

## **Print in Transition, 1850 – 1910: studies in media and book history**

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Chapter One:

'The Trepidation of the Spheres'<sup>1</sup>: Serials and Books in the Nineteenth Century

My subject has arisen from a debate in seminars in Britain about the definition of the history of the nineteenth-century book, and the implication of the newspaper and periodical press in it. In the spirit of the new history of the book, with its emphasis on the history of reading, I want to suggest that, throughout the period, changes in the spheres of the serial and the book were interdependent, and that the apparent separateness of the two spheres is mitigated by a profound interrelatedness: the novel from the 1830s habitually fragments into part-issue; the monthly magazines over time 'passed volumes and libraries of volumes through [their] pages', (Shand 1879b: 227) and each issue of the *Yellow Book* in the 1890s appears as a bound volume. We also know that readers read and reread some periodical articles in the same way they were accustomed to read and reach for volumes of books: Mark Pattison notes in his diary of 1878, 'Read for 5th or 6th time article on English Poetry in L.R.'<sup>2</sup> Oct. 1861' (Pattison 1878: f40<sup>v</sup>). Many newspapers and periodicals were customarily issued as annual and semi-annual bound volumes.

How do the position of these 'spheres' and their characteristics change in relation to each other in the period? In an attempt to address these matters, I want to begin by making four main points: (1) The origins of a significant tranche of periodicals throughout the period were contingent on books and the book trade; for example, the early nineteenth-century quarterlies called Reviews consisted allegedly of long essay/reviews of books. Their authority was predicated on their link with books; by their overall length, their aspiration to authority, and their leisurely frequency, they replicated the weightiness of books which, together with their outbreaks of frenetic irascibility, managed to produce a balance of the stately and the topical. (2) In turn, authors and publishers of books alike came to view the periodical press as an extension of their sphere. John Sutherland comments on Henry Colburn as an early nineteenth-century example:

Colburn was quicker than his contemporaries to understand the interdependence of various book-trade sectors; notably the mutual interest of the publisher, the lending library and the opinion-forming journal. One of his more controversial initiatives was to secure these links, by using his magazines to push his books to the library purchaser. His motives were low. But in this early form of diversified book-trade operation (he was variously library-owner, retail bookseller, magazine-proprietor, publisher) Colburn anticipated what is now termed synergistic patterns of publishing. (Sutherland 1986: 80).

(3) Serials - part-issue and periodicals - were an important factor in forcing the reduction of the price of books during the period, in ending the expensive three-decker system in the 1890s, and with it the circulating libraries' monopoly of the book market for the middle class reader.<sup>3</sup> (4) The growth and embedding of the newspaper sector of the nineteenth-century press were important catalysts in the fostering of reading - the professionalisation of journalism, literature and authorship, and the separation out of journalism from 'literature' in its most general sense.

Between December 1878 and October 1879 Innes Shand contributed anonymously an eight-part, serial article on 'Contemporary Literature' to *Blackwood's Magazine*; or should I have written '*Blackwood's Magazine* published an eight-part, serial article' etc.? I want to pause over this because the phenomenon of the article initially published anonymously but now attributed, highlights characteristics of certain periodicals that both link them to and distinguish them from books. Dating from 1817, *Blackwood's*, was founded in a period when the influence of the anonymous quarterlies was at its peak, and *Maga*<sup>4</sup> likewise adopted a policy of anonymity which, it may be argued, supports the corporate identity of the journal as a journal, and mitigates the differences of its individual contributors. In this respect, such periodicals - despite their multi-authorship and distinct fragmentation into articles on different subjects - present themselves to the reader as a whole, as a book does. Attribution deconstructs this illusion of homogeneity and splinters the text into a multitude of authors who are themselves constructed in our time as authors for our bibliographies, biographies, and catalogues, by virtue of a newly revealed *oeuvre*. The periodical, a casualty of the process, is easily discarded, a husk whose kernels have been removed and eaten. The example of Innes Shand (and all the other contributors to periodicals whose names are unrecognisable to us) indicates the multivalence of nineteenth-century authorship then and now. Even when we learn that Alexander Innes Shand was a novelist, journalist, and critic,<sup>5</sup> we are not much the wiser and, short of reading the *oeuvre*, will use our knowledge of the magazine not the author, *Maga* rather than Innes Shand, to inform our reading of his articles. In fact, Shand's posture in these articles is that of an anonymous individual and a spokesperson for *Maga*; he uses the editorial 'we' and writes as a veteran contributor, using the Tory politics of the Magazine to justify an excrescence of an attack on Gladstone, and defence of *Maga's* increasingly archaic policy of anonymity. In both cases, he seems to be writing simultaneously in two personae, as an individual and for the corporate entity of a collective and successive project which *Blackwood's* represents. Shand's 'Contemporary Literature' is a document in the history of reading, a contemporary construction of the professions of 'literature' and 'journalism'. Written by a Tory and a journalist, it is a 'reading', and both individual and collective.

