussed on the influence of religion as a basis for the development of the moral and intellectual conduct of women. According to these conduct books women should return to the guidelines which can be found in religion and the Scripture and they should take example of the women portrayed in the Scripture.

As in the first chapter the focus will lie here on the manipulation and contradiction on the four levels. However, although the 1830s was a blooming period for the Women Ideology and therefore easily recognisable for its manipulations and contradictions, in this chapter it will become clear that in comparing these books with the ones of the previous chapter that there are differences between them. These differences or alterations chiefly occur on the level

of content (i.e. preface, intertextuality and subject matter). The point is that the previous chapter forms a basis, a foundation to which this and the next chapter are compared with.

The main difference between the conduct books of the 1850s and the conduct books of the 1830s is that the latter combines the ideas posited in the former; the books of the 1830s were as much occupied with the intrinsic values and qualities of women as well as with their conduct in public. This can be seen in the table of content in each of the three books:

- **Domestic duties; or instructions to young married ladies, on the management of their household, and the regulation of their conduct in various relations and duties of married life.** (Mrs William Parkes, New York, 1831): [on practical conduct] conduct to friends and relatives, forms of visiting, dress, servants, regulation of time; [on moral and religious duties] fortitude, sincerity, private and public devotion, charity, etc

- **The young bride at home or a help in connubial happiness. With a comparative view of the sexes.** (Hannah More, Boston, 1836):
  [on practical conduct] dress, servants, visits, choice of friends; [on moral and religious duties] sincerity, prudery, temperance, discretion, matters of religion, etc

- **The young wife or duties of woman in the marriage relation.** (William Andrus Alcott, Boston, 1837): [on practical conduct] domestic economy, early rising, habits and manners, health, dress; [on moral and religious duties] submission, kindness, modesty, purity, sobriety, discretion, moral and religious improvement, etc
Therefore, the conduct books of the 1830s consist of a more or less equal amount of attention paid to both types of subject, i.e. the moral and religious duties of women as well as the practicalities of everyday life and the conduct expected in public.

As a result of the changes in society, in the 1850s this break in conduct books can be seen as a break between practicality and (conservative) theory in which the conduct books of the practicality do not take the ideology as literally as the conduct books of (religious and conservative) theory do. Moreover it is exactly the conservative type of conduct books which is trying to eradicate the already established influence of Spiritualism, American Transcendentalism, and the Women’s Rights Movement; and they attempt this by going beyond their reach as to find proof and confirmation in the Scripture. This explains the intense emphasis on religion and the Scripture, because they (i.e. the conservative) believe that these are the only justifiable starting points from which the true duties and positions in society of men and women can be derived (as opposed to the positions and duties the law instigates, which is created by mankind and can thus be altered by mankind).

2.1.1 The preface

The difference between these conduct books and the ones from the previous chapter is already visible in the formulation of the writer’s purpose in the preface. In the conduct books of the 1830s the main emphasis on the purpose of the books is on the burden that women need to carry and on the sacrifices they have to make on their behalf to ensure the happiness and comfort of their beloved ones. In the conduct books of the 1850s there is no such emphasis placed within the preface. In the conservative conduct book written by Rev. Winslow and Mrs John Sanford the emphasis is on, as the title of the book portends, the moral and intellectual cultivation of women based on religion:

‘In the works which are comprised in this volume, the writers have respectfully proposed to themselves the noble object of forming the female character on the
real and solid basis of religion; and of building it up with the rich and durable material of high intellectual and moral culture.’ (Emphasis added; Winslow and Sanford v)

Not only the task is considered as a noble cause or object, but this sense of ethics and honour is also infused in the style and tone of writing; it is a more elevated style of writing, holding the moral, intellectual, and Republican banner high:

‘No young lady can read and study these works, without appreciating the advantages which they represent towards the true education of the mind and heart. The principles laid down in them, the methods of study and rules of conduct suggested, the examples cited, and the general system inculcated, are such as commend themselves irresistibly to every candid and reflecting mind.’ (Emphasis added; Winslow and Sanford v)

Again here the notions of ‘principles’ and ‘rules’ are of importance, as the use of these words form a great difference with the language and tone in the preface of the more practical conduct book. The conservative conduct book is still busying itself with the laying out of principles and rules which are to be followed to the letter; while in the more practical conduct book there is no mention of principles or rules, on the contrary, Miss Leslie is making suggestions:

‘therefore we wish that those of our fair readers whom certain hints in the following pages may awaken to the consciousness of a few habitual misbehaviours (of which they were not previously aware,) should pause, and reflect, before they allow themselves to “take umbrage to much”. Let them keep in mind that the purpose of the writer is to amend, and not to offend; to improve her young countrywomen, and not to annoy them. It is with this view only that she has been induced to “set down in a note-book” such lapses from
les bienséances as she has remarked during a long course of observation, and
on a very diversified field. She trusts that her readers will peruse this book in
as friendly a spirit as it was written.’ (Emphasis added; Leslie 6)

First and foremost, Miss Leslie is not presenting rules or principles; she is giving hints or
pointers on certain conduct that is likely to be neglected. Secondly, she cares about the
reception of her book with the general readership; she explicitly states that the readers must
not feel offended when reading the book because she has the best interest in mind and the
book was written in ‘a friendly spirit’. She has written this book as to correct the faults which
are most likely to be made by women in society; in this sense she is not at all dictating what
women should do, nor is she saying that she is imposing a burden on women. Lastly, with
regards to language, the style of writing is almost the opposite of the conservative conduct
book; Miss Leslie is writing in a friendly, self-effacing tone in which she seems to diminish
the efforts she has made in writing this book by using quotation marks when referring to the
book as a mere note-book.

So in conclusion, not only is the difference great between the conduct books of the 1830s with
the ones of the 1850s, but also between the ones of the 1850s themselves.

2.1.2 Subject matter

In the case of subject matter there is a considerable difference between the two types
of conduct books; Miss Leslie is more interested in, for instance, forms of visit, conduct in the
streets, writing letters, etc; while Rev. Winslow and Mrs John Sanford are interested in, for
instance, the Christian education of women, the Scripture as illustration of the female
character, female defects, etc.

