

The Nineteenth-Century Periodical Press: Pictures, Print, and Power

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Alexis Easley, Andrew King, and John Morton, eds. *Researching the Nineteenth-Century Periodical Press* (Routledge, 2017), 220 pp., \$119.96 cloth.

Patricia Mainardi, *Another World: Nineteenth-Century Illustrated Print Culture* (Yale University Press, 2017), 296 pp., \$65.00 cloth.

Shattock, Joanne, ed. *Journalism and the Periodical Press in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge University Press, 2017), 402 pp., \$120.00 cloth.

Rarely do I read either a Victorian periodical or an edited scholarly collection from front to back. Instead I read selectively, as I suspect most of us do, flipping back and forth between chapters, looking at illustrations and skipping text entirely, and charting my own path through the text. In preparation for this review, I read everything in a linear sequence. This allowed for a greater appreciation of the role of editors in shaping collections, and the role of authors who combine text and image in their scholarship, as Mainardi's book does. My reading experience was also affected by format. Despite repeated requests, we were unable to obtain a review copy of one of the titles from the publisher. I finally asked my institution's library to purchase a copy for me. Their preference was to

purchase the e-book, making for a very different reading experience from the other two books.

Journalism and the Periodical Press in Nineteenth-Century Britain, edited by Joanne Shattock, is a wide-ranging compilation that joins a well-respected field of scholarly collections on the Victorian periodical press, stretching back at least as far as Shattock's own pioneering volume co-edited with Michael Wolff, *The Victorian Periodical Press: Samplings and Soundings* (1982). That field now includes important collections co-edited by Laurel Brake and others, as well as the recent *Routledge Handbook to Nineteenth-Century British Periodicals and Newspapers* edited by Andrew King, Alexis Easley, and John Morton, a long overdue contribution to the field (2016). The *Handbook* is the companion volume to their new edition under review here. *Researching the Nineteenth-Century Periodical Press* is a "follow-up volume with case studies modelling particular approaches" to the study of Victorian periodicals (2). All of this work is informed by and feeds into the indispensable quarterly journal for Victorian print media research, *Victorian Periodicals Review*. Collections like the one by Shattock and Easley *et al.* demonstrate the unabated vibrancy of the field, for which digitization has proved an incredible boon by increasing ease of access to primary sources, albeit with considerable limitations noted by Easley *et al.* in their introduction and by some of the contributors to their volume. As both collections demonstrate, even if the conditions of the digital have become the new normal, are important subjects of inquiry among a group of researchers who are more than usually alert to the materiality of media and to the power struggles in and of archives.

The Shattock volume contains twenty-two chapters, including the Introduction. It also includes a helpful timeline of publications and events in British periodical history, beginning with the establishment of the *Edinburgh Review* in 1802 and concluding with the founding of the *Daily Mail* in 1896. The collection is divided into four parts: 1) "Periodicals, Genres and the Production of Print"; 2) "The Press and the Public"; 3) "The 'Globalisation' of the Nineteenth-Century Press"; 4) "Journalists and Journalism." In the opening chapter of the book, James Mussell makes a

case for reading digitized sources alongside rather than instead of print. Paying attention to the material forms of print publication, something press researchers have long been inclined to do, prompts consideration of the materiality of the digital resources that remediate those print texts. At the same time, digitization, rather than distancing us from the "actual copies," brings us closer to them, and therefore to the material forms of the past. This point has become something of a touchstone for Victorian periodicals researchers since Mussell's book *The Nineteenth-Century Periodical Press in the Digital Age* appeared in 2012, as evidenced by many of the chapters not in the Shattock book but in the collection by Easley, King, and Morton. And herein lies one of the problems with *Journalism and the Periodical Press in Nineteenth Century Britain*. A sense of dialogue between the chapters is often obscure. While many of the authors in Part 1—the longest of the four sections—are surely drawing on digital resources for their research, none of them seem to be approaching the question of the materiality of the digital with the same kind of self-consciousness that Mussell's chapter calls for, leading to a rather disjointed or inconclusive reading experience. Oddly, Mussell's chapter would perhaps be better placed in the collection edited by Easley and her colleagues.

