Popular periodicals, common readers and the 'grand march of intellect' in London, 1819-34

BODLEIAN LIBRARY OXFORD
DEPOSITED
THESIS
15/11/09

David S. K. J. Magee
Exeter College, Oxford
2008

104,277 words

SHORT ABSTRACT

Between the 1780s and the 1830s increasing amounts of agency were assigned to - and claimed by - the English common people in their own intellectual improvement and moral reform. In the years between 1819 and 1834, this sense of 'popular agency' (the capacity of the common people to assert control over aspects of their lives) was increasingly embodied in - and cultivated by - London's 'popular periodical' press. It was in this popular press (comprising cheap weekly magazines costing three-pence or under and stamped, seven-penny Sunday newspapers - both aimed at 'common readers') that the concept of a 'march of intellect' was most strongly contested as a narrative of popular intellectual and moral progress, a categorization of knowledge forms and a description of improving practice.

This thesis attempts to rethink the 'march of intellect' as a socio-political complex through an analysis of its discursive properties and material bases, as revealed in the popular periodical. Asking questions about the origins, nature, timing, reality and significance of the 'march', it argues that although the trope was rich raw material for reformist rhodomontade and reactionary satire, it was also a widely-recognized shorthand for a range of experienced imperatives and practices. In this context, the popular press was frequently depicted as cultivating a latent 'common readership' of lower-middling and labouring-class Londoners; as making the cultural world of the common people a focus of enquiry; and as providing a medium through which the 'common writer' could articulate a sense of personal intellectual agency. This re-imagination of the common reader as an active historical agent was, however, circumscribed by the nature of the popular periodical itself. No simple link between the overall growth of a popular

periodical market and the perceived increase in popular agency can therefore be confidently made.

This thesis concludes that the march of intellect was the product of a specific historical moment: a linguistic and conceptual framework through which the public image of the common people was being reworked - and a repertoire of practices experienced - in the context of profound economic, technological and demographic changes. Slower and more haphazard than its champions claimed, the 'march' was nonetheless the locus of a crucial debate during the 'age of reform' about the place of the common people in English society: a debate in which at least some of these people articulated their opinions.

LONG ABSTRACT

Between the 1780s and the 1830s increasing amounts of agency were assigned to - and claimed by - the English common people in their own intellectual improvement and moral reform. In the years between 1819 and 1834, this sense of 'popular agency' (the capacity of the common people to assert control over aspects of their lives) was increasingly embodied in - and cultivated by - London's 'popular periodical' press. It was in this popular press (comprising cheap weekly magazines costing three-pence or under and stamped, seven-penny Sunday newspapers - both aimed at 'common readers') that the concept of a 'march of intellect' was most strongly contested as a narrative of popular intellectual and moral progress, a categorization of knowledge forms and a description of improving practice.

This thesis attempts to rethink the march of intellect as a socio-political complex through an analysis of its discursive properties and material bases, seeking to complicate an inherited liberal-radical democratization paradigm that celebrates the putative improvement of the common people as a predominantly political phenomenon. Baldly stated, this paradigm - derivative of nineteenth-century reformist accounts - treats a 'revolution in popular literature' between the 1790s and the 1840s as symbiotically linked to the increasing participation of the common people in formalized public spheres. Modern accounts often adopt this teleology in both its strong democratization and weaker popularization versions, but both conceptual approaches tend towards a Whiggish interpretation that focuses primarily on periods of political agitation.

This thesis aims to build on recent attempts to rethink the 'age of reform' (1780-1850) by examining the impact of the march of intellect as an improving aesthetic in

metropolitan 'popular culture' between 1819 and 1834. As yet, there has been no full-scale study of the 'march', and in most accounts it continues to be celebrated as part of the canon of an adult, male 'working-class' history, underpinned by a political 'march of labour' tradition, or dismissed as the chimera of an overactive liberal-radical imagination - an entertaining but ultimately insignificant episode. Defining 'popular culture' as both discourse and practice - a fluid repertoire from which the common people drew strategically as their reading of certain situations required - this thesis asks questions about the origins, nature, timing, reality and significance of the 'march'. It argues that although the trope was undoubtedly rich raw material for reformist rhodomontade and reactionary satire, it was also a meaningful historical construct, functioning as a widely-recognized shorthand for a range of improving imperatives and practices assumed to be unique to English society during the 1820s and early 1830s. Most importantly, it referred to a range of self-improving ideas and practices that were experienced daily by the common people, both in public and in private. The march of intellect was, in short, the product of a specific historical moment in which the moral, social and political agency of the common people was being widely debated: a linguistic and conceptual framework through which the public image of the common people was being reworked - and a repertoire of practices experienced - in the context of profound economic, technological and demographic changes.

The specific research focus of this thesis on the metropolitan popular press therefore responds to both scholarly lacunae and contemporary claims that it was the popular periodical that most evidently embodied and cultivated the march of intellect. The assertion that this popular press played a special role in the development of a sense of

popular agency has been based on three principal claims. Firstly, that between 1819 and 1834 periodical editors and publishers - motivated by both commercial and ideological incentives - identified and shaped a latent market of 'common readers'. This common readership referred to a broad social constituency, comprising the lower-middling metropolitan artisan or mechanic and his wife and children, as well as poorer labouring-class families. The 'common reader' was (and is) an elusive individual, but the concept retained some coherence both in economic terms (usually referring to readers from families with an income of less than fifty pounds per annum) and as rhetoric (addresses typically being made to the 'labouring', 'working', 'industrious' or 'productive' classes). The most successful titles of the period (particularly the 'sporting' Sunday newspapers), however, appealed to a more inclusive 'popular' readership, incorporating the common reader into a broader social audience. By targeting and depicting common people as readers, popular periodicals supposedly enabled them to express their agency by exercising choice over what they read, where, when and how.

The second claim was that the intellectual and material worlds of the common people increasingly became the subject of periodical discourse: what has recently been termed a process of 'subjectification' achieved through the deployment of representations of popular cultural practice. If this content was heavily stylized and of questionable veracity - and often provided a form of downward social voyeurism for a 'middling sort' readership - it nonetheless assigned a degree of agency to the common people by making their ideas and behaviour a subject of enquiry. And thirdly, it has been claimed (and was widely asserted at the time by radical pressmen and in the marketing puffs of cheap periodical publishers) that the popular periodical provided a medium through which a

new level of 'popular articulacy' could be developed by publishing the correspondence of 'common writers'.

These were the quintessential claims made by the champions of the march of intellect, contested by its detractors during the 1820s and early 1830s, and subsequently developed by historians - but discussions about the relationship between print and popular agency are much older. Indeed, the extended introduction to this thesis demonstrates that the terminology of the 'march' itself is best depicted not as the coinage of nineteenth-century radical autodidacts, philanthropic improvers and commercially-motivated publishers, but rather as the outcome of a broad-based and longer-term preoccupation with the intellectual and moral condition of the common people. Religious and secular initiatives to reform the morals and improve the intellect of 'the people' existed throughout the eighteenth century, becoming fused with debates about popular political agency in the radical and loyalist popular press of the 1790s. Alongside this political inflection, moral-religious improving messages continued to be circulated in printed form into the early nineteenth century; but the notion of popular agency was particularly powerfully expressed in the post-war radical publications of William Cobbett *et al* between 1816 and 1821. In 1819 the 'Stamp Act' was passed, redefining the 'newspaper' and formalizing a split in the popular periodical market between expensive 'stamped' and cheaper 'unstamped' titles. Commentators external to radical print culture increasingly appropriated the concept of a 'march of intellect', and in the new generation of popular periodicals of the early 1820s they repeatedly invoked it in debates about the moral, social and political role of the common people. Although ostensibly a nineteenth-century discourse of progress and description of improving practice, therefore, it is shown that the

march of intellect was the product of over half a century of public discussion about the place of the lower-middling and labouring classes in English society.

If the march of intellect was the product of a long-term campaign for popular intellectual and moral improvement - embodied and cultivated in the popular periodical press - there is a danger in substituting a political democratization paradigm with its cultural equivalent. The implication that there was a linear relationship between the growth of popular periodicals and an expansion of popular agency is clearly problematic. Such a story is complicated in this thesis in a number of ways. Specifically, chapter one demonstrates that in the context of the popular periodical press, the growth of both the cheap weekly and Sunday newspaper markets (symbols of the 'march' of popular print) was slower and less certain than the overall picture suggests. Based on an analysis of a unique dataset of over 1,000 metropolitan titles, it establishes a model for the breakthrough (1815-19), consolidation and diversification (1820-9) and proliferation (1830-4) of the cheap periodical press. There was a significant increase in the number of periodical titles produced in London more generally in the period (by 1830-4, ten times the number of cheap periodicals and 50% more newspapers were being produced in London than in the period 1815-19) - but internal trends and patterns are more complex. Thus, although the post-war radical press campaign was arguably responsible for the breakthrough of the cheap format between 1815 and 1819, the cheap titles of the 1820s were increasingly literary, religious and technical in character. Further, between 1825 and 1829 - the five-year period in which 'march' rhetoric dominated public discourse to an unprecedented degree - the number of cheap titles produced actually *declined*. Indeed, although there was a resurgence of cheap political print in the years between 1830 and

1834, this coincided with the rapid growth of non-political genres, and especially literary titles. This slower and more heterogeneous growth of the metropolitan periodical market complicates received accounts of a march of intellect driven by the rapid rise of a common readership demanding cheap political print.

This tension between the reality of the 'march' and its public perception is also discernable when the motivations of periodical producers are examined: commercial incentives, as much as ideological conviction, stimulated the production of popular periodicals by agents in this market (usually bookseller-publishers, located around the established locales of the metropolitan book trade on Paternoster Row). An analysis in chapter two of the careers of two of the most prominent producers of cheap periodical print in the 1820s and 1830s - the bookseller-publisher, William Strange (1801-71), and his printer coadjutor, George Cowie (*b*.1799/1800) - suggests that cheap periodical producers were simultaneously economic rent-seekers and literary agents, and that for them, at least, the 'march' was as much a commercial opportunity as an improving mission. In terms of the types of periodical they produced, cheap political and technical weeklies enabled the breakthrough of the cheap format in 1815-24, but thereafter cheap literary miscellanies, often with an amusing or satirical agenda, dominated the market, even in moments of political crisis. Many of Cowie and Strange's cheap titles were indeed vehicles of a self-improving message, but even in their most highly specialized titles they offered readers a diversity of content, often at odds with the prescriptions of the 'march of intellect men'. The success of Sunday newspapers - peddling news about sports, crimes and popular amusements - likewise suggested that the common reader

often demanded content seemingly at odds with improving imperatives, suggesting that the choices they made as consumers could lead in many directions.

The subjectification of the cultural practices of the common people in the popular periodical also highlights tensions between reality and representation. A content analysis of a sample of 200 periodical numbers (in chapter three) reveals that although self-improving practices (reading, writing and learning) constituted roughly one quarter of all content, this matter sat alongside - and often subordinate to - portrayals (and often celebrations) of supposedly 'rough' practices. More specifically, a qualitative analysis of debates surrounding popular Sabbath observance reveals that 'realistic' and 'idealized' representational strategies were mobilized by periodical editors, resulting in an image of popular cultural practice that was stylized and strategically loaded. The common reader was thus presented with representations of popular practice that were authentic, but not reliable reflections of reality, complicating the credentials of the popular periodical as a medium of the 'march'. In short, the process of subjectification - rendering popular practices in vivid and concrete terms - could obscure or distort as much as it revealed about the agency of the common people.

Similarly, chapter four demonstrates how representations of periodical circulations, readers and reading spaces were a mixture of reality and rhetoric, centring on the contestation of the image of the common reader as an intellectual and moral agent. Representations of reading and readership functioned as an acid test of the reality of the march of intellect, and the popular periodical's ambivalent take on the cultural practices of the common people (some titles celebrating the common reader, and others expressing unease at his or her perceived tastes and practices) reveals aspects of its complex

representational history. Finally, chapter five concludes that claims that the popular periodical stimulated a sense of 'popular articulacy' prove to be problematic: the 'common writer' (in particular the 'ingenious mechanic' and the 'humble poet') did contribute to public scientific and literary discourse through the pages of the popular periodical - but the nature of the genre and the strategic motivations of editors in selecting and publishing contributions suggest that this was a highly restrictive, if genuine, means of asserting and claiming popular intellectual agency.

What, then, was the impact of the improving aesthetic connoted by the term the 'march of intellect' on metropolitan popular culture between 1819 and 1834? Through an examination of the popular periodical press - its quintessential vehicle and embodiment - the 'march' emerges as slower, more haphazard and more contested than many of its champions claimed. To a certain extent this is unsurprising: the relationship between self-improvement and popular culture was complex, and individuals and groups could display respectable and rough characteristics simultaneously or in quick succession. Such flexibility warns against making solid distinctions between what was 'improving' and what was not. If popular culture was flexible, it was also adaptive, and the limited permeation of an improving aesthetic amongst metropolitan common people ought not to obscure the reality that from the 1820s onwards it constituted an important part of many people's lives, coexisting with, rather than replacing, alternative cultural forms. Ultimately, the march of intellect was the locus of longstanding discussions about the moral, social and political agency of the common people. In the 1820s this was being conducted largely in terms of popular 'intellect' and 'morals' rather than political 'rights' and 'duties', but it remained a crucial debate during the 'age of reform' about the place of

the common people in English society: a debate in which at least some of these people articulated their opinions.

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;
Hands, that the rod of empire might have sway'd,
Or waked the ecstasy of the living lyre:

But Knowledge to their eyes her ample page,
Rich with the spoils of time, did ne'er unroll;
Chill Penury repress'd their noble rage,
And froze the genial current of their soul.

Full many a gem of purest ray serene
The dark and unfathom'd caves of ocean bear:
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

Thomas Gray, *An elegy written in a country church-yard* (1751)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis is a study of London's periodical and newspaper press and its relationship to metropolitan 'popular culture'. The principal source it uses has thus been the press itself: a rich but highly problematic body of evidence. Two research projects in particular have enabled me to approach the popular press with confidence: Professor John North's *Waterloo directory of English newspapers and periodicals* (2003); and Professor Laurel Brake's *Dictionary of nineteenth-century journalism* (forthcoming, 2008). I have been fortunate to be able to acquire and refine data from the former, and to contribute to the latter. Both resources enable the historian to ask new - or at least more sharply focussed - questions about the nature, purpose and impact of this pervasive printed form. My thanks go to Professors North and Brake for their interest and comments. I would also like to thank Professor Brian Maidment for his support and enthusiasm. My thanks also go to the Economic and Social Research Council for funding me for four years.

The research underpinning, and writing of, this thesis was conducted while I was studying at Exeter College, Oxford, and it is with Oxford academics that my biggest intellectual debts lie. I would like to thank Professor Avner Offer, Professor Jane Humphries, Dr. John Stevenson, Dr. Perry Gauci and all the participants of the Graduate Seminar for History, 1680-1850. My largest intellectual debts are to Joanna Innes. As the moving spirit behind the Graduate Seminar and the 'Re-imagining Democracy' project, she has encouraged me to participate fully in academic discourse; but it is as my supervisor that she has made the biggest impact. I would like to thank her for her patience, always insightful comments and unfailing generosity of time. I could not have

asked for a better mentor, and my hope is that the end-product justifies the effort she has expended on my behalf. Most of what is good in this thesis is because of her.

Finally, and most importantly, I would like to thank my family for supporting me in every way possible. My mother, Joan, and father, David, read me stories when I was young and taught me to pursue with passion the things I enjoyed most. My sister, Nicola, and brother, Maarten, have simultaneously shown interest in my work and grounded me with their humour when I took myself too seriously. And Rose-Marie has had to endure living with me: I cannot express enough my appreciation to her for always being there for me. This thesis, then, is dedicated to my family; and is for my Rose.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Short abstract i

Long abstract iii

Acknowledgements xiii

INTRODUCTION: *Morals, intellect and popular periodicals in early nineteenth-century London* 1

Prolegomenon: Francis Place and the 'march of intellect' 1

I - *Definitions and inherited narratives* 12

i. Definitions: 'popular culture', the 'common reader' and 'popular agency' 13

ii. Inherited narratives 17

a. Literacy and 'popular education' 17

b. The 'march of science': science, industry and political economy 25

c. 'Radical history' 30

d. Personal enlightenment: the 'pursuit of knowledge' and moral reform 35

iii. Conclusions: popular culture and inherited narratives 43

II - *Reform and improvement in the popular periodical: 'manners and morals' and the 'march of intellect',* c. *1780-*c.*1830* 44

i. Reforming the morals of the people 45

ii. The march of intellect 51

iii. Conclusions: morals and intellect from the 1780s to the 1830s 62

III - *'Popular periodicals': narratives and genres of a nineteenth-century source* 63

i. Narratives: 'democratization' through print 64

ii. Formats and genres 69

iii. Conclusions: the popular periodical as a primary source 78

IV - *Conclusions: morals, intellect and popular periodicals* 79

Section I

The march of intellect and the production of popular periodicals, 1815-34

CHAPTER ONE: *Organization, trends and patterns in the production of metropolitan periodicals, 1815-34* 83

Introduction 83

I - *Organization: cheap periodicals, bookseller-publishers and legal restrictions* 86

i. Defining 'cheap' periodicals and the 'unstamped' press 87

ii. Bookseller-publishers as cheap periodical producers: roles, finances and locations 91

a. The roles of the bookseller-publisher 91

b. Locations of cheap periodical production 102

iii. Legal restrictions 104

a. Blasphemy, sedition and libel 104

b. Stamp duties: the 'taxes on knowledge' 106

c. Selling cheap periodicals: booksellers and street vendors 110

iv. Conclusions: cheap periodicals, bookseller-publishers and the law 114

II - *Patterns, pricing and content in the cheap periodical market* 115

i. Growth trends and pricing structures 115

a. Scope and limitations of the database 115

b. Pricing taxonomy 116

c. Patterns of production 116

ii. The content of metropolitan periodicals, 1815-34 121

a. Classifying periodicals by content 121

b. Aggregate data 122

c. Higher-price periodicals 123

d. Middle-price periodicals 126

e. Lower-price periodicals 127

III - *Conclusions: organization, trends and patterns in the production of metropolitan periodicals* 130

CHAPTER TWO: *Production practices and cheap publishing repertoires: the case of Cowie and Strange, 1822-34* 133

Introduction 133

I - *Overview of the 'publishing repertoire' of Cowie and Strange* 134

II - *The rise and fall of Cowie and Strange, 1822-30* 142

i. Breaking through: cheap technical periodicals and associational networks, 1822-5 142

ii. Branching out and bankruptcy: from technical organs to religious and literary experiments, 1826-9 145

iii. Summary conclusions: Cowie and Strange, 1822-30 152

III - *A radical solution: co-operative experiment and the unstamped press, 1828-32* 153

i. Co-operative experiments, 1828-30 154

ii. The radical unstamped, stamped newspapers and 'Figaro-mania', *1830-2* 159

a. William Carpenter, the Political Letters *and the radical unstamped* 160

b. 'Figaro-*Mania' and the proliferating unstamped* 167

IV - *Conclusions: Cowie and Strange's publishing repertoire, 1822-34* 171

Section II

The march of intellect as representation and practice, 1819-34

CHAPTER THREE*: Representations of cultural practice in the popular periodical, 1819-34* 175

Introduction: William Cobbett and popular cultural practice 175

I - *Representational strategies: cultural practice as a media event and social reality* 180

II - *Defining and measuring 'cultural practice': a content analysis of popular periodicals, 1819-34* 185

i. Definitions and methods 185
ii. Results: the content of popular periodicals 187
a. Analysis of individual titles 187
Political titles 188
Religious titles 190
Literary titles 192
Technical titles 193
b. Aggregate content analysis 195
Themes 195
Activity groups 198
iii. Summary conclusions: cultural practice and periodical content 201
III - *Sunday in London: representations of cultural practice in the 1820s and 1830s* 201
i. Sabbath observance and the law 202
ii. Sunday trading and working 207
iii. Popular amusements: drinking, viewing and family recreation 212
a. Drinking 212
b. Public events: viewing and participating 215
c. Family recreation 222
IV - *Conclusions: popular periodicals and the representation of cultural practice* 226

CHAPTER FOUR: *Circulations, readers and spaces: reality and rhetoric in the popular periodical, 1819-34* 230
Introduction: 'reading for all' 230
I - *Periodical circulations and the 'rhetoric of success'* 232
i. Circulation figures 233
ii. The 'rhetoric of success' 236
II - *Varieties of 'common reader' in the popular periodical* 240
i. Juvenile and female readers 240
ii. Unskilled and skilled working men 247

iii. Inclusive readerships: 'popular' Sunday newspapers 249
iv. Summary conclusions: varieties of common reader 251
III - *Reading locations: coffee-shops and mechanics' institute libraries* 253
i. Cheap 'coffee-houses' and '-shops' 254
a. Coffee-rooms in the Old Bailey proceedings 254
b. Representations of cheap 'coffee-shops' in the popular periodical 259
ii. Mechanics' libraries and reading rooms 264
a. The library of the London Mechanics' Institution 266
b. Representations of the LMI library in the popular periodical 272
iii. Summary conclusions: coffee shops and mechanics' libraries 276
IV - *Conclusions: representations of reading in the popular periodical* 278

CHAPTER FIVE: *Ingenious mechanics and humble poets: common writers in the popular periodical during the 1820s and 1830s* 281
Introduction 281
I - *Ingenious mechanics and technology in the cheap technical periodical, 1821-1834* 284
i. 'Scientific knowledge' and the march of intellect 285
ii. Cheap technical periodicals and 'ingenious mechanics' 287
iii. Correspondence: practices, techniques and solutions 292
iv. Summary conclusions: ingenious mechanics and cheap technical periodicals 297
II - *Humble poets: political, Parnassian and commonplace verse in the popular periodical* 300
i. The 'Romantic' inheritance and the march of intellect 301
ii. Political poetry 304
iii. The Parnassian strand 307
iv. Commonplace verse 310
v. Summary conclusions: humble poets in the popular periodical 313
III - *Conclusion: common writers, popular periodicals and the march of intellect* 315

CONCLUSION: *Rethinking popular periodicals and the march of intellect in London, 1819-34* 318

Appendices 329

Bibliography 338

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS[1]

Add. mss - Francis Place Collection, Additional Manuscripts held at the British Library, St. Pancras

DNCJ - Brake, L. (ed.), *Dictionary of nineteenth-century journalism* (forthcoming, 2008)

HoC.AP - House of Commons, Accounts and Papers

HoC.B - House of Commons Bills

HoC.R - House of Commons, Reports of Committees

LMI - London Mechanics' Institution

LMR - London Mechanics' Register

MM - Mechanic's Magazine, Museum, Register, Journal and Gazette

OBP - Old Bailey proceedings online (www.oldbaileyonline.org)

OED - Oxford English dictionary

ODNB - Oxford dictionary of national biography

RTS - Religious Tract Society

SDUK - Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge

SPCK - Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge

TN - Trades' Newspaper and Mechanics' Weekly Journal

TFP - Trades' Free Press

WDENP - North, J. (ed.), *Waterloo directory of English newspapers and periodicals*, series II (2003)

WFP - Weekly Free Press

---

[1] The full dates of publication for all periodicals are given in the first instance; thereafter, the reader is kindly asked to check the bibliography.

TABLES AND FIGURES

TABLES

Table 1.1: Child education in the metropolis: Parliamentary returns for 1833 22

Table 1.2: Hebdomadal press listed in the Trades' Free Press, *1827-8* 77

Table 2.1: Profit margins on book publishing, 1832 97

Table 2.2: Profit margins on cheap periodicals, 1850 99

Table 2.3: Number of periodical titles in price categories, London, 1815-34 (as a percentage of price range output) 116

Table 3.1: Periodicals published or printed by Cowie and Strange, 1822-34 (n=65) 137

Table 4.1: Representational strategies in popular periodicals, 1819-34 184

Table 5.1: Occupations of prosecutors from Old Bailey trials naming coffee-shops and coffee-houses as 'integral', 1814, 1819, 1824, 1829 and 1834 (n=61) 257

Table 5.2: Role of coffee-rooms in Old Bailey trials, 1814, 1819, 1824, 1829 and 1834 (n=96) 258

Table 5.3: Twenty libraries and reading rooms avowedly designed for common readers in London during the 1820s and 1830s 266

Table 6.1: Correspondents to the Mechanic's Magazine, *1823-7* 291

FIGURES

Figures 1.1a and 1.1b: Cheap weekly magazines: Knight and Lacey's technical Mechanic's Magazine *(1823-58) and the two-penny literary miscellany, the* Hive *(1822-4)* 8

Figures 1.2a and 1.2b: Seven-penny newspapers: the 'sporting' *Bell's Life in London* (1822-86) and the Tory *John Bull* (1820-92) 9

Figure 1.3: 'The Byron Coffee House and Reading Rooms', 1829 (Robert Seymour) 46

Figure 1.4: 'The March of Intellect', 1829 (Robert Seymour) 52

Figure 2.1: Number of titles per period, by price, 1815-34 118

Figure 2.2: Titles in particular price bands, as % of all titles produced, 1815-34 119

Figure 2.3: Proportion of all titles within particular content categories, grouped by price, 1815-34 123

Figure 2.4: Number of higher-price titles produced, by content, 1815-34 125

Figure 2.5: % of higher-price titles in each content category, by period, 1815-34 125

Figure 2.6: Number of middle-price titles produced, by content, 1815-34 126

Figure 2.7: % of middle-price titles in each content category, by period, 1815-34 127

Figure 2.8: Number of lower-price titles produced, by content, 1815-34 129

Figure 2.9: % of lower-price titles in each content category, by period, 1815-34 130

Figure 4.1: Thematic content of London periodicals and newspapers, 1819-34 (i) 188

Figure 4.2: Thematic content of London periodicals and newspapers, 1819-34 (ii) 196

Figure 4.3: Weighted thematic content of London periodicals and newspapers, 1819-34 196

Figure 4.4: Activity content of London periodicals and newspapers, 1819-34 199

Figure 4.5: Weighted activity content of London periodicals and newspapers, 1819-34 200

Figure 5.1: Circulation trend of Bell's Life in London *(9 Oct. 1825-16 Dec. 1827)* 236

Figure 6.1: Vallance's 'Boat with wings', 1825 299

INTRODUCTION

Morals, intellect and popular periodicals in early nineteenth-century London

Prolegomenon: Francis Place and the 'march of intellect'

On 19 June 1816 the radical reformer, Benthamite utilitarian and master tailor Francis Place (1771-1854) appeared before Henry Brougham's (1778-1868) 'Select Committee appointed to enquire into the education of the lower orders of the metropolis'. Asked by the Whig politician whether he believed that great numbers of the poor in London would not allow their children to attend school 'because they derive profit from their begging and thieving', Place responded 'I have no knowledge of it.' The questioning continued:

> [Brougham] Do you consider that the morals of the lower orders of people are worse now, or better, than they were forty or fifty years back?
> [Place] I am quite sure that the morals of the lower orders are infinitely improved; I think a distinction might be made between the working people and those who are completely dissolute, for in fact they do not belong to them; it will be found on enquiry that very few of the dissolute ever want to work.
> [Brougham] To what do you attribute that improvement?
> [Place] The increased information.[1]

This exchange is revealing. For Place, the 'lower orders' of the metropolis could be divided between the 'working people' and the 'dissolute' - a distinction that enabled him to extol the moral 'improvement' of the 'people' irrespective of evidence to the contrary. When asked to what he attributed this improvement, Place specified 'the increased information'. What this 'information' was, how it was accessed and by who

---

[1] *HoC.R*, Select Committee appointed to enquire into the education of the lower orders of the metropolis, third report, 1816, **1816**, (495) IV. 165. For Place see G. Wallas, *The life of Francis Place* (1898); F. Place and M. Thale (ed.), *The autobiography of Francis Place* (1972); D. J. Rowe, 'Francis Place and the historian', *Historical Journal*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (1973), 45-63; idem., *London radicalism, 1830-1843* (1970); and D. Miles, *Francis Place, 1771-1854* (1988). For Brougham, see A. Aspinall, *Lord Brougham and the Whig Party* (2005); R. M. Stewart, *Henry Brougham, 1778-1868* (1985); and T. H. Ford, *Henry Brougham and his world* (1995). For full titles and publication details of all primary and secondary sources, please see the bibliography.

Place did not discuss; but some idea can be gleaned from a narrative filed twelve years later in his manuscript collections. Whilst walking through London's Green Park one evening in the summer of 1828, he overheard the conversation of three youths. The eldest, a labourer estimated to be about sixteen years old, was offering his peers a rudimentary explication of the solar system. Further up Constitution Hill, Place encountered the opposite pole of London life; a drunken twenty year-old labourer sparring with his friends and grinning at passers-by. To these encounters Place reacted thus:

> This creature, said I to myself cannot describe the Solar system, here is the marked difference produced by 'a little learning', for it is quite impossible for those who can talk of the Solar System with satisfaction, feeling pleasure from the consciousness of the knowledge they have acquired, to be drunk at a Gin Shop, sparring and blackguarding as those wretchedly ignorant and debased creatures were. Here is a sufficient, practical reply to those who sneer at the 'march of intellect.'[2]

For Place, this grand 'march of intellect' comprised a categorization of the 'respectable' knowledge forms increasingly sought by the 'better sort' of metropolitan workmen and their wives, sons and daughters; a description of their improved practices and morals; and a narrative of intellectual and moral progress. It was, as some of his radical coadjutors described it, a 'popular enlightenment'.[3]

---

[2] Add. mss., 27,827, fols. 94-5 (emphases in originals unless otherwise stated). Place's oeuvre reveals an empathy with the plight of the metropolitan poor; but he maintained that self-education was the best means to overcome the challenges met by working people. On drunkenness, for instance, he observed that 'the uninformed man thinks only of sensual enjoyments', whereas '[t]he better-informed man's thoughts are occupied with the pleasures he has had, and those he anticipates; - from books, lectures, conversations, experiments, and ingenious mechanical contrivances'; Francis Place, *Improvements of the working people* (1834), 7-9. See also B. H. Harrison, 'Two roads to social reform: Francis Place and the "Drunken Committee" of 1834', *Historical Journal*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (1968), 272-300.

[3] In 1818 John Keats (1795-1821) wrote to his friend, John Hamilton Reynolds (1794-1852), arguing for Wordsworth's superiority over Milton as a poet. Although Wordsworth and Milton were equals as philosophers, Keats suggested, the latter 'did not think into the human heart, as Wordsworth has done'. 'What is then to be inferr'd?', he asked, 'O many things - It proves there is really a grand march of intellect…'; see Keats to Reynolds, 3 May 1818, in R. Gittings (ed.), *Letters of John Keats* (1995), 90, 291. For the invocation of the term 'popular enlightenment', see John Wade, *History of the middle and working classes* (1833), 41-2; and Harriet Martineau, *The history of England*, two vols. (1849-50), i, 265, 578 and 580 and ii, 5, 179, 254, 255, 412 and 699. For comments on the 'moral and intellectual development of a nation', see Charles Knight, *Passages of a working life during half a century*, three vols. (1864-5), i, preface, x.

The intellectual and moral improvement of the English 'common people' was a theme to which Place repeatedly returned in the 1820s and 1830s, and his 'collections on manners and morals' contain a diversity of material on metropolitan 'popular culture'. In private notes, letters, articles and pamphlets he juxtaposed eighteenth-century examples of 'gross' songs and books, drunkenness, begging, crime, lotteries, fairs and brothels with evidence depicting an improved nineteenth century characterized by sobriety, educational schemes, mechanics' institutes, mutual improvement societies, circulating libraries, cheap coffee-shops, better working practices, an increased diffusion of cheap periodicals, newspapers and books and a 'reformation' of manners and dress.[4] This optimistic story revealed Place's belief not only that moral reform was a prerequisite to political emancipation, but also that the process of popular self-improvement had already begun. Moreover, it was a cause for celebration that such a culture of self-improvement was increasingly indigenous to the 'working classes': in his most powerful articulation of this argument, *Improvements of the working people* (1834), Place observed that

> [t]he most remarkable, and at the same time the most commendable and praiseworthy part of the case is this; that until lately, the acquisition of knowledge, and the reformation of manners, are almost wholly attributable to their own unaided exertions.

For Place, the 'acquisition of knowledge' and the 'reformation of manners' were aspects of the same phenomenon: the practice of intellectual self-improvement led to personal moral reform, and vice versa.[5]

The long-term drivers behind this march of intellect, Place argued, included the political agitation surrounding the French Revolution of 1789, the associational culture cultivated by the London Corresponding Society (LCS) in the 1790s, and

---

[4] See the material in add. mss., 27,823-27,830. These collections were used in M. D. George, *London life in the XVIIIth century* (1925), but a large amount of material remains untapped.
[5] Francis Place, *Improvements of the working people* (1834), 6.

improvements in education and literacy resulting from the Sunday, Lancasterian and National school movements from the early 1800s onwards. All of these, however, were subordinate to the growth of 'newspapers' and 'Small Publications - [for example] Cobbett'. The increased diffusion of such 'popular periodicals' from the 1810s onwards was, for Place, the means by which the intellectual, moral, social - and even political - agency of the common people was gradually being secured.[6] Between the 1790s and the 1840s Place exerted his organizational talents behind numerous schemes designed to cultivate a sense of popular agency, but his belief in the unique power of the press to effect improvement and reform was principally shaped by his own involvement in metropolitan print culture.[7] His notebooks and letters reveal a conflicted attitude towards the press: he invoked articles as evidence, yet frequently denounced their truth-value; and he castigated the press as a 'demoralizer' of the people, but argued that its growth would precipitate their intellectual, moral and political reformation. The image of Place in his later years as a lonely, elderly man cutting out newspaper articles that 'might be useful at some future time, in relation to the working-classes' demonstrates this conviction that the press had a key role to play in improving the lives of ordinary people, but also his isolation from events towards the end of his life.[8]

---

[6] Add. mss., 27,828, fols. 107-10. For newspaper 'growth', see H. Barker, *Newspapers, politics and English society* (2000), 1-28. For an optimistic account of the effect of the 'extension of cheap periodical literature' see John Wade, *History and political philosophy of the middle and working classes*, 4th edn. (1842), 135-6. For a pessimistic view see P. Gaskell, *The manufacturing population of England* (1833), 267-81.

[7] In 1817 he edited five numbers of the two-penny radical weekly *Hone's Reformists' Register* (1817), and in 1818 lent assistance to the penny utilitarian-radical *Gorgon* (1818-19). In the 1820s he wrote articles for the freethinking *Republican* (1819-26) and several daily newspapers, but it was his attempt to popularize political economy in the *Trades' Newspaper* (1825-7) that encouraged his best writing; see add. mss., 35,154, fols. 87-123. Place's foray into elite literary circles was less successful, though he did make contributions to the *Westminster Review* (1824-1914) in 1826-7. See my entry on Place in *DNCJ*.

[8] G. Wallas, *The life of Francis Place* (1898), 397-8.

Place was making the quintessential radical argument that the improved common people deserved political representation, but his collections were more than the selective trappings of a radical antiquarian: they were the raw material of a much broader and longer-term debate about the place of the common people in English society. His triumphalism did not go unchallenged, and the march of intellect was frequently denounced. The essayist Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881) articulated his own opposition in an *Edinburgh Review* (1802-29) article, 'Characteristicks', in 1831:

> What… is all this that we hear, for the last generation or two, about the Improvement of the Age, the Spirit of the Age, Destruction of Prejudice, Progress of the Species, and the March of Intellect, but an unhealthy state of self-sentence, self-survey; the precursor and prognostic of still worse health? That Intellect do march, if possible at double-quick time, is very desirable; nevertheless, why should she turn round at every stride, and cry: See you what a stride I have taken! Such a marching of Intellect is… what the Jockeys call 'all action and no go.'[9]

The repeated invocation of the 'march' trope in this period opens up a number of questions relating to the relationship between periodical print, 'popular culture' and what is depicted as a process of cultural and political democratization. Crudely put, this liberal-radical paradigm treats the growth of a 'popular press' in the early nineteenth century as symbiotically linked to the increasing participation of the common people in formalized public spheres: if Place adopted a teleology spanning the period from the LCS in the 1790s to the 1832 Reform Act, recent proponents assert or challenge the 'growth' of popular consumerism, the 'revolution in popular literature' and the 'expansion' of political institutions.[10]

This approach has left significant lacunae, and scant attention has been paid to the impact of the 'march of intellect' as an improving aesthetic between 1819 and 1834. There has been no full-scale study of the discursive or material bases of the 'march';

---

[9] Thomas Carlyle, 'Characteristicks', *Edinburgh Review*, Vol. 54 (Dec., 1831); see also, 'Signs of the times', ibid., Vol. 49 (Jun., 1829).

[10] For a modern account that stresses the 'politicisation of the common reader's cultural role' between the 1790s and the 1840s', see I. Haywood, *The revolution in popular literature* (2004), 2.

no examination as to what extent it can be approached as a social reality; and no judgement as to why it was an important narrative for historical actors, and remains so for historians. In short, the 'march' continues to be treated as it always has been: celebrated as part of the canon of an adult, male 'working-class' history, underpinned by a political 'march of labour' tradition; or satirized as the chimera of an overactive liberal-radical imagination - an entertaining but ultimately insignificant episode. But to what extent can the 'march' be salvaged as a meaningful historical construct? More specifically, can it provide a useful conceptual tool for assessing the impact of an improving aesthetic on metropolitan 'popular culture' in the 1820s and early 1830s? This thesis aims to elucidate some larger 'what, how and why?' questions: what exactly was the 'march of intellect' and its synonyms, the 'march of mind', the 'march of knowledge' and the 'march of progress'?; what were its origins?; when was it supposed to have occurred?; what caused it to become so pervasive?; to what extent was it real or imagined?; why was it important to Place and his contemporaries?; what were its consequences?; and what is its enduring significance?[11]

Taking as its starting-point Place's claims that the press embodied and cultivated the 'march', this thesis aims to answer these questions through an analysis of London's 'popular periodical' market - the subject of section I ('The march of intellect and the production of popular periodicals'). The chronological focus ranges from 1819 (when the Stamp Act was passed in order to suppress radical or 'unsafe' cheap periodical literature, and the 'march of intellect' began to pervade the popular

[11] Recent engagement can be found in A. Rauch, *Useful knowledge* (2001), 1-60 (although only pages 57-9 actually refer to the term 'the march of the mind'). Ian Haywood makes numerous references to the 'march', but his claims that 'the "grand march of the intellect" is as much a feature of eighteenth-century liberal and radical thought as it is of the next century', while sustainable, detract from the significance of its proliferation in the 1820s and 1830s; see I. Haywood, *The revolution* (2004), 11. Previous coverage can be found in A. Briggs, *The age of improvement* (1959), 216-224 (Briggs refers only to the years 1821-7 and almost exclusively to 'liberal Toryism' and 'political economy'). The most exciting work has been on visual-satirical responses; see B. Maidment, '"Penny" wise, "penny" foolish - popular periodicals and "the March of Intellect" in the 1820s and 1830s', in L. Brake, B. Bell and D. Finkelstein (eds.), *Nineteenth-century media* (2000), 104-121.

journalistic lexicon) to 1834 (which saw the apogee of the cheap periodical in terms of the scale of its production, and the discarding of the discredited 'march' trope by its former champions, such as Place).[12] This 'popular periodical' market comprised both the cheap weekly magazine - typically published on Saturdays, costing between a penny and three-pence and consisting of between eight and sixteen octavo pages in double-column format - and the 'popular' Sunday newspaper - costing seven-pence and consisting of one folded folio sheet in multiple columns (see figures 1.1a, 1.1b, 1.2a and 1.2b). This thesis is based on a reading of over 230 such titles, and many hundreds of individual numbers. The rationale behind this source selection is that historical actors and historians have consistently identified the cheap Saturday periodical and the 'stamped' Sunday newspaper as the dominant forms of periodical print consumed by 'common readers' in the period - though surprisingly little is known about the 'popular periodical' as a cluster of literary forms or as a socially-embedded artefact.[13] Any claims made for the intellectual or moral improvement of the 'common people' on the basis of a 'revolution in popular literature' - indexed by growth in circulation, the forging of new or subaltern readerships or experiments in content - must therefore be approached through an examination of metropolitan print culture itself.[14]

---

[12] See the conclusion of this thesis for Place's apparent decision to stop using the terminology of the 'march' in 1834-5; 318-20.

