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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA  
RIVERSIDE

The Editor as Producer: Nineteenth-Century British Literary Editors

A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction  
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

English

by

Gretchen C. Bartels

August 2013

Dissertation Committee:

Dr. Joseph Childers, Chairperson

Dr. Susan Zieger

Dr. Rise Axelrod

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2013

The Dissertation of Gretchen C. Bartels is approved:

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University of California, Riverside

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for their constant love and support

## ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

The Editor as Producer: Nineteenth-Century British Literary Editors

by

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Doctor of Philosophy, Graduate Program in English  
University of California, Riverside, August 2013  
Dr. Joseph Childers, Chairperson

To more fully understand nineteenth-century literary production, literary scholars must consider periodical editing as more than biographical footnotes to the lives of famous Victorian authors or secondary details in a text's publishing history. In *The Editor as Producer: Nineteenth-Century British Literary Editors*, I seek to render more visible the work of the periodical editor, positing this figure as pivotal to the nineteenth-century literary scene. A single metanarrative of the editorial role is impossible to tell and undesirable insofar as it would necessarily flatten out a rich and varied history of practices and the influences particular men and women have had on literary texts, periodicals, and nineteenth-century print culture; however, critical work on editors has been too fragmented. My approach is to trace the historical trajectory of editorial roles through the nineteenth century but to focus in each period on a pair of editors to explore the editorial trends of professionalization, celebrity author-editorship, and responses to



new technologies.

Pairing Francis Jeffrey of the *Edinburgh Review* and William Blackwood along with the fictional Christopher North of *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, chapter 1 focuses on the struggle for professionalization in literary reviews and magazines during the early nineteenth century. In chapter 2, I draw on the figure of the naked editor to represent the emotional openness and literary intimacy audiences pursued in author-editors. William Makepeace Thackeray's *Cornhill Magazine* and Ellen Wood's *Argosy* form this chapter's central set of periodicals. Finally, *The Editor as Producer* concludes with perhaps the most unlikely pairing: George Newnes's popular magazine *Tit-Bits* and Henry Harland and Aubrey Beardsley's artistic quarterly the *Yellow Book*. The editors of both periodicals responded to late-century changes in audience and technology, but while Newnes embraced the increased pace of modern life and shorter reader attention span, Harland and Beardsley focused on creating a periodical that was first and foremost an *objet d'art*. Chapter 3 emphasizes how the fitness of periodicals in their cultural environments was influenced by the editor's vision.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1: Early Nineteenth-Century Editors: Professionalization in The <i>Edinburgh Review</i> and <i>Blackwood's Monthly Magazine</i> .....	23
Chapter 2: Mid-Nineteenth Century Editors: Celebrity and Personal Connection in the <i>Cornhill Magazine</i> and the <i>Argosy</i> .....	91
Chapter 3: Late Nineteenth Century Editors: Technologies of the Press in <i>Tit-Bits</i> and the <i>Yellow Book</i> .....	149
Bibliography.....	220
Appendix 1: Images from Chapter 3.....	242

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: A page from the third volume of the <i>Edinburgh Review</i> .....	242
Figure 2: The front page of <i>Tit-Bits</i> .....	243
Figure 3: A page from the first volume of the <i>Yellow Book</i> .....	244
Figure 4: Lolcat entitled “He Doesn't Sound Like a Person I Want to Know”.....	245
Figure 5: Lolcat entitled ““I Read Sum Wares Dat Drinkin Is Bad Fur U”.....	245
Figure 6: The cover of the first volume of the <i>Yellow Book</i> , designed by Aubrey Beardsley.....	246
Figure 7: <i>Cornhill Magazine</i> Vol. V (90-91).....	247
Figure 8: <i>Cornhill Magazine</i> Vol. V (1).....	248
Figure 9: Leighton’s “A Study”.....	249

## Introduction

*“It is a magazine age: there can be no doubt about that. Other books are but little read in comparison to the monthly or weekly serial.” The Christian Observer, 1865*

During the nineteenth-century, the power of the British periodical press was expansive, and the magazine editor was the repository of much of this power. Anthony Trollope satirically represented this influence as divine in his 1855 one-volume novel *The Warden*. The title of Trollope’s fictionalized version of the *Times*, the *Jupiter*, makes explicit the godlike might of the paper that destroys Septimus Harding’s career with a single article. Continuing the comparison, Trollope’s narrator asks,

Who has not heard of Mount Olympus—that high abode of all the powers of type, that favoured seat of the great goddess Pica, that wondrous habitation of gods and devils, from whence, with ceaseless hum of steam and never-ending flow of Castilian ink, issue forth eighty thousand nightly edicts for the governance of a subject nation? (160)

Trollope, who would himself hold the editorial chair of the *St. Pauls Magazine* in 1867, paints a bleak picture of literary production. The *Jupiter* to Trollope’s Olympus is both god and governor in this hellscape of a heaven in which the divine and the demonic, a literalization of the printer’s devil, intermix. With this grandiose description in mind, the *Jupiter*’s editor, Tom Towers, is a bit underwhelming: “Tom Towers walks quietly along Pall Mall, with his coat buttoned close against the east wind, as though he were a mortal

man, and not a god dispensing thunderbolts from Mount Olympus” (163). This description juxtaposes Tom, an unremarkable man struggling against the elements, and the god of thunder and sky. In doing so, Trollope emphasizes the great power of the press, especially its destructive potential, but also undermines that god-like facade by revealing the man behind the proverbial curtain. Juxtaposing the mundane and the extraordinary, Trollope highlights the invisibility of the editor himself and raises concerns about placing so much power in the hands of one individual. Later in the novel, when asked about the article accusing Harding of mismanagement, Towers hides behind the mask of the magazine: “My dear fellow,” he tells John Bold, “I really cannot answer for the *Jupiter*” (178). In this moment, the connection between editor and periodical is strained. To some extent, Towers has every right and responsibility as editor to answer for the *Jupiter*, but as this interchange shows, the relationship between editor and paper breaks down, and this divide is borne out in the guiding metaphor for the periodical in the novel. Trollope’s analogy between Roman mythology and periodical publication appears straightforward and quite simple: the magazine with the power of Jupiter is printed on Mount Olympus. However, both the paper and the editor are described as the Jupiter of this particular Olympus, and this ambiguity destabilizes the distinction between editor and periodical. What exactly comprises the eighty thousand nightly edicts is also left somewhat open in this analogy because the print-and-paper numbers materially issuing forth from Pall Mall Street could be Jupiter’s edicts or Jupiter himself whose ideas rather than physical paper are these edicts. Even Tom Towers’s name indicates the same ambiguity: it can be read in verb form as a description of Tom who towers over others or

in noun form as part of a building, perhaps one like the cathedral whose presence looms over *Barchester Towers*, the second novel in Trollope's Chronicles of Barsetshire. The tension in name and analogy reveals the some of the complexity at the heart of the nineteenth-century editor who moves between functioning as an individual and functioning as part and parcel with his or her periodical.

The term "editor," derived from the Latin *e ditus*, "to put forward," was used in ancient Rome as *editor ludorum* to describe the organizer of the games ("Editor"). This brutal etymology is, for the most part, far afield the more mundane and substantially less gruesome world of the periodical press, though the occasional duel between editors introduced actual carnage into the practice and the cutting words and damning thunderbolts of some editors also introduced metaphoric brutality into this history. The term was not widely used to describe periodical editors until the early nineteenth century though it has often been applied to seventeenth and eighteenth-century men and women of the press. According to Christopher Kent, the editor is "essentially a nineteenth-century creation" (99). While the term "editor" has been applied to publishers in the seventeenth century and to the act of preparing the work of another in the eighteenth century, its 1803 use in George Rose's published diaries and correspondence is the earliest listed modern use of the term "editor" in the *Oxford English Dictionary* denoting a conductor of periodicals, though earlier incidences of this definition of the word exist ("Editor"). For instance, the 1802 "Advertisement" that heads the *Edinburgh Review's* first number employs the terms "the Editors" and "the Conductors" interchangeably. The air of familiarity with which the term editor is applied in 1802 suggests that this

definition of the word was already in use at the time, and it likely grew out of the earlier application of the word to publishers who often also served as editors. The changes to conducting terminology during the early nineteenth century are significant because they indicate a solidification of the role as well as a move toward a professionalization of the editor.

Within the turbulent sea of nineteenth-century print culture and serial publication, the figure of the editor stood at the helm of the literary magazine as more than a corrector of textual errors—instead, he or not infrequently she stood as an compiler, organizer, and shaper of texts and indeed of the literary market itself. Often, the editor was the embodiment of the power of the press. In his 1878 article “Memorials of a Man of Letters,” John Morley described the periodical editor as “that more singular personage, the impresario of men of letters, the *entrepreneur* of the spiritual power, the Editor” (313). Rather than reading the work of editing as mechanical or solely production-based, Morley highlights the connections of editing work to the arts and to the spiritual. However, although Victorian editors were equipped with the immense power to select, alter, and review texts, these Olympians were also subject to increasing commoditization in a culture more and more invested in the brand name of the individual author. The nineteenth-century editor has been too frequently under-theorized and overlooked in Victorian studies, appearing as a detail in author biographies or a note in critical studies of periodicals. To more fully understand Victorian literary production, editors must be considered as more than biographical footnotes to the lives of famous authors or secondary details in a novel’s publishing history.

Recent innovations in technology have opened the archives and allowed scholars unprecedented access to nineteenth century serials. Not surprisingly, studies of periodicals and serialization are becoming popular, frequently drawing together scholars from a number of disciplines, such as literary studies, history, media studies, and cultural studies. With access to the Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals and Poole's Index to Periodical Literature available online, the feasibility of navigating the vast nineteenth-century archives increases for would-be periodical scholars. The push by organizations like Google to digitize books, especially the many nineteenth century texts that have been "preserved for generations on library shelves before [they were] carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online," also opens the archives, making scores of tomes not only readily available for download but also electronically searchable (Google Books). The Hathi Trust Digital Library has also opened the archives of nineteenth-century periodicals. These innovations, however, are still only starting to be utilized, and there remains much work to do. When studying nineteenth-century literature, scholars frequently overlook the work of journal editors because the collections of essays, novels, and poems published in individual volumes are regularly identified by author rather than by periodical and editor, except in dramatic cases in which the editing history is especially notable, such as in Charles Dickens's editing of Elizabeth Gaskell's "Lizzie Leigh" and *North and South*.

Furthermore, critical work on editors are often fragmented and embedded in studies of periodicals, print culture, and individual authors who were also editors. While Victorian periodicals and editors have not been studied as thoroughly as nineteenth-



century novels and authors, scholars from many disciplines, including literary studies, the history of print, and bibliography, are rallying in this research space. For instance, the *Victorian Periodicals Review* has focused on scholarly exploration of these topics since its inception as the *Victorian Periodical Newsletter* in 1968. On its website, the *Victorian Periodicals Review* describes itself as “The only refereed journal that concentrates on the editorial and publishing history of Victorian Periodicals,” and emphasizes “the importance of periodicals for an understanding of the history and culture of Victorian Britain, Ireland, and the Empire.” Similarly, the Society for the History of Authorship, Reading and Publishing (SHARP), founded in 1991, supports and transnationally connects scholars who are addressing “the composition, mediation, reception, survival, and transformation of written communication in material forms including marks on stone, script on parchment, printed books and periodicals, and new media” (“SHARP: A Global Scholarly Society”).

The importance of the periodical press to nineteenth-century studies in particular is by no means a recent discovery. An interest in journals and magazines has featured in nineteenth-century literary studies and histories for well over a century; indeed, even during the nineteenth century itself scholars were deeply aware of the importance of connections between the press and literature. For instance, George Saintsbury devotes two of twelve chapters to magazines and journals in his 1896 work *A History of Nineteenth-Century Literature*. Especially in his fourth chapter, “The Development of Periodicals,” the emphasis Saintsbury places on the importance of the press in nineteenth-century literary development is unmistakable:

Perhaps there is no single feature of the English literary history of the nineteenth century, not even the enormous popularisation and multiplication of the novel, which is so distinctive and characteristic as the development in it of periodical literature. For this did not, as the extension of novel writing did, concern a single department only. The periodical—it may almost for shortness' sake be said the newspaper—not only became infinitely multiplied, but it gradually absorbed almost every department or a share of almost every department into itself. (166)

Having divided his literary history by writing genre, Saintsbury notes that the periodical press transgresses these boundaries by influencing all types of nineteenth-century writing. Publication history is always present but easily obscured when essays, poems, and novels are collected in volumes. Often, nineteenth-century novels, poetry, philosophy, and criticism garner more critical attention than periodicals, but Saintsbury's late-nineteenth-century vantage point offers modern literary critics a call for research on literary distribution and nineteenth-century periodical culture. This opens the question of how to study journals and magazines when they comprise such a vast sea of print. Scholars of the periodical and of seriality must wrestle with the question of to what extent generalization is even possible within such a diverse variety of practices and such a complex network of readers, editors, publishing companies, printers, and writers.

The study of the serial delivery of text has frequently coincided with an interest in publication history and modes of production that draw on changes in technology and the workings of the market help explain the popularity of the serial in nineteenth-century

print culture. One of the seminal studies on the topic is Richard Altick's 1957 *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public 1800-1900*. Considering the increase in serially published works, Altick narrates the formation of a mass reading audience in Great Britain as "the history of English democracy seen from a new angle" (3). In "Fictions in the Marketplace: Towards a Study of the Victorian Serial," Bill Bell identifies a move in early 1990s scholarship to interpret serials in terms of their ideological underpinnings, such as in the case of Linda K. Hughes and Michael Lund's oft-cited 1991 study *The Victorian Serial*, which looks at how this delivery format revealed and shaped Victorian understandings of home, history, empire, and doubt. Hughes and Lund identify two major unexamined issues: the connection of the serial to "fundamental assumptions and values of that culture" and the dynamics of serial reading (1). The collections of essays *Romantic Periodicals and Print Culture* (2003) edited by Kim Wheatley and *Encounters in the Victorian Press: Editors, Authors, Readers* (2005) edited by Laurel Brake and Julie F. Codell are also important contributions to the study of nineteenth-century periodicals and editors, including work on authors and artists Mary Robinson, Amelia Opie, Charles Lamb, William Wordsworth, Florence Fenwick Miller, and James McNeill Whistler; topics such as marriage and singleness, liberalism, serial fiction, politics, colonial encounters, and memory; and periodicals such as the *Monthly Magazine*, the *New Monthly Magazine*, the *Edinburgh Review*, *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, *Eliza Cook's Journal*, the *Illustrated London News*, the *Westminster Review*, the *Yellow Book*, the *Dart*, the *World*, and the *Star*.

In their introduction to the 1995 collection of essays on nineteenth-century publishing history entitled *Literature in the Marketplace*, editors John O. Jordan and Robert L. Patten engage with the question of methodology as they describe the difficulty encountered by scholars in the field: “Indeed, publishing history, ‘literary sociology,’ the history of the book, or the ‘sociology of texts,’ as a field is variously denominated, ‘lacks binding theoretical coherence,’ to quote John Sutherland, and is characterized by what Robert Darnton calls ‘interdisciplinarity run riot’” (1). Jordan and Patten offer an impressive catalog of histories of publishing houses, but rather than offer a totalizing theory of publishing and the book, Jordan and Patten’s collection engages many approaches to the material aspects of texts, the conditions that favored print culture and seriality, and histories of specific key figures such as Wordsworth and Dickens. This multiplicity represents the complexity of the field, and Jordan and Patten identify four principles that can be extracted from these diverse perspectives. First, a focus on mediating agents is essential to this type of study. Second, though publishing history and studies of print culture begin with the physical world, they must engage the “ideological and social formation that privileged print culture, events that lent themselves to verbal formulation and dissemination (news, legislation, gossip, controversy), and particular conjunctions of time, place, and person that stimulated print production” (12). Third, scholars should consider the interplay of print culture with oral and visual cultures, and fourth and last, a single metanarrative is impossible to tell regardless of how enticing it may be. Patten and Jordan’s warning against metanarrative is well warranted; however, wariness of overgeneralization should not deter scholars from the genealogical work of

tracing the tangled web of periodical culture and its history, and it raises of the issue of how to coherently write a book-length study of periodicals. Mark W. Turner's 2000 study *Trollope and the Magazines: Gendered Issues in Mid-Victorian Britain* intentionally offers a model for approaching nineteenth-century periodicals critically in terms of gender and intertextuality. Turner ties his study of literary magazines to one author and one main ideological concern, and this allows him to span a number of magazines, including the *Cornhill Magazine*, *Good Words*, the *Fortnightly Review*, and the *St. Paul's Magazine*. Though only a portion of the book deals with Trollope's editing, Turner's *Trollope and the Magazines* is one of the most helpful book-length studies relating to editing.

Much of the work being done on editors is somewhat fragmentary and can be found in journals, in essay collections, or as portions of works engaged with periodical culture more broadly. Perhaps it is fitting that so much of the discussion about editors occurs in periodicals themselves, such as Solveig C Robinson "Editing *Belgravia*: M. E. Braddon's Defense of 'Light Literature'" (1995), Anne M. Windholz's "The Woman Who Would be Editor: Ella D'Arcy and the *Yellow Book*." (1996), Robert Colby's "'Into the Blue Water': The First Year of 'Cornhill Magazine' under Thackeray" (1999), Jennifer Phegley's "'Henceforward I Refuse to Bow the Knee to Their Narrow Rule': Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Belgravia Magazine*, Women Readers, and Literary Valuation" (2004) and "Domesticating the Sensation Novelist: Ellen Price Wood as Author and Editor of the *Argosy Magazine*" (2005), June Sturrock's "Establishing Identity: Editorial Correspondence from the Early Years of *The Monthly Packet*." (2006),

Beth Palmer's "Dangerous and Foolish Work": Evangelicalism and Sensationalism in Ellen Wood's *Argosy Magazine*." (2008) and "'Chieftaness,' 'Great Duchess,' 'Editress! Mysterious Being!': Performing Editorial Identities in Florence Marryat's *London Society Magazine*" (2009). Indeed, much of the discourse on editors seems fragmentary because of these articles' focus on so many different editors and periodicals.

Biographical studies of author-editors, such as William Makepeace Thackeray, Anthony Trollope, Mary Elizabeth Braddon, George Augustus Sala, George Henry Lewes, Marian Evans, Charlotte Yonge, Theodore Hook, Edward Bulwer-Lytton, Florence Marryat, Harrison Ainsworth, Charles Lever, G. W. M. Reynolds, R. S. Surtees, Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu, Francis E Smedley, Alfred Austin, Edmund Yates, James Payn, Walter Besant, and Oscar Wilde, as well as histories of specific periodicals also provide space for scholarly study of editors, but this exploration of editorial personae is generally more historical than theoretical.

While there is a substantial body of work on Victorian editors, book-length studies engaging questions of editorship are more rare, and often these are collections of essays rather than books by single authors. This pattern does change, however, in relation to the work of feminist critics who have been finding studying the multitude of female nineteenth-century editors one productive way to consider the role of professional women during the era. Much has been and is being written on women and periodicals, such as Kathryn Shevelow's *Women and Print Culture: The Construction of Femininity in the Early Periodical* (1989), Patricia Okker's *Our Sister Editors: Sarah J. Hale and the Tradition of Nineteenth-Century American Women Editors* (1995), Margaret

Beetham's *A Magazine of Her Own?: Domesticity and Desire in the Woman's Magazine, 1800-1914* (1996), Barbara Onslow's *Women of the Press in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (2000), Sharon M. Harris and Ellen Gruber Garvey's collection *Blue Pencils and Hidden Hands: Women Editing Periodicals, 1830-1910* (2004), and Beth Palmer's *Women's Authorship and Editorship in Victorian Culture: Sensational Strategies* (2011).

Combining attention to a particular periodical with a more general approach to nineteenth-century editors at large, Robert L. Patten and David Finkelstein's chapter entitled "Editing *Blackwood's*; or, What Do Editors Do?" in the 2006 collection *Print Culture and the Blackwood Tradition, 1805-1930* edited by David Finkelstein is one of the most comprehensive treatments of periodical editors. Patten and Finkelstein offer an overview of the varied roles of Victorian editors while also anchoring their argument in a specific concern for *Blackwood's Magazine*. They identify seven major functions of editing positions in the nineteenth century—overseeing finance and administration, promoting an ideology, commissioning contributors, arranging and perfecting copy, and buying and selling. Patten and Finkelstein outline a taxonomy of Victorian editors including the "big name" editor who "left most of the day-to-day details to subordinates," the "hands on" editor who "oversaw every aspect of production, including the make-up and timing of articles and reviews," and the publisher-proprietor editor who was characterized by "an active interest in his property and often through tie-ins with other of his publishing ventures managed to obtain major works that recouped their substantial cost by running both in the periodical and in a variety of volume formats" (150-51). Patten and Finkelstein consider the importance of giving critical attention to the

mediations by fiction bureaucrats, literary agents, Societies of Authors, technologies, distribution, and evaluation systems; however, they eventually abandon the titular question of what editors do because “By ‘editing’ one can mean almost anything” (152). Instead, they call for scholars to shift the focus of their critical inquiry to engage the great diversity of editorial practices by asking instead what a particular editor did. Matthew Taunton offers a similar warning against the “damaging tendency to conflate the diverse roles played by various editors of various publications at various times” and exhorts scholars to remember how the editorial role “varied hugely across different publications and changed fundamentally over time” in his entry on the editor in the *Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Journalism*.

The most notable collection of essays on editors is Joel H. Wiener’s *Innovators and Preachers: The Role of the Editor in Victorian England* (1985), which grew out of the 1982 CUNY Conference on History. Wiener calls scholars to consider the great importance of the nineteenth-century editor:

Editing is at the core of the Victorian experience. In an age characterized by the proliferation of print, the editor acted as a conduit between text and audience. He communicated ideas and values to a multiple readership. He enriched Victorian political and cultural life in diverse ways. And, perhaps of most importance, he helped create the modern newspaper and magazine, without which life for our Victorian forebears and ourselves would be considerably duller. In brief, the editor was situated at the



nucleus of the Victorian world: He typified both the transformations that were making Britain an urban nation and a stable society. (xii-xiii)

I take this description of the editor's importance as a call to critical arms. Victorian literary critics need to deeply consider the role of the editor, and to fully engage this at times elusive figure, studies of both breadth and depth are needed. In *The Editor as Producer*, I work to balance these demands by constructing a historical narrative that spans the nineteenth century but also focuses on particular periodicals of interest.

To study editors is in many ways to be a conjurer seeking to render the invisible work of the editor visible once more, to give voice to a silent force shaping literary culture, to put your hand on the ghost's shoulder and not simply slip through her immaterial form. A single metanarrative for the role of the periodical editor is impossible to tell and undesirable insofar as it would necessarily flatten out a rich and varied history of editorial practices and the influences specific editors have had on literary texts, periodicals, and nineteenth-century literary culture; however, critical work on editors has been too fragmented. One of the great strengths of periodicals as an area of research is the vastness of the archive and the overwhelming proliferation of print culture through the periodical press from the seventeenth century onward. Indeed, this is a sea far too vast to navigate in three chapters, and I make no claims to even attempt such a taxonomical approach to periodical editors. *The Editor as Producer* is not an exhaustive history of periodical editing; such efforts would be fatiguing for researcher and reader alike. Instead, I follow Michel Foucault's call for historians to write genealogies. In his 1971 essay "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," Foucault draws a distinction between

representing the past as history, a monolithic account that follows cause and effect patterns, and as genealogy, a dialogic, open form of recounting the past that traces many different lines. One of the main traits of this type of genealogy is how it records “the singularity of events outside of any monotonous finality” that are often considered immaterial in traditional histories (140). In *The Editor as Producer*, I take Foucault’s model of “vast accumulation of source material” that offers an exploratory polyvalent genealogy rather than a simple cause and effect history as I weave a narrative of professionalization and personal connection to audiences that illuminates the developing editorial role throughout the nineteenth century (Foucault 140).

For *The Editor as Producer*, one of the most important trends in nineteenth-century print culture was that of journals employing celebrity author-editors. By providing readers with stability and a sense of unity in a work, this individual, artistic editor figure served a function similar to that of the Author, the individual genius and originator of texts. When considering the author-editor, however, this unity of editor rather than that of author and *oeuvre* also reveals the fragmentation of the literary world of the nineteenth-century and challenges the concept of voice in print even as it offers a distinct editorial voice speaking in first person plural. The editor broadly and the author-editor more specifically were accorded similar status to the Author, but the collaborative, polyphonic structure of the literary magazine reveals problems in the concept of the Author that Michel Foucault and Roland Barthes seek to depose with their author-function and dead/dying Author even as it constructs it.

The rise of the Author with the godlike capitalized “A” whose death would later be proclaimed by Roland Barthes was one of the important literary trends of the nineteenth century. Barthes’s 1968 essay “The Death of the Author” heralded a revolution in literary studies that deposed the Author as the text’s monarch of meaning. “The birth of the reader,” Barthes writes, “must be at the cost of the death of the author” (189). Foucault, on the other hand, proposes a transformation into the author-function rather than the death of the Author in his 1969 article “What is an Author?” Foucault characterizes the author-function with the following four traits:

the “author-function,” is tied to the legal and institutional systems that circumscribe, determine, and articulate the realm of discourse; it does not operate in a uniform manner in all discourses, at all times, and in any given culture; it is not defined by the spontaneous attribution of a text to its creator, but through a series of precise and complex procedures; it does not refer, purely and simply to an actual individual insofar as it simultaneously gives rise to a variety of egos and to a series of subjective positions that individuals of any class may come to occupy. (130-131).

Foucault’s description of the author applies equally well to the nineteenth-century periodical editor. The first characteristic of the author-function, the creation of the author in response to the need for someone to be held legally responsible, also applies to editors who often were answerable for the opinions printed in their magazines. The editor’s responsibility for his or her periodical was especially important during the first half of the nineteenth century before the shift from anonymous to signed articles in most

papers. This trend of editorial accountability for the paper was, at times, also complicated during the early decades of the century when anonymous editing and editorial pennames were popular. For instance, when corresponding with the slighted Walter Scott, William Blackwood enjoyed the freedom of blaming his editor for the controversial “Chaldee Manuscript,” when in fact he had no official editor and had overseen the issue (Oliphant 150). Only the title “editor” rather than an actual person was necessary for the author-function to cover Blackwood’s responsibility as publisher. The second and third characteristics of the author-function, the changing demand for an Author of texts and the complex process of constructing the author, also tie closely to the work of the editor, especially considering the diversity of editorial practices and frameworks. Finally, the severing of the author-function from the flesh and blood writer is even more evident in the editor-function that was often shared by multiple people. Adding the editorial dimension to Foucault’s author-function can help scholars understand the diversity of the authorial role, and it also reveals how nineteenth-century audiences actually had access to a more theoretically rich conception of the author than is generally outlined in histories of the development of the Author.

Editorial voice in periodicals reveals a more complex form of authorship, and the editorial “we” functioned as a royal singular pronoun that referenced the collective nature of the writing of each number but also as opened a space for the audience to identify with the magazine. Writers would often take on the voice expected for a particular magazine, as Edgar Allen Poe satirizes in his 1838 “How to Write a Blackwood Article.” Poe’s loquacious narrator Suky Snobbs, who writes under the penname Signora Psyche

Zenobia, interviews Mr. Blackwood about how to write a proper article for his magazine. Poe renders ridiculous the taxonomy of tone preferred by *Blackwood's Monthly Magazine*. The tongue-in-cheek guide for would-be writers moves from describing the curt tone that was in vogue: "It consists in short sentences. Somehow thus. Can't be too brief. Can't be too snappish. Always a full stop. And never a paragraph" to the tone heterogeneous, which is "merely a judicious mixture, in equal proportions, of all the other tones in the world, and is consequently made up of everything deep, great, odd, piquant, pertinent, and pretty" (275, 276-77). Poe's title and formulas imply that virtually anyone could write for *Blackwood's* and points to Blackwood himself as only a loose connecting function between articles written in a similar style. Indeed, Poe imagines a periodical configuration in which the editor could do away with writers entirely: "Mr. Blackwood has a pair of tailor's-shears, and three apprentices who stand by him for orders. One hands him the 'Times,' another the 'Examiner,' and a third a 'Gulley's New Compendium of Slang-Whang.' Mr. B. merely cuts out and intersperses" (271-72). Blackwood, as editor and namesake of the magazine, only needs to fill the author-function; he need not even write the material, and Poe does not identify to which Mr. Blackwood he is referring.<sup>1</sup> Here, the unity of the periodical was perceived as more tenuous than what Michel Foucault calls the "fundamental critical category of 'the man and his work'" in "What is an Author" (115). Editors of literary magazines, especially celebrity author-editors of the 1850s and 1860s, complicate histories and theories of the

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<sup>1</sup> Because Poe's article was written after William Blackwood's death in 1832 and before his son John's ascension to the editorial chair in 1845, this Mr. Blackwood likely refers to either Alexander or Robert, who took over running the magazine after their father's death (Milne).

rise the Author by being accorded similar status but by working more clearly within the collaborative, polyphonic structure provided by magazines. Periodicals are discursive spaces that question the assumptions we use about grouping; drawing on the work of Louis James, Linda Hughes and Michael Lund have challenged scholars to consider the ways in which a number or volume of a periodical can be read as a single text by a corporate author (9). Studying the author-function of nineteenth-century editors reveals that the enshrining of the individual Author as genius is always already problematic in the nineteenth century, and it was self-consciously so.

Taken from Walter Benjamin's 1934 essay "The Author as Producer," my title calls attention this important connection between authorial and editorial roles. With this simile, I hope to highlight how editors were producing work both in the sense of generating material and in the sense of acting much like a film producer. In the most literal sense, the nineteenth-century editor was a producer because of his or her hand in the physical layout of the text: he or she served as an intermediary between authors and the modes of production, Trollope's "ceaseless hum of steam and never-ending flow of Castilian ink" (160). While I certainly never want to lose sight of paper and ink periodical production, the ideological elements of this process are also vital to consider. Benjamin's concern with the artist as producer demands, as Elizabeth Papazian has phrased it, a recognition that

it is not enough to pass through a "revolutionary development" in one's attitude toward contemporary relations of production: the author must become a *producer*—who rethinks his own work, his relation to the

*literary* means of production, in a "really revolutionary way" (772).

(Papazian 816)

In "The Author as Producer," Benjamin enters what he considers a "fruitless debate over the relation between a work's political tendency and its quality" and argues that both a work's ideological stance and its artistry are interdependent but that asking how a work stands *in* the relationships of production of a period is a much more fruitful question than asking how it relates *to* these bonds of production (2). This question of standing *in* guides my history.

The connection between the periodical press and Benjamin's "Author as Producer" is its ability promote dialog and empower readers. Benjamin reads the erosion between writer and audience in the Russian press positively because "The reader is indeed always ready to become a writer, that is to say, someone who describes or even who prescribes" (3). This process of ideological transformation of audience and author is made possible by the press:

Thus I hope I have shown that the portrayal of the author as a producer must be derived from the press. For the press, at least the Russian press, makes us acknowledge that the powerful process of transformation of which I spoke before goes beyond not only the conventional separations between genres, between writer and poet, between the scholar and the popularizer, but it also forces us to re-examine the separation between author and reader. The press is the most authoritative instance of this

process and therefore any study of the author as producer must deal with it. (Benjamin 3)

The press, in some of its iterations more than others, allows space for dialogue with the reader but also for a breakdown in the strong lines demarcating reader and writer.

Benjamin hails periodicals as the heart of this revolution in authorship, and I argue that the periodical editor, then, becomes even more important for critical study and, in fact, becomes a producer of the ideological and the literary.

In *The Editor as Producer*, I will trace, sometimes in broad sketches and others in detailed strokes, the development of the role of the periodical editor in early, mid, and late nineteenth-century Britain. My main concern is with nineteenth-century literary editors, though I will also be looking briefly at seventeenth and eighteenth-century antecedents and occasionally considering less literary elements of the press. In each chapter, I pair dissimilar approaches to editing to give a sense of the practices of the time while developing a more general but by no means monolithic understanding of the growth of the profession and the relationship between editor and audience. While I am not setting out to answer a question quite so sweeping as what the editor does in the next three chapters, I take Patten and Finkelstein's point regarding the danger of asking impossible questions like this one, and thus will be focusing my history on individual editors while still speaking to broader trends. *The Editor as Producer* focuses especially on editors who were also writers, partially for their prominence and prevalence but also for the intimate connection these author-editors had to literary culture. I have also selected editors of magazines both short- and long-lived, editors who have been



considered successful as well as those considered less successful, to give a more comprehensive picture of the field.

*The Editor as Producer* opens with a chapter that focuses on the struggle for professionalization in literary reviews and magazines during the early nineteenth century. The pair of periodicals and editors at the core of chapter 1 is comprised of Francis Jeffrey of the *Edinburgh Review* and William Blackwood along with the fictional Christopher North of *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*. The editors of both periodicals struggled to define and pioneer editing practices and relationships with the reading public. While Jeffrey's editorship was characterized by the struggle between maintaining a gentlemanly and thus amateur persona while laboring to move editing work more into the professional sphere, the editorial masking involved in producing *Blackwood's* reveals the symbolic importance of the editor and the textual power of consolidating the magazine into the appearance of an individual person.

The next chapter considers the press during the mid-nineteenth-century boom of the periodical during the repeal of many taxes on knowledge that had inconvenienced publishers since the reign of Queen Anne, such as the advertisement duty in 1853, the stamp duty in 1855, the paper duty in 1861, and the security system in 1869 (Collet).<sup>2</sup> While literary celebrity was certainly not unique to mid-century writers, its increased prominence during the time left a strong mark on authors and editors alike. In chapter 2, I draw on the figure of the naked editor to represent the emotional openness and literary intimacy audiences pursued in author-editors. William Makepeace Thackeray's *Cornhill*

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<sup>2</sup> For a more detailed look at the taxes on knowledge in Great Britain, see Collet Dobson Collet's two volume *History of Taxes on Knowledge: Their Origin and Repeal* (1899).

*Magazine* and Ellen Wood's *Argosy* form this chapter's set of central periodicals.

Thackeray failed to sufficiently manage his public persona and was eventually overwhelmed by the tension between the public and private aspects of editing; however, Wood successfully leveraged a carefully constructed gentlewomanly persona to intimately engage readers while maintaining personal boundaries.

Finally, *The Editor as Producer* concludes with perhaps the most unlikely pairing: George Newnes's popular magazine *Tit-Bits* and Henry Harland and Aubrey Beardsley's artistic quarterly the *Yellow Book*. During the late nineteenth-century the influence of new technologies as well as changes in class demographics and reading practices reshaped the literary landscape, broadening the gap between artistic and popular magazines. The editors of both *Tit-Bits* and the *Yellow Book* responded to these changes in audience, but while Newnes embraced the increased pace of modern life and the shortening of reader attention span, Harland and Beardsley focused on creating a periodical that was first and foremost an *objet d'art*. Chapter 3 focuses on the fitness of these periodicals in their cultural environments. These three chapters, however, are only the beginning of a genealogy of the editor, Weiner's "nucleus of the Victorian world" (xiii). Much work is left to be done, and scholars from a broad range of disciplines will need to explore the richness of the periodical archives, both digital and analog, that are bursting at the seams. Though oft overlooked, the editor was one of the most influential forces in the literary marketplace of the nineteenth century, which *The Christian Observer* characterized as "a magazine age" (809).

## Chapter 1: Early Nineteenth-Century Editors

### Professionalization in *The Edinburgh Review* and *Blackwood's Monthly Magazine*

In his *Reminiscences*, published posthumously in 1881 by James Anthony Froude, Thomas Carlyle pens a rather bleak representation of the periodical editor's work. Having just described the deaths of the first *Edinburgh Review* editor Francis Jeffrey and his wife, Carlyle describes the final days of Jeffrey's son-in-law William Empson:

in a year or two, at Haileybury (some East India college where he had an office or presidency), Empson died, "correcting proof-sheets of the 'Edinburgh Review,'" as appears, "while waiting daily for death"—a most quiet editorial procedure, which I have often thought of! Craigcrook was sold; Mrs. Empson with her children vanished mournfully into the dumb distance; and all was over there, and a life scene once so bright for us and others had ended, and was gone like a dream. (Carlyle 198)

While Carlyle is most likely referring to correcting proof-sheets as the "most quiet editorial procedure" of which he has often thought, the syntax of his sentence leaves open another interpretation. The close proximity of the "most quiet editorial procedure" and "waiting daily for death" links these concepts, transforms death itself into an editorial procedure of sorts, and converts editing into a prelude to death. The work of the editor appears to be a silent passing of the self in correcting others' texts instead of generating writing. In Carlyle's portrayal of Empson, the editor is supremely passive as he submits patiently to the inevitability of mortality, and in many ways, the grinding work of

combing for words, letters, commas, jots and tittles out of place is not unlike waiting for death.

This morbid editorial vignette encapsulates the images of thankless grunt work and a fate worse than death that the work of editing may call to mind, but as we shall see in this first chapter, nineteenth-century editors were decidedly not a passive group. As it developed in the early nineteenth century, the editorial role became one of great power not only over the jots and tittles of text but also over print culture, readers' tastes, and the literary marketplace. In this chapter, I argue that one of the biggest developments of early nineteenth-century editing was its growth as a profession commensurate with high class standing rather than as a trade or an amateur position. The literary landscape of this period was rife with periodicals and editors, but to give a sense of some of the most important developments in editing, I have selected Francis Jeffrey of the *Edinburgh Review* and William Blackwood along with the fictional Christopher North of *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* as the touchstones of this early history of literary periodical editing.<sup>3</sup> But first, I will set these early nineteenth-century editors in the context of periodical and editorial development in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

While the term "editor" was not widely used to describe periodical editors until the early nineteenth century, scholars have long referred to early periodicals as having

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<sup>3</sup> William Blackwood held the final editorial power over *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, but in name, Christopher North was the magazine's editor. North, however, did not actually exist and was an editorial handle written by a number of different people, thus my designation of fictional editor.

editors. Reading editorial designations back onto early periodical culture emphasizes a relationship of continuity between the work of early periodical organizers and the professional editors of the nineteenth century. This continuity is a fiction that has the potential to efface important distinctions between the editorial roles of those working with periodicals in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and the editors of the nineteenth century; however, I draw on this model of continuity as a way to show the development of the role of the editor even while recognizing the limitations of this model to account for each individual periodical. The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were important periods for the development of editing, especially in terms of negotiating social class.

The history of the periodical opens in the mid-seventeenth century. The tradition of periodic publication is French, and according to John Feather in *A History of British Publishing*, it began with the *Journal des Sçavans*, a review of new books in Paris in 1665, but the format soon crossed the English Channel (Feather 56). The periodical was especially appealing at this historical moment because in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, literacy was on the rise and the British middle class was growing, creating a greater demand for printed material. Since books were expensive at the time, the less expensive periodical had a strong appeal to middle-class readers. The development of the periodical press, however, was retarded by what have been dubbed the “taxes on knowledge.” These taxes on periodically printed material increased the cost of publication with the intention of making news and current political discourse less accessible to working-class and lower-middle-class readers. In the *History of the Taxes*

*on Knowledge: Their Origin and Repeal*, Collet Dobson Collet dates these duties on papers and newspapers to the reign of Queen Anne in the early eighteenth century and notes that these were put in place as measures to control public discourse and prevent challenges to the British system of government (Collet 2-3). Even with these taxes, periodicals continued to grow in popularity throughout the eighteenth century as audiences clamored for the entertainment and instruction they offered. In this section, I look in most depth at the seventeenth-century *Athenian Mercury* and the eighteenth-century *Gentleman's Magazine*.

One of the most popular early periodicals to make knowledge more accessible to middle class readers was the *Athenian Mercury*, first called *The Athenian Gazette, or Cauistical Mercury, Resolving all the most Nice and Curious Questions proposed by the Ingenious*, under the direction of the bookseller John Dunton. First started in 1691 and concluding in 1697, the *Athenian Mercury* was a biweekly periodical that was formatted as a series of questions from anonymous readers.<sup>4</sup> These querying readers, both real and fictional, were answered by Dunton and his panel of anonymous experts. The *Athenian Mercury's* breadth of topics was impressive, ranging from courtship advice to discussions of theology to scientific explanations of the natural world.<sup>5</sup> The *Athenian Mercury*

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<sup>4</sup> While I refer to the *Athenian Mercury* as a biweekly paper, there were a few deviations from this publishing pattern during its seven-year run. For a short time during 1692, the *Athenian Mercury* ran thrice weekly rather its more standard Tuesday and Saturday biweekly publication. Also, there were two suspensions of the paper “one forced by the order of the Licenser in 1692, and another voluntary, for business reasons, in 1696-97” (McEwen 3).

<sup>5</sup> The questions in this periodical varied widely. Some were very serious and metaphysical, such as, “In what Condition is the Soul of an Infant as to its Rational Faculties, and what sort of Thoughts of the things it sees and hears, may it be supposed to have?” (1). Others were more

remained popular with readers well after its cessation in 1697, and it was later reissued as the *Athenian Oracle*. The *Athenian Mercury*'s questions and answers allowed this type of anthologizing because unlike newspapers, this periodical was based on the generalness of the knowledge presented rather than current events and what Lennard Davis identifies as "neuness" in *Factual Fictions: The Origin of the English Novel*. This collection of articles from the *Athenian Mercury* also added to its importance and influence on periodical culture. Print historian John Feather calls the *Athenian Mercury* the first major popular periodical in Great Britain (57). In his 1972 study *The Oracle of the Coffee House: John Dunton's Athenian Mercury*, Gilbert McEwen admits that while Richard Steele's *Tatler*, Steele and Joseph Addison's *Spectator*, Daniel Defoe's *Review*, and Jonathan Swift's *Examiner* were more literary examples of early periodicals, the *Athenian Mercury* rivals these in importance because it "laid the groundwork for those later periodicals that epitomize English society just after the turn of the century" (ix).