It is striking that half of Shand's instalments on 'Contemporary Literature' pertain fully to the newspaper and periodical press, and that the first three about authors for *serial publication*, on 'Journalists', 'Journalists and Magazine Writers', and 'Magazine Writers', precede the following three about authors of *books* - 'Novelists', 'Biography, Travel and Sport', and 'French Novels', before finishing with 'Readers' and 'Newspaper Offices'. Shand's perception of the literary profession' makes clear his reason for giving journalism priority: for Shand journalism is the career path in the literary profession; writing books - and here significantly fiction occupies that entire sphere - is left to the women:

Novel-writing nowadays may be all very well, either for a George Eliot or a Mrs Oliphant, or for the active-minded female who has literary longings with

social ambitions, and who would sooner be writing romances than reading them. But those [males] who devote themselves earnestly to the literary profession, whether for the sake of a livelihood or with the idea of influencing opinions, will naturally turn towards the journals or periodicals. In either case, and in the latter perhaps rather than the former, they may hope for exceedingly liberal remuneration; for the leading organs have abundance of good work that must be regularly done by those who are competent to undertake it. (Shand 1878: 646).

It is interesting to note that by this date, 1878, Shand is able to construct a detailed spectrum of the structure of the profession:

There is scrambling in these quarters as everywhere else, and the best or most showy men must come to the front; but at all events there is abundance of consolation-stakes. . . . There is the broadest possible range of occupation and appointments, from the editors and chief contributors of the commanding oracles of opinion, down to the versatile utility-gentleman in the provinces, who undertakes any department indifferently; or the industrious penny-a-liner in the city who hunts up stray scraps of sensation. (Shand 1878: 646).

The feminisation of the novel as a subject in the Victorian period has been discussed in *Edging Women Out* by Gaye Tuchman (Tuchman 1989) and in *Sexual Anarchy* by Elaine Showalter (Showalter 1991), and in the 1880s and 90s George Moore, Thomas Hardy, and other male novelists gendered their remarks about the constraints on the novel at the time: 'Literature at nurse' was the title of Moore's pamphlet in 1885. But, gender aside, in the *Contemporary Review* in 1891, Edmund Gosse erects a similar barrier between writers of fiction and journalism. His reason for the separation is not primarily based on gender, but on the total exclusion of journalism from the category of the profession of literature: 'the novel, in short, tends more and more to become the only professional branch of literature.' (Gosse 1891: 534). At the same time, he also thinks little of fiction as a genre, contrasting it with 'pure letters', and lamenting the pecuniary success of the 'vapid and lady-like novel' title. By 1891 then, the conceptual separation of literature from journalism is clear on both sides, not only from the newspaper press (which had become more inclusive of literary news and reviews) but within the ranks of the army of part-time writers for the periodical press whom Shand called 'the brilliant half-amateurs'. (Shand 1878: 650). Gosse was one of these and George Gissing, who expressed a very similar view at this time in his novel, *New Grub Street*, another. By 1891 two principal characteristics of nineteenth-century print culture are perceived - the ubiquity of fiction and the ubiquity of the press. In 1896 George Saintsbury reiterates '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' (Saintsbury 1896: 166), but whereas Saintsbury goes on to connect the history of the century's literature with the press, Gosse and Gissing conceptualise the two spheres in the 1890s as mutually exclusive. These two burgeoning facets of the development of print in the 19th century joined forces for a limited period only in their shared growth; fiction was precisely the genre which indissolubly linked the fortunes of the Victorian serial with those of the Victorian book, although links between the serial and the book preceded and exceeded the province of fiction.

The number of serial titles between 1800 and 1900 increased exponentially from the fresh crop of quarterlies at the beginning of the century to the new annuals, monthlies,

weeklies, thrice weeklies, Sundays, and dailies; the longevity of some (such as the *Edinburgh*, the *Westminster*, *Blackwood's*; the *Athenaeum*, the *Spectator*, and *Punch*; *The Times* and the *Morning Post*) and the brilliance of others more short-lived (such as the *Examiner*, the *Penny Magazine* and the *Northern Star*) show the staying power of serials, the market for 'intelligence', and the quality on offer. The range of serial formats (from 'Libraries' to part-issue to daily) and of functions (from the dissemination of news to the reviewing, advertising, and circulation of fiction) was flexible and politically and culturally powerful. The phenomenon of serials - their number, their range, their ubiquity - increased access to reading, the habit of reading, and the market for cheap books at a time when the standard price per volume stood at 10s 6d. It is noteworthy that the establishment of the system of the high-priced three-volume novel in 1815 was shortly followed in 1817 by the creation of *Blackwood's Monthly Magazine*, which offered monthly instalments of novels, later to appear in volume form. Also in the wake of the expensive three-decker, Dickens' success with the part-issue of *Pickwick* re-introduced a format which he and others used profitably and successfully to reach a wider audience than the circulating libraries or the booksellers of the 1830s served.