[13] See, for example, Henry Brougham, 'Progress of the people - periodical press', *Edinburgh Review*, Vol. 57 (1833), 239-48.

[14] For a detailed definition and explication of the 'popular periodical' market, see chapters one and two. Throughout this thesis I have made extensive use of J. North (ed.), *WDENP* series one (2001) and two (2003) <http://www.victorianperiodicals.com/series2/default.asp>.

Figures 1.1a and 1.1b: Cheap weekly magazines: Knight and Lacey's technical Mechanic's Magazine *(1823-58) and the two-penny literary miscellany, the* Hive *(1822-4)*

THE HIVE;

OR,

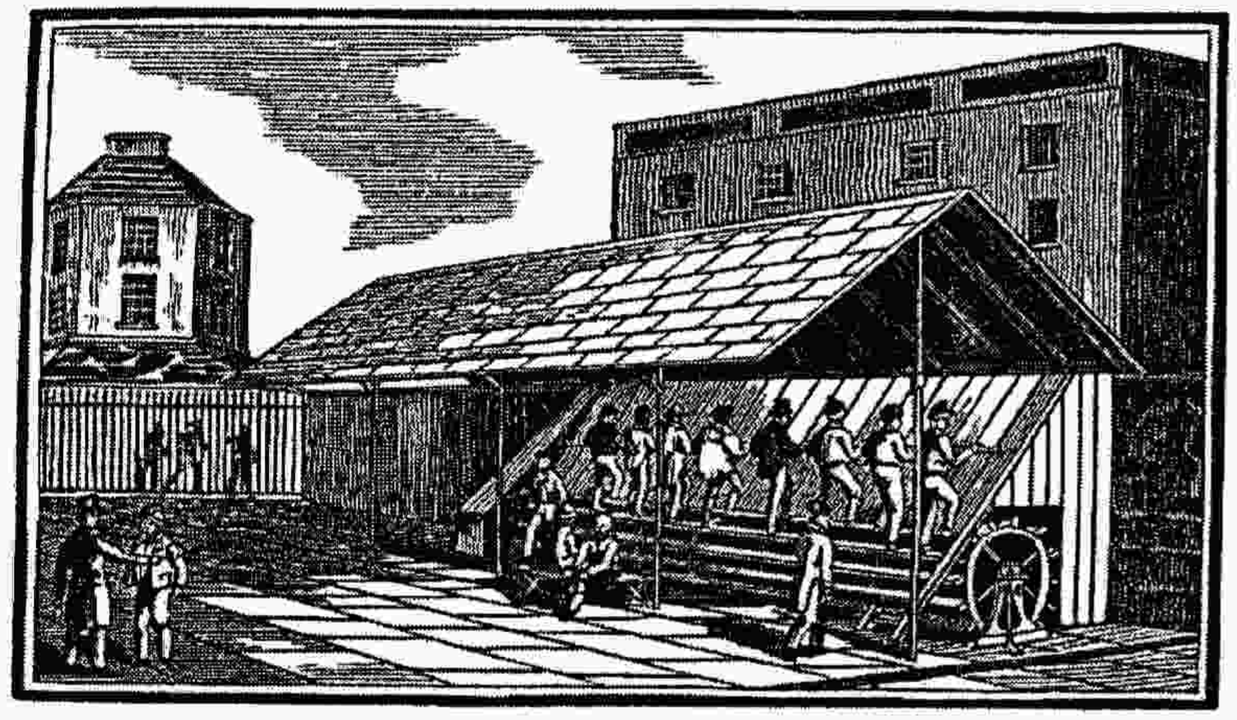
WEEKLY REGISTER OF REMARKABLE EVENTS,

IN

Domestic Occurrences, Literature, the Arts and Manufactures, Public Exhibitions, Life and Manners.

VOL. I.] PRICE TWO-PENCE. [No. I.

(Second Edition.)



THE BRIXTON TREAD MILL.

PRISON DISCIPLINE.

THE invention of the Tread Mill, as an improvement in prison discipline, has attracted so very general a degree of interest, that we have illustrated our notice of the subject with a wood cut. We firmly believe, that the Tread Mill will be found very efficacious in deterring from crime, for nothing is so appalling to the rogue and villain as the idea of unremitted labour.

Our view represents one of the ten airing yards of the prison at Brixton, all of which radiate from the Governor's House in the centre, so that from the window of his room he commands a complete view of all the yards. The building behind the shed, is the Mill House, containing the requisite machinery for grinding corn and dressing the flour, &c. On the right side of this building, a pipe passes up to the roof, on which is a large cast-iron reservoir, capable of holding some thousand gallons of water, for the use of the prison. This reservoir is filled by means of forcing pump machinery below, connected with the principal axis which works the machinery of the Mill: this axis or shaft passes under the pavement of the several yards, and, working by means of universal joints, at every turn communicates with the tread wheel of each class.

By means of steps, the gang of prisoners ascend at one end, and when the requisite number range themselves upon the wheel, it commences its revolution. The effort then to every individual is simply that of ascending an endless flight of steps; their combined weight acting upon every successive stepping board precisely as a stream of water upon the float boards of a water wheel.

Mechanic's Magazine,

Museum, Register, Journal, & Gazette.

——— Industry! rough power!
Whom labour still attends, and sweat, and pain:
Yet the kind source of every gentle art,
And all the soft civility of life.
THOMSON.

No. 1.] SATURDAY, AUGUST 30, 1823. [Price 3d.

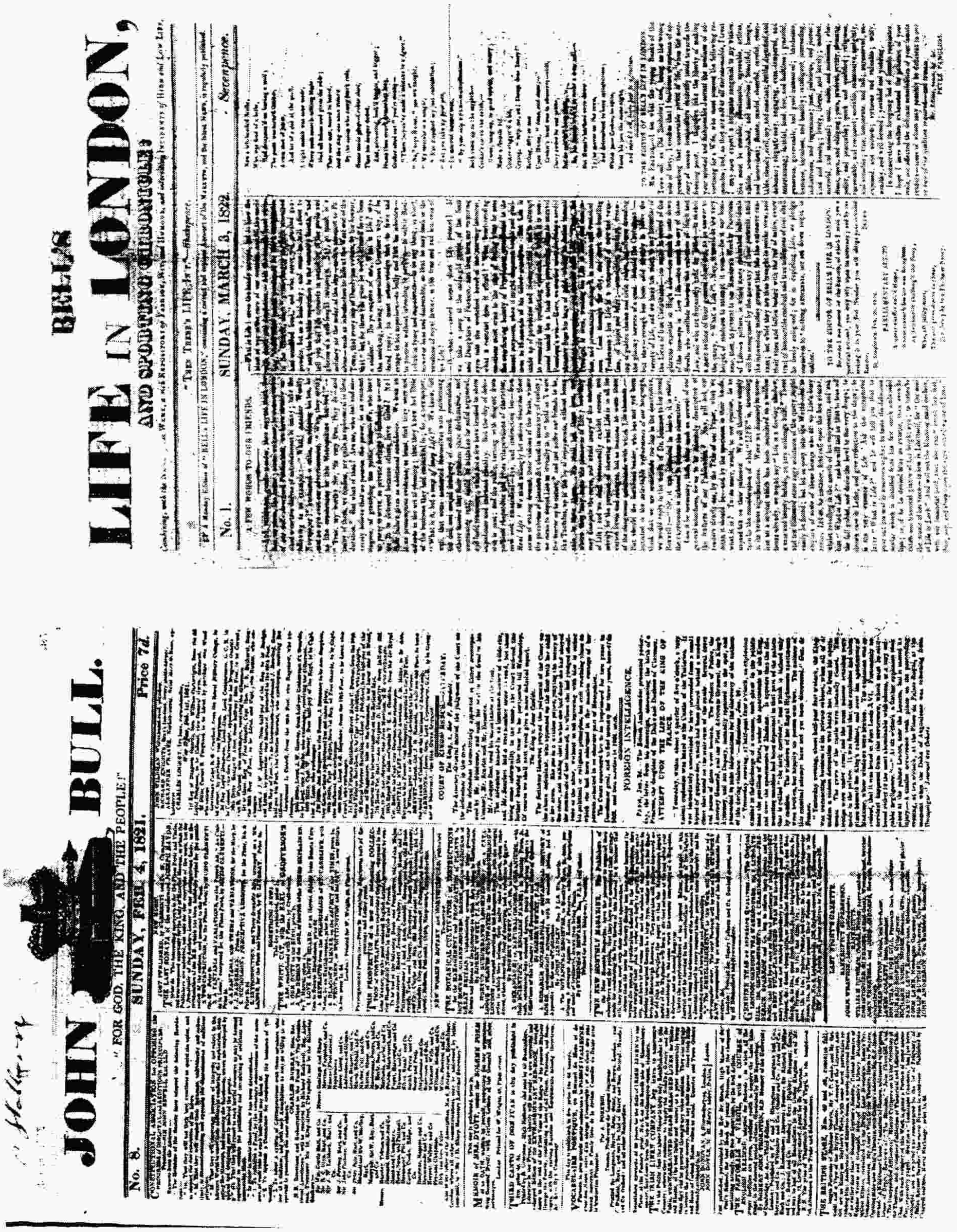


MEMOIR OF JAMES WATT,

THE GREAT IMPROVER OF THE STEAM-ENGINE.

MANY great and distinguished men, the ornaments of the last and present centuries, have been more known and much more talked of than James Watt; but, perhaps, no one of them was the fortunate author of so much real good to mankind or has equal claims on their gratitude. Now, indeed, it is generally known, that he was one of the most successful and skilful inventors of machinery of the age. His good fortune may encourage, and his perseverance instruct the present and all future generations of mechanics; and, therefore, his biography has been selected, as it seems particularly well adapted, for the first number of a work which is to be entirely devoted to their amusement an improvement. Mr. Watt was also a kind good-hearted man—giving lustre to his art, not only by the prodigious power he created, but by the life he led. He acquired wealth and honour by his own exertions, and was praised for his wisdom as well as for his skill. Though we do not pretend to assert that there is any thing in mechanical pursuits which peculi-

Figures 1.2a and 1.2b: Seven-penny newspapers: the 'sporting' *Bell's Life in London* (1822-86) and the Tory *John Bull* (1820-92)


BELL'S LIFE IN LONDON,
AND SPORTING CHRONICLE.
No. 1. SUNDAY, MARCH 5, 1822.
JOHN BULL.
FOR GOD, THE KING, AND THE PEOPLE.
No. 8. SUNDAY, FEB. 4, 1821. Price 7d.

Having identified the 'popular periodical' as a pervasive but financially vulnerable printed genre, this thesis examines what forms of cultural practice were invoked as evidence for or against the reality of the 'march' by periodical editors and publishers (Section II, 'The march of intellect as representation and practice'). The 'march' served as a description of improving practice, and the theme of self-improvement characterized the content of many cheap and Sunday titles. Notwithstanding this apparent permeation of an improving aesthetic, popular periodicals contained a diversity of matter - even in highly specialized religious, political and technical titles - and even the quintessential practice underpinning the 'march' (reading) was subject to contested meanings. Representations of the march of intellect as a popular cultural practice, it is shown, constituted a distorted and highly selective version of social reality: but popular periodicals nonetheless remain a useful source for understanding how popular culture was depicted, by whom and for what reasons between 1819 and 1834.

The third line of enquiry moves on from an examination of the material bases and representations of the 'march' to an investigation of its intellectual content (see chapter five). The 'march' connoted a series of knowledge forms - spanning politics, political economy, natural philosophy and literature - and served as a shared, but contested, narrative of 'popular enlightenment'. Responses among periodical producers and consumers were inconsistent at individual and group levels, and although the term became tainted in the early 1830s through its associations with orthodox political economy, the educative projects of 'middling' reformers such as Brougham, publishing ventures such as the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge's (SDUK) *Penny Magazine* (1832-45) and a confidence in scientific innovation to solve social and moral ills, the message of intellectual and moral self-

improvement did originally prove attractive to the social groupings at which it was directed. 'Humble poets' and 'ingenious mechanics', for instance, contributed poetry and mechanical expositions to popular periodicals, and although these 'common writers' represented a tiny, highly literate minority, their very existence suggests that the popular periodical provided a medium through which a limited sense of popular agency could be expressed.

The final line of enquiry is to assess to what extent the march of intellect provides historians with a useful framework for understanding the history of 'popular culture'. If its uses as a description of improving practice, a categorization of knowledge forms and a narrative of progress were often dependent on their immediate context, can an analysis of the 'march' trope help to explicate the complex and changing relationship between print and 'popular culture' in the years between 1819 and 1834? The central argument of this thesis is that between the 1780s and the 1830s there was a crucial debate about the intellectual and moral condition of the English people, and that this debate was characterized by a tendency to assign to the common people - and for them to claim for themselves - increasing amounts of agency in their own intellectual improvement and moral reform. Such popular agency - whether real or imagined - had long been articulated, in a variety of forms: indeed, its manifestation as the march of intellect was in many ways a departure only in scale and scope, and no linear relationship between the expansion of periodical print and an increasing sense of popular agency is proposed in this thesis. Pervasive yet highly contested, the 'march' was slower, more haphazard and better able to coexist with seemingly contradictory cultural forms than its champions claimed. But it did, for a brief moment, represent

the locus of a longstanding debate about the place of the common people in English society: a debate in which the voices of some of these people could be heard.[15]

I

Definitions and inherited narratives

Francis Place's enthusiasm for the march of intellect was characteristic of the autodidact. Rising from humble beginnings as a journeyman tailor in London during the 1790s, Place retired as a wealthy master in the early 1820s. This relative affluence meant that Place was isolated from the experiences of working Londoners almost from the moment he began his inquiry into their world in the later 1810s - but his belief in the value of hard-won intellectual and moral improvement would have resonated strongly with many individuals embedded in the 'culture' of the metropolitan artisan.[16] Indeed, a plethora of less commercially successful autodidacts recorded their experiences and aspirations, and most recalled with similar pride their struggle to pursue knowledge and feeling of moral superiority over those in comparable social or occupational groups. These surviving memoirs and letters have shaped the way in which historians have viewed the years between 1819 and 1834,

---

[15] For the best recent overview of the reform programme between the 1780s and the 1850s, see A. Burns and J. Innes (eds.), *Rethinking the age of reform* (2003), 1-70. More specifically, Burns and Innes suggest that '[o]ne slogan that petrified into cliché in the 1820s was that of the "march of mind". That phrase had its own partisan connotations: it derived ultimately from the marquis de Condorcet and the French materialist tradition. Some objected to what they took to be the slogan's implication: that progress could take place through an increase in knowledge alone, regardless of society's spiritual state. But, more loosely interpreted, the phrase does evoke central themes of the decade', ibid., 37.

[16] The 'metropolis' comprised the City within and without walls, Westminster, Southwark; the parishes of Middlesex and Surrey within the London Bills of Mortality and out-parishes of Middlesex without the bills of mortality; and the out-parishes of Aldgate, Bermondsey, Bethnal Green, Bloomsbury, Bow, Chelsea, Hackney, Holborn, Islington, Kensington, Lambeth, Limehouse, Mile End, Newington Butts, Paddington, Poplar, Rotherhithe, Saffron Hill and Hatton Garden, St. James's, St. Luke's, St. Pancras, Shadwell, Shoreditch, Somers Town, Spitalfields, Stepney, the Strand, Wapping and Whitechapel; see D. C. Barnett, *London* (1998), 12-23. For a good overview of the history of London, see P. L. Garside, 'London and the Home Counties', in F. M. L. Thompson (ed.), *The Cambridge social history of Britain*, three vols. (1993), i, 471-541. See also S. and B. Webb, *English local government*, three vols. (1906-29); R. Sweet, *The English town, 1680-1840* (1999); D. Green, *From artisans to paupers* (1995); L. D. Schwarz, *London in the age of industrialisation* (1992); G. Stedman Jones, *Outcast London* (1971); and E. A. Wrigley, 'A simple model of London's importance in changing English society and economy: 1650-1750', *Past and Present*, No. 37 (1967), 44-70. For a useful bibliography see L. D. Schwarz, 'London, 1700-1850', *London Journal*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (1995), 46-55.

with the story of educational achievement, political struggle and informal personal enlightenment emerging as dominant interpretive frameworks. If the rhetoric of this minority of self-improvers is unrepresentative of the experience of working people more generally, it is nonetheless clearly stated in these accounts that by the 1820s and 1830s, engagement with the moral, social and political agency of the common people - assigned or claimed - was increasingly a feature of English public discourse. It is argued in this thesis that a political focus has masked an equally powerful cultural trope of intellectual and moral self-improvement, which, although similarly problematic, offers historians an alternative lens through which to view the history of 'popular culture'.[17]

i. Definitions: 'popular culture', the 'common reader' and 'popular agency'

What was the 'popular culture' of early nineteenth-century London? Several broad definitions have recently been offered, their very inclusivity underlining the fluidity of the term.[18] Following Peter Burke's usage, but eschewing the bi-polar model of a divergence of 'elite' and 'popular' cultures in the early modern period, Tim Harris has defined it as 'how they ['ordinary people'] saw their world, how they lived, worked, worshipped, what they believed, their attitudes towards the law, politics, the church, the supernatural, their family, marriage, in short, perhaps about everything.' A similarly capacious definition is offered by Iain McCalman and Maureen Perkins: it comprised, they argue, 'the common people's world of work, attitudes to the natural

---

[17] For a recent review article which argues for placing 'politics' more broadly conceived back into studies of popular culture, see E. Griffin, 'Popular culture in industrializing England', *Historical Journal*, Vol. 45, No. 3 (2002), 619-35. For a classic account, see G. Stedman Jones, *Languages of class* (1983), 76-89.

[18] The figure of E. P. Thompson looms large in the historiography. In his cultural Marxist accounts, Thompson established a model for interpreting popular culture as a struggle against the political, religious, cultural and industrial power of the ruling elite: what he termed a 'move out of the eighteenth-century field-of-force... [to] a period in which there is a structural reordering of class relations and of ideology'; E. P. Thompson, *Customs in common* (1991), 96. In the years between 1790 and 1832, Thompson saw 'not a revolutionary challenge, but a resistance movement, in which both the Romantics and the Radical craftsmen opposed the annunciation of Acquisitive Man'; idem., *The making of the English working class* (1968 edn.), 915.

world, education, literacy and knowledge, health practices, gender and generational roles, religious beliefs, recreational and leisure pursuits, and community customs.' These are useful thematic checklists, and most historians now agree that 'popular culture' was not fixed and homogenous, but fluid and pluralistic; not divided between 'elite' and 'popular', but subject to 'cultural appropriation and exchange' between social groups; and flexible and adaptive rather than struggling and embattled.[19]

In the context of the 'march' trope, the periodical press was seen as the ultimate engine of change in 'popular culture', but the cultivation of popular morals and intellect was also rooted in London's associational culture. Co-operative societies, reading rooms, mechanics' institutes, the newly legalized trade unions and the proliferating friendly societies and benefit clubs all provided outlets through which self-improvement, political resistance and cultural participation could be pursued in the 1820s and 1830s. Along with these formal institutions, the profusion of book clubs, reading societies, mutual instruction societies and circulating libraries, and the burgeoning of public lectures and courses of instruction all seemed to manifest a palpable march towards intellectual and moral self-improvement. This thesis will therefore take 'popular culture' to refer to both discourse and practice; a fluid repertoire from which common people drew selectively and strategically as the situation, or at least their reading of the situation, required. Such a conceptualization has significant implications for the examination of the march of intellect, suggesting that as an improving aesthetic it coexisted with, rather than replaced, alternative cultural forms.[20]

---

[19] T. Harris (ed.), *Popular culture in England* (1995), 10; I. McCalman and M. Perkins, 'Popular culture', in I. McCalman (ed.), *An Oxford companion* (1999), 214. See also P. Burke, *Popular culture in early modern Europe* (1978) and idem., *What is cultural history?* (2004), 17-19, in which the phrase is located in the tradition of the later eighteenth-century German *Volkscultur*.

[20] For debates about 'culture' see R. Williams, *The long revolution* (1961), 57-88; P. Bourdieu, trans. R. Nice, *Distinction* (1984), parts one and three; R. Darnton, 'The symbolic element in history', *Journal*

Throughout, this thesis refers to London's 'common people', 'common readers' and 'common writers'. The first term is used descriptively rather than analytically, meaning the massed and diverse population of England 'undistinguished by rank or position' and allowing for significant heterogeneity of experience and thought.[21] Contemporaries used the term interchangeably with the 'working classes', 'industrious classes', 'labouring classes' and 'lower orders', and this has influenced the definitions of the 'common reader' and 'common writer' used in this thesis. Both terms refer to a broad social and occupational range: from the lower-middling shopkeeper, small tradesman and skilled artisan to the unskilled labourer. This is a diverse group, ranging in terms of income from the unskilled workman paid about fifteen shillings a week (£39 per annum) to his more skilled contemporary, earning perhaps one Guinea - twenty-one shillings - a week (about £54 a year). The addition of women and children from these social levels make the terms more problematic, but in purely pecuniary terms common readers and writers thus defined came from families earning far less than the £100 per annum taken to connote a 'middling sort' family income.[22]

---

of Modern History, Vol. 58, No. 1 (1986), 218-34; C. Geertz, *The interpretation of cultures* (1993), 3-30; R. Chartier, *Cultural history* (1988), chap. one; and V. E. Bonnell and L. Hunt (eds.), *Beyond the cultural turn* (1999), esp. 1-32 and 35-61.

[21] *OED*. The definition of the 'social' and the categorization of social groups is perhaps the defining debate of the historiography of common people. For the birth of 'social' agenda amongst Whig and socialist historians, in which the 'social' grows from the 'economic' and the 'political' from the 'social', see S. and B. Webb, *The history of trade unionism* (1894); J. L. and B. Hammond, *The town labourer, 1760-1832* (1917); idem., *The skilled labourer, 1760-1832* (1919); and G. D. H. Cole, *Attempts at general union* (1953). For the post-war 'new social history', which set the agenda for refining and reconciling traditional positivist material analyses with a Marxist theory of social and economic change, see E. P. Thompson, *The making* (1968); idem., *The poverty of theory* (1979); A. Briggs and G. D. H. Cole, *Essays in labour history* (1967); P. Anderson, *Arguments within English Marxism* (1980); G. Stedman Jones, *Languages* (1983); J. Epstein and D. Thompson (eds.), *The Chartist experience* (1982); and H. Kaye and K. McClelland (eds.), *E. P. Thompson: critical perspectives* (1990). This metanarrative comprised a 'stucturalist' approach to the study of society.

[22] L. D. Schwarz, 'The standard of living in the long run: London, 1700-1860', *Economic History Review*, Vol. 38, No. 1 (1985), 24-41. In his groundbreaking book, Richard Altick claims that '[i]t was from the class of artisans and small shopkeepers that the periodical reading public received most of its permanent recruits in this period [i.e. post-1819]', ibid., *The English common reader* (1957), 330.

This economic definition was reinforced by the rhetorical strategies of popular periodical publishers and editors, who appealed either to specific groups within a 'common readership', or to a more inclusive 'popular' constituency.[23] In the first instance, explicit appeals were made to 'artisans' and 'mechanics', or to 'humble readers', 'artisans' wives and daughters' and 'poor children'; while some titles claimed, optimistically, to have a readership ranging from cottagers to dukes.[24] In reality, these popular periodicals were read by a variety of people, but the explicit appeal to the common reader and writer, and the concern to represent the experiences of the common people (and to champion their interests), gave this heterogeneous group of cheap and Sunday titles some coherence as 'popular' publishing genres. The terms 'common reader' and 'common writer' are therefore used in this thesis to denote a diverse group of minor shopkeepers and tradesmen, alehouse keepers, agricultural labourers, mechanics, artisans, handicraftsmen, labourers, paupers and the criminal classes of London, male and female, adult and juvenile, at which diverse projects for intellectual and moral reform through the diffusion of print were aimed.[25]

---

[23] 'Populism' has replaced 'class' in most accounts since the 1980s, when a challenge was mounted to the 'structuralist' orthodoxy. Encouraged by postmodernist philosophy, poststructuralist critiques attempted to effect a paradigm shift in the epistemological and methodological agenda of historical research. See J. Vernon, 'Who's afraid of the linguistic turn?: the politics and social history and its discontents', *Social History*, Vol. 19, (1994), 81-97; the essays in L. R. Berlanstein, *Rethinking labour history* (1993); P. Joyce, 'The end of social history?', *Social History*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (1995), 73-91; M. Steinberg, *Fighting words* (1999), 1-48 and 229-242; J. Belchem, 'Reconstruting labour history', *Labour History Review*, Vol. 62, No. 3 (1997), 318-23; J. W. Scott, *Gender and the politics of history* (1988); P. Joyce, *Democratic subjects* (1994); idem., *Visions of the people* (1991); and J. Vernon, *Politics and the people* (1991). For a (sceptical) review, see D. Geary, 'Labour history, the "linguistic turn" and postmodernism', *Contemporary European History*, Vol. 9, No. 3 (2000), 445-462.

[24] *Mirror of Literature*, preface to vol. v, 1 Jan. 1826.

[25] See chapter four for a detailed discussion of how children, women and skilled and unskilled working men were identified as readers; 240-52. The terms 'artisan' and 'mechanic' were used to describe any worker employed in the industrial arts; a mechanic, handicraftsman or artificer. 'Artisans' were defined as skilled workers in one of the traditional crafts, such as carpentry or tailoring (often also called 'tradesmen'); whereas 'mechanics' were workers in some process, such as shipbuilding, which comprised invention, design or construction and the use of some form of mechanism. These groups were also labelled the 'operative classes' in contradistinction to 'masters' and 'capitalists'. The term 'operative' was first used as a noun in the early nineteenth century, referring to any person engaged in industry and the trades. The terms 'operative', 'operatives' and 'operative classes' seem to encompass both 'artisans' and 'mechanics'. For a discussion of terminology, see I. Prothero, *Radical artisans* (1997), 22-46.

Such definitions assign a degree of historical agency to the common people as readers and writers. 'Popular agency' is itself a problematic term, often invoked in studies that delineate the exercise of power and resistance within a complex of socio-political structures which limit or open up possible modes of action. In this thesis, 'agency' is understood in terms that would have been intelligible in the period: namely, as meaning the capacity to assert meaningful control over certain aspects of one's life. In the specific scope of this enquiry, therefore, the themes of literacy, knowledge and education are of special importance to conceptions of the common people as intellectual and moral agents. Improved literacy, in particular, was an essential prerequisite for the changing status of the popular periodical as a cultural form, and the practice of reading became the totemic activity underpinning the perceived march of intellect.[26]

ii. Inherited narratives

a. Literacy and 'popular education'

Reading 'literacy' can be defined as the ability to understand and employ printed information in daily activities at home, in the workplace and the community for the purposes of enjoyment or instruction. It was an information-processing competency, enabling readers to engage with documents and to locate, understand and use information in various formats (texts, editorials, news items, poems, fiction, maps and tables). What proportion of the English common people was actually literate in this sense and how did they acquire this skill? David Vincent's definitive account of 'the coming of mass literacy in England' between 1750 and 1914 defines 'literacy' as the

---

[26] *OED*. For discussions of 'agency' see P. Mack, 'Religion, feminism, and the problem of agency: reflections on eighteenth-century Quakerism' in S. Knott and B. Taylor (eds.), *Women, gender, and Enlightenment* (2005), 434-59; the essays in H. French and J. Barry (eds.). *Identity and agency in England* (2004); and for the nineteenth century, A. Clark, *The struggle for the breeches* (1995), esp. 175-263, which largely endorses E. P. Thompson's argument for the formation of a distinct 'working-class' culture in the period.

acquisition of the knowledge and skills of reading and writing which enable individual participation in communication within a society or culture. This historically-grounded definition focuses on the 'needs and aspirations of those who have learned to read and write' and stresses that 'literacy only acquire[s] meaning in relation to the demands of the society in which the individual lives.' The statistics Vincent cites show a turning-point in his sample group of midland and northern industrial towns (Stoke, Macclesfield and Dudley) in *circa* 1850. From a picture of relative decline and small rises in the number of adult males able to sign their names in marriage registers in the early nineteenth century (ranging from 32% to 66% of the whole population), Vincent charts a rapid increase by 1914 (with nearly 100% able to write their own names).[27]

The extended chronological focus of Vincent's study skews the overall picture, but he is careful not to repeat the triumphant rhetoric of nineteenth-century educationalists:

> The spread of literacy raised a series of major questions about how the common people thought about their world, and how they performed in it. If the transformation of their mental outlook was less immediate and dramatic than the reformers had hoped, there were in the end few areas of popular culture left untouched by the shift from restricted to full literacy which had taken place by 1914.

This 'popular culture' for Vincent comprised family life, education, work, the natural world, the imaginative world and politics. The most significant of these elements was

---

[27] D. Vincent, *Literacy and popular culture* (1989), 1-20. See also D. Mitch, *The rise of popular literacy* (1992) and idem., 'Underinvestment in literacy? The potential contribution of government involvement in elementary education to economic growth in nineteenth-century England', *Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 44, No. 2, (1984), 557-566, in which it is argued that government education policy was motivated by 'moral', and not economic, considerations. Mitch's most recent work argues for the differential impact of literacy on social mobility; see D. Mitch, 'Literacy and occupational mobility in rural versus urban Victorian England', *Historical Methods*, Vol. 38, No. 1 (2005), 26-38. For the earlier period, Jonathan Barry has identified the most fundamental debate surrounding the growth of literacy to be 'whether being able to read and write would render ordinary people dangerous revolutionaries or respectable subjects'; J. Barry, 'Literacy and literature in popular culture: reading and writing in historical perspective', in T. Harris, *Popular culture* (1995), 69-94. See also L. Stone, 'Literacy and education in England 1640-1900', *Past and Present*, No. 42. (Feb., 1969), 69-139.

work, with skilled manual workers displaying disparate degrees of 'occupational literacy' depending on their classification as handicraftsmen, workers in trades requiring literacy as a precondition of entry, textile workers, potters, metal workers and miners.[28] The scattered records before 1839 mean that Vincent's account ought to be supplemented by Roger Schofield's work on 'illiteracy' and economic growth in England between 1750 and 1850. A marked decline in illiteracy did not occur until the late 1850s (the generation which had attended school in the late 1830s), Schofield argued, demonstrating that between 1750 and 1840 (representing school cohorts from 1740 to 1825), the level of illiteracy was remarkably constant, oscillating between 35% and 40% for men, and 50% and 65% for women. On average, therefore, the percentage of working people *unable* to sign a marriage register between 1755 and 1844 varied between 55% and 60%.[29]

Objective literacy rates are particularly intractable for the 1820s and 1830s. Vincent and Schofield index literacy by the ability of people to sign their names, and their estimates for 'literacy' thus conceived are therefore arguably lower than the number of common people actually able to read in this period. Further, the permeation of a culture of print amongst common people was not reliant on universal reading literacy: the reading aloud of books and periodicals whilst at home, work or in the tavern was a common practice, and many people who signed with an 'X' would have

---

[28] D. Vincent, *Literacy* (1989), 2, 95-152.

[29] R. S. Schofield, 'Dimensions of illiteracy in England, 1750-1850' in H. J. Graff (ed.), *Literacy and social development* (1981), 213; 210. See also Joel Mokyr on the economic uses of 'useful knowledge' in *The gifts of Athena* (2002), esp. 8-77; and Carolyn Steedman's article on the uses of literacy in the context of domestic servants, 'Poetical maids and cooks who wrote', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. 39, No. 1 (2005), 1-27. David Cressy, in an analysis of literacy in the diocese of London, the City and Middlesex between 1580 and 1700, suggests that the percentage of those signing with a mark in different social groups varied thus: clergy and professions (0%); gentry (2%); apprentices (18%); tradesman and craftsmen (28%); yeoman (30%); servants (31%); labourers (78%); husbandman (79%) and women (76%). The implications for this thesis (in addition to his findings that literacy rates were higher in London than in the provinces), are that there was a social clustering, with tradesmen, craftsmen, yeoman and servants apparently significantly more literate than labourers, husbandmen and women; D. Cressy, *Literacy and the social order* (1980), 118-41.

been able to read and understand handbills, posters and simple news items. Offering a more qualitative perspective, Francis Place noted of the late 1760s that 'the lower classes could not then read. The few among them who could had no desire to exercise their faculty beyond, a ballad, a bawdy tract, or a foolish story like that of Jack the Giant Killer, and Goody Two Shoes.' By the mid-1820s the journalist Robert Mudie (1777-1842) suggested that weekly newspapers 'form[ed] not only the Sunday instructors of the father and his comrades [at the public house], but… become the *vade mecum* of his family during the week': an observation that underlines the place of the Sunday paper in domestic family life.[30] According to these observations, by the 1820s, at least, the issue seemed to be more about what the common people chose to read, than their ability - but these impressionistic accounts ought not to be accepted as proof of the existence of a 'mass reading public', and the statistics quoted above suggest relatively stagnant literacy levels in the early nineteenth century. *Perceptions* of increasing popular literacy were therefore possibly as significant as any experienced reality.

The modest literacy rates of the common people until *c.*1850 - roughly one half of the urban working population displaying some ability to write, and perhaps two-thirds able to read - ought not to preclude recognition that many could read to a functional level, or otherwise access periodical print; but how did they learn to read and write at all?[31] The provision of 'popular education' in the capital explains this patchy, but functional literacy. Child education, in particular, represented a crucial locus of the 'march' trope in the 1820s, epitomized by the repeated deployment of the image of

---

[30] Add. mss., 27, 825, fol. 108; Robert Mudie, *Babylon the great*, two vols. (1825), i, 156-8. For a classic work on early modern chapbooks, see M. Spufford, *Small books and pleasant histories* (1981).
[31] E. P. Thompson, *The making* (1968), 783.

the 'schoolmaster abroad'.[32] In 1818, Henry Brougham's 'Select Committee on the education of the lower orders of the metropolis' concluded that 'there is the most unquestionable evidence that the anxiety of the poor for education continues not only unabated, but daily increasing'. By 1819, the committee estimated that half of all English children were receiving some level of formal instruction through an inchoate local network of Sunday schools, dame schools and private institutions.[33] The growth of schooling provision in London during the period covered by this thesis can be reconstructed using the results of parliamentary surveys conducted in the early 1830s - but such growth must be set in the context of a massive increase in London's population, from 865,000 in 1801 to over one and a half million in 1831 (a 70% increase).[34] These surveys reveal that there was an increase in the number of schools established in the county of Middlesex between 1818 and 1833 (which had population of 1,358,330 in 1831): 1,719 extra infant and day schools (providing places for 67,158 extra scholars) and 219 additional Sunday Schools (with 37,484 extra places). These figures suggest a fourfold growth in the number of infant and day schools (from 542 to 2,261) and a threefold increase in the number of Sunday Schools (from 110 to 329) in Middlesex between 1818 and 1833. The 1833 returns can be summarized thus:

---

[32] The literature of the history of education is vast. For an overview, see P. Gardner, 'Literacy, learning and education' (2004), 353-368, and I. Britain, 'Education' in I. McCalman (ed.), *An Oxford companion* (1999), 161-9. For full-length introductions, see B. Simon, *The two nations* (1974); M. Sanderson, *Education, economic change and society* (1983); and A. Richardson, *Literature, education, and Romanticism* (1994), esp. 213-59. See also T. W. Laqueur, *Religion and respectability* (1976), *passim*.

[33] *HoC.R*, Select Committee on the education of the lower orders of the metropolis, second report, 1818, **1818** (426) IV. 55; and Fourth report from the same, 1818, **1818** (427) IV. 223.

[34] See D. Barnett, *London* (1998), 13-14. Barnett sets the decline of the City's population (from 65,000 in 1801 to 57,000 in 1831) against increases in the north and east: Marylebone, St. Pancras, Islington and Hackney growing from 120,000 to nearly 300,000; and the East End from under 180,000 in 1801 to over 330,000 by 1831. For the national context, see E. A. Wrigley and R. Schofield *The population history of England* (1981), 588. For an overview, see M. Anderson, 'The social implications of demographic change', in F. M. L. Thompson (ed.), *The Cambridge social history*, three vols. (1993), ii, 1-70.

Table 1.1: Child education in the metropolis: Parliamentary returns for 1833 [35]

	No.	Total no. Scholars	Male	Female	Not specified
Infant Schools (ages 2 to 7)	**109**	**8,732**	**3,065**	**2,441**	**3,226**
Daily Schools (ages 4 to 14)	**2,152**	**92,488**	**49, 991**	**34,446**	**8,051**
Totals for daily schools =	**2,261**	**101,220**			
Sunday Schools (ages 5 to 15)	**329**	**52,121**	**23,440**	**23,225**	**5,456**

This increase had both secular and religious origins, and although Nonconformist and Anglican monitorial schools were awarded a government grant only in 1833, popular educational efforts had long been on the agenda of metropolitan reformers and philanthropists. Place himself had been involved in a scheme to establish Joseph Lancaster's (1778-1838) system in the 1810s (supported by the British and Foreign School Society), and the competing system of Andrew Bell (1753-1832) (supported by the National Society) continued to inform efforts during the 1820s. These projects demonstrate a desire to provide education for poorer children - as well as suggesting an increased desire to receive it - which can be traced yet further back, with the Sunday School movement contributing to an increase of basic educational opportunities from the 1780s onwards. Varying local and regional patterns, however, complicate this picture of growth, and the quality and coverage of schooling available to the metropolitan poor is unclear from these figures alone. Thus, although there is clear evidence that the period between 1819 and 1834 witnessed the continuation of a widespread reforming interest in child education in the metropolis (and a corresponding increase in the number of day and Sunday school places), the impact of

[35] Drawn from *HoC.AP*, Abstract of answers and returns on state of education in England and Wales, 1833, **1835** (62) XLI.1, XLII.1, and XLIII.1. 592; 554-92.

this provision was uncertain, struggling to keep pace with population growth and probably supplying scholars with no more than very basic literacy skills.[36]

Initiatives for the improvement of child education were joined in this period by projects designed to cultivate the morals and intellect of the adult working population, and it was in this arena that the 'schoolmaster' and 'march' tropes overlapped most in the public imagination. One particular long-term driver of this phenomenon was an eighteenth-century desire to disseminate scientific knowledge to the public through formalized institutions, scientific lecturing and the diffusion of printed matter. In 1800, for example, the Royal Institution had been founded by Sir Joseph Banks (1743-1820) in order to disseminate 'natural philosophy' and 'literary knowledge' to the metropolitan commercial classes, and this was soon followed by public institutions that imitated its range of facilities (which comprised lecture halls, a laboratory, a library and reading-rooms). Crucial to changing perceptions of the 'march' was the mechanics' institute movement: if previous efforts to provide public access to knowledge had targeted a relatively affluent social constituency, from the early 1820s onwards London's apprentices, mechanics and artisans were increasingly identified as a distinct audience for enlightening ventures.[37]

Thus, in 1823, following his successful Scottish experiment with the education of adult labourers at the Glasgow Andersonian Institute, the educationalist Dr. George Birkbeck (1776-1841) helped to establish the London Mechanics' Institution (LMI) in Bloomsbury.[38] The LMI was less successful than its elite patrons may have hoped, as its artisan and mechanic members began in the mid-1820s to question the role of

---

[36] For this argument, see G. Sutherland, 'Education', in F. M. L. Thompson (ed.), *The Cambridge social history*, three vols. (1993), iii, 119-70, but esp. 119-31.
[37] See the entry on 'lecturing' in I. McCalman (ed.), *An Oxford companion* (1999), 581.
[38] For Birkbeck and the LMI see add. mss., 27,823-27,824; in particular, Place's account in add. mss., 27,823, fols. 237-93. See also T. Kelly, *George Birkbeck* (1957). For the movement more generally see J. F. C. Harrison, *Learning and living* (1961) and I. Inkster, (ed.), *The steam intellect societies* (1985).