According to Dunton's account of the periodical in his autobiography, the *Athenian Mercury*'s existence was a response to the public's thirst for knowledge. According to his autobiography, which featured not only the events of his life but a reimagining of how he would live his life if given a second chance, Dunton's idea for the periodical struck as an epiphany:

The first rude *hint* of it was no more than a confused idea, of concealing the Querist, and answering his Question. However, as soon as I came

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playful, like "Whether Fishes may be said to Breathe" (7) or "Whether if Females went a courting, there wou'd not be more Marriages than now there are?" (33).

home, I managed it to some better purpose, brought it into form, and hammered out a *Title* for it, which happened to be extremely lucky, and those who are well acquainted with the Grecian History may discover some peculiar beauties in it. (188-89).

While Dunton's description of his idea for the magazine in terms of his inspiration worked to hide his commercial motivation as a bookseller, the journal's explicit purpose of disseminating knowledge as opposed to other *raison d'être*s, such as seeking political change or informing readers of current events, shaped the relationship between this periodical and its audience. Written primarily for an audience who could read but had not received a classical education, the *Mercury* was intended to "open the avenues, raise the Soul, as it were, into Daylight, and restore the knowledge of Truth and Happiness" (Dunton and Nichols 188). Its relationship to its audience was a pedagogical one in which the readers studied at the feet of the periodical's writers, which meant that preserving an appearance of gentility and classical knowledge was key for the success of the magazine.

As the publisher-proprietor of the *Athenian Mercury*, Dunton made many of the decisions an editor would make, such as selecting the letters to answer in print and arranging each issue.<sup>6</sup> While Dunton was certainly concerned with the economic element of his venture, his ambition extended beyond the commercial. In his autobiography, he expresses these cultural aspirations by describing the book trade as "that honourable employment, so liberal and ingenious, that it seems indeed an Art, rather than a Trade"

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<sup>6</sup> Though the term editor was not circulating in connection with periodicals during Dunton's lifetime, later scholars have referred to him as an editor with great frequency and generally without hesitation; one such early instance is found in the 1928 work of Roger P. McCutcheon.



(Dunton and Nichols xiii). According to Dunton, this transmutation of trade to art happens through its honorableness, and bookselling transcends its place in the market because it offers cultural capital that appears to be outside of economic consideration. For the most part, however, late seventeenth-century society, however, did not share Dunton's veneration of bookselling as an art. As a bookseller and a tradesman, Dunton could not give his periodical the credibility it needed with its class-conscious audience if he claimed to be the only writer behind the venture. This meant that there were strong social constraints on Dunton's cultural ambition: "The strongest restriction of his aspirations derived, of course, from his lack of social authority; tradesmen could not be gentlemen" (Bhowmik 349). Instead of relying on his reputation as a bookseller, Dunton created the semi-fiction of a group of gentlemen referred to as the Athenian Society who answered readers' questions. The Athenian Society was comprised of Dunton himself and two of his brothers-in-law though he claimed that the society consisted of twelve rather than three members (Bray 25). The first of these was the Reverend Samuel Wesley, father of the famous John and Charles Wesley. The second was Cambridge mathematician Richard Sault. This semi-fictional panel of authors enabled Dunton to position his writing as authoritative and backed with the intellectual weight of a panel of anonymous sages.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, Dunton even commissioned Charles Gildon to write a history of the Athenian Society to lend credence to the coterie of writers. In his 1976 study of

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<sup>7</sup> Jonathan Swift's poem "An Ode to the Athenian Society" concludes with a celebration of anonymity: "How strange a paradox is true, / That Men, who liv'd and dy'd without a Name, / Are the chief Heroes in the sacred List of Fame" (XII.14-16).

Dunton's contributions to the English book trade, Stephen Parks describes the club framework of the *Mercury* as the periodical's most important element, more important even than its innovative question and answer format (75). Though the Athenian society may have been mostly fictional, the collective nature of the *Athenian Mercury*'s voice is significant because the plural editorial voice is collaborative and speaks with the authority of the group.

The *Athenian Mercury* was authored by the Athenian Society, but it also appeared to be authored by British society more broadly through its question and answer format. The voice of the reader sounds throughout the periodical as the concealed individual asks the questions held by society as a whole, and the editorial voice answers both as an individual, inviting personification of the periodical, and as a group, supporting itself with the credibility of corporate authorship. Urmi Bhowmik describes this connection as the source of the *Athenian Mercury*'s power: "What authority the *Mercury* claimed for itself derived from its capacity to act as a vehicle for public discourse, from its ability to register the presence of a collective in its pages" (347). Forging connections between the readers who submitted many of the questions and the panel of anonymous writers, the *Athenian Mercury* represented a collaborative space of social interaction; moreover, the periodical represented a collective form of authorship. This moment is foundational for the history of editing because it helped set the precedent of a plural editorial voice.

While John Dunton's seventeenth-century periodical was only marginally literary, the connections between literary work and the press became more pronounced in the eighteenth century. This connection was especially emphasized by the increase in

authors and poets who were also proprietors of periodicals: Henry Fielding co-founded *The Champion* (1739) and founded both *The True Patriot* (1745) and *The Covent Garden Journal* (1752), Samuel Johnson authored the *Rambler* (1750) and the *Idler* (1758), and Tobias Smollett edited the *Critical Review* (1756). Furthermore, as John Feather points out in his history of publishing in Great Britain, the professionalization of authorship, also left an important impact on the periodical scene, and literary periodicals became more widespread. Famously, Addison and Steele set the pattern of the periodical from the perspective of a shadowy figure who watched society and reported these observations with the *Tattler* and the *Spectator*. This pattern of an unnamed societal watcher aligns with the emerging role of the editor who was in charge of putting together the periodical and keeping a finger on society's pulse but could also retreat behind the veil of Observer, Tattler, or Spectator. As editors and contributors became more active, readers became less active. By the end of the eighteenth century and beginning of the nineteenth century, the role of readers shifted in response to the professionalization of authorship. According to Jon Klancher in *The Making of English Reading Audiences, 1790-1832*, this late-century shift created readers who were consumers of the periodical press rather than potential writers who were invited into it.

This century also marked the rise of the magazine as a periodical form, and with its advent, the increased importance of the editorial role of selecting text. While miscellanies were already common by the beginning of the eighteenth century, this era marks to first adoption of the now popular term "magazine," which initially indicated a digest-approach to print culture. One of the hallmarks of early magazines was that the

bulk of materials they included was reprinted from other sources. The first periodical to employ this metaphor of a well-stocked arsenal was the *Gentleman's Magazine*, which was founded in 1731 and ran until 1907.<sup>8</sup> According to David Haldane Lawrence, the *Gentleman's Magazine* was

certainly the longest running literary periodical. Appearing monthly for over 175 years, it served as a model of format and contents for early nineteenth-century titles such as the *Monthly Magazine* (1796 ff), the *New Monthly Magazine* (1814 ff) and the *Edinburgh Monthly Magazine* (April – Oct. 1817).

Edward Cave, the founder of the *Gentleman's Magazine* was not himself part of the British gentry. Rather, he was a printer and publisher. His magazine was meant to serve as

a Monthly Collection, to treasure up, as in a *Magazine*, the most remarkable Pieces on the Subjects abovemention'd, or at least impartial Abridgments thereof, as a Method much better calculated to preserve those Things that are curious, than that of transcribing. ("Introduction")

This collection of short and abridged articles responded to the overwhelmingly large amount of periodical material available to the eighteenth-century reader, and because this periodical was initially collected from other sources rather than being written by a group of contributors, the editorial role comes to the forefront of the production of this

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<sup>8</sup> The *Gentleman's Magazine* is not to be confused with the earlier *Gentleman's Journal* of the seventeenth century, though the titles of each do underscore the importance of social standing to the burgeoning periodical culture.

periodical. The magazine was not authored in the way that other periodicals of the time were written by societies of gentlemen or shadowy Observers, Ramblers, and Spectators. Selection and arranging rather than generating text or commissioning copy took the largest role in creating each issue. The superintendent of the *Gentleman's Magazine's* collection of periodical knowledge was the fictional Sylvanus Urban. The title pages of the magazine's volumes reflect the importance of collection. In the second volume, the magazine is reported to be "Collected chiefly from the *Public Papers* by SILVANUS URBAN"; however, this process of editing is simplified to "By SYLVANUS URBAN, GENT" later in this volume and in subsequent volumes. This shift in language also suggests a move conceptualizing the role of the editor as collector to creator. By giving Urbanus the status of author with the designation "by" rather than "collected by," the *Gentelman's Magazine* underscored the editor's role as producer. While many periodicals at the time continued to rely on collective authorship and societies, such as the *Critical Review, or Annals of Literature* which was edited by Cave's contemporary Tobias Smollett who presented his as "by a Society of Gentlemen," Cave's byline deviated from the collective approach or the anonymous approach in favor of a figurehead editor.

Concerns of class identification were also of great importance to the *Gentleman's Magazine* as its very title makes immensely clear. The gentleman editor of the magazine was pivotal for promising readers social development. Much like the *Athenian Mercury*, the *Gentleman's Magazine* catered to a genteel audience or an audience aspiring to gentility. Attributing the magazine to the fictional Sylvanus Urban served to reassure readers that the magazine was under the direction of a gentleman; however, unlike his

fictional editing persona and the title of the magazine suggest, Edward Cave was not a member of the gentry. Rather, as Carl Lennart Carlson he was a “printer, publisher, manufacturer, founder of the first English ‘magazine,’ and self-styled patron of literature” (Carlson 3). As Carlson noted in the 1930s, “Cave’s *nom de plume* seems to have been intended to suggest that he would provide fare for readers in both city and country” (Carlson 13). Even though the obviously symbolic *nom de plume* does not seek to hide its fictionality, this editorial mask allowed Cave to work as a tradesman but still maintain the appearance of gentility. Predating the use of the term editor, Sylvanus Urban, gentleman of both town and country, held a recognizably editorial role although he was only a *nom de plume*, laying the groundwork for the editorial developments of the nineteenth century.

The early nineteenth century marks the inauguration of the term “editor,” but this codification of the role was fraught with class-related concerns. The editors of reviews and of miscellanies had a growing influence over literary production, and this meant that an editor of high-social status would be preferable as he or she was best suited to shape readers’ literary tastes. However, the history of hack editors and the association of periodical work with trade made it more difficult for periodicals to attract these potential editors. For instance, Sir Walter Scott’s son-in-law John Gibson Lockhart declined the editorship of a newspaper on the grounds of it causing him “the loss of caste in society by so doing” according to Andrew Lang’s 1897 biography of Lockhart (365). For Lockhart, editing a newspaper was unthinkable, but this class concern did not bar him from accepting in 1826 the more prestigious position of editor of the *Quarterly Review*.

Editing was not yet a respectable profession like the law, but its literary ties and history of laying claim to gentility helped to open the possibility of becoming a respected profession. Newspaper work, however, was decidedly outside the circle of respectable professions during the early nineteenth century. The class distinction is one made especially clear in William Wright's letter to Lockhart on October 3, 1825:

I told Disraeli before he left he had a very delicate mission, and that though my rank in life was different to your own, having no relations whose feelings could be wounded by my accepting honest employment, I should not receive an offer of the editorship of a newspaper as a compliment to my feelings as a barrister and a gentleman, however complimentary it might be as to my talents. In short, I enter entirely into your feelings on this head, and we think alike, for, whatever our friend Disraeli may say or flourish on this subject, your accepting of the editorship of a newspaper would be *infra dig.*, and a losing of caste; but not so, as I think, the accepting of the editorship of the *Quarterly Review*.  
(qtd. in Lang 367)

Wright's letter emphasizes the polarity between class obligations and the "honest employment" of the press. He recognizes that being offered an editorship compliments one's talent but not one's social standing, which depends in part on meeting relatives' expectations about occupation. By including the somewhat wistful line about complimented talent, Wright bespeaks a longing for a world in which talents can be used and recognized without the restraints of maintaining social standing, a world that

quarterlies and periodicals were potentially creating. For early British editors, holding this line between the hack writing and the gentlemanly work of periodical writing was immensely important though often practically impossible.

Periodicals such as the powerful early nineteenth-century reviews needed ways to distance themselves from the trade-overtones of newspaper work, and reviewers worked to avoid the potential stain of being labeled one of Grub Street's hack writers. One way to create this difference was by asserting gentlemanliness through following class conventions. Notably, some dueling editors took to the literal rather than symbolic pistol. Christopher Kent notes that dueling was not uncommon among editors because it was one method they could use to claim higher social class; eventually, though, libel suits were meant to take the place of duels:

In fact the facilitation of libel actions was originally done deliberately to provide an appropriate legal alternative to dueling as means of defending one's reputation. Still the practice persisted into the nineteenth century, and some of its more ardent practitioners were editors such as John Black of the *Morning Chronicle* and James Stewart of the *London Courier*. The Scott-Christie duel involving the editors of the *London Magazine* and *Blackwood's* and the Maginn-Berkeley duel between the editor of *Fraser's* and an enraged reviewee both turned on the practice of anonymity. (113).

In the early nineteenth century, establishing the editor of reviews and literary periodicals as separate from the hack writers and marionette editors of booksellers was paramount



for professionalization and took precedence over editors' personal safety at times. The practice of dueling as it relates to the periodic press in the early nineteenth century shows that the class lines were uncomfortably permeable, and the violence of the duel was used to assert gentility among members of the literary press. In fact, both the *Edinburgh Review* and *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* are associated with dueling.

The history of editing proper (i.e., the period in which the term editor was used to describe periodical work) begins in this great uncertainty regarding the editor's social position and even the editor's role in the periodical. In the next two sections, I will look at the *Edinburgh Review* and *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* as representations of some of the important developments in early nineteenth-century editing. During this period, both papers were at the forefront of defining and redefining the work and power of the periodical editor. In the case of the *Edinburgh Review's* Francis Jeffrey, his editorship helped to professionalize the role even though personally he was highly resistant to anything in his editorship that appeared to be the mark of a trade. He used his conflicted relationship with the role to gain greater power as an editor, especially in shaping the tastes of his readers. The editor of *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* is more difficult to pin down because after Blackwood broke with his initial editors, he worked as a publisher-proprietor-editor employing unofficial subeditors to help run the magazine; however, to the public the magazine presented the front of being edited by Christopher North. The dynamics of collective editorship with the appearance of a single head editor reveals the symbolic power of the editor by the late 1810s.

### **Francis Jeffrey and the *Edinburgh Review***

In her introduction to *Romantic Periodicals and Print Culture*, Kim Wheatley identifies The *Edinburgh Review* as one of the three important developments in the press for setting the tenor of periodical culture in the Romantic era. Wheatley notes the importance of the *Edinburgh Review*'s penchant for "dispens[ing] with the universal coverage and ostensibly objective criticism of the earlier *Critical Review* and *Monthly Review* and the more recent *Analytical Review*" (1). The *Edinburgh Review*'s importance extends beyond developments in reviewing and includes developments in periodical editing practices in the early nineteenth century. Its first editor, Francis Jeffrey, was instrumental in altering the British public's perception of editors and in defining the editorial role through hands-on editing. The *Edinburgh Review or Critical Journal* ran quarterly beginning in 1802 and generally featured anywhere from ten to thirty lengthy articles between ten and forty pages for a total of approximately two-hundred-and-fifty-pages per issue. It featured literary criticism and often biting critical reviews of current publications ranging broadly in topic.<sup>9</sup> Francis Jeffrey's connection with the *Edinburgh* was extensive: he was initially in practice and later in title the *Edinburgh*'s first editor, holding the chair from 1802 to 1829. He contributed his final article nearly four decades after his first in October of 1840 (Jeffrey *Contributions to the Edinburgh* vi).<sup>10</sup>

In this section, I argue that the importance of Jeffrey and the *Edinburgh Review* to the history of editing is primarily their role as a professionalizing force. Because this

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<sup>9</sup> As the periodical progressed, the reviews became longer and the number of reviews per number decreased, but the number of pages stayed relatively stable.

<sup>10</sup> Some critics date Jeffrey's editorship as beginning in 1803 because his role was more defined by then; however, I have chosen to start with 1802 when he was functioning as editor even if the title was an informal one in collaboration with others.

professionalization was rooted in the tension between offering competitive financial remuneration and preserving the appearance of gentlemanly disregard for monetary considerations, Jeffrey and the *Edinburgh Review* were able to profoundly shape the early nineteenth-century perception of editing. They did this by working to make editing respectable as well as relatively lucrative. This combination made editing viable as a vocation although Jeffrey resisted thinking of it as such. The tension between financial compensation and gentility is emphasized in two oft-cited quotes about this review and its first editor: first, Lord Henry Thomas Cockburn's description of the *Edinburgh Review* as having an air of being "all gentlemen, and no pay" (Cockburn and Jeffrey 107), second, Walter Bagehot's comment that Jeffrey developed the position of editor into a "distinguished functionary" rather than "a bookseller's drudge" (276). Inherent in both of these quotes is the question of how much power the editor should have and to what extent the role is a professional one, and I take these as the overarching structure of this section to demonstrate how the rapid change from editor as hack to editor as producer of important cultural artifacts was effected through ambiguity of position. Because Jeffrey as editor maintained the appearance of indifference to compensation while actually being very well compensated, he was able to embody the gentleman editor trope we have seen in the *Athenian Mercury* and the *Gentleman's Magazine*.

The *Edinburgh's* remuneration history reveals the reviewer's tension between maintaining social standing by not showing financial need on the one hand and the desire to be able to consider periodical work a respectable profession on the other. In Lord Henry Cockburn's 1852 *Life of Lord Jeffrey, with a Selection from his Correspondence*,

Cockburn describes the first numbers of the *Edinburgh* as a venture pursued, rather naïvely, for love rather than profit: “Yet for the first two or three numbers they had an idea that such a work could be carried on without remunerating the writers at all. It was to be all gentlemen, and no pay” (107). While the aura of all gentlemen still lingered in connection to the *Edinburgh*, years later Cockburn was skeptical of the viability of their initial decision to start an entirely amateur review even though his investment in social class markers are evident in the title and byline of his biography of “Lord Jeffrey” by “Lord Cockburn.” Immediately following the famous “all gentlemen, and no pay” line in *The Life of Lord Jeffrey*, Cockburn expresses Jeffrey’s concern for this model: “And it was during this state of matters that Jeffrey doubted its success, and meant to have a very short connection with it.” (Cockburn and Jeffrey 107). Much like Cockburn’s tension between upholding class markers and understanding the practical demands of periodical work, Jeffrey’s concern for the venture’s failure without remuneration was tempered by his desire for the venture to maintain its gentlemanly air.

How to preserve their social class while also making a profit in a position that was still considered below their social standing was indeed one of the largest challenges faced by the first reviewers of the *Edinburgh Review*. Editors and contributors frequently created the appearance of gentility, as we have seen in Dunton’s *Athenian Mercury* and Athenian Society or Cave’s Sylvanus Urban of the *Gentleman’s Magazine*, but this was often booksellers’ and tradesmen’s pretense that shifted audience attention away from the financial work of periodical writing and publishing. Unlike many of their periodical forbearers and contemporaries, the writers of the *Edinburgh Review* were, in fact, a

society of gentlemen. By writing without pay, at least initially, the contributors to the *Edinburgh Review* set themselves apart from the hack writers and penny-a-line writers employed by similar periodicals. This arrangement, however, could not last, especially in early nineteenth-century Scotland, which was facing economic depression as James Grieg notes in his study of Jeffrey. The initial financial arrangement of the *Edinburgh Review* did not last. As Cockburn put it, “this blunder was soon corrected by a magnificent recurrence to the rule of common sense” (Cockburn and Jeffrey 107). In this case, “common sense” meant the best pay for editor and contributors offered at the time as Jeffrey outlined in his 11 May 1803 letter to Francis Horner. Jeffrey wrote that the *Edinburgh Review* was offering to pay

£50 a number for editor, and to pay £10 a sheet for all the contributions which the said editor shall think worth the money. The terms are, as Mr. Longman says, “without precedent;” but the success of the work is not less so, and I am persuaded that if the money be well applied, it will be no difficult matter to insure its continuance. (Cockburn and Jeffrey 93).

The intimate connection between competitive pay scales and the quality of the magazine was also emphasized by Sydney Smith early in the *Edinburgh Review*'s history as Lewis Gates notes in his 1899 *Three Studies in Literature*: “The management of the *Review* was at first in the hands of Sydney Smith. When he set out for London his last words to the publisher Constable were, ‘If you will give £200 per annum to your editor and ten guineas a sheet, you will soon have the best *Review* in Europe’” (51-52). The high rate of compensation, much like the initial plan to offer no remuneration, set the *Edinburgh*

*Review* contributors and its editor apart from hack-writers and drudging editors of other periodicals. By offering the best pay, the *Edinburgh Review* could still boast of an air of all gentlemen.

While the social impact of being a contributor to the *Edinburgh Review* was substantial enough to cause concern to some, the social stakes of being editor were even higher because the editor was the face of the review. This made Jeffrey's decision to accept the editorship a fraught one. Initially, he expressed great reticence about the position. Foremost in his decision were the connected concerns of financial need and social standing. Born October 23, 1773 in Edinburgh to a depute-clerk in the Court of Session and a farmer's daughter, Francis Jeffrey was Oxford-educated, but his law career was not initially as lucrative as he hoped, and financial need coupled with limited options for earning a living while remaining part of the upper class was a constant concern in his correspondence in the first years of the nineteenth century. In a letter to his brother John on November 29, 1800, Jeffrey writes,

I have strong propensities to matrimony, too, and temptations that I scarcely know how to resist. Yet it is a sad thing to take an amiable girl to starve her, or to sink below that level to which one has been accustomed, and to the manners to which all one's relishes have been formed.

(Cockburn and Jeffrey 45-6)

In this letter, Jeffrey connects the two main components of his financial situation: the fear of not having basic needs met (“starv[ing] her”) and not fulfilling class duties (“sink[ing] below that level to which one has been accustomed”). The two are in competition as the

pressure to keep class excludes Jeffrey from many ways to earn the money to provide the necessities he describes. Later, in a 1 August 1801 letter, Jeffrey reveals that as he was entering into marriage his main concern continued to be finances: “I am not *very* much afraid of our quarrelling or wearying of each other, but I am not sure how we shall bear poverty; and I am sensible we shall be very poor” (52).

These trepidations became even stronger in many of his 1803 letters in which Jeffrey reveals his fear that he will lose caste by being associated with a review, but he insists on the respectability of this particular venture to vindicate his decision to take on the role of editor. For instance, in his July 2 letter to his brother John, Jeffrey writes: “The publication is in the highest degree respectable as yet, as there are none but gentlemen connected with it. If it ever sink into the state of an ordinary bookseller’s journal, I have done with it” (65). Here Jeffrey describes his connection to the *Edinburgh Review* as tenuous and his continuance as editor as contingent on the periodical preserving an air of gentility. His imagined refusal is written with the future tense implied; instead of saying “I will have done with it,” he insists “I have done with it,” indicating that the decision was already firmly made. The two elements of respectability he identifies here are the pedigree of those connected with the review and its resistance to financial control by a bookseller. In the first of these elements of respectability, Jeffrey personifies the periodical by intimately tying it to the social standing of its contributors, a move echoed two centuries later by Andrea Bradley in her article “Correcting Mrs Opie’s Powers: The *Edinburgh Review* of Amelia Opie’s Poems (1802)” when she describes the

review as having a vexed psychology (Bradley 42).<sup>11</sup> The fluidity between the reputation of the review and its contributors meant that the creators of the review either lent it gentility or threatened its gentility and the review itself had the power to bolster or to tarnish its creators' status.

Jeffrey accepted and performed the offices of the review's editor only because he could conceive of it as something other than his profession. As he admitted to his brother, the pay that attracted him to the position also repelled him. Jeffrey discussed his mixed reactions to the idea of becoming the *Edinburgh Review's* editor more fully in his May 11, 1803 letter to Francis Horner, Jeffrey's close friend, frequent correspondent, and colleague. At the time, Jeffrey had yet to be offered the position, but already knew the responsibilities and pay:

Now, my sage councillor, this editorship will be offered to me in the course of a few days and though I shall not give any definite answer till I hear from you, and consult with some of my other friends, I will confess that I am disposed to accept of it. There are *pros* and *cons* in the case, no doubt. What the *pros* are I need not tell you. £300 a year is a monstrous bribe to a man in my situation. The *cons* are—vexation and trouble, interference with professional employment and character, and risk of

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<sup>11</sup> This personification is most obvious in the following section of Bradley's article:

Although we cannot conflate a periodical with its editors by projecting their quite real anxieties onto an inanimate production, there are grounds, however, for speaking of the *Edinburgh Review* as having a psychology similarly vexed by the risky nature of its enterprise. First the corporate anxiety of the *Edinburgh's* founders and later the corporate identity of Francis Jeffrey and his contributors facilitated the periodical's assumption of, self-evidently, an aesthetic position, but also of a particular psychology. (42)



general degradation. The first I have had some little experience of, and am not afraid for. The second, upon a fair consideration, I am persuaded I ought to risk. It will be long before I make £300 more than I do now by my profession, and by far the greater part of the employment I have will remain with me, I know, in spite of any thing of this sort. The character and success of the work, and the liberality of the allowance, are not to be disregarded. But what influences me the most is, that I engaged in it at first gratuitously, along with a set of men whose character and situation in life must command the respect of the multitude, and that I hope to go on with it as a matter of emolument along with the same associates. (63)

By designating the pay a “monstrous bribe,” Jeffrey implies it is somehow unnatural, malevolent, and illegal or at least underhanded. This rhetorical move recasts the business offer of remuneration for services rendered into a criminal act for illicit services shadily purchased. This rhetorical repositioning of the offer grows out of the Jeffrey’s internal conflict resulting from his desire to do the work and take the pay and his fears of social degradation. Potentially losing status by taking the position becomes here a moral issue of temptation, and Jeffrey clearly indicates that his biggest concern is not the job itself but its social ramifications. It appears that as long as this venture is clearly not a professional one he will continue contributing. This editor of note was actually opposed to professionalizing the role. His stipulation, however, is more nuanced than a simple rejection of professionalization; he functions as a transitional editor whose work of taking the money but also gaining more editorial power through his apparent imperviousness

and even reluctance to pay moved editing forward as a profession. Fortunately for Jeffrey, he did not have to choose between his work at the *Review* and respectability in his nearly three-decade time as editor because of the initial precedent of writing gratuitously.

Part of the reason that the *Edinburgh Review* was so successful at allowing its editor and contributors to maintain their social standing was because it offered pay that was not only very competitive at ten guineas per sheet but also was compulsory. In his May 1803 letter to Francis Horner, Jeffrey describes why he felt justified in accepting the paid editorial position:

All the men here will take their ten guineas, I find, and, under the sanction of that example, I think I may take my editor's salary also without being supposed to have suffered any degradation. It would be easy to say a great deal on this subject, but the sum of it, I believe, is here, and you will understand me as well as if I had been more eloquent. (Cockburn and Jeffrey 63)

Because it started as an unpaid, gentlemanly venture, Jeffrey is willing or perhaps even able to accept the position. The money can be accepted almost unwillingly, and that appearance of reticence and, indeed, the reluctance behind this performance enabled the review to attract and maintain its contributors and first editor. As L. E. Gates put it,

the rule saved the consciences of many brilliant young professional men, who were glad of pay, but ashamed to write for it, and afraid of being dubbed penny-a-liners. By Jeffrey's clever arrangement they could write

for fame or for simple amusement, and then have money “thrust upon them.” (Gates 53)

This settled or at least alleviated the reviewers’ and editor’s bind in which they desperately needed the financial gain offered by their work with the *Edinburgh Review* but were equally desperate to avoid seeming motivated by pay.

In some of Jeffrey’s letters, fissures appear in the front that that the *Edinburgh Review* was a venture pursued purely for the love of it; however, Jeffrey continued resisting the suggestion that his work with the *Edinburgh Review* was vocational. Jeffrey’s complaint to Horner in his May 11, 1803 letter, emphasizes the distinction Jeffrey draws between writing and his profession: “I would undoubtedly prefer making the same sum by my profession; but I really want the money, and think that I may take it this way, without compromising either my honour or my future interest” (H. Cockburn and F. Jeffrey 63). For Jeffrey, editing as a profession is not even an option; his profession was the law, a respectable one that eventually earned him the title of “Lord.” Even so, Jeffrey and all those associated with the *Edinburgh Review* found that the work of editing and contributing to the *Edinburgh Review* was just that: hard work. Jeffrey’s letter only a few months later reflect the frustrations of editing in his September 8, 1803 letter to Horner:

I know that writing reviews is not very pleasant to either of us; but if I feel the burden pressing very heavy on myself, is it not natural for me to ask some assistance from one who is so willing to bear his share of it? I hope you do not imagine that I have made a *trade* of this editorship, or that I

have, upon the whole, any interest in the publication that is essentially different from yours, or Smith's, or that of any of our original associates. The main object of every one of us, I understand to be, our own amusement and improvement—joined with the gratification of some personal, and some national vanity. (72)

Perfectly aware of the unpleasantness of working on the review, Jeffrey encouraged Horner to continue reviewing for the love of it even though they both know that this was a fiction. While conceiving of their writing venture as one for love rather than money, they also faced the fact that they found it laborious. The unthinkable alternative, Jeffrey reminded Horner in this letter, was admitting that reviewing had become their trade, indicating a loss of social standing. Essentially, the *Edinburgh Review* provided Jeffrey and his reviewers with a profession by presenting itself as something other than that. Because Jeffrey publicly held a separate profession, he was afforded the freedom to pursue editing.

What is more, much of the financial success of the periodical was dependent on the appearance of not needing the money it costs for readers to purchase it. For the review to retain its position as a desirable commodity for the upper and upper-middle classes, its creators had to appear unaware of its commodity status. They had to write for fame or simple amusement to turn a profit. Taste marked early nineteenth-century readers, and the majority of early nineteenth-century audiences addressed a classed section of society. The relationship between audience, periodical, and social class has been well articulated in Jon Klancher's 1987 study *The Making of English Reading*

*Audiences, 1790-1832*. Klancher argues that not only do class structures shape periodicals and audiences, but their writers also “shaped audiences who developed awareness of social class as they acquired self-consciousness as readers. But as collective formations, ‘class’ and ‘audience’ gave rise to conflicting forms of collective awareness” (4) and “the periodical text can be a space for imagining social formations still inchoate, and a means to give them shape” (24). Both taste and the audiences marked by taste are negotiated rather than set, and the social power of periodicals like the *Edinburgh Review* was to create and guide these audiences through the seemingly natural workings of good taste.

By foregrounding taste and cultural capital, the *Edinburgh Review* hid its status as a commodity and its relation to capital itself. In *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, Pierre Bourdieu engages with Erwin Panofsky’s essentialist definition of art as that which asks to be treated aesthetically. Bourdieu asks “Does this mean that the demarcation line between the world of technical objects depends on the ‘intention’ or the producer of those objects?” (29). Bourdieu’s distinction between technical objects and art objects based on Panofsky’s criterion of intentionality complicates consideration of the *Edinburgh Review* as an art object because the *Edinburgh Review* does not itself lay claim to being an *objet d’art* but it also distances itself from a technical existence through its work defining and evaluating art. Bourdieu’s response to Panofsky is to point out that “this ‘intention’ is itself the product of the social norms and conventions which combine to define the always uncertain and historically changing frontier between simple technical objects and objects d’art” (29). For Bourdieu,

art is a matter of social distinction and society defines art through taste, which can masquerade as natural and innate rather than learned and socially constructed. The *Edinburgh Review* achieved its success in large part through its function as the discursive space of constructing art but only because it participated in this class-based masquerade.

Having money apparently thrust upon him by a review of all gentlemen with an air of no pay, however, did not finally settle the issue of the editor's social standing, and Jeffrey at times employed other means of establishing class, such as dueling. When Jeffrey became editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, the role itself was still emerging and ill-defined, leaving editors not only in a legal no man's land as Christopher Kent emphasizes in "The Editor and the Law" but also in a state of social uncertainty:

Dueling was one means by which socially insecure editors could claim gentlemanly status. Unfortunately, their opponents did not always design to confer such status on them, and the resort to the horsewhip was not unknown even in Victoria's reign. (113)<sup>12</sup>

The duels allowed both editor and opponent, who was frequently another editor or a writer disgruntled with reviews of his work, to assert themselves as gentlemen. Though he did not initiate this type of confrontation, Jeffrey was embroiled in a duel early in his tenure as editor. In 1806 Francis Jeffrey and Thomas Moore met at Chalk Farm to settle

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<sup>12</sup> William Blackwood I, who will feature prominently in the next section of this chapter, was in fact horsewhipped by a Mr. Douglas from Glasgow after Douglas was mentioned in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* in 1818. Blackwood responded in kind and beat Douglas with the help of James Hogg before allowing him to return to Glasgow. John Wilson's wife described the social approval Blackwood received at the time for his response in a letter to her sister. Blackwood's "conduct on the late occasion is thought perfectly correct; the other man everybody thinks acted like a fool" (qtd. in Gordon 205).

their differences over an acerbic *Edinburgh Review* article of Moore's *Odes and Epistles* as gentlemen. Later, Moore would describe this duel paradoxically as in earnest but also as rather comical because of his limited experience with firearms and because Jeffrey's second failed to properly load his pistol.<sup>13</sup> The unfortunate encounter was felicitously interrupted in the proverbial eleventh hour as Moore recounted later in his memoirs:

the pistols were on both sides raised; and we waited but the signal to fire when some police-officers, whose approach none of us had noticed, and who were within a second of being too late, rushed out from a hedge behind Jeffrey; and one of them, striking at Jeffrey's pistol with his staff, knocked it to some distance into the field, while another running over to me took possession also of mine. (Moore 59)

The editor and the writer were transported to Bow Street and, having forged a more amiable relationship, were released on bail. After Jeffrey's apology to Moore, indicating that "the Review contained too much that was exceptionable, and that he is sincerely sorry for having written it," the two were on affable terms (Moore 62-63). The duel, then, served as a form of social bonding in which both men were able to assert upper-class status that would have otherwise been difficult for either to claim due the socially ambiguous state of the periodical press at the time and the financial restrictions faced by both duelers. Miss Godfrey, the recipient of Moore's letter describing the duel, responded that she imagined Moore as "a perfect hero of a romance" in her October 2,

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<sup>13</sup> The improperly loaded pistol was nearly a large problem for Moore when the authorities suspected foul play.

1806 letter (qtd. in Moore 63). While the duel did not come off, the encounter set an important precedent for editors and their social role.

While this portrait of Jeffrey as editor has thus far been focused on his reluctance to think of his editorial work in a professional light, the portrait would be incomplete without considering the immense impact Jeffrey had on the profession of editing. Jeffrey's editorial work foregrounded the active work of arranging and directing. According to fellow reviewer Walter Bagehot, Jeffrey was the most significant early periodical editor. Bagehot described Jeffrey's importance to the history of editing in his 1855 article "The First Edinburgh Reviewers" published in *The National Review*:

Lord Jeffrey was no every-day man. He invented the trade of editorship. Before him, an editor was a bookseller's drudge; he is now a distinguished functionary. If Jeffrey was not a great critic, he had, what very great critics have wanted, the art of writing what most people would think good criticism. He might not know his subject, but he knew his readers. (276)<sup>14</sup>

As the article's title and the second half of this quote indicate, Bagehot is concerned most with Jeffrey as an immensely popular reviewer, but he also touches here on the importance of Jeffrey's editorship.<sup>15</sup> In fact, the two are intimately connected in this

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<sup>14</sup> Bagehot refers to Jeffrey with his title of Lord that Jeffrey was awarded for his work with the law following his 1829 resigning of the *Edinburgh Review*'s editorship to take on the role of Dean of the Faculty of Advocates and his appointment as Lord Advocate (Shattock "Jeffrey, Francis (1773-1850)").

<sup>15</sup> Obviously, not all editors were bookseller's drudges before Francis Jeffrey. Tobias Smollett with *The Critical Review* or Samuel Johnson with *The Rambler*, for instance, had more control over their periodicals than Bagehot's quote suggests, but most editors of reviews in particular were deeply influenced by booksellers.



passage as Bagehot moves seamlessly from discussing editorship to discussing reviewing. Bagehot's claim that Jeffrey's strength as a critic lay in his connection to readers could equally well describe his skill as an editor. Like reviewing, editing demands, above all, a good sense of audience. Editors who misread their audiences may well find themselves without an audience. The intentionality of Jeffrey's editorship characterizes the shift from "bookseller's drudge" to "distinguished functionary"; instead of following a bookseller's prescription of what to review and how to review it, Jeffrey made these decisions himself. The editor in Jeffrey's formulation was not concerned with shaping audience book purchasing habits to coincide with a particular publisher's wares; rather, the relationship between editor and reader becomes more like "a man speaking to men" to borrow a phrase from Wordsworth than selling a particular product (xxviii). Jeffrey's editorship asserted a literary standard that was ostensibly tied to good taste and not economically-based concern for sales. Editorial professionalization was dependent more, according Bagehot's brief account, on an increase in freedom and influence and less on the compensation offered to editors and their ability to treat editing as a occupation. Editing becomes a profession not because the increase in pay to a livable wage but because it becomes more self-directed.

The increase in freedom and influence for editing also meant more responsibility, especially in interaction with contributors. As editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, Jeffrey was the man most responsible for its success or failure, and as such he had to balance his own work with directing contributors and reading the literary environment of early nineteenth-century Scotland and Great Britain. Jeffrey was especially adept at guiding

his contributors while still giving them freedom to write. For instance, in a letter to John Wilson on October 10, 1817 before Jeffrey knew of Wilson's connection to his competitor William Blackwood, Jeffrey described the type of article he wanted for the review:

I do not want, as you will easily conjecture, a learned, ostentatious, and antiquarian dissertation, but an account written with taste and feeling and garnished if you please, with such quotations as may be either very curious or very delightful. (qtd. in Gordon 155)

By complimenting Wilson on his quickness in knowing what type of review to write, Jeffrey both flatters and directs this potential contributor. Notably, Jeffrey's description of what an article should do emphasizes that which will appeal to the reading public: taste and feeling rather than over-intellectualized prose. His role was not a slow editorial process of waiting for death. Instead, he performed numerous roles in running the review. Lord Cockburn waxes rhapsodical over Jeffrey's "incalculable" value as an editor in his biography:

He had to discover, and to train authors; to discern what truth and the public mind required; to suggest subjects; to reject, and, more offensive still, to improve contributions; to keep down absurdities; to infuse spirit; to excite the timid; to repress violence; to soothe jealousies; to quell mutinies; to watch times; and all this in the morning of the reviewing day, before experience had taught editors conciliatory firmness, and

contributors reasonable submission. He directed and controlled the elements he presided over with a master's judgment. (236)

Although Cockburn's portrait of Jeffrey's work is idealized, it gives a sense of the many demands made upon the editor of a periodical in the early nineteenth century. In this list, the actual revision of articles is one of the lesser duties, but soliciting articles and assembling each number are at the forefront.

Jeffrey's concern for audience reception is another part of what made Jeffrey so successful as an editor, and this is one of the elements of consideration Jeffrey offered Macvey Napier when he wrote to the new editor to give veteran advice. In this letter, Jeffrey indicates that the editorial role is complex because it demands that the editor think deeply about the effect of the review as a whole as well as the impact of each piece in the review. Thus, he advises the new conductor that

There are three legitimate considerations by which you should be guided in your conduct as editor generally, and particularly as to the admission or rejection of important articles of a political sort. (1) The effect of your decision of the other contributors upon whom you mainly rely; (2) its effect on the sale and circulation, and on the just authority of the work with the great body of its readers; and (3) your own deliberate opinion as to the safety or danger of the doctrines maintained in the article under consideration, and its tendency either to promote or retard the practical adoption of those liberal principles to which, and *their practical*

*advancement*, you must always consider the journal as devoted. (qtd. in Morley 324)

Correcting or even arranging the articles is not the focus of Jeffrey's advice. The editor's role is active in reading and responding to the literary climate in which the review is published. To return to Bagehot's term, the editor Jeffrey describes is certainly no bookseller's drudge; rather, the editor must be a canny politician calculating the complex interactions between any particular article and the review's contributors, readers, circulation, and personal political ideologies. Jeffrey's editor is a mastermind behind the success of the periodical rather than a mechanical function that collects and corrects texts following the demands of a bookseller. These are the marks of a profession rather than an amateur venture.

