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Review of Joanne Shattock, ed., *Journalism and the  
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# Reviews

**Joanne Shattock, ed., *Journalism and the Periodical Press in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017; paperback 2019). 402 pp. ISBN 9781107085732**

In recent years, scholarship on nineteenth-century periodicals has, in a sense, reviewed itself. This has happened via celebrations, such as 2018's fiftieth anniversary of the founding of both the Research Society for Victorian Periodicals and the *Victorian Periodicals Newsletter* (subsequently *Review*); via books, including 2016's *Routledge Handbook to Nineteenth-Century British Periodicals and Newspapers* (which I co-edited with Andrew King and Alexis Easley); and via several retrospective personal accounts of the history of periodicals research in *Victorian Periodicals Review*. A young researcher, looking to get a sense both of how to get started in researching nineteenth-century periodicals but also of the reasons for undertaking such research, is much better-situated in 2021 than in years previous thanks to such publications, including the volume under review, which in great measure complements, rather than overlaps with, collections such as the aforementioned *Routledge Handbook*. James Mussell notes herein, referring back to Mark Turner's work, that the availability of search functions for online databases of periodicals can lead one to a 'smash-and-grab' approach to working with nineteenth-century periodicals; this book demonstrates the potential of more focused and involved studies involving periodicals (p. 25).

The list of contributors to *Journalism and the Periodical Press in Nineteenth-Century Britain* is stellar and, while the essays are understandably relatively brief, they largely manage the balance between introductory coverage and new material well, if the coverage is varied. The book is organized into four sections: 'Periodicals, Genres and the Production of Print'; 'The

Press and the Public'; 'The "Globalisation" of the Nineteenth-Century Press'; and finally 'Journalists and Journalism'. These headings work well at controlling the focus of the book, though as I will go on to discuss, the final is perhaps the least satisfactory simply by virtue of the chosen case studies inevitably leaving other names ignored.

Reflecting the centrality of digitized periodicals to the discipline, the first section opens with James Mussell considering the relationship between digital resources and actual copies of periodicals, highlighting that since the digital copy is not the same as the print, but rather a 'radical transformation', thinking about digitization opens up a 'discursive space' to rethink the concept of print (pp. 18–19). This essay is followed by a conventional history of the nineteenth-century magazine format by David Stewart, wherein he observes that magazines were 'not simply mirrors of literary culture, but creative participants in it' (p. 43). If Stewart's chapter errs on the introductory, the essay which follows his, by Laurel Brake on 'The Changing Review', is typically groundbreaking, and in its use of tables performs the historical shifts it charts in the British genre of the review, emphasizing the concept of genre as 'always comparative' (p. 65). Brake's essay is followed by Barbara Onslow's account of the relatively short-lived, mostly early nineteenth-century, phenomenon of annuals, wherein Onslow notes the gendering of what Letitia Landon apparently termed 'butterflies of literature' (p. 72) and, like Brake, provides helpful tables to illustrate her findings. The early to mid-nineteenth century is often overlooked in nineteenth-century

periodicals studies as it is in nineteenth-century studies more generally, and it is good to see the following chapter, Brian Maidment's essay on 'Comic Illustration and the Radical Press', focus on the years 1820–45 and take issue with the stability of the word 'radical' in this period, with a press characterized for Maidment by 'blurred edges and contradictory categories' (p. 103). His essay is followed by a detailed account of illustration in nineteenth-century periodicals by Lorraine Janzen Kooistra which focuses on illustration as central to a participatory theory of reading periodicals. The final essay in this section is by the late Linda Peterson, considering periodical poetry. Peterson notes, building on the work of Linda K. Hughes, that poetry was, in the first wave of organized periodicals research in the 1960s, systematically excluded from its databases, considered 'filler', despite periodicals studies being founded on an assumption that 'filler' is itself worthy of scholarly investigation. Peterson's chapter demonstrates some of the most interesting issues in the study of poetry in periodicals — from the at times near-incidentally periodical publications of canonical Victorian poets (Peterson notes that Robert Browning's 'Porphyria's Lover' 'made little or no impact within the magazine format' (p. 131)) through to the frequency of poets utilizing periodical publication 'when their goals were immediate' (p. 143).