There is, however, one subject on which they both seem to agree; and that is the subject of the
appropriate sphere of women (and of men). The theme of the appropriate sphere of women
has not been so elaborately discussed and the theory has not been so profoundly established on religious research as it has been in the 1850s.

This overpowering interest of the topic has, of course, everything to do with the state of affairs at that time regarding with the Women’s Rights Movement (see 2.1). The two main focal points to which they both seem to allude are public education for women and the public appearance of women in the political sphere. On both topics they present similar ideas.

They consider it inappropriate for women to, not alone, be present at political conventions, but also to speak their own mind on several subjects:

‘[…] American ladies appear to such disadvantage as when crowding the galleries of our legislative assemblies; ejecting gentlemen to whom it is of importance to hear the debates; and still worse, intruding upon the floor of the senate-chamber, and compelling the senators to relinquish their places, and find others where they can, or else to stand all the time.’ Emphasis added; Leslie 89 – 90)

‘But the privilege should not be abused as it is, […]’ (Emphasis added; Leslie 90)

From these quotes it can be gathered that women were allowed to be present at political debates, it was a privilege of theirs; however, through the use of negative verbs such as ‘to crowd’, ‘to eject’, ‘to intrude’, and ‘to compel’ Miss Leslie makes it clear that she does not at all approve of women going to such assemblies. Furthermore by stating that it is a mere privilege, women should not abuse this; it is a privilege, not a right to be present there.

In her book, Miss Leslie remains to talk about conduct on a general, wide-ranging level; she is not singling out one particular group, or one particular lady.
This stands in contrast with what Rev. Winslow and Mrs John Sanford have to say about the same topic. They openly attack the Women’s Rights Movement by means of referring to them in terms of other idealistic (literary) figures:

‘The female Quixote broke her lance in vindicating the “Right’s of Women”, and no one sympathized in her defeat.’ (Emphasis added; Sanford 36)

or by referring to them by using a negative epithet: ‘the Blue Stocking Club’ (Sanford 94). They even proceed by saying that women were not at all undervalued, but more than often overvalued and that ‘the confidence placed in their judgement, are in some instances disproportionate with their true claims.’ (Sanford 90). As a result they state that ‘this, perhaps, is the cause of their occasionally aspiring to situations, and intruding upon offices, for which they are not fitted.’ (Sanford 90).

As to make it completely clear what position/sphere was assigned to women, they empower the theory by referring to the fact that not only God, but Nature as well has assigned this sphere to her:

‘Nature has assigned her a subordinate place, as well as subordinate powers; and it is far better that she should feel this, and should not arrogate the superiority of the other sex, whilst she claims the privileges of her own.’

(Sanford 91)

Even though the two books present similar ideas on this subject, there is, nonetheless, one difference between them. Rev. Winslow and Mrs John Sanford knock the Women’s Rights Movement down to the ground, leaving only a bleak image and a bleak future for women of that time behind. Miss Leslie, on the other hand, knocks the theory down as well, but then she immediately starts describing the things that women are excellent at, and what they are supposed to do instead of focusing on the public sphere:
‘The truth is, the female sex is really as inferior to the male in vigour of mind as in the strength of body; and all arguments to the contrary are founded on a few anomalies, or based on theories that can never be reduced to practice.’

(Leslie 199)

With this previous quote, Miss Leslie leaves but little hope behind for women. However, on the same page she starts to rebuild the confidence of women by saying the following:

_{Yet women are endowed with the power to meet misfortune with fortitude; to endure pain with patience; to resign themselves calmly, piously, and hopefully to the last awful change that awaits every created being; to hazard their own lives for those that they love; to toil cheerfully and industriously for the support of their orphan children, or their aged parents; to watch with untiring tenderness the sick-bed of a friend, or even a stranger; [...]’} (Leslie 199 – 200)

By establishing this act of ‘break-down and rebuild’ she is able to convince women, even more than Winslow and Sanford, to believe what these conduct books have to say about the domestic sphere and therefore to believe that women do belong to that sphere.

On the topic of education both of them seem to agree that female education is only beneficial when it is used as to assist the woman in her daily duties. Education should only serve to that purpose and not to enlighten her on several “forbidden” topics such as politics or philosophy. For instance, in the case of Miss Leslie she makes little reference to female education; only in the chapter of conversations does she mention what type of knowledge women should have:

_{‘There must be knowledge of the world, knowledge of books, and a facility of imparting that knowledge;’} (Leslie 185)
According to Miss Leslie, education/knowledge serves to only one purpose: it is only needed when it facilitates the daily duties of women and it is useful in becoming a good conversationalist.

Rev. Winslow and Mrs John Sanford state the same idea as Miss Leslie, they are only more explicit:

‘At the same time she should ever bear in mind, that knowledge is not to elevate her above her station, or to excuse her from the discharge of its most trifling duties. It is to correct vanity and repress pretension. It is to teach her to know her place and her functions; to make her content with the one, and willing to fulfil the other. It is to render her more useful, more humble, and more happy. [...] she will be happy in her own home, and by her own hearth, in the fulfilment of religious and domestic duty, and in the profitable employment of her time.’ (Emphasis added; Sanford 33)

So according to Rev. Winslow and Mrs John Sanford, education only serves as to make women perfect housewives.

They, however, not only talk about the subject of education but also about the topic of public versus private education. As women are supposed to be the teacher of their own children it is acceptable that they become private teachers either for their children or for a small group of people within the boundaries of their own homes. Nevertheless women were not supposed to become public teachers:

‘But when females undertake to assume the place of public teachers, whether to both sexes or only to their own; when they form societies for the purpose of sitting in judgement and acting upon the affairs of the church and state; when they travel about from place to place as lecturers, teachers, and guides to public sentiment; when they assemble in conventions to discuss questions, pass
resolutions, make speeches, and vote upon civil, political, moral, and religious matters; [...] it is then no longer a question whether they have stretched themselves beyond their measure.’ (Winslow 30 - 31)

This previous quote is originally 34 lines long, all comprised into one sentence. The length of this sentence and its content prove the ardour with which they fought against the upcoming of both the Women’s Rights Movement as well as religious movements such as Spiritualism.