Jeffrey's editorial power is especially obvious when we look at how he leveraged it against his publishers. Unlike periodicals, especially reviews, operated by or closely tied to booksellers, the *Edinburgh Review* did not have economic dependencies on a particular bookseller, giving its reviewers more freedom in evaluating and interpreting the works they reviewed. The *Edinburgh Review*, however, did experience controversy around the possibility of ties to publishers. In 1807 the publishing of the review became a tense issue when a proposed transfer of more of the London publication to John Murray was protested by Messers Longman & Co. According to Samuel Smiles's 1891 account of Murray and the *Quarterly Review* entitled *A Publisher and His Friends*, "The difference between the contending publishers was brought to a crisis by Mr. Jeffrey" (79). Jeffrey's pivotal role in the publishing tension demonstrates the power he wielded

as an editor which he used to resolve the tension between the review and the Longmans. Staunchly defending his position on the publication of the *Edinburgh Review*, Jeffrey wrote in a letter to Messers Constable & Co. June 1, 1807 which was also copied to Messers Longman,

I believe you understand already that neither I nor any of the original and regular writers in the *Review* will ever contribute a syllable to a work belonging to booksellers. .... If that claim be not speedily rejected or abandoned, it is our fixed resolution to withdraw entirely from the *Edinburgh Review*; to publish to all the world that the conductor and the writers of the former numbers have no sort of connection with those that may afterwards appear; and probably to give notice of our intention to establish a new work of a similar nature under a different title. (qtd. in Smiles 79)

Describing himself in terms of conducting and writing, Jeffrey asserts his power by making it immensely clear that he is no bookseller's drudge. Rather, he portrays himself as the force that attracts the *Edinburgh Review's* audience. Furthermore, he pictures himself as a general marshaling his troops. As the editor, his role is to lead and to speak for the regular contributors, and by threatening to withdraw his work as editor and contributor, Jeffrey defines the producers of the literary product as the major draw of the review. He implies that he is, at this particular moment, irreplaceable if he refuses to give his approval to the next editor. In the case of the *Edinburgh Review*, the editor was the foundation of the periodical even though he had less legal right to control it than the

publishers could claim. The editor's trump card is a committed audience; Jeffrey knew this and played it to his advantage, and his power play worked. The potential of the coterie of writers and editor starting the *New Edinburgh Review* was a substantial enough threat to the very profits the Longmans were trying to protect by insisting that Murray not be given more publication rights, and the case was dropped.

But how much power, we may ask, did Jeffrey wield on a more day-to-day basis when he was not perhaps battling loss of the review itself? At the level of working with text, Jeffrey's editorial power was fairly extensive, and he frequently altered the reviews before including them in the *Edinburgh Review*. He claimed, however, to have only partial control of his reviewers in a July 20, 1810 letter to Francis Horner:

But you judge rightly of my limited power, and of the overgrow privileges of some of my subjects. I am but a feudal monarch at best, and my throne is overshadowed by the presumptuous crests of my nobles. However, I issue laudable edicts, inculcating moderation and candour, and hope in time to do some little good. (107)

Though Jeffrey claimed that he did not wield much editorial power over his reviewer's texts, Thomas Carlyle's description of how he would "rebel against what [he] reckoned mere authority" in response to Jeffrey's "light editorial hacking and hewing to right and left" suggests Jeffrey understated his editorial role (qtd. in Morley 828). Lord Cockburn took a kinder perspective, lauding the editor for his ability to tinker with text:

Inferior to these excellences, but still important, was his dexterity in revising the writings of others. Without altering the general tone or

character of the composition, he had great skill in leaving out defective ideas or words, and in so aiding the original by lively or graceful touches, that reasonable authors were surprised and charmed on seeing how much better they looked than they thought they would. (Cockburn 236)

The editor's power is contradictory: Jeffrey had the final say on what words were printed, but he was also tasked with keeping this power invisible by preserving the tone of his reviewers. By hybridizing the voice of the individual reviewer with his sense of the communal voice of the review, he created a periodical that was at once a loose collection and a single work. The early nineteenth-century editor's power of changing text was certainly an expansive one, but it was a power that was circumscribed.

Jeffrey's true editorial power lay neither in light hacking nor hewing but in establishing the literary taste of a generation. He wielded this power as a critic and editor. Jeffrey, working with Sydney Smith, Francis Horner, John Allen, and Henry Brougham, was aware of the importance of taste in the literary market. His view of taste is evident in the advertisement for the first number of the *Edinburgh Review*:

Of the books that are daily presented to the world, a very large proportion is evidently destined to obscurity, by the insignificance of their subjects, or the defects of their execution, and it seems unreasonable to expect that the Public should be interested by any account of performances, which have never attracted any share of its attention. A review of such productions, like the biography of private individuals, could afford gratification only to the partiality of friends, or the malignity of

enemies.—The very lowest order of publications are rejected, accordingly, by most of the literary journals of which the Public is already in possession. But the Conductors of the EDINBURGH REVIEW propose to carry this principle of selection a good deal farther; to decline any attempt at exhibiting a complete view of modern literature; and to confine their notice, in a great degree, to works that either have attained, or deserve, a certain portion of celebrity.

The original conductors of the *Edinburgh Review* had no intention of being comprehensive; instead, they claimed to give readers that which is worth celebrity, which is to say that they promised to help their readers develop good taste and the ability to correctly judge the merit of the works being reviewed. As editor, Jeffrey had the final say over what was included in the magazine and what was left out, and by this choice he sent a clear message to the public about what was worth celebrity and what new ideas and literature merited his readers' attention. The work of editing is mostly invisible in this instance, and the power he had over readers was even stronger for its subtlety.

In addition to the more subtle method of shaping his audience's tastes through inclusion and exclusion, Jeffrey also explicitly discussed literary taste in his reviews. The opening pages of Jeffrey's 1810 review of Sir Walter Scott's *The Lady of the Lake* are a meditation on the role of pleasure in determining good poetry. In this section, Jeffrey highlights the general reading public's need for training with regard to taste; he contends that while the main criterion of good poetry is whether it gives its readers



pleasure that what type of pleasure is derived from any poem is also important to consider:

The great multitude, even of the reading world, must necessarily be uninstructed and injudicious; and will frequently be found, not only to derive pleasure from what is worthless in finer eyes, but to be quite insensible to those beauties which afford the most exquisite delight to more cultivated understandings. ("*Lady of the Lake*" 368)

Though some readers may have wished for a democracy of taste in which popular appeal determines good poetry, Jeffrey supports an aristocracy in which those with natural gifting and dedicated study have better poetic taste than others. Lewis Gates points out that "Jeffrey regards himself as one of the choicest spirits of this chosen aristocracy, and it is as the exponent of the best current opinion that he speaks on all questions of taste" (15). Others also saw Jeffrey as an authority on taste as evidenced in his being asked to write the *Encyclopædia Britannica* entry on "Beauty" "that, down to 1875, stood as representing authentic English opinion in matters of taste" (Gates 1). In spite of the hierarchical nature of Jeffrey's understanding of taste, it is not entirely a system of exclusivity because he maintains that taste can be learned and taught. Jeffrey understood his role as one of sharing the good taste he possessed with his audience who had less developed literary palates through his reviews and his editorial work. The review was then the outlet for literary *noblesse oblige* in the aristocracy of taste. Jeffrey's aristocracy of taste, however, can be productively inverted with a consideration of Pierre Bourdieu's work on taste in *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*.

Bourdieu writes that because taste is not so much a “gift of nature” as a “product of upbringing and education” that this “predisposes tastes to function as markers of ‘class’” (Bourdieu 1-2). Describing Jeffrey’s system of taste as an aristocracy actually reflects that socioeconomic status has a profound impact on these tastes: this is not merely a metaphor. By presenting taste as a natural giftedness that can be communicated to his readers, Jeffrey sets himself up as the party with social power in this exchange, and he can assert his taste because he presents himself as a gentleman with a great understanding of poetry. This presentation is cyclical because in many ways his ability to present himself as a gentleman is possible because he works to demonstrate artistic sensibility. Taste depends on his class identification, and the class he projects in print is dependent on the taste he professes in his periodical. Because the *Edinburgh Review* had a strong reader base and many devoted followers, Jeffrey’s influence over taste-formation was an immense social power.

Jeffrey most famously wielded his ability to affect the British public’s taste in his now infamous judgment of Wordsworth’s poem *The Excursion*. He opened his review with the condemning summation “This will never do” (“The Excursion” 1). Looking retrospectively it is easy to balk at Jeffrey’s proclamation for its lack of foresight in regard to the immense staying power of Wordsworth’s poetry, but we must also remember the great impact this review had on nineteenth-century readers and the particular poem being discussed. While Jeffrey’s failure to correctly read the literary horizon in this instance may appear a bit comical, Russell Noyes points out in his 1941 study *Wordsworth and Jeffrey in Controversy* that the effects of this prejudice against the

Lake Poets and Wordsworth were real and had a strong financial impact. Noyes claims that Jeffrey kept Wordsworth out of circulation because many who read the negative reviews did not purchase Wordsworth's poems. Granted, the Romantic poet certainly attained no small celebrity during his day: he was appointed as Poet Laureate in 1843. While negative press can add to celebrity as Lord Byron's promiscuous public persona added to the interest in his poetry, the financial impact of the review and associated ethical and social concerns should not be overlooked. Samuel Taylor Coleridge took exception to Jeffrey's treatment of Wordsworth in "Remarks on the Present Mode of Conducting Critical Journals." Coleridge acknowledged the importance of the *Edinburgh Review*, calling its commencement "an important epoch in periodical criticism" and even allowed for "the keenness or asperity of its damnatory style" if the criticism is based on the work itself and not on personal knowledge of the writer's private life (242-43). For Coleridge, however, Jeffrey overextended his power in his review of Wordsworth by basing his critique in assertion and by honing in on the worst passages in the poem. Coleridge calls Jeffrey's opening line "vulgar exultation, with a prophecy meant to secure its own fulfillment," and Coleridge's article offers a more positive review of Wordsworth's poem (247). Coleridge's need to answer Jeffrey bespeaks the power of the review, perhaps especially when poorly wielded, and Coleridge grounds his critique of Jeffrey's review in ethical concerns. The problem of damnatory reviews in Coleridge's article are only a problem of accuracy but also a problem of charity.

The reviewer's power over taste sat particularly poorly with George Gordon, Lord Byron who reacted against the lack of thought he perceived in the *Edinburgh Review*.

Byron responded to the review satirically in poetry and highlighted a number of the periodical's weaknesses through mock praise: he advises any aspiring writers who are motivated most by financial concerns in *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers* to look the *Edinburgh Review* for employment:<sup>16</sup>

To JEFFREY go, be silent and discreet,  
His pay is just ten sterling pounds per sheet:  
Fear not to lie, 'twill seem a lucky hit,  
Shrink not from blasphemy, 'twill pass for wit;  
Care not for feeling—pass your proper jest,  
And stand a Critic hated yet caressed. (Byron 69-74)

Because Byron's charge of mercenary writing on the part of critics suggests that the review was not surrounded entirely by an air of all gentlemen and no pay, he hits Jeffrey's rawest nerve regarding the review. In this passage, Byron moves swiftly between describing the remuneration the young critic will get to quality he will produce, charging the *Edinburgh Review* with favoring articles that only seem intelligent but are actually false and blasphemous. He also takes aim at Jeffrey's ability to critique literature by referring to Jeffrey as a "self-constituted Judge of Poetry" (62) who was wont "To sentence Letters, as he sentenced men" (437). Byron challenges Jeffrey's ability to shape the tastes of his audience. Though Jeffrey may have the class

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<sup>16</sup> Byron's title also foregrounds the regional difference between the writers and the reviewers, which complicates the social power dynamic in the poem. The editor and reviewers may seem to have the power of shaping public taste, but the title reminds readers that the reviewers as Scotsmen are marginalized.

qualifications for good taste that Cave lacked in his association with the *Gentleman's Magazine*, Byron questions whether this man of legal rationalism who served as a judge of men has the aesthetic sensibility to also evaluate literary work. In Byron's clever conflation of Jeffrey's legal and literary work, Jeffrey's role as reviewer and, by extension, his role as editor are represented as professional.

Through and through, Jeffrey was an editor of contradictions. He fought, at times literally, for higher class status in his editing work and tried to make the review appear as a venture pursued by gentlemen for love rather than money, but he also desperately needed the money the position afforded him. He vociferously denied editing was a profession for him but in many ways did invent the trade of editing. Joanne Shattock describes Jeffrey's editorial fame well in "Showman, Lion Hunter, or Hack: The Quarterly Editor at Midcentury": "Just as the *Edinburgh* was the first of the new style of reviews and became a model for its successors, Jeffrey too became a legend within his lifetime, and it was a legend of a certain kind of editor" (Shattock "Showman, Lion Hunter, or Hack: The Quarterly Editor at Midcentury" 163). He was an editor torn between maintaining class and professionalizing the role he inhabited, but even in the midst of these tensions, he functioned as a high-profile face for the review. While he could never fully embrace his role as editor, his work with the *Edinburgh Review* did open space for subsequent editors.

**William Blackwood, Christopher North, and *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine***

Though not the first to make use of the designation “magazine,” *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* was the quintessential magazine of the early nineteenth century.<sup>17</sup> It claimed the nickname “Maga” and inspired others like the *London Magazine* to follow its format. In his 2009 article on magazines development, David Stewart notes that “*Blackwood’s*, as several recent critics have recognized, reinvented the monthly miscellany upon its launch in October 1817, rendering obsolete the outmoded magazine form typified by the *Gentleman’s Magazine*” (155). This feat alone could justify its inclusion in this editorial genealogy; however, it earns its prominent place in this study of editors for the complexity of its editorial arrangement. Published monthly, *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* ran for well over a century from October of 1817 through 1980.<sup>18</sup> As a Tory periodical, *Blackwood’s* rivaled the Whig *Edinburgh Review*. More of a miscellany than a review, *Blackwood’s* differed strongly from the *Edinburgh* by introducing original fictional work to the public and also in editorial arrangement. Rather than a hands-on editor like Jeffrey who was separate from the publishing side of the *Edinburgh Review*, *Blackwood’s* featured a publisher-proprietor-editor in William Blackwood I, though he did take more of a hands-on approach to the running of his magazine than most publishers or proprietor-editors.

In the last section, the most basic of editorial questions, who is the editor of a particular periodical, was easily answered. Francis Jeffrey was offered the role of editor of the *Edinburgh Review* and accepted it; he was paid for his work and enjoyed the power

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<sup>17</sup> In 1905, it dropped “Edinburgh” from its title to become *Blackwood’s Magazine*.

<sup>18</sup> Within this long run, the magazine was at times published on a fortnightly or bimonthly schedule, such as the two December issues from 1821, collected in volume X.

afforded to him by the position. When we ask the same question of *Blackwood's*, the answer is far more complex. In many ways William Blackwood I, the magazine's publisher-proprietor was also its editor. He employed John Wilson and John Gibson Lockhart as sub-editors, a practice that would become more common in the mid-nineteenth century. The editorial role becomes more muddled, however, when we consider that Blackwood, Wilson, and Lockhart all vehemently denied being the editor of this magazine and that it was purportedly edited by Christopher North, a man who did not exist. Much like the *Gentleman's Magazine's* Sylvanus Urban, North was a fictional creation, but unlike Urban, North was not merely a pseudonym hiding an actual editor. He was a fictional editor, most frequently written by the unofficial sub-editor John Wilson, but there was no one person behind the mask of Christopher North, though the British public found the question of who was behind the mask fascinating. This fictional editor reveals that the narrative of one person who is behind the magazine was a fiction that readers held to closely; thus, the magazine needed an editor not only to arrange text and solicit manuscripts but also to serve as the face of the magazine. This demonstrates that by the late 1810s when *Blackwood's* was beginning, the reading public assumed that a periodical would have a single editor, but *Blackwood's* plays with and challenges this assumption. By looking at how the Editor function is presented as unified and accessible in the person of North, we can see that *Blackwood's* editorial history demonstrates the tension between an older model of magazine conducting and a newer, more fluid model.

The change in editorship from the *Edinburgh Monthly Magazine*, a fairly standard arrangement in which two men shared the editorial chair, to that of *Blackwood's*

*Edinburgh Magazine* demonstrates the growing power of the editor but also that this editorial power could be wielded well from behind a veil. William Blackwood's relationship to the editing of his magazine throughout this transition shows that while there was a growing space for editing as a clearly identified and professional role in the early nineteenth century that the practice and concept of editing developed asymmetrically. This led Blackwood to employ the figure of a veiled editor who did not exist except in fiction but did allow a great degree of freedom to him and his coterie of writers. After looking at Blackwood and the editing of his magazine, I will turn to questions of the editorial voice, focusing on the role of anonymity, the first person plural pronoun, and the creation of personality. While the stability of the editor as a literary fixture was apparently firmly rooted in a correlation with "reality" in Francis Jeffrey's editorship, *Blackwood's* Christopher North reveals both the importance of the editor as the unifying force of a magazine and also that this work of unification is ultimately a fiction and perhaps a necessary one.

Begun as the *Edinburgh Monthly Magazine* in April of 1817, the periodical that eventually became the somewhat infamous *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* was not particularly notable. Initially, William Blackwood's periodical was very like any other miscellany following in the tradition of the *Gentleman's Magazine*. It provided its readers with an array of articles, some reprinted and some original, on a variety of subjects. Phillip Flynn describes the new magazine as lacking organization in his 2006 *Victorian Periodicals Review* article "Beginning Blackwood's: The Right Mix of *Dulce* and *Utile*":



the miscellany teetered through incoherence into self-contradiction, providing activities of the Royal Family, narratives of crimes, reports of coroners' inquests, and any "Singular Occurrence," "Shocking Story," "Melancholy Accident," or "Dreadful Catastrophe" that could be gleaned from other publications, while mixing William Blackwood's own Tory sentiments with summaries of articles in the Whig *Edinburgh Review*.  
(137)

Unlike the editor of the *Gentleman's Magazine* who successfully pioneered a digest approach to periodical publishing, James Cleghorn and Thomas Pringle, the editors of the *Edinburgh Monthly*, found that summarizing, paraphrasing, and reprinting no longer set a magazine apart from others in the early nineteenth century. The first article of the *Edinburgh Monthly's* first volume is a good indicator of the magazine's tenor—it opened with the "Memoir of the Late Francis Horner, Esq. M. P." The writer of this article provides a number of paragraphs excerpted from published eulogies for the deceased. The tone of "Memoir of the Late Francis Horner, Esq. M. P.," and indeed much of the magazine, is laid out in the opening sentence which, while not poorly written, does lack the vigor it needed to hold reader interest:

Of the many eminent and good men whom Great Britain may proudly boast of having produced,—who have dedicated their lives to the service of the state,—and have ministered to the improvement and the happiness of their countrymen, not less by the exercise of splendid talents in the public councils of the nation, than by the bright example they have

afforded in private life, of inflexible integrity, and the practice of every amiable virtue,— there is certainly not one whose death has excited a deeper or more universal regret, than that of MR FRANCIS HORNER. (3)

Beginning thus with the death of this Scottish politician and early *Edinburgh Review* contributor, the *Edinburgh Monthly*'s editors seem to predict their own deaths as editors and wait daily for that quiet editorial process. As suggested by its habit of drawing heavily on other periodicals, the *Edinburgh Monthly* was unremarkable in a market glutted with periodicals, which contributed to Blackwood's dissatisfaction with his editors and discontinuation of that iteration of his magazine venture. Walter Graham describes Cleghorn and Pringle's editing as an "incompetent joint-editorship" and the magazine itself as "uninspired and undistinguished," and subsequent critics have agreed that Cleghorn and Pringle were poor editors (275).<sup>19</sup>

Blaming his editors for the magazine's lackluster performance, Blackwood decided to discontinue it after six numbers. His frustration with Cleghorn and Pringle reveals that by the late 1810s, publishers had clear expectations for their editors' work. In short, professional editing standards were developing. Blackwood's expectations centered on the copy his editors would produce for the magazine; however, both his hope that the copy would be good and his assumption that enough would be provided by his editors were misplaced. This strained relationship between Blackwood and his editors

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<sup>19</sup> Even with charges of incompetence as editors following them, Cleghorn and Pringle did attempt another editorial venture, and they became editors of the *Scots Magazine*, which had been purchased by Blackwood's publishing competitor Archibald Constable in 1801 long after its inception in 1739 (Shattock "Constable, Archibald (1774-1827)").

was humorously retold in the controversial “Chaldee Manuscript” concluding *Blackwood’s* seventh number. In this prophetic history of the magazine, the new contributors describe Cleghorn and Pringle as the “two beasts” that break their word to Blackwood, “a man clothed in plain apparel... [whose] name was as it had been the colour of ebony” (Wilson et al. 297). The conflict over copy is rendered as follows:

But after many days they put no words in the Book; and the man was astonished and waxed wrath, and he said unto them, What is this that you have done unto me, and how shall I answer those to whom I am engaged? And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that. (Wilson et al. 298)

Here the disagreement between editors Cleghorn and Pringle and Blackwood is cast in terms of work and professional obligation in a way that foregrounds the network of engagement: Blackwood is engaged to provide his subscribers a finished product and the editors are obliged to, at bare minimum, put words in the magazine. Part of the humor of this passage is the reduction that happens when editing is described in the mock-prophetic language of the “Chaldee Manuscript.” Obviously, there is much more to writing than gathering together words and putting them in a book, but Blackwood’s editors failed even at this basic task. Beside impertinence in their answer to Blackwood in this passage, the wayward editors’ fault is a lack of productivity and writing. These particular editors were not active producers of literary culture, and thus, they were quickly replaced.

While the “Chaldee Manuscript” rendered the conflict between Blackwood and Cleghorn and Pringle humorous, editors failing to meet their professional obligations was

a serious problem for Blackwood. In a letter to his London agents Baldwin, Cradock, and Joy on July 23, 1817, Blackwood indicated serious frustration at his editors' failure to comply with his expectations:

I have been much disappointed in my editors, who have done little in the way of writing or procuring contributions. Ever since the work began I have had myself, almost the whole burden of procuring contributions, which by great exertions I got from my own friends, while at the same time I had it not in my power to pay for them, as by our agreement the editors were to furnish me with the whole of the materials, for which and their editorial labours they were to receive half the profits of the work. I found this would never do, and that the work would soon sink, as I could not permit my friends (who have in fact made the work what it is) to go on in this way for any length of time. (qtd. in Oliphant 104)

Besides half of the profits, Blackwood was also contracted to pay Cleghorn and Pringle a joint monthly salary of £50. The financial risk in this venture was Blackwood's, so it fell to him to fill in for his remiss editors. Because his business arrangement with Cleghorn and Pringle tied up his funds thus barring him from properly compensating those actually writing copy, Blackwood had to rely on the older personal favor-based and fame-based periodical model of amateur rather than professional contributors. His ability to rely on private relationships for contributions indicates that contributing to magazines was still not entirely professionalized in the early nineteenth century, though Blackwood indicates a desire to professionalize his periodical by venting his frustration at not being able to

financially compensate his contributors. In short, he assumes that contributors must be paid, and this assumption shows a change to a professionalized periodical system. Like Francis Jeffrey, Blackwood falls between two systems though, as a publisher, Blackwood was not embroiled in the editorial class issues in the same way as Jeffrey.<sup>20</sup>

Finding himself caught between an economy of personal obligation and one of professional responsibility, Blackwood's break with his remiss editors demonstrates this personal/professional tension as he tried to keep his connection with Pringle intact while still acting in accordance with his contract. In the letter to his London agents, he described how he reached out to Pringle in friendship but after giving "a notice, according to our agreement" found that rather than "Pringle acting in the friendly way he had professed, he joined Cleghorn, and without giving any explanation, they concluded a bargain with Constable & Co." to edit *Scots Magazine* (qtd. in Oliphant 105).

Blackwood was offended at the lack of friendliness and consideration Cleghorn gave him; in addition, his personal offense grew out of the professional implications of

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<sup>20</sup> As we have seen in the last section and as Blackwood points out in this letter, periodicals could not last if they were all gentlemen and no pay. Explaining the lack of financial remuneration to her late nineteenth-century audience, in her history of *Blackwood's*, Margaret Oliphant writes:

In those days it was considered right at all events to say, and if possible to believe, that literature was superior to payment, and that to imagine a man of genius as capable of being stirred up to composition by any thought of pecuniary reward was an insulting and degrading suggestion – an idea in which a fanciful spectator would fain take refuge once more, in face of a generation which weighs out its thousand words across the counter, with the affectation of finding in sale and barter its only motive. (99)

Oliphant's tone in this passage anticipates credulous readers who conceive of the periodical press in terms of market and profit; her very decision to include this aside indicates a need to gloss this earlier approach to magazines for readers.

Cleghorn's actions. Cleghorn behaved as if only professional agreements were binding. As he had made only a personal promise without a professional contract with Blackwood, he was able to cast his friendly implications aside easily. Blackwood, however, conceptualized their relationship as if personal communications and friendliness were professionally binding. It was not, however, only Blackwood who was dissatisfied by the business arrangement. According to Wilson's daughter Mary Gordon, Cleghorn and Pringle were also dissatisfied with the agreement: "On the 19th of May the co-editors formally wrote to Mr. Blackwood, letting him know that his interference with their editorial functions could no longer be endured" (Gordon 161). The editors, remiss as they seem to have been, were also frustrated by what they perceived as a lack of power. They conceive of editorship as a position that must be characterized by autonomy from publisher control. They wanted to function as professionals who are capable of directing, but Blackwood does not and perhaps cannot give them this space. Their ability to claim legal rights to the magazine's title shows that the law agrees with their claim to a degree of ownership of the periodical, and eventually, neither remiss editors nor frustrated publisher could lay claim to the title "the Edinburgh Monthly Magazine." With the unfortunate partnership dissolved, Blackwood was free to continue the magazine but changed its name in accordance with the contract he had with Pringle and Cleghorn.

Following Blackwood's fallout with the editors of the *Edinburgh Monthly*, he was more actively involved in the new iteration of his magazine. While decidedly more hands-on than in the previous six numbers, Blackwood's role in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* has been difficult for scholars to categorize. Fellow-publisher John Murray's

reminder to Blackwood that “You and I are not editors, but publishers. We know the first effect, though we may not be able so easily to gauge the cause of its not being proportionate to our expectations” in his April 28, 1818 letter implies a clear division between editor and publisher, but Blackwood often transgressed this professional line (qtd. in Smiles 481). In a correspondence with Samuel Taylor Coleridge over the poet’s offer to serve as a London editor for *Blackwood’s*, Blackwood signed his response to Coleridge’s letter that was addressed to “William Blackwood, Bookseller, Edinburgh” sans name as “The Editor of Blackwood’s Magazine.”<sup>21</sup> Even in these multiple roles, however, Blackwood is never The Editor of Blackwood’s Magazine in the same way that Christopher North seems to be. In *The Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Journalism*, William Blackwood I is listed as a publisher/proprietor, not as an editor, though Maurice Milne, the author of this dictionary article, does expound on the somewhat confusing nature of his relationship to editing the journal:

The lack of a formal position of “Editor” proved useful in deflecting some of the flak incurred by the notorious first issue of “Maga.” Thus, excusing himself to Scott for the biblical parody the “Chaldee Manuscript,”

Blackwood pleaded, 'The Editor took his own way and I cannot interfere

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<sup>21</sup> In these letters, now housed in the Huntington Library’s collection, Coleridge puts himself forward as an editor for *Blackwood’s* offering “in short, to give the Edinburgh Magazine the whole weight of my interests, name, and character, whatever that may be”; however, Blackwood was unable to accept Coleridge’s offer at the time, but smoothly compliments Coleridge’s genius while also pointing out that editing a magazine like *Blackwood’s* requires “many things besides genius, and you need forgive me for entertaining some little doubt whether or not the labor of it might prove as agreeable to a Person of your current qualifications as at first sight you might imagine.” Earlier, Coleridge had attempted magazine work with the *Watchman* and the *Friend*, neither of which were successful.

with him'. In truth there was no editor other than Blackwood himself. The best formulation is to be found on his tombstone: "Originator and for seventeen years Conductor and Publisher of the Magazine which bears his name."

His role in the inception of the magazine, his editing, and his work as publisher of *Blackwood's* were all significant enough to mark William Blackstone's grave. Indeed, these accomplishments are listed before his role as son, brother, husband, father, citizen, and magistrate on his gravestone. In death, the editorial role he so often denied was ascribed to him making him an editor posthumously rather than an editor waiting for death to draw near. Although Milne claims that there was no editor other than Blackwood, the situation was more complex than simply Blackwood acting as his own anonymous editor. When reinventing his magazine, Blackwood drew on a number of subeditors: particularly John Wilson and John Gibson Lockhart.<sup>22</sup> The energy and wit of these two men, in conjunction with the work of other contributors to the magazine, revolutionized *Blackwood's*, but because Wilson and Lockhart were not officially editors and did not think of themselves as editors, Blackwood avoided a situation similar to that with Cleghorn and Pringle.

The seventh issue of Blackwood's magazine, the first under the new regime, had the tricky task of claiming continuity with the *Edinburgh Monthly Magazine* while also establishing itself separately from Cleghorn and Pringle's failed editorship. In the

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<sup>22</sup> James Hogg was also an important figure in *Blackwood's* early history, but because his role was generally more of a contributor than an editor, I will not be treating him in as much depth as either Wilson or Lockhart.



“Notice from the Editor,” this continuity is affirmed by the announcement that the magazine’s correspondents will include “almost all the distinguished Contributors to the late *Edinburgh Monthly Magazine*” (1). By giving a list of upcoming articles and their writers, Blackwood and his fictional Editor reassure readers that the magazine will continue to be of the same caliber and thus be a commodity worth the monthly cost. Unlike Francis Jeffrey’s threat to leave the *Edinburgh Review* and take with him the bulk of the review’s contributors, Cleghorn and Pringle’s actual departure deprived *Blackwood’s* of few contributors, which meant that while some substantial changes were made in the magazine it could still be recognized by readers as the same magazine.<sup>23</sup>

To make his magazine more lucrative, however, Blackwood also had to show in the seventh issue that the magazine was under new management. This issue needed to feel like a new beginning. *Blackwood’s* did this firstly through changing the tone of its articles and secondly by creating the fiction of a shadowy editor. Notably, the cutting opening article “Some Observations on the ‘Biographia Literaria’ of S.T. Coleridge, Esq—1817,” the infamous “On the Cockney School of Poetry: No. 1” that took aim at Leigh Hunt, and the incendiary “Chaldee Manuscript” set the aggressive tenor for which *Blackwood’s* would be known.<sup>24</sup> Comparing the openings of the first and seventh numbers is illustrative of the differences in the articles. Opening with eulogies gathered

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<sup>23</sup> Editorial power, then, depends to a great measure on editorial skill, especially at bringing together a set of writers.

<sup>24</sup> The “Chaldee Manuscript” inflamed public outrage for two main reasons. Firstly, its thinly veiled references to actual people in the world of Edinburgh’s periodical press, and secondly, for its mock-biblical language which at times took direct quotes from the Scriptures, such as “it shall be a light unto thy feet, and a lamp unto thy path” which quotes Psalm 119:105 (298).

from the pages of other periodicals, the first offers a look backwards; whereas, the attack on a famous poet is forward-looking as it actively shapes literary reception. This new oppositional approach also connected *Blackwood's* to its competition, the *Edinburgh Review*. The break with older numbers of the periodical was underscored by the use of the singular "Editor" rather than the previously plural "Editors" in the preliminary notice. This unnamed editor also appears in the "Chaldee Manuscript" at the beginning of chapter two when Blackwood is perplexed about what he should do: "And while [Blackwood] was yet musing, there stood before him a man clothed in dark garments, having a veil upon his head; and there was a rod in his hand" (305). He gives advice to Blackwood, commanding him: "Behold, if thou will listen unto me, I will deliver thee out of all thy distresses, neither shall any be able to touch a hair of thy head" (305). The new editor is a character both mysterious and dynamic. He breaks into the story to save Blackwood from despair and summons the coterie of contributors who are represented as an array of animals.<sup>25</sup> Certainly, the editor plays an important narrative role in this story of betrayal, despair, rebirth, and success in the "Chaldee Manuscript," and the audience clamored to know who was behind the veil. No one was behind the veil, but the fiction of the veiled editor was perpetuated when briefly after this inaugural issue, the editor was given the fictional persona of Christopher North, which led to the question of who was behind yet another veil.

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<sup>25</sup> The manuscript mentions the following animal contributors: the leopard (John Wilson), the lynx (Arthur Mower), the scorpion (John Gibson Lockhart), the wild boar (James Hogg), the griffin (Rev. Dr. McCrie), the black eagle (Sir William Hamilton), the stork (James Wilson, brother of John Wilson), the hyæna (John Riddell, Esq.), the beagle and the showhound who are not identified by name in the later release of the manuscript.

While editorial pen names were used by other periodicals, *Blackwood's* Christopher North stands apart because North was not an editorial pen name holding the place of the actual editor's name; Christopher North was a fictional editor obscuring Blackwood's role in the magazine to which he lent his name. To some degree, the veiling of the editor served to stir the audience's imagination in a literary scene rife with anonymity and speculation about identity:

The question of who was *Blackwood's* editor, of who was "Christopher North" or "the Veiled Editor" or "Veiled Conductor," intrigued Blackwood's contemporaries, a reading public that was also intrigued by the identities of "the Great Unknown," the author of the Waverly novels. Blackwood, Wilson, and Lockhart obfuscated the first question at every turn, partly to fend against lawsuits for slander, partly to feed the younger men's taste for literary hoaxes, mysteries and "bams." (Flynn 138)

The veil actually hides a lack of standard editorial presence, which points out the assumptions the audience would have about the editorial position in this period. By the early nineteenth century, the editorial figure of consolidated power was recognizable and legible to the audience. In *Blackwood's* case, however, the editorial role is not as centralized. Even so, this game of who is behind the veil was short-lived not because the truth of the matter was discovered, but because, as Mary Wilson Gordon indicates in her biography of Wilson, the reading public

refused after a time to acknowledge the mystery, and insisted on recognizing in John Wilson the real impersonation of Blackwood's "veiled

editor.” The error has been often emphatically corrected: let it once again be repeated, on the best authority, that the only real editor *Blackwood’s Magazine* ever had was Blackwood himself. (Gordon 167)

The matching of John Wilson with Christopher North was firmly planted in the public’s mind. In the mid-nineteenth century, Gordon must still assert that Blackwood and not Wilson was editor of *Blackwood’s*. Ironically, Gordon’s biography is entitled “*Christopher North: A Memoir of John Wilson*, capitalizing on the recognizability of the pen name of sorts, and in the preface to the American edition this volume is said to be “the key to *Blackwood’s Magazine*, and particularly to the ‘Noctes’” (ii). The need for the audience to pin North’s identity on a single person persisted long after his involvement with the magazine. The person of the editor had formed so strongly in audience’s minds that one man needed to stand behind the magazine or, more accurately perhaps, in front of it as a figurehead. Just as an omnibus would have one conductor, so too in the public’s mind would a periodical have one conductor to steer the literary venture. In other words, the audience demanded a key with which to understand the magazine, and that key was an editor, singular.

John Wilson seemed to be that key. While he vehemently refused accusations of being the man behind the pen name, the public’s linking Wilson to North was not unfounded. Christopher North was most frequently written by John Wilson, but Wilson strongly denied any charges of editorship and also denied being the original of Christopher North. In a letter to the Rev. Mr. Fleming of Rayrig in spring 1828, Wilson writes:

*Of Blackwood's Magazine* I am not the editor, although, I believe, I very generally get both the credit and discredit of being Christopher North. I am one of the chief writers, perhaps the chief, and have all along been so, but never received one shilling from the proprietor, except for my own compositions. Being generally on the spot, I am always willing to give him my advice, and to supply such articles as may be most wanted when I have leisure to do so. But I hold myself answerable to the public only for my own articles, although I have never chosen to say, nor shall I ever, that I am not editor, as that might appear to be shying responsibility, or disclaiming my real share in the work. To you, however, I make the avowal, which is to the letter correct, of Christopher North's ideal character. I am in great measure the parent nevertheless, nor am I ashamed of the old gentleman, who is, though rather perverse, a thriving bairn. (qtd. in Gordon 123)

In this letter, we are afforded an intimate view of Wilson's relationship to *Maga*. First of all, we must note how he measures being an editor by the financial compensation that comes with the position. Were he to be an editor or even to consider himself a subeditor, he clearly believes that he should be paid more, which indicates pay is one of the important markers for identifying editing as professional work according to Wilson. His role is that of an amateur editor of sorts as he is willing to give unpaid input on how best to conduct "*Maga*." In this letter he defends himself against what seems to be a charge of being an editor, indicating that many of the class concerns that plagued Jeffrey reappear

in Wilson's response to editing.<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, Wilson reveals that his eye is always to his public persona and how denying charges of editorship publically will look although he implies that this private letter allows Fleming to see behind the public mask. North, however, is not actually the mask he wears so much as a mask for all of those working in an editorial capacity in *Blackwood's*. To draw an analogy to twentieth and twenty-first-century Internet identity construction, North is not a handle or an avatar for Wilson; instead, he is a fictional creation that Wilson describes as his progeny. North has a life of his own as a thriving child. The line between fictional characters in a novel and fictional editors of a periodical is slighter than we might expect. Wilson reads North as a character he created rather than as a pen name, and in the tension between character and pen name, North's status reveals that all high-profile editors are characters for the public to imagine and with whom readers connect.

But after the lifting of the veil to discover its concealed emptiness, we may wonder why a veiled editor was necessary in the reconstruction of *Blackwood's*. Most obviously, the veiled editor was a screen behind which Blackwood could hide to avoid negative reactions to his provocative magazine. Blackwood and his new magazine were under perpetual threat of libel suits due in most part to the aim they took not only at the works but also the personal lives of many literary figures. Theodore Besterman calculated the

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<sup>26</sup> While his co-contributor John Gibson Lockhart was less frequently identified as the original of Christopher North, Lockhart also worked hard to deny charges of editorship; the most extreme instance of which led to the infamous Scott-Christie duel in which Scott died for insisting that Lockhart admit editorship of *Blackwood's*. For a more extended discussion of this duel and the letters between Scott and Lockhart in which Scott insists that Lockhart must admit to editing *Blackwood's* which would render him "ungentlemanly" and thus null the challenge to duel see Peter T. Murphy's 1992 article "Impersonation and Authorship in Romantic Britain."

cost of libel suits for *Blackwood's* during William Blackwood I's tenure as editor as a minimum of £3,000 (Morrison "William Blackwood and the Dynamics of Success" 30). Having a separate editor to blame was convenient way for Blackwood to ameliorate the negative responses of those whose good opinion he needed to maintain, such as Walter Scott or William Laidlaw. In a letter to the latter on 29 October 1817 regarding the "Chaldee Manuscript," Blackwood blamed editorial interference:

After I saw it in proof, I did everything I could to prevent it, and at last succeeded in getting the Editor to leave it out. In the course of a day, however, he changed his mind, and determined that it should be in. I was therefore placed in a terrible dilemma; and as I must have stopped the Magazine if I did not allow the Editor to have his own way, I was obliged to submit. (qtd. in Oliphant 150)

Being in many ways his own editor, Blackwood had not in fact lost control of his editor, but the shadowy figure of the anonymous and uncontrollable editor was a convenient fictional scapegoat for his controversial decision, and when he reprinted the seventh number to meet the immense demand, he decorously left out that offensive final article. In the case of the "Chaldee Manuscript," Blackwood's decision to include it in the original printing was a shrewd one, as it garnered the most attention from the public of any article in the first number. Describing the effect of *Blackwood's*, and the "Chaldee Manuscript" in particular, Margaret Oliphant recounts her memories of her mother's account of the satire: "yet her laugh over it, and her remembrance of it, made it familiar to me long before I saw a word of it in print. It was one of the old brilliant things 'such

as you never hear of nowadays' of her youth" (Oliphant 129-30). This memorable article's veiled editor allowed Blackwood to deny full responsibility and thus give greater freedom to his writers, which led them at times to write the articles that would be remembered nostalgically decades later.

The pretense of not being personally responsible for inflammatory articles like the "Chaldee Manuscript," however, is not a sufficient explanation of why so developed a fictional editor was needed by *Blackwood's*. Another portion of the answer to the question of why *Blackwood's* developed a fictional editor lies in the way in which North's fictional persona also served as a figurehead for the magazine. The acrostic poem for Christopher North called "Quatrains to Christopher North, Esq" which was reported to be by "Sir Scares Rue of Coventry" and was published in the October 1821 number of *Blackwood's* clearly depicts the editor as a symbolic leader:

Commander of the faithful troops, whose hands  
Hold the sharp pen, which ink-drops deep distain,  
Round whose bright throne, the intellectual bands  
In never-ending circles love to train;  
Sweet smiler on thy subject tribes—unless  
To punish rebels rude should be thy will,  
(On them full oft, and justly, I confess,  
Punishment falls tremendous from thy quill.)  
How wondrous 'tis to see a single mind  
Extend o'er earth its undisputed sway!



Resistance no where thought on—men inclined

Nowhere its despot power to disobey!

Oh then! Consider what on these depends:

Rule gently, wisely, nothing like a Turk,

Trample down him who thy just rule offends;

Him who is good extol, and name him in thy work. (348).

The acrostic form of this poem adds levity to the praise and cues the reader to the poem's purpose of defining the shadowy editor. Promising to nail down and explain the editor whom readers were curious to identify, the poem defines Christopher North as a man in control of his literary environment. The overwrought militaristic language that appears in the reference to the editor as commander portrays a periodical hierarchy with consolidated power being held by a single editor who stands as the general-king. This reigning editor is leagues from the bookseller's drudge editing style predating Francis Jeffrey or the editor waiting for death. However, Christopher North, as a fictional character, has no actual editorial power over *Blackwood's*. He cannot delete or add a single word to the magazine, nor can he accept or reject a single submission. But North is not entirely powerless: as the acrostic states, he inspires fear in his subjects with the threat of punishment. As Michel Foucault has famously argued in *Discipline and Punish*, in disciplinary societies power works by use—it is exercised rather than held. North may be hailed as an editorial king, but he is not a king with two bodies. While he does have what Ernst Kantorowicz designates the Body politic, he lacks the Body natural.