'middling' reformers in an institution which was supposed to belong to them: '[o]f all men', Place noted ruefully following his loss of control over the LMI committee, 'none are so susceptible of suspicion in what relates to themselves as journeymen tradesmen.'[39] As institutional manifestations of the 'march', the mechanics' institutes were limited in scale and scope, but they were not straightforward examples of 'cultural reproduction' (an educational process by which the cultural and political power of the ruling elite was transmitted to the next generation). Education was as much about the experiences of the educated as the formal provision of learning, and working men and apprentices recognized and responded strategically to paternalistic behaviour, appropriating what was useful from a variety of such endeavours. What is clear from the mechanics' institute movement is that adult education - irrespective of its variable quality and controversial patronage - was indicative of a widening of formalized opportunities through which common people could pursue self-improvement. Providing lectures, classes and access to a well-stocked (and cheap) library, the LMI and its imitators were an imperfect but important vehicle of popular intellectual self-improvement in the 1820s and early 1830s. Indeed, the apotheosis of the 'ingenious mechanic' as central to the commercial prosperity of the nation (particularly strongly articulated through the LMI's periodical vehicles) was an important driver behind the establishment of such initiatives for popular improvement in the early 1820s, and a crucial locus of the march of intellect.[40]

In his account of the relationship between literature, education and 'Romanticism', Alan Richardson suggests that the market for child and adult popular education sketched above had changed by the 1820s: 'a new discourse on the nature and social role of schooling and literacy had emerged, an outgrowth of the post-Lockean

---

[39] Add. mss., 27,823, fol. 264.
[40] P. Bourdieu, *Reproduction in education, society and culture* (1977). For the LMI library see below, chapter four, 264-77; for 'ingenious mechanics', chapter five, 284-99.

consensus but drawing more particularly on the educational proposals (and economic theories) of Adam Smith [*c.*1723-1790] and Thomas Malthus [1766–1834].' The temporary alliance of the Benthamite utilitarian and 'liberal Whig' groups on projects such as the LMI and the University of London (founded in 1826), he suggests, was driven by the common belief that literacy was to be controlled rather than impeded, and that encouraging the common people to pursue 'enlightenment' rather than passively accepting existing forms of literacy, Christian morality and deferential social relations was more likely to ensure 'social stability'. If this consensus model is accurate - and the opportunity afforded for 'enlightenment', rather than the attempt to 'control' literacy and education, is the criterion by which historians ought to judge educational opportunities - conceptions of popular education were being crucially reworked by the 1820s. The 'schoolmaster abroad' trope may have been an exaggeration of the scale and quality of child and adult educational provision between 1819 and 1834 - but the image reflected a broad agreement that the common people ought to be educated, if not an agreement as to how and on what terms.[41]

b. The 'march of science': science, industry and political economy

This general consensus that the common people ought to have been granted access to some form of education intersected with older debates about the relationship between 'science' and industry, and a growing preoccupation with political economy. These themes were connected by a utilitarian conception of 'science' as conducive to wealth creation and national progress: if man's physical environment could be tamed and manipulated to improve manufacturing processes, so too could the organization of production and the social relationships associated with these processes. Perceived developments in both the physical and 'social' sciences crucially shaped

---

[41] A. Richardson, *Literature, education and Romanticism* (1994), 214-17.

contemporary visions of the period, and an heroic 'march of science' narrative was frequently deployed in both elite and popular contexts.[42]

Between 1760 and 1830 a metamorphosis in the nomenclature of studying the natural world, from 'natural philosophy' to 'science', revealed fundamental changes in the practice and status of science. Before the 1760s, 'Newtonianism' remained the ultimate articulation of the alliance between the Anglican Church, social order and 'natural philosophy'. Thereafter, during the putative 'Second Scientific Revolution', science became increasingly associated with materialism and radical theological and political agendas; not least through the influence of 'Rational Dissent'. New disciplines, with separate agendas, tools and methods replaced the older picture of unity. Astronomy and chemistry joined the core Newtonian disciplines of mechanics, optics, electricity and magnetism to form the physical sciences, while 'natural history' emerged as a distinct branch of science, encompassing the sub-disciplines of biology, zoology, physiology and anatomy and geology. In short, the Newtonian natural philosophy paradigm bolstering both temporal and spiritual pillars of state began to be questioned.[43]

By the 1820s, a powerful narrative of scientific progress was repeatedly invoked in discussions about the intellectual agency of the common people. In March 1825, for example, the most successful cheap technical weekly of the period - the three-penny weekly *Mechanic's Magazine, Museum, Register, Journal and Gazette* (1823-58) - published a letter observing that '[o]ne of the objects of your valuable Magazine appears to me to be, the giving of publicity to whatever tends to facilitate the *march of science*, either by the revival of old, or the production of new instruments', before

---

[42] See chapter five for 'ingenious mechanics'.
[43] See S. Shapin, *The scientific revolution* (1996), 1-166; and R. Yeo, 'Natural philosophy (science)' in I. McCalman (ed.), *An Oxford companion* (1999), 320-8.

describing a 'machine for taking meridian lines'.[44] This 'march of science' narrative had four basic elements. Firstly, that science was the quintessential knowledge of enlightenment. This elevated status of scientific knowledge had its roots in the seventeenth century;[45] but it continued to dominate assumptions about the relative value of different knowledge forms in the period covered by this thesis, and could be appropriated to radical ends. Thus, it is significant that in the anecdote quoted at the beginning of this chapter, Francis Place observes that the youth describing the solar system in 1827 appeared to be gaining (or at least seeking) recognition for his specialist knowledge.[46]

The second constituent belief was that scientific knowledge had spread during the later eighteenth century, and needed to spread further.[47] In this context, James Watt (1736-1819) - the inventor of the steam engine - was often held up as an exemplar: images of Watt were widely diffused in the cheap periodical press (see above, p. 8) and other eminent 'men of science' were also feted as popular heroes. In *The mechanics' library* (1829), for instance, the scientific lecturer and writer, Charles Partington (*fl.* 1820-1835), articulated his own belief in the importance of exemplary biography:

> The biography of men eminent for their labours in the cause of science, must at all times constitute an important feature in the history of this or any other branch of the mechanical arts; we propose, therefore [to illustrate]... our work by brief notices of those persons who have facilitated the march of science in every age, and of every nation.[48]

---

[44] *MM*, 5 Mar. 1825 (emphases added). For the *Mechanic's Magazine*, see chapter five; add. mss., 27,823-27,824; and J. Mussell, '"This is ours and for us": the *Mechanic's Magazine* and low scientific culture in Regency London', in D. Clifford (ed.), *Repositioning Victorian sciences* (2006), 107-17.
[45] See the section on 'invisible technicians' in S. Shapin, *A social history of truth* (1994), 355-408.
[46] See the radical appeal in Richard Carlile, *An address to men of science* (1821); and above, 1-3.
[47] In a seminal article on the history of popular science, Roger Cooter and Stephen Pumfrey challenged the 'diffusionist' model of scientific knowledge, suggesting that it implied that the common people were not active producers of scientific culture and meaning; R. Cooter and S. Pumfrey, 'Separate spheres and public places: reflections on the history of science popularization and science in popular culture', *History of Science*, Vol. 32 (1994), 237-267.
[48] Charles Partington, *The mechanics' library; or, book of trades* (1829), 2.

Meanwhile, institutions diffusing scientific knowledge to the common people simultaneously created and responded to demand. Eighteenth-century scientific institutions can be seen as precursors to mechanics institutes; the latter operating at a lower social level and aiming to harness the inventive genius of the humble artisan by prescribing him a course of 'useful knowledge'.[49]

An incentive to such popularization was the belief that (as Watt's example had shown) scientific and technological advances could be useful to industrial manufacture. Indeed, the perceived relationship between new technologies (such as steam-driven machinery), scientific knowledge and national progress was particularly evident in the deployment of steam imagery in discussions about the march of intellect.[50] As productive agents, the common people were encouraged to keep pace with - or at least accept - such technological advances, but discussions about the economic and social impact of machinery were loci of contestation.[51] This so-called 'machinery question' permeated popular protest from at least the 1790s, and the Luddite disturbances of 1811-13 and outbreaks of machine-breaking in 1818 and 1826, kept the issue in the public eye. One recipient of the Luddites' ire in 1812 was William Radcliffe (*c.*1761-1842), a cotton-mill owner and technological improver who lost both machinery and his wife following an attack on his Stockport properties. In 1828 he published an account of his 'struggles through life' in the face of

---

[49] See below for 'useful knowledge', 37-9. For the eighteenth-century 'Enlightenment culture', see R. Porter, 'Science, provincial culture and public opinion in Enlightenment England', reprinted in P. Borsay, (ed.) *The eighteenth-century town* (1990), 243-67. Work on nineteenth-century artisan scientific practices has suggested that historians' understanding of how common readers 'made' scientific knowledge ought to be complicated: the outward movement from editor and metropolis to reader and periphery implied by the 'diffusion' metaphor reduces common readers to passive receivers of meaning. See Adrian Desmond's take on popular uses of 'evolutionary determinism' in 'Artisan resistance and evolution in Britain, 1819-1848', *Osiris*, Vol. 3 (1987), 77-110; and idem., *The politics of evolution* (1989). See also, A. Secord, 'Corresponding interests: artisans and gentlemen in nineteenth-century natural history', *British Journal for the History of Science*, Vol. 27 (1994), 383-408; and L. S. Jacyna, 'Immanence and transcendence: theories of life and organisation in Britain, 1790-1835', *Isis*, Vol. 74 (1983), 311-29.

[50] See below, 52-4.

[51] See M. Berg, *The machinery question* (1980), intro.

opposition amongst operative weavers to his power-loom machines. Before 1800 his weavers had been 'faithful, moral, and trust-worthy', but, he noted, this was 'before the curse of modern political economists, and liberal (meaning retrograde) march of mind were known.' Perversely, in this instance, the 'march of mind' was seen as hindering the 'march of science'.[52]

Radcliffe's lament linked to one final belief underpinning the 'march of science' narrative - a utilitarian conception of political economy as a scientific knowledge form that had the potential to maximize wealth creation, increasingly evident in elite and governmental discourse from the 1810s onwards.[53] Utilitarian political economists (ironically termed '*feelosophers*' by William Cobbett [1763-1835]) were closely associated with the 'march of science' trope during the 1820s and early 1830s.[54] Popular engagement with orthodox political economy was also a striking characteristic of this period, and was articulated in two forms: an anti-capitalist cluster of theories, centring around loosely-defined Owenite co-operation and a nascent popular political economy; and orthodox political economy, championed by Place *et al*, following the precepts of a rational system of exchange dictated by free market forces and driven by Bentham's 'greatest happiness' principle.[55] Orthodox political economy met with strong opposition amongst some common readers, summed up by one response to Place's attempts to win converts to this new 'science of society' in the seven-penny *Trades' Newspaper and Mechanic's Weekly Journal* (1825-7): 'PERISH

---

[52] William Radcliffe, *Origin of the new system of manufacture common called 'power-loom weaving'* (Stockport, 1828), 107.
[53] For an overview, see D. Winch, 'Political economy', in I. McCalman (ed.), *An Oxford companion* (1999), 311-19; and A. Burns and J. Innes (eds.), *Rethinking* (2003), 31.
[54] See below, 60; and William Cobbett's opposition to 'the infernal Scotch "intelligence" of modern political economy', in idem., *The poor man's friend; or, essays on the rights and duties of the poor* (1829), [unpag.], paras. 112-32.
[55] For popular political economy, see N. W. Thompson, *The people's science* (1984), esp. 8-34 (on the 'working-class press').

POLITICAL ECONOMY, BUT LET THE PEOPLE LIVE'.[56] Indeed, it was in the *Trades'* that one of the most potent rebuffs to such attempts was first serialized in the 1820s. Evoking themes central to the 'march of science' trope (in particular knowledge acquisition) in his *Labour defended against the claims of capital* (1825), the radical political economist Thomas Hodgskin (1787-1869) described the consequences of a scientific enlightenment amongst the common people thus:

> As the labourers acquire knowledge, the foundations of the social edifice will be dug up from the deep beds into which they were laid in times past, they will be curiously handled and closely examined, and they will not be restored unless they were originally laid in justice, and unless justice commands their preservation.[57]

The 'march of science' narrative, therefore, in both contemporary and modern forms, has been underpinned by a belief in the special enlightening role of scientific knowledge; by interest in the popularization of science both as discourse and as practice; the perceived irresistible advance of technology; and the invocation of political economy as a scientific knowledge form capable of maximizing wealth creation. This narrative had been a component of English public discourse since at least the beginning of the eighteenth century (though the term 'march of science' was a late eighteenth-century coinage). It drew together these themes in the specific context of the intellectual capability and productive function of the common people. Pervasive yet contested, the 'march of science' was an important conceptual framework for those contemporaries rethinking popular agency between 1819 and 1834.

c. 'Radical history'

The radical campaigns of the 1790s, the post-war period and the 'reform crisis' of 1829-32 were also depicted by 'march of intellect men' such as Place as drivers of the

---

[56] *TN*, 22 Jan. 1826. For political economy in the *Trades'* see I. Prothero, *Artisans and politics* (1979), 183-209.
[57] *TN*, 21, 28 Aug., 4, 25 Sep. and 16 Oct. 1825.

changed status of knowledge in popular culture. The propaganda campaign waged by radical pressmen between 1816 and 1836 formed a particularly powerful element in a distinct 'radical history' (forged in the period, and subsequently developed by historians), in which parliamentary reform, the 'liberty of the press' and intellectual and moral self-improvement were mobilized as nostrums and desiderata. From the moment William Cobbett chose to issue his *Political Register* (1802-35) in a two-penny format in 1816, metropolitan radicals relied on a cheap (and often 'unstamped') periodical press to organize, instruct and create the impression of a unified national movement.[58]

The legal repression of radical pressmen following the 'Six Acts' of 1819 - which carried new provisions for the prosecution of blasphemy and seditious libel, and imposed a four-penny stamp duty on periodicals carrying 'news' - succeeded in closing some smaller publications, but galvanized the more defiant: Thomas J. Wooler's (*c*.1786-1853) radical constitutionalist *Black Dwarf* (1817-24) circulated until 1824, Richard Carlile (1790-1843) edited his freethinking Paineite *Republican* (1819-26) from Dorchester gaol until 1826 and Cobbett continued to produce his *Political Register* until his death. The so-called 'war of the unstamped' press (1830-6) against the 'stamp tax' was rekindled on a massive scale in 1830 by William Carpenter's (1797-1874) *Political Letters* (1830-1), and Carpenter was soon joined by dozens of publishers, editors, booksellers and street hawkers - many of whom suffered fines or periods of imprisonment for producing or selling 'illegal' radical literature.

The story of the dual radical struggle for universal suffrage and press freedom in these

---

[58] For the 1790s, see the essays in R. M. Maniquis (ed.), *British radical culture* (2002), esp. 151-72. For the post-war radical movement see J. Stevenson, 'The Queen Caroline affair', in idem., (ed.), *London in the age of reform* (1977), 117-48; J. A. Hone, *For the cause of truth* (1982); J. Belchem, 'Radical language and ideology in early nineteenth-century England: the challenge of the platform', *Albion*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (1988), 247-59; idem., *Popular radicalism* (1996); and J. Epstein, *Radical expression* (1994).

years ought not to be relied upon as the sole interpretive framework for analyses of popular print culture; but for many common readers, the pugnacious radical campaigns of 1816 to 1836 probably did change their relationship with, and expectations of, periodical print. By the early 1830s, the diffusion of printed knowledge in periodical format had become an essential element not only of radical politics, but also of popular culture.[59]

To understand how struggles for political reform and press freedom intersected with the march of intellect trope, radical autobiographies are an instructive starting-point. In these personal histories, the modern reader is confronted with a number of political themes which tie into a master narrative that depicts a forward 'march of labour' and apotheosizes the diffusion of printed knowledge as the basis of political emancipation.[60] William Lovett's (1800-77) autobiography, perhaps the archetypal radical memoir, provides a summary of these:

> The commencement of the following pages I must attribute to the solicitations of some of my radical friends, who, when I had been talking of some of the events of my life, of the different associations I have been connected with, and of the various political struggles in which I have been engaged, have urged me to write the facts down, so that the working classes of a future day may know something of the early struggles of some of those who contended for the political rights they may be then enjoying; and of those who aided in establishing a free and cheap press, and in the diffusion of that knowledge which may have brought peace, plenty, and happiness around their dwellings.

Reflecting on his lifelong 'pursuit of Bread, Knowledge and Freedom', Lovett's words fuse into a single narrative the struggles of the English common people to gain their 'political rights' between the late eighteenth-century and mid-Victorian periods.

---

[59] See W. H. Wickwar, *The struggle for the freedom of the press* (1928); J. H. Wiener, *The war of the unstamped* (1969); idem., *A descriptive finding list of unstamped British periodicals* (1970); P. Hollis, *The pauper press* (1970); R. Harrison *et al* (eds.), *The Warwick guide to British labour periodicals* (1977); D. Worrall, *Radical culture* (1992); and K. Gilmartin, *Print politics* (1996).

[60] For works on autobiography, see D. Vincent, *Testaments of radicalism* (1977); idem., *Bread, knowledge and freedom* (1981); J. Burnett, *Useful toil* (1974); idem., *Destiny obscure* (1982); and J. Burnett *et al* (eds.), *The autobiography of the working class*, two vols. (1987). More recently, but adding little to these accounts, see J. Rose, *The intellectual life of the British working classes* (2002 edn.), esp. 1-91.

Lovett identifies the fundamental goals and nostrums of radicalism: in practice, it was the pursuit of 'peace, plenty and happiness' through the panacea of parliamentary reform, achieved through mutual association and 'pressure from without'; in discourse, the desire to access and communicate the truth, and to disseminate and transmit knowledge through a 'free and cheap press'.[61]

The fusion of the campaigns for universal suffrage and press freedom is evident in the memoirs of other men at the forefront of radical campaigns.[62] The struggle to disseminate knowledge of political 'rights' found its supreme manifestation in the person of Henry Hetherington (1792-1849). Hetherington, a printer and publisher of radical periodicals from the early 1820s onwards, has left no complete memoir of his life; although a short manuscript account - written in the 1840s and apparently in his hand - has survived. The author of this fragment pens an emotive portrait for what was intended to be a series entitled 'Biographical Sketches of the Originators of the Chartist Movement'. The sketches arose

> …from a laudable anxiety to do justice to the individuals themselves ['the pioneers of liberty'], as well as from a desire to encourage the present popular labourers in the cause of Liberty to persevere undauntedly - by pointing out to them, as a stimulus to exertion, the praiseworthy example of those who have preceded them. May the honesty and zeal they have displayed - in the struggle for equality of political rights - never be forgotten or disregarded…

Such is the inherited narrative of the cultivation of English radicalism that still dominates accounts of struggle to reform the state, free the press and diffuse knowledge between the 1790s and the 1830s.[63]

---

[61] William Lovett, *The life and struggles* (1967 edn.), 1.

[62] See Henry Hunt, *Memoirs of Henry Hunt, Esq.*, three vols. (1820-1); Thomas Hardy, *Memoir of Thomas Hardy* (1832); Samuel Bamford, *Passages in the life of a radical*, two vols. (1841); and Allen Davenport, M. Chase (ed.), *The life and literary pursuits of Allen Davenport* (1994).

[63] Anon, [attrib. Henry Hetherington], 'Biographical sketches of the originators of the Chartist movement' [n.d.] fols. 1-14, National Co-operative Archive, Manchester. There is a note from the freethinker George Jacob Holyoake (1817-1906) attached which reads: 'Signed "J.W." which might stand for James Watson, perhaps written for his friend Hetherington's paper. Yet the handwriting seems to be Hetherington's.'

Perhaps the most influential work in this 'radical history' genre was E. P. Thompson's *The making of the English working class* (1963), which remained the canonical narrative of English class formation for a generation, and which, though challenged, has still not been wholly superseded. Thompson's *magnum opus* represented a powerful attempt to analyze the 'radical culture' of the 1820s on such terms and to assess its implications for the history of popular politics and culture. This socio-cultural history added cultural struggle to the radical narrative of economic exploitation and political oppression. On an empirical level, Thompson reached several conclusions regarding the 1820s:

> When contrasted with the Radical years which preceded and the Chartist years which succeeded it, the decade of the 1820s seems strangely quiet - a mildly prosperous plateau of social peace. But…
>
> *There is a sense in which we may describe popular Radicalism in these years as an intellectual culture.* The articulate consciousness of the self-taught was above all a political consciousness… The towns, and even the villages, hummed with the energy of the autodidact.

'Radical culture' was thus 'an intellectual culture', but Thompson located it in six instrumental mobilizations: the struggle for a free press; the growth of trade unionism; the development of freethought and unorthodox religion; the co-operative experiment and the popularization of Owenite theory; the experience of the insurgency (1815-21), defeat (1821-8) and resurgence (1829-32) of political radicalism; and a concern with political economy, morality and 'useful knowledge', which epitomized the sober and evangelical commitment to self-improvement, crystallized in the phrase the 'march of intellect'.[64]

One of the most important subsequent works dealing with the radical culture of the 1820s and the 'march' was Iain McCalman's cultural history of London's Spencean activists, *Radical underworld* (1988). McCalman argues that a tradition of plebeian

---

[64] E. P. Thompson, *The making* (1968), 781-2. For co-operation in the 1820s and early 1830s, see G. Claeys, *Citizens and saints* (1989), esp. 167-207.

'unrespectability' was kept alive by the resilience and flexibility of Spencean ideas, individuals and practices in the face of changing social, intellectual and moral mores. His account shows that the period 1821-40 witnessed 'survivals and revivals' of an old Spencean underworld:

> As well as generating new social and economic ideas, the Zetetic, Deist, sectarian and co-operative movements of the twenties were important agents of this messianic popular drive for intellectual and moral improvement.[65]

McCalman departs from the Thompsonian model of an emerging political 'class consciousness' in two crucial ways. Firstly, he argues that the new cultural, moral and intellectual imperatives of the 1820s did not affect working people uniformly. And secondly, he suggests that the new anti-capitalist and 'socialist' theories had a limited impact on radical thought: the ideas of the 1830s were remarkably similar to those of 1819.[66] Indeed, his focus on the Spencean ultras means that McCalman views the 'march of mind', driven by politics, religion and 'respectability', not as an opportunity, but as a challenge to the old underworld traditions: 'the radical march of mind - self-improving and/or socialist - appeared to present the veteran ultras with a crisis of adaptation'. What both Thompson and McCalman's accounts demonstrate - for all their power as finely researched and theoretically sophisticated arguments - is that a 'radical history' which privileges political culture has dominated the best writing of the period.[67]

d. Personal enlightenment: the 'pursuit of knowledge' and moral reform

Important insights into the responses to the march of intellect of common people presenting themselves as external to this radical tradition can be gained by an analysis of their own reminiscences. These sources reveal not only their opinions on formal

---

[65] I. McCalman, *Radical underworld* (1988), 2, 194.
[66] Patricia Hollis had previously made the argument that the 'old' analyses did not replace the 'new'; P. Hollis, *The pauper press* (1970), 203-59.
[67] I. McCalman, *Radical underworld* (1988), 200, 181.

and informal educational provision, but also how the hardships of everyday life affected the way in which they viewed knowledge and morality. Indeed, the pursuit of knowledge and personal moral reform combine in these accounts to create a powerful narrative of apolitical 'personal enlightenment'.[68] The journeyman printer Charles Manby Smith (1804-1880) articulated his own belief in the value of hard-won knowledge in his memoirs thus:

> I make no claims to literary talent, and must crave the reader's indulgence for my want of literary tact. I can forge no fiction upon which to hang any peculiar doctrines or dogmas of my own. Doctrines or dogmas, indeed, I have none to inculcate or announce, and no romantic story to tell. I am a working-man [sic], in the plainest acceptation of the term… My knowledge of the world is of the working-man's world, and my knowledge of books (the world of mind and the past) has been derived from such books as a working-man [sic] could afford to buy or avail to borrow. So pardon, gentles all… [for] all the *lapsus pennae* which must occur now and then to one but little accustomed to trail the quill.[69]

Manby Smith's false modesty was typical of the genre of the autodidact autobiography; but the claim that his 'knowledge of the world is of the working-man's world' was more than sentimental rhetoric. The feeling of hard-won learning springs from the pages of scores of such memoirs, epitomized by the phrase 'the pursuit of knowledge under difficulties'. This rhetoric of struggle was a pervasive trope in narratives of self-improvement, but it is clear that the effort expended by many working people to acquire knowledge was considerable.[70]

---

[68] For a 'non-political' working man's autobiography redolent of the genre of early modern confessional literature, see P. Hudson and L. Hunter (eds.), 'The autobiography of William Hart, cooper, 1776-1857: a respectable artisan in the Industrial Revolution', *London Journal*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (1981), 144-160; and Vol. 8, No. 1 (1982), 63-75.

[69] Charles Manby Smith, *The working-man's way in the world* (1853), 2-3. There is no *ODNB* entry for Smith, whose accomplishments as a popular author were not insubstantial. His memoir, including an account of his work as a 'printer's devil' and journeyman in London and Paris in the 1820s and 1830s, is informative.

[70] This phrase had partisan connotations. Richardson locates it within the scope of the SDUK in the publication of G. L. Craik's, *The pursuit of knowledge under difficulties* (1831). He sees 'the narrative of self-improvement as appropriated for (and idealized by) bourgeois ideology', A. Richardson, *Literature, education and romanticism* (1994), 246. For a negative reaction to an early draft of Craik's work, which had 'the sanction of Brougham', see the *Associate, and Co-operative Mirror*, 1 Nov. 1829.

'Knowledge' was a desirable commodity for most of the autobiographers, often distinguished from 'information' and inflected with different meanings according to the context of its use. This epistemological morass is compounded by the additional use, and distinctions between, the terms 'useful knowledge' and 'really useful knowledge' - particularly in the cheap weekly press. There was an increasing tendency in the 1820s and early 1830s for the phrase 'useful knowledge' to be appropriated by middling reformist vehicles, such as the SDUK's *Penny Magazine*. 'Sound knowledge', its editor Charles Knight (1791-1873) suggested, did not comprise 'superstitions', 'the miraculous' or, above all, 'party politics'. Instead, readers of the *Penny Magazine* would be provided with Knight's own version of 'useful knowledge':

> Striking points of Natural History - Accounts of great Works of Art in Sculpture and Painting - Descriptions of such Antiquities as possess historical interest - Personal Narratives of Travellers - Biographies of Men who have had a permanent influence on the condition of the world - Elementary Principles of Language and Numbers…[and] established facts in Statistics and Political Economy.[71]

The reaction amongst some radicals was the deployment of the phrase 'really useful knowledge' as a clarification of what they believed the original phrase ought to have meant. In January 1832 Hetherington wrote in his penny weekly *Republican; or, Voice of the People* (1832-4) that

> …the swindlers in power are utterly ignorant of *useful knowledge* (not the sort of quack knowledge vomited by the *Society for the Diffusion of* so-called *Useful Knowledge*) but of really useful knowledge.

---

[71] *Penny Magazine*, 31 Mar. 1832; Henry Brougham, *Practical observations upon the education of the people* (1825), 32. For the SDUK see Charles Knight, *Passages*, three vols. (1864-5), ii.

For some, such as Knight, 'useful knowledge' therefore meant everything apart from the contentious topics of politics and religion; but for others, including Hetherington, the whole range of intellectual enquiry ought to have been open to common readers.[72]

Whether 'useful' or 'really useful', the knowledge pursued by common readers between 1819 and 1834 did have some consistent features. In several letters to Francis Place between 1825 and 1826, for instance, the Bradford trade unionist John Tester (*b.*1800) detailed his own struggle for intellectual self-improvement. Recalling that he had 'known what it is to work hard eight hours, and study hard for ten more', Tester catalogued his reading list of key writers on political economy (J. S. Mill, John Ramsay McCulloch and Place); contemporary parliamentary politics (Joseph Hume and Henry White on the 'combination laws'), religious freethought (Richard 'Carlisle' [sic]), revolution and science (Jean Paul Marat); co-operation (William Thompson), and literature (Alexander Pope). 'After having studied the Latin language 'till I could read the most difficult authors with the assistance of a Lexicon', Tester continued, he had 'pored over Treatises on grammar, logic, rhetoric and Belles Lettres, untill [sic] I imagined myself a critic on these matters'.[73]

Manby Smith, Hetherington and Tester were exceptional individuals, but their accounts suggest that several broad knowledge categories might be identified as constituting the intellectual framework of the common reader: 'political knowledge' (often a constitutionalist narrative of history, corruption and reform, but frequently including a Paineite republican strand associated with a rationalist freethinking

---

[72] *Republican; or, Voice of the People*, No. 31, (Jan., 1832). For the various uses of the terms see Richard Carlile, *To the reformers of Great Britain* (1821), 25; and *Penny Papers*, 1 Oct. 1830.

[73] John Tester to Francis Place, 10 Jul. 1825, add. mss. 27,803, fols. 343-6. Tester came to national attention in 1825 as a result of his leadership of a turn-out of the Bradford wool-combers and stuff-weavers - but he claimed not to be a 'radical'. For a primary account, see John Tester, 'History of the commencement, progress and termination of the Bradford contest' (1826), West Yorkshire Archive Service (Bradford), DB3C39/5. See also M. Chase, *Early trade unionism* (2000), 27-9. Tester's letters to Place, sent between 6 Jul. 1825 and 19 Feb. 1826, do not seem to have attracted the attention of historians; add. mss. 27,803, fols. 335-51 and 410-11.

opposition to organized Christianity); 'scientific knowledge' (covering nature, technology and new discoveries); 'moral knowledge' (which proved to be a site of contestation between the evangelical, Methodist, Anglican, Roman Catholic and freethinking camps); 'literary knowledge' (including fiction and poetry, and often in tense coexistence with the conservative canon of 'Romanticism'); and knowledge of the 'science of society' (including social and economic questions of commerce, agriculture, industry and poverty, and driven by an engagement with, or opposition to, orthodox political economy). When 'knowledge' was used in these contexts it referred to the acquisition of truths, facts or principles by study, learning or reading. These knowledge forms gave shape to the intellectual world of the common reader, but the boundaries were fluid and 'knowledge' could have shifting meanings.[74]

The other dimension of this 'personal enlightenment' was moral reform. Although in many accounts the 'pursuit of knowledge' itself led to improved personal morals, often that pursuit also had some religious content. Between the late 1780s and 1820s some historians have identified a powerful evangelical push by the forces of English dissent, and Deryck Lovegrove, in particular, has demonstrated that from the 1790s onwards this drive was manifest in 'the widespread employment of itinerant evangelism'. By the 1820s, he argues, the expansion of this proselytizing practice into rural and urban areas previously untouched by Methodism became increasingly formalized, with logistical preoccupations detracting from the movement's momentum. The practice continued, however, and was widely reported in the religious periodical press of the 1820s and 1830s: the penny *Canal Boatman's Magazine* (1829-31) of the Paddington Society for the Promotion of Christian

---

[74] See R. Johnson, 'Really useful knowledge: radical education and working class culture, 1790-1848', in R. Dale, *et al* (eds.), *Politics, patriarchy and practice* (1981), 75-102.

Knowledge (PSPCK), for instance, carrying monthly reports of the activities of street preachers in one of the most deprived neighbourhoods of the metropolis.[75]

The impact of religious dissent on the English common people remains an understudied topic; but certain examples bear testimony to the continuing influence of evangelical popular religion (dissenting or otherwise) into the 1820s.[76] As a young Methodist entering London in search of work in the summer of 1821, for example, William Lovett was shocked at the appearance of the metropolitan working population: '[i]n passing the Borough end of the old London Bridge I recollect being forcibly struck with the number of blackened eyes, and scratched and battered faces, that I met with among the labourers going to their employments', he recalled; 'the result, I afterwards learnt, of their Saturday evening and Sunday sprees.' 'Popular immorality' was a recurring theme for Lovett: drinking, gambling and pugilism were rife, he noted, and he suggested that even in the 1870s

> no more effectual means for the removal of drunkenness could be provided than the opening of our museums, or mechanic and scientific institutions, our libraries, and all our exhibitions of art and science on Sunday, the only day our working population have to enjoy them, and by giving every facility and encouragement for persons delivering scientific, historical, and every description of instructive lectures to the mass of the people on that day.

More positively, Lovett did suggest that 'a great improvement, mentally and morally, has taken place among the working classes of London since that period', and his account draws together at least five different moral preoccupations recurrent in working men's autobiographies: the failure of state educational provision, policing

---

[75] D. W. Lovegrove, *Established church* (1988), 14-23 and 142-165. For classic interpretations of Methodism, see E. Halévy, *A history of the English people* (1924), 365-70; E. P. Thompson, *The making* (1968), 362-89; and E. J. Hobsbawm, *Primitive rebels* (1959), 135-40. For the attempt to initiate 'open air preaching' before an audience of rowdy dustmen and Wharfingers, see the *Canal Boatman's Magazine*, Jul., 1829.

[76] For Anglican missions, see D. M. Lewis, *Lighten their darkness* (2001), 49-78; for Unitarianism, see G. M. Ditchfield, 'English Rational Dissent and philanthropy, *c.* 1760-*c.* 1810', in H. Cunningham and J. Innes, (eds.), *Charity, philanthropy, and reform* (1998), 193-207.

and other modes of improving popular morals; the persistence of a culture of drunkenness in the metropolis; the importance of mutual improvement societies in 'moralizing' the poor; the issue of religious observance of the Sabbath; and a sense of isolation from the mass of the people.[77]

In the memoirs of the self-educated Hemel Hempstead teacher James Bonwick (1817-1902), popular ignorance was attributed to the state's failure to prevent crime and provide education in the 1820s. Criticizing the 'old Charlies' (night watchmen) for their inability to control the drinking habits of the people, Bonwick recalled that '[t]hey were fair game for the rowdy "Tom and Jerry" of the period'. 'These Charlies', he continued, 'not inaptly represented the clumsy and inadequate efforts of educationalists':

> The Government was sublimely indifferent to the popular ignorance and the consequent exposure to vice and disorder. The instruction of the poor was left to chance or to charity. The worthy SPG and SPCK Societies had done what they could. Parish schools were neither numerous nor well conducted… Then came the sparsely scattered British Schools, more or less subscribed to by kindly neighbours.[78]

Drunkenness was frequently depicted as the great barrier to personal enlightenment, and particular trades had longstanding reputations. The Holborn printer, Robert Skeen (*b*.1797), noted in his memoirs that '[t]he character of "Printers" has greatly improved since I first knew London [in the 1820s]. They were then spoken of as a "drunken set," though I verily believe they were no worse than their neighbours', concluding that '[t]he general tone of morality is, no doubt, much higher than it was about sixty

---

[77] William Lovett, *The life and struggles* (1967), 19-20; 47-8. The impact of religion on self-improvement has long been contested: Thompson claimed that 'Methodism and Evangelicism contributed few active intellectual ingredients to the articulate culture of the working people, although they can be said to have added an earnestness to the pursuit of *information*', E. P. Thompson, *The making* (1968), 813.

[78] James Bonwick, *An octogenarian's reminiscences* (1902), 35-7. The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG) was an Anglican missionary association founded in 1701. By the 1820s it was expanding its mission throughout the empire. The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK), founded in 1698, was also an Anglican association, but played a much larger part in the early nineteenth-century cheap publishing market. See also A. Fyfe, *Science and salvation* (2004), 1-59.

years ago.' Skeen, like Lovett, attributed the improvement in morals to the 'influence of more sober and steady men' and likewise ended on an optimistic note, complementing the improved morality and mental capacity of the London printers: 'I believe the compositors of the present day may rank with the most steady, as they are certainly the most intelligent, class of workmen in the Metropolis. May they ever so continue!'[79]

Some authors represented themselves as extraneous to 'rough' popular culture, while others depicted themselves as guilty of its worst excesses, before being saved by education and religion. Another Holborn resident, the draper William H. Ablett, fell into the first category. For Ablett, occupying his Sundays as an apprentice in the 1800s presented no problem:

> the ordinary amusements that were sought after by most of the young men by whom I was surrounded were not to my taste, and I fortunately happened to fall into the best means of employing my leisure that was possible, and acquired a taste for reading... [and] I was enabled to procure and read most of the classical standard authors, and was tolerably familiar with Virgil, Homer, Horace, and Ovid; while Smollett, Fielding, Richardson, and others of a similar school, such as Sterne, I had at my fingers' ends.[80]

This vision of personal enlightenment, isolated from his peers, represents a recurring autobiographical theme of choosing respectable pursuits over rough amusements. But these worlds often overlapped, and alongside respectable accounts were the well-established narratives of the drunken 'vagabond' saved by his or her conversion to Christianity. The shipwright Christopher Thomson (1799-1871), for instance, claimed that important lessons could be learned from stories of moral degradation. In a section entitled 'A word to my class', Thomson noted that he had 'somewhere read, that the moral history of the beggar, fully and honestly given, might greatly enlarge and

---

[79] Robert Skeen, *Autobiography of Mr Robert Skeen, printer* (1876), 50-1.
[80] William H. Ablett, *Reminiscences of an old draper* (1876), 48-9.

enlighten the views of a philosopher.' Invoking the twin nostrums of education ('[t]he safety valve is education') and religion, Thomson's account represents the archetypal tale of the Christian soul saved by a moment of evangelical clarity:

> My faith in the progress of our class is full and firm based on the mercy and goodness of God. We have but to expand our minds to enjoy the fullness of our redemption… let the blessings of enlightenment and truth dwell in us - loving man for God's sake.

Such heavily stylized accounts of the 'pursuit of knowledge' and individual moral reform serve to add an additional dimension to the 'radical history' tradition: self-improvement, they suggest, functioned as a vehicle of intellectual and moral - and not necessarily political - emancipation.[81]

iii. Conclusions: popular culture and inherited narratives

The reminiscences of working men and histories derived from them thus offer at least four frameworks for understanding early nineteenth-century popular culture. Firstly, an educational story, in which a public culture of enquiry - sustained and embodied in improved literacy, scientific and mutual improvement societies, public lecturing, libraries and educational initiatives - was from the later eighteenth century increasingly directed towards the lower levels of English society. Secondly, a 'march of science' narrative - increasingly deployed for and by the common people - that depicted science as the knowledge of enlightenment, apotheosized eminent inventors, described the irresistible advance of technology and supported an engagement with orthodox or popular political economy. Thirdly, a radical political 'march of labour' account, in which the common people increasingly demanded citizenship, or other, less formal, types of inclusion in society and polity. And fourthly, what might be termed a story of 'personal enlightenment', in which the common people were increasingly assigned - and increasingly claimed - agency in their own intellectual

---

[81] Christopher Thomson, *The autobiography of an artisan* (1847), 1, 8-10 and 23.

improvement and moral reform. The extent to which this latter (equally heroic) story of 'popular enlightenment' is useful for improving our understanding of the history of popular culture requires further consideration - but it does provide the historian with an alternative to the dominant 'radical history' tradition, in which the movement for parliamentary reform becomes the organizing framework, and periods of defeat are characterized by a turn towards the improvement of a potential citizenry. The alternative hypothesis - implicit in these reminiscences and discussed in detail below - is that a broad-based and long-term preoccupation with the intellectual and moral condition of the common people existed between the 1780s and the 1830s, itself punctuated by brief periods of political excitement. The theme of popular intellectual and moral agency, in this context, emerges as part of a wide-ranging interest in 'reform' between the 1780s and 1830s rather than the sole product of a single interest group or party. Increasingly, from the 1790s onwards, this preoccupation was manifest in a nascent popular periodical press.