As a result, it seems that the more practical conduct books are little interested in the topic of education or the sphere of women in the sense that they assume that women already know their position in society (which explains why the emphasis is on specific conduct and little practicalities such as letter-writing). On the other hand, the conservative conduct books are especially focussed on these two topics exactly because in the 1850s these topics were in “danger”; Spiritualism attacked the organised religions and in their plea for sexual reform they bonded with the Women’s Rights Movement. The conservative conduct books were facing a society in which women were starting to get out of their sphere, to bond with other types of religion, and to abandon every principle which conduct literature so profoundly had established. In this sense it seems that the conservative conduct book of the 1850s is writing in the same line as the conduct books of the 1830s with the emphasis on the separation of the spheres; while the more practical conduct book is leaning more towards the etiquette book by only focussing on the conduct in public (i.e. towards others) and not emphasising the private conduct or private devotions. In this sense it seems that they make a separation between what happens in public and what stays private.

2.1.3 Intertextuality

On the subcategory of intertextuality there is a similarity visible between these conduct books and the ones of the previous chapter; besides the mention of other contemporary works and/ or authors, Miss Leslie, Rev. Winslow and Mrs John Sanford make
use of anecdotes as well. However there is a distinction between the anecdotes mentioned by Miss Leslie and the ones mentioned by Rev. Winslow and Mrs John Sanford. The anecdotes brought up by Miss Leslie are of the same type as the ones discussed in the conduct books of the 1830s. Again a division can be made between three types of anecdotes: anecdotes which allude to an incidence which is personally seen or heard; anecdotes which came from another acquaintance; and anecdotes which are generally known by society or at least by a part of society. The only thing that differs is that Miss Leslie persists in not mentioning any names or giving exact details; this explains the fact that, although she mentioned 108 anecdotes, the anecdotes are only a couple of lines long:

- Anecdote type 1: ‘We knew a very sensible and agreeable lady in Philadelphia, who liking better [...]’ (Emphasis added; Leslie 43 - 44)
- Anecdote type 2: ‘[...] This anecdote we heard from the sister of one of those officers.’ (Emphasis added; Leslie 218 - 219)
- Anecdote type 3: ‘Yet there are travellers who (like Smelfungus) are never satisfied with the place they are in, [...]’ (Emphasis added; Leslie 214)

Similar to the conduct books of the 1830s, the anecdotes of type 1 prove to be the most popular as in this case 60.19% (or 65 out of 108) of the anecdotes are of that type. These numbers further confirm the idea posited in the previous chapter that the use of anecdotes, and especially of anecdotes which allude to a personally experienced incident, is a powerful tool to make the principles seem easier to follow (as it is proven through these anecdotes that it is possible in reality to uphold the rules).

These anecdotes are again used to either indicate the positive effect of the suggested behaviour;

25 Smelfungus is a name given by Laurence Sterne to Tobias Smollett as author of a volume of Travels through France and Italy, for the snarling abuse he heaps on the institutions and customs of the countries he visited. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Smelfungus>
‘We have seen country children perfectly satisfied with a doll that was nothing but a hard ear of Indian corn, arrayed in a coarse towel pinned around it.’ (Leslie 180)

or to indicate what happens or could happen if the suggestion is ignored:

‘[Conversation is dialogue, not monologue.] It was said of Madame de Stael\textsuperscript{26} that she did not converse, but delivered orations.’ (Leslie 185)

In this way there is a connection visible between the more practical conduct book of the 1850s and the conduct books of the previous chapter.

In the case of the more conservative conduct book anecdotes are used as well, but not with the same frequency and the same type as with the ones of the 1830s. Rev. Winslow and Mrs John Sanford make use of anecdotes in which they refer to biblical figures as to show a positive or negative example of the said behaviour:

‘[...] You have only to contemplate in proof the example of Sarah, who through her faith and piety became a source of unspeakable blessings to unborn nations; [...]’ (Winslow 57)

‘[examples of pride, revenge, and irreligion] The ambitious Athaliah; the persecuting Jezebel; the cruel Herodias, and her siren daughter, are melancholy examplifications, and stand forth in the sacred page in sad pre-eminence of guilt.’ (Sanford 75)

These are the only type of anecdotes which they use; this is connected with their noble object of using religion and the Scripture as basis for their book. They wanted to demonstrate that the Scripture gives ample examples of what correct and incorrect behaviour is without feeling the need to find ‘examplifications’ elsewhere.

\textsuperscript{26} It is no coincidence that Miss Leslie makes a negative anecdote of Madame de Stael. This illustrious figure can be considered as a rebel during the Napoleon Empire in late 18th century France. She contested Napoleon’s code civil in which it was made clear that women were subordinate to men and were situated on the same level as children and servants. Later in the late 1840s she became one of the authors on which American Transcendentalism was based for her knowledge of German philosophy.
In the case of Miss Leslie there is a striking remark she makes on the act of telling anecdotes or, even worse, gossiping in which she is very severe towards the persons who commit this act:

‘The visit over, be of all things careful not to repeat any thing that has come to your knowledge in consequence, and which your entertainers would wish to remain unknown. While inmates of their house you may have unavoidably become acquainted with some particulars of their way of living not generally known, and which, perhaps, would not raise them in public estimation, if disclosed. Having been their guest, and partaken of their hospitality, you are bound in honour to keep silent on every topic that would injure them in the smallest degree, if repeated.’ (Emphasis added; Leslie 23)

The above quotation can thus be considered as a direct reproach to the anecdotes which Hannah More, Mrs William Parkes, and William Alcott have given in their conduct books.

Miss Leslie proceeds by saying that ‘it is not sufficient to refrain from “mentioning names.”’

No clue should be given that could possibly enable the hearers even to hazard a guess.’ (Emphasis added; Leslie 24)

So in rephrasing both quotes, according to Miss Leslie it is inappropriate and unacceptable that anyone should mention an anecdote about another person which could do them harm, not even if the name of the said person is left out.