Instead, he has what might be termed the Body textual. He seems to see without being seen, and his editorial role is a sort of periodical panopticon. His editorial subjects are not the magazine's contributors but rather the poets and writers against whom he wields his fearsome quill. North's power is textual. His lack of physical presence does not bar him, however, from exercising power in a panoptic arrangement. As Foucault writes, "Panopticism is the general principle of a new 'political anatomy' whose object and end are not the relations of sovereignty but the relations of discipline" (208). Because the influence of panopticism functions at the site of the bodies policed rather than policing, North's lack of physical presence can give him even more power. He attacks without fear of counter-attack because as words on a page, he has no corporal existence outside of the text in which he speaks and drinks and dozes. *Blackwood's* biting reviews have the power to shape society and literary taste because the credibility of North stands behind them and because he is believed to have a physical person behind him. This is perhaps why the poet emphasizes the "single mind" that presides over the magazine and its implied dominion, and for this singularity of purpose and direction to exist, the implication is that there needs to be or to appear to be a single figurehead.

The consolidated editor figure is more than just a convenient veil by which the proprietor can more invisibly exercise his power over his magazine. It also functions as a symbolic figuration of the magazine and centralizes the power of the press in a way that bridges the private space of the reader and the public sphere of the magazine.

*Blackwood's* needed more than a veiled editor to be the face of the magazine; it needed Christopher North, a man to whom readers could connect as they did to characters in

novels even though they believed him to be John Wilson. Robert Morrison describes the “tone of intimacy and intellectual badinage” as one of the most important elements to *Blackwood's* success in connecting with its audience (“Blackwood's Berserker” para. 21). We can clearly see the connection of readers and editor in the public outcry over the rumor that North was retiring or perhaps dead. The outcry was such that it merited *Blackwood's* answering these concerns in the December 1821 issue. North’s response “On the Late Rumour of a Change of Administration” reveals the importance placed on his editorial role. He writes, “the PEOPLE OF SCOTLAND were determined that we should not retire from the EDITORSHIP, which, in their minds, was equivalent to the death of the WORK itself, if it was in their power to prevent it” (748). North can only counteract rumors of his death by presenting himself to the public in print because he has no corporeal existence. He, like all fictional characters, is comprised entirely of words, and his existence as a person is contingent on readers’ willingness to imagine him as such rather than as mere words on a page. He is language turned to flesh and bone in readers’ imaginations. The writers of North invited this intimacy through including North’s personal history and personality. Implications of a life outside the magazine buttress the fiction of his corporal existence. One such claim is that he had intended to resign the post of *Blackwood's* editor because “The truth is, that nature intended us for private rather than for public life; and they who knew us during the first fifty years of our existence, may recollect their astonishment on our accepting the situation of Prime Editor of Great Britain” (North 743). To seem “real,” North claims a private life that does not exist. North is only a public personae. Furthermore, the reader is invited to imagine North as a

fully embodied person in the *Noctes Ambrosinanae* dialogues in which he converses, drinks, and even dozes. North not only provided written reviews of current works like Jeffrey does in the *Edinburgh Review*, but he also invited the reader into discussions of poetry and other topics in the *Noctes Ambrosinanae* articles which were set in perhaps the most personal of public spaces: the pub. Robert Morrison has so succinctly put in in “William Blackwood and the Dynamics of Success”: “In the *Noctes*, Blackwood’s magazine performed its own production” (Morrison “William Blackwood and the Dynamics of Success” 40). This performance is one that has important implications for the history of editing because it shows that audiences wanted access to editorial decisions. Their curiosity to peek behind the editorial veil extended beyond a question of editorial identity; they wanted to know how magazines were constructed, and the central role in this construction was that of the editor.

One of the methods to create a public persona distanced from private existence was through the use of the editorial first person plural pronoun. Even in the seemingly unified person of Christopher North, the multiplicity of his creation slips in through the convention of the editorial “we.” Joanne Shattock notes the contradiction between the power implied by the editorial “we” and the limits many editors faced: “In principle the editorial ‘we’ was an acknowledgement of firm editorial control and the subordination of individual personalities and personal display to that control.” (Shattock *Politicks and Reviewers* 16). This subordination of individuals was never entirely effected in magazines, but the appearance of unity was offered by using “we” rather than “I.” John Morley, discussing the midcentury transition from primarily unsigned to signed articles in

periodicals, describes the old editorial “we” as having “a monstrous charlantry” but speculates that the ability for writers to disappear behind an editor also gave these writers more freedom (Morley 326). The privacy of the individual contributor under a strongly present editor allowed each writer to be less fearful of consequences for not performing the expected character of his or her public identity. In the case of Christopher North, those acting in an editorial role were also given this freedom of hiding behind the fictional editor. The double-voice of North and his writers is especially evident in North’s discussion of privacy in “On the Late Rumour”:

We felt, that though nature had imbued us with the love of privacy, she had, at the same time, endowed us with the power of publicity; and that precise era in the history of the world having arrived when such a man was necessary to the salvation of his country, and of Europe, we took lodgings in Edinburgh, and made Mr Blackwood the proprietor and publisher of our Magazine. (743)

Read as the voice of Christopher North, the passage is straightforward. Here is a man who is using the conventional first personal plural employed by many a magazine editor. The man would have preferred to remain unknown and out of the public sphere but he takes the public role, somewhat hyperbolically, for the good of the country. Read against the grain, however, taking the “we” as an actual first person plural of all the men who work with the magazine and who fulfill the editorial role in one way or another, the passage becomes more complex: the power of publicity is in this reading no longer at odds with the love of privacy because the public persona of North ensures that the

privacy of this group of writers and unofficial editors. North serves as an ideal smokescreen for these writers and for Blackwood because even if readers try to decode the *nom de plume* “Christopher North,” they are sent looking for a single man who does not exist, and the privacy of the editors and sub-editors of *Blackwood’s* can remain public figures while still maintaining a sense of privacy. While North’s dilemma of longing for the private while being a very public figure is fictional and manufactured to connect with readers, for many nineteenth-century editors, the tension between private and public life was a matter of great frustration. In the next chapter, we shall see how William Makepeace Thackeray and Ellen Wood navigated this challenge while editing the *Cornhill Magazine* and the *Argosy* respectively.

The first years of the nineteenth century featured the invention or perhaps reinvention of the editorial role with Francis Jeffrey’s editorship of the *Edinburgh Review*. He was no editor whittling away the time while waiting for death; instead, he was active in shaping literary culture through his reviews but also through selecting texts to review and reviewers to develop. The growth in the scope of periodicals themselves but also the importance of original copy and expanding audiences meant that publishers and proprietors or frequently in this era publisher-proprietors needed help from editors, whether from hired editors like Jeffrey, Cleghorn, and Pringle or from sub-editors like Wilson and Lockhart. By the time *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* was launched, the reading public had grown accustomed to a single editor or an editorial pair standing behind any given periodical. This trend demonstrates professionalization and normalization of the editing role, and when looking at *Blackwood’s*, we can also see the

symbolic importance of the editor and the textual power of consolidating the magazine into an individual. The concern I close this chapter with, that of the audience's connection to the editor and of the professional/private line becomes even more important in mid-century editing as editors drew even more heavily on literary celebrity to attract reading audiences.

## Chapter 2: Mid-Nineteenth Century Editors

### Celebrity and Personal Connection in the *Cornhill Magazine* and the *Argosy*

The mid-nineteenth-century emphasis on decorum and the particular brand of sexual morality with which the Victorian age has become synonymous created a cultural environment in which mainstream textual nudity had decreased from the more raucous days of *Tom Jones*, *Gulliver's Travels*, and *Pamela*. The greater scarcity of naked figures in Victorian fiction makes the naked editor-narrator of Antony Trollope's 1869 short story "The Turkish Bath" more remarkable. In the first story of his collection *An Editor's Tales* published in the *St. Pauls Magazine*, Trollope recounts the narrative of a beleaguered editor and an aspiring contributor.<sup>27</sup> The meeting between editor and writer and, indeed, the bulk of the story takes place in a Turkish bath, facilitating the editor-narrator's constant emphasis on the near nakedness of himself and others. Beginning with a veiled reference to his state of undress, he mentions being "in that light costume and with that air of Arab dignity which are peculiar to the place" (3).<sup>28</sup> For the curious reader, the unnamed editor later specifies what type of light costume he means by describing how he strutted into the bath after "fastening the larger of [the two towels] satisfactorily round our own otherwise naked person" (5). Save for the towel wrapped round his waist, the editor is completely naked—a state of affairs which is not surprising giving the setting of a Turkish bath but is surprising for its textual setting in a mid-

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<sup>27</sup> *An Editor's Tales* was published in the *St. Pauls Magazine* beginning in 1869 before their collective publication in 1870.

<sup>28</sup> The Orientalism rampant throughout "The Turkish Bath" is worth noting, especially as it complicates ideas of decorum, power, and sexuality in this story, but it will not be my focus.



nineteenth-century periodical. Lest the reader forget the nudity of the characters, references to an individual with “his arms crossed on his naked breast” and to the man later revealed to be the aspiring writer as “stretching out his naked legs, and throwing back his naked shoulders” are made, begging the question of why Trollope included a naked editor and potential contributor at all (6, 10). While the nakedness of the editor certainly creates sexual tension in the story, it is also a figuration of a broader concern that was integral to nineteenth-century editing: that of intimacy between audience, editor, and author. This literary intimacy worked primarily through the circulation of celebrity and the celebrity author-editor of mid-nineteenth-century print culture.

Bearing in mind its implications for our understanding of the mid-nineteenth-century editor, let us look further at Trollope’s naked editor. First, this nudity plays the obvious role of sexualizing the narrator-editor. The sexual tension of the story has not gone unremarked by scholars. In *Postal Pleasures: Sex, Scandal, and Victorian Letters*, Kate Thomas connects Trollope’s representation of the Turkish bath and Victorian Turkish baths more broadly with cruising, and she points out that Trollope himself was a frequenter of the Jermyn Street Turkish baths (98). Mark Turner reads the entire short story collection as a type of soft pornography that draws on the rhetorical strategies of Victorian pornographic writing (198). Turner argues that the central dynamic in this collection is “the eroticization of the contributor for the pleasure of the editor” and also of “the reader [who] is identified with the editor and so participates and colludes in the pleasure of the editor” (200). While I agree with Turner that there are clear homoerotic overtones in “The Turkish Bath” and that this dynamic of sexual predation accounts well

for later stories in the series, much more is happening in this nakedness than the eroticization of the contributor. In fact, the editor is undressed, laid bare both literally and figuratively, in this tale in a way both shot through with and devoid of sexual tension. The physical body of the editor is naked, but this nudity is second to the bareness of the editor's personality and process. The draw of the story is the intimacy with the editor, which resonated with a culture whose imagination was increasingly caught up in literary celebrity. In that sense, the mid-nineteenth century was in fact a period of naked editors.

Although the setting of a Turkish bath may have occasioned the editor-narrator's nudity, it does not necessitate the short story's elaborate striptease. Trollope's narrator is not only unclothed, he is also performing the act of becoming naked. The editor-narrator writes that "with an absence of all bashfulness which soon grows upon one, we had divested ourselves of our ordinary trappings beneath the gaze of the five or six young men lying on surrounding sofas" (5). The young men are watching the editor, suggesting the power of the gaze; however, their odalisque-like reclining positions and their youth render these men less powerful and less of a sexual threat. Presented to the audience's view, they are subjects more seen than seeing; thus, they lose the power of the gaze even as they are gazing. While not described in detail, these men are offered for the scopical pleasure of the narrator-editor as he turns them into objects to be seen rather than active subjects.

The editor, whose action of disrobing, initially suggests vulnerability and potential sexual objectification, claims the power of viewer even as he is viewed. The editorial striptease is one with both extradiegetic and diegetic audiences. The young men,

the editor, and the author are not the only viewers in the scene of divestment in the Turkish bath. Another party, that of the readers, is also integral to the complex lines of sight in this scene. The editor's body is seen physically by the five or six men in the bath and seen textually by the reader. He is, then, the object of the gaze, but he is also deeply aware of his audiences, gazing back at both and daring his physical audience to look while controlling the gaze of his readers. In *Ways of Seeing*, John Berger contrasts the way in which men and women are portrayed in art, noting how "*men act and women appear*. Men look at women. Women look at themselves being looked at" (47).<sup>29</sup> This distinction, social and seemingly essential, launches Berger's reading of the female nude in visual art and advertising. Although Berger over-essentializes how men and women behave, the division is a productive one for considering the power relationships in Trollope's Turkish Bath scene. In her seminal essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" from 1975, Laura Mulvey outlines a similar visual dynamic. Mulvey's psychoanalytic reading of the cinematic gaze produced by the *mise-en-scène* builds on her understanding of the gendered dynamic of visual pleasure:

In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its phantasy on to the female form which is styled accordingly. In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and

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<sup>29</sup> I use Berger's work here as a window into visual conventions and gender representation; I do not mean to suggest that Berger's essentialism of how men as a group or women as a group function is entirely accurate or applies to all individual situations. I am more interested in the power dynamic of acting versus appearing than assigning gendered identities to these roles. Furthermore, the use of visual codes that have historically been associated with women and the feminine in this scene could also be due to the homoeroticism of the scene.

displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote *to-be-looked-at-ness*. (236)

This division of active/male and passive/female creates a power asymmetry between men and women through relationship to vision. This arrangement is complicated in “The Turkish Bath” when viewer and viewed are both men and the viewer claims an active presence.

Trollope’s editor-narrator transgresses this boundary of activity and passivity through the visual dynamic created in his story. He is explicitly being gazed upon and looking at himself being seen, but he is also gazing and making readers see as he sees. He “appears” in this scene, which seems to erode his power. However, unlike the lounging young men, the editor also resists the power dynamic of being seen by reminding the reader of his activeness as an observer: “We are much given to speculations on the characters and probably circumstances of those with whom we are brought in contact. Our editorial duties require that it should be so. How should we cater for the public did we not observe the public in all its moods?” (10-11). The narrator highlights his role as spectator, indirectly connecting to the eighteenth-century practice of titling magazines after a key watching figure as in the *Spectator* or the *Observer*. Furthermore, his vision is bifurcated in time. He is both the seeing subject in the moment in the Turkish bath and the remembering subject as narrator after the events of the story have transpired. As the narrating subject, the unnamed editor becomes the invisible, impossible “we” that sees himself as well as the young men in the bath. He both acts and

appears—taking on Berger’s masculine and feminine roles simultaneously, but this amorphous role is not particular to our narrator-editor.

The nineteenth-century editor, and especially the mid-nineteenth-century celebrity author-editor, was highly visible, but this visibility was complicated by the editorial role of being the unseen eye from late eighteenth-century periodicals. The high-profile editorial role is perhaps best displayed in Charles Dickens’s work in *Household Words* and *All the Year Round*. The editor is seen by the public in the prominent placement of Charles Dickens’s name on his midcentury magazines. Every other page bore his name clearly stating that these periodicals were conducted by Charles Dickens. His name and celebrity were part and parcel with the commodity that readers were purchasing, and his role was to appear before his audience as a commodity for consumption. However, his role was also to watch and know that audience. Appearance is insufficient; action is required.<sup>30</sup>

For Trollope’s editor-narrator, his activeness is also tied to reading and understanding the public correctly as he manipulates how the audience sees him. Secure in his social standing and the advantage of his greater age, the editor-narrator can participate in the striptease at the Turkish bath as in a playful game of revealing and concealing. Literally, the editor reveals his body as he also dons the towel to again conceal himself. This dynamic of revelation and concealment also functions more metaphorically as he describes his state of undress for readers but gives very little

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<sup>30</sup> For Dickens, this action was not solely textual. His famed readings offered him the space to appear bodily in front of his reading public.

information about his person. Readers are privy to his thoughts as his body is laid bare, but he tells his audience little about his personal life other than what is revealed by his decision to visit a Turkish bath, his profession, and the way in which he interacts with the would-be-contributor Molloy. The reader is in an intimate relation with the narrator, but this intimacy is one in which the reader also finds himself or herself kept at a distance by the editorial “we.” By using this editorial “we,” the unnamed editor-narrator never allows readers to see him as a singular person. Rather, he always functions as a representative of the magazine. The editor calls attention to this narrative choice early in the tale: “This little story records the experience of one individual man; but our readers, we hope, will without a grudge, allow us the use of the editorial we. We doubt whether the story could be told at all in any other form” (3). Trollope highlights here the great difference between “I had divested myself of my ordinary trappings” and “we had divested ourselves of our ordinary trappings.” The editor can play at nakedness because of the fine line between editor as the face of the magazine and editor as private individual. Using the first person plural allows him to evade being seen even as he presents himself as a spectacle.

Some mid-nineteenth-century readers, however, had difficulty discerning whom exactly they were seeing in Trollope’s editor-narrator. Many asked whether the editor was Trollope or the tales true. This ambiguity informed the critique of the story in the contemporary *Athenaeum* review of *An Editor’s Tales*:

In a single volume half-a-dozen tales are put together for lazy readers.

They are to literature, properly so-called, what an idle pen-and-ink outline,

dashed off at random, is to art. They are reading for sea-side loungers who cannot bestow much thought on what they read. There is nothing in the stories to put a strain upon their mental powers, and there is as little they will care to remember, less that they will not easily and comfortably forget. Such stories are as so many caprices. Genius has the prerogative of being capricious, but caprices do not necessarily imply that Genius exists with them. As experience of an editor's life, the tales tell us nothing trustworthy, for we are not informed where fiction ends or fact, if there be any, begins. Altogether, the book is hardly worthy of the author. (112)

The *Athenaeum* reviewer's confusion over the autobiographical resonances between Trollope and his narrator underscores the difficulty many contemporary readers felt when decoding the story. The merit of the tale for many lay in its trustworthiness as a source of autobiographical insight into Anthony Trollope, a celebrity author-editor and commodity for sale in the literary marketplace. Mark Turner indicates in *Trollope and the Magazines* that while many critics still read the tales as autobiographical: "Trollope himself tries to distance his own life from the fictional editor's through his particular title, 'an' editor, not 'the' editor, and he seems to be playing with the ambiguity and slippage in identity" (192). This playfulness reads as caprice to the *Athenaeum* reviewer. When the literary value of these stories becomes linked to whether readers can discern autobiographical "truth," the celebrity of the author becomes the primary value in the text.

The great promise of celebrity is the potential of a close, communal connection to a high-profile person. The celebration element of "celebrity" necessitates a community,

such as the community of readers Trollope engaged in his writings. While this community must feel authentically connected to the individual they celebrate, the celebrity plays the editorial game of revealing and concealing the self. In response to audience interest in the veracity of *An Editor's Tales*, Trollope teases his audience when describing the work in his *Autobiography*. He writes,

I do not think that there is a single incident in the book which could bring back to any one concerned the memory of a past event. And yet there is not an incident in it the outline of which was not presented to my mind by the remembrance of some fact:—how an ingenious gentleman got into conversation with me, I not knowing that he knew me to be an editor.

(Trollope *An Autobiography* 291-92)

In this description, Trollope conceals himself as he affirms that the stories are fictional even as he teases readers with the promise that every tale is based in fact. His aside about the ingenious gentleman recalls the meeting in the Turkish bath, but Trollope holds back where this actual conversation occurred, leaving open the possibility of the fictional naked editor being embodied in Trollope himself. This rhetorical move allows Trollope to position himself in an intimate relationship with his audience while still maintaining his privacy. While Trollope's editor-narrator is surprised at his own recognizability, Trollope refuses to let readers recognize or discount him from the editorial portrait in "The Turkish Bath." Through this play between coyness and intimacy with his audience, Trollope successfully constructs his celebrity persona without being consumed by it. Trollope's self-revelation remains a game because it can flit between fact and fiction.



The strategy of preserving privacy through ambiguity works in this case for Trollope, but it was only one among many possible ways midcentury author-editors, or frequently the Authors with the capitalized “A” Barthes described in “The Death of the Author,” attempted to navigate their relationship with readers. Although there were many mid-nineteenth-century celebrity author-editors and many configurations of relationships with readers, my focus in this chapter will be on William Makepeace Thackeray and Ellen Price Wood, known as Mrs. Henry Wood. These two celebrity author-editors are notable for their high profile and the lasting scholarly interest in their works, both literary and editorial. Furthermore, this pairing emphasizes how the difference in relationship with audience influences the editorial role and vice versa. The important distinction between Thackeray and Wood was their ability to construct editorial celebrity personae without sacrificing personal privacy. While Wood successfully maintained the public persona of a private and genteel Victorian lady, Thackeray found himself unable to cope with the pressures of editing in great part because of the difficulty of maintaining his privacy and setting boundaries. This pairing reveals that the literary celebrity that was developing in mid-nineteenth-century Britain was embroiled in a struggle between performance of persona and creating personal connection. Before turning to Thackeray and Wood’s particular brands of editing, let us consider how celebrity was developing in the mid-nineteenth-century literary marketplace.

## Celebrity and Mid-Nineteenth Century Periodical Editors

In periodical editing, one of the formative mid-century trends was the increasingly high profile of editors. Though some early nineteenth-century editors became infamous, notably for scathing reviews and dueling, using the celebrity status of an editor as a marketing technique was more characteristic of the second half of the nineteenth century. Tom Mole's 2009 edited volume *Romanticism and Celebrity Culture, 1750-1850*, has been influential in exploring the role of celebrity in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as it developed over a multitude of media. In the introduction, Mole traces a brief history of the term celebrity. He highlights the difference between its eighteenth-century meaning of a personal attribute, such as in Sam Johnson's use of the term in 1751 in his periodical *The Rambler*, and its nineteenth-century use of describing a celebrated person, such as in Dinah Mulock Craik's coining of this use in her 1849 novel *The Ogilvies*. According to Mole, in the mid-nineteenth century, "Celebrity was no longer something you had; it was something you were. But even as it emerged, celebrity came to be understood as a distinctly inferior variety of fame" (Mole 2). This shift was especially important for periodicals because while the superior varieties of literary fame were predominantly for the dead—for Shakespeare, for Chaucer, for Dante, for Homer—celebrity was for the living. Although this version of fame may have been perceived as more ephemeral and thus lower than other forms, its very ephemerality suited it well for the periodical market of quarterly, monthly, and weekly publishing. Its lowness attached it well to the literary form of the novel, which was still considered inferior to poetry.

Literary celebrity and personality, previously reaching great heights in Lord Byron, found further commodification in the periodical press with authors like Charles Dickens, William Makepeace Thackeray, Anthony Trollope, Mary Elizabeth Braddon, and Ellen Wood who all conducted magazines.<sup>31</sup> Periodical editors frequently leveraged literary celebrity derived from authorship to attract audiences, and some were employed more as figure-heads than editors. Even without celebrity, the author-editor, and more specifically, the novelist-editor was a canny choice in a market in which the novel in parts was king because he or she would be able to provide not only novels to publish serially but also professional contacts with other authors. While earlier nineteenth-century periodicals were connected to literary writing most often through reviews, the serial novel became the main fare of many periodicals in the mid-nineteenth century, and many editors found that the continuity of publishing a novel over a year or two drew greater audiences and increased consumer retention. George Saintsbury, in his ambitious 1896 history of nineteenth-century English literature, describes the mid-century change in periodical content in terms of reader appetite:

Although the popularity of the of the quarterly and monthly reviews did not exactly wane, and though some of the most brilliant work of the middle of the century—George Eliot’s novels, Kingsley’s and Froude’s essays, and the like—appeared in them, the ever fickle appetite of readers

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<sup>31</sup> Corin Throsby has written about the Byromania surrounding the famous Romantic poet in “Byron, Commonplacings and Early Fan Culture,” noting that Byron was one of the first people to review fan mail (228).

seemed to desire something else in shape, something different in price, style, and form. (378-79)

This description captures two of the important elements of the history of periodicals: first, the cyclic or trend-based nature of periodical culture itself and, second, the overlapping of many periodical paradigms while new periodicals are created but older periodicals continue to find markets.

The mobilization of literary celebrity in attracting audiences to periodicals by author-editors intertwined fiction writing and the periodical press more closely and commodified the celebrity editor as another saleable element of a magazine. This commodification of the celebrity served an important role in shaping nineteenth-century literary endeavors in conjunction with the development of capitalism and shifting ideas of the individual. Many theorists have noted the commodification of the individual that happens in the construction of celebrity. Jason Goldsmith identifies the tension between the individual and its commodification as a form of irony: “This is, of course, the irony of celebrity; it promotes the illusion of individuality while simultaneously manufacturing that unique personality as an alienable commodity” (Goldsmith 34). Individuality implies uniqueness and some sort of inalienable and irreducible pattern of personhood, and this seems diametrically opposed to the commodity—that which can be converted into exchange value. If the individual is unique, how, we might ask, can the individual be assigned exchange value and circulated in the marketplace? Therein lies the role of media. With literature, and especially with the interiority that was characteristic of the novel as a genre, the individual became more easily reproducible. The individual, be it

Richardson's fictitious titular heroine in *Pamela* in the mid-eighteenth century or Thomas de Quincey in his *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* in the early nineteenth century, was circulated in print.<sup>32</sup> The celebrity is both person and personality, the individual writ large and the commodity for sale.

This relationship, however, does not have to be conceived of in terms of dissonance. P. David Marshall identifies the celebrity as the public individual, a combination rather than an irony, in *Celebrity and Power: Fame in Contemporary Culture*:

Moreover, the celebrity as public individual who participates openly as a marketable commodity serves as a powerful type of legitimation of the political economic model of exchange and value—the basis of capitalism—and extends that model to include the individual. (x)

For Marshall, the discourse of celebrity is intimately connected to the ideology of capitalism. If the individual—the person—can be converted into a good with exchange value, anything can be rendered a commodity. This conversion of person to celebrity is possible because of a capitalistic worldview even as it works to legitimize that ideology. As this commodification of the person takes place, more emphasis is put on authenticity:

In all cases, celebrities are the production locale for an elaborate discourse on the individual and individuality that is organized around the will to

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<sup>32</sup> Note that while my focus here is circulation in print, this is only one discursive space for the construction of the individual in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The theater, images, waxworks, autographs, and even locks of hair are a few of the other means of circulation.

uncover a hidden truth, or, as Richard Dyer has developed it, to uncover the “real” person behind the public persona. (Marshall 4)

The authentic or the “real” becomes important because, on the one hand, it cannot be reproduced, but on the other hand, it is what makes any given circulation of a celebrity have value. In a way, the celebrity must have what Walter Benjamin has famously dubbed “aura” in “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction.”

In this seminal essay, Benjamin claims that manual reproduction allowed the original to maintain authority, but independence from the original and the ability of mechanical reproduction to “put the copy of the original into situations which could be out of reach for the original itself” mean that the work of art loses that authority when mechanically reproduced (1236). For Benjamin, the photograph loses the uniqueness of its presence in the fabric of tradition through its reproducibility; however, mechanical reproduction also emphasizes the worth of this aura. To support my claim that aura retains value even in a culture saturated with mechanical reproduction, let us consider the photography of Ansel Adams. His work has been mechanically reproduced widely, and the very medium of photography demands stages of reproduction.<sup>33</sup> With multiple prints generated from a negative, there is no “original” for photography, which makes the Ansel Adams Gallery website’s claims to sell Ansel Adams “originals” a complex one, begging the question of whether there can even be an Ansel Adams “original.” According to the website, there can and there is. The originals are the prints developed by Adams himself,

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<sup>33</sup> There are exceptions to this, such as a case in which the negative itself or the taking of the picture is being considered the art.

and through this celebrity contact and through the manual process of developing the photograph, the aura is reinscribed on these images. This authenticity, in turn, makes these prints worth substantially more as commodities with prices that can run upwards of \$50,000.

While Benjamin was writing in the twentieth century and had in mind the graphic and audio reproduction of images and sounds, I propose that we can read nineteenth-century celebrity in these terms as well. Unlike other versions of fame, celebrity relied heavily on the public's ability to connect with the celebrated man or woman on a personal level. Mole notes that "In its mediation through industrialized culture, in its branding of the individual's identity and in its intense fascination with a radically privatized subjectivity celebrity retooled earlier kinds of distinction for a modern media-saturated age" (Mole 6). Nineteenth-century print culture celebrity operated similarly to the mechanical reproduction of the work of art in the twentieth century insofar as it also allowed readers to see what might escape normal vision and it could bring the individual into situations normally outside his or her scope. Let us consider that most famous of midcentury literary celebrities: Charles Dickens. Dickens formed seemingly intimate relationships with his reading public on a weekly basis through his periodicals *Household Words* and *All the Year Round*. As an individual, it obviously would have been impossible for him to come into of thousands of homes each week to sit by the hearth and discuss matters close to his heart, such as the treatment of the poor, but, through the printed reproduction of his discourse, he did just that. The success of his magazines

depended in great part on the aura and authenticity of his celebrity persona as rendered in print.

The construction of celebrity identity relied on frequent meetings between the public and the celebrity, and these textual encounters were often facilitated by the periodicity of magazines, journals, reviews, and novels in parts. The consumption of celebrity through periodicals was both private and corporate: the imagined community of the readership of a celebrity author-editor's periodical would typically peruse the most recent number of the periodical in the space of the home. Charles Dickens emphasized this private connection in his first magazine, *Household Words*, whose title was culled from Henry V's "St. Crispin's Day" speech in Shakespeare's *King Henry the Fifth*:

Old men forget; yet all shall be forgot,  
But he'll remember with advantages  
What feats he did that day. Then shall our names,  
Familiar in his mouth as household words—  
Harry the King, Bedford and Exeter,  
Warwick and Talbot, Salisbury and Gloucester—  
Be in their flowing cups freshly remembered. (*King Henry the Fifth*  
5.3.49-55)

In this speech, literally rallying the troops for battle, Henry V discusses the lasting fame that heroic deeds will win. Indeed, *Household Words* had a hand in making Dickens's name very familiar in homes across Britain and America. In *All the Year Round*, Dickens again drew on Shakespeare, paraphrasing the following portion of *Othello*:



Her father loved me, oft invited me,  
Still questioned me the story of my life  
From year to year – the battles, sieges, fortunes,  
That I have passed. (*The Tragedy of Othello, the Moor of Venice* I.iii.127-  
30)

The personal connection between reader and magazine becomes even stronger in this allusion. Dickens's rewording of Othello's "the story of my life, / From year to year" becomes a promise of faithfulness in *All the Year Round*. Furthermore, Othello's intention behind telling the story of his life was to catch the attention of Desdemona. Fortunately for Dickens, his romance with his reading audience ended much better than ill-fated Othello and Desdemona's. The magazine becomes a medium in which Dickens as editor enters into the reader's private space to regale him or her with his stories, but the magazine also functions as a stage on which he performs this spectacle of private connection. As Jason Goldsmith has noted in connection with the recognizability of Madame Tussaud's waxworks, "Mass-media celebrity functions according to the principle of the simulacrum, adducing the private individual as public spectacle" (22). The celebrity functions as Baudrillard's hyperreal.

Charles Dickens was the most successful and notable celebrity author-editor of the Victorian age, and his model of celebrity was very influential throughout the period. Some author-editors consciously modeled themselves on his celebrity, such as sensation fiction writer Mary Elizabeth Braddon with her magazine *Belgravia*, which launched in November of 1866. Braddon's audience would have easily understood the homage its

title page paid to Dickens in indicating that the journal was “conducted by” M. E. Braddon. Unlike Dickens, however, Braddon did refrain from emblazoning her conducting role on every page of the magazine. Beth Palmer, in her 2011 book *Women’s Authorship and Editorship in Victorian Culture: Sensational Strategies*, argues that celebrity culture, especially the example of Charles Dickens in *Household Words*, provides an overlooked but important context for sensation literature. Because her focus is the 1860s and the rise of sensation fiction, it makes sense that Palmer focuses on Dickens’s celebrity editorship of *Household Words* (1850-59) and its continuation in *All the Year Round* (1859-1895); however, Dickens’s celebrity was established in the periodical press long before he launched these magazines.

Initially, Dickens gained recognition as “Boz.” Adopted as a pseudonym by Dickens in 1834, Boz was derived from the nasalization of the pet name he had for his brother Augustus according to Dickens’s close friend and biographer John Forster (104).<sup>34</sup> Boz, the jovial observer of society with an eye for detail, was quickly beloved of the British reading public and achieved broad recognizability. Under this name, Dickens published *Sketches by Boz*, the first of which appeared in the *Monthly Magazine* on December 1, 1833, and *The Pickwick Papers*, which ran between April 1836 and November 1837. Building on the work of Kathryn Chittick, Paul Schlicke argues in his 2005 article “Risen like a Rocket: The Impact of *Sketches by Boz*” that some of the important forces that allowed Dickens to build fame very quickly as Boz were the way

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<sup>34</sup> The name was Moses from the *Vicar of Wakefield*, and through nasalizing it as Boses and shortening it, the name Boz, the middle name of Dickens’s son Charles Boz Dickens, was created.

*Sketches* lent itself to being excerpted and the frequency of reviews and notices about *Sketches*:

More than thirty reviews greeted *Sketches by Boz*, first series, in the first three months following its publication on 8 February 1836. Many commented on the fact that most of the sketches had previously appeared in newspapers and magazines: their republication in a collection was greeted with enthusiasm as a sign of their popularity and enduring worth.

(Schlicke)

Dickens's developing literary celebrity was dependent on the technologies of print on the eve of the Victorian age, and the great frequency of writing about him and his early works helped create the celebrity he would later be able to leverage as the editor of *Bentley's Miscellany*, *Household Words*, and *All the Year Round*.

Dickens's first editorship as "Boz" came in the form of being the editor of *The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club*. By claiming to be the editor of this collection instead of initially taking a position of authorship, Dickens creates distance between himself and the writing. This move also lent an air of factualness to his sketches. In their introduction to *Literature in the Marketplace*, John O. Jordan and Robert L. Patten note that the "*Pickwick Papers* has often been identified as the work that ushered in the Victorian Era" (6). This makes the editorial pretext even more important, implying that this type of textual mediation is part and parcel with the Victorian Era itself. The line between authorship and editorship is an important one here. Editorship connects Dickens's narrative to the older novelistic tradition of Samuel Richardson with his

epistolary novels that claimed to be more edited than authored, a choice potentially influenced by how the editor of papers bore less responsibility to some degree for the work than an author, even if that authorship was an open secret. Unlike the editors of Richardson's novels, Dickens's Boz became an actual editor, as the first editor of *Bentley's Miscellany* on the heels of his success in the *Pickwick Papers* in November of 1836, but his pretense of editorship of the *Pickwick Papers* was abandoned by the time the novel was printed in volume form in 1837 (Wormald xiii).

Well after leaving *Bentley's* because he felt he was not given sufficient editorial control of the periodical, Dickens launched *Household Words* in 1850 and developed a reputation for strong editorial control. Beth Palmer writes, "Dickens constructed an editorial persona who seemed in charge of every syllable, and who was highly invested in his magazine's production because it was a weekly representation, or performance, of himself" (23). For Dickens's magazines to create the illusion of Dickens himself entering into his readers households all the year round, the magazine had to bear his stamp and speak in his voice. Although the "Conducted by Charles Dickens" emblazoned on every other page of his magazines worked to create this illusion of wholeness, the text itself also had to sound Dickensian. One moment of Dickens's anxiety over editorial control appears in the November 26, 1859 number of *All the Year Round*, which Dickens started after quarreling with the publishers of *Household Words*, Bradbury and Evans, when he felt that their contract which stated he was invested "with absolute control over the literary department and over all agreements, rates of payment and orders for payment" was not being upheld (qtd. in Kent 104). On this page,

Dickens's *Tale of Two Cities*, the novel which had opened the first number of the new magazine in the previous volume, concludes, and Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White* begins. What is notable for understanding editing is the space in between these two novels, space in which Dickens included the following editorial intrusion in the 26 November 1850 volume:

We purpose always reserving the first place in these pages for a continuous original work of fiction, occupying about the same amount of time in its serial publication, as that which is just completed. The second story of our series we now beg to introduce to the attention of our readers. It will pass, next week, into the station hitherto occupied by A Tale of Two Cities. And it is our hope and aim, while we work hard at every other department of our journal, to produce, in this one, some sustained works of imagination that may become a part of English Literature. (95)

Considering his readers had already had a decade to get accustomed to the set-up of *Household Words* and considering that its virtual clone, *All the Year Round*, was already in its second volume, this editorial intrusion seems unnecessary. The replacement of the finished serialized novel with another in the numbers to come seems amazingly intuitive and obvious. So, why does Dickens feel the need to intrude on the reader in this fashion? Certainly, this aside expresses on the editor's part that readers need additional guidance to navigate the printed paper, but more than that, Dickens is also expressing concern about celebrity and authorship. *A Tale of Two Cities* was listed with a by-line indicating that Dickens was the author. As it was more lucrative for Dickens to publish in parts

separate from a journal, his inclusion of his own novel in his magazines was a move meant to maintain and generate reader interest. His concern here is that by handing over the first place to Collins, who was unnamed as the author of this new novel in parts, the celebrity that has been attracting his audience would lose its pull. By using the editorial “we” in this transitional passage, Dickens calls it “the second story of *our* series,” claiming Collins’s work as part of his own celebrity. Again in the final line, the future is one in which the shadowy “we” will be producing works of imagination. By exploiting the ambiguity of the editorial “we,” Dickens simultaneously includes Collins and other writers and excludes them, absorbing them into his own name or celebrity and thus making them more marketable.

Dickens’s editorial intrusion in the last months of 1859 emphasizes the importance of connections between celebrity authors, editors, and audiences in the upcoming decade, especially the way in which magazines connected with and attracted audiences through the use of celebrity author-editors. Editorship served more and more as a means by which novelists could connect with their reading audiences, not only through their own writing but also through their selection and guidance of others’ writing. On the heels of Dickens’s editorial intrusion, William Makepeace Thackeray would bring his first volume of the *Cornhill Magazine* to the British reading public in January of 1860, and Ellen Wood would purchase the *Argosy* later in the decade. These magazines opened the space for Thackeray and Wood to navigate and construct their celebrity personae. Both author-editors engaged their audiences through personal connection, and both magazines were successful. However, *Cornhill* went on to success after Thackeray

had left the helm of the magazine; whereas, Wood's leadership was longer lasting and more effective. While Wood maintained her personal space while still connecting with her audience, Thackeray struggled eventually unsuccessfully with navigating his relationship with the *Cornhill's* readership, especially those readers most keen to contribute to the magazine.

### **William Makepeace Thackeray and the *Cornhill Magazine***

Although he remained fascinated with magazine work throughout his literary career, William Makepeace Thackeray had bad luck with the periodical press. In 1833 Thackeray's purchase of the *National Standard* went awry, and the periodical failed after about a year. Only a year after Thackeray's stepfather Major Carmichael Smyth purchased the *Constitutional and Public Ledger* in 1836 and employed Thackeray as the Paris correspondent; the newspaper failed as well leaving Thackeray without much of his private fortune.<sup>35</sup> Thackeray succeed far more as a contributor to the periodical press: his novel *Catherine* was serialized in *Fraser's Magazine* from 1839 to 1840, and he contributed writing and illustrations to *Punch* starting in 1842. His editing work at the *Cornhill Magazine* combined success and failure. Launched in 1860, the magazine itself was immensely successful, but unlike his contemporary and literary rival Charles Dickens, Thackeray soon found the work of editing weighing too heavily on him, and after only a year and a half, Thackeray resigned his post at the helm of the *Cornhill*.

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<sup>35</sup>Writing later in the nineteenth century, Charles Johnson pinpointed this failure as the impetus that "was destined to convert Thackeray from a man of fortune and *dilettante* writer for newspapers and magazines into an actual professional man of letters, and thus into one of the greatest writers of the century" (29).

While this resignation bespeaks editorial failure, Thackeray's connection with the magazine was also marked by important successes, not the least of which was the canny use of Thackeray's fame in marketing the monthly. Many of his contemporaries and subsequent critics have called him a figurehead editor, and I do not contend that his role was as hands-on as Dickens's. It was not. Instead, I argue that Thackeray's editorial distance was pivotal to establishing the celebrity author-editor as a Victorian figure. In Thackeray's editorship, the commodification of celebrity is less obscured by the business of editing. While his literary fame was one of the biggest contributions Thackeray made to *Cornhill*, he also contributed a strong concern for the literary reputation and quality of the magazine.