II

Reform and improvement in the popular periodical: 'manners and morals' and the 'march of intellect', c. *1780*-c.*1830*

The memoirs cited above demonstrate a preoccupation with moral reform and intellectual improvement, and even a cursory reading of popular periodicals produced between 1819 and 1834 suggests the pervasiveness of two related terms in the period: 'manners and morals' and the 'march of intellect'. This section focuses on the uses of these two key phrases. Where did these phrases come from?; what was their relationship to each other?; how was it that they came to refer almost exclusively to the experiences of men, women and children from London's lower-middling or labouring classes?; and what is their significance for considerations about the agency

of the common people? The invocation of these improving tropes in periodical print is revealing, and evidence that increasing numbers of common people were joining a 'nation of readers' was itself frequently cited by champions of the 'march' as proof of improved popular morals and intellect. In response, caricatures of newspaper-reading dustmen, chimney-sweeps writing in French and housemaids conducting scientific experiments proliferated, but they were effective precisely because they were recognizable, if grossly exaggerated.[82]

i. Reforming the morals of the people

During the late 1820s and early 1830s, the satirist Robert Seymour (1798-1836) etched a series of perceptive observations on the relationship between the practice of reading, popular moral reform and metropolitan social relations. One rendition ('The Byron Coffee House and Reading Rooms', 1829) drew on a range of contemporary images and rhetoric, harnessing the comico-cynical figure of the 'literary dustman' as a parodic sign of the times (figure 1.3, p. 46). The scene depicts a coal-heaver and a dust-man taking coffee, heavily caricatured in the 'cockney style'.[83] The serving maid in the background bears a deliberate, stylized resemblance to Henry Brougham, whose public association with the 'march' trope was secured by his widely-circulated tract, *Practical observations upon the education of the people* (1825).[84]

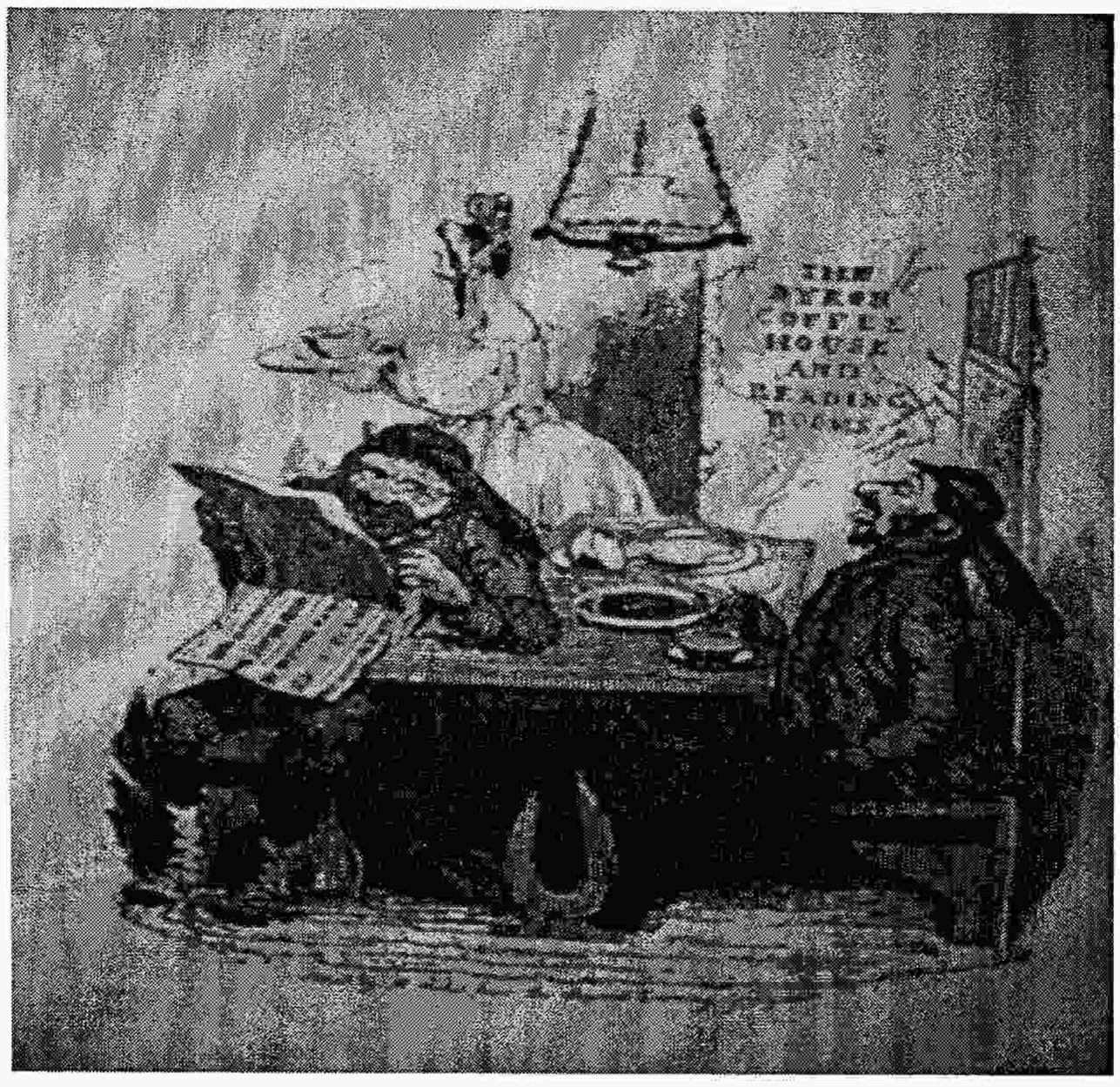
---

[82] See the selection of satirical prints from George Cruikshank, *My sketch book* (1834-6) in J. Marriott (ed.), *Unknown London* (2002), 398-426. See also M. D. George, *Hogarth to Cruikshank* (1967), 177-82.

[83] Robert Seymour, *Seymour's sketches* (1838), [unpag.], fols. 11-14. Seymour's dustman is redolent of one of William Hazlitt's 'Coffee-House Politicians'. Hazlitt observed that such men devoured 'the latest stirring information', but dismissed deeper, historical knowledge as irrelevant to the 'affairs of the nation'; William Hazlitt, 'On Coffee-House Politicians', *Table talk: or, original essays* (1821-2), ii, in William Hazlitt and G. Dart (ed.), *Metropolitan writings* (2005), 38-54.

[84] Brougham believed that the most important driver of popular education was 'the encouragement of cheap publications', but that this was to be accompanied by book clubs and reading societies, reading aloud at work, societies of mutual instruction, abridged lecture courses and public lectures. '[T]he question', he noted, 'no longer is whether or not the people shall be instructed… but whether they shall be well or ill taught', Henry Brougham, *Practical observations* (1825), 32. Henry Martin, in his *Observations on the importance and advantages of the education of the people* (1826), agreed, referring to 'that powerful impulse which has been, in derision, termed the "March of Intellect"…

Figure 1.3: 'The Byron Coffee House and Reading Rooms', 1829 (Robert Seymour)



Judging by its size and layout, the coal-heaver is reading a 'stamped' six-column broadsheet. This air of legality serves to highlight the incongruity of rough characters consuming respectable reading matter. Seymour's dialogue leaves the reader with little doubt as to his own response: '[newspaper-reading coal-heaver] You shall have the paper directly, Sir, but really the debates are so very interesting. [dust-man, stirring his coffee] 'Oh, pray don't hurry Sir, its [sic] only the scientific notices I care about'. The incongruity of social status, location and learning are suggestive of where and how working men consumed print in the imagined world of the march of intellect, and the juxtaposition of rough stereotypes and respectable reading practices served to mock the aspirations of the upwardly mobile common man and to warn that widespread access to print threatened social stability.[85]

[which] is... the turning point, on which is hinged the whole question of the Education of the Poor', 11-12.

[85] Sketched by Seymour in the early 1830s, this print became part of a collection sold to Carlile in 1836. In 1838 the plates were published in a single volume collection by 'Alfred Crowquill' [Alfred Henry

This theme of the increasing agency of the common people was the product of a rich discursive heritage: a moral reform discourse encapsulated by the term 'manners and morals'. This phrase - like the 'march of intellect' - drew together discussions about print culture, the impact of rationalism on religion, science and nature, the study of human nature, the science of politics, the drive for progress through education, modernization and the pursuit of happiness and wealth - all of which characterized what has been termed 'Albion's Enlightenment'.[86] The term 'manners and morals' referred, broadly, to behaviour that was judged according to both social mores and in terms of what was deemed morally correct. Projects aiming to effect a reformation of manners and morals had long existed in London, but between the late 1680s and 1730s 'Societies for the Reformation of Manners' formalized responses to perceived moral depravity. If these societies were largely obsolete by the 1720s, a preoccupation with the moral implications of certain forms of behaviour survived among what Michael Roberts calls 'moral reform cultural elites'.[87] In terms prefiguring the debate about the utility of cheap coffee-houses a century later, Daniel Defoe (*c.*1660-1731) lamented in *The complete English tradesman* (1726) that '[t]he Tea-table among the Ladies, and the Coffee-house among the men, seem to be places of new invention for a depravation of our manners and morals'; locations where a

---

Forrester] with prose and verse additions: 'What a thrill of pleasure pervades the philanthropic breast on beholding the rapid march of Intellect!', Forrester's addition began, before ridiculing the cultural aspiration ('Literature has become the favourite pursuit of all classes'), political inconsistency ('I once was a Reformer - but Rads and Whigs is so low, that I've turned Conservative'); and lack of understanding ('What's the liberty of the press?' 'Why calling people what thinks different from 'em all sorts of names - arn't that a liberty?') of the cockney readers; Robert Seymour, *Seymour's sketches* (1838), fols. 13-14. For dustmen and the 'march', see B. Maidment, *Reading popular prints* (1996), 61-70.

[86] R. Porter, *Enlightenment* (2001), 1-24.

[87] M. J. Roberts, *Making English morals* (2004), 3. See also R. Shoemaker, 'Reforming the City: the reformation of manners campaign in London, 1690-1738', in L. Davison *et al* (eds.), *Stilling the grumbling hive* (1992), 99-120; and J. Innes, 'Politics and morals: the reformation of manners movement in later eighteenth-century England', in E. Hellmuth (ed.), *The transformation of political culture* (1990), 57-118.

lady or tradesman might be exposed to scandal, meet unsavoury characters and lose 'reputation' as well as 'credit'.[88]

Such moral concerns persisted throughout the eighteenth century, but foreign conflicts and their perceived domestic implications rekindled interest from the 1770s onwards. Thomas Paine (1737-1809), for instance, argued that the corruption of politics was the principal degrading influence on morals, rather than vice versa. In 1775 Paine penned a letter to the *Pennsylvania Magazine*, lamenting that some 'British Magazines' (such as 'the Town and Country, the Covent Garden and Westminster [sic]') had become 'retailers of tale and nonsense'. Acknowledging that '[t]he two capital supports of a magazine are utility and entertainment', Paine argued that

> There is nothing which obtains so general an influence over the manners and morals of a people, as the press; from that, as from a fountain, the streams of vice or virtue are poured forth over a country: and of all publications none are more calculated to improve or infect than a periodical one…[89]

A concern for the manners and morals of the people had therefore informed commentaries on social behaviour, political participation and the role of the periodical press for decades before the term was appropriated in the 1820s. The period between the late 1770s and the late 1790s in particular was characterized by a focus on the relationship between morals, society, politics and national regeneration. Morality was found wanting in both high and low cultures, and to stop a trickle down of demoralization campaigners set up associations to publicize and prosecute immoral practices. The quintessential moral reform society of the 1780s was William

---

[88] Daniel Defoe, *The complete English tradesman* (1726), 228-9. For coffee houses see J. Money, 'Taverns, coffee houses and clubs: local politics and popular articulacy in the Birmingham area in the age of the American Revolution', *Historical Journal*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (1971), 15-47; B. Cowan, *The social life of coffee* (2005); and below, chapter four, 254-64.

[89] 'The Gentleman's, the London, and the Universal Magazines [sic]' remained 'respectable'; Thomas Paine, 'To the publisher of the *Pennsylvania Magazine*' (orig. 1775), reprinted in *The political works of Thomas Paine*, two vols. (1817), ii, 432-6.

Wilberforce's (1759-1833) Proclamation Society (1787); a response by 'middling' reformers to a perceived moral crisis in England, in which the effects of war, increasing access to print and the growth of a market economy were seen to be creating conditions in which immorality, low standards of living and political sedition were increasingly the experience of the common people. Contemporaneous with these moral reform campaigns was a vibrant metropolitan debating culture, and debating clubs were increasingly important spaces for the public discussion of a variety of moral, religious and political issues.[90]

The debates of the London Corresponding Society covered a range of topics, but it was its focus on the common people as active agents, rather than passive receivers, of moral reform that was most significant in this context. The LCS was also among the first associations attempting to court the readership of working people through the publication of cheap periodicals. In 1794 it established the weekly eight-page *Politician* (1794), marrying reform politics with popular intellectual and moral improvement by diffusing 'morality, religion and politics' to the domestic sphere of the 'mechanic' and the 'tradesman'. This reforming agenda was particularly evident in the monthly *Moral and Political Magazine of the London Corresponding Society* (1796-7). With a circulation of between three and four thousand copies per number, the magazine retailed for 4½d. to members of the LCS and 6d. to non-members and, like the *Politician*, it aimed to fuse moral and political reform and to embody the LCS's mission '[t]o cultivate the moral taste and understanding of the society. [and] To obtain a reform in parliament…'[91]

---

[90] M. J. Roberts, *Making English morals* (2004), 17-58. See also B. Taylor, 'Feminists versus gallants: sexual manners and morals in Enlightenment Britain', in S. Knott and B. Taylor (eds.), *Women, gender, and Enlightenment* (2007), 30-52; and D. T. Andrew, *London debating societies* (1994), intro.

[91] *Politician*, 3 Jan. 1794 and *Moral and Political Magazine*, 1 Jul. 1796, both reproduced in M. T. Davis *et al* (eds.), *London Corresponding Society*, six vols. (2002), iii.

The period of war with France between 1793 and 1815 created conditions in which it became increasingly difficult for societies such as the LCS to peddle the dual message of moral and political reform without being opened up to charges of disloyalty. But the decline of radical and moral-reforming activity ought not to be overstated: the legacy of the 1790s was manifest in a range of localized educational and charitable schemes.[92] Moreover, the moral reform campaigns of secular, Anglican and Dissenting groups begun in the 1780s continued, and 'a common, evangelising cause' was articulated in range of Sunday Schools, Bible societies and other commercial and religious ventures, all designed to reform the morals of the people.[93]

Although a handful of periodicals in the 1790s had addressed farmers, artisans, labourers and peasants, the precise social group whose morals were being debated was often unclear. The invocation of the term 'morals and manners' by the cheap periodical press in the 1810s defined the debate in clearer social terms and on an unprecedented scale. Frequently addressed to 'humble readers', the post-war press drew on debates about moral reform in order to make (or deride) claims for popular political representation. The popular Tory press offered its readers a particular take on the root cause of degraded morals, but like its radical counterparts stressed that it was in the context of 'common men' that such debates ought to be played out. The four-penny *Shadgett's Weekly Review of Cobbett, Wooler* [sic], *Sherwin and Other Democratical* [sic] *and Infidel Writers* (1818-19) blamed not government corruption, but rather 'bad education'. In one article focussing on the education of boys, the editor aimed to 'depict the influence of a good or bad Education on the manners and morals of the pupil', concluding that

---

[92] For the continuing use of the term 'manners and morals', see the *Reformists' Register*, 5 Oct. 1811. For an account of radicalism in the period see A. Prochaska, 'The practice of radicalism: educational reform in Westminster', in J. Stevenson, (ed.), *London in the age of reform* (1977), 102-116.
[93] For a survey, see W. Canton, *A history of the British and Foreign Bible Society*, five vols. (1904-10).

> A man possessed of a useful Education, one in which his attention has been directed to transactions between man and man… is much better calculated for getting through the world, than he whose life has been spent poring over Homer, or Virgil; or in reasoning with the profound Aristotle. Such a man can qualify himself for common conversation and business… [and] to those little minutiae, that treat of common men and common things.[94]

That the preoccupation with the 'manners and morals of the people' was politically and religiously loaded was therefore not new to the nineteenth century; but the shift in its application appears pronounced by the 1810s. From a concern with social interactions in the early eighteenth century, through the political and religious inflection of the term between the 1770s and 1790s, 'manners and morals' had come to refer almost exclusively to 'common men and common things'. The shifting uses and meanings of the term thus tracked increasingly prevalent debates about the reform of popular morals; revealed how the issue of a reformation of popular cultural practice became central to religious and political programmes; and drew together a target group of lower-middling and labouring men, women and children, increasingly presenting them as active agents of their own moral reformation through the medium of the popular periodical press.

ii. The march of intellect

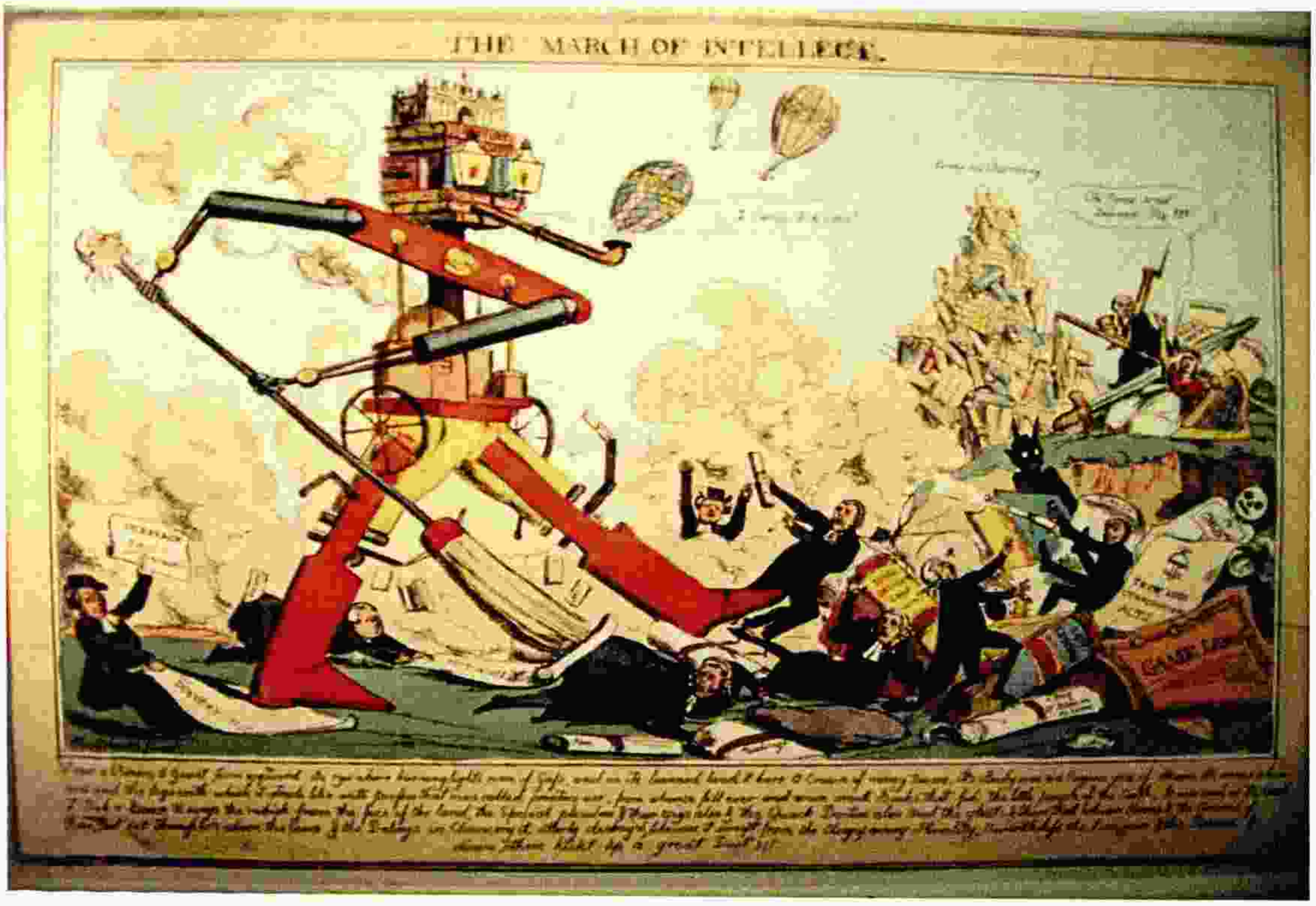
These moral reform campaigns were increasingly bolstered by appeals for popular intellectual improvement. From the later 1810s, the consumption of periodical print by common readers animated discussions about the march of intellect, and 'march' rhetoric pervaded radical, Whig, Tory and evangelical debates touching on 'improvement', 'reform' and 'civilization'. Another of Seymour's etchings ('The March of Intellect', 1829) distilled the fundamentals of this rhetoric into a single striking image (figure 1.4, p.52). The 'march' is given form as a 'Giant', whose body

---

[94] *Shadgett's Weekly Review*, 19 Apr. 1818. For the invocation of the term 'manners and morals' in a radical context, see the *People*, 17 May 1817.

comprises symbols of progress, striding towards a dust heap of corruption with a 'Broom' (Brougham) in hand. The body of the leviathan reveals the technological and physical qualities of the march, locating it in a decade of scientific innovation and experiment: its eyes are 'even of Gas', its body a great engine, issuing forth steam, and its arms wrought iron pillars. In this vision of enlightenment, the giant is guided by the literal illumination of gas, propelled by the raw industrial power of steam and iron, and directed on legs made from printing presses: illumination, power and dynamic movement.

Figure 1.4: 'The March of Intellect', 1829 (Robert Seymour)



On closer inspection, the giant's physiognomy reveals much about the intellectual impetus behind the 'march'. Its 'crown' is London University, resting atop tomes on history and philosophy, the cognitive basis of the 'march'. The ear is a letter box, suggesting the importance of the post as a conveyor of information, and the mandible,

appropriately, is a textbook on 'mechanics'. Along with its physical and intellectual characteristics, the 'dust' heap identifies the targets of the 'march'. Legal reform is represented by the 'Special pleaders', the wigged Lilliputian figures clutching documents, and miscellaneous 'Law Lumber'. A 'Quack Doctor' is shown falling back into the rubbish heap, and the dark influence of superstition (ignorance) is manifest as both a horned demon and a ghost. There is a hierarchy to these obstacles to 'liberty'. The 'game laws' and the 'Test and Corporation Acts' are displayed as propping up the previous abuses, and the very furthest image from the giant shows Britannia lying prone, crying 'Oh come and Deliver me!!!'.[95]

Seymour's rendering of the dynamics and targets of the 'march' mobilized many symbols resonant in the 1820s, but it also drew on older discursive responses to improvement and reform.[96] In 1775 Edmund Burke (1729/30-1797) had lamented the slowness of the 'march of the human mind', and in 1792 the writer Thomas Holcroft (1745-1809) observed that 'the march of knowledge is slow, impeded as it is by the almost impenetrable forrests [sic] and morasses of error.' In 1775 the actor Thomas Sheridan (1719-1788) sketched the emergence of civilized society from barbarism through mental refinement in his description of 'the slow march of the intellect.'[97] The themes of 'civilization' through the polishing of language, manners and the improvement of mental faculties, coupled with pessimistic expectations of the capacity of human nature to improve itself, seemed to prevail. These comments referred to a preoccupation with the mental cultivation of those in polite society only.

During the 1770s, however, discussions about the diffusion of knowledge to lower

---

[95] For 'ignorance' born of a lack of accessible literature, see William Lovett, *The life and struggles* (1967), 17-18; and Louis James, *Print and the people* (1976), 17-27.
[96] For the seventeenth-century, see J. I. Israel, *Radical enlightenment* (2001), 1-22.
[97] Edmund Burke, *Speech of Edmund Burke, Esq.,* third edition (1775), 66; Thomas Holcroft, *Anna St. Ives: a novel*, seven vols. (1792), iv, 43; Thomas Sheridan, *Lectures on the art of reading*, two vols. (1775), i, 134; P. Langford, *A polite and commercial people* (1989). For these themes, see D. Spadafora, *The idea of progress in eighteenth-century Britain* (1990).

social levels were being conducted. Chief amongst the radical thinkers of the period were the 'Rational Dissenters' Joseph Priestley (1733-1804) and Richard Price (1723-1791). In 1771 Priestley claimed that 'the human species is capable of… unbounded improvement', and called on government to take up the challenge of education. Similarly, Price had long argued for 'the diffusion of knowledge and the quiet influence of reason and conviction'.[98]

During the 1790s, 'march' narratives were appropriated, re-inflected and redeployed by English radicals as a means of demanding their universal and constitutional rights. In this intellectual climate, in which the 'march of progress' began to refer to both knowledge and political power, metropolitan radicals began to disseminate political knowledge through an embryonic popular periodical press. One of the first periodicals published specifically for common readers - even before the LCS's publications - was the radical bookseller Thomas Spence's (1750–1814) weekly *One Pennyworth of Pig's Meat, or Lessons for the Swinish Multitude* (1793-5). A republican riposte to Burke, it aimed to 'enlighten the people' by the 'promotion of *political* knowledge', but also called more generally for an 'improvement of chemistry or experimental philosophy'. Spence and other metropolitan radicals had thus begun to fuse intellectual and scientific improvement with radical rhetoric stressing the political rights of 'the people'. These tendencies were stimulated by the first English translation of Condorcet's (Marie Jean Antoine Nicolas de Caritat, 1743-1794) treatise on the 'progress of the human intellect' (*Progrès de l'esprit humain* [1794]), although this represented an additional weapon, rather than an innovation.[99]

---

[98] Joseph Priestley, *An essay on the first principles of government* (1771), in P. N. Miller (ed.), *Joseph Priestley, Political writings* (1993), 9; Richard Price, *The evidence for a future period of improvement* (1787), in D. O. Thomas (ed.), *Richard Price, Political writings* (1992), 165.

[99] Thomas Spence, (ed.), *One Pennyworth of Pig's Meat*, second edn. (1793), 129-31; M. de Condorcet, *Outlines of an historical view of the progress of the human mind* (1795), 3; and E. P. Thompson, *The making* (1968), 806.

By 1800 the contested issue of popular intellectual improvement was well-established in English public discourse. Those in favour, to varying degrees, included progressive voices in the 'liberal' camp, who issued paeans to the 'march of civilization', and radicals, who saw knowledge as power; a means to political, intellectual, moral and social emancipation. Between 1816 and 1821 the preoccupation with cultivating the intellect of the common reader became further entwined with the struggles for press freedom and parliamentary reform, and it was in these years that the Baconian dictum that 'knowledge is power' began to enter the popular journalistic lexicon.[100] The post-war radical periodicals usually had a specific, political, vision when referring to 'knowledge': if Bacon occupied a venerable status, his words had come to mean that political knowledge was the prerequisite for political power. An article in William Hone's (1780-1842), *Reformists' Register* (1817) in 1817 epitomized this vision of 'political enlightenment':

> An extent of talent and political knowledge has been displayed from one end of the island to the other which no man could have anticipated…The *blaze of intellect* - the glorious light of knowledge… should encourage every *good* man, as it will confound every *bad* one… Statesmen will be taught, what they alone seem ignorant of - that 'KNOWLEDGE IS POWER'.[101]

During the 1820s and 1830s, the 'march' trope was increasingly invoked in popular periodicals. Positive affirmations owed much to a developing 'liberal' conception of progress, which sought to discard the past, improve and educate, and prized masculine independence, personal responsibility and moral reform over

---

[100] Taken from Francis Bacon's statement 'nam et ipsa scientia potestas est' ('knowledge in itself is power') in his 'De Haeresibus' in *Meditationes Sacrae* (1597); see Francis Bacon, *Essayes, religious meditations, places of perswasion & disswasion* (1924 reprint), 14-15.

[101] *Hone's Reformists'* Register, 1 Feb. 1817 (emphases added). This 'political knowledge' was fractured, and the radical press appropriated rhetoric, symbols and influences from Paineite republicanism (the 'rationalist' idiom), and two overlapping 'constitutionalist' discourses: an 'Old English Constitutionalism' (with its roots in the seventeenth-century 'Commonwealth' radical appeals to the constitution) and a 'Liberal Constitutionalism' (a nineteenth-century usage, which privileged public opinion). This is not to ignore the diversity of matter in post-war periodicals, for evidence of which see the indices in P. Keen (ed.), *The popular radical press in Britain*, six vols. (2003). For other uses, see the *Gorgon*, 17 Apr. 1819; and the *Medusa*, 27 Apr. 1819.

superstition, cruel sports, excessive drinking and sexual promiscuousness. Ordinarily, the 'march' was deployed in political discourse to create or deride a shared historical narrative of freedom; to assert or refute the 'manly independence' of an enlightened working people against the ignorance of 'Old Corruption'; and to apotheosize or denigrate the nostrums of reform and revolution. Fusing these usages for radical ends, Henry Hetherington issued a paean to the European revolutions of 1830 in his *Penny Papers for the People*: 'the grand question is', he asked,

> shall such revolution [in England] be effected by the March of Intellect, or by such marches as the French and the Belgians have lately made? Imagine, a half-educated - a half-brutal mob taking the government into their own hands; - and repicture [sic] the atrocities of 1792!

The French 'terror' of 1792-3 served as an important historical touchstone; and although Hetherington attempted to locate the march of intellect in a tradition which prized moderation, in this article at least, the 'march' became a vehicle of revolution.[102]

Conservative responses to such radical enthusiasm also invoked the 'march' trope in the 1820s, drawing out its perceived associations with both irreligion and sedition. In a letter to Place in December 1827, for instance, John Cam Hobhouse (1786-1869) explained how the march of intellect had become the 'march of sedition' for some commentators: 'Lord Eldon, call[s] it the rogue's march', he observed, 'and think it a time to which one day or other a hundred thousand tall fellows with clubs & pikes will march against Whitehall'.[103] This ultra-Tory response was epitomized in 1825 by a ballad attributed to Theodore Hook (1788-1841), editor of the popular Tory Sunday newspaper, the *John Bull* (1820-92):

> We'll all of us shortly be doom'd,
> To part with our plain understanding,

---

[102] *Penny Papers*, 2 Oct. 1830.
[103] Letter from John Cam Hobhouse to Francis Place, 21 Dec. 1827, add. mss., 35,148, fols. 6-7.

For INTELLECT now has assumed
An attitude truly commanding!
All ranks are so dreadfully wise,
Common sense is set quite at defiance,
And the child for its porridge that cries,
Must cry in the language of SCIENCE.

Hook's preoccupation with social rank invoked the 'grand chain' narrative that 'every man had his place in society' against the disruptive effects of diffusing knowledge. Specifically, Hook depicted the character of 'John Bull' (the traditional symbol of British 'common sense') as besieged by the disruptive knowledge form of 'science'. The practice of knowledge acquisition was shown to adversely impact on the domestic sphere, with even the child's request for porridge succumbing to the new linguistic imperatives of the 'march'.[104]

The *John Bull* itself carried a satire entitled 'The March of Intellect' in March 1826, drawing together a range of concerns about the displacement of social, political and religious hierarchies. Predicting the plight of the Duke and Duchess of Bedford (descendants of one of the pre-eminent Whig dynasties) in the year 1926, the satire sketches an England in which the House of Lords has been abolished, the Roman Catholic Church has been established as the state religion and domestic servants have abandoned their duties in favour of pursuing 'enlightenment'. The housemaids refuse to clean away the breakfast plates because they are practising their singing, while the footman is unable to deliver a message because he has been elected as a Member of Parliament. The 'historical fragment' concludes with a vision of anarchy: 'by extending with liberal anxiety... the benefits of enlightenment, [the servants, having taken over the house from the Duke and Duchess] in turn gave way to the superior claims of inferior animals, and were themselves compelled eventually to relinquish

---

[104] Anon. [attrib. Theodore Hook], *The march of intellect: a new song* (1825), *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, Vol. 18 (Dec., 1825), reprinted in N. Mason (ed.), *Collected satires I* (2003), 219-223. See *ODNB* for 'John Bull'.

happiness, power, and tranquillity, in favour of monkeys, horses, jack-asses and all manner of beasts.'[105]

The playwright and theatre manager William Thomas Moncrieff (1794-1857) embraced this theme of popular intellectual improvement inverting social hierarchies more playfully in his satirical poem, *The march of intellect* (1830):

The march of intellect all love,
All wish to have a hand in;
E'en cobblers labour to improve
The *human understanding*.
Such is the general thirst of knowledge,
So little is its scarcity;
Soon Tooley Street will have its College,
St. Giles its University.[106]

The humble social constituency of the 'march' is depicted here not only by reference to the cobbler, but also to notorious areas of vice and crime in the metropolis. Tooley Street in Southwark had long been associated with metropolitan 'low life'; and St Giles', Cripplegate, according to the sporting journalist Pierce Egan (1772-1849), was populated by 'rude and unsophisticated residents'. Some commentators went further: in his exposé of the 'cadging houses' and dens of the city, the radical pornographer John Duncombe referred to St Giles' as 'the Rookery' and 'that modern Sodom'. For Moncrieff, Egan and Duncombe, such notorious neighbourhoods might serve as the immoral location for the institutions of improvement in the confused world of the march of intellect.[107]

---

[105] *John Bull*, 27 Mar. 1826; add. mss., 27,824, fols. 99-103. Place is satirized as the artisan who neglects his trade to visit the 'Academy' (the LMI).

[106] William Thomas Moncrieff, *The march of intellect: a comic poem* (1830). William Gibb Thomas Moncrieff was a colourful character in the demimonde of metropolitan minority theatre. He has been neglected by historians; though see J. R. Stephens, *The profession of the playwright* (1992). For the popular theatre, see J. Moody, 'The theatrical revolution, 1776-1843', in J. Donohue (ed.), *The Cambridge history of British theatre* (2004), 199-215; J. Moody, *Illegitimate theatre in London* (2000); and D. Worrall, *Theatric revolution* (2006).

[107] Pierce Egan, *Life in London* (1821), 27. See J. C. Reid, *Bucks and bruisers* (1971); and D. A. Low, *The Regency underworld* (2005), 105-30. Anon. [attrib. John Duncombe], *The dens of London exposed* (1835), reprinted in J. Marriott (ed.), *Unknown London*, five vols. (2000), iv. For the role of

The 'march' thus had both positive and negative connotations. Such contested political, social and moral meanings increasingly coexisted with economic inflections, as popular periodicals began to address the issues of political economy, free trade, co-operation and poverty. In 1833, the Norwich operative G. C. Burrows railed in the penny *Advocate; or Artizans' and Labourers' Friend* (1833) against the effects of machinery and what he saw as an abstract 'march of intellect past common sense, disdaining to look down on common things, on human nature, on human frailty, to consider man as man.' Starvation and distress, Burrows argued, were not the result of 'rent, nor tithe, nor taxes, nor the national debt, nor national corruption', nor even these combined. The real cause was 'the march of mind pursuing folly's phantom - universal peace and brotherhood; it is this forgets that nations are but men.' In contrast to Hetherington's enthusiasm, some working people thus viewed the march of intellect as modern capitalistic ambition underpinned by the dehumanizing political economy of the commercial classes: machinery and technological innovation provided the impetus, and starvation was the consequence.[108]

This tension in the uses of the 'march' trope was manifest in debates about popular experiences of literature and science. In 1828 John Timbs (1801-75) - editor of the quintessential cheap periodical of the decade, the two-penny *Mirror of Literature, Amusement and Instruction* (1822-47) - explored what he saw as the cultural shortcomings of so-called 'march-of-intellect-men'. Criticizing the faith they placed in Benthamite utilitarianism and scientific innovation, Timbs wrote:

> Dine with a march-of-intellect man, and only observe the downcast eyes of his pale-faced, trembling wife - the knit brows of his sullen sons - the sulky sorrows of his joy-denied daughters. All that comes of your hard-hearted, hard-headed, music-painting-and-poetry-despising, utilitarian,

---

pornography in radical politics and popular culture, see I. McCalman, *Radical underworld* (1988), esp. 214-20; and Lisa Z. Sigel, *Governing pleasures* (2002), 15-49.

[108] G. C. Burrows, *A word to electors: letters to the present generation on the unrestrained use of modern machinery* (1832), 4-5; serialized in the *Advocate,* 16 Feb. 1833.

> intellectual, all-in-all educationists, who know nothing so admirable as a steam-engine, and would wish to see the whole world worked by machinery.

Mocked as 'march of intellect men', humble autodidacts were thus dismissed as cultural philistines: immune to feeling and obsessed with mechanistic nostrums for intellectual, moral and physical improvement. For these champions of scientific progress, the march of intellect had been given iron cladding in George Stephenson's 'Rocket' in 1829, and the steam engine itself became a symbol of the ingenuity of the age. For doubters, such as Timbs, steam metaphors were re-inflected to suggest that the notion of 'popular enlightenment' was little more than a 'Will-o'-the-wisp'; an *ignis fatuus* that vanished as soon as it was approached.[109]

Many negative responses moved beyond reactionary squibs and satirical depictions to denounce the 'march' on the grounds that it promised the common people more than it could deliver. The journalist William Maginn (1794-1842) wrote a long article for his *Fraser's Magazine* (1830-82) in September 1830 entitled 'On the March of Intellect, and Universal Education', that located the 'march' - by which Maginn meant elementary and adult education for tradesmen's sons - in a long 'succession of schemes' taken up by 'middling' reformers with too much time, wealth and credulity. The 'insane mania' for popular education resulted not only from the 'gullibility of Mr Bull' but also his boredom in 'piping times of peace': 'mechanics and artisans *will be* philosophers', he noted of the vogue for offering 'general and scientific education' through mechanics' institutes and London University, 'and there is no preventing it.' The 'gross delusion' that education could help the sons of 'small traders with plain understanding' break into the professional classes was widespread, he lamented, suggesting that the money spent on education by socially-ambitious barbers, bakers,

---

[109] *Mirror*, 22 Jan. 1825; 5 Jul. 1828; 30 Aug. 1828; and 12 Jul. 1828.

linen-drapers, tailors, shoemakers and butchers had been wasted by forsaking moral and religious teaching for political economy 'and all the ologies and onomies, and ographies, and aulics, and draulics throughout the immense field of science'. None of these, he concluded, would improve the social or occupational prospects of their sons, and a generation of frustrated social ambition among the 'ignorant orders of society' would result from the pernicious schemes of Brougham, Place and other 'charlatans' and 'demagogues'.[110]

The march of intellect was thus invoked positively and negatively in a range of debates touching on political history, reform and corruption; economic and social discussions of cash, corn and poverty; and disputations about the meanings and uses of art and science. Discursive responses cut across perceived social, political and religious lines in unpredictable ways, but the 'march' did retain some coherence as an overarching narrative of intellectual progress. As a categorization of knowledge forms, it was subject to competing interpretations - for some, it was the vehicle of revolution, while for others it was synonymous with the establishment doctrine of orthodox political economy. This complexity confirms that sensitivity to the context and purpose of the invocation of the 'march' is paramount to any reassessment: but its enduring associations with popular intellect, morals and periodical print combine to locate it in a broader programme, in which the people themselves were depicted as agents of their own intellectual improvement.