From the 1840s, in addition to serial publications, various means of circumventing the high price of books stand out, involving publishers, retailers, and entrepreneurial distributors of books. The projects of circulating libraries and single-volume reprint series thrive, and cheap editions of 'railway novels' began to appear exclusively in stations from 1848. It is the period after the removal of the stamp and paper taxes in 1855 and 1861 respectively that I shall examine in detail. The metropolitan dailies and provincial weeklies multiplied and the provincial dailies appeared, the older weeklies (such as the *Athenaeum* and the *Spectator*) were challenged by the *Saturday Review*, and the monopoly of the expensive *Blackwood's* and *Fraser's* by the new shilling monthlies such as *Cornhill* and *Macmillan's*. While the frequency of these 'lighter' and family monthlies caught out the quarterlies, their reign and authority were more profoundly affected by the new 'heavy' monthlies such as the *Fortnightly Review* in 1865, the *Contemporary Review* in 1866 and eventually the *Nineteenth Century* in 1877.

One effect on the book of this prodigious accumulation of serial publications over the century pertains to the perception of time in relation to print culture. It may be noted from the account above that the new serials named discernibly appeared at intervals of increasing frequency, moving from quarterlies to monthlies to weeklies, to more than once a week, to dailies and to evening dailies. By the end of the century the 'busy' reader is the target of the new journalism in the *Review of Reviews*. Even in 1879 Shand ponders the question of the lasting vitality' of the quarterlies 'in these days when everybody is living so fast that a quarter seems much the same thing as a century' (Shand 1879a: 90). He decides wryly that their durability is related to their high rates of pay. Nor does Shand stop there; he notes that quarterly articles 'almost inevitably' are 'behind the news' and cites 'the blots which have escaped the hasty correction of the thoughtful author' (Shand 1879a: 92). At the same time he outlines the roles of the serials *vis à vis* books according to their frequency, and reserves the right of monthlies to 'sit as judge in appeal on the more hasty opinions of the daily and weekly press' whose respective functions are to 'treat current literature as current news' and to review widely.' (Shand 1879c: 242). Shand's vacillation between hasty and thoughtful reviewing, in the dailies and quarterlies, leaves the monthly - the position from which he is writing - as the centre of judicious criticism. Shand is

registering the regular, insistent, and cacophonous rhythms of the serial press: morning and evening, weekly, Sundays, monthly, and quarterly. The periodical press of the last two categories (and perhaps monthly part-issues?) also contributed emphatically to this noise and rhythm in their Magazine Day, when Paternoster Row worked flat-out to supply the retailers' orders. The regularity and public nature of these issue days created numerous and large communities of readers, all of whom were reading the same publications at roughly the same time all over the country.<sup>6</sup>

It was in the interest of book publishers to participate in this quickening rhythm induced by the proliferation of serial publications on a large and national scale. Book publishers bought into this rhythm, and these communal readings, through copious advertisements in the press of their lists *which were issued monthly*, and through creation of their own series of volumes - analogous to serials - organised variously around topics (such as travel, biographies<sup>7</sup>) or publishing status ('standard' novels or classics, 'railway' fiction, an authorial edition, or a 'popular' edition); these ran and ran.<sup>8</sup> But the ubiquity of the serial did mean that the non-serialised or non-series book title, by a new or unproved author, was a commercial risk. Publishers and authors preferred to rely on a system of pre-volume publication in the magazine or in part-issue, in which system book publication then 'culminated' the serial rhythm, with the appearance of the book edition just before the last numbers appeared in part-issue or in the magazine. Publishers and authors also relied on the huge purchases of the circulating libraries that provided a guarantee of sales and a means of distribution of both the serial and the volume forms. Shand, in an explanation of the advantages of pre-publication in *Maga*, defends Blackwood's longstanding policy of the publication of serialised fiction (a genre which the weighty quarterlies excluded in favour of non-fiction) with the argument that serial *fiction* makes a better book than serialised non-fiction!

Essayists and reviewers like Jeffrey and Sydney Smith, and, subsequently, like Southey and Hayward, might collect and reprint their articles; but it was in the shape of a miscellany of the fragmentary and fugitive pieces that were rescued from unmerited and unfortunate neglect. Each individual article had to stand on its merits; it was a stone cast at random, as it were, on the cairn which was to serve as a monument to the memory of the writer. By inserting the publication of works in serial form 'Blackwood' passed volumes and libraries of volumes through his pages. A book that might have been ignored had it been brought out anonymously, or merely introduced by some slightly-known name, was there sure of extensive perusal and something more than dispassionate consideration. The subscribers to the Magazine had come to feel something of self-pride in the growing success and popularity they contributed to. At all events, they were predisposed to look kindly on the *protégés* whom *Maga* vouched for as worth an introduction. It was for the more general public afterwards to confirm or reverse the verdict. The *débutant* had the encouragement of knowing that he addressed himself in the first place to a friendly audience. (Shand 1879b: 227).