Begun by publisher-proprietor George Smith in 1860 and running until 1975, the distinctively orange and black-covered *Cornhill Magazine* was successful in the mid-Victorian market. R. G. Cox claims that "The most important magazine of the latter part of the nineteenth century was undoubtedly the *Cornhill*." The success of the magazine is especially apparent in its circulation. According to Andrew Maunder,

Estimates vary as high as 120,000, but sales of the first *Cornhill* stood at 110,000, although this settled down to around 87,500 at the end of 1860. ...Although the figures had dropped to about 20,000 by 1870, this original circulation has left its trace in public and university libraries all over the world, a reminder of *Cornhill*'s centrality. (241)

The magazine was affordably priced at a shilling, allowing for a broad circulation. This price was comparable to a part of a serially published novel, and offered its readers not



only a portion of at least one novel but also illustrated essays, poetry, and short fiction (Eddy 8). *Cornhill* has been remembered for its literariness, and its literary success is apparent from its impressive list of contributors: Anthony Trollope, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Alfred Lord Tennyson, Elizabeth Gaskell, George Henry Lewes, George Augustus Sala, George Macdonald, Matthew Arnold, John Ruskin, and of course, William Makepeace Thackeray—a veritable who’s who of the Victorian literary scene. Its list of contributing illustrators was also impressive, featuring such hands as John Everett Millais. This attention to artistry, both verbal and visual, combined with attention to the market created a affordable high quality literary product.<sup>36</sup> Leonard Huxley, in 1922, commented that “As a work of art, [*Cornhill*] won universal admiration in 1860, and if to-day we are critical of its subsidiary part... we are still conscious of the great beauty of its chief features” (qtd. Maunder 242). Nearly a century after Huxley’s review, the magazine still inspires readers, and this legacy is one of the important markers of its success. The two issues of the *Victorian Periodical Review* devoted to *Cornhill* in Fall of 1999 and Spring of 2000 stand as a testament to the magazine’s accomplishments. Whether or not *Cornhill* was successful is not particularly debatable, but the question of what made this periodical flourish, especially when its first editor has been often termed weak, remains more open. While many factors contributed to the periodical’s success,

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<sup>36</sup> This positive consideration of *Cornhill*’s artistic worth was not, however, the consensus of mid-nineteenth-century critics. For a description of negative receptions of *Cornhill*, see Maunder, Andrew. “‘Discourses of Distinction’: The Reception of the *Cornhill Magazine*, 1859-60.” *Victorian Periodicals Review*. 32.3, *Cornhill Magazine* (Fall 1999). 239-258. JSTOR. Web. 26 July 2011.

two of the most important were Thackeray's celebrity and Smith's sense of the midcentury literary market.

The biggest attraction of the *Cornhill*'s first number was William Makepeace Thackeray, whom George Smith recruited as editor. In his 1901 retrospective article "Our Birth and Parentage," Smith recalls how "Thackeray's name was one to conjure with" (106). The language of conjuring asks *fin-de-siècle* readers to imagine mid-century celebrity as a supernatural phenomenon that was able to magically call an audience into being. Significantly, it is Thackeray's name that can be conjured with, not Thackeray himself who is performing the conjuring. For Smith the celebrity author-editor is a commodity, a sort of philosopher's stone that will create journalistic gold from the baser metals of unsigned articles. With this view, the business qualifications of the editor become less important than his or her celebrity. As Anthony Trollope put it, "Thackeray had become big enough to give a special *éclat* to any literary exploit to which he attached himself" (50). In great part, this was due to Thackeray's celebrity, but the particular brand of Thackeray's literary fame was also key. Judith Fisher contends that "Smith's choice of Thackeray as a novelist and then editor was based as much on Thackeray's reputation as a gentleman who wrote like a gentleman as on his popularity" (2). Indeed, the two were intimately connected. That Thackeray was a celebrity and was popular with audiences mattered greatly, but what type of literary celebrity he cultivated was equally important.

Smith had initially considered Thackeray only as a potential contributor and centerpiece; however, after Smith's offers of editorship to Tom Hughes and other

unnamed potential editors were rejected, he decided to offer the position to Thackeray, a decision of which Smith was quite proud years later:

One morning, just as I had pulled up my horse after a smart gallop, that good genius which has so often helped me whispered into my ear, “Why should not Mr. Thackeray edit the magazine, you yourself doing what is necessary to supplement any want of business qualifications on his part? You know that he has a fine literary judgment, a great reputation with men of letters as well as with the public, and any writer would be proud to contribute to a periodical under his editorship.” (Smith 108)

Smith couches his account of the decision to offer Thackeray the editorship of *Cornhill* in the language of reputation and literary quality rather than celebrity. Thackeray’s celebrity persona differed from someone like Dickens’s persona because where Dickens was characterized by his role as an entertainer, Thackeray’s persona was constructed around the literariness of his writing and his ventures.<sup>37</sup> This distinction extended to the magazines edited by each literary lion: Dickens’s *Household Words* and *All the Year Round* were characterized as popular fiction engaging a broad audience as was indicated by their weekly publication; whereas, Thackeray’s *Cornhill Magazine* had more literary aspirations as a monthly.<sup>38</sup> This literary ethos, however, does not obscure the importance

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<sup>37</sup> For a larger discussion of Dickens as entertainer see Schlicke, Paul. *Dickens and Popular Entertainment*. 1985. NY: Routledge, 2003. Print.

<sup>38</sup> While the choice of daily, weekly, monthly, and quarterly publishing schedules is not a definite indicator of the class of the target audience or the literariness of the venture, publishing schedule does offer insight into how mid-nineteenth century periodicals were branding themselves and what competition they would face.

of celebrity in Smith's choice of editor. Debating what to title the new magazine, Smith had even considered *Thackeray's Magazine*, partially because *Smith's Magazine* would have been too general a title but also in deference to Thackeray's recognizability and popularity. Instead, the magazine was christened for its place of publication.

Thackeray was the public face of the *Cornhill Magazine*, but Smith represented himself as the power behind it. Describing his idea for the magazine as a sort of epiphany, a "plan [that] flashed upon me suddenly," Smith portrays his idea in terms similar to John Dunton's stroke of inspiration that inspired his query-based *Athenian Mercury* (106). Whether the idea for *Cornhill* struck as an electrical shock of inspiration or the idea was more gradually sculpted and this description worked to give the magazine an aura of romance, Smith creates an origin myth for *Cornhill*. It was born of the moment and of the individual, and Smith casts himself as the Romantic genius, the publisher-proprietor who is also artist. This artistic portrayal, however, was second to Smith's understanding of himself as the business side of the venture that Thackeray lacked. Indeed, Smith confirmed that Thackeray never had a head for business in his work with the *Cornhill*: "I cannot truly say that he was, in a business sense, a good editor, and I had to do some part of the work myself. This was a pleasure for me, for I had the greatest possible admiration and affection for him" (123-4). The recommendation of one's work as an editor is not sufficient without literary celebrity and audience recognition by the mid-nineteenth century, and Thackeray's editorship highlights that some publisher-proprietors were willing to sacrifice the former for the latter.

Literary celebrity alone was not enough to make *Cornhill* a success. George Smith, the magician conjuring with Thackeray's name was also vital, and the *Cornhill's* publisher-proprietor was important in his own right. According to Spencer L. Eddy Jr., Smith was "perhaps the most important Victorian publisher" (1). The ability to read the market and anticipate its needs are some of the skills editors needed to keep periodicals afloat in the nineteenth century, and Smith repeatedly demonstrated this ability. No small measure of business success followed Smith: "Smith's success as a publisher may be attributed to his financial acumen, his instinct for identifying public taste and publishing trends, and his genuine personal interest in books and their writers" (Eddy 2). Perhaps the same insight and risk taking that lead Smith to publish Charlotte Brontë's now-beloved novel *Jane Eyre* also attended his vision for *Cornhill*. In her article "Introduction *The Cornhill Magazine: Celebrating Success*," Barbara Quinn Schmidt points out that much of the business savvy of the *Cornhill Magazine* was contributed by George Smith's attention to the marketability of personality. While Thackeray's name was the most important in establishing *Cornhill*, big name contributors were also imperative: "Thus [George Eliot's novel *Romola*] added prestige even if many subscribers thought it ponderous. Smith understood what sold a magazine or a book: quality, innovation, appearance, popularity, and the dependability of a brand name" (Schmidt 205). Eliot's novel, which did not engage much of the magazine's audience still contributed to the brand name of the magazine and its success. Rather than reading Thackeray as only a figurehead editor and Smith as the power behind the magazine, I propose we read this relationship as a collaborative editorship in which Thackeray was in

charge of literary decisions and Smith the business side of the endeavor, and though Thackeray did not show much promise in this element of editing, the collaboration between the two men made the *Cornhill* work.

The success of the *Cornhill* itself, however, stands in contradistinction to the apparent failure of Thackeray as editor. In his biography of Thackeray for John Morley's English Men of Letters series, fellow author-editor Anthony Trollope characterized the *Cornhill* as "the last great work of [Thackeray's] life": "It will be well remembered still how much *The Cornhill* was talked about and thought of before it first appeared, and how much of that thinking and talking was due to the fact that Mr. Thackeray was to edit it" (50). Despite his praise of Thackeray's contributions to the *Cornhill*, Trollope's negative opinion of Thackeray as editor is well-known and has been influential:

The magazine was a great success, but justice compels me to say that Thackeray was not a good editor. As he would have been an indifferent civil servant, an indifferent Member of Parliament, so was he perfunctory as an editor. It has sometimes been thought well to select a popular literary man as an editor; first, because his name will attract, and then with an idea that he who can write well himself will be a competent judge of the writings of others. The first may sell a magazine, but will hardly make it good; and the second will not avail much, unless the editor so situated be patient enough to read what is sent to him. (54)

Trollope judiciously phrases his criticism of Thackeray in the negative ("not a good editor") and in terms of "indifference," but his indictment of Thackeray as editor is clear

in his proclamation that Thackeray was “perfunctory as an editor” even though Thackeray’s editorials suggest that he was a very earnest and engaged editor even if he struggled with the business elements. By distinguishing between the success of selling many copies and having a long run from the success of making a magazine a high quality product, Trollope parses the popular and literary the and privileges the latter.

In the same section, Trollope describes the general practice of choosing editors for their literary celebrity while implying that Thackeray’s failure as an editor grew of the Smith’s faulty assumptions that fame and taste were sufficient for an editor. Trollope solidifies the connection between the selection of a popular literary man as editor and Smith’s hiring of Thackeray by returning immediately to him after laying out criteria for a good magazine editor:

Of a magazine editor it is required that he should be patient, scrupulous, judicious, but above all things hard-hearted. I think it may be doubted whether Thackeray did bring himself to read the basketfuls of manuscripts with which he was deluged, but he probably did, sooner or later, read the touching little private notes by which they were accompanied,—the heartrending appeals, in which he was told that if this or the other little article could be accepted and paid for, a starving family might be saved from starvation for a month. (54)

Trollope’s criteria for a magazine editor—patience, scrupulousness, judiciousness, and hardness—all stress the business side of the work. As an editor himself, working on the *St. Pauls Magazine* between 1866 and 1870, Trollope would have been intimately

familiar with how an editor should conduct his or her magazine, and his charge that Thackeray was lacking implies that Trollope considers himself more successful as an editor and thus able to stand in judgment of Thackeray. Celebrity can accomplish commercial success, but the author-editor is not necessarily equipped to make a good volume according to Trollope because the editor needs to be “hard-hearted” or, rendered differently, needs to be a craftsman concerned most about the final product. The implication is that the rigor an author brings to his or her work is not necessarily something that he or she can easily apply to others. The editor role needs to be separated from general human kindness, and this separation is one that Thackeray found especially difficult.

Trollope’s portrayal of Thackeray as an ineffective editor, however, ignores some of the strengths of his work with *Cornhill*. Thackeray only edited *Cornhill* for a little over two years from January 1860 to May 1862, but his influence was strong, especially in setting the literary tone of the magazine, and his association with Smith’s magazine was long remembered. Robert Colby points out Thackeray’s acumen at soliciting manuscripts:

In his memoir of Thackeray, Trollope left the impression that Thackeray was an indifferent and perfunctory editor, but the record indicates vigorous enterprise, at least at the outset. Thackeray’s very recruitment of Trollope, insisting not only on a full-length work instead of the offered short stories and moreover an ‘English story’ rather than his novel in progress *Castle Richmond*, set in Ireland, compelling him to produce by



‘quick-roasting’ that ‘saddle of mutton’ called *Framely Parsonage*. (214

“Into the Blue Water”)

By negotiating for *Framely Parsonage*, Thackeray demonstrated awareness of his audience and the tenor he wished to set in the magazine.

Thackeray also kept a keen eye on the expectations and sensibilities of an audience including women and children. As he indicates in the prospectus for *Cornhill*, Thackeray was very aware that “At our social table, we shall suppose the ladies and children always present” (Thackeray qtd. in Smith 110). At times this broad audience meant that Thackeray’s artistic decisions were restricted, and the responsibility Thackeray felt for cultivating this reading public often led him to use different criteria for selecting material for *Cornhill* than he might use when assessing the literary merits of a work. Judith L. Fisher has noted the decisions made by Thackeray as editor were quite different from those made by Thackeray as author:

The editor espoused staunch imperialist politics and printed essays expounding the cultural, intellectual, moral, and military superiority of the British. The author characterized these Briton heroes as a debauched earl, hypocritical social climbers, a doctor who swindles everyone including his own son, a horrific harridan of a mother-in-law, a self-centered, bumptious oaf for a protagonist, and a worldly *ennyté* narrator. (7)

Furthermore, Fisher notes that he rejected things as too sexually permissive while writing similar or even more scandalous material himself; he famously declined Elizabeth Barrett Browning’s submission “Lord Walter’s Wife.” As editor, he had to censor inappropriate

material, and Barrett Browning's rejected poem stands not only as a testament to the tension between Thackeray's personal artistic sentiments and his editorial eye but also as an example of a case in which Thackeray abstained from the editor's blue pen. In a March 1860 letter to Smith, Thackeray wrote describing his inability to publish Elizabeth Barrett Browning's new poem "Lord Walter's Wife":

I doubt whether the public will bear being told that God is the author of all evil: whether the sweet Wife in thee [sic] description is not too sensual a bed-fellow. The poem is so good I should not like to offer to geld: and without that operation I dont think we ought to use it. (qtd. Colby 215 "Into the Blue Water")

The high compliment Thackeray pays to Barrett Browning's poem is couched in terms of masculinity, and in this analogy, the poem's manhood stands in for its artistic power that would be lost through domestication. Thackeray equates censorship with emasculation and domestication. Here, Thackeray found himself in an editorial bind: the sensuality of the wife and the spiritual questions raised by the poem make it unfitted for the magazine presumably because of the women and children always present at the periodical table. His abstaining from editing this particular poem makes visible the tension between his artistic and editorial standards. While his inability to ask Barrett Browning to sacrifice her aesthetic vision in "Lord Walter's Wife" lost *Cornhill* a literary celebrity's poem, this editorial move actually bespeaks an important awareness audience.

Thackeray's greatest weakness as an editor was personal rather than professional: he lacked the hard-heartedness Trollope identified as one of the markers of a successful

editor. Thackeray's difficulty with navigating the tension between the more personal and impersonal elements of the role was apparent early in his editing career. Concluding the July 1860 number of *Cornhill*, the fifth of Thackeray's renowned Roundabout Papers, "Thorns in the Cushion," features a lament over the pains associated with the editorial chair, specifically the emotional pleas for assistance in the form of publication and payment. These "thorns" cleverly disguised as letters arrive at Thackeray's personal residence despite the instructions for any manuscripts to be addressed to the office in Cornhill. Prospective contributors' choice to send letters to his residence rather than office demonstrates their desire to connect personally rather than professionally. The reader-contributors seem to have imagined this celebrity author-editor as a friend and confidante, using emotional appeals sent to his home address. In one example thorn Thackeray includes anonymously in this Roundabout Paper, the writer of the thorn implores Thackeray for his help:

If I could add but a *little* to our means by my pen, many of my poor invalid's wants might be supplied, and I could procure for her comforts to which she is now a stranger. Heaven knows it is not for want of *will* or for want of *energy* on my part, that she is now in ill-health, and our little household almost without bread. Do--do cast a kind glance over my poem, and if you can help us, the widow, the orphans will bless you! (126)

The young lady's tone in this letter is unprofessional, and her heart-felt emotional appeal is more similar to a letter requesting funds from wealthy relative than an offer of a manuscript to a perspective employer. Though it is impossible to discover all of the

motivations that combined to drive this young woman to apply to Thackeray's kindness, one is evident in this letter: the letter-writer feels a sense of connection with the editor.

The young letter-writer's comfort with Thackeray likely grew out of the familiarity cultivated by literary celebrity and a magazine with a shared social table. As a male celebrity, Thackeray would have been cast more in the role of provider and protector than a female celebrity would have been at the time, and the young poet's plea was an attempt to draw on the pressure for Thackeray to act as provider. Considering gender inscribed constraints on celebrity in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Linda Zionkowski argues that

Writing at a time when the vigorous production and marketing of such texts made increasing numbers of readers familiar with their names, their works and ultimately a version of their private lives, male authors faced the problem of compromising their masculine status by becoming a source of entertainment for audiences; in accepting this role as commodified objects of pleasure, they risked adopting the position their culture traditionally allotted to women. (169)

Thackeray preserves his masculine role by functioning as a sort of household head, responsible for the wellbeing of readers and contributors alike. Would-be contributors write to him asking him for favors in a way that casts him not as a commodified object of pleasure but rather as a patron and provider.

Thackeray's response to the emotional appeals for his editorial provision is itself an emotional appeal. In "Thorns in the Cushion," Thackeray publicly rebukes this type

of author and entreats would-be letter writers to stop sending him these “thorns.” Writing in the personal register, Thackeray explains that he is sad to disappoint these would-be contributors but generally the prose they submit is unacceptable for publication. Flattery too, he says will not work: “A very common way with these petitioners is to begin with a fine flummery about the merits and eminent genius of the person whom they are addressing. But this artifice, I state publicly, is of no avail” (126). Why, we might ask, do the readers see Thackeray as a personal friend or relation rather than as an impersonal editorial “we”? The answer lies partially at least in Thackeray’s primary role: that of author. The relationship between author and audience is an intimate one, especially in the case of an author who privileges omniscient narration. Thackeray’s *Vanity Fair*, for instance shows through satire and the puppet master how he believes society should be organized and should function. By inviting the reader into the intimate activity of watching others’ lives and slipping together into so many consciousnesses, the writer creates an intimate relationship between, in this case, himself and the reader. To a great extent, Thackeray is the naked editor of Trollope’s “Turkish Bath,” and some readers responded to this intimacy with their thorns.

Continuing his Roundabout Paper by exploring another kind of thorn, Thackeray designates these “bludgeons,” letters that quibble with the decisions he has made as a writer, for instance one epistle-writer felt the need to quibble with his portrayal of the ballet. Thackeray’s response again is a personal appeal that supports the audience connection at the heart of celebrity. In this portion of the reflection, Thackeray invites the reader into his private life to entreat aspiring contributors to stop sending thorns:

“Last month we sang the song of glorification, and rode in the chariot of triumph. It was all very well. . . . But now that the performance is over, my good sir, just step into my private room, and see that it is not all pleasure—this winning of success” (123).

Thackeray’s is not the imperial “we” of the editor. It is the inviting we of editor and reader riding together in triumph, perhaps close enough for the editor to lean over and whisper some secret of success and celebration in the reader’s ready ear, barely audible over the roar of the crowd. Thackeray then drops the editorial third person and invites the reader into “my private room.” He opens space for the reader to understand his struggles. Rather than take a distant and impersonal approach to the pleas of his readers, Thackeray draws on the personal connection inspired by his literary celebrity to entreat the readers to consider his predicament. Unfortunately, this strategy proved ineffective. In the next of the Roundabout Papers, Thackeray indicates that though his correspondents had actually begun labeling their envelopes “no thorn,” the presence of thorns amongst his letters persisted, perhaps growing out of the strong connection that readers felt with the naked editor. Thackeray’s emotional appeal to readers, which seems and likely was so heartfelt, was in part his editorial failure. He fails as an editor at this junction because he does not properly manage his celebrity in a way that will allow him to act hardheartedly as Trollope describes or in a way to create the professional distance between himself and his audience. By inviting his readers into his private room in this Roundabout Paper, he only confirms the intimate relationship between himself and readers, inviting each to feel as though his or her letter is no thorn.

The combination of these two types of thorns perpetually filling up his mail stack was fatiguing for Thackeray, and the emotional exhaustion of perpetually being asked to rescue potential contributors from ruin was ultimately one of the driving forces behind Thackeray's decision to relinquish the editorial chair. In March of 1862, Thackeray disagreed with Smith and resigned. According to D. J. Taylor, "The specific cause is uncertain, but it seems to have had something to do with Thackeray's inability to cope with day-to-day editorial duties. He told his *Punch* cronies that what he really needed was a co-editor: 'fact is, I don't do Editorial work – which is to read and judge, not to write'" (Taylor 432). In his final resignation letter on March 6, 1862, Thackeray writes to Smith,

My daughters are for a compromise. They say: "It is all very fine Sir Charles Taylor telling you to do so and so. Mr. Smith has proved himself your friend always." *Bien*. It is because I wish him to remain so that I and the magazine had better part company. Good-bye and God bless you and all yours. (qtd. in Ritchie 4)

Robert Colby interprets Thackeray's problem as one of approaching his magazine as if it were an eighteenth-century gentleman's review, which varied substantially from the faster-paced nineteenth-century miscellany ("Goose Quill and Blue Pencil" 218). Part of this distinction, though, is not only in pace as Colby points out, but I contend that a pivotal difference is the operation of celebrity in the eighteenth and nineteenth-century models and the greater distance between the eighteenth century editor and his audience.

*Cornhill* continued long after Thackeray's editorship, but the impact he left on the magazine was long lasting, and its association with his celebrity was sufficient for Smith

to conjure with the name William Makepeace Thackeray even after Thackeray himself had left the position. After the resignation of its first editor, *Cornhill* was edited by a committee including George Smith, Frederick Greenwood, George Henry Lewes, and Edward Dutton Cook; only in 1871 did the editorship this revert to a single editor in the person of Leslie Stephen (Finkelstein and Patten 153-54).<sup>39</sup> Thackeray's daughter, Lady Ritchie, reminisced in her article "The First Editor; And the Founder" about her father's editorship in the special Jubilee Number in January 1910, fifty years after the magazine's inception. She writes of the Cornhill Dinners: "When the time came for my Father to leave the Editorial Chair these meetings went on, and he, too, still belonged to the good company, only he felt the great relief from the straining and recurrent cares of editorship" (4). He could return to the higher degree of freedom and less complicated relationship with the reader provided by authorship without editorship. As an author, cultivating his celebrity and connection to his audience would not be accompanied by the thorns of an audience who threw themselves on his editorial kindness.

This is not, however, the whole picture of the *Cornhill*'s early leadership; one element too frequently overlooked is the female support. Notably, while George Smith's support in the person of his wife is rarely discussed in critical accounts of the *Cornhill* or in nineteenth or early-twentieth century accounts of the magazine, Lady Ritchie singles

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<sup>39</sup> In his article in the Jubilee Number, W. E. Norris recollects Stephen as an editor who "was not indulgent" and demanded the same "painstaking" work from his contributors that he demanded of himself. Norris ends his tribute to Stephen with a turn to social class: "and Stephen's modest hope that he might be able to 'live and die like a gentleman' was assuredly not disappointed," which suggests that subsequent editors may have felt the pressure to live up to the standard set by Thackeray (50).



her out for praise in the Jubilee number of *Cornhill*. Ritchie describes Elizabeth Murray Smith as having a sort of power in femininity:

whose voice, never unheeded, whose influence, always counting for so much, was that of the tender wife and helpmate, the thoughtful companion of George Smith's far-reaching life of generous achievement; to whom he ever turned and his children with him, and of whom we all think with affection and grateful trust as we celebrate the jubilee of the old "Cornhill." (1)

The friendship between the two women is made even clearer when Elizabeth Smith mentions Lady Ritchie in a later commemorative article. Taking up the journalists pen, "Mrs. George Smith" writes only a page and claims that her "memories are not needed to add to its history; but I am glad to have the opportunity of recording my grateful remembrance of those kind and steadfast friends who have carried on the high traditions of the early 'Cornhill' through these many years, and of those who have now marked its Jubilee with words of generous praise" (70). Even though traces of her role in the *Cornhill* survive, much is accessible only to the imagination.

All in all, William Makepeace Thackeray was too naked an editor to survive the combination of his emotional connection to his audience and their constant requests for his help. His celebrity persona, which was associated with being a literary gentleman, invited would-be contributors to throw their prose on his mercy and to expect his *noblesse oblige*. He his editorship did not last even two years; however, his editorship helped establish the importance of literary celebrity in mid-Victorian periodical editing.

Although Thackeray's editorship could be seen as a failure of sorts in which he discovers that he was not well prepared for the role editor, the lasting legacy of his short time as editor bespeaks the vast importance of literary celebrity to mid-century periodical editing. The magazine did not, as his other periodical ventures did, fail, and his legacy was still being celebrated half a century later. The staying power of the *Cornhill* was first and foremost due to audience support and the financial means to continue publishing, but it was also the result of a collaborative network of support that made the removal of the editor something for which those associated with the magazine could compensate.

### **Mrs. Henry Wood and the *Argosy***

Another important celebrity author-editor of the mid-nineteenth century was Ellen Wood, known in print as Mrs. Henry Wood, whose literary celebrity derived from her penning of *East Lynne*, one of the most popular novels of the nineteenth-century. Jennifer Phegley has identified Wood's magazine, the *Argosy*, as a journal based on the *Cornhill* model; however, the similarities are more in the form of the magazine and the celebrity of the editor than in the form of editorship. Unlike Thackeray who shared the editorial duties with his publisher-proprietor, Wood was both proprietor and editor of the *Argosy* beginning in 1867. Wood successfully navigated the personal and professional space of the editorial role unlike Thackeray who found it an impossible tension. Wood's editorial ability was due in part to business sense and a strong ability to read the demands of the public well, but her careful management of her celebrity persona was equally important. Unlike Thackeray's nakedness in *Cornhill*, Wood's voice in the *Argosy* was characterized by decorum and gentlewomanly reticence. The public persona of Mrs.

Henry Wood, an invalid and committed evangelical, differed greatly from Thackeray's as a literary gentleman.

Considering Wood solely on the basis of her gender would be an immensely reductive picture of her editing work; however, ignoring the role of gender in shaping Wood's particular brand of editing and some of the changes in the periodical press during the mid-nineteenth century would be to overlook a key facet of both. The mid-nineteenth century was the period in which more women became editors of magazines though the role was still predominantly male. In her foreword to *Blue Pencils and Hidden Hands: Women Editing Periodicals, 1830-1910*, Ellen Gruber Garvey claims that "Magazine careers, regardless of the magazine's content, attracted middle class women" (xv), explaining that the aura of gentility that surrounded much of the periodical press was part of its strong appeal to women. Though Garvey and Harris's volume of essays focuses on American female editors, this trend, which is a larger one than the feminists first thought when beginning to notice women's role in periodical editing, was also evident in Great Britain during the nineteenth century. In "Editing *Blackwood's*; or, What Do Editors Do?" Robert Patten and David Finkelstein echo this focus on female magazine work and gentility:

Like Ellen Wood, many other women editors were hired not to deal with the business of setting type, obtaining advertising, arranging page make-up, stimulating sales, or addressing politics. Instead they were hired to provide copy, generally copy of a particular sort – for example, Puseyite, sensational, didactic, or sentimental – to find others similarly inclined, and

to orient their periodicals to the imagined interests of developing cohorts of female and increasingly urban consumers, be they suffragettes, homemakers, charity workers, shop girls, or ladies of leisure. (158)

The common thread is the distinction between the serious work that was coded masculine—the literary, the philosophical, and the business of the press—and the less serious work that was seen as better suited to women—the sentimental, the sensational, the art of the press. Wood, unlike the other female editors Patten and Finkelstein mentioned, was not actually hired by the magazine; she purchased it. Even so, she wrote a large portion of the magazine, and providing this type of gentlewomanly copy was one of her primary roles in the periodical. The perception of some copy as “feminine” and the association of women and the press in its many forms that Ellen Gruber Garvey notes could explain how Wood was able to preserve a genteel, domestic public persona while also managing a magazine.

In some cases, women did hold editorial positions with more “serious” literary magazines. For instance, Marian Evans, before her novelistic career as George Eliot, worked with John Chapman as editor of the *Westminster Review* starting in 1852: “At this stage [1852-54] the bulk of Marian’s responsibilities consisted of coaxing and pruning the work of others. She came up with the topics, advised Chapman which writer to commission, proof-read the copy and followed its progress safely through the press” (Hughes 111). In her capacity as editor, Eliot was both anonymous and unpaid, save for room and board she received living with Chapman, giving her editing the aura of “no pay” and, as Francis Jeffrey’s phrase went, maintaining the illusion of the magazine

being “all gentlemen.” According to Katherine Hughes, “Advanced thinkers were not so advanced at mid-century that they were able to accept a woman at the head of a distinguished publication like the *Westminster*” (107). Many mid-century female editors worked with the more popular and less prestigious sensational periodicals, such as the *Argosy* and *Belgravia*, which flourished in the 1860s with the immense popularity of sensation fiction. Eliot’s anonymous editorship, however, was of a more “serious” periodical and thus required anonymity. Furthermore, in 1852, Eliot was relatively unknown, having yet to publish a novel, making her name less marketable. In Eliot’s case as well as in the case of many other female editors, being attune to gender difference as manifest in the Victorian periodical press gives scholars a fuller picture of one of the few professional options open to gentlewomen and upper-middle-class women in the nineteenth century. We must remember, though, that female editors are not some sort of surprising anomalies but rather a widespread pattern within periodical culture.

Much like Thackeray, Wood achieved celebrity through her writing; however, Wood’s celebrity persona reads very differently from the author of *Vanity Fair* in part because of her gender. One of the difficulties Thackeray and other male celebrities faced was that of needing not to appear a passive and thus feminized entertainer. For the Victorian female celebrity, on the other hand, the main difficulty was preserving a sense of decorum and virtue in a culture that often classified public women as promiscuous and thus subversive and dangerous. Describing the celebrity of eighteenth-century actress and poet Mary Robinson, Tom Mole notes that “While celebrities of both genders experienced gender-specific constraints, the assumption that women of virtue did not

draw attention to themselves meant that female celebrity could seem like a contradiction in terms” (187). The tension between gentleness and apparent fallenness for female celebrities continued in the nineteenth century. Mary Elizabeth Braddon embraced the more scandalous side of female celebrity with her past as an actress, her role as a writer of sensation fiction, and the personal scandal of cohabitating with the married John Maxwell. Other Victorian women writers responded differently. Marian Evans took refuge in the male pseudonym George Eliot, which was a thin veil, but still served to give a sense of seriousness to her literary work. Ellen Wood’s was yet another approach: she crafted the moral persona of Mrs. Henry Wood.

Wood’s cultivation of her celebrity persona had close ties to the mid-Victorian periodical press. Before publishing *East Lynne*, one of the most popular novels of the nineteenth century, Wood wrote for a number of periodicals, focusing on shorter pieces and garnering little acclaim. Her novel, however, promised to launch her as a celebrity. In a letter to Wood before the publication of *East Lynne* in book form, Mary Howitt wrote,

My dear Mrs. Wood, I cannot tell you how high an opinion I have of *East Lynne*, as far I have read it in the monthly parts; but this I will say: that you have only to publish the work with your name attached to it, and you will at once become famous. (qtd. in Charles Wood 198)

*East Lynne* had been published in parts with the heading “By the author of ‘Ashley,’” a short story Wood had published previously. Howitt’s phrasing here implies that Wood was considering publishing anonymously, but Howitt gently advises against that decision, which is perhaps an urging a female writer in the mid-nineteenth century especially

needed. For the most part, Wood followed Howitt's advice. Writing to George Bentley on August 8, 1861, she objected to *East Lynne* being marketed under the designation "By the author of 'Ashley'" because "Ashley" would not be easily recognizable by the public and suggests instead "By the author of Danesbury House." Wood further manages her image in this letter, writing, "On the title page of the book I must request you to put 'By Mrs Henry Wood, Author of 'Danesbury House.'" Be particular that the Christian name (Henry) is inserted" (694). By insisting on the inclusion of her husband's name in her penname, Wood takes control of her image just as she is on the cusp of literary celebrity. This name gave her the protection of a husband and created a public persona that was firmly rooted in her domestic role of wife, allowing her to avoid scandal. She became a public persona but not as naked a celebrity as Thackeray.

Rather than publish using her initials like Mary Elizabeth Braddon did as M. E. Braddon, or using a male pseudonym like Marian Evans did as George Eliot, Ellen Wood foregrounded her gender. As Mrs. Henry Wood, she maintained her femininity, but she did this through eliding her own name and identifying closely with her husband. Even her final resting place is engraved with "Mrs. Henry Wood" with no trace of Miss Ellen Price. Though Wood's work was published under "Mrs. Henry Wood" during her lifetime and during the greater part of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, most of Wood's work in print is currently published with the byline of Ellen Wood. The work of feminist critics to reintegrate "Ellen" into her publishing name has been driven by a desire to reintegrate her identity into her writing and is a response to the declining use of husbands' first names by professional women. Critics today sometimes even discuss

Ellen Price Wood, including her maiden name as an attempt to further recuperate her individual identity. What these attempts overlook is the intentionality of Wood's decision to market her work under Mrs. Henry Wood. The intentionality of Wood's chosen publishing name and its shaping of her public persona is especially visible in her continuance as Mrs. Henry Wood after her husband's death. Jennifer Phegley has also remarked that Wood's role as wife was something she maintained through her designation of Mrs. Henry Wood even after her husband's death ("Domesticating the Sensation Novelist" 181). Certainly this decision was conditioned by the society in which Wood lived, but her active choice bespeaks a sort of agency that can be overlooked by critics' attempts to reclaim Wood's identity. Her femininity was constructed as nonthreatening to gendered hierarchies and the sanctity of Victorian separate spheres through her definition of self as wife. Certainly, it clothed her with the decorum she needed to construct her public persona, but what matters equally is the work of construction itself.

This enacting of a domestic and moral persona publically even while writing sensation fiction makes Wood an especially important instance of a female public figure in the mid-nineteenth century for understanding the roles that female celebrities played at the time. Unlike Marian Evans whose male pseudonym George Eliot in her fiction and anonymous editing of the *Westminster Review* or Mary Elizabeth Braddon whose personal life and history as an actress added an aura of scandal to her sensational plotlines and periodical, Wood's sensation fiction, public persona, and magazine engaged the sensational without losing the moral high ground, and Wood did this in great part on



the basis of her femininity. Her most famous novel, one of the most popular of the Victorian period, *East Lynne*, rides this line between the sensational with its seduction and semi-bigamous plotlines; however, unlike most sensation literature that only feints at repentance and rather revels in transgression, *East Lynne* focuses more on repentance and atonement than seduction and transgression. Eventually, Isabel is portrayed primarily as a doting and repentant mother rather than as a fallen woman. This domestic focus allows Wood's novel to participate in the sensational aspects of the genre while still maintaining a strong moral position.

During this period, the celebrity of their contributors had become a sort of threat to periodical editors. According to Charles Wood's account, William Harrison Ainsworth did not want Wood to write novels because he felt that her short stories were selling so well in the magazines (206). Presumably, Ainsworth, an experienced editor, felt that as a short story writer, Wood was a constant asset and he was more invested in maintaining her as an asset than developing her celebrity draw, which would likely take her away from the magazine. Howitt's prediction of Wood's path to fame was realized, and after the publication of *East Lynne*, Howitt told Wood:

But your talent, my dear friend, is all your own. Did I not once tell you that you had only to publish *East Lynne* to become famous? It is only such power as yours that can, like Lord Byron, awake one morning to find itself famous. And your reputation will be lasting. Your books are photographs of real life; your characters are human beings and our

personal friends—they can never die. You will be read long after many of us are forgotten. (qtd. in Charles Wood 203)

By connecting Wood with Byron, one of the most famous literary celebrities, Howitt describes Wood's celebrity potential both in terms of the present, waking up to find oneself famous, and the future, lasting fame. Here Howitt's description of characters as personal friends brings up again the issue of reader connection to author and to character. The personal connection readers made to Wood's characters were accompanied by a feeling of personal connection to Wood herself.

This personal connection was also key for Wood's ability to attract an audience for her periodical. The *Argosy* had already run for four volumes when Wood purchased it from Alexander Strahan who had founded the shilling monthly in 1865. Part of Wood's struggle in making the *Argosy* marketable was amending the moral tone of the magazine to coincide with its Victorian audience's values: "Wood bought the *Argosy* from Alexander Strahan in 1867 and immediately set out to replace its risqué reputation (caused by its serialization of Charles Reade's controversial bigamy novel *Griffith Gaunt* (1866)) with her moral, Christian tone" (Palmer, "Dangerous and Foolish Work" 190). The work of reforming the sensational *Argosy* was not entirely new to Wood, as she had experience with periodicals, previously working for the *New Monthly Magazine* and *Bentley's Magazine* (Palmer *Women's Authorship and Editorship* 4). One of the most effective of her strategies to change the magazine's reputation was employing her literary celebrity as editor. Though the first volumes of the *Argosy* were published without an editorial byline, by volume five the listing of "Edited by Mrs. Henry Wood" prominently

adorned each volume, and Wood reassured readers that the magazine was undergoing the necessary changes to recover from *Griffith Gaunt* after wisely waiting a year to purchase the magazine. Another change Wood brought to the *Argosy* was the section called “Our Log Book” which reviewed recent publications, giving the magazine known for its ties to sensation literature more propriety through the inclusion of the more respectable genre of the review.

These strategies worked well, and she was successful in gathering a substantial readership: the *Argosy*’s average monthly circulation 20,000 under her editorship which was more than Mary Elizabeth Braddon’s 16,000 for *Belgravia*, and more than doubled circulations of *Blackwood’s* and the *Saturday Review*, though without garnering as much prestige as either (Phegley “Domesticating the Sensation Novelist”184). It attracted a number of well-known contributors, such as Frances Power Cobbe, Margaret Oliphant, Bessie Rayner Parkes, Christina Rossetti, George MacDonald, Charles Reade, and Anthony Trollope. Wood remained the magazine’s primary lion: “However (with the exception of Rossetti and Kingsley), Wood did not maintain this stable of celebrities. She rightly predicted that her name would be a big enough draw to achieve profitable circulation” (Palmer *Women’s Authorship and Editorship* 102). Wood’s management of her own literary celebrity and the magazine’s tenuous reputation demonstrate her skill at crafting a successful periodical by anticipating audience response and also by management of funds by not paying for celebrity literary material when her own name was sufficient to engage her readers. Although this could be read as a type of domestic economy writ large, Wood’s strategies and success show that she was strongly engaged

in editing as a profession. She was no figurehead relying on a proprietor for business advice, which is significant both as an example of a professional woman in the nineteenth-century and also in terms of professionalization of the editorial role.

As part of her attempt to render the risqué *Argosy* more respectable, Wood published articles that addressed the concern of sensation literature more directly. The article “Past Sensationalists” in the first volume Wood edited worked to distance the magazine from more negative elements of its sensational past represented by *Griffith Gaunt*. “Past Sensationalists,” an unsigned article that well may have been penned by Wood herself, describes the importance of novels and sets up the novelist as social historian. The author, to whom I shall be referring with the feminine pronoun, sees Fielding as the best or rather “noblest epitome” of this type of social historian novelist (49).<sup>40</sup> This essay defends the worth of novelists, arguing that though they were less honored than poets that they deserve more critical attention than they had been receiving. Within this argument, the author considers the sensation genre. While the writer never entirely casts off past sensationalists, she does portray the genre as having a number of flaws, saying: “But it is well that the melodramatic age of fiction is gone; and it is to be hoped that it will never be again revived” (56).

Considering that the previous article, entitled “Ten Years a Nun,” is a riveting story of a French nun’s daring escape from a corrupt nunnery to be reunited with her

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<sup>40</sup> The author of this article may have been male; however, I have decided to use the feminine pronoun to describe this author partially because Wood was known for writing a very large portion of her magazine; partially because as Jennifer Phegley has argued, there were higher rates of publications by women in woman-edited periodicals which makes a female author likely (“Domesticating the Sensation Novelist” 181); and most of all to simplify what would become a difficult discussion should I employ “he or she” throughout.

lover whom she had been told was dead a decade before by a greedy abbess, the age of melodrama seems far from finished. The polyvalence of periodicals provides some degree of explanation for this dialogic moment in the volume, but beyond allowing for periodicals to be contradictory, the clear pressure against sensation literature is what balances and in some ways legitimates the inclusion of sensational stories by the editor who is trying to reform the magazine's reputation. The reader could enjoy the triumph of the nun finally reunited with her long-lost lover while still separating himself or herself from sensationalists by reading in the next article how "our 'sensationalists' still retain the *black and white* way of telling stories; still copiously colour; still freely exaggerate; still travestie human nature by imposing upon human nature the operations of motives and the commission of actions which are improbable or gross" without classifying "Ten Years a Nun" as sensationalist because of its emotional authenticity is not in line with this description of sensation fiction (56). Wood's editorial arrangement here indicates her skill at engaging her audience.