---

[110] *Fraser's Magazine*, Vol. 2, No. 8 (Sep., 1830), 161-70.

iii. Conclusions: morals and intellect from the 1780s to the 1830s

Between the 1780s and the 1830s there was an increasing tendency to assign to the common people - or for them to claim for themselves - agency in their own intellectual and moral improvement. The phrases 'manners and morals' and the 'march of intellect' had rich discursive histories, representing longstanding (and overlapping) interests in the moral and intellectual reform of the English people. The terms acquired an increasingly demotic edge between the 1770s and the 1790s, and from the 1790s onwards the message of self-improvement was embodied and cultivated in an embryonic cheap weekly periodical press, aimed primarily at a metropolitan readership of artisans, mechanics and tradesmen. Between 1816 and 1819 a resurgent cheap periodical press - unprecedented in scale, scope and its cultivation of a readership of common men, women and children - began to address the theme of popular improvement for a range of religious, political and commercial reasons.

Despite the repression of the radical press after 1819, these tendencies to assign and claim popular agency through the medium of a popular press gathered momentum in the 1820s, drawn together under the banner of the 'march of intellect'. The 'march' trope pervaded public discourse, re-inflecting visions of an eighteenth-century 'Albion's Enlightenment' with new, popular meanings, and appropriating symbols of nineteenth-century progress driven by science, technology and the diffusion of knowledge. Conservative religious and political commentators usually found the claims made for the benefits of popular improvement a challenge to the stability of society, church and state - particularly when religious morality was overlooked, or political knowledge was seen to be circulating unchecked by government - but popular periodicals displayed a conflicted attitude towards the

'march', and responses from editors, publishers and contributors cut across social and political boundaries. Of all the claims made by the 'march of intellect men' for a flowering of educational opportunities or a political march of labour, it was the vision of the 'personal enlightenment' of the common reader, driven by periodical print, that resonated most powerfully. The 'march' trope was largely discredited by the early 1830s, but the central theme it evoked - that the common people were increasingly portrayed as agents of their own moral and intellectual improvement - had a lasting impact on metropolitan popular culture.

III

'Popular periodicals': narratives and genres of a nineteenth-century source

For champions of the march of intellect, the permeation of an improving aesthetic into metropolitan popular culture was achieved principally through the communication of serial print to the common reader. By the early nineteenth century, the image of the printing press had become a powerful symbol of popular intellectual and moral progress, and messianic knowledge-diffusers drew together claims for increasing literacy, improving educational provision and the shaping experience of political agitation to depict the creation of new mass reading public: common readers were, it was claimed, increasingly 'conscious of their capacity to play a part in the evolving drama of national politics'.[111] Such an account of the democratizing impact of print on popular politics and culture was heavily stylized, but it was also sensitive to how the 'great engine' of the press actually worked. A 'communications circuit' - stretching from the author or editor, through the bookseller and publisher, printer, shipper and retail bookseller to the reader - was seen to be in operation, raising questions about who read what, where, how and why. More specifically, by the early

[111] I. McCalman (ed.), *An Oxford companion* (1999), 197-206.

1820s these discussions began to be conducted in terms of the impact of the 'march' on popular culture.[112] But how have the serial formats connoted by the term 'popular periodicals' been depicted in the historiography? What cluster of genres did the 'popular periodical' comprise? And what are the strengths and weaknesses of the 'popular periodical' as a primary source for metropolitan popular culture?[113]

i. Narratives: 'democratization' through print

The changing status of the periodical and newspaper press in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries has given rise to a powerful Whig interpretation of the 'fourth estate' in English society: a 'liberal' paradigm which ties the democratization or popularization of print to the story of press freedom and political liberty. The resonant nineteenth-century terminology of 'diffusion', 'revolution', 'transformation', 'growth', 'rise' and 'expansion' has often been uncritically replicated in modern accounts to create a story of democratization more broadly, in which not just politics, but science, literature and other knowledge forms all became increasingly open to the common reader through the diffusion of serial print.[114] E. P. Thompson summed up the faith in the democratizing power of the press as 'a characteristic illusion of the epoch', epitomized by the freethinker Richard Carlile's claims that '[t]he art of

---

[112] See chapter one, 86-114; and R. Darnton, *The kiss of Lamourette* (1990), chaps. seven and eight.

[113] For the classic accounts of nineteenth-century periodicals, see R. D. Altick, 'Nineteenth century English periodicals', *Newberry Library Bulletin*, No. 9 (1952), 255-64; and J. P. Klancher, 'From "crowd" to "audience": the making of an English mass readership in the nineteenth century', *ELH*, Vol. 50, No. 1 (1983), 155-173. A more recent, though impressionistic, account of periodical print opening up 'pandora's [sic] box', proposing an 'irrevesibility thesis' on 'how it became possible to credit the lower orders with dignity and political agency' can be found in D. Herzog, *Poisoning the minds of the lower orders* (1998), 86-7. The most nuanced recent account of the 'democratization of print culture' is in P. Keen, *The crisis of literature in the 1790s* (1999), 141-70.

[114] The phrase 'democratization' is used to refer to the 'opening up' of the cultural and political spheres. Its contemporary use was limited. The word 'democratize' does have some political currency from the 1790s, but is rare. 'Democratization' was even rarer; though see Lady Sydney Morgan's use in the Neapolitan context in her *Italy*, two vols. (1821), ii, 374. The best full-length accounts of 'democratization' through print in general are R. K. Webb, *The British working class reader* (1955) and R. D. Altick, *The English common reader* (1957). Altick saw the development of 'a revolutionary social concept: that of democracy in print' in the emergence of the 'common reader'; while Webb saw the defiant struggle of the 'working class reader' against the attempt of 'middle class enthusiasts' to enforce their intellectual and moral imperatives through the diffusion of 'useful knowledge'.

Printing is a multiplication of mind…' For Thompson, this was 'the rationalist illusion', but he concluded that 'between 1816 and 1836 this "multiplication" seemed to *work*.' It has already been demonstrated how the 'march' trope - although evoking central improving preoccupations of the day - has skewed perceptions of popular culture, and the same is true of this democratization narrative of the nineteenth-century popular periodical.[115]

Carlile was not alone in expressing his reverence for the printing press. 'Print technicians' (publishers, printers, editors and associated individuals) external to radical culture were acutely aware of the shaping influence on popular culture of both the cheap periodical and the Sunday newspaper. On 12 February 1825, for instance, John Timbs and Thomas Byerley (1789-1826) - editors of John Limbird's (*c*.1796-1883) *Mirror of Literature* - responded to Brougham's paean to the diffusion of cheap printed knowledge:

> In the course of his observations he [Brougham] pays a just tribute to cheap periodical literature, which, with honest pride we may say, was first rendered popular by the publication of the MIRROR. Several cheap periodicals had at various times been tried… but the commencement of the MIRROR formed a new era in periodical literature…[116]

Timbs and Byerley underplayed their debt to pre-existing cheap radical, and eighteenth-century miscellaneous, periodical literature in terms of style, format and

---

[115] E. P. Thompson, *The making* (1968), 805-6. Aled Jones has argued that the faith in 'the democratisation of knowledge through the liberty of the press had, for more than two centuries, been a deeply embedded element… in the more liberal and oppositional aspects of English political culture', and that it is important not to reproduce this heroic picture of intellectual, moral and political 'progress' through print; see his exemplary *Powers of the press* (1996), 17.

[116] *Mirror*, 12 Feb. 1825. For an introduction to cheap publishing, see J. R. Topham, 'Scientific publishing and the reading of science in nineteenth-century Britain: a historiographical survey and guide to sources', *Stud. Hist. Phil. Sci.*, Vol. 31, No. 4 (2000), 559-612; and idem., 'Publishing "popular science" in early nineteenth-century Britain', in A. Fyfe and B. Lightman (eds.), *Science in the marketplace* (2007), ch. 5. The most important works on cheap periodicals are J. P. Klancher, *The making of English reading audiences* (1987); M. Beetham, 'Open and closed: the periodical as a publishing genre', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, Vol. 22 (1989), 96-100; R. Chartier (ed.), *The culture of print* (1989); J. O. Jordan and R. L. Patten (eds.), *Literature in the marketplace* (1995), esp. 1-18; L. Brake, B. Bell and D. Finkelstein (eds.), *Nineteenth-century media* (2000); and G. Cantor *et al* (eds.), *Science in the nineteenth-century periodical* (2004). For an incisive analysis, see M. Beetham, 'Towards a theory of the periodical as a publishing genre', in L. Brake, A. Jones and L. Madden (eds.), *Investigating Victorian journalism* (1990), 19-32.

organization, but their depiction of the early 1820s as a 'new era in periodical literature' was a favourite refrain amongst cheap pressmen in the decade. In 1826, the radical veteran John Thelwall (1764-1834) argued for the transformative effects of the 'pursuit of general knowledge' in an article on the 'Connexion of Periodical Literature with the moral and intellectual progress of society':

> The increase of periodical publications is one of the intellectual phenomena of the day. But it is… no emanation of caprice or fashion. It is one only of a connected series of reciprocal causes and effects, attendant upon and manifesting the rapid march of mind in pursuit of general knowledge, and of more refined and rational pleasures, than those of preceding generations. It is the harbinger we trust, of an improved morality…

For Timbs, Byerley and Thelwall the growth of cheap print was a palpable reality, and its positive effects in carrying intellectual and moral improvement into popular culture were beyond question.[117]

For 'march of intellect men' such as Francis Place, it was not just the increase of cheap periodical print that drove 'the rapid march of mind': an avid quantifier, Place demonstrated that the number of newspapers produced in England had increased from seventy-nine in 1782, to 146 in 1790 and to 284 by 1821. From the lapsing of the Licensing Act in 1695, through the Libel Act of 1792, the redefinition of the 'newspaper' in the Stamp Act of 1819 and culminating in the removal of the four-penny newspaper tax in 1836, the democratization narrative growing from this chronology traces the victory of commercialism, the free market, legal freedom, popular control and the '"progress of the press"… [as] central to "the broadening of political liberty"'.[118] In 1887 the journalist Henry Fox Bourne (1837-1909) reflected on how the newspaper had changed since the bookseller Nathaniel Butter (*c.*1583-

---

[117] John Thelwall in the *Panoramic Miscellany*, 31 Jan. 1826 in add. mss. 27,827 fols. 82-90. See also [W. Stevenson] 'On the reciprocal influence of the periodical publications, and the intellectual progress of this country', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, Vol. 16 (Nov., 1824), 518-28, cutting in add. mss., 27,827, fol. 35; and 'Progress of periodical literature 1830 to 1860', *Bookseller*, 26 Apr. 1861.
[118] Add. mss., 27,828, fols. 107-10; J. Curran, *Power without responsibility* (2003 edn.), 9.

1664) had produced the first number of his *Weekly News* in 1621: '[n]ewspapers are now thrones and pulpits, and journalism assumes to itself the right and power to control and reform the world; and not without some reason. During these past eight generations it has made mighty progress in England'.[119]

In this story of progress, the Stamp Act of 1819 was crucial in distinguishing between 'periodicals' and 'newspapers' (although this legal distinction was often politically loaded against radical print). The Act defined 'newspapers' as 'all Pamphlets and Papers containing any Public News, Intelligence or Occurrences, or an Remarks or Observations thereon, or upon any matter in Church or State, printed in any part of the United Kingdom for Sale, and published periodically, or in Parts or Numbers, at intervals, not exceeding Twenty-six days', which was no larger than two sheets and sold for less than 6d. exclusive of duty. Although in some senses merely formalizing a pre-existing division between periodical and news print, the 1819 Act did raise the financial threshold of entry into the newspaper market for producers and the retail cost for consumers. In consequence, historians ought to distinguish between two distinct but overlapping popular print formats - the cheap weekly periodical and the Sunday newspaper - within the popular periodical market of the 1820s and 1830s.[120]

Positive affirmations of a process of democratization through print were nonetheless contested: just as the 'march' was denounced, so too were the improving

---

[119] Henry Fox Bourne, *English newspapers* (1887), 390.

[120] *HoC.B*, Bill to make certain publications subject to duties of stamps on newspapers, **1819-20** (34) I. 63. For a discussion of the act see below, 101-5. The historiography of the newspaper press is enormous. Reprints of four nineteenth-century classics can be found in the *Chapters in the history of British journalism series* (1998): in addition to Bourne, see Joseph Hatton, *Journalistic London* (1882); Frederick Knight Hunt, *The fourth estate* (1850); Alexander Andrews, *The history of British journalism* (1859). Modern surveys (in addition to those already cited) include A. J. Lee, *The origins of the popular press* (1976); S. E. Koss, *The rise and fall of the political press in Britain* (1981) and D. Griffiths (ed.), *The encyclopaedia of the British press* (1992). For a sensitive discussion, see E. Royle, 'Newspapers and periodicals in historical research', in L. Brake, A. Jones and L. Madden (eds.), *Investigating Victorian journalism* (1990), 48-59.

credentials of the cheap weekly press, in particular. In a review of fifteen cheap periodicals 'randomly' purchased from several Paternoster Row bookshops in the late 1830s, William Thackeray (1811-1863), dismissed the 'whole class of [cheap] literature'. Such periodicals were 'the result of the remission of the stamp-laws [in 1836]'

> [And] the offspring of the 'March of Intellect,' which we have heard so much about: the proof of the 'intelligence of the working classes,' and the consequence of the meritorious efforts of 'the schoolmaster abroad.'

Thackeray's review suggested that the predominant content, concerned as it was with 'the doings of the gin-shops, the gambling-houses, and - houses more famous still', was strong evidence of degraded popular morals:

> The popularity of the journals, and their contents, are dismal indications of the social conditions of the purchasers, who are all to be found among the lower classes in London. Thanks to the enlightened spirit of the age, no man scarcely is so ill-educated as not to be able to read them; and, blessings on cheap literature! no man is too poor to buy them… We [now] have penny libraries for debauchery as for other useful knowledge…[121]

Similar concerns were articulated in the context of the Sunday press. Robert Mudie noted an increased consumption of Sunday newspapers amongst the 'poorer classes of the people', suggesting it was evidence of their 'unequivocal' intellectual, though not moral, improvement:

> An engine which… comes upon the greatest body of the labouring classes at the only time when they can afford the leisure to read - and which, in fact, forms the principle, and with many the sole, source of reading and mental culture, seems worthy of more attention… than seem hitherto to have been bestowed upon it… and much as I respect the organs of religious instruction… I am disposed to think that the Sunday press has a greater influence upon the minds and the morals of the working classes… than the homilies of all the preachers, from the Lord Primate to the cobler [sic], delivered in all sorts of places, from the splendid cathedral to the unenclosed common.

---

[121] William Thackeray, 'Half-a-crown's worth of cheap knowledge', *Fraser's Magazine*, Vol. 17, No. 99 (Mar., 1838), 279-90.

A tension between optimistic and pessimistic accounts of the impact of the popular press on culture and politics was thus manifest during the period of the creation of the democratization narrative itself. What these comments demonstrate most forcibly, however, is that the popular periodical market was simultaneously depicted as improving and amusing - as evidence of a widespread capacity to read, but also ambivalence as to whether this reading competency actually improved popular intellect and morals.[122]

ii. Formats and genres

An appreciation of the complexity of popular periodical formats and genres is thus not new. Richard D. Altick and R. K. Webb's groundbreaking studies linking the 'growth' of the press, the 'emergence' of the common reader and the 'development' of a form 'democracy in print' - although replicating the teleological democratization narrative - were nuanced accounts, and recognized the dual instructional and entertaining function of popular periodicals. Altick himself claimed that his study was but 'a preliminary map', a return to which proves instructive:

> This book… is about people: humble people for the most part, mechanics, clerks, shopmen, domestic servants, land workers and their families… they read because they wanted to find political salvation, or to discover the kingdom of heaven or to make more money or to exercise the emotions and imaginative cravings that were stifled in an England whose green and pleasant land was being built over with red-brick factories.

Altick's argument that the consumption of print was driven by a range of overlapping and competing motivations is compelling, and is echoed by Webb:

> The great part of the working classes, like the great part of any class, were not actively interested in learning; they wanted to be amused, and were so in one way or another. Such ideas as they had in political and social matters came, not from an exercise of reason, but from experience, economic necessity, a vague but important sense of justice and dignity, a preference for collective action, and infection by better-informed and more active fellow workers.

---

[122] Robert Mudie, *Babylon the great*, two vols. (1825), i, 156-8.

Common readers, argue Altick and Webb, sought various forms of print - books, pamphlets, newspapers, magazines, reviews, broadsides and ballads - for a range of reasons, improving or otherwise.[123]

More recent studies have also noted this mixed function of the popular periodical, but many tend to restate the democratization paradigm, albeit with caveats. Ian Haywood, for instance, embraces the metanarrative of 'the radical political transformation of Britain' through print. For Haywood, the 'people's enlightenment' began in eighteenth-century Scotland, and was driven until 1848 by the cheap periodical press, the diffusion of popular literature and an increasing public demand for 'universal education'. Haywood's study is an important re-reading of radical periodicals, but it says little about the periodical press of the 1820s: a period in which his argument for the shaping impact of radical 'working-class' literature might need some refinement. It does, however, point the way to resolving this omission: '[t]he rapidly expanding reading public had never of course been completely homogenous':

> It is more accurate to think of a series of overlapping popular readerships who made up the markets for a variety of cheap forms of print culture: the purely commercial, religious didactism, moral 'improvement', 'useful knowledge', radical periodicals and the carnivalesque and satirical. These various genres and modes of production operated with a degree of cultural independence, but they all subscribed in their own ways to the common metanarrative of 'progress' and enlightenment, and they constantly appropriated and recycled each other's aesthetic practices.

Haywood's identification of 'overlapping' readerships, cultural independence and borrowing between genres is important - though it remains to be proven whether these diverse forms (and he omits the Sunday newspaper) really did *all* subscribe to a 'metanarrative of progress'. The identity of some popular periodicals - particularly

---

[123] R. D. Altick, *The English common reader* (1957), 11-12; R. K. Webb, *The British working class reader* (1955), 160.

satirical titles - actually hinged on an opposition to the rhetoric and prescriptions of liberal-radical visions of 'progress'.[124]

These conclusions have important implications for the categorization of 'popular periodicals'. Three main formats were available to common readers between 1819 and 1834: the cheap weekly periodical (typically published on Saturdays and retailing for between a penny and three-pence); periodicals lying in an intermediate price-range (costing between four-pence and six-pence and published for the most part monthly); and the stamped Sunday 'newspaper' (retailing for seven-pence). Cheap weekly periodicals were ordinarily owned and published by individual bookseller-publishers motivated by varying degrees of political, religious, philanthropic or commercial incentives, and produced at a low unit cost. In the later 1820s and early 1830s, publishing societies such as the SDUK and the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK) appropriated the cheap weekly format to diffuse their messages on a large scale - the latter, although long responsible for diffusing religious literature, responding to recent experiments with cheap periodical print. Medium-price, mainly monthly, periodicals were also owned and produced by a mixture of individual bookseller-publishers and publishing societies; but in the case of some specialist titles (such as the six-penny *Lancet* [1823-1968], the four-penny *Anti-slavery Monthly Reporter* [1823-31] and the four-penny *Racing Calendar* [1818-34])

---

[124] I. Haywood, *The revolution* (2004), 4, 410. Taking the lead from the 'history of the book', literary historians have turned their attention to the 'knowledge culture' of the early nineteenth century; see Alan Rauch's exploration of the dissemination of novels as one aspect of the march of intellect. Although Rauch's treatment of the 'march' is fleeting, his general conclusions on representations of morality and science are instructive: namely, that there was 'an underlying sanctioning of curiosity and inquiry'; 'knowledge' was divided 'into highly specialized disciplines' and became increasingly contested; and, in spite of challenges to its 'truth' value, Victorians still considered 'knowledge' to be 'both improving and useful'; A. Rauch, *Useful knowledge* (2001), 202-4. From a sociologist's point of view, see A. Johns, *The nature of the book* (1998). Johns locates the failure to diffuse 'middling' modes of conduct in the emergence of 'fixity' of 'knowledge' in book production between 1500 and 1900: '[a] more likely candidate than technological innovation for the advent of fixity is the... practice and representation of reading itself... reading is a complex skill... [and] is not easily disciplined by texts', ibid., 629-35.

these could be more capital-intensive operations, employing larger staffs. Newspapers, by contrast, were rarely owned and produced by individual bookseller-publishers (though occasionally owned by consortia). The high financial threshold of entry ensured by the legislation of 1819 and other capital costs - the three-hundred pound bond required as security for fines that might be incurred for transgressing the act, for example - meant that Sunday newspapers were either financed by wealthy individuals or run as joint-stock companies.

If the differences between formats are relatively clear, the miscellaneous content of most popular periodicals make it difficult to categorize them into mutually exclusive genres. The criterion of self-presentation must be central to any periodical-content taxonomy; cheap titles in particular consistently reinforced their chosen identity for strategic reasons. Certain tendencies, rather than definitive genres, are thus discernible: cheap and medium-priced periodicals could present themselves as political, religious, literary or technical titles; while stamped Sunday newspapers ordinarily identified themselves as commercial, political and general 'news' or as sporting organs.[125] Cheap weekly and medium-priced monthly political titles - radical or loyalist, and characterized by a coverage of current affairs, parliamentary proceedings, domestic and foreign policy, court news and military movements - are perhaps the best known popular genres amongst historians. Titles such as Cobbett's *Political Register*, Wooler's *Black Dwarf*, Carlile's *Republican* and Hetherington's *Penny Papers* all belong to this political genre, in which a long editorial usually dominated the weekly number.[126]

---

[125] See appendix 1 and chapter one (115-27) for a full discussion of this taxonomy. For the sporting press, see A. Harvey, *The beginnings of a commercial sporting culture* (2004), 31-62.

[126] For a focus on radical discourse see B. J. Guzenhauser, 'Reading the rhetoric or resistance in William Cobbett's Two-Penny Trash', in K. Wheatley (ed.), *Romantic periodicals and print culture* (2003), 84-101.

Religious periodicals have received less historiographical attention. Such titles - produced by a range of Anglican, Dissenting and freethinking sects - were characterized by biblical, ecclesiastical and other religious content in the form of poetry, sermons, reviews, articles and correspondence. Many included youth departments, biographical sketches and Sunday school information, such as the SPCK's *Saturday Magazine* (1832-54). In addition to the precedent set by the first Methodist magazines of the 1740s and the Wesleyan-Methodist *Arminian Magazine* (1778-97) - succeeded by the *Methodist Magazine* (1798-1821) and then the *Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine* (1822-1914) - the evangelical revival of the late eighteenth century gave an impetus to the production of religious periodicals, as religious organizations sought to publicize their transactions. It was not until the 1820s, however, that the best-known religious societies began to experiment in earnest with cheap periodicals, with the Religious Tract Society (RTS), for instance, launching its penny *Child's Companion; or Sunday Scholar's Reward* (1824-37). Further, historiographical claims that it was not until the 1850s that the urban working man - rather than the rural labourer or cottager - was targeted by cheap religious publishers appear unsustainable given the existence of titles such as the *Canal Boatman's Magazine* in the late 1820s.[127]

Cheap and medium-priced literary and technical periodicals have likewise received little attention: though titles such as Limbird's *Mirror of Literature* and John Knight and Henry Lacey's three-penny weekly *Mechanic's Magazine* were perhaps

---

[127] For an introduction, see S. Durden, 'A study of the first evangelical magazines, 1740-1748', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, Vol. 27 (1976), 255-75; J. R. Topham, 'The *Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine* and religious monthlies in early nineteenth-century Britain', in G. Cantor *et al* (eds.), *Science in the nineteenth-century periodical* (2004), 67-90; idem., 'Periodicals and the making of reading audiences for science in early nineteenth-century Britain: the *Youth's Magazine*, 1828-37', in L. Henson *et al* (eds.), *Culture and science in the nineteenth-century media* (2004), 57-69. See the claim that John Cassell's *Working Man's Friend* (1850-3) was the first cheap religious title to target the urban worker in J. L. Altholz, *The religious press* (1989), 135-6.

the quintessential cheap periodical forms of the early 1820s in terms of format, content and target readership.[128] Literary periodicals - containing a diversity of critical, amusing and satirical content, and characterized by reviews, excerpts from original and pirated literature, poetry, biographies, fashions and manners - were epitomized by Limbird's *Mirror of Literature*, which aimed to 'afford the greatest quantity of "Amusement and Instruction" at the lowest possible expense… [for] readers in the humblest circumstances'.[129]

Such literary periodicals, in addition to occasional political and social commentary, might carry articles on topography, natural history and domestic hints, demonstrating an overlap with the technical genre. Technical periodicals were a large class, intended to provide specialist information and instruction in a range of fields, including science (broadly conceived), technical processes and educative endeavours. These titles usually contained a strong self-improvement motif, manifest in reviews, lectures, diagrams, correspondence and news of patents, discoveries and inventions. The journalist and patent agent Joseph Clinton Robertson (1788-1852) and Thomas Hodgskin - editors of the *Mechanic's Magazine* - for instance, peddled an agenda of 'popular enlightenment' through 'the study of Nature', declaring that

> Almost every class of people in this enlightened country has now a Journal or a Magazine, which attends to its peculiar interests… and supplies it with the sort of intellectual food in which it takes pleasure. The Gentleman, the Philosopher, the Divine, the Physician, the Lawyer, the Farmer, the Sportsman, have all their favourite works, to which they can weekly, or monthly, turn, with the certainty of obtaining some new information connected with their particular pursuits. The very Cottager has his magazine. As yet, however, there is no periodical Publication of which

---

[128] Both the *Mirror* and the *Mechanic's Magazine* were invoked by Brougham as laudable titles; perhaps this is the reason that the *Mechanic's Magazine* has been mistakenly labelled a 'vector of knowledge for the middle class' in A. Rauch, *Useful knowledge* (2001), 58.

[129] *Mirror*, preface to vol. i, 21 May 1823. For the best work on the *Mirror*, see J. Topham, 'John Limbird, Thomas Byerley, and the production of cheap periodicals in the 1820s', *Book History*, Vol. 8 (2005), 75-106; idem., 'The *Mirror of Literature, Amusement and Instruction*, and cheap miscellanies in early nineteenth-century Britain', in G. Cantor *et al* (eds.), *Science in the nineteenth-century periodical* (2004), 37-66. Much, however, remains to be said of this periodical.

> that numerous and important portion of the community, the Mechanics or Artisans, including all who are operatively employed in our Arts and Manufactures, can say, 'That is ours, and for us.'[130]

In comparison with these diverse genres, the Sunday newspaper was more uniform in terms of content, presenting itself as a purveyor of commercial, political and sporting news. The origins of the popular newspaper can be traced to the late 1770s and the *British Gazette and Sunday Monitor* (founded in 1779). There were a few experiments in this format, most notably John Bell's (1745-1831) *Bell's Weekly Messenger* (1796-1904); but it is unclear to what extent these earlier titles reached common readers. The targeting of a common readership began in earnest in the post-war years, during which time newspaper editors increasingly made appeals to humble radical or 'loyal' readers (in the former case, most famously in *Bell's Weekly Dispatch* [1801-86]). It was following the redefinition of the 'newspaper' in the Stamp Act of 1819 and the repression of radical print in the early 1820s, however, that the newspaper became more embedded in lives of the common people, responding to and shaping experiences of popular culture and politics.[131]

The Sunday press was the chief engine of this process, and successful titles such as *Bell's Life in London and Sporting Chronicle* (1822-86), William Innell Clement's (1779/80-1852) *Observer* (founded in 1821) and Daniel Whittle Harvey's (1786-1863) *Sunday Times* (founded in 1822) began addressing themselves explicitly to a 'popular' audience that included the common reader. Many, such as *Bell's Life* and *Pierce Egan's Life in London and Sporting Guide* (1823-7), did not conform to the prescriptions of the improving agenda of the march of intellect - although they recognized it as an aesthetic supposedly operating in metropolitan popular culture.

---

[130] *MM*, 30 Aug. 1823.

[131] L. James, *Print and the people* (1976), 38-48. See also Raymond Williams' comments that 'the real history of the nineteenth-century popular press has to be centred in the development of the Sunday paper', R. Williams, 'The press and popular culture: an historical perspective', in G. Boyce *et al* (eds.), *Newspaper history* (1978), 41-50.

These Sunday newspapers were often politically reformist, and *Bell's Life* was established as a corrective to the Tory *John Bull*. They were also self-consciously the papers of, and for, the 'people'. The editor of *Bell's Life* noted in April 1822, for instance, that '[w]e observed in our last, that the PEOPLE of England were not the illiterate Rabble that their Rulers, on certain occasions, think fit to designate them, but they have sometimes presumed to think for themselves'. The high retail cost of seven-pence put the Sunday newspaper beyond the personal financial resources of most common readers, but collective reading, lending and other modes of consumption mean that the weekly paper was usually accessible in some form.[132]

Although thus distinct in terms of format and content, there was occasionally an overlap of organization between cheap and middle-price periodicals and Sunday newspapers. Both Robertson of the *Mechanic's Magazine* and Limbird of the *Mirror of Literature*, for example, were involved in the establishment of one of the first Sunday newspapers owned and run exclusively by and for working people: the *Trades' Newspaper and Mechanic's Weekly Journal* (1825-7). The *Trades'* and its successors, the *Trades' Free Press* (1827-8) and the *Weekly Free Press* (1828-31), represented a fusion of the political rhetoric of the cheap weekly radical journal, the improving agenda of the literary and technical 'useful knowledge' magazine and the political, sporting and general news content of the Sunday newspaper. Managed by a committee of artisans and mechanics led by the radical shipwright John Gast (*c.*1772-1837), this hybrid demonstrated how radical and commercial publishers responded to the improving aesthetic of the 1820s by appropriating 'march' rhetoric and appealing to the common reader. The involvement of Limbird, Robertson and Gast - as well as the financial assistance of Francis Place and the editorial input of William Carpenter

---

[132] *Bell's Life*, 7 Apr. 1822.

and radical publisher John Cleave (1794/5-1850) - testifies to its importance as an artefact of both metropolitan radicalism and popular culture.[133]

The *Trades' Free Press* itself carried a review of what it termed the 'hebdomadal' (weekly) London press in December 1827 and January 1828, indicating the range of popular periodicals to which the reviewer (possibly Place) believed common readers had access. The daily press (dominated by *The Times*) was criticized for its 'filler' content, and the reviewer identified twenty weekly 'papers' - spanning the cheap and medium-priced periodical and Sunday newspaper markets - subdivided into 'political' ('reform', 'anti-reform' or 'dubious'), 'sporting' and 'literary' categories.[134]

Table 1.2: Hebdomadal press listed in the Trades' Free Press, *1827-8*

Political			Sporting	Literary
Pro-Reform	**Anti-Reform**	**Dubious**		
Examiner	***John Bull***	***Englishman***	***Bell's Life in London***	***Literary Gazette***
Cobbett's Register	***Age***	***Observer***	***Weekly Dispatch***	***New Literary Gazette***
Sunday Times	***Watchman***	***Atlas***	***Sunday Register***	***Literary Chronicle***
News	***Tory***		***High Life in London***	**[London]** ***Weekly Review***
Weekly Times			***Nimrod***	***Athenaeum***
Sunday Monitor				***Mirror of Literature***
World				
Sphynx				

This was an incomplete listing for the year 1827, but it underlines the point that, roughly mid-way through the period covered in this thesis, it is possible to discern a diverse popular periodical market. Beneath the heroic narrative of a democratization of print and improving popular intellect and morals, the common reader thus seemed to be demanding a variety of periodical formats and genres. The popular periodical

---

[133] See my entry in *DNCJ*. For previous engagement, see I. Prothero, *Artisans* (1979), 183-90.
[134] The dailies were *The Times*, *Morning Herald*, *Morning Chronicle*, *New Times*, *Morning Post*, *Public Ledger*, *Morning Advertiser*, *Courier*, *Globe*, *Sun*, *British Traveller*, *Star* and the *Standard*. This, and the information for the table, is compiled from the *TFP*, 23, 30 Dec., 1827 and 6 Jan. 1828.

was, in consequence, a fusion of the instructional and the entertaining. This diversity of content is unsurprising when the popular periodical is considered as a multilayered text (promulgating various messages) and a physical commodity (to be sold in a competitive marketplace and thus requiring some breadth of appeal). But what is particularly important is that such diversity existed within, as well as between, titles: even the most stridently improving periodicals had to attract and sustain a readership, and offering readers amusing items was frequently seen as the means by which this could be achieved.[135]

iii. Conclusions: the popular periodical as a primary source

What then, are the strengths and weaknesses of the popular periodical as a source for popular culture between 1819 and 1834? Most positively, popular periodicals embodied and cultivated a sense of popular agency, in three principal ways. Firstly, publishers claimed that they had identified and shaped a latent market of common readers. By targeting and depicting common people as readers, it was claimed that they had been empowered to exercise choice over what they read, where, when and how. Secondly, publishers and editors increasingly made the intellectual and material worlds of the common people a subject of enquiry. If this content was heavily stylized - and often provided a form of downward social voyeurism for a 'middling sort' readership - it nonetheless assigned a degree of agency to the common people. And thirdly, periodicals claimed to stimulate a feeling of popular agency by providing a medium through which common writers could express their opinions, either as editors, publishers, paid contributors or correspondents.

This narrative of the popular periodical embodying and cultivating a sense of popular agency is complicated in this thesis in a number of ways. Specifically, the

---

[135] See chapter three for a periodical content analysis.

growth of the popular periodical market was slower and less certain than the overall picture might suggest: between 1825 and 1829 - the five-year period in which 'march' rhetoric dominated public discourse - the number of cheap titles, in particular, actually declined. The assumption that the common reader was an active consumer of print - an economic and cultural agent - is thus challenged by the uncertain growth of the very popular periodical market supposedly forged in response to mass demand. Similarly, the 'subjectification' of the common people through editors' attempts to champion or reform popular cultural practices led to a distorted public perception of their intellectual and material worlds: in this context, the attempt to make the common reader a subject of enquiry resulted more in the deployment of highly stylized representations than a positive assertion of his or her active agency. And finally, although the popular periodical did provide a platform for common readers to express themselves, 'popular articulacy' was heavily circumscribed by editorial intervention. These conclusions suggest a need to rethink the cluster of formats and genres defined as 'popular periodicals', and to reassess their importance as socially-embedded artefacts of popular culture.

IV

Conclusions: morals, intellect and popular periodicals

Between the 1780s and the 1830s increasing amounts of agency were assigned to - and claimed by - the English common people in their own intellectual and moral improvement. More than the liberal-radical democratization model of struggles for political agency, this represented a thread of continuity in the way in which 'the people' were conceptualized in English society. These debates were drawn together by one pervasive but controversial phrase: the march of intellect. A categorization of knowledge forms, a description of improving practice and a narrative of intellectual

and moral progress, the 'march' thus served as a useful shorthand in debates about popular agency. As well as framing discussions, this trope referred to an indigenous culture of self-improvement, supposedly stimulated by political agitation, improved literacy and increased educational opportunities. Most importantly, however, this 'march' was embodied in, and cultivated by, a periodical press which stimulated a sense of the common people as agents.

If the march of intellect was the product of a long-term campaign for improvement, embodied and cultivated in the popular press, there is a danger in substituting a political democratization paradigm with its cultural equivalent. The implication that there was a linear, or even symbiotic, relationship between the growth of popular periodicals and an expansion of popular agency - or the permeation of an improving aesthetic - is clearly problematic. What, then, was the impact of the 'march of intellect' on metropolitan popular culture between 1819 and 1834? The 'march' emerges as slower, more contested and more haphazard than its champions claimed. As a narrative of intellectual and moral progress it was resilient but contested; as a categorization of knowledge forms it was subject to competing meanings; and as a description of improving practice it was an exaggeration of social reality. This is perhaps unsurprising: individuals and groups could display respectable and rough characteristics simultaneously or in quick succession. If popular culture was thus flexible, it was also adaptive, and the limited permeation of an improving aesthetic into metropolitan popular culture ought not to obscure the reality that it constituted an important part of many people's lives, coexisting with, rather than replacing, alternative cultural forms.

In terms of its origins, the march of intellect was the locus of longstanding discussions about the moral, social and political agency of the common people.

Between 1819 and 1834 the older languages of 'improvement' and 'reform' were reworked with a new intensity, and with new 'popular' applications, in a period when the common people were increasingly exposed to new knowledge forms such as political economy and 'science'. As to its reality, the 'march' was both the spirit of the age and its chimera. In the first mode, it evoked certain reforming preoccupations of the day and provided a vocabulary for their public discussion. In the second mode, it remained widely contested as an unfounded vision of progress; a fanciful and even dangerous creature of the imagination. These conclusions suggest a need to continue our rethinking of both the 'quiet' period of the 1820s, and of the 'age of reform' itself. Rather than viewing the history of the common people through a political lens that brings into focus a peak-trough story of radical reform - with defeat followed by a period of introspection and a turn towards self-improvement - historians ought to recognize a more broadly-based, longer-term and insistent preoccupation with popular intellect and morals, itself punctuated by short periods of political excitement. This concern with intellectual and moral improvement was perhaps the most crucial site of the debate about the place of the common people in English society: a debate in which at least some of these people articulated their opinions.

Section I - The march of intellect and the production of popular periodicals, 1815-34

CHAPTER ONE

Organization, trends and patterns in the production of metropolitan periodicals, 1815-34

Introduction

One of the principal beliefs underpinning the claims of the 'march of intellect men' for an increase in popular agency between 1819 and 1834 was that periodical publishers had, since the mid-1810s, begun to identify, seek out or shape a latent market of common readers. Even those who ridiculed or feared the 'march' conceded that since Cobbett's decision to issue a two-penny edition of his *Political Register* in late 1816, the common reader seemed to have been granted access to a greater quantity and wider variety of periodical print than ever before.[136] The image of the metropolitan common reader as an active intellectual, moral or political agent, capable of choosing what to read, how, when and where, had its origins in at least the 1790s, and discussions about the growth of London's newspaper market were even older.[137] Indeed, the basis of a democratization or popularization narrative depicting a period of rapid expansion specifically in the early nineteenth century seems at first to be sustainable: between 1815 and 1834 the number of periodical *titles* published in London (including all periodicals and newspapers appearing at daily, weekly, fortnightly, monthly and quarterly intervals) more than doubled; from 484 between

---

[136] For the opinion of one 'march of intellect man', see Place's claim in July 1829 that a 'vast number [of working people, now] read newspapers - small pamphlets - [and] think on political subjects', add. mss., 27,828, fols. 107-10. For a discussion of the negative role of *Hone's Reformists' Register*, W. T. Sherwin's *Republican* (1817-19) and the 'two-penny farrago' of 'King Cobbett', see 'On the rise and progress of popular disaffection', *Quarterly Review*, Vol. 16 (Jan. 1817), 511-52. Conversely, Charles Knight believed that Cobbett's periodical, far from responding to the 'intellectual wants of the working-classes', was successful because there was 'no healthful food for their newly-created appetite'; idem., *Passages*, three vols. (1864-5), i, 236.

[137] See H. Barker, *Newspapers* (2000), 1-28.

1815 and 1819, to 1,040 between 1830 and 1834. In total, 1,835 individual periodical titles were produced in this period, representing 2,912 cases (table 2.3, p.116).[138]

This impressive overall increase had significant political, cultural and economic implications, and it has been invoked to demonstrate the emergence of a bourgeois public sphere, the rise of public opinion, the commodification of printed knowledge and even the diffusion of useful knowledge facilitating economic growth.[139] Most importantly for this thesis, the long-term expansion of the periodical market continues to be depicted by some historians as a predominantly political phenomenon: a 'revolution in popular literature' resulting from radical and conservative campaigns to diffuse print to the common reader between the 1790s and the 1840s.[140] Even accounts that identify a commercial or philanthropic impetus behind the targeting of the common reader tend to assume that this was a period of uninterrupted expansion in the press - and many pass over the decade of the 1820s without specific comment. This chapter seeks to test the assumptions of such democratization and popularization narratives through an analysis of London's popular periodical market between 1815 and 1834 - a market comprising cheap titles costing between a penny and three-pence, middle-price titles costing between four-pence and six-pence and higher-price titles costing over seven-pence, and sold at daily, weekly or monthly intervals.