The most coherent and exciting section of the Shattock book is Part 3 on globalization, with chapters on the international links between the London press and its counterparts in colonial Australia and India, and the exchange of ideas, forms, and content between Britain, the United States, and France. The entries in this section enable us to see the nineteenth-century transformation of the press from a national to a global phenomenon. A highlight for me was the chapter by Deeptanil Ray and Abhijit Gupta, whose lovely opening paragraph takes the reader to a "narrow alley" in present-day Calcutta, in front of a "crumbling Raj-era building" that was home to the first Bengali communist daily (1946). "It was somewhere here," amid present-day food stalls, dance bars, and shoe shops that "the first newspaper in the Indian subcontinent using moveable type" was printed (245). Ray and Gupta's is an exciting chapter that introduced me to a tradition of manuscript newspapers in pre-colonial India that circulated long

before print newspapers, but whose archives have disappeared with what Marx called “the crumbling of an ancient world” (qtd Ray and Gupta 248).

Following on Part 3, the final section of the Shattock collection features six case studies of household-name authors whose careers were inflected by their journalistic writing: Dickens, Martineau, Collins, Oliphant, Evans, and Wilde. Fionnuala Dillane’s chapter, “Marian Evans the Reviewer,” makes a compelling case for looking squarely at Eliot’s journalism in its own right, rather than as the handmaiden to the novels. Doing so moves us beyond the same few major articles we already know well and alerts us to the diversity of her press writing, allowing us to see how carefully Eliot worked the various press platforms available to her.

Dillane’s is just one of many excellent contributions to *Journalism and the Periodical Press in Nineteenth-Century Britain*. The strength of the book is its comprehensive coverage of major events, developments, and figures by influential scholars in the field—for example, Lorraine Janzen Kooistra on “Illustration,” and Martin Hewitt on “The Press and the Law.” But herein lies a puzzle for me as a reader, and it is the question of audience. Many of the articles have an introductory air, suggesting the book is intended for new researchers, which is in no way a problem. But the apparatus and marketing doesn’t really announce this, unlike, say, a volume such as the 2016 *Routledge Handbook*. It almost seems as though this volume should have been included in a “Companion” or “Introduction to” series, but wasn’t. Shattock’s introduction explains that “one of the purposes of the volume is to show the ways in which the periodical and newspaper press is central to an understanding of the long nineteenth century” (7), an argument that does not need to be made for specialists. If the book is intended for graduate students and early researchers, how effective is it at providing coverage of the evolving trends in the field? A good many of the entries are not driven by a strong argument; instead they introduce a topic, then provide a series of examples, as introductory anthologies often do. Yet many of the entries also turn to a figure or text that has been overlooked in the existing scholarship, suggesting an orientation to more initiated readers looking to supplement their knowledge of a particular area. Perhaps my confusion

about the intended audience for this volume isn't a problem. The broad title of both the volume and many of the individual chapters, together with the overview style of most of the entries, will be helpful for new scholars wanting to gain their footing in the field, or for established scholars needing a refresher. Meanwhile, the inclusion of lesser-known figures and texts within some of the chapters suggest new avenues of research for all.

The Introduction to *Researching the Nineteenth-Century Periodical Press* articulates a clear sense of purpose: to "[model] particular approaches and methodologies for periodicals scholarship. [...] We hoped that by laying bare some of the ways scholarship is produced in our field, we would demystify the process of critical inquiry" (2). The practical and intellectual contribution of such an approach is invaluable at this moment in the history of the field. Digitization has produced at least as many new conundrums as it has resolved, and many of the entries in *Researching* are highly attuned to the ways in which the digital has transformed the shape of periodicals research and the contours of our research practices. The majority of the twelve chapters are titled with the word "Researching," "Researching gender issues," and "Researching periodical networks" suggest the volume's slant toward practical know-how in a field that is often intimidatingly opaque for new researchers, and subject to rapid change for veterans who have witnessed a transformation from the days of poring over microfilm and searching through newspapers in the Colindale Library to full-text searching and Gale Cengage. Yet the keywords of the book's introduction—"authorship," "genre," and "archive"—clearly signal the intellectual and theoretical rigor of the questions posed by both individual contributors and the volume as a whole. Indeed, the introduction serves as something of a mini manifesto for the renewal of the field by a "return" to the archive: "We must treat our own archival processes archivally, that is, to discover what secrets our research processes might reveal if treated as subjects of study in their own right" (12). This kind of self-aware attention to both product and process of research in the periodicals archive is vital at this juncture, and is borne out by the majority of the chapters in the volume.