And this is where the contradiction starts; throughout the book Miss Leslie makes a constant use of anecdotes (either for a positive or negative purpose).

However she is very careful. The majority of the anecdotes remains on the surface and are of general consideration (i.e. she does not relate to one particular incidence):
- ‘**There are ladies** who, when a friend is staying with them, are continually slipping into her chamber when she is out of it, …’
  (Emphasis added; Leslie 26)

- ‘**We have often met with young girls** from whom it was scarcely possible for one of their own sex …’ (Emphasis added; Leslie 41)

- ‘**Such things have happened, as we know.**’ (Emphasis added; Leslie 23)

However on page 133 of her book there are two anecdotes which relate to one particular incident which she has been herself acquainted with while staying at someone’s house:

- ‘**We have seen a young lady at a very fashionable house in one of our great cities, pull a dish of stewed oysters close to her, and with a tablespoon fish out and eat the oysters one at a time; audibly sipping up their liquor from the said dish.**’ (Leslie 133)

- ‘**We have seen a young gentleman lift up his plate of soup in both hands, hold it to his mouth and drink, or rather lap it up. This was as no less a place than Niagara.**’ (Leslie 133)

So with these anecdotes she goes against all her claims which she has made so far in the subject: she repeated something which came to her knowledge while staying at the house; she knew that the particular behaviour was perhaps not generally known and could damage the reputation of the said person if the anecdote was brought forth; she did not keep secrecy and has thus shown little respect; and although she has left out the names of both persons, she did give fair enough clues so that the readers or hearers could guess about whom she was talking. Miss Leslie emphasizes and defends a standard of behaviour which she cannot uphold herself.
3. The 1860s: conduct books after the civil war

This chapter is focused on two conduct books written after the Civil War, namely The Young Woman’s Friend; or, the duties, trials, loves, and hopes of woman. Designed for the young woman, the young wife, and the mother. (Boston: Horace Wentworth, 1866) written by Daniel C. Eddy; and Manners: or, happy homes and good society all the year round. (Boston: J.E. Tilton and Company, 1868) written by Sarah Josepha Hale.

3.1 Socio-historical contexts: the civil war and the Women’s Rights Movement

In the aftermath of the Civil War the Cult of True Womanhood, also known as the Cult of Domesticity, was further in decline. The fundamental idea of the complete separation of the spheres is from the Civil War onwards more and more difficult. The conduct books written after the Civil War have adapted themselves further to the changing society of that time. These conduct books continue evolving in the two ways, as illustrated in the previous chapter, however with some more differences regarding content, i.e. preface, intertextuality, and subject matter.

In general these books seem to combine the “traditional” views on the moral and religious aspects of domesticity (i.e. women represent the moral and religious beacons of society) and the fact that women still belong to the domestic sphere, with views on education promoted by the Women’s Rights Movement. These views are visible in the way the conduct books discuss education: women should be allowed to have access to the same (higher) education as men have; and in the way these books make use of images which are typical propaganda of the Women’s Rights Movement: e.g. the image of the drunkard’s wife (referring to the Temperance Movement, which is lead mostly by women as well, in favour of Prohibition).

27 During the Civil War most of the women took over the jobs their husbands, brothers, or fathers positioned. These jobs would range from factory work to a clerk job. When the war was over and, hopefully, the men returned back home, it was assumed that the women would go back to their own (domestic) sphere. However, as it proved to be, this was not as easy as hoped to be. Women by then had tasted the liberty and independence of the working sphere and so, they were not that keen to return to the secluded sphere of the home.
This seems quite odd that these conduct books should even consider including similar views as the Women’s Rights Movement, however this had to do with two things: the fact that since the 1840s these books started evolving along with the changes (morally, socially, and religiously) in society, and the fact that in the late 1860s a rupture appeared within the Women’s Rights Movement. This rupture is a result of the changes within the Women’s Rights Movement just before and after the Civil War. In the advent of the Civil War the Women’s Rights Movement shifted its attention from women’s rights to the abolitionist cause. After the War, with the declaration of the Emancipation Proclamation Act, the leaders of the Women’s Rights Movement changed the name of the group in 1865 into the American Equal Rights Association, striving for both black and female suffrage. However with the passing of the 14th Amendment and the pending of the 15th Amendment disagreements arose between on the one hand Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Stanton, and on the other hand Lucy Stone and Henry Blackwell. Eventually in 1869 the former founded the all female National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA) which rejected the 14th and 15th Amendment and was striving for women suffrage above all; the latter founded the more moderate American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA) which strived for the approval of the 15th Amendment first and for women suffrage in the second place. Yet even before these groups were founded the division between radical and moderate convictions were already visible within the American Equal Rights Association which explains why these conduct books are also referring to some early activists of the Women’s Rights Movement in a positive note (as opposed to the negative tone used by some authors of the previous chapters).

So it will be made clear that there is a certain positive experience felt by the authors towards some ideas posited by the Women’s Rights Movement/ American Equal Rights Association.

28 The 14th Amendment gives American citizenship to all persons who were born or naturalised in the United States. The 15th Amendment gives the right to vote to all male persons older than the age of 21 without regarding race, colour, or previous condition of servitude.
In addition, as to make a link between this chapter and the previous one (i.e. the conduct books of the 1850s), the conduct books remain divided with regards to practicality and theory along with a moral, religious undertone of a changing society (i.e. in the conduct books of the 1850s the authors were distancing themselves from and refuting the ideas proposed by the Women’s Rights Movement, American Transcendentalism, and Spiritualism). As the Scripture and Christian religion in the 1850s were threatened by Spiritualism and other upcoming alternative religions; it was again under attack in the 1860s. However this time the threat did not come from other religious groups, but it was attacked by science when in 1859 Charles Darwin published in England his controversial work On the Origin of Species by means of Natural Selection. The idea that mankind has evolved over millions of years from lower life forms into the life form we are today launched a worldwide debate on the legitimacy of the evolution theory as opposed to the Creation theory that mankind, in the form as we know it today, was created 10,000 years ago by God.

