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## The Professionalization of the American Magazine: Periodicals, Biography, and Nationalism in the Early Republic

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a method akin to annotated bibliography. Other ticks surface conveying an almost mechanical delivery of this profoundly human question. Footnoting, for example, categorizes related secondary sources with the same template, “On Ahab as Romantic hero, see. . . .” Although useful for bibliographic categorization, this method misses an opportunity to complicate, expand, and enrich points in the body of the text. The argument, finally, remains unchallenged and isolated from the dialogue established by previous scholarship.

This may be asking too much of a volume that in its own right accomplishes precisely what it sets out to do in a clear and coherent manner. *Inscrutable Malice* is a welcome addition to Melville scholarship, a work that aptly elucidates *Moby-Dick*'s precise points of intersection with the Bible on its two major concerns for the problem of evil in the universe and the impending doom of the last days of the apocalypse. More studies like it, focusing not just on Job and the apocalypse, but on other portions of the Bible that captured Melville's imagination, might be usefully applied to his other works.

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TIM LANZENDÖRFER, *The Professionalization of the American Magazine: Periodicals, Biography, and Nationalism in the Early Republic*. Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2013. Pp. 355. €48 paper.

Tim Lanzendörfer's book follows the publication of Manushag N. Powell's *Performing Authorship in Eighteenth-Century English Periodicals* (Lewisburg: Bucknell Univ. Press, 2012) and other studies that seek to better understand the material and ideological circumstances of periodical publication on one side of the Atlantic or the other during the last couple of centuries. *The Professionalization of the American Magazine: Periodicals, Biography, and Nationalism in the Early Republic* focuses on the Early Republic (1800–1825) and how money or “profit,” as opposed to political idealism, combined with the genre of biography and the War of 1812 to propel the business of periodical publication.

Lanzendörfer begins his study by offering “a re-reading of the history of American magazines in the Early Republic” (p. 9) and asserting that his reading of the “market of periodicals” stands in stark contrast to studies by Catherine O'Donnell Kaplan, Michael

Warner, and Jared Gardner that emphasize the role of periodical print culture in forming an American national identity or ideology. The fact of the matter, claims Lanzendörfer, is that “periodicals in the Early Republic were primarily meant to make money for their editors and publishers,” and that understanding this fact requires “a reappraisal of their relationship to their content” (p. 12).

I agree with Lanzendörfer’s thesis, but I question the validity of the claim that “although periodical research has been ongoing for decades, the question of how we should look at periodicals has gone largely unanswered” (p. 14). To be sure, Frank L. Mott’s classic study *A History of American Magazines 1741–1850* (New York: D. Appleton, 1930) and Lyon N. Richardson’s *A History of Early American Magazines 1741–1789* (New York: Thomas Nelson, 1931) are accounted for in Lanzendörfer’s study, but missing is any reference to *Periodical Literature in Nineteenth-Century America*, ed. Kenneth M. Price and Susan Belasco Smith (Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1995), and *Periodical Literature in Eighteenth-Century America*, ed. Mark L. Kamrath and Sharon M. Harris (Knoxville: Univ. of Tennessee Press, 2005), both of which address how we might read periodical literature. Also absent, surprisingly, is any reference to ProQuest’s *American Periodical Series Online* database.

*Periodical Literature in Eighteenth-Century America* articulates, for instance, clear ways to employ “interdisciplinary methods of inquiry,” along with contemporary race, culture, feminist, and performance theory, and examines the “changing material and political relationships among publishers, printers, and readers and how they influenced constructions of republicanism or the status quo in the 1790s” (Kamrath and Harris, “Introduction,” p. xxii). It points specifically to colonial efforts to “improve upon the designs, engravings, and ‘ink’ used in British or European periodicals as well as the need to run a successful business in an emerging market economy” (p. xi). Likewise, Joyce W. Warren’s essay “Uncommon Discourse: Fanny Fern and the *New York Ledger*,” in *Periodical Literature in Nineteenth-Century America*, documents Robert Bonner’s “revolutionary decisions” in regard to the price of his weekly newspaper, removal of “all advertisements,” insertion of a “variety” of materials for his readers, and willingness to pay contributors like Fanny Fern substantial sums of money (“Uncommon Discourse,” p. 58), topics that Lanzendörfer takes up in one form or another. In short, more recent studies have addressed, at least in part, the question of periodical as a “commodity,” along with relations between editors, printers, publishers, contributors, and readers (*Professionalization*, p. 10).

To Lanzendörfer's credit, though, questions such as "how did the production of periodicals work? What was the status of biography in Early Republic periodicals? What can biography tell us about how these periodicals worked? What was the role of the periodical in the construction of American nationalism? What was the role of biography in the construction of American nationalism?" (p. 12) all move study of the field forward. While he identifies the difficulty of reading nearly "22,000 pages" of the *Port Folio*, along with extant "editorial correspondence," "business records," and "histories of the development of printing and entrepreneurial publishing" (p. 17), he tackles questions about the professionalization of American periodicals in a useful way. Specifically, he examines "three interwoven issues": "the ways in which periodicals were produced, the usages of the genre of biography in magazines, and their discussion of American nationalism" (p. 11)—all of which can be highly instructive, especially if discussed together.