Let me focus on three articles to provide a sense of both the diversity and thematic coherence of the volume. Alexis Easley's chapter on Eliza Cook and Charlotte Cushman's transatlantic collaboration and cross-promotion of each other's work offers a case study on how to research gender issues using digital, microfilm, and hard copy resources (30). Her contribution provides a patent sense of her research path while also showing us the results of that research. By carefully tracking the steps of her process, Easley reveals the kinds of research questions she asked herself—always framed in relation to the material constraints and affordances of different archives—and where those questions led. What makes this chapter particularly appealing is the seamless discussion of research as both dynamic process and contribution to knowledge.

In her chapter "Who do you think they were?: what genealogy databases can do for Victorian periodical studies," Marianne Van Remoortel "explores alternative ways of identifying anonymous contributors to the periodical press and the lives and careers of nameless 'back room' workers" such as subeditors, typesetters, illustrators, and newsboys (133). This article is less a recounting of a research path than Easley's and is more of an investigation of the potentialities and limitations of using a certain kind of resource—online genealogies—and a method of searching—"surfing and stumbling" (135). Van Remoortel examines the value of using genealogical databases in conjunction with more traditional resources like the Wellesley Index, which although essential is oriented toward authors and authorship to the exclusion of other kinds of workers who helped to make periodicals. One of the results of Van Remoortel's research is a fascinating discussion of a group home for newsboys—a category of workers entirely invisible to the Wellesley but essential to the circulation of print news. But she also found that the impossibility of searching by gender *and* occupation hampered her investigation of the supposed "rise" of female journalism toward the end of the century, a provocative finding that deserves further investigation.

In comparison to Van Remoortel's or Easley's chapters, Margaret Beetham's chapter is a much more personal, even autobiographical account

that takes the form of a series of dated journal entries describing her research on the "Women's Corner" of the penny weekly, *Co-Operative News*. Like many of the other authors, Beetham is interested in the question of the relationship between the digital and the undigitized, the benefits of using paper copies, and the difficulties of researching contributions to press history by the socially marginalized—in this case working-class women. The diary form of Beetham's chapter, entitled "The Body in the Archive," allows her to convey the sense of the "messy" process of research, which is concealed in most published scholarship: the emails to colleagues, the old notes from previous research projects, furtive Wikipedia use, and the deep history of our reading (for Beetham, Irigaray and Millett) that informs our questions. As Beetham writes in the opening stages of her chapter:

The "how" of a research method depends first on the "why" of the research question, and answering this question is always a complicated mix of personal history, institutional pressures, time, and money, as well as commissions, chance, conversations with other people (oral and written), and what we might broadly call "the state of the discipline."
(145).

If pressed to identify a sentence that captures the essence of the entire collection, I might choose this one.

A handful of chapters in both edited collections focuses on visual culture and the nineteenth-century roots of our image-saturated media landscape. Gerry Beegan's chapter in *Researching* notes that the nineteenth century ushered in the combined use of text and image in commercial print products, made possible by continual innovation in printing technologies. Using popular illustrator Phil May as a case study, Beegan rejects the thesis of photographic hegemony, arguing that hand-drawn, collaborative methods of illustration intersected with but were not superseded by photomechanical images. These observations link productively to the final title under review here, Patricia Mainardi's *Another World: Nineteenth-Century Illustrated Print Culture*. Several themes unite the scholarship on visual culture in all three volumes, but they are developed to the fullest extent in Mainardi's

book. They include the prevalence of the vernacular and scenes of everyday life in popular nineteenth-century print illustration; a refusal to see photography as the culmination of hand-drawn media images; the potency of cross-cultural exchanges between England and other countries, especially France; the development of a global market for print; and the increasingly complex interplay of text and image on the page. Mainardi's survey of nineteenth-century illustrated print culture is a handsomely produced volume chock full of color images focusing on news and popular media, reproductive processes, lines of artistic influence, and generic trends. *Another World* fills a gap between art historians' traditional emphasis on high art and concepts of originality, and popular visual culture studies. Mainardi's main sources are lithographic prints and caricature, illustrated penny periodicals and the illustrated newspaper press, comics, illustrated books (though not necessarily novels), and popular prints.