The second part of the book, 'The Press and the Public', opens with an account of 'The Press and the Law' by Martin Hewitt that future scholars will find indispensable; Hewitt handles the complexities of the legalities of publication with a deftness of touch, demonstrating in an engaging and thorough fashion that 'the law could protect as well as constrain' (p. 164) in this period. Hewitt's chapter is followed by a detailed and engaging consideration of special correspondence in the Victorian period by Catherine Waters, convincingly presenting the phenomenon as a 'new mobile technology' (p. 181). This

is followed by a case study, by Geoffrey Cantor, of press coverage of the Great Exhibition, which if it feels slightly out of place is nonetheless a rich and engaging demonstration of how one might chart the public understanding of a major national event — a 'media sensation', in fact (p. 199) — via periodicals, and the point Cantor makes about the inseparability of the history of the Exhibition and the reportage and analysis of it in the press is convincing (p. 200).

The book continues with its third section, 'The "Globalisation" of the Nineteenth-Century Press', perhaps its most distinctive contribution. This opens with an engaging account by Mary L. Shannon of 'Colonial Networks and the Periodical Marketplace', focusing on Australian journalism and its connections to the print culture of London. In an essay collection with many excellent illustrations, those in this section from publications such as *Melbourne Punch* are among the most revelatory, and complement Shannon's essay very well. Shannon is followed by Juliette Atkinson, on a much more geographically close relationship between Paris and London, wherein the author notes astutely that the prevalence of fiction translated from the French in popular English periodicals did not necessarily mean that the translations were accurate or indeed complete. The next chapter, by Deeptanil Ray and Abhijit Gupta, considers 'The Newspaper and the Periodical Press in Colonial India' and is among the most interesting contributions to the book, demonstrating the centrality of the press to this most turbulent historical period and the rich material awaiting future researchers. This is also true of Joel H. Wiener's chapter on British and American newspaper journalism — Wiener demonstrates the interrelation of the two astutely and convincingly, and like several other authors in this volume, his point on technology and its impact on the speed of the delivery of news, not least in the US, is well made. His chapter is followed by another

detailed case study, by Simon Potter on the *Review of Reviews*, who demonstrates the 'transnational interconnectivity' of the nineteenth century as manifested in its print capitalism (p. 284).

Potter focuses in his chapter on W. T. Stead, and this leads neatly into the final section on 'Journalists and Journalism'. This opens with John Drew on 'Dickens and the Middle-Class Weekly', offering a clear account of the periodicals edited by Dickens, emphasizing the 'deliberate hybridity of form' of these publications (p. 305), the 'artful poise' of their editor preventing them from being straightforward miscellanies. Drew is followed by Iain Crawford on Harriet Martineau, who makes a convincing case for Martineau's 'helping to make it possible for women authors to work in both literature and journalism and to have professional lives of their own' (p. 327). Graham Law's chapter on Wilkie Collins follows this, providing detail on the famous 'Unknown Public' essay, putting it in context of other, less well-known accounts of popular reading, before giving a clear account of Collins's journalistic career. After this, Joanne Shattock provides a detailed account of Margaret Oliphant's career as 'aligned with the fate of the House of Blackwood' (p. 352), even if the chapter is one of the shorter in the collection. The penultimate chapter, by Fionnuala Dillane on 'Marian Evans the Reviewer', is outstanding. It demonstrates that Evans (later George Eliot) did not see 'her journalism as constituting some type of literary manifesto for the fiction to come' (p. 357), dispelling a frequently-held view of the novelist's

development; instead, Dillane argues, Evans's journalism is characterized by a 'militantly secular' approach to writing (p. 368); Evans opposed in her reviews 'bad logic, opportunistic poetry, false preaching, ill-informed theological history and misdirected didacticism in imaginative writing' (p. 369). This fresh take on Evans's journalism is matched by the claims made in the book's final chapter, by Mark Turner and John Stokes, for Oscar Wilde as a New Journalist, who found in the 'continual hurrying' of the New Journalism a good match for the 'quickly delivered message' which, for Turner and Stokes, 'defines Wilde's modern way of thinking' (p. 382).

From the above brief summaries, I hope that the scope and variety of this essay collection can be discerned, and anyone interested in nineteenth-century history and literature will find much of interest in this collection. There are drawbacks to the organization of the book — the essays can err on the brisk side, and the case studies of individual journalists, while engaging and well-chosen, do leave one wondering which other writers might have been included instead. And while some of the chapters demonstrate recent innovations in approaches to periodical studies, most of the chapters here are only implicitly testament to the existence of 'big data' and digitized periodicals; few give direct accounts of cutting-edge methodologies and approaches to periodicals. But with that said, this book will be indispensable to scholars of periodicals, in its content, and in its evidence of best scholarly practice.

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