Shand puts forward his view of advantages of serial publication rather avuncularly here. Elsewhere, he is more frank in attributing the origin of some new periodicals to successful serial authors: 'unless each of his stories is ushered in through the pages of a magazine, it seems to him that they have scarcely been creditably introduced, and, moreover, he expects a double profit'. (Shand 1879b: 244). This double profit was

shared by the publishers such as Macmillan and George Smith, who also created periodicals to bolster book publication. By attracting new and established authors to their highly-paying and prestigious journals, the publishers aimed to secure authors for their firms' lists. Moreover, house periodicals supplied free publicity for house book lists through their advertisements, and helped pay for themselves by the sale of advertisements to outside firms, some of which purchased and circulated house books, such as the circulating libraries. Thus the *Cornhill* carried 'free' adverts for Smith's list and paid adverts for various other magazines and circulating libraries. Reviews were yet another form of publicity for books in the periodicals. Shand was quite critical about the adverse effects on book sales of the irregularity of the periodicals' reviews and their haphazard reviewing policies, but he seems certain that a good review of a book enhanced its demand and reputation:

Monthlies authors get unequal measure; and there are rising men who may fairly complain of being ignored; while some rival of similar, though inferior, pretensions, has the honours and the profit of general notice. The fact being, that so far as authors are concerned, it is very much matter of luck, and partly matter of fashion. The name of the lion of a London season is naturally in people's mouths; there is a run on his book at the circulating libraries; he has the art of making a thrilling narrative of adventurous travel or exploration; he has unearthed a race of anthropophagi in primeval forests, or has stumbled over a buried city or the traces of the lost tribes; or he may have broached some new and startling revelation, social, political or religious, and be making a host of admiring proselytes. His book, for one cause or another, recommends itself to the handling of some clever contributor, who sees in it the materials for an article which shall be vigorous or original. Several writers are struck by the idea: two or three interesting papers make their appearance simultaneously, and others follow suit in due course. The subject of their praises has cause for congratulation; and if he has been brought so conspicuously before the public, he may have deserved it by superior literary talent and the graceful charm of his style. (Shand 1879b: 242).

Those periodicals which carried reviews (the majority of which were anonymous) could employ their authors in yet another capacity which was a concealed form of publicity, in reviewing favourably house publications or works by friends of the reviewer or publisher. Henry Colburn's journals were well-known for this practice, and the weekly *Athenaeum*, famous for its hostility to puffing from its inception in 1828, in the last quarter of the century can clearly be seen to prop up the publishing world: almost all of its (anonymous) reviews of Swinburne's prose and poetry were written by Swinburne's close friend and house mate, Watts-Dunton, a regular reviewer for the *Athenaeum* at this time.<sup>9</sup>

Pausing for a moment over anonymity and signature, I want to explore briefly the relationship between the press and books in respect to authorship. For the first half of the nineteenth century anonymity was the rule for the majority of newspapers and periodicals but, while anonymous books did appear in this period, signature of some kind was the more common characteristic of this form of publication. By this time in Britain it was safe and even socially acceptable on the whole to be known in the public sphere as an author - but for men only; this respectability was gendered and excluded women. More prone to publish (and even write) anonymously, women may have sought freedom from discrimination in the overwhelmingly male world of

publishing, but they also sought respectability - which did not extend to women who worked for wages or risked the taint of the public sphere. Between 1859 and 1865 signature made a breakthrough, in the publication of new monthly magazines - *Macmillan's* and *Cornhill*, and the *Fortnightly Review*. But signature did not become universal by any means, with quarterlies and newspapers remaining resolutely anonymous longest. Newspaper bylines appeared late in the century, preceded by 'Our Own Correspondent' or in the case of columns, pseudonyms or initials. In the periodicals, reviews and political articles also tended to appear unsigned, with exceptions, through the century. This permitted both the 'log-rolling' found in late period of the *Athenaeum* and the employment of women and unknowns.

Out of this *précis* comes my point: many newspaper and periodical writers entered the social formation of 'authorship' with book publication of anonymous copy which had appeared in the press; an early and renowned example of this is Francis Jeffrey's publication of *Contributions to the Edinburgh Review* in 1844, culled from his long career of anonymous pieces in the prestigious quarterly, where anonymity was carefully preserved. The periodicals nurtured anonymous authors whose 'names' were then revealed and commodified in book publication; later in the century subsequent work by named authors was then re-introduced into periodicals with a signature (such as the *Nineteenth Century*) which attracted readers through 'stars'. This in turn enhanced the value of 'names' so that sales of their books increased through the recognition of authors by readers and consumers. This cycle of serial and book publication is clearly a principal model of authorship in nineteenth-century Britain for most writers of essays, some longer works of non-fiction, and fiction of all kinds.