For example, in Chapter 1, "The Production of Periodicals and the Uses of Biography," we learn that economic issues were closely tied to a periodical's success or failure. Specifically, the "amount of submissions from unpaid contributors," the number of subscribers for a particular magazine, and the ability to collect payment on time were all factors that determined a periodical's viability. Likewise, one's success in the market may have had more to do with the amount and quality of "amusing variety" in a periodical as opposed to the amount of moral instruction it contained or claimed to contain (p. 93). That is, editors of periodicals—weekly, monthly, or otherwise—were not completely at liberty to publish anything in the name of "republican virtue." They were enmeshed in a number of "economic and material constraints" (p. 41) and, as Jared Gardner has pointed out, had to account for the various "tastes" of readers. Thus, even as editors like Charles Brockden Brown envisioned their periodicals as being a repository for entertaining and instructive materials, they still had to establish a readership that would support the magazine financially. Along with the use of "seriality," editors, says Lanzendörfer, discovered that biography interested readers. Biographies of classical Roman statesmen, contemporary British figures, and eventually Americans themselves provided moral lessons while coming in "different styles, lengths, and arguments" (pp. 89–90), thus contributing to a periodical's appeal.

In Chapter 2, "The *Port Folio*, the Market, and Periodical Biography," Lanzendörfer highlights how the *Port Folio* (1801–1827), run mainly by Joseph Dennie of Philadelphia, illustrates the day in and

day out demands of acquiring and editing content in order to produce a periodical, as well as how the weekly evolved into a monthly magazine. As part of this inquiry, Lanzendörfer analyzes Dennie's editorship of the *Farmer's Weekly Museum* (1793–1810), his interaction with contributors, the "increased use of biography in the journal," i.e., of Shakespeare, Spenser, Milton, and others (p. 116), and the quest for biographies about Americans. He also investigates Dennie's correspondence with Boston bookseller and printer John Russell and his offer of a "*profitable*" enterprise (p. 127). It is, however, his in-depth explanation of Dennie's changes to the periodical from 1801 to 1812 that merits the most praise. Lanzendörfer details early relations between Dennie and his publisher, Asbury Dickens; relations with Hugh Maxwell, the periodical's printer for six years; sale of the *Port Folio* to Bradford & Inskeep and related format and content changes (e.g., for American biography); and, finally, the impact of Dennie's death in 1812 (p. 138). Dennie's decision, for instance, to leave his publishing partner, Maxwell, provides an eye-opening view of the business, economic, and contractual world of periodical publishing at this time. Likewise, the announcement by John Watts, Dennie's new publisher, in the 1806 prospectus that the *Port Folio* would focus more on literature than politics highlights the declining influence of the Federalist party and the growing importance of "Science and Polite Literature" for economic success (p. 166).

Finally, in Chapter 3, "Periodicals, Biography, and the War of 1812," the role of biography in the periodical and the Early Republic emerges fully. As Lanzendörfer notes, "The War of 1812, with its resultant flood of original submissions of lives of American heroes, was a key period in the development of American periodical biography and the American periodical business as a whole" (p. 203). Biography increasingly become a forum through which alternating views of "British heritage" and American independence could be voiced, rather than simply being a vehicle for moral didacticism or national pride. Publication, argues Lanzendörfer, of biography in periodicals after the War of 1812 was part of a larger print culture phenomenon that included books and graphic representation, and periodicals sought to "profit from it" (p. 209). For example, Washington Irving's biography of Oliver Hazard Perry and the amount of attention paid to the Battle of Lake Erie illustrates the complex ways in which national identity was mythically constructed (pp. 266–67). By 1817, observes Lanzendörfer, interest in naval officer biographies had "waned," and thus they were replaced by other material that would appeal to a periodical readership (p. 282).

In sum, if, as John Adams remarked in 1776, “Public Virtue cannot exist in a Nation without private, and public Virtue is the only Foundation of Republics,” then *The Professionalization of the American Magazine* provides us with an alternative view of moral instruction in the Early Republic; it insightfully demonstrates how republican virtue and the successful “pursuit of happiness” by periodical publishers, editors, printers, and contributors often required a business plan—and “monetary profit.”

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ROSALIND WILLIAMS, *The Triumph of Human Empire: Verne, Morris, and Stevenson at the End of the World*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013. Pp. xii + 416. \$30.

What does it mean for humans to dominate the planet? The cultural challenges attending an era in which Earth’s ecologies are shaped by human action—the Anthropocene—has received attention lately from critics such as Dipesh Chakrabarty, Srinivas Aravamudan, and Bruno Latour. In *The Triumph of Human Empire: Verne, Morris, and Stevenson at the End of the World*, Rosalind Williams offers a fresh perspective on the dawn of this era via her ambitious and illuminating history of three writers—Jules Verne, William Morris, and Robert Louis Stevenson—who prophesized the possibilities and the terrors attending the closing of the world frontier. Via the parallels she establishes in her biographies of these three men, Williams makes a persuasive case for their similar preoccupation with the losses entailed by the extension of “civilization” over the globe.

The grand sweep of Williams’s argument is laid out in her highly exerptable introductory chapter, “The Rise of Human Empire.” Verne, Morris, and Stevenson lived at a time when the terrestrial globe appeared on the brink of being thoroughly mapped. This distinctive sign of the progress of human knowledge and technological achievement—what Williams, borrowing a phrase from Francis Bacon’s *New Atlantis*, calls the triumph of “human empire” (p. ix)—triggered a new “event of consciousness” (p. xi) in which witnesses had to process, not only the unprecedented scope of human knowledge and power, but also the imminent collision between the nineteenth century’s expanding empires, populations, and capital and the