---

[138] See above for a discussion of 'democratization' and 'popularization', 63-71. For these figures, see *WDENP*, series II (2003). My thanks go to Professor John North for allowing me to procure a portion of this data. I have significantly refined and added to its original scope; all results and errors are therefore my own responsibility. The resultant (unique) dataset will be referred to as *London periodicals, 1815-34*.

[139] J. Habermas, trans. T. Burger, *The structural transformation of the public sphere* (1989); J. P. Klancher, *The making of English reading audiences* (1987); J. Mokyr, *The gifts of Athena* (2002); and M. Berg, 'The genesis of "useful knowledge"', XIV International Economic History Congress, Helsinki (2006), <http://www.helsinki.fi/iehc2006/papers1/Berg.pdf>. For a useful account that sketches the *decline* of 'public opinion', see D. Wahrman, 'Public opinion, violence and the limits of constitutional politics', in J. Vernon, (ed.), *Re-reading the constitution* (1996), 83-122.

[140] See, in particular, I. Haywood, *The revolution* (2004), 1-10. Haywood's study is impressive, but its focus on radical and conservative print culture ('a return to the politics of class') limits it as a study of 'popular literature' more broadly conceived; ibid., 4.

Section I undertakes an analysis of the organization of London's cheap periodical market, asking who the producers of cheap print were, where they were located, and under what legal and commercial restrictions they operated. It argues that the principal producers of cheap periodicals were bookseller-publishers located in the locales of the established book trade, entering the market with a range of ideological, commercial and paternalistic motivations. Operating under intense legal-political restrictions, this group was responsible for cultivating the infrastructure, format and content of a cheap periodical market. The image of the embattled radical publisher, it concludes, has obscured the social and political heterogeneity of cheap periodical publishers. In sum, radical print culture is essential to - but not sufficient for - an understanding of the cheap periodical market during this period.

Section II measures trends of growth and patterns of diversification within and between the cheap, middle- and higher-price markets, using a unique dataset containing 57% of all periodicals titles known to have been produced in London in the period.[141] It presents a price and content analysis of 1,051 periodical titles (1,662 cases), demonstrating that by 1834 a cheap periodical market had been established in London: common readers had been identified as a commercially viable market, and between 1830 and 1834 cheap periodicals accounted for 49.5% of all periodical titles included in the sample described above.[142] It is argued, however, that a plateau (and even decline) in the number of cheap and expensive titles produced between 1825 and 1829 - the highpoint of the march of intellect as a public discourse - suggest a more complex growth pattern, as well as a more problematic relationship between the diffusion of print and perceptions of popular agency. Further, political content is

---

[141] Only for this limited sample does there exist enough information on price, periodicity and genre to enable the following analysis. It represents 57% of all titles listed in *WDENP*.

[142] A 'case' refers to the occurrence of a title in one of the four date ranges used: thus, a periodical that circulated between 1815 and 1834 represents a single title, but four 'cases'. See below, 115-16.

shown not to have been the dominant feature of cheap periodicals after 1819, and literary, technical and religious periodicals to have increased as a proportion of all cheap titles produced. In terms of how this phenomenon occurred, a model for the breakthrough (1815-19), consolidation and diversification (1820-9) and proliferation (1830-4) of the cheap periodical is proposed.

Ultimately, this chapter assesses the significance of the creation of a marketplace for popular periodicals, asking how, why and to what extent it expanded, and examining the relationship between popular print, radical culture and the march of intellect. It concludes that between 1815 and 1834 a cheap periodical market was forged and cultivated in London; but that if the popular periodical was depicted by a range of philanthropic, reformist and commercial commentators as embodying and cultivating a sense of the common reader as an active agent, exercising choice over what he or she read, the uncertain growth of the cheap periodical market - and its apolitical nature - suggest a need to rethink such narratives. If an increasing sense of popular intellectual and moral agency was in part predicated on a belief in the 'march' of the popular press, the stumble of the latter in the late 1820s suggests that the march of intellect itself was less rapid and sure-footed than its champions claimed, and dependent on investment and production in the periodical market.

I

Organization: cheap periodicals, bookseller-publishers and legal restrictions

This section defines 'cheap' and 'unstamped' periodicals, and outlines the organization of production in the cheap periodical market in the 1820s and 1830s, stressing the commercial and intellectual roles played by 'bookseller-publishers' and the location of their operations. This analysis of the topography of the cheap periodical market has implications for whether the cheap trade is viewed as fugitive

(operating on the margins of the respectable book and periodical trades) or an accepted publishing strategy. A move from the latter to the former, it will be argued, is discernable. It will be shown how bookseller-publishers and associated print technicians (editors, printers, news-agents and street vendors) negotiated, or attempted to negotiate, legal restrictions and how such restrictions affected the way in which periodicals were produced and disseminated. It is argued that the cheap periodical format grew out of the radical print culture of the later 1810s, became assimilated into established loci of book and periodical production in the 1820s, and broke into overlapping 'safe' and 'unsafe' strands in the context of repression during the early 1830s. Radical print was therefore essential in creating the infrastructure of the cheap market; but the cheap format was also exploited by a non-radical book trade and there was a complex overlap of personnel, location and channels of distribution between print cultures.

i. Defining 'cheap' periodicals and the 'unstamped' press

The 'unstamped' periodical was a species of cheap periodical, usually targeted for prosecution by the Stamp Office for political reasons.[143] The distinction between 'unsafe' unstamped periodicals and the 'safe' cheap genus from which they grew was arbitrary and concealed overlaps in content, format and personnel. The etymology of the term 'unstamped' (applied to a newspaper that avoided the mandatory stamp duty on newsprint) can be traced to the early eighteenth century and from 1712 newspapers were subject to three forms of taxation: an excise duty on paper, an advertisement duty and a penny stamp duty. The stamp duty was progressively increased in 1775 (to one-penny half-pence), in 1789 (to two-pence) and in 1804 (to three-penny half-pence): by 1815 the excise duty on paper was three-pence per pound,

[143] See my entry on the 'unstamped' in *DNCJ*.

advertisement duty three-shillings six-pence per advert and stamp duty four-pence per sheet.[144] The term 'unstamped' acquired radical political associations in November 1816 when Cobbett circumvented the stamp duty by re-issuing editorials from his *Political Register* in a weekly two-penny format. This strategy established the unstamped periodical as a vehicle of radical expression and was imitated by Richard Carlile in his *Republican*, Thomas J. Wooler in his *Black Dwarf*, William Hone in *Hone's Reformists' Register* and John Wade in his *Gorgon*. A Stamp Act in 1819 targeted this unstamped radical press by defining any periodical containing news or comment as a 'newspaper' (and therefore subject to stamp, paper and advertisement duties), commencing a period of intense legal-political repression.[145]

In the wake of this radical breakthrough and decline, a nascent cheap periodical market continued to diversify and expand. Costing between a penny and three-pence (and technically 'unstamped'), the cheap periodicals of the 1820s were produced by a range of radical, entrepreneurial and philanthropic bookseller-publishers, and encompassed a diversity of literary, political, technical and religious genres. This cultivation of the infrastructure, content and form of the cheap periodical enabled the rapid mobilization of the radical press during the 'war of the unstamped' in 1830-6. In this campaign against the 'taxes on knowledge' the term 'unstamped' continued to connote illegal radical newspapers (for both contemporaries and later historians), of which William Carpenter's *Political Letters and Pamphlets* (1830-1), Henry Hetherington's *Penny Papers* and *Poor Man's Guardian* (1831-5) and James Watson's (1799-1874) *Working Man's Friend* (1832-3) were the quintessential examples. These were succeeded by John Cleave's broadsheet, the *Weekly Police*

---

[144] L. Brown, 'The British press, 1800-60', in D. Griffiths (ed.), *The encyclopaedia* (1992), 24-32.
[145] For overviews, see J. H. Wiener, *The war of the unstamped* (1969), 1-19; P. Hollis, *The pauper press* (1970), 2-12; A. Jones, *Powers of the press* (1996), 19-27; and I. Haywood, *The revolution* (2004), 112-37.

Gazette (1834-6), James Morrison's (1802-35) trade unionist *Pioneer* (1833-4), Robert Owen's (1771-1858) co-operative *Crisis* (1832-4), Carlile's republican *Gauntlet* (1833-4), Richard E. Lee's (*b*.1809) Spencean *Man* (1833-4) and scores of other political weeklies, for the dissemination of which hundreds of publishers, printers and vendors were fined or imprisoned.[146]

But this so-called 'unstamped' press was not exclusively radical - nor even necessarily political - reflecting instead the diversity of cheap genres developed in the previous decade. Metropolitan and provincial publishers including William Strange, George Cowie, Benjamin Cousins, Benjamin Steill, George Purkess, George Berger, Effingham Wilson, Charles Penny, Abel Heywood, James Mann and Joshua Hobson produced hundreds of unstamped titles across a range of genres, including the medical *Doctor* (1832-7), the newspaper-style *Hetherington's Two-Penny Dispatch* (1836), the literary *Parterre* (1834-7), the *Penny Satirist* (1837-48) and the penny comic weekly, *Figaro in London* (1831-9).[147] Strange was also involved in publishing the *Penny Cyclopaedia* (1833-43) of the SDUK, and Charles Knight invoked the 'unstamped' label for his *Penny Magazine*, demonstrating how pressmen external to radical print culture could comfortably apply the label to their cheap titles.[148] Pressure from across the political and social spectrum forced the reduction of the stamp duty to a penny in 1836, although it was not finally repealed until 1855. In the context of political crisis, the term 'unstamped' thus functioned as a synonym for an unsafe radical political press; but this distinction from 'safe' cheap periodicals was arbitrary,

---

[146] In addition to *WDENP*, see the list in P. Hollis, *The pauper press* (1970), 318-28 and, even more comprehensively, J. H. Wiener, *A descriptive finding list* (1970), *passim*.

[147] For biographical summaries of some of these publishers, see P. Hollis, *The pauper press* (1970), 307-15. Hollis rightly notes in her preface that 'Co-operative magazines, comic sheets, crime reporters, Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge publications, and religious weeklies were all unstamped, and technically all violated the law', but her comments that 'only the radical Unstamped were prosecuted, presented as a threat to public order, and described as a pauper press' need some refinement; ibid., xii. See also L. James, *Fiction for the working man* (1963), 212-15.

[148] *Penny Magazine*, 19 May 1832.

and the overlap in personnel, ideas and readership was considerable. Cheap satirical, literary, co-operative, sensationalist, useful knowledge and religious periodicals were all technically unstamped, and the growing market for cheap periodical literature bore testimony to the increasing production and consumption of all these forms.

In this chapter, periodicals have been categorized as lower price (costing between one penny and three-pence, produced weekly and monthly, containing between eight and thirty-two pages of double or triple columns); middle price (four-pence to six-pence, issued weekly, or more typically monthly, and including between eight and sixty-four pages of two or three columns); and higher price (seven-pence plus, comprising the newspaper format of four to eight pages of four to six columns produced daily or weekly, and longer monthly or quarterly periodical productions). The relationship between price and periodicity was complex, but in general cheap periodicals were almost always published weekly and middle-price titles monthly.[149]

This pricing taxonomy has been determined by the way in which publishers marketed their periodicals. John Limbird's quintessential cheap periodical, the two-penny *Mirror of Literature*, claimed, for example, that it was priced 'to enable readers in the humblest circumstances to become acquainted with the current and expensive literature of the day… at the lowest possible expense'.[150] That two-pence was an affordable expense for humble readers accords with contemporary wage information. In December 1826, for instance, the seven-penny *Trades' Newspaper* offered a breakdown of a workman's fifteen shilling weekly wage: 'Rent 4s; Bread (5 loaves at 9d) 3s 9d; Meat (7lb at 6d per lb) 1s; Potatoes (24lb at 1/2d per lb) 1s; Coals (one bushel) 1s 3d; Total 13s 6d', leaving 1s 6d 'to procure sugar, tea, soap, candles,

---

[149] These categories have been influenced by association with Professor Laurel Brake's 'Nineteenth-Century Serials Edition' (NCSE), which aims to provide a conceptual framework for researching the periodical press. See J. Mussell and S. Paylor, 'Mapping the "mighty maze": the Nineteenth-Century Serials Edition', *Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, No. 1 (2005), 1-25.

[150] *Mirror*, preface to vol. i, 21 May 1823.

education, clothing, [and provide for] sickness.' This would have been a low wage for a skilled worker, but suggests that a seven-penny weekly newspaper was a significant financial outlay.[151] Explaining how this price threshold might be negotiated, Robert Mudie noted that 'ordinary readers' (the 'labouring classes', 'artisans', 'operatives', 'mechanics' and 'skilful workmen') purchased Saturday journals such as the *Mirror of Literature* and the technical *Mechanic's Magazine* for individual, home consumption, whereas Sunday newspapers were either bought collectively or read in the public- or coffee-house.[152]

These examples demonstrate how the intuitive link between a low price and a common readership might influence publishers' calculations, but also that middle- and higher-price periodicals were not beyond the reach of those with limited purchasing power. Conversely, the cheap periodical market opened opportunities to other levels of readership: Limbird's assertion that his journal was 'to be found in the cottage of the peasant, on the loom of the manufacturer, in the counting house of the merchant, in the parlour windows of the affluent, and in the carriages of the nobility' was only a slight exaggeration.[153]

ii. Bookseller-publishers as cheap periodical producers: roles, finances and locations

a. The roles of the bookseller-publisher

The metropolitan printing and publishing industry from which the cheap periodical market grew was considerable in workforce size and capital scale by the 1820s: in 1826-7 it has been calculated from insurance records that there were 1,162 printers and publishers (393 printers, 358 engravers, 255 bookbinders and 48 publishers),

---

[151] *TN*, 24 Dec. 1826. For wages, see L. Schwarz, 'The standard of living'.
[152] Robert Mudie, *Babylon the great*, two vols. (1825), ii, 213-15. See chapter four, below, for reading practices in coffee-houses, 253-64.
[153] *Mirror*, preface to vol. v, 1 Jan. 1826. For a review of this work in the context of the expanding periodical press, see [Art. *Pseud*] 'Practical observations upon the education of the people', *Quarterly Review*, Vol. 36 (Oct. 1825), 410-28; and 'On the present state of periodical literature', *Mirror*, 12 Feb. 1825.

representing 8% of all personnel employed in manufacturing trades and 10% of all capital insured.[154] The principal agents in the book trade had since the sixteenth century been denominated 'Stationers' (members of the Stationers' Company, incorporated in 1557). This term included not just paper-stationers, but a variety of agents associated with the printing, publishing and paper trades (including printers, publishers, editors, booksellers, engravers and bookbinders). The nomenclature relating to these subdivisions shifted over time, and by the 1820s publishers of books and periodicals were referred to as 'booksellers', 'bookseller-publishers' or 'booksellers *and* publishers'. In his history of British publishing, John Feather defines the publisher as a 'capitalist in the world of books' who

> Invests all, or almost all, of the capital which is assigned to a particular edition before a single edition is sold. [And] Therefore his immediate objective must be to sell as many copies as possible immediately after publication to recoup his costs and move into profit.[155]

Feather's account of the increasing specialization of the production and dissemination roles of the printer, publisher and bookseller throughout the eighteenth-century ought not to conceal the overlap that existed into the nineteenth century.[156] Indeed, according to *The book of English trades* (1824), published by the radical bookseller Sir Richard Phillips (1767-1840), the bookseller was 'a person of considerable importance in the republic of letters, more especially if he combines those particular branches of the trade denominated *Proprietor* and *Publisher*'. The overlapping roles of proprietor and publisher were thus subsumed into the identity of the bookseller, with these activities deemed 'branches of the trade'. *The book of*

---

[154] D. Barnett, *London* (1998), 49-54.

[155] A. Johns, *The nature of the book* (1998), xix-xxi and 59-60; J. Feather, *A history of British publishing* (1991), 68; idem., 'British publishing in the eighteenth century: a preliminary subject analysis', *Library*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (1986), 32-45; and I. McCalman and J. Brewer, 'Publishing' in I. McCalman (ed.), *An Oxford companion* (1999), 197-206.

[156] Indeed, see J. Feather, *Aspects of nineteenth-century publishing* (1994), *passim*; L. F. Chard, 'Bookseller to publisher: Joseph Johnson and the English book trade, 1760-1810', *Library*, Vol. 32, No. 2 (1977), 138-54; and M. Harris, 'Periodicals and the book trade', in R. Myers and M. Harris (eds.), *Development of the English book trade* (1981), 66-94.

English trades went on to extol the role of the retail and wholesale bookseller (or 'combination of booksellers') in investing in literary projects calculated to dispel ignorance:

> for it is to such men our men of genius take their productions for sale: and the success of works of genius very frequently depends upon their spirit, probity, and patronage. It is also to such men that the reading public generally are indebted for almost every important work of a voluminous kind.[157]

The bookseller-publisher - often selling a range of periodicals, pamphlets and books produced both in-house and by other houses - was in this account a crucial conduit in the 'republic of letters', commissioning, producing and disseminating 'genius'. The 'book' thus conceived was a means of emancipation as much as a commodity, and the bookseller-publisher a liberator as much as a rent-seeking economic agent. Modern scholars have likewise stressed the importance of the bookseller in the production and dissemination of print, but have characterized him as 'a cultural agent, the middleman who mediated between supply and demand at their key point of contact' in the print trade's 'communications circuit'. This six-stage circuit stretched from the author or editor, through the bookseller and publisher, printer, shipper and retail bookseller to the reader, and highlights the commercial as well as the enlightening functions of printing and publishing networks: the book was a commodity, and the production, dissemination and consumption of print created a marketplace shaped by intellectual currents, economic and social conditions and political and legal sanctions. The profit motive, it is noted, must be placed back into the story to complicate the image of the bookseller as a disinterested patron of genius: baldly stated, booksellers made a business of Enlightenment.[158]

---

[157] [Anon.], *The book of English trades and library of the useful arts* (1824), 36-7. In 1811 Phillips bought the copyright for this work, first published in 1804. By 1830 it had been through twelve editions.
[158] R. Darnton, *The kiss of Lamourette* (1990), 129-31; idem., *The business of enlightenment* (1979), 264-70.

This dual identity of the bookseller as a patron of the 'republic of letters' and an agent in the marketplace was carried across into the periodical trade. For the author of *The book of English trades*, periodical publishing was a subdivision of the book trade, and as such the domain of the bookseller-publisher. Indeed, it was argued that the periodical press grew out of, and remained rooted in, the book trade:

> The sale of periodical publications is in Great Britain of considerable importance: it consists of Magazines, Reviews, and a variety of other productions published for the most part monthly… By these means an infinity of books and a vast body of information have been diffused throughout the community and which have made the trade of a Bookseller one of the greatest interests and importance to mankind. It is by the diffusion of knowledge by books that all species of tyranny and oppression can be most effectually resisted; it is by the diffusion of books, that mankind becomes acquainted with their moral and religious duties…

Again, language rhapsodizing the 'diffusion of knowledge' shaped descriptions of the bookseller, but this excerpt is striking for its suggestion that the periodical was a *type* of book. This claim of the periodical-as-book could extend further, incorporating the newspaper press: '[n]ewspapers are another species of books, very valuable in their kind; but as they are not often sold by Booksellers, we content ourselves with merely making mention of them', the entry concluded. This last comment was misleading, and a function of the unchanged text between the 1804 and 1824 editions of this work (a point suggested by the dated comment that periodicals came out 'for the most part monthly'). Many bookseller-publishers did sell newspapers: the distinction was that they did not ordinarily produce them.[159]

There were important subtleties of distinction within the book trade, the organization of which followed the model set out by the artist Nathaniel Whittock (1791-1860) in an updated edition of Phillips' work, *The complete book of trades, or, the parents' guide and youths' instructor* (1837). Whittock identified five species of

---

[159] [Anon.], *The book of English trades* (1824), 38-9.

'bookseller' and 'publisher', operating in parallel. Firstly, there was the 'wholesale Bookseller and Publisher', who bought the copyright from the author or employed a periodical editor. Secondly, there were specialist publishers (focusing on religion, law, medicine, education, children's literature and 'pocket books and almanacs'). Thirdly, publishers in the 'Number Trade' (producing expensive works in parts and numbers at regular intervals, aimed specifically at a poorer readership). Fourthly, periodical publishers and sellers, including illustrated annuals (such as the *Forget Me Not*), quarterly reviews (such as the *Westminster Review*), monthly magazines and 'the cheap publications; at the head of which stands the Penny magazine [sic], the Saturday Magazine, the Mirror, [and] Chambers' Edinburgh Journal'. And finally, the 'retail Bookseller' (combining the role of stationer and bookseller). Whittock fused the enlightening and commercial roles of the bookseller-publisher by outlining how the 'appetite for knowledge' of recent years had stimulated a growth in associated trades extending 'to every class of the community', including authors, artists, engravers, printers, type founders, papermakers, bookbinders and toolmakers. The business of popular enlightenment was a remunerative one, and for Whittock the march of intellect was a commercial reality.[160]

Although registered as 'bookseller-publishers', many print technicians assumed the specific role of cheap periodical publishers and sellers; a role deemed 'respectable' by Whittock in the 1830s. The respectability of this sub-trade was partly the result of examples of its profit-making potential: '[p]ersons unacquainted with the Bookselling business can form no idea of the immense sale of the periodicals, particularly the low priced publications', Whittock noted. This rise of the cheap periodical publisher from a non-existent species in the early 1800s to a respected agent in the book trade is

---

[160] Nathaniel Whittock, *The complete book of trades, or, the parents' guide and youths' instructor* (1842 edn.), 39-42.

remarkable. There is, however, some nervousness in Whittock's account of the rise of the cheap bookseller-publisher, revealed by his eulogy to James Lackington (1746-1815) as the archetypal hard-working and 'respectable' bookseller.[161] Whittock identified two distinct classes in the trade, and the young reader was presented with the respectable characteristics required to become a bookseller and publisher of 'the first class': a 'good classical and commercial education', as well as 'a clear and comprehensive understanding, and a gentlemanly appearance and address'. Property was essential 'as, without a good capital, it will be almost impossible for him to enter into business with a chance of success'. The premium on an apprenticeship in the first-rate houses was between two- and three-hundred pounds. Less wealthy individuals might become retail booksellers with the more modest premium of fifty to one-hundred pounds, and such an apprentice might require 'a good education, a lively, obliging disposition, and a genteel address'. Five-hundred pounds, Whittock suggested, was the level of capital required to enter the retail business as a retail bookseller and stationer.[162] This social and financial distinction is important, and many of the bookseller-publishers who entered the cheap periodical trade in the 1820s did so with little capital. Evidence from insurance records suggests that many of those in the book and periodical trades were what was referred to as the 'poorer fry': of 269 metropolitan printing and publishing firms in 1826-7, 22% were valued at less than £100 and 31% at less than £500.[163]

The economics of cheap periodical publishing are opaque, but an indication of profit margins can be gained from analyses of the newspaper and book trades. In *A*

---

[161] Nathaniel Whittock, *The complete book of trades* (1842), 41. The term 'periodical publisher' had currency from at least the 1810s: see for example J. Pigot's *The commercial directory* (1818), 324. See the dedication to the 'respectable' bookselling trade in James Lackington, *Memoirs of the first forty-five years* (1791), viii.
[162] Nathaniel Whittock, *The complete book of trades* (1842), 42-3.
[163] D. Barnett, *London* (1998), 51.

dictionary, practical, theoretical and historical of commerce and commercial navigation (1832), the economist John Ramsay McCulloch (1789-1864) presented an analysis of the newspaper trade in which he criticized the stamp duty for fettering free trade and perpetuating the 'unjust stigma that now attaches to low priced papers'. Under these conditions, in which a stamped newspaper sold for seven pence, McCulloch calculated that the publisher sold a 'quire' (twenty-seven newspapers) to the newsvendor or newsman for thirteen shillings (five and three-quarter pence per copy). Having paid stamp duty, the publisher received just over two and a half pence per copy, with which he had to pay for 'paper, printing, and the expenses of their establishments'. This profit was supplemented by the insertion of advertisements, McCulloch noted, which was 'a considerable source of profit to newspapers'. The newsvendor or retailer had a lower financial return, making two-shillings and nine-pence per quire.[164]

Turning to the role and profit margins of the book publisher, the mathematician Charles Babbage (1791-1871) described the 'combinations of masters against the public' (preferential rates for paper and supplies within the 'trade') in *The economy of machinery and manufactures* (1832). On a six-shilling book, Babbage calculated the following profit margins:

Table 2.1: Profit margins on book publishing, 1832

	Buys at	Sells at	Profit on capital expended
No. I - The Publisher who accounts to the author for every copy received	3s. 10d.	4s. 2d.	10%
No. II - The Bookseller who retails to the public	4s. 2d.	6s.	44%
No. II - Or,	4s. 6d.	6s.	33.5%

[164] John Ramsay McCulloch, *A dictionary, practical, theoretical and historical* (1832), 765-7.

In this context, Babbage defined the publisher as 'a bookseller… the Author's agent', whose role was to

> receive and take charge of the stock, for which he supplies a warehouse-room; to advise the author about the times and methods of advertising; and to insert advertisements… He pays the author only for the books actually sold; consequently, he makes no outlay of capital, except that which he pays for advertisements: but he is answerable for any bad debts he may contract in disposing of them.[165]

The bookseller could buy from the publisher as an advance subscriber at a 4-5% discounted rate of 4s. 2d., and thereafter at the full wholesale rate of 4s. 6d. The 33% profit margin for the bookseller, who laid out no initial capital investment, was deemed unjustifiable by Babbage, and he was critical of those 'great publishers' who 'find it convenient to be the proprietors of reviews, Magazines, Journals, and… Newspapers', used 'merely as *advertising machines'* for their own works.[166]

The profitability of the cheap periodical per unit is difficult to establish, and the overlap of the bookseller-publisher's production and dissemination roles complicates the picture further. Reflecting on the failure of cheap religious literature to circulate amongst common readers, Reverend Samuel Green suggested in 1850 that the style and tone of 'condescension' had given 'moral works' limited currency: profit margins were larger for 'the godless, demoralizing, penny literature of our day', and it was 'plain… that the dealer in this kind of ware will not run the risk of taking goods on speculation without some corresponding advantage.' This 'advantage' was a profit incentive, and Green calculated that penny periodicals were sold wholesale to newsvendors at either seven and a half or eight-pence for thirteen numbers (table 2.2). Periodicals of 'the religious class' were sold at 'the ordinary publisher's price' of

---

[165] Charles Babbage, *On the economy of machinery and manufactures* (1832), 315. See the comments on the dissemination roles of the bookseller and billsticker in *The book of trades: or, circle of the useful arts* (1835), 386-8.

[166] The publisher Charles Knight reputedly made over £915 profit from Babbage's book; Charles Babbage, *On the economy of machinery* (1832), 267-8; 317-34.

nine-pence per dozen, giving cheap publications of 'low and vicious character' a profit of between thirty-eight and a half and forty-two percent, compared to a religious periodical profit of twenty-five percent.[167] These profit margins can be summarized thus:

Table 2.2: Profit margins on cheap periodicals, 1850

	Sold wholesale to newsvendors for	Retails at	Profit margin
No. I - 'Penny periodicals' of 'low and vicious character'	7½d.-8d. for 13 nos.	13d. for 13 nos.	38.5-42.3%
No. II - 'Religious periodicals'	9d. per dozen	12d. for 12 nos.	25%

A snapshot of the finances of John Knight and Henry Lacey, publishers of the three-penny technical *Mechanic's Magazine*, has survived, offering some further insight into the profitability of cheap publishing. Knight and Lacey had entered the cheap trade in January 1823 with the modest capital sum of £500: a stark contrast to publishing behemoths such as Longman and Co, who were insured for £71,000 in 1822.[168] They became prolific producers of cheap books and periodicals from their premises on Paternoster Row, and beginning with the *Christian Gleaner* (1823) for the next six years published a number of 'useful' and entertaining works. It was in their shop on 'the Row' that plans for the LMI, the quintessential manifestation of popular self-improvement, were discussed in December 1823 by Place, Thomas Hodgskin, Joseph Clinton Robertson, the educator George Birkbeck and the Holborn ironmonger William Bailey.[169] In 1826, three years after the founding of the

---

[167] Samuel G. Green, *The working classes of Great Britain* (1850), 123. Green's work informs the structure of R. K. Webb's introduction in *The British working class reader* (1955), 27-8.
[168] See the balance sheet reproduced in *TT*, 3 Jun. 1828. For Knight and Lacey's affairs, see *TT*, 21 and 25 Feb., 1826. For Longman's see D. Barnett, *London* (1998), 52, 172.
[169] Knight and Lacey published dozens of 'useful knowledge' books and pamphlets and over forty cheap weekly periodicals, including Hodgskin's three-penny technical weekly, the *Chemist* (1824-5),

Mechanic's Magazine, they claimed to have 'as Publishers, devoted ourselves to the working classes', seeking to forge a link between their own 'literary world' and their readership of 'intelligent Mechanics' by claiming that the recent financial crises had created a shared experience of 'distress'. They further claimed, in an oblique reference to Limbird's *Mirror*, that

> At the time when the idea of the Mechanics' Magazine was suggested… it was suggested that it should be a *mere literary miscellany*; and although the gentleman who, at the first, joined us in the projecting of it (we mean Mr Joseph Clinton Robertson,) could not hope for the support which we subsequently experienced, it was not without a good deal of difficultly, that we prevailed upon him to adopt our view of the matter, and attempt to make the "Mechanics' Magazine" in reality, what it was in name.[170]

Just as they were announcing the success of their periodical, however, *The Times* revealed that Knight and Lacey had amassed debts of over sixty-five thousand pounds. By December 1828 they had declared themselves bankrupt. Hodgskin and Robertson broke with their erstwhile publishers following mutual claims of malpractice, and Robertson took the periodical title with him, issuing a Parthian shot by calling on Knight and Lacey's creditors to demand immediate payment. Knight and Lacey defended their 'great and economical industry, in the publication of works intended to promote morality and knowledge among the laborious part of the community', but their debts remained insurmountable.[171]

Knight and Lacey's balance sheet reveals a number of aspects of cheap publishing, not least that they kept a large amount of stock at their shop and elsewhere (over £30,000) and that the liquidation of their assets produced less than 10% of their

---

the three-penny weekly *Economist and General Advertiser* (1824-5) and, briefly in 1824, the six-penny *Lancet* (1823-1968). For prospectuses, addresses and contributors see add. mss., 27,824, fols. 15, 86, 88 and 119-21.

[170] *MM*, 30 Jun. 1826, preface to vol. v. For Place's reaction see add. mss., 27,823, fols, 285-9.

[171] *TT*, 21 Feb., 1826. For the conflict over the management of the *Mechanic's Magazine* see add. mss., 27,823, fols. 242-4, 251-3 and 375-8. Place claimed that 'Mr Knight and Lacey were by no means free from blame [for their bankruptcy], for they were persuaded to countenance the early proceedings of Robertson and his associates… and their conduct at the time helped to shelter that of Robertson in embezzling some of the money which had been subscribed towards the institution', add. mss., 27,823, fols. 285-9.

estimated capital value (£3,890 of £42,187). Some indication of the profitability of the cheap periodical and the costs of production are revealed for the four-month period between April and September 1826. In this period, Knight and Lacey made over £960 from the sale of three periodicals: the religious *Pulpit* (1823-71); the six-penny literary *Arlis's Pocket Magazine* (1818-26); and the three-penny *Mechanic's Magazine*. Their costs included rent and taxes (£40), trade expenses (£67), 'housekeeping' (£152) and 'miscellaneous payments' (£146). Their commercial failure suggests that cheap periodical producers dealt in large amounts of credit and that the risks of entering such a market were high: as well as ensuring Knight and Lacey's notoriety within metropolitan publishing circles, *The Times* invoked the case as a caveat against those joint-stock 'bubble' companies that were 'the existing method of concluding business'.[172]

In summary, the term 'bookseller-publisher' covered a range of production and dissemination roles within the book trade. Contemporaries located cheap periodical publishing within the domain of the bookseller-publisher, and as this role diversified into specialist strands a chasm developed between 'first-rate' houses (making large profits from capital investments) and 'poorer fry' (combining retail and publishing functions). The former category did experiment in the cheap periodical trade in the 1820s, but it was the latter that initially took advantage of the low financial threshold of entry to experiment with cheap formats and content. In the context of periodical production itself, the bookseller-publisher played a central role. His first task was to identify and select a target readership based on calculations of circulation; to select or advise on the format, content and tone of the periodical, advising also on its frequency and purpose. Working under copyright restrictions and government censorship,

[172] *TT*, 3 Jun. 1828.

bookseller-publishers tended to pursue specialist lines of publishing and were responsible for employing editors, writers, engravers and printers, occasionally becoming involved in these processes. They were responsible for advertising and marketing, arranging subscriptions, reviews and advertisements, and for seeking out advertisers and vendors. Their shops became loci for correspondence and meetings and functioned as both warehousing and retail outlets. The prevailing image of the bookseller as an arrogant and profit-seeking individual is pervasive in the caricature of the period. Yet while the bookseller-publisher did often take risks and seek quick profits, he was also concerned with more than profitability: his motivations were a mix of profit-seeking and intellectual conviction, and his publishing strategies offer an insight into his commercial calculations and even his ideological sensibilities.[173]

b. Locations of cheap periodical production

A range of bookseller-publishers was producing cheap periodicals in the period: but exactly where they were operating, and what this reveals about the uses of space in metropolitan print culture, remains unclear. The traditional picture is that in the early nineteenth century bookseller-publishers operating in the 'respectable' book trade were located around Paternoster Row, Piccadilly and Oxford Street, while newspaper and radical unstamped publishers were located on the Strand, Fleet Street and in a literary underworld based around Holywell Street and Newgate Market.[174]

---

[173] See P. Isaacs, 'Byron's publisher and his "spy": constancy and change among John Murray II's printers, 1812-1831', *Library*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (1997), 1-24. For Thomas Rowlandson's *Bookseller and Author* caricature see I. McCalman (ed.), *An Oxford companion* (1999), 202. There was a long history of lamenting the decline in professional standards: Thomas Mortimer noted that although 'booksellers are indeed the nearest allied to the learned professions… this trade is overstocked, by the numbers who have thrust themselves into it… some of whom are so far from having a taste for literature, that they can scarce read an English title', Thomas Mortimer, *A new and complete dictionary of trade and commerce*, two vols. (1766-7), i, 386-7.

[174] I. McCalman, *Radical underworld* (1988), ch. 10. Paternoster Row, St. Paul's and Ave Maria Lane were the traditional centres of religious book publishing. The bookseller William West suggested that 'Paternoster-Row and Ave-Maria Lane were so called from the stationers, or text-writers who dwelt there, and who wrote and sold all sorts of books in use; viz, A B C, with the Pater Noster, Ave, Creed, Graces, &c.', William West, *Tavern anecdotes and reminiscences* (1825), 193 and 285-6.

This topography is certainly discernable. Nonetheless, Parliamentary returns of stamp prosecutions reveal that cheap periodicals were also produced and disseminated by bookseller-publishers in the heartland of the metropolitan book trade, suggesting that cheapness did not necessarily imply fugitive or radical status: of 116 individual bookseller-publishers prosecuted between 1828 and 1830 for failing to enter periodicals or books at the Pamphlet Duty Department of the Stamp Office, thirty-one (27%) were based on Paternoster Row or in St. Paul's Churchyard; fifteen (13%) on Fleet Street; and seven (6%) on both the Strand and Oxford Street. Taken as a whole, the returns show a geographical clustering around the established book trade on Paternoster Row and its environs.[175]

There are three possible reasons for this pattern. Firstly, arising from logistics, that bookseller-publishers of all descriptions might be expected (if they could afford it) to rent the larger retail and storage premises in Paternoster Row because it lent respectability to their business, increased their potential sales and placed them close to suppliers and retailers.[176] Secondly, in terms of commercial opportunism and proselytizing new readerships, 'respectable' bookseller-publishers saw the profit potential of the cheap format, and religious associations saw its moralizing potential (and both species of publisher were already located in this area). And thirdly, although it is tempting to depict Knight and Lacey as pioneers in bringing the cheap

---

[175] These figures have been calculated from *HoC.AP*, Return of prosecutions and fines against printers and publishers under Stamp Act, 1830, **1830** (407) XXV. 539. The addresses used have been taken from *The Post-Office London directory* (1830) and supplemented by W. B. Todd, *A directory of printers* (1972); P. A. H. Brown, *London publishers and printers* (1982); and the *British Book Trade Index* (BBTI) < www.bbti.bham.ac.uk >.

[176] The Chapter Coffee House on Paternoster Row was a key locus. According to West: [h]ere are kept files of the chief newspapers, and various periodical reviews and magazines are taken in… The London booksellers, usually denominated "The Trade," generally meet here, for the purpose of agreeing upon giving out a book to print… or for dividing a work when printed, and on other business', William West, *Tavern anecdotes* (1825), 119-20.

periodical to Paternoster Row, 'the Row' had long been home to dissenting print cultures.[177]

iii. Legal restrictions

Bookseller-publishers and associated print technicians working in the periodical trade faced the perennial commercial and logistical challenges of the marketplace (how were sales to be increased, profit made and the product marketed or advertised?; and how were supplies to be procured and the periodical shipped and distributed?). Those operating in the cheap periodical market faced additional legal and political restrictions, and local magistrates and government officials had recourse to an armoury of statutory weapons to restrict the production and dissemination of cheap print between 1815 and 1834. Three varieties were commonly deployed: legislation against blasphemous and seditious libel; legislation imposing stamp duties; and a series of older laws preventing the selling of unstamped newspapers. Parliamentary returns of prosecutions reveal a range of individuals operating as cheap periodical publishers, printers and distributors in this period - radical or otherwise, and all subject to government prosecution.[178]

a. Blasphemy, sedition and libel

Between 1812 and 1822 the Attorney General instigated over 100 prosecutions of publishers, booksellers, street hawkers and activists under legislation against blasphemy, libel and sedition, on charges of 'profane libel', 'profane and seditious libel', 'blasphemous libel' and 'malicious libel on the king'. London booksellers featured prominently in the early burst of prosecutions, with the failed prosecution of

---

[177] A. Johns, *The nature of the book* (1998), 66-8.

[178] The cost of a single prosecution was between 11 s. and 14s. 4d; *HoC.AP*, Account of law expenses for prosecutions against printers, publishers and booksellers, 1829-30, **1830** (563) XXV. 545. For a definitive account of the prosecutions between 1830 and 1836 see P. Hollis, *The pauper press* (1970), 156-193. My purpose is not to challenge Hollis' account, but to stress the interaction of radical and non-radical print cultures, the arbitrary definition of 'unstamped' and the integration of 'respectable' and 'unrespectable' periodical producers.

the radical publisher Daniel Isaac Eaton (*bap.* 1753, *d.* 1814) for blasphemous libel in 1813 widely reported at the time. In 1817 the Attorney General initiated proceedings against the radical booksellers William Hone and T. J. Wooler for profane and seditious libel, while Richard Carlile and Benjamin Steill were arrested, but not tried. The low conviction rate and subsequent martyr status of Hone and Wooler embarrassed government and encouraged agents in the book trade to experiment with cheap political and religious periodicals, seemingly safe from reprisal.[179]

The imprisonment of Carlile in October 1819 dampened radical enthusiasm, and in December 1819 legislation deployed in his trial was augmented by 60 Geo. III. c. 8: 'An Act for the more effectual prevention and punishment of blasphemous and seditious libels'. This Act legislated for severe penalties (fines, imprisonment and 'banishment') against

> any person for composing, printing, or publishing any blasphemous libel, or seditious libel, tending to bring into hatred or contempt the person of his majesty, his heirs or successors, or the regent, or the government and constitution of the united kingdom as by law established, or either house of parliament, or to excite his majesty's subjects to attempt the alteration of any matter in church or state as by law established, otherwise than by lawful means…[180]

This legislation succeeded in closing down most of the radical periodicals that had broken through in the previous three years, and raised the risks of producing cheap anti-establishment print. The net widened from late 1819 to catch the booksellers Thomas Dolby, William Watling, John Thelwall and John Duncombe, as well as the prominent radical reformers Sir Francis Burdett, Major Cartwright, John Hunt, Robert

---

[179] *HoC.AP*, Return of ex-officio informations filed for political libel and seditious conduct, 1808-20, **1821** (438) XXI. 405; *HoC.AP*, Return of individuals prosecuted for public libel, blasphemy and sedition, 1813-22, **1823** (562) XV. 239. Eaton was prosecuted for publishing Baron d'Holbach's *Ecce homo! or, a critical inquiry into the history of Jesus Christ* (1813); William Hone, *The three trials of William Hone* (1818); and Thomas Jonathan Wooler, *A verbatim report of the two trials of Mr. T. J. Wooler* (1817); *Hone's Reformists' Register*, 1 Feb. 1817.