If the project of authorship prospered under this cultural formation, the case of the periodicals themselves is more mixed. The foregrounding of individuals - named contributors - posed a threat to the collective identity of the periodical, an identity fostered by the 'house' style, the collective 'we', and the circulation of a periodical persona through a sobriquet such as 'Maga'. In defending the anonymity of *Blackwood's* late in the century, Shand cites the prestige which emanates from the *collective* force of intertextuality, and worries about its erosion which, in his view, undermines the degree to which a periodical may 'direct' its readers:

We have always preferred to leave each separate article to be commended or condemned for itself, or, at all events, with the reflected prestige of the company in which it chanced to find itself. We believe our [anonymous] practice to be a safe one, even in the case of writers of name and experience. (Shand 1879c: 237).

The casting about for distinguished names in all quarters has another consequence. Since these gentlemen hold most contradictory opinions, they must have an almost absolute latitude permitted them; and while the editor in great measure relieves himself from responsibility, he is proportionately deprived of control. There can be no question that his teams are powerful and showy, but they are 'straggling all over the place;' and while his leaders are heading in one direction, his wheelers are backing in another. . . . our predilection for the system which bands contributors together on common principles has been confirmed by long experience . . . it should be the object of a leading magazine to influence opinion for definite purposes . . . not merely to enlighten the public, but to direct them. (Shand 1879b: 240, 241).

Shand's attention to the collectivity of journals - both single issues and the run through time - is apposite. Authorship as constructed in serials is collective, or at the very least it is not individualist; intertextuality and editing assure this, and authors themselves write within codes of discourse, of the kind of piece they are writing - news, features, short story, novel - and of the particular journal they are writing for. In Maga, for example, Shand writes as a contributor to monthly magazines, a veteran author of *Blackwood's*, and as a *Blackwood's* Tory. Arthur Galton, an experienced journalist of the 1890s, writing in 1913 after signature had become more common in the wake of the new journalism's cultivation of the personal, reflects on the conflicting claims of collectivity and the rights of contributors under anonymity and signature:

Editors very often give themselves a license which would not be tolerated in any other sphere of business . . . I have always maintained that signed articles should not be touched after the author's final revision, or without his knowledge and his definite sanction for any change. It is unfair both to himself and to his readers that opinions which are practically not his, but the editor's, should be given to the public with his name and responsibility attached to them. On the other hand, if work is to be published anonymously, I have always felt that it belongs of right to the editor who buys it. He pays his price, the responsibility for what is published is his, and for both reasons he is within his right if he alters an article in any way that suits him. . . . the author has no legitimate or tangible grievance; for he has sold his work, and as it is not issued in his name he has no responsibility for either the substance or the form, until he reissues it on his own account. (Galton 1913: 5-6).

Writing twenty years after Shand, Galton also insists on a distinction between the effects of anonymous and signed journalism, but significantly from the position of the [rights of the] author rather than that of the collectivity and authority of the periodical. It is a change in perspective in the wake of the founding of the Society of Authors in 1884, the securing of international copyright in 1891, and the star system developed by the new journalism.

Book publication, as Gallon implies in his last phrase, is predicated on named author(s); the 'translation' of periodical material (signed or anonymous) to book form reconstructs collectively constructed work as individual work. It literally constructs and enforces the notion of the individual author, and addresses the public thirst for the named individual that nineteenth-century reader/consumers exhibit. Writing in 1866 in the early years of the *Fortnightly Review* which adopted the policy of signature, George Lewes, a professional editor and contributor feels the burden of anonymity in the face of a readership eager for individual named authors:

The evils of anonymous criticism mostly fall upon authors and the public. If they pressed as heavily on the critics, anonymity would long ago have been relinquished, but one does not look for law-reforms from practising lawyers. Yet some evils also fall upon the critics, and one of these is the facility with which a writer known (or rumoured) to be a contributor to a particular journal gets credited for any clever or objectionable criticism that may appear in the journal. Whenever people's minds are roused to admiration or stung to indignation, they are impatient of doubt as to the individuality of the writer. The pale abstraction 'we' passes unchallenged before their minds so long as the article does not move them; but the 'we'



becomes intolerable directly they are moved. They must have an idol or a victim. (Lewes 1866: 507):

Lastly, on this question of authorship, serials, and books, I want to suggest that the differences in the nature of authorship in nineteenth-century serials and books - the collectivism of the serial as a cultural form and the individualism of the book - are significant in the relative status of the two spheres in our own period: the privileging of books and the marginalisation of serials by our author-oriented system of cultural value.