Wood's personal editorial voice was most audible in "Our Logbook," which was essentially a book review section. The title of this final section in each number both reinforces the first person plural voice so strongly associated with the editorial chair, but it also asks the audience to participate in this logbook, implying that the taste of the writer and that of the reader are in accord. The continued presence of "Our Logbook" in each number of the *Argosy*, similar to Thackeray's "Roundabout Papers," built a continued relationship between reader and editor. In the first of these installments found in the fifth volume on December 1867, Wood reviews *Mabel's Progress*, George

MacDonald's *Guild Court*, Macleod's *Starling*, Le Fanu's *Tenants of Malory*, *£500 Reward*, and a few Christmas books. Wood claims to give morally sound judgments of the texts reviewed rather than opinions on the texts:

Opinions have often a high value; but we detract nothing from the weight we set on our own when we say that in these few pages we shall keep them in reserve as far as it is compatible with our design. We wish to tell what we have seen—to indicate the track on which we have voyaged, rather than to formally detail the incidents as they occurred; in other words, our aim is not systematic criticizing of individual authors. Our criticisms shall be subordinate to our purpose of directing our readers to pleasant, healthy, elevating literature. Unconsciously, we may thus, perhaps, help to form some tastes, by simply leading the way and pointing out the beauties that lie on either hand. (75)

Continuing the seafaring analogy of the magazine's title, Wood aims to help the reader navigate the sea of print. Wood separates her writing from mere opinion (though she is careful not to denigrate opinion) but also holds back from claiming to write the type of critique found in the more prestigious reviews. The logbook, as neither opinion nor criticism, is positioned in a contradictory space of telling "what we have seen" but not merely summarizing, of "directing our readers" but not relying on opinion. Wood's language of telling what she has seen resonates with evangelical language of bearing witness, which is not surprising considering her deep commitment to evangelicalism. By

moving her language into this religious register, Wood is able to carve out speaking space for herself that avoids being trivialized or rejected as overreaching her capabilities.

While Wood herself remains hidden in this logbook entry, her editorial voice is still personal because it is based in her own observation and in appreciation of aesthetics and enjoyment of decorous literature. Armed with the criteria that literature should be elevating as well as beautiful, Wood clearly passed judgments on the literary scene of the 1860s. Expounding upon her criteria in the June 1, 1868 logbook entry, Wood contrasts the writing of Wilkie Collins and George Eliot by highlighting the importance of emotions rather than just intellect. She writes,

The school of novelists of which Mr. Wilkie Collins has become the best representative tells ‘what we may get’ by reducing Nature to a mere Chinese puzzle, or rather they ignore her, and set up a great Somnauth idol instead. Their art—which is only intellectual ingenuity or literary card-castle building—exhausts the interest it breeds, and produces a kind of fever of self-consuming excitement, from which sensible adults like to keep clear if they can. Thus this kind of art, in fact, defeats its own end; for there is nothing to reward a careful reading, not to speak of a second glance. (76)<sup>41</sup>

The persona of the reviewer and the role of the editor allow Wood to present her ideas here in a way that is emphatic but also really quite cutting. Even in her strong indictment

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<sup>41</sup> The othering language of a “Chinese puzzle” and “a great Somnauth idol” is worth noting as it reveals problematic representations in race that are used to criticize this type of writing, though the implications about race, Empire, and orientalism inherent in this description fall outside the scope of my current project.

of Wilkie Collins, Wood manages not to overstep the role of gentlewomanly editor that she has created because she roots her critique in concern for the development and elevation of her audience. She refrains, though, from passing moral judgment on these tales. They are not unsuitable because they are immoral; they are unsuitable because they are not edifying. Her editorial role as critic in this section is based not on determining merits of the work as art piece but on determining the merits of the work as it nurtures or fails to nurture her audience. Mrs. Henry Wood takes the role of mother in relation to her audience by guiding their moral development and helping to form their taste.

Perhaps because of how she defined her role as personal and domestically nurturing, Wood's biography, written by her son and published soon after her death, deemphasizes her editorial role in favor of representing her as the paragon of femininity. In these memorials of his mother—rather than a “Life” or a “Biography,” as he points out in the introduction—Charles W. Wood describes her life as that of a lovely invalid with never a wrinkle, beautiful unto death. Charles Wood says little about his mother's editing, especially the business of editing. Instead, his representation of her professional work is focused on her writing:

Then all the work that followed *East Lynne*: nearly forty novels; the *Johnny Ludlow* stories, which were continued for twenty years; the acknowledged work; the immense amount of anonymous literary work written in addition for the *Argosy*, never known, never to be known; everything required earnest care and thought; for we have said that, however light and easily read may be the novels of Mrs. Henry Wood,



every one of them cost her immense reflection; every one was carefully and elaborately considered to the utmost of her ability. (255)

The *Argosy* is mentioned briefly in this description of Wood's work; however, Charles Wood disregards the editorial role his mother played in favor of focusing on the writing she produced for the *Argosy*. Rather than a celebration of her celebrity editing of the periodical, he represents her work solely in terms of authorship with the frustration at the anonymity she suffered in the magazine. The *Argosy*, one of Wood's larger projects, does not appear in the lists of what each chapter covers in Charles Wood's biography though others of her works, such as *East Lynne* and the *Johnny Ludlow* stories do appear in these lists. Rather he focuses on presenting her within the domestic space, a space which seems to allow for the role of writer but not of editor in his representation of it. In a condolence letter to Charles, one of his mother's fans wrote: "Many will feel as if they had lost a personal friend—particularly readers of the *Argosy*, who had just welcomed a new work from her pen, showing all the old freshness of charm and style" (327). Wood's audience also read her more in terms of the writing she produced for the magazine than her role in selecting copy and paying aspiring writers. Here Wood's magazine is imagined as a space of friendship and its readership as personal friends of its editor and star contributor. While she was a successful proprietor and businesswoman, saving a floundering magazine, her readers conceived of her role instead in personal terms, in the terms of friendship. Her editing is at once professionalized and distanced from the profession.

In other words, Mrs. Henry Wood succeeded at creating a space of intimacy in her magazine; however, while offering the feeling of connection found in personal friendship, Wood also avoided becoming the naked editor of Trollope's "Turkish Bath." Thackeray, on the other hand, did not successfully navigate the combination of closeness and distance required for a successful celebrity author-editor in the mid-Victorian period. Certainly, many factors, such as gender and personal constitution, contributed to the great success of the one and the eventual failure of the other editor, but the difference between these two editorial ventures' success demonstrates both the importance and the difficulty of midcentury leveraging and managing literary celebrity. The complex lines of sight that made Trollope's first editor's tale dynamic also had a strong bearing on midcentury celebrity editors: the celebrity editor had to be both high profile and spectral, the "I" and the "we." Thackeray's visibility meant that while his celebrity was instrumental in launching the *Cornhill* to success that it afforded him no privacy. Hiding behind her husband's name, Mrs. Henry Wood, however, was able to become a public persona while keeping a veil over her private life.

### Chapter 3: Late Nineteenth Century Editors

#### Technologies of the Press in *Tit-Bits* and the *Yellow Book*

As the age of Edison, Tesla, electric lights, phonographs, photographs, and the Transatlantic cable, the second half of the nineteenth century was an era of technological innovation and increasing mechanical complexity. By the late nineteenth century, the pace of innovation was astounding, influencing Victorians' everyday lives and also the way they understood and represented their world. These changes strongly impacted the press, and according to Joel Wiener in his introduction to *Papers for the Millions*,

Technology was a crucial element of this New Journalism, for within a relatively short period of time (1860-1900), the electric telegraph, telephone, typewriter, high speed rotary press, and half-tone block for the reproduction of photographs all came into regular use. (xii)

These technologies changed the production of printed materials while other innovations, like the 1890 introduction of the first subway line in London, rewrote human experience of time and space. The increasing pace of modernization met with different reactions in the press, and in this chapter, I pair two very different responses: George Newnes's magazine *Tit-Bits* and co-editors Henry Harland and Aubrey Beardsley's *Yellow Book*. Newnes's popular collection of short articles targeted at the commuter and semi-literate was far afield Harland and Beardsley's artistic periodical that engaged strongly with the aestheticism and decadence of the *fin-de-siècle*. While these magazines appear and, in many ways, are diametrically opposed, both are a response to the shifting literary

landscape and technological innovation of the late nineteenth century: the one an embrace and the other a retreat.

Late nineteenth-century authors, such as H. G. Wells in his 1895 classic *The Time Machine*, engaged imaginatively with the way that machines were changing the individual's relationship to the world. Even realist novelists like George Gissing felt the pull of science fiction and the magic of mechanization. Titled for the eighteenth-century London street whose name became synonymous with hack writing, Gissing's 1891 novel *New Grub Street* grappled with the ideal of literary production as art and the harsh reality of an unforgiving market that demanded light and easy reading. Within the gritty realism of this novel about the bleak fates facing literary men and women, Gissing breaks momentarily from his faithful representation of late nineteenth-century London to include Marian's reverie about the possibility of mechanizing writing. Both drawn to and terrified by an advertisement for a literary machine, Marian considers the drudgery of her work as a writer and researcher:

A few days ago her startled eye had caught an advertisement in the newspaper, headed "Literary Machine"; had it then been invented at last, some automaton to supply the place of such a poor creature as herself, to turn out books and articles? Alas! the machine was only one for holding volumes conveniently, that the work of literary manufacture might be physically lightened. But surely before long some Edison would make the true automaton; the problem must be comparatively such a simple one.

Only to throw in a given number of old books, and have them reduced, blended, modernized into a single one for today's consumption. (138)

While Gissing's foray into speculative fiction in this passage is brief, the potential of mechanizing literary production is presented as not only a possibility but also an inevitability. The literary machine that would take old books and synthesize them into new texts bears a striking resemblance to the periodical press of the late nineteenth-century, especially the periodical *Tit-Bits*, which is aped later in Gissing's novel as the fictional magazine *Chit-Chat*. Fittingly, Marian encounters this idea from science fiction in an newspaper advertisement, and this context highlights the way in which print culture and the capitalistic system of late nineteenth-century Britain mediate her experience of writing.

Longing to be replaced by a machine, Marian also reveals the extent to which she feels that her work is already mechanical. Instead of viewing her own writing as "the joy and the privilege of one who had an urgent message for the world," Marian sees the work she has to do as only a wizened version of literary writing (137). Although this leads Marian to ardently desire mechanized relief from the tedium of magazine work, she also dreads becoming a literary machine herself. The free indirect discourse of Gissing's narrator allows readers access to Marian's fears and frustrations: "She was not a woman, but a mere machine for reading and writing" (136-37). Gissing's choice to write the reverie regarding the literary machine as a female fantasy connecting the mechanical with the immanence and connection to nature that Western culture has traditionally associated with women works to mechanize women but also to give these writing machines an

almost biological generativity.<sup>42</sup> The writing machine that will replace Marian links her literary work to the mechanical, a common trope in the late nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries with the opening of more clerical professions for women, a concern that would dominate Gissing's 1893 novel *The Odd Women*. In her 2005 study *My Mother Was a Computer: Digital Subjects and Literary Texts*, N. Katherine Hayles describes the shock that her readers will likely feel upon reading her title, a line taken from Anne Balsamo's autobiographical opening to *Technologies of the Gendered Body*. While Hayles and Balsamo's audiences are most familiar with computers as machines, both scholars work to recover the linguistic heritage of "computer" referring to a person who performs computations. This sentence, "My mother was a computer," serves to blur the line but also enforce the line between the biological and the mechanical in the context of kinship relationships. By working, women are represented as machines rather than people. This blurring of the biological and the mechanical also appears in Marian's description of the machine's purpose of to reduce, blend, and modernize old books "into a single one for today's consumption" (138). The biological need for daily sustenance, in this case literary food, fuels this fantasy appears inevitable in the context of the late nineteenth century's technological advancements. Again, the literary machine is intertwined with the periodical press and the public's appetite for daily, weekly, monthly, and quarterly copy.

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<sup>42</sup> Longstanding critiques of this type of gender stereotyping, such as Simone de Beauvoir's seminal work on femininity, have problematized this characterization of women. Rather, I draw on this historical understanding of gender to unpack the cultural assumptions that inform this particular representation of the literary machine.

Furthermore, the syntax of the sentence representing Marian's fear, "She was not a woman, but a mere machine for reading and writing," brings out the deep ambivalence of Gissing's novel. In the same way that the text mourns the loss of space for genius in a literary marketplace while simultaneously accepting literature's trade elements, Marian is at once giving herself up to the role of literary automaton and asserting that she should not be a mere machine for reading and writing. Her fantasy of mechanization stands in for her deeper desire to escape the literary market and instead pursue art, and in doing so, Marian's fantasy interrogates the linguistic flexibility of the term "literature" to refer both to writing in general and a particular type of artistic writing. Gissing's foray into science fiction asks the question at the center of his novel: is the literary endeavor an art or a trade? This question of how to understand the role of writing resonated in the late-Victorian British press and was especially important for editors as they cultivated their periodicals' identities. Writers too were deeply concerned with how to conceive of literature and the difficulty in representing writing as exclusively art or trade. Rather, literary work seemed to flit between these two seemingly opposite poles. Although this question was by no means unique to the late nineteenth century, these concerns resulted in a widening gap between the popular press and the literary press during this period. Gissing responded to the complexity of the debate by embodying these approaches to literary work in *New Grub Street's* main characters. The novel's two male protagonists, Jasper Milvain and Edwin Reardon, represent two trends in late nineteenth-century periodicals.<sup>43</sup> Milvain, modern and aspiring to commercial success, focuses on

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<sup>43</sup> The use of Jasper and Edwin as Christian names connects this pair of writers to the protagonist

anticipating and meeting the public's textual appetite much like the popular branch of the press; whereas, Reardon, sensitive and aspiring to artistic success, pours his energy into pursuing quality much like self-consciously literary rather than primarily commercial magazine ventures. These two writers align well with the two periodicals at the core of this chapter: the popular magazine *Tit-Bits* and the artistic *fin-de-siècle* magazine the *Yellow Book*. Embodying these approaches to writing in his characters, Gissing creates a dialogic space, which Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin described as "the basic distinguishing feature of the stylistics of the novel" (263). The multi-voicedness of this novel and the often unobtrusive narrator who operates often through free indirect discourse combine to create an open text in which characters, writer, and readers grapple with the meaning of writing and literature.

This embodiment of ideology in the individual also allows Gissing to develop the analogy he draws between writing and marriage, an institution whose romantic and more calculating aspects had been the topic of many a novel for over a century.<sup>44</sup> Gissing's

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and potential antagonist pair in Dickens's unfinished final novel, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, which features Edwin Drood and his uncle John Jasper who are both in love with the same woman, Rosa Bud. The strong implication in Dickens's novel that Jasper has murdered Drood was especially intriguing to turn of the century critics, and thus Gissing's name choice suggests both kinship and animosity.

<sup>44</sup> Jane Austen, the most famous of marriage plot novelists, perpetually reminds readers that while affection is required, prudence in a match is equally necessary. For instance, in *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), Elizabeth Bennet may marry the wealthy Fitzwilliam Darcy only after she falls in love with him, but her affections for Colonel Fitzwilliam can come to naught because he is not a prudent match financially. Austen censures mercenary marriages and makes clear that her heroines are not motivated solely by financial gain, but even though Austen's narrator sympathizes with Charlotte Lucas who has few suitors and asks "only a comfortable home," Charlotte is punished for her overly practical view of matrimony by a loveless marriage to the boorish Mr. Collins (96). While Austen satirizes the assumption that "It is a truth universally



romantic couples in *New Grub Street* are torn between practicality and romance. Poverty, unrealistic expectations, and poor communication destroy Edwin and Amy Reardon's marriage that had been based on romantic love, and Milvain's imprudent attraction to Marian ends with his poor treatment of her and their broken engagement after she loses her inheritance. The calculating relationship between Milvain and Amy is one of the few to survive the novel, but their marital bliss is haunted by the ghost of Reardon, whose death in part rests on Amy's shoulders, and Marian, whose unhappy fate results from being thrown over by Milvain.

The romantic relationships in the novel mirror the approaches each protagonist takes to writing. Reardon's marriage to Amy is a love match that left the financial future unplanned much like his writing, which is characterized as the work of a genius unconcerned with the market. Milvain, however, is calculating and upfront about the importance of finances and his professional future when he discusses marriage with Marian. His resistance to expressing romantic ardor eventually drives her away, freeing him to pursue the now-wealthy widow Amy Reardon. On the surface, this may seem to be a simple analogy: Reardon is the loving husband who puts romantic love above practical considerations and Milvain is the cool, calculating man who only marries if it is financially and socially advantageous; Reardon is the starving artist who would rather die than sacrifice his artistic ideals and Milvain is willing to sell his soul and his literary standards to make it in the press. However, the novel's representation of these characters

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acknowledged that a man in possession of a good fortune, *must be in want of a wife*," Austen's novels also often bear out this universal truth (1).

is more complex than this surface reading would suggest. Reardon's relationship to the literary marketplace is fraught: his problem is not only that his ideal is good literature; it is also that when he tries his hand at hack writing, he cannot do it serviceably. His writing talents do not include Milvain's ability to read the market. He is but also is not a man driven by high literary ideals. The same is true in his relationship with his wife. Amy's abandoning of her husband to the poverty that eventually kills him is censured, but his demands on his wife and his jealousy of the attention she gives their infant son are also at times unreasonable. In the same way that Reardon is not a simple hero, his foil Milvain is not entirely despicable: he helps his friends who are struggling writers with favorable reviews as he is able, and he is upfront with Marian about her options, his feelings for her, but also his ambitions and financial needs. The genre of the novel allows for this plumbing of the depths of these characters and thus also the humanizing of the view of writing as commodity and the troubling of the ideal of writing as art without consideration for the market. Gissing's text mourns the loss of men like Reardon and the type of approach to writing he embodies even as it attempts to come to terms with the late nineteenth-century literary market and the age of trade.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>45</sup>One of the indications we get that Gissing's novel is mourning this loss is the way the narrator recognizes the difficulties his audience may have connecting with Reardon, and he directly addresses this concerns in the second volume of the novel: "The chances are that you have neither understanding nor sympathy for men such as Edwin Reardon and Harold Biffen. They merely provoke you. They seem to you inert, flabby, weakly envious, foolishly obstinate, impiously mutinous, and many other things" (462). He asks readers, however, to take their perspective: But try to imagine a personality wholly unfitted for the rough and tumble of the world's labour-market. From the familiar point of view these men were worthless; view them in possible relation to a humane order of society, and they are admirable citizens. ... The sum of their faults was their inability to earn money; but, indeed, that inability does not call for unmingled distain. (462)

Reardon fails to survive because he does not adapt to the changing literary landscape. He is of the old Grub Street, not the new, as Milvain says:

Reardon can't do that kind of thing, he's behind his age; he sells a manuscript as if he lived in Sam Johnson's Grub Street. But our Grub Street of to-day is quite a different place: it is supplied with telegraphic communication, it knows what literary fare is in demand in every part of the world, its inhabitants are men of business, however seedy. (39)

Milvain's criticism of Reardon as "behind his age" also highlights the way in which Milvain himself is of the time. Milvain and the hack writers of Gissing's *New Grub Street* differ from their eighteenth-century brethren in terms of mechanization and the way in which they interface with technology. Rather than the comparison between the hack writer, shortened from hackney, and a horse for hire, the writer in the late nineteenth century is integrated into the technology that was revolutionizing the press: the writer becomes the writing machine of Marian's fantasy. In this natural selection, Milvain is clearly the fitter of the two, and Gissing underscores this literary Darwinism in the novel's marriage plot. Reardon is not able to maintain his wife Amy and their child, and both the child and Reardon die leaving Reardon literally without progeny. Milvain marries Amy after breaking his engagement to Marion, and the novel ends with a scene of slightly clouded domestic bliss for the couple. Literary survival, however, can also be read in terms of text rather than person, and from this perspective, the fitness of the two

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Expressing this frustration at the ability to earn money as a mark of success, Gissing asks readers to consider alternate standards of worth.

men is reversed. Reardon's works survive him while Milvain's are forgotten week to week. Similarly, many of the works of the literary press in the late nineteenth century have stood the test of time while those of the popular press are more often forgotten in literary studies. The *Yellow Book* had but a four-year run while *Tit-Bits* ran for over a century, implying a fitness in the latter missing in the former; however, the lasting literary impact of the *Yellow Book* and its volumes' survival demonstrate lasting literary value and fitness in a different market.

The fissure between the popular and the literary in the periodical press certainly existed before the late nineteenth century, but this period saw greater separation between the two. These two periodical trends are typified in *Tit-Bits* and *The Yellow Book*. As this gap widened, late nineteenth-century editors had to adapt to the changing literary scene. Looking specifically at journalism, Joel Wiener notes that "profits replaced ideas as the motor force of the new industry of journalism, while, as an accompaniment to this shift, a market for journalism was located somewhere near that point on the social scale where the 'man on the knifeboard of the omnibus' sat" (Wiener "Introduction" xii). As represented in *New Grub Street*, this increasing concern for earnings applied not only to newspapers but also more broadly in the press. The tension between ideas and profits had haunted the periodical press for a long time: John Dunton's *Athenian Mercury* was born of profit as much as of ideas; furthermore, even the *Edinburgh Review*'s aura of all gentlemen and no pay was held in tension with financial compensation for the gentleman editor. Concerns about financial gain had been part and parcel of the press for centuries. Still, the difference in the late nineteenth century is how overt these commercial

ambitions are. Late-century editors did not need to protest remuneration, and the shifting class market of periodicals was one of the elements that allowed for greater visibility of profit as a driving force. As writing for the press solidified as a profession, there was a split between writing for profit (literary work as trade) and writing to produce texts of beauty and lasting value (literary work as an art). These two responses, represented in *Tit-Bits* and the *Yellow Book*, depend upon each other as opposite sides of the press's response to modernization, but before turning to these magazines' engagement with the changing world of the late nineteenth century, we must first consider their context.

### **Late Nineteenth-Century Editors**

The late Victorian press saw not only technological innovation but also many social and cultural shifts that revised the role of the periodical and its editor: increased professionalization of the editorial role, New Journalism, and changing audience demographics were three of the most important changes in the press during this period. By the late nineteenth century, editing had been professionalized to such an extent that the dissemination of knowledge regarding editorial practices moved beyond the earlier forms of training, which had consisted primarily of learning the tricks of the trade by working with periodicals as contributors and sub-editors as well as learning through interpersonal relationships between established editors and novices. The founding of the American journal *The Editor: A Journal of Information for Literary Workers* in 1895, for instance, clearly indicates the conceptualization of "literary work" as a profession. In an advertisement published in *The Dial* in 1912, this magazine purported to be "a stimulus to the production and sale of more and better manuscripts" (qtd. in "The Editor; the

Journal of Information for Literary Workers”). The magazine itself was not geared specifically toward editors; rather, it acted as a sort of senior editor offering inside advice to the masses of aspiring writers at the turn of the century. To this end, its advertisements included headlines like “Have you a Book Manuscript?” and advertised works like “500 Places to Sell Manuscripts!” which could be purchased for one dollar. Another similar magazine, *The Journalist* claimed to show readers how to climb the ladder of journalism by being “A primer of newspaper work. prepared by a practical newspaper man; in a word. A Text Book of Journalism” in an ad in *The Editor* volume VII from January 1898. While pointing to the clearer delineation of the editorial role as a profession, the mentoring offered by these types of late-century magazines was also clearly a commodity being sold at market.

Furthermore, printed guides for editors appeared in the late nineteenth century. In the 1872 guide *Hints to Young Editors, By an Editor*, the unnamed author claims to be writing “the first text-book on a profession which is already a power, and which will grow in importance and influence with the growth of civilization” (3).<sup>46</sup> I have yet to find an earlier editing textbook, and I am willing to take this as one of the earliest of its kind. The author demonstrates a clear sense of the power held by the editor in shaping and influencing culture, more specifically the culture of late nineteenth-century North America. Although I have focused on British editing in this study, American work still has strong bearing on this project because the Transatlantic influences of late nineteenth-

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<sup>46</sup> For simplicity’s sake, I will be applying the male pronoun to the anonymous editor who authored this volume. My decision is conditioned by the author’s prevalent use of the male pronoun and discussions of “the men who edit our present papers to-day” (7). As with other gendered pronoun choices I make, this is for manageability of prose.

century periodical culture, especially in connection with New Journalism. Since much of the informal transmission of journalistic and editing knowledge is lost to history, this guide is especially important for the history of editing because it shows how one particular editor, and likely many other editors, conceived of the profession. The book purports to consist of “hints,” implying that this knowledge is informal and somewhat disconnected, making it a repository of some of the lost editorial lore.

One of the concerns with which the writer engages is the type of training needed by editors. He quotes a *New York Tribune* article on Cornell University’s new Bachelor of Letters as providing one type of training potentially useful for the newspaper man or, as specifically noted here, woman:

This movement, if it be wisely managed, will do a good deal to supply the want now felt of a thorough education in every department of journalism. Those who now succeed in this do so pretty much by accident or through uncommon natural qualifications, while those who fail greatly outnumber the successful aspirants. Meanwhile, periodical writing, whether for newspapers, magazines, or reviews, offers an excellent field of industry, especially for women; but those who are successfully to work in it, for the benefit of their readers as well as for their own, need a thorough preliminary training just as much as clergymen, lawyers, doctors, teachers do. A person who betakes himself to editorial work when well advanced in years, without any special study, and as a last effort to get a livelihood, will probably fail in finding an engagement, or in keeping a position

should he be unlucky enough to obtain one. The demand for journalists is greater than ever, but it should be remembered that the standard of qualification is proportionately higher. (qtd. in *Hints to Young Editors* 8)

The question of how best to educate those who are choosing professions in the press is a late nineteenth-century concern that indicates the extent to which the profession had developed. This *New York Tribune* article on Cornell's program suggests that general education in literature and letters would be the most effective for preparation, rather than a degree in journalism as is more common at present. This coursework preference indicates that some of the eighteenth and early nineteenth-century spirit of the man of the press as a man of letters (or indeed woman of the press as a woman of letters) still had a foothold even in the midst of the increased specialization of the press and professionalization and corresponding commodification of the editorial role. The use of generalist academic study to editors, however, is limited according to the author who writes: "It must be remembered, however, that advice to journalists can take only the form of suggestions. Practice alone will give real instruction" (3). Editorial work is a trade to be learned through practice causing the author to at times be ambivalent about the usefulness of the very volume he is writing. Even though he is writing a guide that fixes the knowledge about editing in print, the author shies away from defining or prescribing editorial practice in favor of affirming a multiplicity of approaches.

In the rest of the volume of hints, the writer does give some more definite criteria for editorial success, noting that while the background experience and education necessary for an editor varies, there is a more universal necessity of ambition and energy,



both most frequently found in the young, to work one's way up within the journalistic hierarchy to become an editor. The tension between giving definite advice and giving only shadowy hints speaks to some of the conflicts in the editorial role itself, which is manifest in this volume in a conflict regarding how to represent editing. On the one hand, the writer describes editing as associated with art:

As in an art collection, the paintings are hung with great care, and the most prominent given the best places, so in a newspaper, the articles must be arranged—technically speaking, "made up"—with a view to give the most attractive appearance to the paper, and place the most important intelligence in the most prominent place. (23)

This attention to aesthetics, one of the hallmarks of New Journalism, which was increasing in popularity at the time, is both artistic and technical or trade-based. The editor here is configured primarily as artist. On the other hand, the author writes that the beginning editor

will find, what actual newspaper work only points out, that journalism is as distinct a profession as a cooper's work is a distinct trade; and that, even in the writing of an ordinary report, men will excel him who, unaided by any but a superficial education, have experience to guide them. (31)

Rather than artistry, the editor displays trade savvy and craft in this portion of the text. This foregrounding of editing as a profession even more than as an art could also be due to the focus of this particular editor on Dailies, which he calls the “the most important branch of the profession” and the distribution of information (13). By privileging the

communication of information, this author casts editing as a profession over an art, even if artistry is never entirely lost.

Another of the important developments of the period was New Journalism, the popular brand of reporting marked by sensationalism, attention to narration, and a strong concern with amusing the audience.<sup>47</sup> According to Joel Wiener, the shifts in the press from 1880 to 1914 which were tied to New Journalism “fall principally into three categories; typography and makeup, content, and the commercialization of the press” (“How New Was the New Journalism?” 50).<sup>48</sup> Highlighting this spirit of change in the late nineteenth-century periodical press, Matthew Arnold famously coined the term “New Journalism,” albeit pejoratively, in his May 1887 article “Up to Easter” in *The Nineteenth Century* volume XXI number CXXIII. While Arnold’s article has gained most of its fame from this coining, it actually has more to do with nineteenth-century political debates, William Gladstone, and the question of Irish home rule than with changes in

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<sup>47</sup> Another element of the late nineteenth-century press that bears mentioning but will not be a focus in this chapter is women’s magazine and the “New Woman.” While I will not be looking specifically at a women’s magazine, such as *The Woman’s World*, edited by Oscar Wilde from 1887-1889, I will consider the influence of gender on the editorial dynamics of the *Yellow Book* in this section.

<sup>48</sup> Whether New Journalism was actually an invention of the late nineteenth century has been called into question by Joel Wiener in his article “How New Was the New Journalism?” While Wiener contends that New Journalism was not as novel as many writers of the time and critics of our time have thought, there were many important innovations in journalism from 1880 to 1914, and describing these under the term “New Journalism” is exigent for my study, so I shall proceed using this term.

journalism in the second half of the nineteenth century.<sup>49</sup> Arnold's discussion of journalism is woven into his response to the political power of the reading masses:

I have said that no reasonable man, who thinks fairly and seriously, can doubt that to gratify these aspirations by reconstituting Ireland as a nation politically, is full of dangers. But we have to consider the new voters, the *democracy*, as people are fond of calling them. They have many merits, but among them is not that of being, in general, reasonable persons who think fairly and seriously. We have had opportunities of observing a new journalism which a clever and energetic man has lately invited. It has much to recommend it; it is full of ability, novelty, variety, sensation, sympathy, generous instincts; its one great fault is that it is *feather-brained*. It throws out assertions at a venture because it wishes them true; does not correct either them or itself, if they are false; and to get at the state of things as they truly are seems to feel no concern whatever. (638)

Here Arnold takes issue with *Pall Mall Gazette* editor W. T. Stead, the “clever and energetic man,” and his form of journalism. Describing this “new journalism” in terms of sensation, novelty, variety, Arnold criticizes the lack of deep thought fostered by Stead's sensational journalism. Arnold's major concern here, however, is that the “new voters” (i.e., the reading public) do not deeply consider the implications of political issues like Irish home rule and that sloppy journalism designed to court a mass audience is more

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<sup>49</sup> For an account of the political context of the debate between Arnold and Stead, see Campbell, Kate. “W. E. Gladstone, W. T. Stead, Matthew Arnold and New Journalism: Cultural Politics in the 1880s.” *Victorian Periodical Review*. 36.1 (Spring 2003), 20-40. *JSTOR*. Web. 29 August 2011.

concerned with amusement than with responsibly representing fact. According to Arnold, because readers buy into the sensational trappings of this new journalism, they fail to think fairly and seriously and implicitly fail to be reasonable persons. By doubting the rationality of the masses, Arnold claims a position of greater importance for writers like him and tries to maintain a sort of aristocracy of the press. In short, Arnold is dismayed that the periodical press has become a consumable commodity rather than a forum for exchanging ideas, and he labels this distressing trend the feather-brained new journalism and implied that it is characterized by feather-brained editing.

Although my emphasis on literary periodicals entails a focus on weekly, monthly, and quarterly rather than daily periodicals, a study of the nineteenth-century British editing would be incomplete without consideration of W.T. Stead's journalistic work. Stead's journalism and his conception of the role of the press were influential in the late nineteenth century. With the "Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon," his 1885 sensational series of articles in *The Pall Mall Gazette* that exposed London child prostitution practices, Stead captured the attention of a broad audience.<sup>50</sup> For Stead's views on editorship, I turn to his article "Government by Journalism" published in the May 1886 number of the *Contemporary Review*. In this article, Stead lays out his concept of the editor's role as a political crusader. His major concern is to establish the power of the editor and to issue a call to action for other editors and journalists to use this power responsibly as part of the political apparatus, claiming that

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<sup>50</sup> Since Judith R. Walkowitz has extensively covered the impact of these articles on the Victorian sense of sexual danger in her 1992 study *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London*, I will not be looking in depth at this set of articles.

an editor is the uncrowned king of an educated democracy. The range of his power is limited only by the extent of his knowledge, the quality rather than the quantity of his circulation, and the faculty and force which he can bring to the work of government. (664)

Here Stead's language is sensational, displaying one of the very traits Arnold enumerated in his critique, and his claims about editorial power are grandiose; however, this grandiosity is purposeful as his intention is to inspire editors to reconceptualize their role. Rather than a celebrity editor who is both friend of the reader and commodity for sale, Stead's editor is an active political force.

In terms of the relationship between audience and editor or journalist, Stead is actually in accord with Arnold. Both see the editor as having immense power over the masses; however, while Arnold laments the public's use of this knowledge as power and the press as power-wielder, Stead celebrates this democracy that is paradoxically ruled by an editorial monarch. The imbrication of this democracy with commerce is clear to Stead: "The editor's mandate is renewed day by day, and his electors register their vote by a voluntary payment of the daily pence. There is no limitation of age or sex. Whosoever has a penny has a vote" (655). Political power rather than connection with the celebrity author-editor is sold by Stead's editor. Pointing to the price of a penny as part of the inclusiveness of this democracy, he ignores the implications that this type of commercial relationship has for the editor/reader dynamic. The editor's renewed mandate does prove that he is close to the people and thus has a sort of power; however, this need for daily renewal also means that the editor's power is based not solely on his

ability to present facts on political concerns; rather, much of the reason for increased circulation is the editor's ability to astound his or her audience with the sensational, such as Stead's child prostitution exposé. Rather than focusing on the editor's need to court the audience, Stead, emphasizes the political potential and responsibilities of editors:

The very concept of journalism as an instrument of government is foreign to the mind of most journalists. Yet, if they could but think of it, the editorial pen is a sceptre of power, compared with which the sceptre of many a monarch is but a gilded lath. In a democratic age, in the midst of a population which is able to read, no position is comparable for permanent influence and far-reaching power to that of an editor who understands his vocation. In him are vested almost all the attributes of real sovereignty. He has almost exclusive rights of initiative; he retains a permanent right of direction; and, above all, he better than any man is able to generate that steam, known as public opinion, which is the greatest force of politics.

(661)

The editor as reforming crusader is similar in some ways to Dickens's social concerns in his journalism and fiction; however, while Dickens was most interested in forming the emotional reaction of the individual to social ills (e.g., the Bastardy Clause of the New Poor Laws in *Oliver Twist*), and thus slowly changing society, Stead's social involvement is more overtly political: he wanted to raise and topple political figures. The identification of early nineteenth-century periodicals like the *Edinburgh Review* and the *Quarterly Review* with political parties also differs from Stead's call to editorial action

here because he not only reported on politics and presented a worldview that is in line with one political party or another; he wanted to affect political change through his newspaper.

Finally, changes in audience also contributed to the shifting literary landscape of late nineteenth-century Britain. Audience demographics and markets for magazines in the mid-nineteenth century had been closely tied to social class, although some magazines claimed to engage a broader mass audience. In his “Preliminary Word” which opened the first number of *Household Words* in 1850, its editor Charles Dickens imagined the magazine as a gender, age, and class boundary-crossing periodical: “In the bosoms of the young and old, of the well-to-do and of the poor, we would tenderly cherish that light of Fancy which is inherent in the human breast” (1). However, although magazines like Dickens’s *Household Words*, claimed to cross class boundaries, the majority of mid-nineteenth century periodicals focused on the mid to upper middle-class reader, and in *Household Words* itself, the poor appeared most often as a subject of study to raise social consciousness of the upper-middle class rather than imagined readers. The magazine that engaged readers from a variety of classes that Dickens envisioned in his preface to *Household Words* had by the end of the century become a stronger reality.

While many factors contributed to the alterations in the press during this time, one of the most significant factors was increased literacy. The Elementary Education Act of 1870 was especially important in these changes. Much of the adolescent and adult audience of the 1880s and 1890s would have been influenced by this legislation, but as Bruce Rose notes, it is equally important to remember that “In fact, the state had been

involved since at least the 1830s and the debate over education for the poor had been going for many years prior to that” even though it was not until much later, 1899, that free public education was available. The change in class dynamics of periodicals meant new challenges for editors but also new opportunities for engaging an audience. Writing in 1911, Hulda Friedrichs describes Great Britain in the late nineteenth century as “a whole nation of young men and women [who] were clamouring for things good to read” (53). What constitutes things good to read, that which is dictated by literary taste or by popular demand, becomes the operative question. More and more, the latter became the definition of “good” reading. Changes in patterns of textual consumption shaped late-century periodical culture as the demand for reading material catering to commuters increased. These changes left their mark on the ever-adapting field of periodical editing.

Successful influence over an audience demanded periodicals maintain large reader bases in the journal-saturated market of late nineteenth-century Britain, but some periodicals could not meet this pressure to adapt. The expanding reading public certainly influenced how successful newspapers constructed their audiences. In “Editors and Social Change: A Case Study of *Once a Week* (1859-80),” Stephen Elwell looks at the changing terrain of late-Victorian periodical audiences through the lens of *Once a Week*, arguing that this particular periodical did not successfully navigate the shift between mid-century class-based journalism and late nineteenth-century mass appeal:

Editors in the nineties saw that the class consciousness that had characterized the magazine of the sixties and had made it popular was inadequate to accommodate the interests of the new mass of people who



looked progressively more and more alike and who were destined to share a similar future based on more or less equal access to education and job market based on individual competence rather than class or social patronage. (Elwell 40)

The class structure itself was undergoing substantial changes in the late nineteenth century, and figuring out how to appeal to new markets while maintaining older markets was a challenge for periodical editors. Eventually, Elwell concludes, *Once a Week* “lost [its] solid middle-class audience” and “failed to engage the less easily characterized and more marginal lower-middle-class audience” (24). Reading their changing audiences was especially important for periodical editors as they predicted what types of material to print, whether essays, reviews, poems, novels, short stories, or collections of anecdotes, and what the purpose of those materials were, whether to amuse, instruct, or inform.

Many of the formal changes in late nineteenth-century periodicals, such as the practice of headlining or the increased use of illustration, perpetuated the commercialization of the press by making these newspapers and journals more easily consumed by a mass audience. Simply looking at the layout of a magazine like *The Edinburgh Review* (see Figure 1) and comparing it to the more visually engaging *Tit-Bits* (see Figure 2) or the *Yellow Book* (see Figure 3), demonstrates the aesthetic shift from the early to late nineteenth century. Both the *Edinburgh Review* and *Tit-Bits* use the entire page; the latter of these does so with concern for dividing up the page to appeal more to its audience and to make its content more easily accessible, especially in the right two columns of Figure 2 which consist of a series of small “tit-bits” divided by decorative

markers. The *Yellow Book*, on the other hand, is a periodical characterized by large margins and the liberal use of blank spaces, signaling to the reader the means to provide this luxury but also drawing attention to itself as an *objet d'art* that promises to be more permanent than many periodical productions. Even in formatting, the tension between the art and trade elements of the periodical press arises. My magazine pairing in this section reflects this tension between the editor as artist or as tradesman/tradeswoman runs through the late nineteenth century. In the following sections, I turn to two very different periodicals: *Tit-Bits*, an example of New Journalism, and the *Yellow-Book*, an example of a periodical concerned most of all with artistry. By putting the two in conversation, we can see the embracing of increased modernization in the one and the conflicted aesthetic response to modernization in the other.

### **George Newnes and *Tit-Bits***

Before beginning a section on George Newnes's immensely popular magazine *Tit-Bits* from *all the Most Interesting Books, Periodicals and Newspapers in the World*, it is fitting to ask the question whether this particular magazine with its immense collection of anecdotes even deserves a place in this study of editors which I have already identified as focusing on literary periodicals. Although *Tit-Bits* marks a divergence from the strictly literary, it is an important component in this study for a number of reasons. First of all, this magazine reveals more clearly than many the editorial power of selection because the editor of *Tit-Bits* chose not only which full-length articles to include but also which ten lines of the article were the most important and thus the only bit that made it into the week's number. Second, its popular focus rather than strictly literary focus

provides a strong example of some of the late-century changes to the press, much of which was happening in less literary papers. Finally, *Tit-Bits* intersects with the literary concerns of the time period through references in literary works, such as George Gissing's *New Grub Street* and even James Joyce's *Ulysses*, and also through publishing original novels, such as Grant Allen's novel *What's Bred in the Bone*.<sup>51</sup> *Tit-Bits* adapted well to the environment of the late nineteenth-century press as Newnes navigated critiques about the suspect literariness of the paper and engaged an audience whose experience of time and space had shifted.

George Newnes's 16-quarto-page penny weekly was launched October 22, 1881 and became immensely popular. *Tit-Bits* ran until 1984 when it was incorporated into *Weekend*. George Newnes served as *Tit-Bits*'s editor-proprietor, and following its success, he launched a number of other periodicals: *The Strand Magazine* (1891), *The Million* (1892), *The Westminster Gazette* (1893), *The Wide World Magazine* (1898), *The Ladies' Field* (1898), *The Captain* (1899), and *C.B. Fry's Magazine* (1904). While never acquiring the press empire of some of the late nineteenth-century and early-twentieth-century press barons like William Randolph Hearst, this son of a Congregational minister from Derbyshire certainly made his fortune in the press. Newnes's magazine consisted predominantly of short articles and small pieces of information, many of which were humorous in nature. Overall, the brief articles in *Tit-Bits* are amusing, short, and often without much apparent purpose other than easy reading. A quick glance at the October

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<sup>51</sup> I will be looking more in depth at *New Grub Street* as it deals with *Tit-Bits* in more depth; however, the passing reference to *Tit-Bits* in the second section of *Ulysses* bears mentioning here because of what a literary icon the novel is.