Mainardi's is an impressively wide-ranging survey of popular visual media that manages to capture the complex entanglement of technological change and aesthetic values in relation to political and cultural transformation in an informed and inviting style. Lithography and wood engraving are understandably given a great deal of attention. Invented in Bavaria in 1796 by Alöys Senefelder, lithography was fast, cheap, and easy to produce and was well suited to the depiction of everyday life, "initiating what has been termed 'the nineteenth-century media explosion'" (Beatrice Farwell, qtd Mainardi 13). Understanding the significance of this change entails an awareness of just how rare it was for average people to see their lives portrayed in an image. In France, "manners and customs," fashion, cityscapes, and landscapes were favorite subjects since political images were still subject to censorship. The display of lithographs in show windows was an early form of marketing, yet allowed access for audiences who might not be able to afford the purchase of prints. This commercial display of popular images bore some resemblance to the display of high art in the salons, but was also important to another development, the advent of visual series featuring a recurring character. The importance of serial storytelling and sequential narration in popular visual culture is something of an

unacknowledged theme in Mainardi's book. She traces it from lithographic print series to the invention of comics, illustrated books, advertising, and eventually cinema. Mainardi's discussion of Gustave Doré was a highlight for me. While Doré produced only a few "comics" when still in his youth, his images are significant for the way they broke comic book rules that were barely even rules, signalling the transgressive nature of the form.

While the invention of lithography made prints cheaper and more widely available, it was the development of wood engraving in the 1830s that would "revolutionize printing by enabling text and image to be combined on the same page" (71). In Chapter 2, Mainardi provides a brief description of the wood engraving process, before moving to four case studies of the first two illustrated periodicals and newspapers in England and France. The *Penny Magazine* and *Le Magasin pittoresque* were "useful knowledge," general-interest publications aimed at providing educational and edifying reading material to working-class readers. Mainardi notes that while *Le magasin* borrowed heavily from its British forerunner, a major difference was that the *Penny Magazine* was oriented toward text with illustrations, while *Le Magasin* prioritized illustrations over text. From here Mainard's discussion moves to the first illustrated newspapers, the *Illustrated London News* (1842) and *L'Illustration, Journal universel* (1843), which established patterns in newspaper formatting and layout that are with us even today.

While all of the examples in Chapter 2 serve Mainardi's chapter admirably, these particular titles will likely be familiar to readers of her book. What was newer to me were the titles examined in Chapter 4. In "Paths Forgotten, Calls Unheard: Pictures in Stories," Mainardi discusses a largely forgotten stream of illustrated books for adult readers. These books were not comics—they featured more text than comics—and illustrator and author were often not the same person. Importantly, however, these were not illustrated serial novels like those of Dickens, but were experimental, non-linear texts with a mix of fantasy and realism appearing in weekly installments, where the storytelling function was often shared (or snatched back and forth) between text and illustration. Jean Grandville's *Another*

World (1844), from which Mainard takes her title, was one such example. “A loosely organized novel in pictures,” it rejected realist plot structures in favor of a series of images on a particular theme with accompanying text. In the case of *Another World*, the writer of the majority of the text, Taxile Delord, was uncredited until the conclusion of the series. This chapter demonstrates the level of inventiveness brought to the illustrated book in its early days. Mainardi calls these examples “paths forgotten”—brief flowerings of inventive possibility for adult illustrated texts that fell by the wayside, but are clearly forerunners of both children’s picture books and graphic novels.

Mainardi’s book is that wonderful mix of pleasure and instruction—a trove of images and carefully researched insights and connections. While there is a great deal of scholarship on early forms of popular culture, much of it overlooks the importance of illustration. *Another World* is a welcome addition to the research on visual culture and nineteenth-century popular print. Indeed, all three books here indicate just how lively the field of Victorian print media studies is today, and how much work remains to be done. Perhaps more so than in any other field of nineteenth-century studies, press research has been transformed by digitization, which has opened up inquiry and access in ways we are just now beginning to theorize. I sense the greatest energy and excitement in cross-disciplinary, transnational work that has thrown open the borders of periodical press research. At the same time, I also see in this work increased attention to the politics that underwrite control of periodicals archives, including the politics of corporate ownership, commercialization, institutional constraints, and the legacies of colonial violence. I observe—and welcome—in much of this work a rigorous exposure of the operations of power inherent in both the objects we “discover” in nineteenth-century periodicals archives, and the conditions of scholarly discovery itself.

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