I now want to consider two forms of the circulation of print in the nineteenth century which participate in a system of highly-priced first publication of books that discourages if it does not prohibit individual purchase: *part-issue* undermined this system while *circulating libraries* both sustained and negotiated it.

It is the way serial publication of fiction increased access to reading and to books from the mid-1830s that I want to look at, and a latter-day review of this format in 1866. First Shand, who is insistent on the link between part-issue and increased access to texts:

And the success of the green and yellow covers of 'Vanity Fair' and 'Martin Chuzzlewit' - indicated a most extraordinary advance in the influence of popular patronage. . . . Thousands and tens of thousands of people were spending their shillings every month, half-committing themselves to a costly course of subscriptions, whose fathers had bought nothing from the cradle to the grave but a Bible, a drawing-room annual, or a cookery book..

Literature has become cheapened and popularised, and everybody has become something of a reader. (Shand 1878: 644).

For Shand, part-issue signifies not primarily because of its implication in the histories of individual authorship, but by virtue of the relation between a form of publication and the growth of a reading public. The nature of his interest is characteristic of a period pre-dating the widespread academic study of English literature, a period when reviews, occasional review articles, and even more occasional essays, obituaries, or biographies were the principal forms of publication of criticism of individual authors. In our century, when English literature flourishes as an examination and university subject, and scholarly monographs, introductory handbooks, and literary biography are common types of publication, the definition of the subject is overwhelmingly authorial (for example, 'Dickens' or 'the Brontes'). Recent attempts to make visible and undermine this organisation of knowledge by Roland Barthes, Michel Foucault, and postmodernists such as Italo Calvino are a measure of its normalisation and entrenchment in our own day.

Late in the life of part-issue, the *Publishers' Circular* of 1866 had occasion to assess the advantage of part-issue and magazine serialisation when Trollope announced that he would issue his next novel in weekly parts. The writer speculates on the fortunes of serialisation as a project in light of changed circumstances since the success of the form in the 1830s. One difference is the shilling monthlies:

New and vastly more numerous generations of book readers and book buyers have arisen. Shilling monthlies have attained an immense circulation; twopenny and threepenny weeklies, in which fiction is the chief element, are well established; but only actual experiment can perhaps determine whether the admirers of a popular author will give a weekly sixpence for an illustrated portion of a new novel from his [Trollope's] pen. (Anon.1866: 650).

This sceptical, anonymous writer makes interesting points about the reading of weekly and monthly serial parts, and about part-issue versus magazines as a whole:

The plan of serial publication of novels has manifestly many advantages. It may perhaps be said that no buyer of a magazine feels an interest in all the subjects of its articles. Many notoriously buy a periodical only for the sake of some story in it by a favourite author, and are wholly indifferent to the remainder of its contents. The purchaser of an instalment of a story, on the other hand, necessarily gets nothing but what he desires to have. The weekly issue must also have peculiar advantages; for who is not familiar with the complaint that the reader of monthly serials has lost the thread of a story before it is taken up again in the next number? Whether Mr Trollope's *Last Chronicle of Barset* . . . is destined to inaugurate a new fashion in the publication of serial fiction, we will not venture to prophesy. (Anon 1866: 650).

In the first flush of the new generation of shilling monthlies, the critic testifies to the ubiquity and dominance of the interest in fiction, as well as the highly selective practice of magazine reading. Nor does the article support our notion that the intervals between parts were occupied by repeated readings, as the ease of remembering the plot is adduced as a strong advantage of weeklies over monthlies.

Despite this author's testimony that the mnemonic devices deployed by Victorian serial novelists had only a limited success, I do want to flag the profound effects that part and serial issue of fiction had on the nature of the Victorian novel, which Linda Hughes and Michael Lund have examined in the book, *The Victorian Serial*: for example, the necessary emphasis on the structure of the instalment, its start, finish, and middle; the heightened importance of delay and suspense; the necessity to bring characters forward regularly, lest they be forgotten altogether, or to render their absence significant; the interplay between parts of fictions by different authors which appear simultaneously, perhaps even in the same volume. This relation alone, of the parts and the whole, the effect of the ways fiction was issued on the end-product, bonds the Victorian serial and the Victorian book theoretically, formally, and historically.

In 1879 Shand has only praise for the circulating library, that other principal means of distribution of new work. For him the libraries, which kept 'their original sets of volumes in incessant circulation, till the pages began to wear with industrious thumbing' (Shand 1878: 644), increase access to books in the expected manner: 'These lending and circulating libraries have gone far towards altering everything. 'Nowadays a man who can afford a moderate subscription has such opportunities as the richer of our grandfathers never hoped for, and even students in the humblest ranks of society are generally within reach of some literary institute' (Shand 1879c: 251). He claims with satisfaction that even the discarding of the circulating library book is a form of circulation: 'and the volumes from the libraries in the leading cities gradually find their way into the country towns and villages, till, now that paper-lined trunks have been superseded by portmanteaus, they pass in process of time into the hands of the housemaids' (Shand 1878: 645). An additional wry note pertains to the other increase that the libraries system produces: 'The system cannot be favourable to quality of work, but it is admirably fitted to give a fillip to production' (Shand 1878: 645). This is the sole allusion to the key role of the circulating libraries in maintaining the high price of new work in volume form.