[180] *HoC.B*, Bill, intituled, Act for more effectual suppression of blasphemous and seditious libels, 1819, **1819-20** (21) I. 83. Charles Henry Timperley, *A dictionary of printers* (1839), 871-2.

Wedderburn and Henry Hunt. Spencean agitators were particularly targeted, and Wedderburn, Davison and Dolby were followed in 1821-2 by William Benbow, Samuel Waddington and Carlile's wife, Mary-Anne, and shop-woman, Susannah Wright. A trickle of prosecutions for 'political libel and seditious conduct' continued throughout the 1820s, with Daniel Whittle Harvey and John Hunt prosecuted in 1823, a series of trials in 1829 and Carlile's imprisonment in January 1831 for libel and promoting 'insurrection' in his *Prompter* (1830-1) creating a broken line in the repression of blasphemy, sedition and libel.[181]

b. Stamp duties: the 'taxes on knowledge'

Blasphemy, sedition and libel were sensational charges, and only a minority of bookseller-publishers continued to test the limits of such severe legislation (the most tenacious, Carlile, spent much of the 1820s in Dorchester gaol). For most producers of cheap literature it was a different Act of 1819 that restricted their movement into, and within, the cheap periodical trade: 60 Geo. III. c. 9, 'An Act to make certain publications subject to the duties of stamps upon newspapers, and to restrain the abuses arising from the publication of blasphemous and seditious libels'. This 'Stamp Act' had pressmen such as Cobbett and Carlile in view when it was drafted in December 1819, but it affected the way in which cheap print was produced, distributed and consumed throughout the 1820s and 1830s: it was, as such, the chief restriction on cheap periodical producers and sellers, radical or not, for over a decade. Its preamble was explicit in its aim:

> Whereas Pamphlets and printed Papers containing Observations upon public Events and Occurrences, tending to excite Hatred and Contempt of the Government and Constitution of these Realms as by Law established, and also vilifying our Holy Religion, have lately been published, in great

[181] *HoC.AP*, Return of prosecutions for political libel, blasphemy and sedition, 1821-33, **1834** (410) XLVIII. 269; and *HoC.AP*, Return of prosecutions for libel by ex-officio information, 1834, **1834** (202) XLVIII. 267. See the accounts in Richard Carlile, *Bridge-Street banditti versus the press* (1821) and Jane Carlile, *Report of the trial of Mrs. Carlile* (1821).

> Numbers, and at very small Prices; and it is expedient that the same should be restrained…[182]

The method chosen to restrain the cheap market was to build on several eighteenth-century acts, and in particular 38 Geo. III. c.78: 'An Act for preventing the Mischiefs arising from the printing and publishing Newspapers and Papers of a like nature, by Persons not known, and for regulating the Printing and Publication of such Papers in other respects'. The Act of 1819 made certain cheap publications legally a 'newspaper', and thereby subject to legal restrictions and financial obligations:

> …all Pamphlets and Papers containing any Public News, Intelligence or Occurrences, or an Remarks or Observations thereon, or upon any matter in Church or State, printed in any part of the United Kingdom for Sale, and published periodically, or in Parts or Numbers, at intervals, not exceeding Twenty-six days between the Publication of any two such Pamphlets or Papers, Parts or Numbers, where any of the said Pamphlets or Papers, Parts or Numbers respectively shall not exceed Two Sheets, or shall be published for Sale, for a less Sum than Sixpence, exclusive of the Duty by this Act imposed thereon, shall be deemed and taken to be Newspapers…[183]

The chief provisions were that any periodical or pamphlet carrying 'Public News, Intelligence or Occurrences' was subject to a four-penny stamp duty, with a £20 fine for non-payment for every number published. The Act also stipulated that a monthly pamphlet had to be published on the first of the month (or within two days); that the price and day of publication had to be printed on the paper; that a three-hundred pound bond (a security for fines that might be levied as a result of a conviction of libel) had to be paid before a newspaper could be published, with a fine of £20 for

---

[182] *HoC. B*, Bill to make certain publications subject to duties of stamps on newspapers, 1819, **1819-20** (34) I. 63; Charles Henry Timperley, *A dictionary of printers* (1839), 872-5; and John Wade, *The book of penalties* (1834), 273-9.
[183] *HoC. B*, Bill to make certain publications subject to duties of stamps on newspapers, 1819, **1819-20** (34) I. 63.

each number published without such recognizance; and that the selling and hawking of unstamped newspapers was likewise subject to a £20 fine.[184]

This Act effectively meant that the cheap periodical could no longer exist legally as an organ of news and comment, and it was against this intended consequence that Francis Place railed in *A letter to a minister of state, respecting taxes on knowledge* (1831). Place opposed the arbitrary decision-making processes by which prosecutions were initiated, criticizing the empowerment of the Stamp Office: 'the commissioners [of stamps] have a power denied to the king, a dispensing power; they may permit or even authorise publications, or they may extinguish them…' He was struck that 'well conducted' cheap periodicals such as John Doherty's trade unionist *Voice of the People* (1830) and John Timbs' 'respectable' two-penny theatrical weekly, the *Harlequin* (1829), were closed down by the commissioner of stamps (John Timm), while the *Penny Magazine* went unmolested. Legal prosecution under stamp legislation was politically charged, and the result, claimed Place, was that 'two descriptions of persons, namely religious tract societies, and those who set the laws at defiance [ultra-radicals]' produced cheap periodicals. If the taxes were removed, he argued, the 'dogmatical [sic] and foolish' content and 'cant and command' approaches would give way to improving literature. This pamphlet was one of Place's most lucid defences of the free market, and its prominent display of the words 'NOT FOR SALE' on the front page (rendering it immune from prosecution under the provisions of the Act) revealed both his command of legislative detail and inherent caution.[185]

Place was correct to highlight the discretionary power awarded to the Stamp Office, as well as the arbitrariness of its prosecutions. Parliamentary returns of fines

---

[184] Ibid. For an overview of the Act, see John Ramsay McCulloch, *A dictionary, practical, theoretical* (1832), 765-9.
[185] Francis Place, *A letter to a minister of state, respecting taxes on knowledge* (1831), 12-13.

issued for the transgression of the Act reveal many radical veterans falling foul of legislation between 1828 and 1831: Carlile's £20 fine in 1829 was stayed after he paid backdated stamp duty; Edward Duncombe had his fine stayed, and John Duncombe his fine commuted to £2; Watling paid a commuted fine of £1 in 1830; Cobbett paid a commuted £5 fine in 1829; and John Mitford was fined £2. The breakthrough of a new generation of radical publishers is also visible, with Henry Hetherington having a £20 fine stayed in 1829. The Act was thus, as planned, used to supplement the legislation against blasphemy, sedition and libel in the prosecution of radical pressmen.[186] But Place was also correct to stress the range of producers and sellers prosecuted under the 1819 Stamp Act. The King's printer, William Sams of St. James's, for example, was fined £5 in 1829 for failing to register Herbert Taylor's *The last illness and decease of the Duke of York* (1827) as a pamphlet. That such a minor infringement caused Sams to appear in the same prosecution return as Carlile is testimony to the zealousness of the Stamp Commissioners, and further examples of the prosecution of establishment figures abound: John and William Norie of Leadenhall, chart-sellers to the Admiralty, had a £20 fine stayed in 1829, and the SPCK publishers, C. and J. Rivington, had a £20 fine commuted to £5 in the same year. Indeed, although many bookseller-publishers experimented only briefly with cheap periodicals (preferring to concentrate on more expensive niche markets) the returns name many individuals important in the emerging cheap market, many of whom did not publish political works; including George Smeeton, George Virtue, William Kidd, William Guthrie, the firm of Sherwood, Gilbert and Piper, John Chappell and Simpkin and Marshall.[187]

---

[186] *HoC.AP*, Return of prosecutions and fines against printers and publishers, 1830, **1830** (407) XXV. 539.
[187] *HoC.AP*, Return of prosecutions and fines against printers and publishers, 1830, **1830** (407) XXV. 539.

These prosecutions are significant for their early date relative to the clampdown on unstamped periodicals in 1830-6 and their targeting of respectable agents in the book and periodical trades alongside supposedly unrespectable radical printers, publishers and booksellers. The motivation of the Stamp Office seems to have been to issue a warning that government could squeeze the cheap market at its discretion: a gentle prelude to the repression of the radical unstamped press, but also an acknowledgement that cheap periodicals had the potential to be turned to subversive ends. These returns demonstrate that although post-war radical pressmen may have initially been the chief producers of cheap periodical print (and thus the targets of government repression), by the early 1820s cheap periodicals were increasingly produced by bookseller-publishers extraneous - or at least presenting themselves as extraneous - to radical print culture. A new market niche, it seemed, had been carved.

c. Selling cheap periodicals: booksellers and street vendors

Accompanying the cheap bookseller-publisher's legal, political and commercial considerations were logistical problems; in particular the issue of how cheap periodicals were to be distributed. Modes of distribution were affected by the legality of the periodical in question, and for sellers of the radical unstamped the recourse to eighteenth-century legislation directed at hawkers and pedlars of unstamped newspapers presented a challenge. Patricia Hollis has argued that the unstamped periodicals of the 1830s relied on covert distribution networks following the Stamp Act because established booksellers thereafter refused to stock them: they needed, she notes, to 'establish an entirely new network of agencies'. The precarious legal status of the cheap periodical in the 1820s and 1830s did indeed give rise to a range of innovative distribution techniques, including Carlile's national system of agents, the 'lending' of periodicals and the practice of indirectly ordering illicit literature.

Nonetheless, two additions need to be made to Hollis' account. The first, that covert techniques for distribution were utilized *before* the Stamp Act of 1819 was passed. The second, that even into the 1830s, bookseller-publishers were harnessing 'orthodox' channels of distribution for both legal and illegal cheap periodicals.[188]

The repression of periodicals deemed to be blasphemous, seditious and libellous between 1817 and 1822 forced many vendors to adopt innovative means of supplying consumers, as revealed in the practices of the Spencean bookseller Samuel Waddington (*bap.* 1759-*c.*1820). The printer, Charles Timperley (1794-1861), recounted the novel methods by which 'little Waddington' distributed obscene and radical publications from his shop on the Strand in the late 1810s:

> Within the shop were posted up the names of several books with their price, and opposite each book was a hook, to which a short rope was attached, extending up to the first floor, which was occupied by Waddington; there was also a ring which the purchaser put on the book opposite the book he wanted, and thus signified to the person above stairs what book it was he desired to have, the rope was then pulled up, and a box was let down through a hole, into which the purchaser put the price, the box was then pulled up, and the book immediately let down.[189]

Waddington's novel technique did not prevent his prosecution, but it was significant as an example of the use of covert distribution techniques before the implementation of the Stamp Act of 1819. Alongside such booksellers, street-vendors played an essential role in distributing cheap literature. Carlile's country agents employed street hawkers to sell the *Republican* in the 1820s, and radical publishers used itinerant ballad- and print-sellers as retailers well into the 1830s. Parliamentary returns of the prosecution of vendors of unstamped periodicals and almanacks reveal the important retail and marketing roles of street-vendors (Carlile's hawkers were said to shout

---

[188] P. Hollis, *The pauper press* (1970), 107-16.

[189] Charles Henry Timperley, *A dictionary of printers* (1839), 886n. For Waddington, see I. McCalman, *Radical underworld* (1988), chs. 9 and 10. In 1823 Waddington was indicted for rape, but acquitted; *OBP* (www.oldbaileyonline.org, 12 Dec., 2007), 9 Apr., 1823, trial of Samuel Waddington (t18230409-155).

'Rep! Rep! Rep!'). They also reveal exactly which periodicals street-vendors were prosecuted for selling. The most frequently named periodicals were Hetherington's *Poor Man's Guardian*, the *Prophetic Almanack*, Lee's *Man* and Cleave's *Weekly Police Gazette*. Hundreds of hawkers, pedlars and vendors were imprisoned for periods ranging from one week to six months, and Hetherington himself was gaoled for six months after refusing to pay a £20 fine (under 38 Geo. III c.78 and 60 Geo III c. 9).[190]

As a leading producer of the radical unstamped, Hetherington was an obvious target, but many of those prosecuted were less prominent. In September 1831, for instance, the street-vendor Edward Windhurst was convicted of selling an unstamped copy of the *Poor Man's Guardian* to James Colley (a particularly industrious government spy) in Westminster. Windhurst was convicted under 16 Geo. II. c. 26. s.5 (which legislated 'for the punishment of Vendors of unstamped Newspapers') and committed to the House of Correction for three months. The severity of the sentence was by no means unusual.[191] The crippled Newgate-market hawker Joseph Forster, for example, was committed to Coldbath Fields House of Correction for three months for selling the *Man* and the *Weekly Police Gazette*, and using 'irritating words'. When he was arrested, it was reported that Forster yelled 'Englishmen, will you suffer me to be taken, bring out your knives!' to the gathering crowd. A plea for clemency from a number of local butchers who had witnessed the incident did not secure Forster's

---

[190] *HoC.AP*, Return of number of persons committed for selling unstamped publications, 1832-3, **1833** (77) XXIX. 37; *HoC.AP*, Return of persons committed by Magistrates for sale of unstamped publications, 1836, **1836** (21) XLI. 427.
[191] *Penny Papers*, 2 Oct. 1830; *HoC.AP*, Warrant of conviction and commitment of E. Windhurst, 1831, **1831** (275) XV. 99.

release, and the imprisonment of this humble street hawker is a rare reported example of a once widespread practice.[192]

Street hawking ought not, however, to be depicted as an unorthodox technique peculiar to the radical unstamped press. Charles Knight's *Penny Magazine* actively encouraged the practice, listing bookseller agents in London and the country, and indicating that from these men 'Shopkeepers and Hawkers may be supplied wholesale'.[193] The street hawker could also act as an agent from whom a legal, stamped newspaper could be illegally hired. *The moral and political evils of the taxes in knowledge* (1830), a petition from the London Literary and Scientific Institution, outlined how the four-penny stamp duty had increased the price of newspapers by 250%, and that as a result

> it has become an extensive and almost general practice amongst the trading community, by whom the daily papers are habitually perused, for several persons to subscribe each a portion of the expense, or to hire a paper, in order that he may have the use of it during a part of the day.

This practice was illegal under 29. Geo. III. c.50. s.9, it noted, quoting '[t]hat any hawker of newspapers, who shall let any newspaper to hire to any person, or to different persons, shall forfeit the sum of five pounds for each offence'.[194] The uneven prosecution of street-vendors meant that polemical unstamped political periodicals were increasingly distributed and sold on an erratic basis by peripatetic

---

[192] *HoC.AP*, Information, evidence and conviction of J. Forster... June 1834, **1835** (555) XLVI. 243; see the huge number of prosecutions in *HoC.AP*, Return of number of persons committed in metropolis for sale of unstamped publications, 1831, **1831-2** (40) XXXIV. 103; *HoC.AP*, Return of number of persons committee for selling unstamped publications, 1831-2, **1831-2** (711) XXXIV. 107; *HoC.AP*, Return of number of persons in prison on prosecutions for the sale of unstamped publications, 1831-3, **1833** (679) XXIX. 45; and *HoC.AP*, Return of number of persons committed for selling unstamped publications, 1833-34, **1834** (199) XLVII. 241.

[193] *Penny Magazine*, 19 May 1832.

[194] [Anon.], *The moral and political evils of the taxes on knowledge* (1830), 12.

street sellers after 1831, though many bookseller-publishers nonetheless continued to use traditional distribution networks for their cheap works.[195]

iv. Conclusions: cheap periodicals, bookseller-publishers and the law

This section has argued that the distinction between cheap periodicals and the 'unstamped' was a contingent one, based on politically charged calculations made by the Stamp Office as to what constituted news. Periodicals identified as 'unstamped' were increasingly cheap radical organs, and from 1831 onwards a stream of prosecutions attempted to formalize the distinction between 'safe' and 'unsafe' literature. It has also identified a nascent cheap periodical market emerging from within the book trade and cultivated by a broad range of bookseller-publishers. These print technicians ranged from Spencean radicals to the King's official publisher and were clustered around traditional locales of the metropolitan book trade. They were subject to a variety of legislative restrictions, including laws against blasphemy and sedition, a mandatory stamp duty and the prohibition of the sale of unstamped periodicals. The tense political climate during the 'reform crisis' of 1829-32 led to state repression of anti-establishment periodicals, forcing many publishers to seek unorthodox retail outlets and covert supply chains. But these organizational divergences ought not to obscure the continuing overlaps of personnel, location and modes of dissemination between 'safe' and 'unsafe' titles or the reality that both species were members of the same cheap periodical genus.

---

[195] See chapter two for Cowie and Strange's retail practices - in particular, their continued sale of Carpenter's *Political Letters* from their Paternoster Row shop, 159-71.

II

Patterns, pricing and content in the cheap periodical market

i. Growth trends and pricing structures

a. Scope and limitations of the database

This section analyzes growth trends and patterns of diversification within the cheap periodical market between 1815 and 1834 using data contained in the *Waterloo directory of English newspapers and periodicals* (2003).[196] The database sample comprises 1,662 of 2,912 known 'cases' (a coverage of 57.1% - a 'case' referring to a single title produced in one or more date ranges) and includes variables for title, sub-title, data range, place of publication, publisher, price, frequency, departments and dummy variables for price and content (table 2.3, p.116).[197] A selection bias has resulted from uneven survival rates of periodicals and a variation in the pricing information contained in surviving sources. The coverage of all known periodical titles produced in London in this period is thus uneven, being lower than the average in most date ranges (55.6% in 1815-19, 54.6% in 1820-5 and 52.4% in 1825-9) and higher in 1830-4 (62.6%). This bias is a function of the intensive study of earlier and later periods (in particular by Patricia Hollis and Joel Wiener), as well as the occasional practice of distributing un-priced periodicals in order to allow retailers to charge varying prices. This practice did not characterize the newspaper market, and higher-price periodicals are over-represented in the sample. In addition, the database includes no data for circulation.[198] Whereas this information is available for some titles, it is so rarely available that an attempt to map it more generally would prove patchy and be excessively skewed towards the higher price range. The number of

---

[196] For a depiction of the growth of the periodical market using series one of the *WDENP* (2001) see the figures comparing annual book and periodical production in G. Cantor *et al* (eds.), *Science in the nineteenth-century periodical* (2004), 9-10.
[197] *London periodicals, 1815-34*.
[198] For circulation figures, see chapter four, 232-239, and appendix 4.

periodical titles produced by date range is thus used as a proxy for the size of each market; but if strong statements about the relative market share of each price range cannot be made on the basis of such figures, an increase in the number of titles within each price range does provide some indication of relative growth.[199]

b. Pricing taxonomy

When the aggregate growth data are broken down into separate price ranges the internal dynamics of three separate but overlapping periodical markets are suggestively sketched (table 2.3 and figures 2.1 and 2.2).

Table 2.3. Number of periodical titles in price categories, London, 1815-34 (as a percentage of price range output)

	Higher price (7d plus)		**Middle price (4d-6d)**		**Lower price (1d-3d)**		**Totals (% of all cases known)**
Date range	**No. Cases**	*% Total date range output*	**No. Cases**	*% Total date range output*	**No. Cases**	*% Total date range output*	
1815-9	188	*69.9*	42	*15.6*	39	*14.5*	269 (/484 = 55.6%)
1820-4	251	*66.8*	47	*12.5*	78	*20.7*	376 (/689 = 54.6%)
1825-9	241	*65.8*	57	*15.5*	68	*18.6*	366 (699 = 52.4%)
1830-4	250	*38.4*	79	*12.1*	322	*49.5*	651 (/1040 = 62.6%)
CASES TOTAL (% of all cases with price/type data)	**930 (56%)**		**225 (13.5%)**		**507 (30.5%)**		**1662 (/2912 = 57.1%)**

c. Patterns of production

The data chart an overall pattern of growth in the metropolitan periodical market from 484 titles (of which 269 are included in the sample) in 1815-9 to 1,040 (of which

---

[199] The strengths and limitations of this approach have been discussed in analyses of book publishing; see J. Feather, 'British publishing in the eighteenth century', *Library*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (1986), 32-45 and S. Eliot, 'Some trends in British book production, 1800-1919' in J. O. Jordan and R. L. Patten (eds.), *Literature in the marketplace* (1995), 19-43.

651 are included in the sample) in 1830-4, but with differing movements in the cheap, middle- and higher-price markets. Between 1815 and 1829 the number of higher-price periodical titles figuring in the sample increased (from 188 in 1815-19 to 250 in 1830-4), with a peak of 251 in 1820-4 and a plateau of 241 in 1825-9. The data suggest that higher-price periodicals dominated the periodical market in terms of title output, accounting for 69.9% of all titles in the sample published between 1815 and 1819, 66.8% between 1820 and 1824 and 65.8% between 1825 and 1829. Strikingly, although 250 higher-price titles appeared between 1830 and 1834, this accounted for only 38.4% of the sample total at that date, reducing the average to 56% for the whole period. The general pattern in the expensive price market was therefore one of overall growth and relative stability, with small episodic peaks, troughs and plateaus in the number of titles produced, but a large decline as a proportion of total periodical title output in 1830-4.[200] This decline does not necessarily correlate to a decline in market share, as the data do not measure circulation or readership. Indeed, the scale and dominance of the expensive market can be inferred from the large amount of capital investment within the newspaper trade. Place calculated, for instance, that newspapers spent over £700,000 annually on wages, including payments of over £300,000 a year to the Stamp Office in the form of stamp and advertisement duty.[201]

Duties and legal restriction were important variables affecting the whole periodical market. The most significant piece of legislation was the Stamp Act of 1819, which benefited higher-price periodicals by squeezing out cheaper competitors. The provisions raised the threshold of entry to the newspaper market, and meant that only wealthy individuals or joint-stock companies could take on the burden of running a

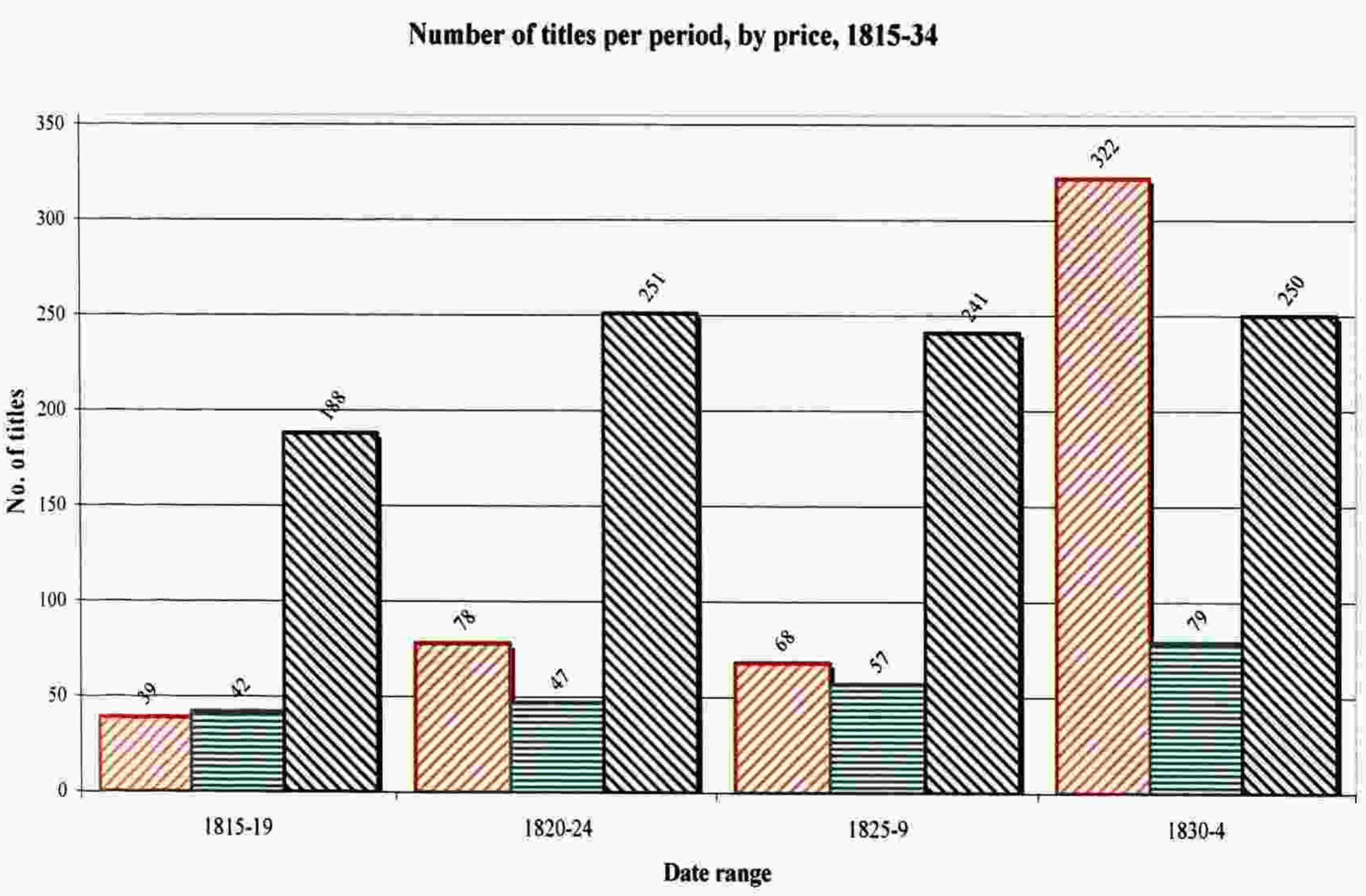
---

[200] This pattern characterized book production, indexed by the annual percentage increase of paper production: 1800-9 (64%); 1810-19 (15%); 1820-9 (35%); 1830-9 (42%); 1840-9 (36%); 1850-9 (45%); in S. Eliot, 'Some trends' (1995), 19-43.

[201] Add. mss., 27,828, fols. 109-11. See also, A. Aspinall, 'Statistical accounts of the London newspapers, 1800-36', *EHR*, Vol. 65, No. 255 (1950), 222-234 and No. 256 (1950), 372-383.

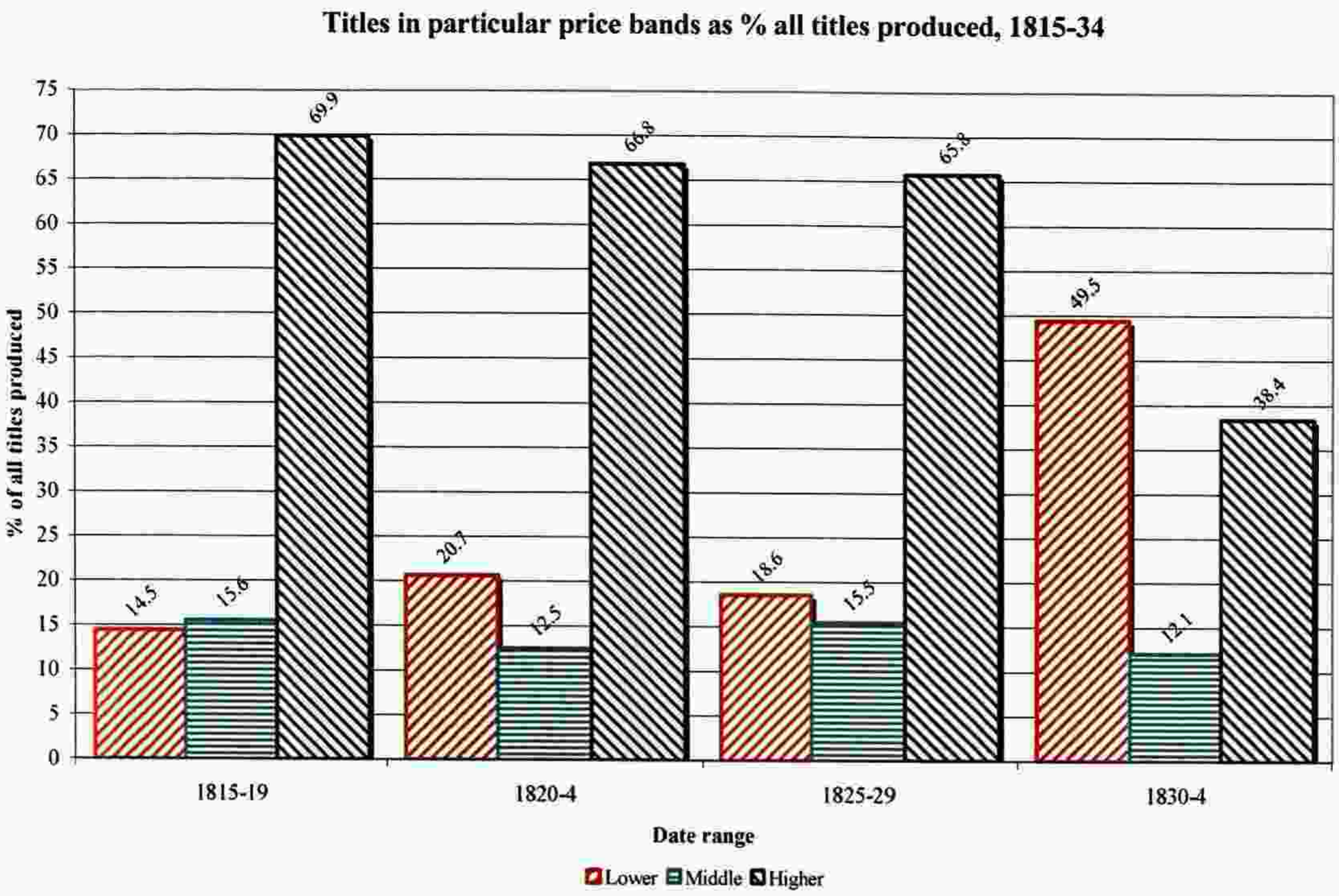
stamped newspaper. The periodical market became polarized between capital-intensive higher-price periodicals and cheaper operations. Following this legislation, there was a peak in the number of higher-price titles produced between 1820 and 1824 coinciding with the 'Queen Caroline Affair' of 1820-1, in which the divorce suit of George IV and his estranged wife was publicly debated. The most successful of the higher price weekly newspapers established in this context were the Tory *John Bull* and *Bell's Life in London*: the latter a new species of weekly sporting newspaper catering for an inclusive 'popular' readership.[202]

Figure 2.1 [203]



[202] J. Stevenson, (ed.), *London in the age of reform* (1977), 117-48; *Bell's Life*, 14 Apr. 1822. See also Henry Fox Bourne, *English newspapers* (1887), 1-33.
[203] This figure, and all subsequent figures in this chapter, refer exclusively to the periodical titles held in the sample database, *London periodicals, 1815-34*.

Figure 2.2



Middle-price periodicals within the sample likewise demonstrated an increase in number of titles (from forty-two in 1815-19 to seventy-nine in 1830-4). This growth, unlike growth in the expensive market, was not affected by the 'Caroline' agitation, the economic slump of 1825-9 or the reform crisis of 1829-32. Indeed, set against an increased number of titles, middle-price periodicals' share of titles (averaging 13.5% between 1815 and 1834) declined to 12.1% between 1830-4. Contrastingly, in the period 1825-9 middle-price periodicals were the only sector to experience growth in both the number of titles produced (fifty-seven) and share of total titles (15.5%).

The most striking trend was the continuing growth of cheap periodicals, both in terms of number of titles and as a proportion of all titles produced (accounting in all for 30.5% of titles in the sample between 1815 and 1834): in 1815-19 there were thirty-nine cheap periodicals in the sample; in 1820-4, seventy-eight; in 1825-9, sixty-eight; and 322 by 1830-4. To appreciate the speed of this increase, it is necessary to break down the 1815-19 period further: only two of the cheap periodicals established

before 1815 survived until that date; one more was established in 1815; seven in 1816; nine in 1817; four in 1818; and fifteen in 1819. This increase was accompanied by a growth in the share of total output of titles, especially after 1830: from 14.5% in 1815-19; 20.7% in 1820-4; 18.6% in 1825-9; to 49.5% in 1830-4.[204]

This breakthrough of the cheap periodical was shaped by the rise (and subsequent decline) of the radical 'mass platform' between 1816 and 1821, the campaign to keep the radical presses running in opposition to legal repression and a perceived longer-term rise of a secular and non-elite reading public. In particular, the large number of cheap periodicals appearing in 1819 reflected the impact of a radical campaign at its zenith following the 'Peterloo' massacre in Manchester. The 'Caroline' agitation precipitated a resurgence of cheap journalism of both radical and loyalist hues in 1820, but after 1821 only a small number of the cheap titles that had broken through in the preceding five years continued to circulate. The continuation of these periodicals, including Carlile's *Republican* and Wooler's *Black Dwarf*, did something to keep the campaigns for parliamentary reform and against the 'taxes on knowledge' in public view, but these were isolated cases. The early 1820s were nonetheless boom years in cheap publishing: far from declining, the data suggest that the number of cheap titles increased between 1820 and 1824, and even during the economic slump of 1825-9 maintained nearly double the number of titles of the 1815-19 period. The tenacity of the cheap periodical in the 1820s in turn provided the personnel and infrastructure that enabled a leap in production in the cheap market between 1830 and 1834: in this later period, the cheap market was responsible for producing nearly as many titles as both the higher and medium price markets combined.[205]

---

[204] *London periodicals, 1815-34*.

[205] Ibid. For a statistical attempt to show this toughness, see J. Sutherland, 'The British book trade and the crash of 1826', *Library*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (1987), 148-61.

A measure of the number of cheap titles produced does not capture circulation, measure impact or indicate profitability. The scale of the cheap periodical proliferation during the early 1830s was an anomaly, set as it was against the backdrop of unprecedented political agitation. Moreover, cheap periodicals often existed for very short runs, had tiny circulations and could incur significant losses: the radical ideological motivation of many producers of cheap periodicals to publish no matter the cost means that the existence of a cheap title says little about the commercial viability of the lower-price market. The cheap market itself was vulnerable to economic cycles and political agitation, and the story of its publishers in this period was often one of insolvency, legal proceedings and gaol terms.[206] In spite of these handicaps, the growth of the cheap market after 1815 was considerable. That a period of consolidation and cultivation (1820-9) is discernible between the breakthrough of 1815-19 and the proliferation of 1830-4 suggests that by the early 1820s cheap periodicals were an established popular format and a significant sector of the metropolitan periodical market.

ii. The content of metropolitán periodicals, 1815-34

a. Classifying periodicals by content

What types of periodical were produced in the cheap price range? Did this change over time, and if so, how and why? Did the middle-price and expensive markets follow a similar trajectory? This section classifies all periodicals in the sample into five categories, based on their self-identification and tendency towards commercial, literary, political, religious or technical content (see appendices 1 and 2).[207]

---

[206] For commercial woes, see Charles Knight's claims that '[i]n 1826, I had to struggle, in common with many others of my craft, against the depression in value of all literary property'; *Passages*, three vols. (1864-5), i, preface, vi.