22, 1888 number bears out this assessment of *Tit-Bit*'s lack of literariness. While certainly entertaining, the tit-bit that reads "It is computed that the average circumference of a woman's waist is 36in. It is also computed that the average length of a man's arm is 36in. Great is thy wisdom, oh Nature!" is certainly a far cry from high literature (1).<sup>52</sup> Even so, this mock-hymn to the wisdom of nature as confirmed by the scientific quantification of the human body reveals much about the late nineteenth-century audience and editor. Underneath the playfulness of these measurements of woman's waist and man's arm, the tit-bit communicates assumptions about gender roles and relations between the sexes: assuming that men will be wrapping their strong arms around women's waiflike waists (though if the thirty-six-inch measurement is taken in earnest, this average woman's waist would not have been particularly waiflike). Praising nature as the architect of this bodily symmetry between men and women suggests that men's masculinity is inherently created to work perfectly with female femininity, naturalizing the society's gender roles. Though not a literary magazine itself, *Tit-Bits* played an important role in shaping culture through print.

By the 1880s, the press had become too unwieldy and time too short for readers to gain a comprehensive knowledge of the information published in periodicals. George Newnes noted this problem in the opening number of *Tit-Bits*:

It is impossible for any man in the busy times of the present to even glance at any large number of the immense variety of books and papers which

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<sup>52</sup> Considering the corsetry use in the late nineteenth century, a 36-inch waist average seems unlikely; additionally, an arm span of well over six feet seems too large as well. Potentially, 26 rather than 36 could have been meant for both.

have gone on accumulating, until now their number is fabulous. It will be the business of the conductors of *Tit-Bits* to find out from this immense field of literature the best things that have ever been said or written, and weekly to place them before the public for one penny. (1)

Much like Edward Cave's response to the similar eighteenth-century problem of the overwhelming sea of print, George Newnes's strategy was to make this sea more navigable for readers, but instead of simply excerpting the best articles from the existing periodicals, Newnes extracted morsels of interesting information from longer papers and articles. According to contemporary anecdotes, Newnes's first tit-bit was a paragraph from "A Runaway Train" in the *Manchester Evening News*. In her biography of Newnes, Hulda Friedrichs writes,

That day's issue struck him as unusually dull and devoid of news, except for one paragraph, describing how two children of a station-master had climbed into a wagon to which a locomotive was attached. By some mistake the engine was started and ran down the line uncontrolled.

Discovering that his children were in the runaway train the frantic station-master made all kinds of desperate efforts to prevent an accident, and somebody jumping on the foot-plate and stopping the engine, presently brought the adventure to a happy ending. (54-55)

Newnes pronounced this paragraph a choice tit-bit and wished for a magazine containing only similar articles. Instead of equipping the gentleman with a ready arsenal of knowledge, then, Newnes's goal was to fish out the most amusing portions of writing

from the sea of print. This shift in purpose responds to the fragmentation of reading time caused by commuting. Partially because many of these readers turned to *Tit-Bits* while commuting, the disconnected, amusing short articles found a ready market and the magazine became immensely popular.

Surprisingly, Newnes's language in his description of the business of *Tit-Bits* as presenting "the best things that have ever been said or written" echoes vehement opponent of New Journalism Matthew Arnold's famous description of culture as "a pursuit of our total perfection by means of getting to know, on all the matters which most concern us, the best which has been thought and said in the world" in *Culture and Anarchy* (xi). Arnold, however, would likely have not counted the following tit-bit from March 4, 1882 as numbering among the best thoughts or sayings: "'Old age is coming upon me rapidly,' said an urchin who was stealing apples from an old man's garden, as he saw the owner coming furiously towards him with a stick in his hand" (14). Though Arnold and Newnes mean different things when they refer to the best thoughts, the project of placing before the public a fare that will nourish it connects these two men. For Newnes, this nourishing fare is amusement that avoids some of the moral issues of the penny dreadfuls and other cheap literature geared at the lower classes, and his language in this passage argues for the value of the tit-bit, the value of amusement for this busy audience. Unlike Arnold's concept of culture as sweetness and light, Newnes's culture of tit-bits is self-consciously a consumer item, and even Newnes's discussion of the best things that have ever been said or written is intimately tied to its price of one penny. Newnes was at peace with the commercial nature of *Tit-Bits*, and the other

common use of the term tit-bit, that of a morsel of food, highlights this consumerist nature of the magazine.<sup>53</sup>

Like Ellen Wood, Newnes privileged literature's role in nourishing his audience. Indeed, the magazine was literally tied to nourishing the British public because when Newnes's first two attempts to get capital to launch his paper failed, Newnes founded a vegetarian restaurant called "The Vegetarian Company Saloon" in Manchester to fund his literary venture.<sup>54</sup> This culinary undertaking also demonstrates Newnes's market savvy: vegetarian restaurants were popular at the time, though ironically, Newnes himself enjoyed a good beefsteak according to Friedrichs (64). Within "a few weeks' time," Newnes sold the business and had the capital he needed to start *Tit-Bits* (Friedrichs 64). He turned from literal to more figurative nourishment. Some of this literary nourishment was directly tied to the readers' physical wellbeing. Combining levity with serious concerns, one bit from the 22 October 1881 number offered "Cures for Drunkenness" in the form of a tincture of iron sulfate, magnesia, peppermint water, and spirit of nutmeg to "partially [supply] the place of the accustomed liquor, and [prevent] that absolute physical and moral prostration that follows a sudden breaking off from the use of stimulating drinks" (10). Rather than offer a cure for hangovers, this short article focuses on the larger issue of alcohol addition and withdrawal. In doing so, it tries to change its readers' private lives by offering a recipe for sobriety that includes the aforementioned

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<sup>53</sup> This alternative definition of tit-bit appears in some nineteenth-century cookbooks, such as the 1864 American cookbook *Tit-bits; or, How to prepare a nice dish at a moderate expense* by Mrs. S. G. Knight.

<sup>54</sup> The second firm from which he requested a loan of £500 would later offer him £16,000 for his magazine only to be rejected (Friedrichs 60).

tonic, and it also gives the suggestion of using *Tit-Bits* itself as a cure for drunkenness: “Another cure for drunkenness is to regularly take in *Tit-Bits*, as by its means a taste for reading will be acquired, which will form a counter-attraction to the public-house” (10). Newnes literalizes analogies of taste and magazines as the audience’s fare here by calling for an actual replacement of drink with reading. This replacement implies both a larger concern for the personal habits of the reader than most magazines evidenced. The shift from editor as guide for literary taste to editor as a sort of addiction coach both demonstrates and helps create an important shift in the role of the magazine because the relationship shifts from a concern with literary taste or the general moral development of reader through reading to focused moral and health-related lifestyle changes through reading. *Tit-Bits* presented itself not only as the reader’s fare but also as the reader’s medicine for physical ailments and spiritual shortcomings, and its self-help articles prefigured the myriad of glossy magazines lining today’s grocery store checkouts promising to help the reader lose five pounds in ten days with a new diet or workout regimen.

Criticisms of Newnes’s periodical as not literary enough were common while he was alive, and Newnes had to defend his magazine against the disapproval of many contemporary critics. One response he gave was the following:

Oh, you may call it cheap journalism; you may say it combined lottery with literature, but I will tell you this, that it has guided an enormous class of superficial readers, who craved for light reading, and would have read so-called sporting papers if they had not read *Tit-Bits*, into a wholesome



vein which may have led them to higher forms of literature. (qtd. in Friedrichs 97)

One of the questions with which Newnes is engaging here is what the purpose of literature should be, a question that vexed the Victorians for the better part of a century. Newnes assents to the hierarchy in which light literature is inferior to more serious or “higher” forms of literature, but he bases his idea of the purpose of literature in the instruction of readers. This editorial engagement with the question of literariness, even though Newnes ceded ground in this instance, connects the periodical venture to late nineteenth-century concerns with literature. The practical element of this evaluation of literature, then, opened space for light literature if that is all the audience is willing to read and if it is not particularly damaging to their moral fiber. *Tit-Bits*, truncated as many of its articles are, represented then a sort of evolution of literature, even if its “literariness” is seen as suspect. Much like Jasper Milvain who, unlike Edwin Reardon, survives Gissing’s *New Grub Street*, *Tit-Bits* adapted successfully to its late-Victorian environment.

Newnes’s struggle to procure the capital for his magazine put his editing more firmly in the realm of business than art, and Newnes differs from other editors in this study because he was not an author and did not aspire to be a literary figure. He was a businessman, a professional, and a man who loved reading and could recognize the most interesting part of an article, but he was not a novelist, a poet, or an essayist. Unlike George Smith or many of the other business figures in the history of periodicals, he also

served as editor. Furthermore, he did not need literary connections for his magazine; he needed only a sense of what would amuse the masses. According to Kate Jackson,

Newnes' editorial persona was multiform. He was 'innovator and preacher', (to borrow the title of a recent work on the Victorian editor, edited by Joel Wiener), 'patriarch and pioneer', democratic representative, business partner, adviser and friend; sometimes upbraiding, sometimes cajoling, sometimes jesting, often avuncular. ("The *Tit-Bits* Phenomenon" 207).

Unlike earlier editors, especially those of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Newnes made no claims at gentility as an editor although he was awarded a baronetcy, as Hulda Friedrichs's biography of him highlights in its title *The Life of Sir George Newnes*. Instead, he constructed a frank editorial persona of being a self-made man: "I *am* the average man,' Sir George Newnes would say. 'I am not merely putting myself into his place. That is the real reason why I know what he wants'" (Friedrichs 188). Readers felt a strong connection to Newnes and his magazine, likely in great part for this public persona of ordinariness.

One of the enduring portraits of *Tit-Bit's* brand of journalism, George Gissing's *New Grub Street* raised concerns about the changes in literature and in readers occasioned by the chatty magazine. In the novel, Mr. Whelpdale describes the type of periodical he would market given the chance:

I would have the paper address itself to the quarter-educated; that is to say, the great new generation that is being turned out by the Board schools, the

young men and women who can just read, but are incapable of sustained attention. People of this kind want something to occupy them in trains and on 'buses and trams. As a rule they care for no newspapers except the Sunday ones; what they want is the lightest and frothiest of chit-chatty information—bits of stories, bits of description, bits of scandal, bits of jokes, bits of statistics, bits of foolery. Am I not right? Everything must be very short, two inches at the utmost; their attention can't sustain itself beyond two inches. Even chat is too solid for them: they want chit-chat.  
(496-97)

The magazine that Whelpdale intends to call *Chit-Chat* is clearly a parody of *Tit-Bits*, and Gissing's bleak view of an audience without even the attention for "chat" is, to some degree, upheld by the vast popularity of *Tit-Bits*. Whelpdale identifies the "quarter-educated" in terms of limited attention span, though this description lacks the charity that a consideration of the circumstances rendering these tit-bits the best form of amusement could introduce, considering the attention exhaustion created by modernization, commuting, and an increasing pace of life especially in urban centers. The phrasing of "their attention can't sustain itself beyond two inches" or "even chat is too solid for them" distances the readers "them" from the producers, the editors and the literary men and women. Instead of the potentially inclusive editorial "we," Gissing's "their" emphasizes the distance between editor and audience in this portrait of the editor who excludes the semi-literate and the lower classes from culture, which takes on more of an Arnoldian sense of the word. This exclusion and Whelpdale and Milvain's degree of

contempt for the audience as not meeting the standard of the literary man or woman who can handle more substantial writing is the opposite of Newnes's professed desire that by providing something less solid, something like chit-chat, that readers will improve and perhaps become ready for more solid reading fare. Unlike Gissing's burlesque of Newnes, Newnes himself described his readers with high regard and a paternal stance, and readers responded with strong commitment to his periodical.

While his magazine was obviously very commercialized, by taking a fatherly role and philanthropic position toward his readers, Newnes was able to balance the personal and commercial in his relationship with readers. One way Newnes navigated the potential of thorns in his editorial cushion was by inviting reader submissions in the form of a contest for a prize, such as the *Tit-Bits* £1000 prize Grant Allen won for his novel or the *Tit-Bits* Villa Contest which was a story contest for a "seven-roomed freehold house" to be named after the magazine (Friedrichs 87). The periodical was famous for its many contests, such as the *Tit-Bits* Insurance Scheme, the *Tit-Bits* Villa Contest, writing contests, and the many hunts for buried treasure it held by giving clues to the locations of the treasure in the paper. Much like Ellen Wood, Newnes connected to his readers on an interpersonal level; however, Newnes's close relationship with the reader was at odds in some ways with the business elements of his venture. For instance, the *Tit-Bits* Insurance Scheme offered £500 to the family of anyone who died in a railroad accident with the current number of *Tit-Bits* on their person. Offering this substantial sum of money made Newnes appear amazingly generous and concerned for the families of those lost to railway accidents, but this apparent philanthropy also functioned as a shrewd marketing

strategy because to be covered by this insurance the most recent volume of *Tit-Bits* needed be one one's person at all times. In its insurance scheme, *Tit-Bits* fell somewhere between a caring family and a calculating insurance company. Furthermore, the few claims that were made turned into more advertising for the magazine and into material for the periodical to publish.

Its successful establishment of a close relationship with readers was one of the reasons for *Tit-Bits*'s success; however, although the magazine sold well from the moment it touched the newspaper stalls, its name gave some potential readers pause as "tit" was part of the slang of 1880s Victorian England although according to his biographer, a connection other than "tittle" had not previously occurred to Newnes.<sup>55</sup> Friedrichs writes that the problem with the title was "one of the ironies of fate" considering that Newnes's main concern with the paper was decency that because Newnes was "unacquainted with the slang then in fashion among the class of men and boys who are for ever on the look-out for indecencies and obscenities" (67). The problem with the name was especially apparent in Newcastle-on-Tyne, where Newnes had to employ a number of advertising strategies including using his brother-in-law's connections to woo high-profile readers (Friedrichs 74). Notwithstanding the difficulties of title, *Tit-Bits* won its audience's hearts, and the stories of the lengths to which devoted Tit-Bitites spread the word about the paper was at times surprising, such as in the case of

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<sup>55</sup> While Friedrichs is too decorous to define the slang use of tit that the young men in particular associated with the magazine's title, it was likely not the current slang use of "tit" to describe a woman's breasts because this usage is of more recent American coinage. The earliest record of this sense of the word in the *Oxford English Dictionary* is from 1928. Friedrichs is more likely referring to the use of "tit" to describe a girl or woman of loose character.

the readers who painted “Read Tit-Bits” on a rock above a remote village in Cape Colony, South Africa (Jackson “The *Tit-Bits* Phenomenon” 211).

These Tit-Bitites were more than a group of readers; they were an imagined community leaving their mark on the world around them. In Benedict Anderson’s seminal study of the nature of nationhood, *Imagined Communities*, he describes the nature of print culture in relation to nationhood, arguing that the nation is “an imagined political community” (6).<sup>56</sup> Anderson notes that a newspaper is connected only by imagined connections held together by “calendrical coincidence”:

If we were to look at a sample front page of, say, *The New York Times*, we might find there stories about Soviet dissidents, famine in Mali, a gruesome murder, a coup in Iraq, the discovery of a rare fossil in Zimbabwe, and a speech by Mitterrand. Why are these events so juxtaposed? What connects them to each other? Not sheer caprice. Yet obviously most of them happen independently, without the actors being aware of each other or of what the others are up to. The arbitrariness of their inclusion and juxtaposition (a later edition will substitute a baseball triumph for Mitterrand) shows that the linkage between them is imagined.

(33)

Even though *Tit-Bits*, as a magazine little concerned with current events, did not have as strong of an incidence of calendrical coincidence as newspapers, Anderson’s point that

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<sup>56</sup> This colonizing moment, emblazoning the South African rock with an advertisement for an English periodical, or rather a command to read it, relates nationhood, colonialism, and the press, and these connections could be profitable for further study.

articles are linked through imagination has an important bearing on understanding the working of this magazine. Periodicals are held together by much more than glue, paper, and ink, though the physical object of the periodical should not be minimized. They are also held together by the imagination of their readers and by the communities of readers. Through juxtaposition, the small articles and anecdotes of *Tit-Bits* do create a whole of sorts made by imagined linkages and physical proximity. The line of three dots between each of the smallest tit-bits (see Figure 2) suggests that these anecdotes and jokes can be seen as pearls on a string, strung together by the editor, selected for their similarity of purpose—amusement—paired together as an ornament of sorts, gems to enjoy on the morning commute and a good luck charm to ward off railway calamity with the *Tit-Bits* Insurance Scheme. Readers could recognize kindred spirits in others sporting these printed pearls, which became the marker not of social class and standing but of being a member of an international community of readers.

Anderson's observation that "the newspaper reader, observing exact replicas of his own paper being consumed by his subway, barbershop, or residential neighbours, is continually reassured that the imagined world is visibly rooted in everyday life" (35-6) is taken to a larger extreme in the *Tit-Bits* imagined community which also had meeting spaces, like the *Tit-Bits* Pavilion and Inquiry Office near the Paris Exhibition of 1889 which was designed to "be a facsimile in design, colour, and every other way of the front page of *Tit-Bits*" (Newnes qtd. in Jackson "The *Tit-Bits* Phenomenon" 210). This *Tit-Bit* exhibit was a physical representation of the textual community formed in the pages of the magazine. Kate Jackson notes the important cultural role played by this magazine in

“The *Tit-Bits* Phenomenon: George Newnes, New Journalism and the Periodical Texts”:  
“*Tit-Bits* functioned as the focus of a popular cultural movement, a source of cultural identity, a popular social educator, a legal and moral bond between reader and editor, and a pluralistic discursive sphere” (206). The editor’s role in Jackson’s estimation moves into the moral realm, and in Newnes’s case the moral formation of his audience and the provision of reading fare that might lead to what Newnes himself called “higher forms of literature” (qtd. in Friedrichs 97). One of the hallmarks of *Tit-Bits* was the way in which it engaged its readers and the way in which these Tit-Bitites participated in the magazine. Within the magazine itself, the interactive potential of the press was integral in the column “Answers to Correspondents,” appearing from 1885 onwards, which Bridget Griffen-Foley calls “the linchpin of the interactive posture adopted by *Tit-Bits*” (535). This question and answer format harkens back to early periodicals, specifically the *Athenian Mercury*, though the questions and answers are more abbreviated in *Tit-Bits* than in Dunton’s periodical. The “Agony Column,” which ran from June to July in 1885, was another example of interactive journalism in which the journal itself becomes a sort of public space for connecting a society; however, as Jackson notes in “The *Tit-Bits* Phenomenon,” Newnes’s vision of estranged families reconnecting over advertisements for missing people or forgiven prodigals did not materialize as the column was more often used to arrange meetings. The magazine served, then, to create communities not only imagined but also realized as Newnes produced a magazine at once commercial and personal.



To the twenty-first-century ear tuned to the song of technologically-mediated communication, the textual sound bites of *Tit-Bits* may appear eerily familiar as they bear more resemblance to Facebook status updates, tweets, memes, and posts on Internet sites such as [icanhascheezburger.com](http://icanhascheezburger.com) than the poetry, articles, or novels of most nineteenth-century periodicals. For instance, this October 22, 1888 entry bears marked similarity to the lolcat images in the appendix (see Figures 4 and 5): “WHISKY is your greatest enemy.’ ‘But,’ said Mr. Jones, ‘don’t the Bible say, Mr. Preacher, that we are to love our enemies?’ ‘Oh, yes, Jones, but it don’t say we are to swallow them” (3). The fun poked at a proverb in this tit-bit provides its audience with quick, accessible humor. Figures 4 and 5 deal with similar issues of moderation and excess in alcohol consumption. In Figure 4, the cat asks “Who’s this ‘moderation’ people keep telling me to drink with,” and in Figure 5, the caption reads “I read sum wares dat drinkin is bad fur u, so I qwit readin.” These lolcat images and the 1888 tit-bit depend on a misunderstanding of advice for decreasing alcohol consumption. In the tit-bit, the play between loving a human enemy and “loving” whiskey results in the humorous repartee. Similarly, the humor in Figure 4 relies on the misreading of “moderation” as a name rather than a virtue, again playing with the distinction between persons and alcohol. The humor in Figure 5 derives from a willful misreading of advice similar to the 1888 lover of whiskey’s misreading of the biblical command. Both the nineteenth-century magazine and the twenty-first-century Internet sites respond to similar demands by offering pages and pages of micro-articles or images, gifs, and videos that serve as a momentary escape from the tedium of work. Both of these rely on amusement, and quick diversion from an increasingly hectic

existence is the commodity this magazine is selling. In *Tit-Bits* as in twenty-first-century Internet posts, technology plays an important role and both types of texts respond to the societal changes and are influenced by new technologies.

*Tit-Bits* demonstrates many of the changes in late nineteenth-century audiences, particularly the way reading context and habits affected practices. In the conclusion of his 1889 article in the *New Review* entitled “The New Journalism,” T. P. O’Connor describes the reading practices of the late Victorian era:

We live in an age of hurry and of multitudinous newspapers. The newspaper is not read in the secrecy and silence of the closet as is the book. It is picked up at a railway station, hurried over in a railway carriage, dropped incontinently when read. To get your ideas through the hurried eyes into the whirling brains that are employed in the reading of a newspaper there must be no mistake about your meaning: to use a somewhat familiar phrase, you must strike your reader right between the eyes. The daily newspaper often appears to me to bear a certain resemblance to a street piano: its music is not classical, nor very melodious, and perhaps there is a certain absence of soul, but the notes should come out clear, crisp, sharp. (434)

Modernization through technological advances such as the increased use of the railway car left its mark on reading practices not only in newspapers articles but also in longer forms, such as the novel. The distinction O’Connor draws between the privately read

book and the publically read newspaper breaks down to some degree in a periodical like *Tit-Bits* that published novels in parts.

The influence of technologies and time spent reading left their mark on the pacing of novels. For instance, Grant Allen's novel *What's Bred in the Bone* progresses at a faster pace than 1860 sensation novels. It won the *Tit-Bits* £1000 prize for the best story and was featured in the magazine and then printed in a single volume. Allen's novel follows the intertwined fates of the apparently orphaned identical twins Guy and Cyril Waring, their aristocratic half-brother Granville Kelmscott, and Elma Clifford, whose Eastern heritage manifests itself in fits of snake-dancing frenzy, through an intricate plot network of inheritance, murder, forgery, and African diamonds. While employing a number of stock plotlines from the literature of the time, particularly sensational melodrama, one of the important elements of this novel that connects to its context of *Tit-Bits* is its rapid pacing. Unlike Ellen Wood's *East Lynne*, which features a train accident after hundreds of pages, *What's Bred in the Bone* leads off with a tunnel cave-in in the second chapter that traps newly-introduced Cyril and Elma in their train car without sufficient oxygen. This action-heavy beginning is followed quickly with the aforementioned snake-dancing frenzy and murder. Dickens's concern that serial fiction should follow a serial cadence whereby each number creates suspense is taken further in this novel to catch and hold the attention of readers who are turning mostly to the tit-bits of information in the magazine's pages. The novel's pace escalates, echoing the increased speed of modern life.

Much like Jasper Milvain, *Tit-Bits* produced few contributions to what we might term lasting literature. *What is Bred in the Bone* is certainly no *Middlemarch* or even *East Lynne*, and *Tit-Bits*'s scarcity in archives today bears a testament to the survival of ephemera but also to the evanescent nature of this particular paper. In so many ways, it became the literary machine of Marian's nightmarish fantasy with its readers sending in tit-bits in hopes of being awarded the distinction of being the "Prize Tit-Bit" and Newnes sorting through submissions, books, and other papers for material. The many books that were already written were not fed into a machine to be condensed into a coherent, modernized whole. Instead, the "best" that had been said and written was gathered together into a literary assemblage of bits as the distance between popular and literary magazines grew.

### **The *Yellow Book* and Henry Harland, Aubrey Beardsley, and Ella D'Arcy**

If *Tit-Bits* was one of the more ephemeral late-Victorian contributions to literature, the *Yellow Book* was one of the *fin de siècle* press's more lasting contributions to literature. Both the *Yellow Book* and Aubrey Beardsley's other magazine endeavor, the short-lived *Savoy* (1896), represent an intentionally literary branch of late nineteenth-century periodicals that form a counterpoint to Newnes's popular, consumer-oriented, late nineteenth-century magazines. The *Yellow Book* (1894 - 1897) with its iconic covers designed by Aubrey Beardsley in stark black over distinctive yellow (see Figure 6) can still be found in many a library today. It was published by John Lane at Bodley Head and was co-edited by Henry Harland, an expatriate American novelist who served as the literary editor, and Aubrey Beardsley, a young artist who was infamous for his

illustrations of Oscar Wilde's *Salome* who served as art editor. The *Yellow Book* was and is an iconic periodical representing the heart of the 1890s artistically. Its editors were very self-conscious of what they wanted their periodical to be and the impact they wished it to have on literature and visual art, and it represented the editors' response to the changing literary landscape through a blending of tradition and innovation. The periodical's engagement with modernization was complex because its editors embraced it while simultaneously resisting the effects the evolving experience of time was having on reading. Before looking at the relationship between the changing world of the late nineteenth century and the *Yellow Book*, it is vital to consider in more depth how the complex editorial dynamic influenced the quarterly itself and anticipated editorial changes in the twentieth century. Unlike the relative simplicity of the editing of *Tit-Bits* by founder-proprietor-editor, the *Yellow Book* divided these editorial duties. Aubrey Beardsley, the art editor, and Henry Harland, the literature editor, worked closely with John Lang, the publisher, to balance the avant-garde focus of the periodical with the demands of the market. Furthermore, the less official influence of contested sub-editor Ellen D'Arcy and the influence of Harland's wife Aline created more of a space for women in the world of the literary magazine, though it is important to remark that this space was unofficial.

According to Henry Harland, the moment of the *Yellow Book's* inception was a conversation with Aubrey Beardsley on "one fearful afternoon in one of the densest and soupiest and yellowest of all London's infernalesst yellow fogs" in which they expressed their frustration at the lack of consideration their submissions received from publishers:

London publishers should feel themselves longer under obligation to refuse anymore of our good manuscripts. Fancy having our brains stowed away for so long in their editorial sideboards that we lost our chance of even having our ideas served up cold. (Harland qtd. in Mix 68)

For Harland the editorial chair or, in this case, sideboard is a site of power, and his vision of the new periodical was one in which this power was held by the idea-generators themselves. He and his co-editor desired the editorial role because of the power it represented to shape the course of literature and ideas, especially in terms of newness, timeliness, and ideas served hot rather than cold. Harland drew on his literary connections and successfully gathered an impressive coterie of contributors to the new periodical. Most impressively, he secured the support of Henry James, whom he idolized. Literary celebrity, however, was not enough to secure a writer a place in this quarterly. From authors famous and obscure Harland demanded the best; in fact, he turned down two of H. G. Wells's stories of as second-rate even though Wells's name would have been a great draw for readers. In an interview with *Sketch* published on the eve of the release of the *Yellow Book*'s first volume, editors Henry Harland and Aubrey Beardsley indicated that literary quality was their first objective:

What goes into the *Yellow Book* will go in on the absolute rule of workmanship—value from the literary point of view. In fine, the notion is

that the *Yellow Book* should contain what is literature, and only what is literature—literature in all its phases. (557)<sup>57</sup>

This high standard for literature reflected the editors' commitment to quality and the concept of art as removed, to some degree at least, from commercial interests, as highlighted by the lack of advertisements in the *Yellow Book*.

While Harland and Beardsley may not have had editorial sideboards collecting writing and images rapidly growing cold, their magazine created a literary meritocracy rather than democracy. In the same interview, the co-editors expounded on their commitment to quality with their amusing indication that a good picture of a pumpkin would be more likely accepted than a poor one of the Crucifixion. This attention to execution and artistry over subject matter fights the tendency toward the mechanization of literary and artistic work evident in Marian's fantasy of the literary machine. One of the significant traits of mechanization is repetition, and in the press, this repetition can be found in elements such as subject matter, style, plot, and character. The *Yellow Book's* editors' example of the good picture of a pumpkin that would be printed over a mediocre representation of the Crucifixion resists the press's impulse to recombine and repeat. Take for example, Grant Allen's *What's Bred in the Bone* from *Tit-Bits*. This novel in parts has the feel of the literary machine with its trite sensation fiction plotlines of evil twins, threatened inheritance, fear of hereditary insanity, and a fortune won in the colonies. This seeming mechanization of print is especially prominent considering how many of these stock plotlines are "reduced, blended, modernized into a single one for

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<sup>57</sup> I attribute this quote both to Beardsley and Harland because the author of this interview reports their responses as if interviewing one person rather than two.

today's consumption" in Allen's prize-winning novel (Gissing 138). The hypothetical *Yellow Book* pumpkin, on the other hand, is valued for its artistry that cannot be mechanized, though mechanical reproduction allowed for its circulation.

Although the *Yellow Book's* art editor does not seem to have been inundated with pictures of pumpkins, the standard of quality was upheld in both visual and written art with a high degree of success; in his 1930 study *English Literary Periodicals*, Walter Graham refers to the *Yellow Book* as containing "some of the most brilliant writing of the 'nineties in its 280-page numbers" in his history of nineteenth-century literary periodicals (265-66). Harland and Beardsley's move to put literary quality foremost in their interview likely worked to warn away the thorn-writers Thackeray feared by replacing the editor's perceived personal relationship with the reader with a more distanced relationship. Beyond being a testament to the public interest in the new periodical, the *Sketch* interview with Beardsley and Harland indicates a shift in the public's perception of editors by the late 1890s. The fact that the editors are considered personalities worth interviewing because of their new quarterly shows a change in the editorial role in which editors themselves and periodical editing become newsworthy, and generating interest in a periodical through interview suggests an increasingly public profile for the editor. In this case, Harland and Beardsley both had some fame previous to launching the *Yellow Book*, Harland as a writer and Beardsley as an artist; however, their editorships and the draw of this particular periodical both in terms of art and in terms of advertising in this interview are what make them newsworthy for the *Sketch* journalist. After the *Yellow Book's* release, Aline Harland, Henry Harland's wife, recorded that "To be brief, Henry



Harland, Aubrey Beardsley, became (to their surprise) the very lions of the hour, while their Quarterly was to be found on every smart drawing-room table in London” (Glastonbury 215). Lionism was associated with writers at the time, such as in the case of the writer referred to in Henry James’s short story entitled “The Death of the Lion” that was the first piece in the *Yellow Book*’s first volume, but Aline applies the term to her husband and Beardsley as editors, revealing how intimately connected these editors were to the artistic venture of their book.

As art editor of the *Yellow Book*, Beardsley was responsible for selecting the images to include in the periodical and also for providing cover art and other contributions. It was for the second of these duties that he was most famous and, in fact, infamous, as he told Henry James in a letter on April 30, 1894: “Have you heard of the storm that raged over No. 1? Most of the thunderbolts fell on my head. However I enjoyed the excitement immensely” (68). Criticism of Beardsley was even found in the *Yellow Book* itself. In “The Yellow Book: A Criticism of Volume I” which was published in the second volume of the periodical, Philip Gilbert Hamerton writes,

There is distinctly a sort of corruption in Mr. Beardsley’s art so far as its human element is concerned, but not at all in its artistic qualities, which show the perfection of a discipline, of self-control, and of thoughtful deliberation at the very moment of invention. Certainly, he is a man of genius and perhaps, as he is still very young, we may hope that when he has expressed his present mood completely, he may turn his thoughts into another channel and see a better side of human life. (187).

This critique is more laudatory than critical, but the fact that this thunderbolt of sorts falls within the pages of the *Yellow Book* itself makes the more critical portions about Beardsley's corruption and youth noteworthy. As part of the artist's brand, the overtones of youth and corruption, also the hallmarks of Oscar Wilde's aesthete hero Dorian Gray, were important for setting the tone of Beardsley's celebrity. Even so, boundaries for Beardsley's artistic and editorial decisions had to be maintained to allow the *Yellow Book* to continue to engage its audience.

The power dynamic in the relationship between editor and publisher is especially evident in Lane's interactions with Beardsley in which the publisher had to take the editorial role of censor. Beardsley's still celebrated images generated the most public interest, but his power to include what he wanted was bounded by his publisher.<sup>58</sup> The negotiation of this relationship can be seen in the following letter to Lane from March of 1894 in which Beardsley argues for the inclusion of a caricature of Mrs. Whistler in the *Yellow Book*:

Yes, my dear Lane, I shall most assuredly commit suicide if the  
*Fat Woman* does not appear in No. 1 of *The Yellow Book*.

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<sup>58</sup> Through his covers and other artwork in the *Yellow Book*, Beardsley's contributions were center-stage in the periodical and, in many ways, in the period. In fact, Max Beerbohm famously claimed to "belong to the Beardsley period." This claim at the end of his essay "Diminuendo" was not, however, as we may be inclined to assume, a claim for a new period around the iconic images of Aubrey Beardsley, rather, this claim is one of identifying a period now past: "Already I feel myself a trifle outmoded," Beerbohm wrote in the mid-nineties, "I belong to the Beardsley period. Younger men, with months of activity before them, with fresher schemes and notions, with newer enthusiasm, have pressed forward since then" (160). The Beardsley period was immensely short, cut off in 1895 with Oscar Wilde's indecency trials and Beardsley's association with Wilde.

I have shown it to all sorts and conditions of men—and women. All agree that it is one of my very best efforts and extremely witty. Really I am sure you have nothing to fear. I shouldn't press the matter a second if I thought it would give offense. The block is such a capital one too, and looks so distinguished. The picture shall be called *A Study in Major Lines*.

It can't possibly hurt anyone's sensibilities. Do say yes.

I shall hold demonstrations in Trafalgar Square if you don't and brandish a banner bearing the device 'England expects every publisher to do his duty.'

Now don't drive me into the depths of despair. Really I am quite serious. *The Second Mrs T* has come off splendidly. Annan and Swan will finish it in two or three days.

The Furse portrait looks A 1.

Yours Aubrey Beardsley (65-66)

Beardsley's style in this letter is flippant and energetic, threatening suicide or full-scale protests over the exclusion of a single image. These protests, more bluster and exaggeration than actual threat, were ineffective and the caricature was eventually cut from the number and later published in *To-Day* on May 12, 1894, showing that while Beardsley's editorial power was seriously bounded by his publisher, likely because of his youth, lack of experience, and penchant for pushing the proverbial envelope. Because Beardsley did not excel at the editorial role of censor that was associated with keeping a magazine marketable and appeasing its Victorian audience, this role passed to Lane in a

configuration somewhat like George Smith's handling of the business concerns of the *Cornhill Magazine* when Thackeray was unequal to the task. By freeing Beardsley from the role of acting as censor, Lane successfully employed an art editor who would be avant-garde while still controlling how far the magazine pushed against convention. After Beardsley's early death from tuberculosis in March 1898, Lane wrote in his 1904 introduction to Beardsley's *Under the Hill* that "Beardsley's defect as Art Editor was Youth. He would not take himself seriously: as an editor and draughtsman he was almost a practical joker" (qtd. in Mix 140). This artistic strength and editorial defect, though, were held in check by the sharing of editorial power among those in charge of the magazine.

Like Beardsley, Henry Harland had made a name for himself before becoming editor of the *Yellow Book*. That name, however, was Sidney Luska, his apparently Jewish *nom de plume* under which he published his first novel *As It Was Written: A Jewish Musician's Story* and subsequent Jewish-themed fiction. According to Harland's biographer Karl Beckson, the author-editor frequently fictionalized his life for interviews and enjoyed mythologizing his past. This romanticizing of his past worked to make him more mysterious to readers and to hide him from readers; however, Harland's subeditor of sorts, Ella D'Arcy, noted that Harland's writing served to reveal who he was:

There was never a writer who put himself so undisguisedly into his work as did Harland. Of the Cromwell Road circle used to say of him in friendly criticism that every Harland story consisted of the same three

people: Henry, Harriet, and the vague tertium quid or showman, serving to point the moral and adorn the tale. (34)

Perhaps his masks afforded him such a thorough public display of self; the editorial role also allowed him a veiled form of textual nakedness with its tension between the anonymity offered by the voiceless control of print with its inscrutable editorial “we.” This mythologizing and remythologizing without concern for consistency suggests a negotiation of the personal connection between writer and reader. Rather than allow the reader to know him, Harland presented a number of characters in a sort of reversal of the process by which D’Arcy notes that he drew himself in all of his characters.

Harland, more experienced than his coeditor, did consider how to avoid alienating his audience and had to heed the limitations of the editorial voice. In response to these concerns, he donned yet another mask, that of the Yellow Dwarf. Harland used the persona “The Yellow Dwarf” on a number of letters to the editor of the *Yellow Book*, starting in volume VII with “Books: A Letter to the Editor and an Offer of a Prize.” In this article, Harland as the Yellow Dwarf laments the lack of criticism in contemporary magazines, describes its repercussion that the gentleman scholar has no appropriate fare in the periodical press, and then offers a prize of fifty shillings for “what I shall admit to be a polished, a considered—in one word, a satisfactory expression of my own views” (132). Tension rather than direct opposition characterizes the interaction between the Yellow Dwarf and the editor. On the one hand, the Yellow Dwarf seems to correct the editor’s idea of criticism: “The fact is, Mr Editor, that in order to criticise you must have certain endowments—you must have a certain equipment” (129). On the other hand, the

editor, indicated as “ED. Y.B.” or simply “ED” in the footnotes, takes exception to the Yellow Dwarf’s position that “The *Spectator*, the *Academy*, the *Athenæum*, are different, very different—with a likeness. The likeness, I would submit, consists in the rigorous exclusion of considered literary criticism from their columns,” claiming instead, “THE YELLOW BOOK must note its dissent from the Yellow Dwarf’s observations, in so far, at least, as they affect the *Spectator*” (128). The power that attracted Harland to the editor position was limited, and like so many editors before him, Harland’s turn to anonymity allowed him freedom not given to the official voice of a magazine. His wife Aline described his use of this mask as his way of “showing his teeth, mocking, ironic, to the foes of fine art in letters” (215). Even this freedom in anonymity, though, is connected to the editorial power to decide what to publish, showing that Harland’s editorial role was one of tensions: a mask that allows self-revelation and restrictions that leave open the possibility of anonymous freedom.

Harland’s wife described her husband’s editorial role in contrast with his contemporaries. In “The Life and Writings of Henry Harland” first published in Santa Clara College’s journal the *Redwood* and reprinted in April 1911 in the *Irish Monthly*, Aline Harland under her penname G. Glastonbury, writes,

It was in truth, then, I make no doubt, very much as it is now,—the editor of the average magazine was a timid person; he saw evil everywhere and safety “only in Matrimony.” Caution prompted him for the most part to print nothing with the slightest touch of individuality, unless, indeed, it had previously been sifted and declared wheat, by an audience outside his

dominion. In fact, courage was denied him, and he was, and is still, always for the safe side. But the other hand, those unknown artist-watchers of the skies were in the position of the astronomer alone on his tower; not an eye to see but his own. (213)

Granted, Aline Harland's characterization of editors as timid does not capture the entire scope of late nineteenth-century editing, but the contrast between the cautious editor who was slave to his or her audience and the bold editor looking to further the literary scene does give a sense of the tension between the artistic demands frequently felt by editors, especially author-editors, and the more commercial demands of catering to an audience. His wife's portrayal of Harland also erases the collaborative nature of his editorship as he worked with his co-editor but also with Ellen D'Arcy.

The collaboration between Beardsley and Harland was cut short by Oscar Wilde's infamous indecency trials. Since Aubrey Beardsley's first connection to Bodley Head was the work he did illustrating the publishing company's edition of Oscar Wilde's risqué decadent drama *Salome*, the association of the young artist with the decadent playwright was strong in the public mind, perhaps as strong as the association between Beardsley and the *Yellow Book*. Eventually this connection between Wilde and Beardsley ended the latter's career editing the *Yellow Book* when he was fired from his art editorship because of concerns over his connection to Wilde.<sup>59</sup> Unfortunately, the

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<sup>59</sup> There has been much speculation, beginning in the nineteenth century, over how this situation would have resolved had John Lane not been abroad in America at the time where he was forced to make decisions without full knowledge of the situation. Katherine Lyon Mix, for instance, claims that "In the years of radio and trans-Atlantic telephone, such misunderstanding would be impossible" (146).

*Yellow Book*'s easy identification and this similarity of appearance to French novels worked against the periodical when Oscar Wilde was arrested while carrying a book that happened to be yellow.<sup>60</sup> Headlines like the New York headline "Arrest of Oscar Wilde, *Yellow Book* under his arm" did not pay attention to which yellow book was tucked under the arrested aesthete's arm, though it was actually a French novel, and the connection was formed in the public's mind and sealed the end of Beardsley's tenure as art-editor (Mix 142). Even after he lost his job, though, he continued editing, working as art editor of the *Savoy* with decadent poet Arthur Symons.

At this time, Harland took on the bulk of the editing work for the *Yellow Book*: a feat worthy of Arthur Waugh's description of Harland's editorial qualifications in 1894: "Mr. Harland has certainly many qualifications for the difficult post. . . . Moreover, he has unbounded enthusiasm and energy, and is safe to throw himself into the scheme with indomitable interest" (43). Katherine Mix also marvels at his ability to take on so much responsibility alone:

To plan and manage such a pretentious journal, even with the aid of the publisher, called for tremendous energy. Today [the 1960s] such a task would be undertaken only with a staff of editors, readers, and clerical assistants in private offices with names on the doors, but Harland worked alone with inadequate facilities (190).