Edmund Gosse, in a signed article in the *Contemporary Review* in 1891 registers the *fin de siècle* disillusion with the libraries - that the guarantee of 'selectivity' by the libraries to their subscribers amounts to censorship of books and serials alike, and in the spirit of the popularising new journalism, Gosse names it,

the disease which we might call Mudieitis, the inflammation produced by the fear that what you are inspired to say, and know you ought to say, will be unpalatable to the circulating libraries, that 'the wife of a country incumbent,' that terror before which Messrs. Smith fall prone upon their faces, may write up to headquarters and expostulate. In all these cases, without doubt, we have instances of the direct influence of democracy upon literature, and that of a deleterious kind. (Gosse 1891: 529).

Gosse is writing in the midst of a campaign by authors in the 1880s and early 1890s against constraints on fiction imposed by publishers, editors, and libraries in the name of the sensibility of reader/consumers. In 1890, Thomas Hardy, one of three contributors to a symposium on 'Candour in English Fiction' in the *New Review*, links the censorship of the libraries with that of the magazines, and indicts them both: 'the magazine in particular and the circulating library in general do not foster the growth of the novel which reflects and reveals life. They directly tend to exterminate it by monopolising all literary space' (Hardy 1890: 17). Hardy's perception of connections between the distributors of books, the editors of magazines and, by implication, the publishers, in the censorship of the novel puts a case for viewing these institutions, networks, and individuals as part of a single cultural formation, to which serials and books and their production and distribution alike belong.

With the collapse of the three-decker format in 1894 and the intervention of the one-volume 'well made' novel, the price of much new fiction was reduced by two-thirds. This and an increasing number of popularly priced reprints undermined the dominance of the circulating libraries, and their imposition of themselves between the bookseller and the reader. With the reduction of the high price of books, the yoking of serial production with that of literature and books became less important for publishers and authors. They might now rely far more on sales in the first instance to an audience exponentially increased by their access to cheap serial literature in the course of the nineteenth century. Increasingly, fiction reverted to its debut in volume form, which was bought or borrowed. Part-issue and serial fiction gradually subsided. I want to end by looking briefly at the newspaper press, which Gosse called 'the most democratic of all vehicles of thought' (Gosse 1891: 532). With its emphasis on 'news' and politics, its perception as an agent of 'democracy', its brevity of style, and its inhospitality to rumination, many early and mid (nineteenth-century newspapers marginalised books of all kinds. Frances Power Cobbe, writing in 1867 in the *Fortnightly*, an organ of the 'higher journalism', makes what I think is a commonplace juxtaposition at the time between books and the newspaper press:

The extension of the Literature of England, especially since the repeal of the paper duty [in 1861], is very great in point of bulk. There were 4,204 books published in England in 1866, out of which 849 were on religious subjects. Yet it is an extension rather too much in keeping with the rest of our progress. The pyramid grows wide, rather than high. Newspapers, and that special new invention, 'Railway Literature,' have so increased that not the vault under the synagogue in Jerusalem where old books are religiously buried . . . would contain all the papers which are printed in a few years. . . . But the English

book of original and creative genius, written since 1851 - where is it? (Cobbe: 1867: 369).

Gosse, writing retrospectively in 1891 on democracy and print in the *Contemporary Review* allows that the attitude of newspapers toward books has changed since then:

A few years ago, the London newspapers were singularly indifferent to the claims of books and of the men who wrote them. An occasional stately column of the *Times* represented almost all the notice which a daily paper would take of a volume. The provincial press was still worse provided; it afforded no light at all for such of its clients as were groping their way in the darkness of the book-market. All this now is changed. One or two of the evening newspapers of London deserve great commendation for having dared to treat literary subjects, in distinction from mere reviews of books, as of immediate public interest. Their example has at length quickened some of the morning papers, and has spread into the provinces to such a signal degree that several of the great newspapers of the North of England are now served with literary matter of a quality and fulness not to be matched in a single London daily twenty years ago. When an eminent man of letters dies, the comments which the London and country press make upon his career and the nature of his work are often quite astonishing in their fulness; space being dedicated to these notices such as, but a few years ago, would have been grudged to a politician or to a prize fighter. The newspapers are the most democratic of all vehicles of thought, and the prominence of literary discussion in their columns does not look as though the democracy was anxious to be thought indifferent or hostile to literature (Gosse 1891: 532).