By the early 1860s the entire American continent was by now familiar with these theories and had already formed their own opinion about the subject. This conflict of theories eventually gave rise to the Creation- Evolution Controversy by the end of the nineteenth century and is still going on today.\(^{29}\)

In this chapter it will therefore be clear which viewpoint these conduct books take with regards to this Creationism – Evolution conflict and which typical characteristic is used as to promote their ideas.

\(^{29}\) According to the Gallup Poll on the subject of ‘Creationism – Evolution – Intelligent Design’ the latest poll in 2008 resulted that of the American population 44% believed in Creationism (man is created by God in its present form), 36% believed in the Intelligent Design (man has developed over millions of years with the guidance of God), and only 14% believed in Evolution (man has developed over millions of years without any religious interference). This poll started in the 1980s and so far the numbers from 2008 are still similar to the ones from the 1980s.  
3.2 Continuation of the break between practicality and theory

The division within the group of conduct books between practicality and theory is still perceptible in the conduct books of the late 1860s. The book written by Sarah Josepha Hale is focussed mostly, as comparable to the book written by Miss Eliza Leslie, on such daily practicalities as language, clothing, letter-writing, conversation, balls, etc. The book written by Daniel C. Eddy is focussed, as comparable to the book written by Rev. Winslow and Mrs. Sanford, on the religious and moral character and duties of a woman.

3.2.1 The preface

In the preface of Sarah Josepha Hale’s book the same type of humility can be seen as to prove that her writings are presented to the reader with the best intentions:

‘This standard it has been my purpose to set forth and illustrate in a fashion that would do good, and not evil; as I believe in Tennyson’s estimate of merit, -

“tis only noble to be good”.’ (Emphasis added; Hale 6)

She attributes a lot of importance to the goodness of her work, and the goodness she wants her readers to achieve. She enhances this image by quoting one of Tennyson’s most famous quotes, stating that true nobility equals being good.

In the preface of Daniel C. Eddy’s book the same religious tone and vivid language is noticed as in the preface written by Rev. Winslow and Mrs. Sanford, the only difference is that the tone is more subdued; it is more humble and softer:

‘It is the hope of the author that this humble work may contribute to the formation of honourable and beautiful human character, lead the mind of the reader to a higher conception of the aims and purpose of life, unfold and develop the graces that adorn and bless humanity, and lead those who find no rest here to the great source of rest, the Redeemer and Saviour of the world. [...] with an earnest prayer that the work may be “a friend indeed”, it is sent forth on its mission. If it shall succeed in planting in the bosom of one person a
principle of integrity, kindling in one soul an aspiration for the true, the beautiful, and the sublime, it will not have been published in vain.' (Emphasis added; Eddy 5 - 6)

The strong religious emphasis on rules and principles has disappeared in this conduct book and has been replaced by a softer religious tone with an emphasis on integrity and kindness of heart.

3.2.2 Subject matter

In the case of subject matter the duality between the conduct books remains (i.e. practicality versus theory) yet again this is interwoven with the undertone of a changing society. In this section the focus is on two main topics which can be derived from these conduct books: the ongoing struggle of Christianity against powers which try to undermine its authority; and the ongoing discussion which these conduct books experience with the Women’s Rights Movement/ American Equal Rights Association.

In the 1860s Christianity took a second blow however this time it came from the department of science. In 1859 Charles Darwin published his On the Origin of Species by means of Natural Selection concluding that mankind in its present form has evolved over millions of years without any interference of a religious figure. This meant that the theory of the Creation of mankind by God is not real according to scientists. Christianity had to battle not only against other religious groups but scientific evidence as well. The theory of Evolution now stood radically opposed to Creationism. The latter was already most profoundly visible in the United States of America in the nineteenth century and had many followers.

In these two conduct books it is clear that they follow the principles of Creationism and refute the ideas posited by the Evolution theory:
‘It may be well to consider these matters, when grave philosophers are putting forth learned theories to prove that all human beings are but developments from the oyster, the ape, and the gorilla. Such foolish theories may become popular in the Old World of nations; but “we, the people of the United States of North America” (as our national title runs), will hold fast to our royalty of race. This dates from Eden, and claims full sovereignty over the earth (which human labour and skill have subdued), by and through the divine charter of Bible truth.’ (Emphasis added; Hale 30)

Sarah Josepha Hale is very critical and severe for such theories as the Evolution theory, especially when these hypotheses are contradicting religion and the theory of Creation. In the excerpt above she has included a keen manipulation: ‘we, the people of the United States of North America’. By using this phrase and even putting it in between quotation marks she puts a lot of emphasis on the patriotic notion of the American Nation; an emphasis which works very well especially after the Civil War when the sense of unity needs to be reinforced. When reading this quote the reader can assume that it is very un-American and therefore also blasphemous to accept the Evolution theory; it would imply that if any American would consider the Evolution theory to be factual, he or she would be denying their own ‘royalty of race’ and it would therefore be a sign of disrespect.

This notion of the ‘royalty of race’ is further enhanced by Hale when she is comparing the ark of Noah with the Mayflower:

‘Both had knowledge of the true God and of his laws; and they also had faith in Him. Both were beginning a life anew, under like necessities of working to subdue a wild, uncultivated world; and both had those two institutions from Eden – the true marriage and the true home – which only can insure the well-being and improvement of mankind. Forty two centuries have gone by since
that family from the ark went forth to find their homes and empires. What is the result? But one race retains the Eden laws of love and home; and in that race only is the faith and worship of the true God. From that race were the families that settled and made our American people.’ (Hale 24)

Concluding from the excerpt above it seems that to accept the Evolution theory is to deny their own identity and the toils and misfortunes their ancestors had to go through in order to assure a good future for their offspring. Furthermore in the way she states it, it seems that the only true Faith is left with the American people, and no-one else. This meant that the continuation of the Faith is in the hands of the American people. It would, therefore, be extremely impertinent to question a Faith which has been a part of their ancestry and which continuation depends on them. With this quote Hale has put a lot of pressure on all Americans, especially the ones who were willing to open up to the Evolution theory.