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<sup>60</sup> Ironically, this relationship between a yellow book, French novels, decadence, and Wilde also appears in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* in the gift of the "poisonous" book with a yellow cover given to Dorian by Lord Henry: "For years, Dorian Gray could not free himself from the influence of this book. Or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that he never sought to free himself from it" (124). Beardsley too could not free himself from the influence of the yellow book tucked under Wilde's arm.



By contrasting the late nineteenth and early-twentieth-century editing practices, Mix highlights the difference between the lone-editor of the *Yellow Book* opposed to the veritable army of assistants the mid-twentieth-century editor could claim; however, the collaboration and division of editorial labor that became more common in the twentieth century were characteristic of the earlier years of the *Yellow Book*. Harland was hardly alone in his editing.

Rather, Harland relied on the ready help of his unofficial sub-editor Ella D'Arcy. Whether Ella D'Arcy, a constant contributor to the *Yellow Book*, was actually an editor of the quarterly falls within a gray area of *Yellow Book* lore. Speaking to Katherine Mix, D'Arcy herself claimed, "I was around a great bit, . . . and I helped as I could. But I never was really an editor" (qtd. in Mix 190). She describes her role as helpful and supportive but not official; however, many critics have read D'Arcy's involvement in the *Yellow Book* as officially editorial. For instance, James Lewis May describes her as an "Assistant Editor" in his 1936 *John Lane and the Nineties*. Anne Windholz's 1996 article, entitled "The Woman Who Would Be Editor: Ella D'Arcy and the *Yellow Book*," portrays D'Arcy as a woman caught between her aspiration to be an editor and gendered expectations holding her back. Windholz contends that D'Arcy's letters show a different gender dynamic at the *Yellow Book* than the promotion of female artists that it is known for; instead, we see reflected in D'Arcy's letters an environment "where female self-assertion was, at least in D'Arcy's case, neither appreciated nor tolerated" as is evident in her dismissal from her editing duties after her substantial changes to the April 1896 volume (116). The pay D'Arcy received supports Windholz's reading of D'Arcy as an

editor. Harland wrote to Lane saying “I pay Miss D’Arcy as sub-Editor from my own pocket” (qtd. Windholz 117). The wage itself implies that the role is a professional one, but the source of the income—Harland’s personal resources—renders this remuneration ambiguous.

The liminal status of D’Arcy as editor is especially important when considering professionalization and gender. The earlier aura of all gentlemen and no pay had certainly dissipated by the nineties, but gendered assumptions about editing of more serious journalistic endeavors lingered. Whether or not D’Arcy was officially an editor, she certainly edited. The work she did proofreading, arranging, paginating, and indexing, was paid work, and as such her role was somewhat professional in capacity. As she reveals in a letter to John Lane on April 11, 1896, she still wanted the official title: “*Why* didn’t you make me Art Editor?... Ah, why *didn’t* you make me Art Editor” (qtd. Windholz 122). Contrasted with the claim to have been “around a great bit” to have “helped as I could” and that she “never was really an editor,” the fervor of her editorial aspirations in this letter is a bit confusing because years later she did not recount her experience with the *Yellow Book* in terms of profession and pay. Perhaps what made D’Arcy most clearly an editor was also what made her least likely to claim this role: like Beardsley, she too was fired. D’Arcy was relieved of her shadowy position of editor after trying to exercise too much power over changing articles, especially Harland’s. She received a postcard indicating that she could “consider herself relieved of the duties of Sub-Editor, & he will seek for a less untrustworthy person” (qtd. in Windholz 126). Whether the root cause of her termination as editor was gendered or not, it certainly

illustrates that while tough to navigate, nineteenth-century journals did provide professionalization options for women. Furthermore, the breakdown of the partnership between D'Arcy and Harland demonstrates that while collaborative forms of editorship had benefits and became more necessary in the twentieth century, the power dynamics of these professional relationships were often quite tricky and the relationships volatile.

Before closing this discussion of professionalism, gender, and the *Yellow Book*, it is only right to mention that D'Arcy and the quarterly's many female contributors were not the only woman to significantly influence the *Yellow Book*. Aline Harland, Henry Harland's wife, was also an important, though less visible, part of the periodical. In a letter to Steadman May 21, 1894, Aline appropriated the editorial we:

As we have succeeded in spite of their unfriendliness we bear them only the slight grudge and small amount of contempt one cannot help feeling for meanness unspeakable, and we hope with Heaven's help to succeed so much better in our second number, even than in our first, that they will be the laughing stock of the public and The Yellow Book. (qtd. in Beckson 73).

Aline seems to have considered herself a part of the *Yellow Book* staff and includes herself in grudge bearing as well as success. While her role in the periodical is, to some degree, lost to history, this letter implies that she had an active though unofficial role in the quarterly, and likely many other spouses of editors have had an influence unexplored by scholars at, at times, accessible only in glimpses in letters and glints in the researcher's imagination. Later, after her husband's death, Aline took up his final work

*The Royal End*, which he left unfinished, and completed it, even remembering his plan for the final line of the book being that love is the royal end (Glastonbury 218). Much like this final work of Harland's that became a joint work, the *Yellow Book* too included collaboration, perhaps less visibly, however. The editorial dynamic of the *Yellow Book* was complex and that power and official editors, publisher, a sub-editor, and even a spouse shared the work.

Having considered the editorial dynamics of the *Yellow Book*, let us turn to the quarterly itself. Although it would certainly not be wrong to classify the *Yellow Book* as an illustrated periodical, this designation implies a subordination of image to word that the *Yellow Book*'s editors actively resisted. Many magazines and newspapers from the second half of the nineteenth century used illustrations to flesh out text, but these decisions were often driven by commercial concerns and an assumption that the role of illustration was to add value to the text itself. After early illustrated periodicals such as *Punch* (1841-1992, 1996-2002) and the *Illustrated London News* (1842-2003) succeeded at attracting a large audience, many periodicals followed suit; *Once a Week* (1859-1880), the *Cornhill Magazine* (1860-1975), *Good Words* (1860-1911), the *Argosy* (1865-1901), *St. Paul's Magazine* (1867-1874), *Belgravia* (1867-1899), to name only a few, all included images.<sup>61</sup> Pictures included in serially published novels, such as many of Dickens's novels and even Thackeray's illustrations of his own novels, also helped drive this trend of illustrating periodicals and serial works. The visual and the commercial

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<sup>61</sup> For a more in-depth study of mid-century periodical illustrations see Simon Cooke's 2010 *Illustrated Periodicals of the 1860s: Contexts and Collaborations*.

came together in the mid-nineteenth century, and printing technologies, such as wood engraving enabled periodicals to include images, and the effectiveness of images to attract Victorian audiences had long been remarked in the periodical press. In 1942, Herbert Ingram founded the *Illustrated London News*, “the first weekly news periodical to link text with images,” after he “noticed that when a paper included even the crudest of illustrations its sales increased” (Beegan 257, 258). The picture in the periodical was subordinate not only in its commercial role but also to the text itself. For example, Figures 7 and 8 from the fifth volume of the *Cornhill Magazine* are typical images serving as illustrations that depend upon the text for their significance. The set of illustrations in Figure 7 depicts a theater audience’s reactions to tragedy, comedy and farce, melodrama, and the opera for the article “At the Play.” These illustrations depend on the article for their meaning—the textual descriptions under each gives meaning to the images, and their significance is representing the theater genres discussed in the article. The image in Figure 8 is actually part of the text itself, forming the “G” in General Baynes for the twenty-seventh chapter of Thackeray’s novel *The Adventures of Philip*. The meaning of the image of a man sitting at a table depends on the story being told in writing, and its integration into the text itself underscores its lack of artistic autonomy.

The lack of self-sufficiency in the images in Figures 7 and 8 is implied by their position in relation to the text of the novel and article, but the power dynamic in the dialectic between text as master and image as slave is unstable. The image precedes the word in the reader’s experience of the text because the eye can absorb the image before reading the words on the page. The image itself changes how readers image the text, and

readers may depend upon the image to make meaning of the periodical. These illustrations can be read against the grain or even removed from their context, and printed pictures had the potential to give readers more of a feeling of connection to and control over the text, as demonstrated in widespread extra-illustration, the practice of inserting other pictures or even hand-drawn images into published works.<sup>62</sup> Another way the power dynamic between word and image was challenged in illustrated periodicals was the interest they held for the illiterate. Especially before the education reform of the late-Victorian era, the illustrations in magazines and newspapers attracted illiterate “readers,” as Henry Mayhew describes in volume one of his journalistic study *London Labour and the London Poor*:

“The costermongers,” said my informant, “are very fond of illustrations. I have known a man, what couldn't read, buy a periodical what had an illustration, a little out of the common way perhaps, just that he might learn from some one, who *could* read, what it was all about. They have all heard of Cruikshank, and they think everything funny is by him -- funny scenes in a play and all.” (“The Literature of Costermongers” 25)

Mayhew’s mid-century illiterate costermonger reverses the relationship between image and text—for him, the writing has meaning and value in relationship to the images in the periodical. When purchased by an illiterate consumer, the periodical becomes important primarily in relation to its visual interest. The text of the periodical is subordinated to the

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<sup>62</sup>Luisa Cale has done work on extra-illustration, one use of nineteenth-century illustrations, see her 2010 article “Dickens Extra-Illustrated: Heads and Scenes in Monthly Parts (The Case of *Nicholas Nickleby*)” in *Yearbook of English Studies* 40.2. 8-32.

images that illustrate it, reversing the general trend of seeing illustrations as the ornament and the text as the substance. Mayhew's anecdote also reveals how these images are tied to the value of a particular periodical as a commodity that opened new mid-century markets.

By the late nineteenth century, illustrations were not only common but also frequently the focus of periodicals, such as *Sketch* (1893-1959) and the *Strand Magazine* (1891-1950), in a culture more and more saturated with the visual. Instead of privileging the written, the *Yellow Book* configured the relationship between image and text as equal with each element, visual or textual, standing alone as a work of art. This separation was reflected in the editorial structure and the layout of the quarterly. In another account of the inception of the *Yellow Book*, the initial idea for the periodical was hatched in 1893 at a cottage in Brittany nicknamed Grob, a combination of the names Goold and Robinson, when the Harlands and a number of artists were summering there. In *A Study in Yellow: The Yellow Book and Its Contributors*, Katherine Lyon Mix writes that it was during the summer at Grob that D. S. MacColl expressed his desire for "a periodical of literature and art which would be independent of each other, having in common only the desire to break new ground, with the art also to be paid for" (66). The next year saw the launch of the *Yellow Book* under the direction of an art editor and a literary editor.

In "Machines of the Visible," Jean-Louis Comolli describes the latter part of the nineteenth century as "[living] in a sort of frenzy of the visible. It is, of course, the effect of the social multiplication of images: ever wider distribution of illustrated papers, waves of prints, caricatures, etc." (122). As Comolli notes, the periodical press was the major

impetus in the increased profile of and importance of the visual in the nineteenth century. The *Yellow Book* was deeply engaged with the visual culture of the 1890s; however, this quarterly also resisted the tendency to the frenzied component of Comolli's description through guard sheets and its use of space. Each image was covered by a guard sheet that would need to be slowly peeled back before the picture would be fully revealed. This served not only to protect the print but also to change the audience's experience of time in relation to the image. Rather than a rushed glance, these images demand a slower digestion. Furthermore, the liberal use of blank space invited the reader to pause and reflect. The title of each image appeared on its own page rather than underneath the image, and this separation distanced text and image. The free use of blank space in the *Yellow Book* adds to its unique *mis-en-page*. Linda Dowling reads the blank space in the pages of the periodical as "no longer a passive or suppressed background but a positive material element, a 'figure' in its own right" (122). Sir Frederick Leighton's "A Study" (Figure 9) is a prime example of the difference in approach to visual art found in the *Yellow Book*. There is no textual code to this image, even its title—"A Study"—yields no clue to its story. Instead, readers can only consult the image itself. It is art for art's sake.

The *Yellow Book* represents a conflicted response to modernization and the changes in the press at the time. On the one hand, it was self-consciously attempting to break from periodical tradition, but on the other, it also returned to older press aesthetics and resisted some of the technology-related changes embraced by magazines like *Tit-Bits*.



In the prospectus, Harland and Beardsley lay out their theory of how the magazine should work:

All magazines, if they are any good at all, must have clever stuff in them; that is a primary essential. We want, also, to be distinctive, to be popular in the best and truest sense of the word. And we don't want to be precious or eccentric. We feel that the time has come for an absolutely new era in the way of magazine literature. When the *Century* was started, it was, in magazine literature, far ahead of anything else; now it is as far behind, and probably in time, we shall get behind also, and somebody younger will take the lead. Distinction, modernness—these, probably, so nearly as they can be picked out, are the two leading features of our plan. (qtd. in Mix 557)<sup>63</sup>

In this Darwinian vision of the press, periodicals are creatures locked in a struggle for existence, and the magazine that survives is the one that breaks the mold and adapts to a rapidly changing market. The example Harland and Beardsley cite, the *Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine*, is especially representative of this periodical evolution. Begun in 1881, the American magazine the *Century* commenced with volume twenty-one because it succeeded *Scribner's Monthly Magazine*, which ran twenty volumes between 1870 and 1881. *Scribner's*, in turn, was descendent of the second incarnation of *Putnam's Magazine*, which had only been refounded after a thirteen-year hiatus only two

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<sup>63</sup> The *Century Magazine* was an American periodical first published only a little more than a decade before the *Yellow Book*, running from 1881 to 1930.

years before *Scribner's* began (Ockerbloom). This phoenix-like set of papers demonstrates the increasing textual pressure for newness and reinvention in the second half of the nineteenth century. To some extent, Harland and Beardsley's vision of the periodical press is a progress narrative, but like Darwin's theory of natural selection, the progress Harland and Beardsley describe is based on fitness for a cultural environment more and more enamored of the new rather than a belief in improvement. In the blossoming modernist spirit that Ezra Pound would later describe in his epigram of modernism, "Make it new," the editors of the *Yellow Book* envisioned their endeavor as one that would revolutionize periodicals. The editors wanted to be ahead of their time for fear of falling behind it, and being avant-garde was what they believed would make the new magazine distinctive and "popular in the best and truest sense of the word" rather than as a commodity easily consumed by the masses. For Harland and Beardsley, popularity was linked more to capturing the artistic *Zeitgeist*, indeed prescribing and shaping the *Zeitgeist*, than to selling copies.

The *Yellow Book* did not pursue this press revolution by entirely rejecting the traditional in favor of the new; instead, the *Yellow Book* kept distance from artistic movements of the time, and both traditional and cutting-edge authors comingled in its pages. In his "London Letter" in the January 20, 1894 number of *The Critic*, Arthur Waugh noted that Harland and Beardsley's magazine would "treat, not of the passing moment and its interests, but (in so far as it deals in criticism at all) with the permanent and stable" (43). In short, Waugh sets the literary in tension with the journalistic and notes that the *Yellow Book* is allied with the first of these endeavors. As its form

suggests, the *Yellow Book* aspired to permanence rather than ephemerality, and this aspiration meant that it did not deal with current events but rather current tastes and aesthetics. Part of this attempt at permanence was a resistance against being defined in terms of a single movement. While the *Yellow Book* has been strongly associated with Aestheticism and Decadence, and rightly so as many artists in the movement published in its pages, it was not simply a mouthpiece of the movement. Many of the contributors to the *Yellow Book* were young artists associated with Bodley Head; however, a number of contributors and those asked to be contributors, like Coventry Patmore of *The Angel in the House* fame, were well-established and decidedly not avant-garde. The mixing of more traditional and more avant-garde elements added to the novelty of the periodical and also helped it define a market.

This combination of tradition and newness can also be found on the literal page where old and new printing practices were combined and repurposed. The *Yellow Book*'s physical appearance hearkened back to older printing traditions through its letterpress and the use of catch-words. In its prospectus, the attention to the *Yellow Book*'s letterpress is mentioned in connection with its overall purpose:

to depart as far as may be from the bad old traditions of periodical literature, and to provide an Illustrated Magazine which shall be beautiful as a piece of bookmaking, modern and distinguished in its letter-press and its pictures, and withal popular in the better sense of the word. (qtd. Mix 77-78)

Distinguishing its letterpress is a rather strange promotional strategy for a new periodical, yet since this particular one was billed in that way, we should heed how the physical book was important to the editors. In “Letterpress and Picture in the Literary Periodicals of the 1890s,” Linda Dowling identifies the *Yellow Book* as “commercially the most ambitious and typographically the most important of the 1890s periodicals,” noting how the fly-titles and guard sheets emphasized the artistry of the book (118). The *Yellow Book* was printed in Caslon old-face font (see Figure 3), a font named for its eighteenth-century developer William Caslon who drew on seventeenth-century font models (Dowling 124).<sup>64</sup> Caslon old-face had been revived in the 1840s and used for devotional and Tractarian publications before its appropriation by late nineteenth-century Aesthetes (Dowling 124). Its use in the *Yellow Book* created the tone of a visual aesthetic that has been often reinvented and repurposed—it had the weight of history but also the feel of rebirth. The use of catchwords, a practice in which the first word of the following page was also included at the bottom of the page (see Figure 3), also helped bridge old and new. Notably, the *Edinburgh Review* used catchwords earlier in the century, though the practice was much older. In his 1885 *Encyclopædia Britannica* entry on palæography, E. M. Thompson dates catchwords to the twelfth century and their use in connecting quires (145). Harland and Beardsley’s use of catchphrases creates overtones of the medieval and overtones of a reinvented early nineteenth-century aesthetic, and it also emphasizes the periodical’s textuality. Instead of receding into the background during the reading experience, the text calls attention to itself through these recurrent repetitions each time

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<sup>64</sup> Linda Dowling speculates that James McNeill Whistler’s *The Gentle Art of Making Enemies* (1892) may have inspired the physical format of the *Yellow Book* (121).

the reader turned the page. The repeated words punctuate the physical interaction with the pages of the book, reminding the reader of the physical object containing the article or piece of art they are experiencing.

With its catch-phrases and traditional typeface, the *Yellow Book* may seem more backward-looking than engaged with the changing world of late-Victorian Britain like Edwin Reardon's refusal to modernize and become part of New Grub Street; however, this nostalgic formatting was not mutually exclusive with *avant garde* periodical production. The *Yellow Book*'s return to past publishing practices was combined with new practices, such as the hybrid of book and periodical. For some contemporary critics, however, the hybridization of book and periodical was confusing and off-putting. A reviewer in the May 19, 1894 number of the *Spectator* claimed, "All that this literary cackling has produced is a jaundiced-looking, indigestible monster, half-book, half-magazine" (695). The reviewer's language of monstrosity divides the "natural" books and magazines from each other, and challenges not the quality of any portion of the book but its legibility as a periodical. Fighting against this type of possible confusion, Harland and Beardsley described their magazine as a book, saying, "The quarterly is to be a book, a thing to be put in the library just like any other volume, a complete book" (557). This conception of the periodical as a work of lasting import even in its first printing separates it from the ephemera generally churned out as newspapers, journals, and magazines. The terminology of completion is also telling here—instead of a collection of unrelated voices, this periodical purports to create a whole, implying that the reader may well sit

down and read through this periodical as he or she is wont to read through a book.<sup>65</sup> The periodical's physical form was the topic of conversation in the press even before its release. Arthur Waugh commented, "Its very shape is to be a novelty. It will be exactly the size of an ordinary French novel, and will contain 320 pages" (43). The *Yellow Book* becomes both familiar by physically resembling a novel and fresh by using this familiar format in a new context. The physicality of the *Yellow Book* is even highlighted in its title. Rather than a magazine, gazette, journal, or review, this periodical is a book, a physical object; furthermore, the only modifier given to identify this book is a color, light reflected off a material surface.

This magazine proclaimed its physical presence in a way that most magazines, considered ephemera until bound in volumes, avoided. The prospectus described the *Yellow Book* as physical object, claiming that

It will be charming, it will be daring, it will be distinguished. It will be a *book*—a book to be read, and placed upon one's shelves, and read again; a book beautiful to see and convenient to handle a book with style, a book with finish a book that every book-lover will love at first sight; a book that will make book-lovers of many who are now indifferent to books. (qtd. in Mix 78-79)

The volumes' small page size and 320-page length are more inviting and easy to handle than other tomes of nineteenth-century periodicals, which are often a bit unwieldy both in page size and length. It calls readers to imagine it as a whole rather than a loose

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<sup>65</sup>I am not suggesting that one ought to or would enjoy sitting down and reading a volume of the *Yellow Book* cover to cover in one sitting--books, too, are read serially in multiple sittings.

collection of articles or bits. In combining periodical and book, the *Yellow Book* revolted against the frenetic pace of modernization embraced by *Tit-Bits*. Its physicality also demanded the reader's attention and called the reader to sit down and experience the book. The lightweight paper of *Tit-Bits* called readers to replace the magazine weekly, but the *Yellow Book's* uncut pages and thick paper invited readers to linger over its articles and images, much like twentieth- and twenty-first-century American author Toni Morrison's talking book in the concluding pages of her 1992 novel *Jazz*: "*That I love the way you hold me, how close you let me be to you. I like your fingers on and on, lifting, turning. I have watched your face for a long time now, and missed your eyes when you went away from me*" (229). Even now the *Yellow Book* speaks to its readers, calling them away from the hectic frenzy of a life shaped by technology and the frenzy of the visual.

This primary concern with artistry rather than amusement sets the *Yellow Book* on the opposite end of the periodical spectrum from *Tit-Bits*. There is a stark contrast between the *Yellow Book* and *Tit-Bits* regarding the former's aesthetic concerns and the latter's pandering to a semi-literate audience and seeking commercial gain. In this respect, *Tit-Bits* plays the Jasper Milvain to the *Yellow Book's* Edwin Reardon. Looking at the run time of each magazine highlights this difference: the *Yellow Book*, for all its artistic importance to the 1890s, ran only three years and three months as opposed to *Tit-Bit's* over a century run. *Tit-Bits* was the fittest textual organism in the late nineteenth-century environment, but the *Yellow Book*, its beautifully crafted pages, and its eponymously colored cover survives in myriad libraries and special collections because it was the better suited periodical to the literary environment. Furthermore, this unlikely

pair demonstrates the increasing gap between the literary and the popular press at turn of the century.

## **Conclusion**

There is no “Editorial Role” in totalizing capital letters. There are only editorial roles, but looking at particular editors and especially by pairing unlike editors, Jeffrey and Blackwood, Thackeray and Wood, Newnes and the collaborating editors of the *Yellow Book*, brings out a number of trends in editing in the nineteenth century. Firstly, the ill-defined position of editor at the beginning of the nineteenth century transformed into a structured and indispensable element of periodicals by the end of the Victorian period, but the tension between the art and trade elements of this type of literary work remained. Printed material devoted to guiding aspiring writers, like *The Editor* or *The Journalist*, and professionalization of writing during this time also contributed to this change. Periodical ventures are necessarily commercial, and the role of the editor in this commercial endeavor is both professional and artistic. One of the trends we see is that the commercial magazine and the literary magazine became more distinct by the end of the nineteenth century. Secondly, while generating audience interest in the editor served to increase the profile of the periodical in the early nineteenth century press, the mobilization of literary celebrity especially for author-editors increased drastically in the second half of the century, creating tension between the personal and professional elements of the role. This conflict was most evident in Thackeray’s difficulty with editorship of the *Cornhill*, but the personal connection to their audience was also an important component of Wood and Newnes’s editorial personas as well; however, both of



these editors were able to more easily navigate this tension. As the role of editor became more professionalized as the nineteenth century came to a close, the problem of contributors asking to be published as a personal favor rather than as part of a professional alliance did not disappear entirely, but the perception of editors, especially editors of literary magazines, as professionals changed the way most potential contributors approached publishing. Finally, adapting to the demands of the market and also actively shaping these demands were some of the most important elements of editorial work. Defining an editor as successful can be difficult and can differ from the description of an editor whose magazine was successful as in the case of Thackeray who was relatively unsuccessful as an editor of a successful magazine or in the case of Beardsley and Harland whose magazine was successful but short-lived, but one of the important markers of successful editors was watch and read the skies in the position of the astronomer, though none of these artist-watchers were ever truly alone in their towers.

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Appendix 1: Images from Chapter 3

THE  
EDINBURGH REVIEW,  
OCTOBER 1803.

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ART. I. *Lectures on the Elements of Chemistry, delivered in the University of Edinburgh, by the late Joseph Black, M. D. &c. &c. &c. Now published from his MSS. by John Robison, LL.D. Professor of Natural Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh.* 2 vol. 4to. pp. 1384. Longman & Rees, London. Creech, Edinburgh. 1803.

IN performing the duties of Editor to the discourses of his departed friend, Professor Robison had peculiar difficulties to overcome. With a few exceptions, Dr Black's lectures were left in a very disordered and imperfect state; generally written indistinctly upon scraps of paper; often in the form of notes or memorandums, from which he had spoken extempore; frequently consisting of references to the experiments that went on during the lesson.

To counterbalance these disadvantages, the Editor possessed some very important qualifications and happy facilities. He had known Dr Black most intimately for a long course of years; during which he had been, first, his favourite pupil, then his successor, and, lastly, his colleague. He enjoyed the friendship of the distinguished circle of philosophers among whom this great man, after achieving the most brilliant discoveries of modern times, happily and elegantly passed the quiet remainder of his days. From these friends, Mr Robison obtained all the information and assistance that the nature of his office required. He had free access to every document which could enable him to furnish the public with an accurate transcript of these celebrated lectures, or to aid his own recollections in presenting a sketch of their author, and in completing a history of the steps by which his discoveries were made. By a coincidence, equally rare and fortunate, journals of Dr Black's scientific pursuits were preserved from the time of his first application to speculative matters; and Mr Robison has been enabled to supply some of the dates  
VOL. III. NO. 5.

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Figure 1: A page from the third volume of the *Edinburgh Review*.

# TIT-BITS

FROM ALL THE MOST INTERESTING BOOKS, PERIODICALS AND NEWSPAPERS IN THE WORLD

No. 1.—VOL. I.

[ENTERED AT STATIONERS' HALL.]

PRICE ONE PENNY.

[REGISTERED FOR TRANSMISSION ABROAD.]

OCT. 22, 1881.

## "TIT-BITS."

HERE is no paper in the world conducted on the lines which will be followed in *Tit-Bits*. It will be a production of all that is most interesting in the books, periodicals, and newspapers of this and other countries. Opinions may differ as to whether it is fair for newspapers to use other people's writings so extensively as has now become the practice. Whatever fault may be found by some with this wholesale abstracting, in the case of *Tit-Bits* it is at any rate done openly and avowedly, and no attempt is made to pass off extracts as original compositions. There is scarcely a newspaper which does not give some extracts. The business of the conductors of *Tit-Bits* will be like that of the dentist—an organised system of extracting; but instead of, like the dentist, extracting that which is bad, and leaving that which is good, they will pursue exactly the opposite course, and extract that which is good, and leave the remainder. A complete system has been arranged whereby all the most interesting papers and books of England, France, Germany, Italy, Russia, America, Australia, and the Indies will be regularly searched, and whatever is found of interest to the general reader—in short, wherever a tit-bit is discovered—it will be drafted into the new paper *Tit-Bits*. It is impossible to find a person who can read the English language who will not be entertained by reading *Tit-Bits*. *Tit-Bits* will contain interesting incidents, amusing anecdotes, pithy paragraphs. Any person who takes in *Tit-Bits* for three months will at the end of that time be an entertaining companion, as he will then have at his command a stock of smart sayings and a fund of anecdote which will make his society agreeable. It is impossible for any man in the busy times of the present to even glance at any large number of the immense variety of books and papers which have gone on accumulating, until now their number is fabulous. It will be the business of the conductors of *Tit-Bits* to find out from this immense field of literature the best things that have ever been said or written, and weekly to place them before the public for one penny.

AN officer, not remarkable for courage, came one day to Quin, the actor, and asked him what he should do after having had his nose pulled. "Why, sir," said Quin, "soap your nose for the future, and then they'll slip their hold."

WHEN last the Queen was about to be confined the Prince Consort said to one of his little boys: "I think it is very likely, my dear, that the Queen will soon present you with a little brother or sister—which do you prefer?" The child (pausing): "Well, I think, if it is the same to mamma, I should prefer a pony."

A WILD young fellow, who was staying at a country house, was asked by a refined young lady to write some poetry in her album about autumn. The following was his performance:—  
"The melancholy days have come,  
The saddest of the year;  
It's a little too warm for whisky hot,  
And a little too cold for beer."

MR. FALLS, a well-known sportsman, happened one day to ride down a bound. The irascible but witty master of the Quorn attacked him in no measured language. "Sir," was the reply, "I'd have you recollect that I am Mr. Falls, of Dunganon." The answer was ready: "I don't care if you are the Falls of Niagara, you shan't ride over my bounds."

THE Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster was dining with a well-known citizen of Cottonopolis, and the conversation turned on the subject of the growth and development of America. "I should like," said the host, who is an enthusiastic admirer of the great Republic, "to come back fifty years after my death to see what a fine country America had become." "I believe you will be glad of any excuse to come back," said Mr. Bright.

AN Englishman in Paris went into a restaurant to get his dinner. Unacquainted with the French language, yet unwilling to show his ignorance, he pointed to the first line on the bill of fare, and the polite waiter brought him a plate of thin soup. This was very well, and when it was despatched he pointed to the second line. The waiter understood him perfectly, and brought him a vegetable soup. "Rather more soup than I want," thought he; "but it is a Paris fashion." He duly pointed to the third line, and a plate of tapioca broth was brought him. Again, to the fourth line, and was furnished with a bowl of preparation of arrow-root. He tried the fifth line, and was supplied with some gruel kept for invalids. The bystanders now supposed that they saw an unfortunate individual who had lost all his teeth, and our friend, determined to get as far from the soup as possible, pointed in despair to the last line on the bill of fare. The intelligent waiter, who saw at once what he wanted, politely handed him a bunch of toothpicks. This was too much, the Englishman paid his bill and left.

It is computed that the average circumference of a woman's waist is 36in. It is also computed that the average length of a man's arm is 36in. Great is thy wisdom, oh Nature!

A VERY loquacious female witness, whom the opposing counsel could not silence, so far kept him at bay, that by way of browbeating her he exclaimed, "Why, woman, there's brass enough in your face to make a kettle." "And sauce enough in yours," she instantly rejoined, "to fill it."

SAID Lord John Russell to Hume, at a social dinner: "What do you consider the object of legislation?" "The greatest good to the greatest number." "What do you consider the greatest number?" continued his lordship. "Number one, my lord," was the commoner's prompt reply.

"Now, then, my hearties," cried a gallant Yankee captain, seeing that it was all over with his men, "fight like heroes till your powder's done; then run for your lives. I'm a little lame, I'll start now."

It is doubtful whether human eccentricity ever went further than in the case of Lord Holland, who was contemporaneous with William the Third. It was his usual custom to regale his stud of horses with a weekly concert. He had a gallery erected for the purpose, and he maintained that the music cheered their hearts and improved their tempers.

THE son-in-law of a Chancery barrister having succeeded to the lucrative practice of the latter, came one morning in breathless ecstasy to inform him that he had succeeded in bringing nearly to its termination a cause which had been pending in that court of scruples for several years. Instead of obtaining the expected congratulations of the retired veteran of the law, his intelligence was received with indignation. "It was by this suit," exclaimed he, "that my father was enabled to provide for me and to portion your wife, and with the exercise of common prudence it would have furnished you with the means of providing handsomely for your children and grandchildren."

A STORY is told of a graceless scamp who gained access to the Clarendon printing office, in Oxford, when the formes of a new edition of the Episcopal Prayer Book had just been made up, and were ready for the press. In that part of the "forme" containing the marriage service, he substituted the letter "k" for the letter "v" in the word live, and thus the vow to "love, honour, etc., as long as ye both shall live," was made to read, "so long as ye both shall like." The change was not discovered until the whole of the edition was printed off. If the sheets thus rendered useless in England be still preserved, it would be a good speculation to have them neatly bound and forwarded to Indiana and Connecticut.

Figure 2: The front page of *Tit-Bits*.

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## The Death of the Lion

By Henry James

### I

I HAD simply, I suppose, a change of heart, and it must have begun when I received my manuscript back from Mr. Pinhorn. Mr. Pinhorn was my "chief," as he was called in the office: he had accepted the high mission of bringing the paper up. This was a weekly periodical, and had been supposed to be almost past redemption when he took hold of it. It was Mr. Deedy who had let it down so dreadfully—he was never mentioned in the office now save in connection with that misdemeanour. Young as I was I had been in a manner taken over from Mr. Deedy, who had been owner as well as editor; forming part of a promiscuous lot, mainly plant and office-furniture, which poor Mrs. Deedy, in her bereavement and depression, parted with at a rough valuation. I could account for my continuity only on the supposition that I had been cheap. I rather resented the practice of fathering all flatness on my late protector, who was in his unhonoured grave; but as I had my way to make I found matter enough for complacency in being on a "staff." At the same time I was aware that I was exposed to suspicion as a product of the old lowering system. This made me feel that I was doubly bound to  
have

Figure 3: A page from the first volume of the *Yellow Book*.



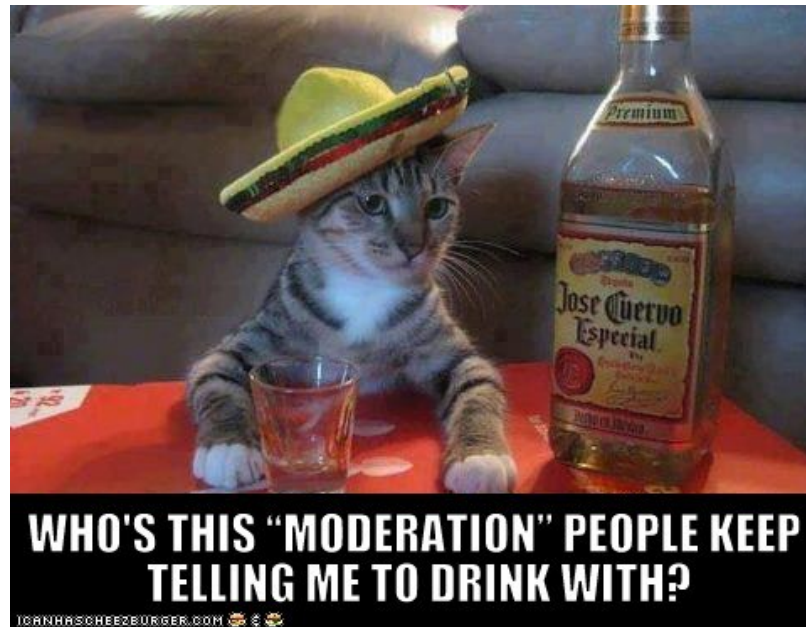


Figure 4: Lolcat entitled “He Doesn’t Sound Like a Person I Want to Know” from <http://icanhas.cheezburger.com> where it was reblogged from <http://theanimalblog.tumblr.com> on 15 July, 2012, and it originated on <http://lickystickypickyshe.tumblr.com> on 14 July 2012.



Figure 5: Lolcat entitled ““I Read Sum Wares Dat Drinkin Is Bad Fur U”” from <http://icanhas.cheezburger.com>. LoL by: wonphatcat Picture by: Dawnie.



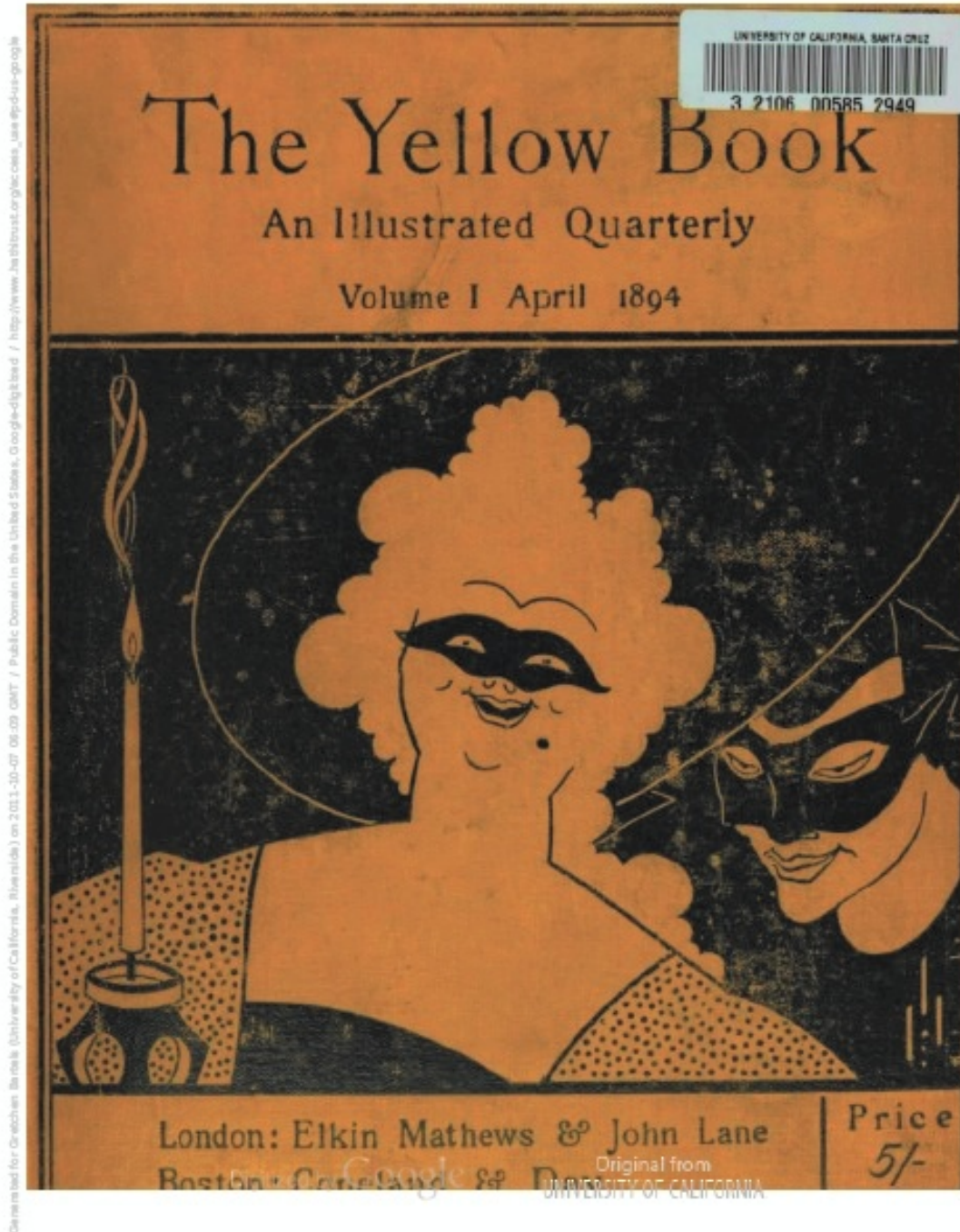


Figure 6: The cover of the first volume of the *Yellow Book*, designed by Aubrey Beardsley.



Figure 7: *Cornhill Magazine* Vol. V (90-91): This set of illustrations depicts the audience reactions to tragedy, comedy and farce, melodrama, and the opera for the article “At the Play.”

THE  
CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

JANUARY, 1862.

Philip.

CHAPTER XXVII.

I CHARGE YOU, DROP YOUR DAGGERS!



GENERAL BAYNES began the story which you and I have heard at length. He told it in his own way. He grew very angry with himself whilst defending himself. He had to abuse Philip very fiercely, in order to excuse his own act of treason. He had to show that his act was not his act; that, after all, he never had promised; and that, if he had promised, Philip's atrocious conduct ought to absolve him from any previous promise. I do not

wonder that the general was abusive, and out of temper. Such a crime as he was committing can't be performed cheerfully by a man who is habitually gentle, generous, and honest. I do not say that men cannot cheat, cannot lie, cannot inflict torture, cannot commit rascally actions, without in the least losing their equanimity; but these are men habitually false, knavish, and cruel. They are accustomed to break their promises, to cheat their neighbours in bargains, and what not. A roguish word or action more or less is of little matter to them: their remorse only awakens after detection, and they don't begin to repent till they come sentenced out of the dock. But here was an ordinarily just man withdrawing from his promise, turning his back on his benefactor, and justifying himself to himself by maligning the man whom he injured. It is not an uncommon

VOL. V.—NO. 25.

1.

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Figure 8: *Cornhill Magazine* Vol. V (1): Note how the illustration is part of the text itself.

A Study

By Sir Frederic Leighton, P.R.A.

*Reproduced by the Swan Electric Engraving Company*

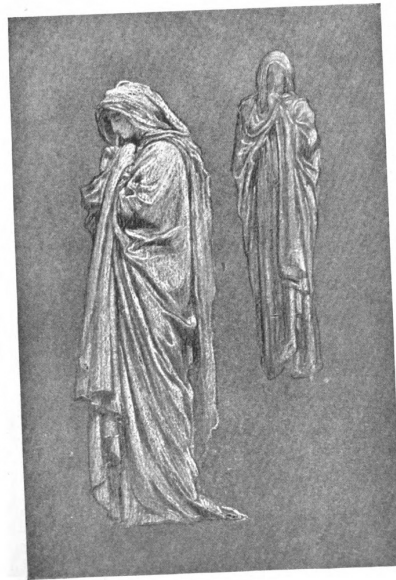


Figure 9: Appearing as the first entry in the first volume of the *Yellow Book*, note the use of blank space in Leighton's "A Study" (4-5).