With the development of Sunday papers, of weeklies such as the *Saturday Review*, and of evening papers such as the pioneering *Pall Mall Gazette* which modelled itself on magazines and reviews (the *Cornhill*, the *Saturday Review*, and the *Anti-Jacobin*), the newspaper press came round to features, rumination, and reviewing, but the quiddity of newspapers remained 'news' or ephemera. The prospectus of the review-like *Examiner* of 1808, a weekly newspaper, makes its criteria for inclusion clear: even it will make way for literature, philosophy, and fine arts only in the 'absence of temporary matter'. In an effort to map interrelations among spheres, this helps clarify a difference of orientation in the newspaper and the periodical press. It shows in relief the alliances between the book trade and significant elements of the periodical press - publishers, authors, style, knowledges, and distribution (through circulating libraries and clubs as well as personal subscription). The distinct origins of the newspaper press (in printers and later politicians), and its overwhelming, almost exclusive, concern in the early part of the century with domestic and foreign politics, government, finance, and law would appear to separate it from the book trade. But at a time when book borrowing was the form in which most books were circulated in the middle classes, from 1855 cheap newspapers were bought by a wider range of readers and read (or heard) by still more. As well as circulating 'intelligence', newspapers developed and fostered the habit of reading. Shand connects the onset of the newspaper and this habit:

The ferment of thought, the restless craving for intellectual excitement of some kind, have been stimulated; till now, in the last quarter of the nineteenth

century, we are being driven along at high-pressure pace; and it is impossible for any one who is recalcitrant to stop himself. If you do not read for yourself, you are constrained to listen; and there is no getting beyond the reach of the press, unless you should be cast away, like Crusoe, upon some desert island. The penny papers of yesterday are to be found in the parlour of each back-of-the-world alehouse; and there is generally some intelligent rustic, more advanced than the rest, who volunteers to spell them out and comment on them for the benefit of the circle of gaping smokers. Localities, interests, and trades have their special organs; and the broadsheets of the 'Police News' with kindred publications circulate freely among the criminals and roughs of our cities. (Shand 1879c: 238-39).

Nothing, perhaps, is more significant of the thirst for sensation, and of the indifference to the trifling cost at which it may be gratified, than a glance into the carriages of one of the suburban trains that has run into a city terminus before morning business-hours. Floors and cushions are covered with the penny papers that have been roughly torn open and hurriedly skimmed; acquaintances have exchanged the 'Standard' for the 'Telegraph;' there have been extensive orders for the 'Daily News,' if Cape letters are looked for from Mr Archibald Forbes; and there is a liberal sprinkling of the 'Sportsman' and 'Sporting News' left by gentlemen who, as a matter of business, are interested in the latest odds. The railway servants gather so rich a harvest that they can afford to become generous benefactors in their turn, of the cabman on the rank and the patients in the hospitals. (Shand 1879c: 242)

These two accounts of the process of newspaper reading in 1879 and of newspaper networks of distribution testify to Shand's perception of the ubiquity of reading among working and middle class urban and country people. Shand goes on to single out and characterise English travellers as readers, unlike French and German:

For, as a rule, an Englishman who is going any distance seems to think it as much a matter of course to lay in reading of some sort as to take a wrapper in winter or a ticket at all times. And the bookstall, like poverty or a third class carriage, introduces a man to a strange medley of companions. (Shand 1879c: 244)

It is my contention that the links between the companionable bookstall and the republic of reading, figured here by the 'richness' of 'poverty or a third class carriage', were forged by the Victorian serial - the part-issues, the magazines, and the newspapers - and that in the nineteenth century the spheres of the book and the serial inhabited one and the same galaxy. In the next chapter I shall explore relations between serial and book publication through examination of part-issue and magazine serialisation.

## Chapter 1 notes

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<sup>1</sup> John Donne, 'A Valediction Forbidding Mourning'.

<sup>2</sup> L.R. is the *London Review and Weekly of Politics, Art and Society*, which appeared between July 1860 and March 1869.

<sup>3</sup> For more on the circulating libraries during this period, see Hiley, 1992.

<sup>4</sup> 'Maga' was the nickname given to *Blackwood's Magazine*.

<sup>5</sup> Alexander Innes Shand published two novels (*Against Time* in 1870, *Fortune's Wheel* in 1886); a number of cookery books in the 1890s; travel books, some reprinted from *The Times*, in the 1880s; a biography of a military man, and three volumes of reminiscences.

<sup>6</sup> It should be noted that according to the terms of Mudie's subscriptions, country subscribers could borrow current numbers of periodicals from Mudie's only a month after their initial issue to city borrowers.

<sup>7</sup> See Chapter Three.

<sup>8</sup> See Chapter Two.

<sup>9</sup> According to the marked copy of the *Athenaeum* at City University, for example. Watts reviewed work by Swinburne on 31 January and 22 May 1880, and 2 June 1894.

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