One particular aspect of Creationism is that it takes Genesis literally, especially the first three chapters on the creation of the world and mankind. In these two conduct books this aspect is clearly visible; Sarah Josepha Hale uses the chapters in Genesis as to illustrate her points on the different aspects of life:

- On clothing: ‘The merciful Creator acted in concert with his “fallen” children: while Adam and Eve sought to make only a covering for their shame of sin, revealed to them in their nakedness, their heavenly Father made them clothing that typified his pitying love; thus he gave to their race the hope of salvation, through being clothed upon the righteousness of Christ.’ (Hale 39)

- On food: ‘Food is the first requirement of life; it must be had, or we cannot live. It therefore becomes the most pressing necessity of our
daily cares; and this want, like all wants for which our wearisome work
must be done, comes upon us by the Fall.’ (Hale 25)

In the book written by Daniel C. Eddy each chapter starts with the story of one particular
woman from Genesis; the story from which a moral lesson is deduced:

- Eve: Mission of a woman
- Queen of Sheba: female education
- Sarai and Hagar: proprieties of married life

The constant use and reference to Genesis is even so visible in the intertextuality in both
books which will be discussed later on in section 3.2.3.

Next to religion, the fight against the Women’s Rights Movement has always been
visible in conduct books, either openly or “in between the lines.” In the conduct books of the
1830s this struggle was not that openly visible, however these books were one of the items
against which the upcoming Women’s Rights Movement was fighting. The conduct books of
the 1830s represented a rigid model of the domestic sphere from which the woman was not
supposed to deviate; meaning therefore, that she was not allowed to do anything else. The
leaders of the Women’s Rights Movement of that time were convinced that by locking
women up in the domestic sphere society would deny them every other right to have a life of
their own (being passed on from the parental domestic sphere to the conjugal domestic
sphere). In the 1840s and 1850s the Women’s Rights Movement gained not only more and
more followers, but also the attention of other spiritual and/ or philosophical movements such
as Spiritualism and American Transcendentalism. The conduct books were facing a society in
which the “traditional” views of the Cult of True Womanhood would no longer find
followers. From that point onwards the conduct books started showing changes within the
ideology, and one of the most profound changes is the topic of education.
As mentioned in the previous chapter, the conduct books gradually started allowing more freedom to the type of education and the subjects taught to women. However this freedom is only starting to become visible in the conduct books of the 1860s.

In the 1850s female education in conduct books was only meant as to help the women in her domestic sphere; nothing more, nothing less. In the conduct books of the 1860s there is a substantial step forward taken with regards to female, higher education (the type of education which the previous conduct books refuse to allow women); a step which brings them closer to the ideas on education proposed by the American Equal Rights Movement of that time. Both conduct books are promoting female higher education as a right and as a necessity:

‘The great mistake of men, Christian as well as heathen, when legislating for the benefit of civilization and moral improvement, is, that they have devoted their care and means chiefly for the education of boys and men. So they legislate as if men could be wise while women were left in ignorance!’

(Emphasis added; Hale 34 – 35)

‘And yet in America, while the young men have schools and colleges, richly endowed by public and private bounties, to fit them for all manly professions, there has never been an institution in our land founded and endowed by State or national bounty for the young women. Nor is there but one endowed institution in all our wide country: “Vassar College” stands alone in its just design of giving “to the young women of America an education as thorough as our colleges are accomplishing for young men”.

(Emphasis added; Hale 356 – 357)

‘Every parent should endeavour to give his daughters as finished and substantial an education as he gives his sons. It is only in this way that the

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30 Vassar College was founded in 1861 as a women’s college. Sarah Josepha Hale was one of the cofounders of the college. Originally it was an all female college, only from 1969 onwards were male students accepted.
race can be forced up to a higher position in the scale of intelligent being. The present defective mode of female education is keeping our race from the high attainments for which it was fitted, and for which it is capable.’ (Emphasis added; Eddy 133)

It is thus clear that both authors agree that the way in which society is dealing with female higher education is inadequate. More attention should be paid to the female education especially if society wants to go up ‘to a higher position in the scale of intelligent being’. They make it clear the female education is a necessity for the moral wellbeing of the children, the parents, and society.

This progressive view goes even further when both of them are discussing the curriculum of this education:

‘The system of female education should embrace the sciences, ad grapple with all the more profound acquirements. [...] Female education should embrace knowledge of political economy and life. [...] Female education should embrace the theory, experience, and practice of true religion.’ (Emphasis added; Eddy 132 – 138)

‘Medical science belongs as surely to women as to men. [...] She has a right to this knowledge and to the means of acquiring it, so far as her own sex and children are concerned. The profession of “Doctress of Medicine” should be considered, like the duties of mother and nurse, which it closely resembles, a proper sphere for educated women, if they choose to enter it.’ (Emphasis added; Hale 357 – 358)

According to Daniel C. Eddy a woman should be able to learn about the sciences, economy, and political life; however in the sense that these women would be able to understand and, if
necessary, advice their husbands on it. This education was not to be misinterpreted as a sign for women to enter the public, or even, the political sphere.

Sarah Josepha Hale has touched upon a topic which is very sensitive; in the quote above she aspires that women should be allowed to educate themselves in the medical science and that these women should be allowed to practice medicine (however, to practice it so far as women and children are concerned). This suggestion is quite progressive in the sense that, although she is not stimulating women to leave the domestic sphere, she is proposing to expand the domestic sphere. That is why she adds to the title of ‘doctress in medicine’ that it resembles the (female) duties of motherhood and nursing. So she claims that the ‘doctress of medicine’ is nothing more than an expansion of the sphere; not a breach.

Nonetheless, both Daniel C. Eddy and Sarah Josepha Hale make it clear that they still consider the domestic sphere as the appropriate sphere for women; this typical, fundamental idea of the Cult of True Womanhood remains the same:

‘Would it not be better if the sex were admitted to participate directly in the administration of government, voting, and holding offices equally with men? No: I reply unhesitatingly, no! Feminine power is not coercive, but persuasive. [...]Besides, our American women have the controlling power over their homes, their children, and social life: it is but just that men should enjoy a separate theatre for the cultivation and display of their own talents and virtues.’ (Hale 358 – 359)

‘What, then, is woman’s sphere? Certainly not in the field. [...] Nor was woman designed for the tented field. [...] Nor is the forum her place. [...] Nor is woman at home in the pulpit. [...] At home. Home is woman’s throne, where she maintains her royal court, and sways her queenly authority.’ (Eddy 20 – 23)
Next to the ideas on female education, these conduct books share another distinct opinion with the American Equal Rights Association/Women’s Rights Movement: temperance, and the approval of Prohibition.

‘Intemperance, with all its sad train of sorrows, - the deserted home, the lonely wife, the neglected children, - is doubtless a heavy sin, and one which entails prompt and present punishment upon the offender; [...] To prevent the spread of this evil, the law should go to the root of the matter, and stop the manufacture of distilled spirits.’ (Hale 289)

‘In view of these facts, the community is bound to do two things: (1) to respect the drunkard’s wife. She is sometimes treated as if she was responsible for the vileness of her husband. [...] (2) To throw its arms around her husband, to lead him back from the fatal path of ruin, to take out of his way the dreadful temptation which he has found himself unable to resist, to shut up the dens of crime and infamy which now draw in him’ (Eddy 161 – 162)

This opinion is shared by both the American Equal Rights Association (Women’s Rights Movement) as well as by these conduct books. This seems quite logic, if it were not for the case that in the quote by Daniel C. Eddy he claims that the wife is not to be blamed for the intemperance of the husband. In the conduct books of the 1830s it is implied that when a husband starts drinking, it is the fault of the wife. They claim that the wife then has failed to make their home a peaceful haven to return to:

‘If all wives loved and delighted in their homes as Solomon would have them, few husbands would go down to a premature grave through the avenues of intemperance, and lust, and their kindred vices.’ (Alcott 89)

So even in this case it is proven that the conduct books, which were written in the decades after the 1830s (when the Cult of True Womanhood was at its peak), do evolve along with the
changes of society. This meant that a shift is visible from the pure ideological views on the position of women in society to more pragmatic views on this position; a pragmatic view which meant that the authors of the conduct books of the 1860s were dealing with these changes in society in a sensible, and practical way instead of a radial way (as the ones of the 1830s did).

As a result it can be said that the conduct books of the 1860s, although they still disagree with the American Equal Rights Association, have evolved along with society in a positive way and that they are opening up progressively to the ideas of the American Equal Rights Association with regards to female education.

3.2.3 Intertextuality

Within the topic of intertextuality an evolution can be noticed as well. In the conduct books of the 1830s there were three types of anecdotes distinguished of which the personal anecdote proved to be the most popular one. In the conduct books of the 1850s there is a slight shift; the more practical conduct book keeps on using the personal anecdote as the most convincing one while the more theoretical, religious conduct book is starting to make more use of the third type of anecdotes (the ones in which the person mentioned is generally known). The conduct books of the 1860s seem to follow the more theoretical, religious conduct books of the 1850s in its use of the third type of anecdotes. In both conduct books of the 1860s the majority of the anecdotes are referring to distinguished men and women in society. It seems that personal experience (anecdote type 1) is no longer sufficient as to make a rule or principle well founded. Since society, on a social level, started changing quite fast from the 1850s onwards, the need arose for these authors to validate their suggestions and principles with factual evidence, or with statements made by renowned persons.
‘That learned and eloquent man, Richard Knill\textsuperscript{31}, says, “I have a vivid recollection of the effects of maternal influence. [...]” (Emphasis added; Eddy 110)

‘The venerable John Q. Adams\textsuperscript{32} paid the following tribute to his mother: [...]’ (Emphasis added; Eddy 112)

‘The distinguished philologist Max Müller\textsuperscript{33}, in his “Lectures on the Science of Language,” says: [...]’ (Emphasis added; Hale 33)

‘Miss Sedgwick\textsuperscript{34} has asserted, in some of her useful books, [...]’ (Emphasis added; Hale 80)

As seen in the excerpts above, these renowned persons range from novelists to philologists and from missionaries to presidents. The authors tried to incorporate as many different “worlds” (i.e. the literary world, political world, religious world, etc.) in their work so that they would reach the maximum of readers.

As mentioned in section 3.2.2 the references to Genesis are even so visible in the intertextuality. In the case of the conduct book written by Eddy, he starts each chapter with the story of a Biblical female figure appearing in Genesis: Eve; Jephthah’s daughter; Rebekah; Rachel; Ruth; Hannah; Queen of Sheba; Abigail; Delilah; Sarai and Hagar; Dorcas. Eddy refers to the stories of these women as to deduce a moral lesson from their appearance in Genesis; a moral lesson which all women should respect and honour.

Sarah Josepha Hale, as well, refers a lot to Genesis in her work; in the first part of her book she makes direct references to Eve (chapters 2, 3, and 7) and Noah (chapters 2 and 3).

\textsuperscript{31} Richard Knill (1787 – 1857) was born in England and spent most of his days in foreign countries where he worked as a missionary.

\textsuperscript{32} John Quincy Adams was the sixth president of the United States of America

\textsuperscript{33} Max Müller (1823 – 1900) was a German philologist and Orientalist. His work “Lectures on the Science of Language” was published in 1864.

\textsuperscript{34} Catharine Maria Sedgwick (1789 – 1867) was an American novelist whose female protagonists did not act according to the “traditional” conduct of women. Her most controversial work was \textit{Hope Leslie} which was published in 1827.
In the course of her book she refers continually to the Bible and the Old Testament history, and more particularly to Genesis; for instance when she is giving suggestions on reading material:

“To mothers and teachers who would like to know this short-hand way of Bible reading, so as to grasp the idea of consecutive history, we say, study the first three chapters of Genesis; then read the story of the Flood; of Babel; of the three patriarchs; of Joseph and Moses; also the book of Exodus; [...]’ (Hale 206)

Nonetheless the conduct book of Sarah Josepha Hale does not at all completely deviate from the practical conduct book written by Miss Eliza Leslie in the 1850s. Hale does not completely abandon the principle that the personal anecdote is of use when she is discussing practicalities such as evening receptions, the importance of needlework, weddings and engagements, etc. It is still necessary to exemplify these practicalities with some personal experience as to clarify the situation:

- On the importance of needlework: ‘We know a lady of large means, and surrounded with every luxury, who always kept a pair of woollen stockings on hand, knitting them whilst waiting for meals and at vacant moments, for poor pensioners.’ (Hale 195 – 196)

- On the subject of evening reception: ‘I have known people who refrained from inviting their friends because they could not entertain them with a luxurious supper and expensive wines.’ (Hale 342)
Nevertheless, what is striking here is that these conduct books are referring to some of the early women activists in a positive note; something which the previous conduct books never did (on the contrary, the previous conduct books referred to them in a negative note).

- ‘Miss Sedgwick has asserted, in some of her useful books, [...]’
  (emphasis added; Hale 80)
- ‘Time would fail me to mention the names of others among the living and the dead, such as Madame de Stael, Harriet Martineau, Margaret Fuller, Mrs Hall, Mrs Sigourney, all of whom ascend to eminent heights, not only for what is ornamental and fashionable in female education, but for what is substantial and profound in all literature.’
  Emphasis added; Eddy 133)

Miss Sedgwick is the author of *Hope Leslie* (published in 1827) and many other controversial books (controversial for her time) in which the female protagonists deviate from the stereotypical conduct attributed to women; Harriet Martineau is the author of *Society in America* (published in 1837) in which she criticizes that women in American society are not benefitting from the democratic principles which America holds so high; Margaret Fuller is the author of the first major feminist work in the United States of America: *Women in the Nineteenth Century* (published in 1845). Daniel C. Eddy refers to these women in the context of their efforts to improve female education and in the context of their literary careers. The fact that he refers to Madame de Stael in a positive sense is very particular, because Miss Eliza Leslie refers to her in her book (published twelve years earlier) in a negative sense:

- ‘[Conversation is dialogue, not monologue.] It was said of Madame de Stael that she did not converse, but delivered orations.’ (Leslie 193)
It can therefore be said that opinions change along with the changes of society and this in the course of one decade.
4. Conclusion

The genre of the prescriptive literature in general, and of the conduct books in particular; a genre which many consider inferior and superficial has proven to be more then what critics claimed it to be. It forms part of society in the sense that it presents an alternative idea of what society could be or should be.

In a period in which Christianity experienced a second Revival (The Second Great Awakening from the 1800s to the 1830s) these conduct books flourished for their ideas on the religious and moral position and duties which they attributed to women. The conduct books of the 1830s proved to be very popular, especially in this period. The authors were able to keenly manipulate the reader on the four levels as stated and explained in the first chapter. Their fundamental ideas of the separation of the spheres (which goes back to the early days of the American Revolution) were greatly accepted by many scholars, particularly by religious scholars. However, when taking a closer look, this ideology of the Cult of True Womanhood presents certain cracks in the façade (as with most other ideologies). These cracks or contradictions already anticipate the fact that from that period onwards the conduct books will never be able to really uphold the fundamental ideas which the ideology holds so dearly.

From the 1840s and 1850s onwards a lot is changing in society with regards to gender theories; the Women’s Rights Movement (which already emerged in the early 1830s) was starting to become more influential, step by step. The conduct books then had two options: either remain the same, or start adapting to society. They chose the latter option, however only partly. The genre of the conduct books showed a break between conduct books of practicality and conduct books of (religious and conservative) theory. This break is a step forward in the sense that they already started altering their own position with regards to the ideology: the conduct books of practicality were focussed more on the outward appearance, as to uphold at least that part of the ideology, and to leave whatever that is private, private.
The more conservative conduct books keep on clinging to the fundamental principles of the ideology.

The real change within the genre occurs within the conduct books of the 1860s. When during the Civil War women were taking over the jobs and other work of their husbands, fathers, brothers, etc., the fundamental principles of the ideology, as presented in the conduct books of the previous decades, were standing farther away from reality. With the American Equal Rights Association (formerly known as the Women’s Rights Movement) diverting its attention back to women’s suffrage and with the publishing of Darwin’s Evolution theory, the conduct books needed to seek connection with more readership and the only way possible to do this, is to change some principles.

The most noticeable change which these conduct books allowed was on the subject of education. In the conduct books of the 1830s female education was very limited; it only encompassed female accomplishments such as singing, playing an instrument, learning foreign languages, reading, and other domestic activities. In the conduct books of the 1850s not much was added to the previous “curriculum”; the conduct books allowed women to learn more about science (chemistry, anatomy, and medical science) and history, however, these topics were only accepted if they benefited the domestic duties. Topics such as the law or legal system, politics, and economy were not allowed, since these topics had nothing to do with the domestic sphere. In the conduct books of the 1860s, these views changed optimistically when the authors were stating that women should be able to have access to the same level of education as man have. In comparison with the conduct books of the previous decades, this is a significant step forward.

The second significant change is on the level of intertextuality. When in the conduct books of the 1830s the personal anecdote was the most popular in use, the more general anecdote was most frequently used in the conduct books of the 1860s. This shift can again be
linked to the socio-historical context; in the conduct books of the 1830s the need was less felt for the authors to link their principles to a well known person since opposition was limited and the conduct books were very popular at the time. In the conduct books of the 1860s this need was genuinely felt because these authors not only had to argue against other religious groups but also against scientific evidence that refutes the Creation theory. It was no longer enough to confirm the principles with personal anecdotes; in order to provide a well founded argument they needed to bring forth examples which would prove that these principles were backed up by a renowned person, and not taken “out of the blue”.

With these final remarks I conclude that an evolution can be seen within the genre of the conduct books from a rigid ideology to a more pragmatic system of principles and suggestions; an evolution which can be described as a growth in which the changes of society are being taken in account in a sensible and practical way.
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