[207] The often heterogeneous content of these categories is explored in detail in chapter three.

b. Aggregate data (see figure 2.3, p.123)

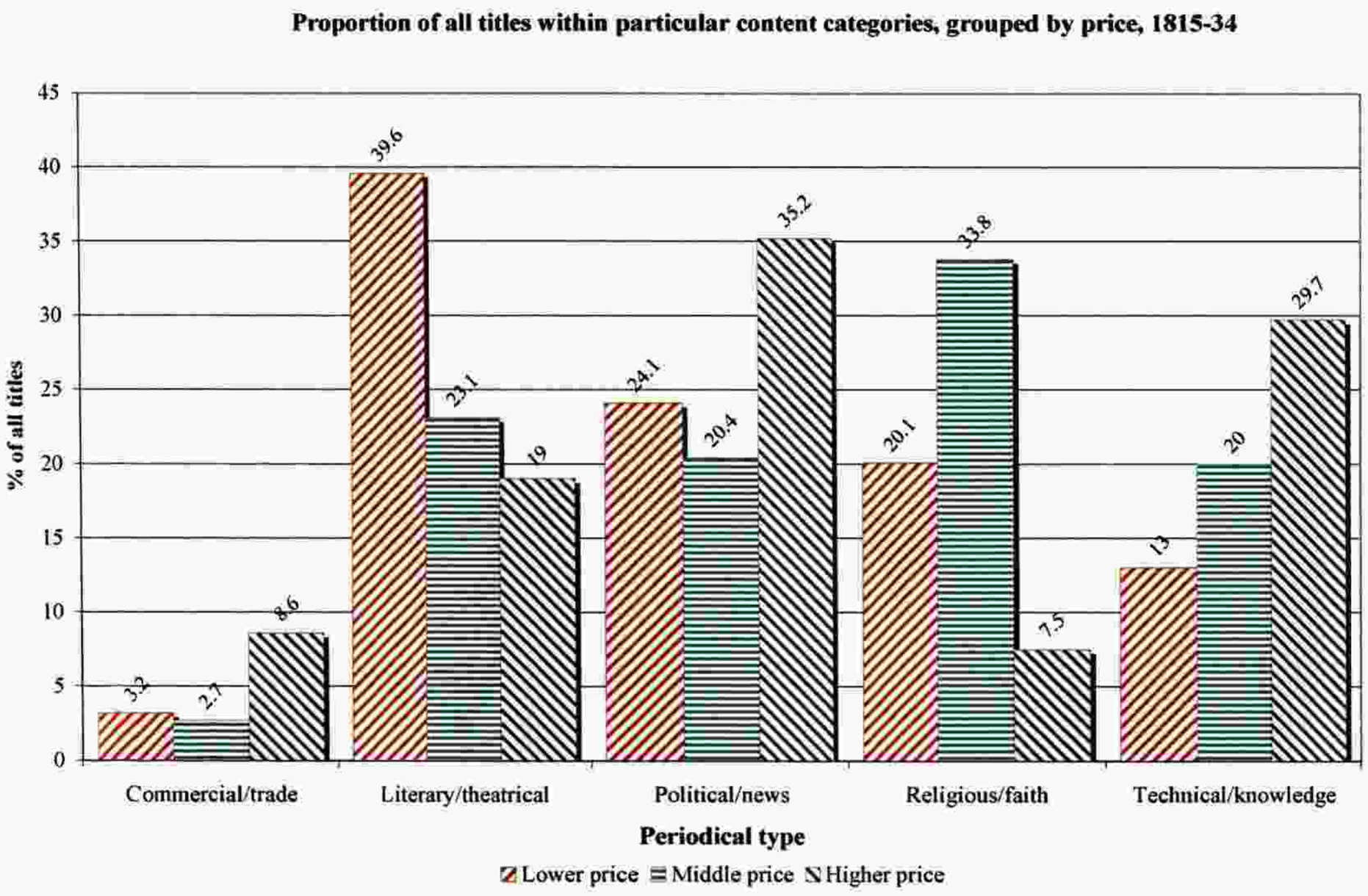
The aggregate data for the expensive market suggest that political periodicals dominated the price range (35.2% of all titles produced). The political class is closely followed by technical periodicals (29.7%): a result which reflects the large number of scientific, educational, legal and medical publications in this price range, often linked to professional associations and amateur societies.[208] Literary content accounts for 19%, but most striking is the small proportion of periodicals of a religious nature (7.5%). In the middle-price market, the situation is markedly different: religious content dominates (33.8%), while literary (23.1%), political (20.4%) and technical (20%) categories possess a similar market share. The dominance of religious content in this middle price range confirms patterns in the book trade for the period (in which religious books 'tended to have a price structure that leaned toward the cheap book'), but suggests also that the transition from religious to secular content was not yet complete. The data also reveal that the cheap market was dominated by literary periodicals (39.6%) rather than politics (24.1%). Religious titles accounted for 20.1% of all those produced, followed by technical periodicals (13%) and small number of commercial titles (3.2%). This result suggests that politics was an essential, though not dominant, dimension of cheap periodical content, and that some readers of cheap titles were as likely to demand literary, satirical and theatrical coverage. In comparison to the cheap book trade (where the literary book did not begin to appear until 1870), cheap periodicals were therefore part of a campaign to provide cheap literary material between 1815 and 1834.[209] The data also show that technical knowledge was an important component of cheap content, suggesting the existence of a readership that demanded a combination of literary amusement, political news and

---

[208] For example, the ten-penny monthly *Scientific Receptacle* (1791-1819), the *Quarterly Journal of Foreign Medicine and Surgery* (1818-21) and the monthly *British Entomology* (1824-39).
[209] S. Eliot, 'Some trends' (1995), 39-41.

scientific information, and which would be exploited by Charles Knight and the SDUK after 1827. Finally, the relatively high proportion of religious periodicals in the cheap market reflects the increasing effort of the RTS and SPCK to diffuse cheap moral literature.[210]

Figure 2.3



c. Higher-price periodicals

If the higher-price data are plotted over time the aggregate content-hierarchy remains relatively unchanged (figures 2.4 and 2.5). The market is suggested to be a mix of stability in the case of the religious, commercial and literary categories, and one of rapid change for political and technical periodicals. Religious periodicals experienced slow growth in numbers of titles (from eleven to twenty-two) in the period, and oscillated between 5.9% and 8.8% of the total proportion of the price

[210] The SDUK published its *Penny Magazine* late in the development of the cheap market, as did the SPCK with its *Saturday Magazine*. The RTS had some earlier experiments, including the *Children's Friend* (1824-9), the *Child's Companion*, the *Domestic Visitor* (1828-31), the *Tract Magazine* (1824-46) and the *Weekly Visitor* (1832-5).

range. Literary organs were similarly stable after initial growth (a 2% rise from thirty-two titles in 1815-19 to forty-eight in 1820-4), but thereafter stabilized in number of titles and at 19% of output. Commercial organs fluctuated between 7.5% and 9.6% of output, but after a peak in 1820-4 levelled off and declined in number. The first of two significant changes came with the decline of political periodicals from being the dominant genre in 1815-19 (seventy-eight titles and 41.5% of all output) to seventy-three titles and 29.2% of output in 1830-4. A peak in 1820-4 (ninety-six titles, 38.2%) was followed by a decline thereafter, and political were overtaken by technical periodicals as the source of the largest share of titles by 1830-4. This surprising result, particularly in the context of the 'reform crisis', suggests that the rise in cheap political titles in 1830-4 may have adversely impacted the expensive market (though this could also be a result of readerships increasingly clustering around particular leading titles). The second significant shift occurred with technical periodicals, which represented the second largest group in 1815-19 (fifty-one titles, 27.1%), and thereafter increased rapidly in number (to eighty-four in 1830-4) and as a proportion of the total (up to 33.6%).[211]

[211] *London periodicals, 1815-34.*

Figure 2.4

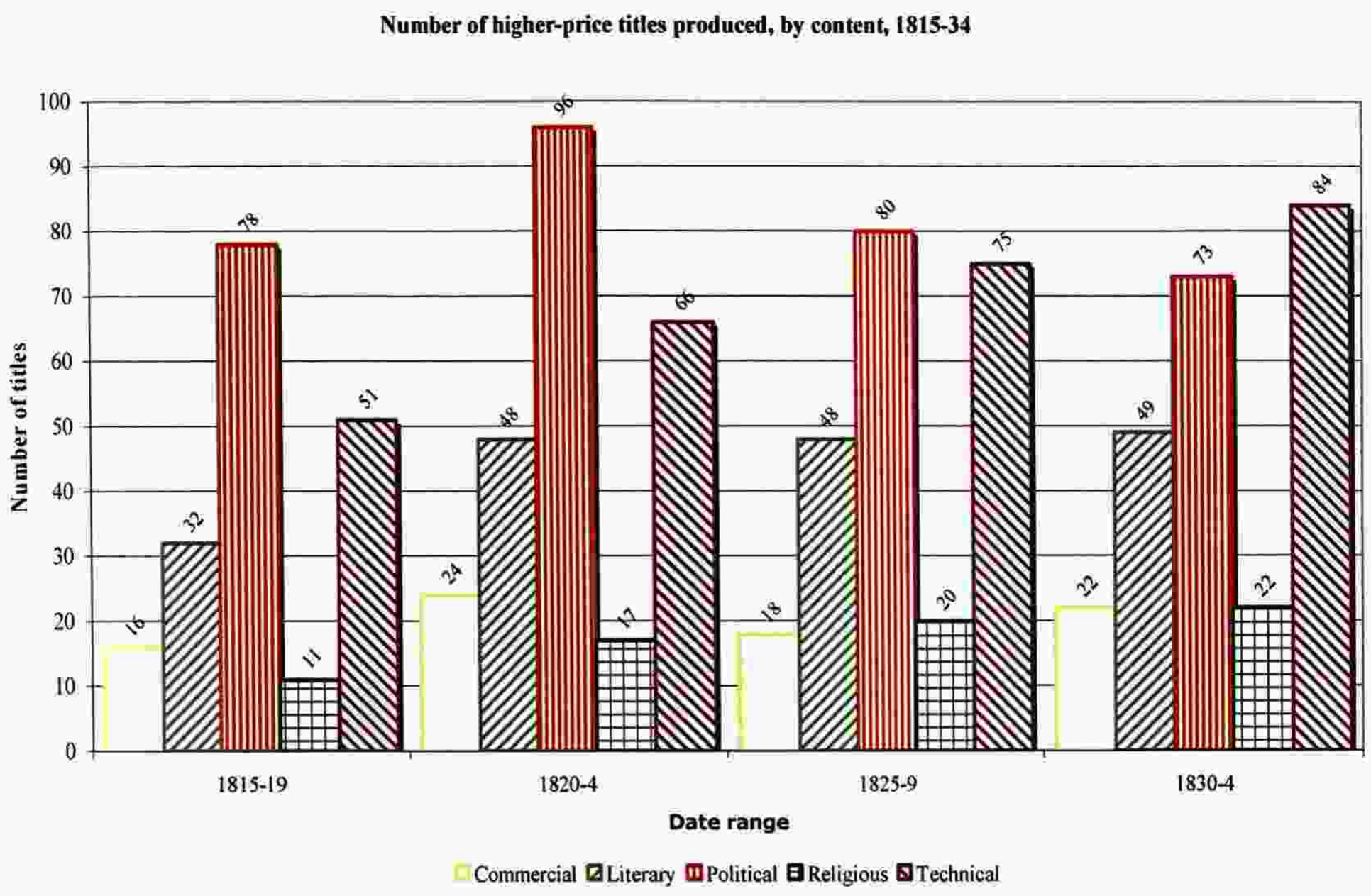
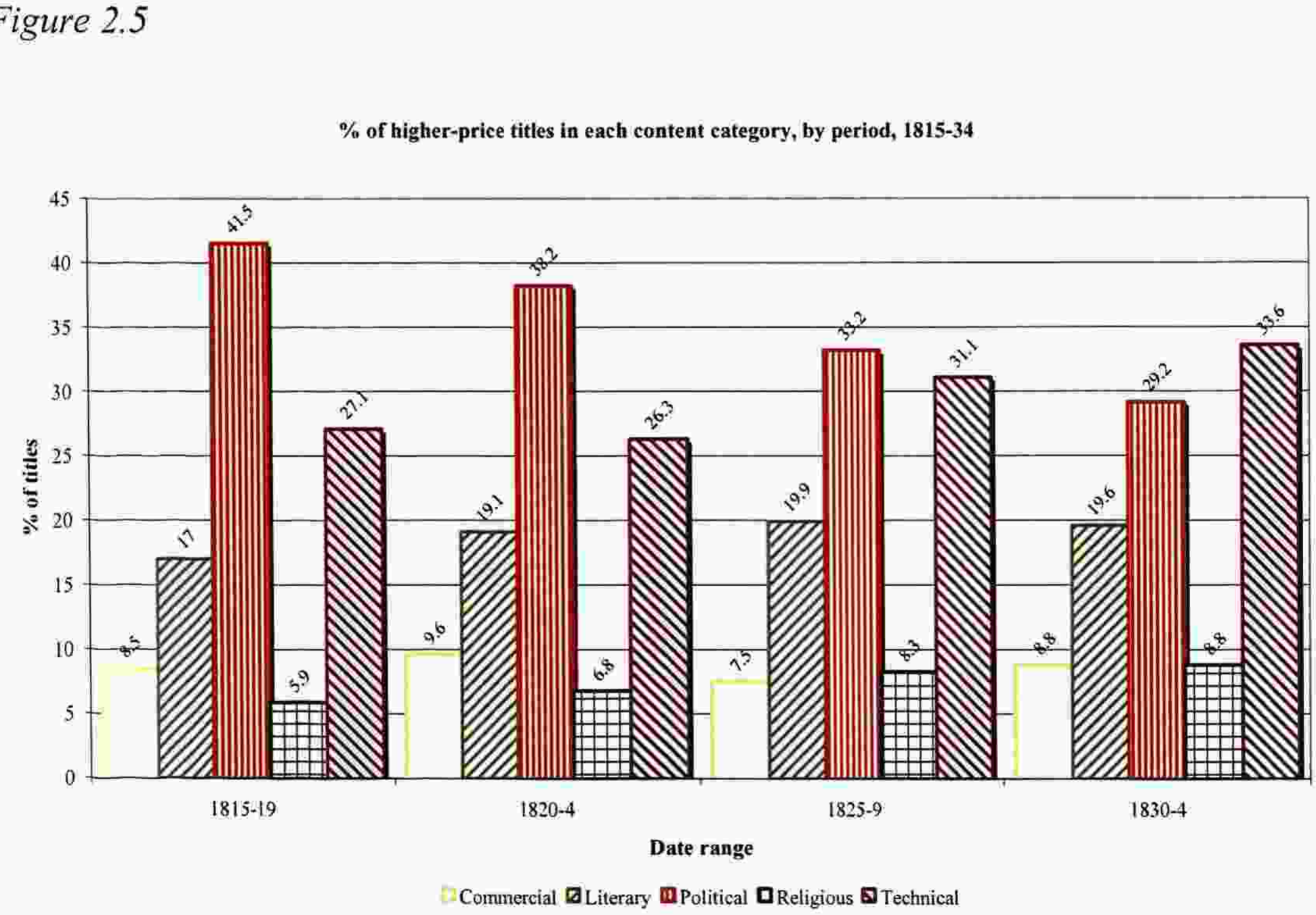


Figure 2.5



d. Middle-price periodicals

In the middle price range, there is some change over time (figures 2.6 and 2.7), with religious periodicals increasing steadily from fifteen titles in 1815-19 (a 35.7% share of titles), to twenty-three titles in 1830-4 (but a reduced share of 31.6%). Literary periodicals mirrored this steady growth in numbers and slight dip in share of output, from nine titles in 1815-19 (and 21.4%) to sixteen in 1830-4 (and 20.3%). Overall, technical titles in this category increased in number (from six to sixteen) and as a proportion (from 14.3% in 1815-19 to 20.3% in 1830-4, with a peak of 23.4% in 1820-4). Most remarkable in this price range was the decline of political periodicals in 1820-4 (from eleven titles and 26.2% of the total, to five titles and 10.6% of output), subsequent recovery in 1825-9 (ten titles and 17.5%) and peak in 1830-4 (twenty titles and 25.3%). These results demonstrate how in the middle-price market the decline of the political periodical allowed other genres to flourish, but that the market adapted quickly in times of political agitation.

Figure 2.6

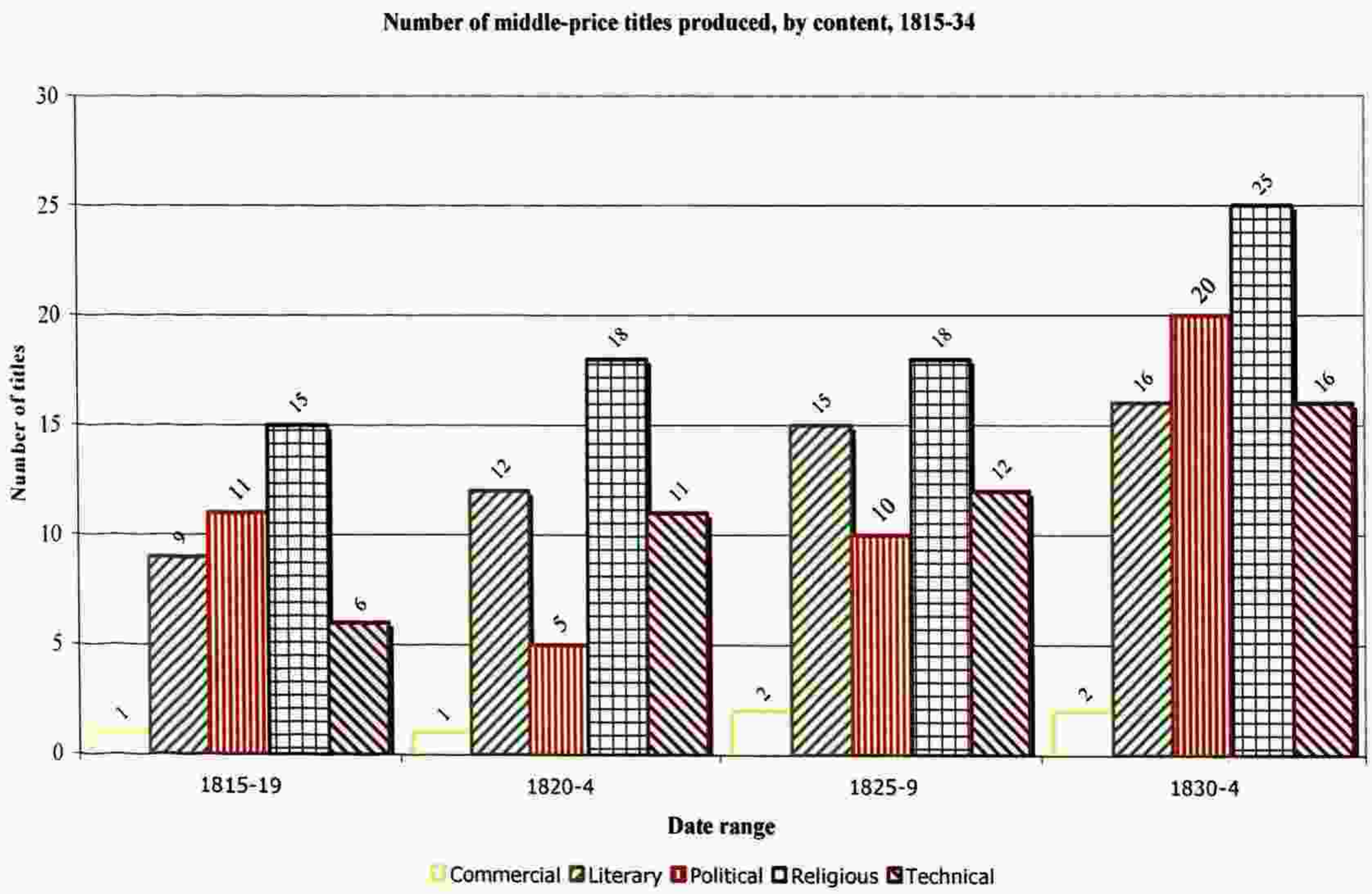
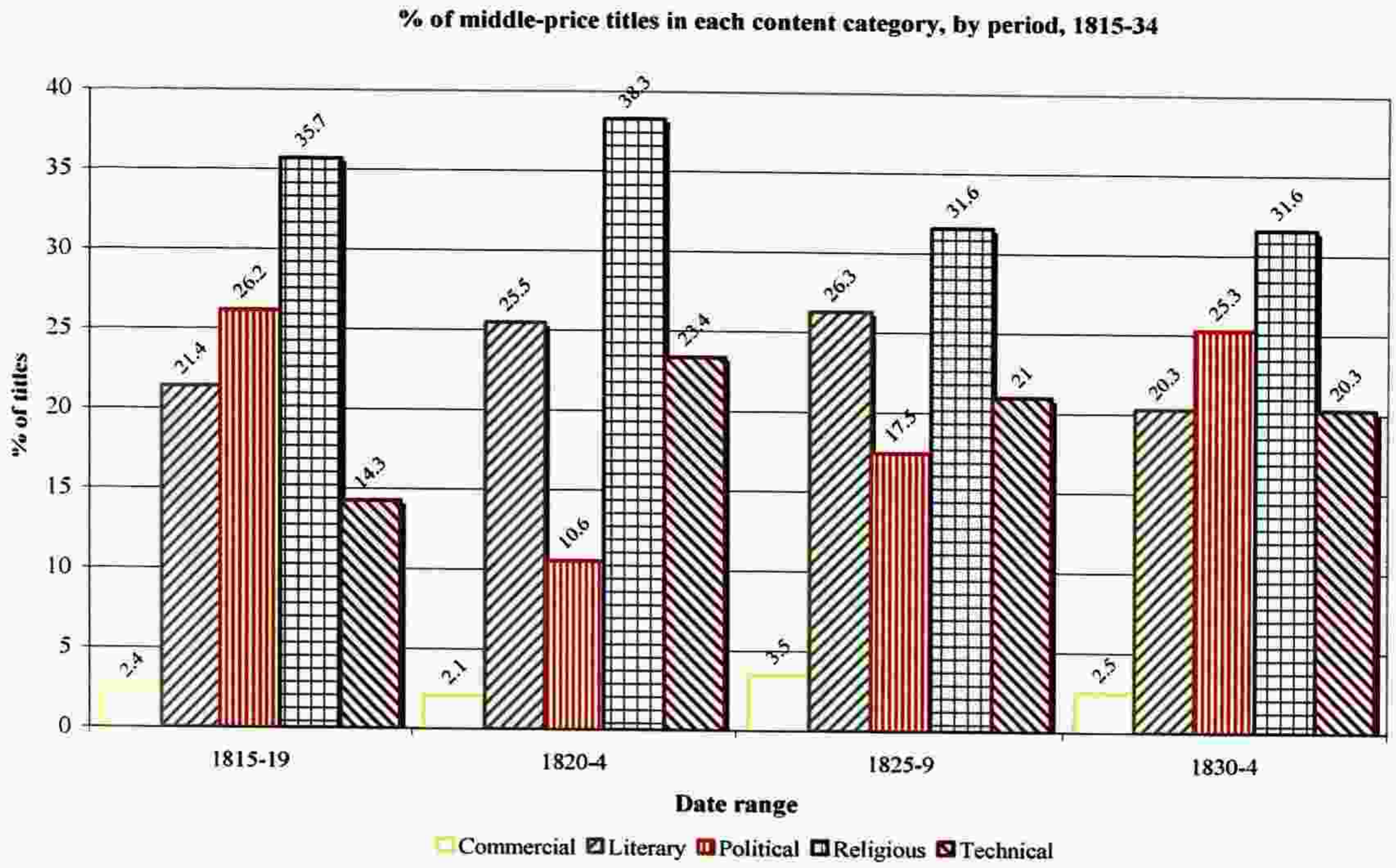


Figure 2.7



e. Lower-price periodicals

The most remarkable patterns of growth and diversification were experienced in the cheap market (figures 2.8 and 2.9, pp.129-30). These become pronounced if the outlying periods (1815-19 and 1830-4) are compared: commercial titles increased from 1 to 16 (a decline as a proportion of date-range output from 2.6% to 2.5%); political titles from 21 to 122 (a decline from 53.8% to 24.8%); religious titles from 11 to 102 (a decline from 28.2% to 15.8%); literary titles by contrast increased from 6 to 201 (an increase from 15.4% to 43.8%); and technical titles from zero to 66 (an increase from 0% to 13%). The data thus show that within a pattern of significant overall growth, important changes in the content hierarchy of the cheap market had occurred, with a decline in the proportion of political and religious titles offset by significant increases in literary and technical titles. The relationship between genres is clearly shown: the decline of the political periodical (from 53.8% in 1815-9 to 8.8% in 1825-9) and subsequent half-recovery in 1830-4 (24.8%) is particularly striking - as

is the growth of the literary genre's share from 15.4% in 1815-9, to 37.2% in 1820-4, 36.8% in 1825-9 to 43.8% in 1830-4. The growth of the technical title from a non-existent share in 1815-19 to 14.1% in 1820-4, and to 19.1% in 1825-9 is similarly notable. As well as an altered hierarchy of content, therefore, the cheap market appeared to be experiencing an increasingly balanced distribution of titles across subject genres.[212]

This pattern is complicated if the intervening years are included. Religious periodicals experienced a large increase between 1815-19 and 1820-4 (from eleven to twenty titles), a plateau in 1825-9 (twenty titles) then a large increase in 1830-4 (to fifty-one titles). Technical periodical titles increased steadily throughout the period: from zero in 1815-19, to eleven in 1820-4, a plateau at thirteen in 1825-9, then a large increase to forty-two in 1830-4. This development is striking, and has been interpreted as an opening up of a public space for 'popular science' in these years. Indeed, the foundation of the LMI in 1823 and turn to issues of knowledge and education in the early 1820s stimulated the peak of technical periodical production. The high cost of production of technical journals, which relied on woodcuts, original articles and abridgements, may explain why publishers of this genre faced particularly acute problems during the slump in the book trade in 1825-6, though the large increase in 1830-4 suggests its continuing appeal to common readers.[213]

The most notable results come from the literary and political periodical genres. In 1815-19 there were only six literary periodicals, by 1820-4 twenty-nine had appeared, in 1825-9 this expansion levelled off (at twenty-five), before a jump to 141 literary

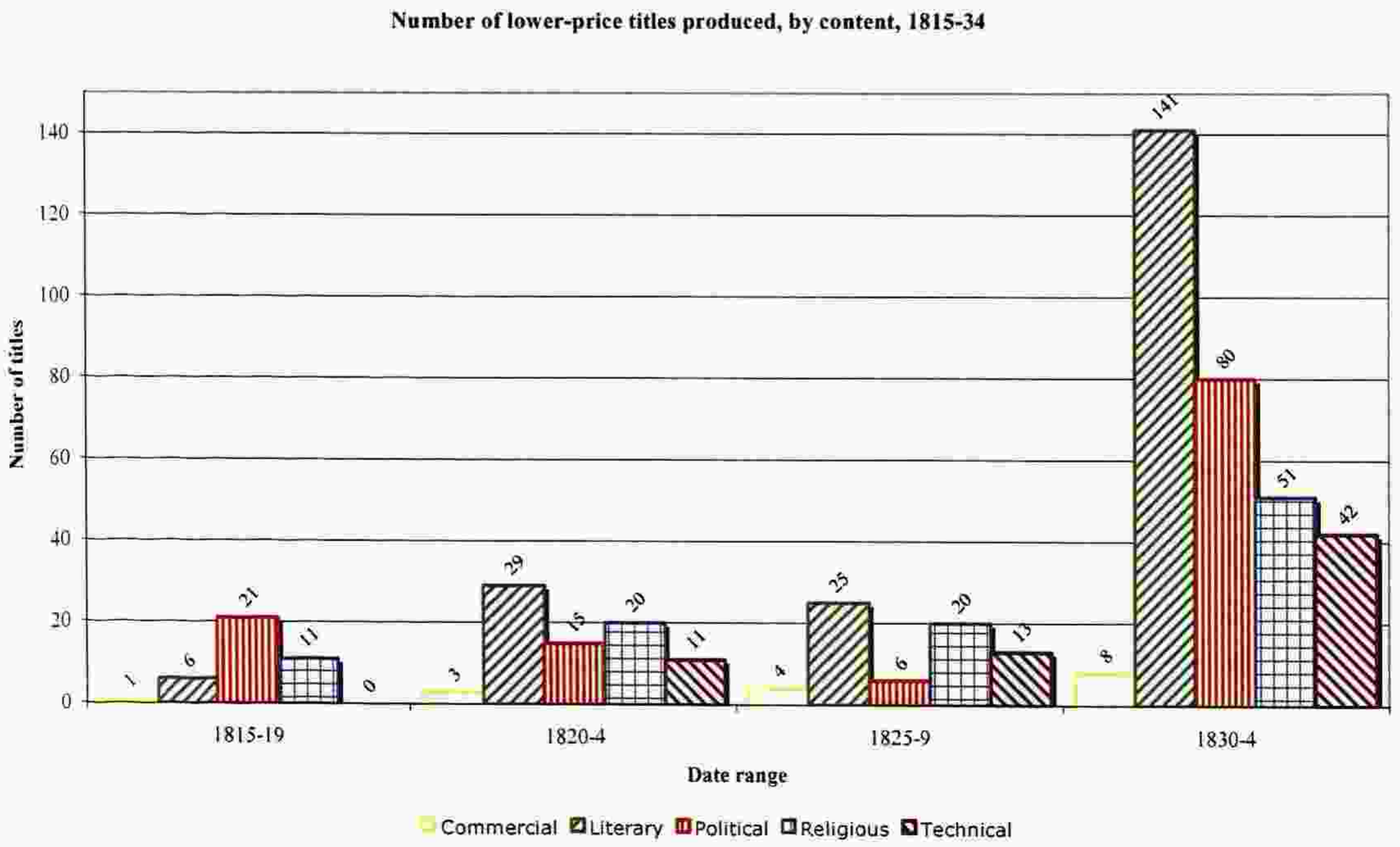
---

[212] *London periodicals, 1815-34.*

[213] The early 1820s witnessed a proliferation of cheap technical titles, such as the *Mechanic's Magazine*, the *Economist and General Advertiser*, the *Artisan and Mechanics' Instructor* (1824-5), the *Mechanic's Chronicle* (1824) and the *Mechanic's Weekly Journal* (1823-4). See J. R. Topham, 'Scientific publishing', *Stud. Hist. Phil. Sci.*, Vol. 31 (2000), 559-612 and chapter five of this thesis, 287-99.

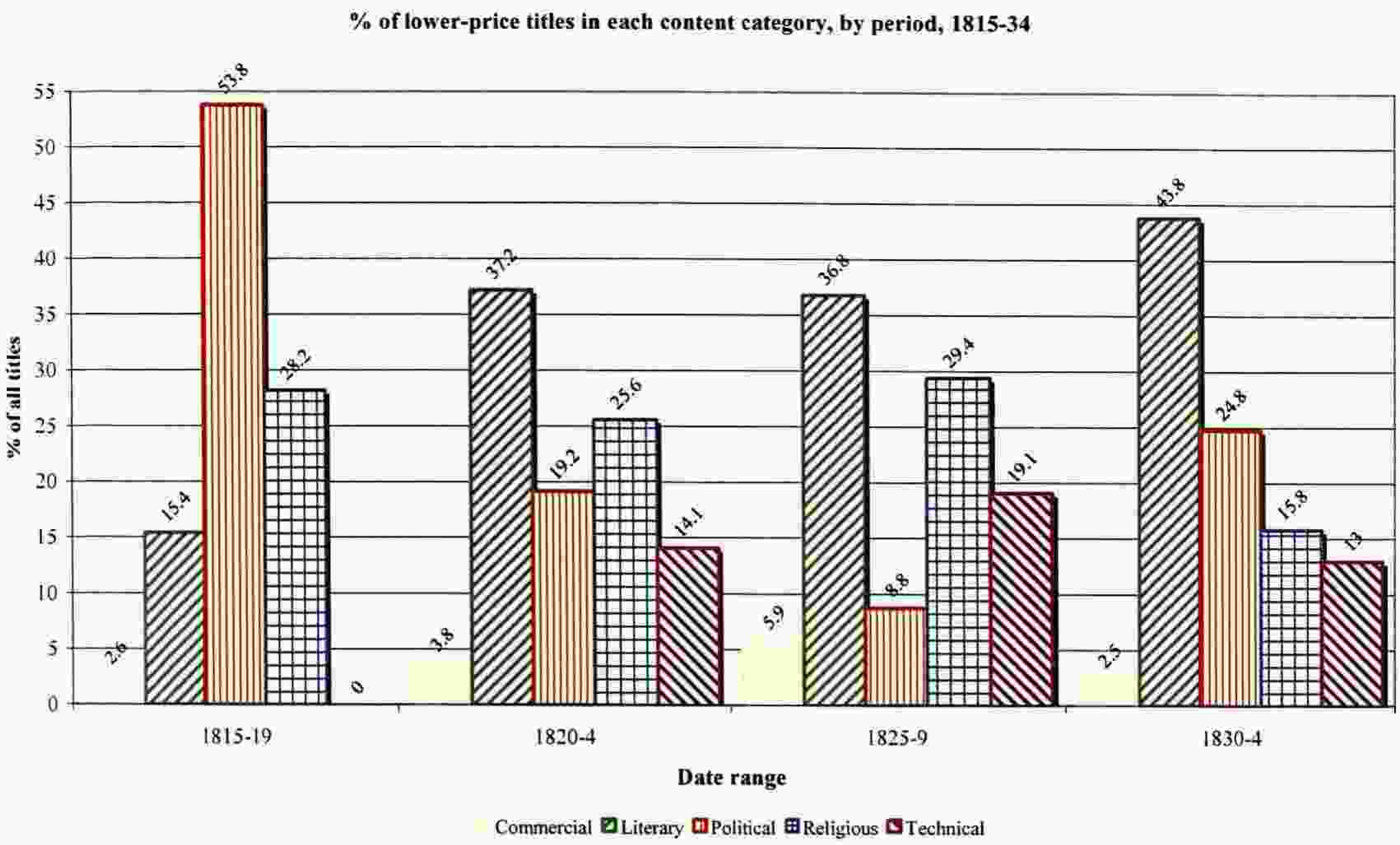
periodicals produced in 1830-4. One explanation for this increase is that publishers in the 1820s began to appropriate the cheap weekly format as a vehicle for pre-existing popular literary genres, the most famous example of which is Limbird's *Mirror*. The ballad, poem, woodcut image, bawdy story, crime report and gossip page could often be found in such cheap literary periodicals, and at a time when a newspaper cost at least seven-pence, the cheap literary miscellany was an attractive alternative. The relationship between cheap literary and political organs in the period is complex. Political periodicals began as the dominant form of cheap periodical in 1815-19 (twenty-one titles); declined slightly in 1820-4 (to fifteen); crashed to only six in 1825-9; then grew quickly to eighty in 1830-4. This decline and relative recovery does not necessarily indicate the declining place of politics in the life of the common reader. Rather, it might suggest that in the context of legal repression, literary organs could provide political comment in the form of satire.[214]

Figure 2.8



[214] For the cheap illustrated journal, see B. Maidment, *Into the 1830s* (1992), 2-24. For the subsequent move in caricature from politics to social comment, see D. Kunzle, 'Between broadsheet caricature and "Punch": cheap newspaper cuts for the lower classes in the 1830s', *Art Journal*, Vol. 43 (1983), 339-46.

Figure 2.9



In summary, although political periodicals dominated the cheap market in 1815-19, they lost ground to all other genres until the reform crisis of 1829-32 precipitated their resurgence. Technical periodicals first emerged as a cheap format in this period, peaking in 1820-4 and becoming a significant sector of the market by 1830-4. Literary periodicals represented the most extreme case of change, with a pattern of quick growth between 1815 and 1824, a plateau in 1825-9 and a renewed growth spurt in 1830-4.

III

Conclusions: organization, trends and patterns in the production of metropolitan periodicals

This chapter has made a number of arguments through a supply-side analysis of popular periodicals published in London between 1815 and 1834. What are the implications of these conclusions for an understanding of the relationship between the popular periodical, radical print culture and the march of intellect? What was driving

the expansion of the cheap market, in particular, and why did it happen when and in the manner in which it did? Firstly, it is proposed that bookseller-publishers, embedded in the metropolitan book trade and operating within its traditional locales, were the most important agents in effecting change. Operating under legal-political restrictions, this diverse group entered the cheap periodical market for a range of ideological, commercial and paternalistic reasons. And secondly, that the infrastructure of a cheap periodical market was forged in the period - though with a plateau in the number of titles being produced in the later 1820s. The breakthrough of the cheap radical press in 1815-19 was followed by a period of consolidation and diversification between 1820 and 1829, providing a basis for the rapid mobilization and proliferation of an unstamped press in 1830-4 that spanned a range of technical, religious, political and literary genres.

The data thus reveal the overall expansion of a heterogeneous market for periodical literature. In particular, they demonstrate that cheap periodical titles increased significantly both in number and as a proportion of all titles published in London, and that by 1830-4 this market represented the largest share of all titles produced. Distinctive patterns within this overall growth trend are also visible: a breakthrough of the cheap periodical format between 1815 and 1819 (spearheaded by the post-war radical press); a period of stabilization and diversification between 1820 and 1829 (characterized by the increasing prevalence of literary, religious and technical titles); and a subsequent proliferation between 1830 and 1834 (driven by a combination of the resurgence of political titles and the rapid growth of all other genres).

This cheap price range was not entirely derivative of more expensive markets: each price range had specific characteristics in terms of content, and while the higher-

price market was largely driven by politics and news and the middle-price market by religion, the cheap market was characterized above all by a combination of literary and political content. There is evidence - as will be demonstrated in the next chapter - that common readers accessed and supported not just the lower and middle price markets, but also the higher price market, and similarly that cheap periodicals themselves were consumed by a heterogeneous readership. This warns against portraying any single price-range as the exclusive property of a particular social group.

Most importantly, in terms of how this phenomenon occurred, trends of growth and patterns of diversification demonstrate that the appropriation of print technology by and for a common readership led to the breakthrough of cheap print encompassing a range of genres - literary, religious and technical, as much as political. If radical print was thus not the sole driver of the growth of a cheap market after 1819, the stagnation of this and the higher price market in 1825-9 - the very years in which the march of intellect began to pervade public discourse - suggests not only that there was no linear growth trend, but also that perceptions of the amount of printed material available to the common reader did not always reflect reality. In sum, claims that the popular periodical embodied and cultivated a sense of popular agency by supplying the wants of a latent common readership ought to be set in the context of the oscillating fortunes of the popular periodical market itself.

CHAPTER TWO

Production practices and cheap publishing repertoires: the case of Cowie and Strange, 1822-34

Introduction

The most remarkable development in the metropolitan popular periodical market between 1815 and 1834 was the breakthrough, diversification and proliferation of the cheap periodical format - but what were the practices underpinning these changes? How, why and for what readerships were cheap periodicals produced? And what are the implications of this for an understanding of the common reader as an active intellectual, moral or political agent in this period? This chapter explores the kind of bookseller-publishers who were producing and disseminating cheap periodicals, for what readerships and why, through an analysis of the careers of the publisher William Strange (1801-71) and his printer coadjutor George Cowie (*b.*1799/1800). This analysis addresses two specific questions relating to the economics of cheap publishing and the development of a cheap 'publishing repertoire'. Firstly, what made Cowie and Strange believe that cheap periodical publishing was commercially viable? And secondly, to what extent were they driven by commercial, political or ideological motivations?

It is argued that although radical political content was responsible for the initial breakthrough of the cheap weekly format in the 1810s, radicalism thereafter represented only one dimension of a multifaceted cheap 'publishing repertoire'. The consolidation and diversification of the cheap market in the 1820s enabled the proliferation of 'unstamped' periodicals during the early 1830s; but these unstamped periodicals encompassed a wider scope of content than radical politics. Cowie and Strange - who broke into the cheap market as publishers of 'technical' titles - targeted

a predominantly humble readership of artisans and mechanics in this period, but they also experimented with a more inclusive 'popular' readership.[215] Additions to their repertoire were made as a result of bankruptcy and shifting political conditions, and the latter provided a powerful commercial incentive to exploit a perceived latent common readership. These conclusions, it is argued, throw new light on how and why the cheap periodical market expanded, and illuminate aspects of the complex and changing relationship between cheap publishing, radical culture and the march of intellect.

I

Overview of the 'publishing repertoire' of Cowie and Strange

Cowie and Strange developed a varied 'publishing repertoire' during the 1820s and 1830s, experimenting with a range of technical, literary, political and satirical periodicals - covering the cheap, middle and higher price ranges - before becoming publishers of unstamped periodicals in 1830. Their 'publishing repertoire' was a stock of formats, genres and modes of presentation, marketing and distribution, drawn on selectively and pragmatically as their reading of the market required (see table 3.1, p.137). As a pool of publishing resources it was constantly modified by experience and experiment, suggesting that cheap publishing in the period ought to be considered as both a business practice (producing a commodity in a marketplace and concerned with pricing, product, readership, risk and strategy); and a personal activity (relying on individual and institutional networks and influenced by a range of legal, political and ideological conditions).[216]

---

[215] For a discussion of 'popular' readerships, see chapter four, 249-52.

[216] For previous (brief, but insightful) coverage of Cowie and Strange, see L. James, *Fiction for the working man* (1963), 21-2, 30, 39, 47-8, 52 and 215; P. Hollis, *The pauper press* (1970), 127-8, 200-1, 310 and 314; I. McCalman, *Radical underworld* (1988), 219 and 221; and I. Haywood, *The revolution* (2004), 133-6. The concept of a 'publishing repertoire' is my own.

George Cowie was born on Drury Lane in Middlesex in either 1799 or 1800, and William Strange in Newington Causeway in Southwark in 1801. In 1822 they established a printing, publishing and bookselling business at number twenty-four Fetter Lane in the City, registering a common press with John Clements. Cowie and Strange's first publication was the technical three-penny *London Mechanics' Register* (1824-6); in early 1826 they moved into additional retail premises at number sixty Paternoster Row, in the heart of the established book trade.[217] From here they published and disseminated a range of periodicals, including the weekly three-penny technical *Register of Arts and Sciences* (1823-6), the monthly shilling *Christian Moderator* (1826-8), the weekly three-penny *Paul Pry* (1826), the four-penny *Ass; or Weekly Beast of Burden* (1826), the three-penny *Literary Cabinet and Journal of Belles Lettres, Fine Arts, Drama* (1827), the three-penny *Beauties of the Magazines and Spirit of the Times* (1827-8) and the penny *Casket* (1827-9). In 1829-30, trading from number fifty-five Paternoster Row, they became publishers of the *Olio; or Museum of Entertainment* (1828-33), simultaneously publishing a number of penny co-operative journals, including the *Co-operator* (1828-30), the *Associate* (1829) and the *Birmingham and Co-operative Herald* (1829-30). The cheapness of Cowie and Strange's periodicals was a statement of the modest social level of readership they aimed to reach, and their repeated appeals to 'humble readers', the 'working classes' and, more specifically, 'artisans' and 'mechanics' reinforced this strategy.[218]

Throughout the 1820s Cowie and Strange also increased the scale and scope of

---

[217] See my entries for Cowie and Strange in *DNCJ*. Strange and his wife, Ann (*b*.1806), had six children: William, Charles, Thomas, Sarah, Eliza and Mary Ann. Cowie and his wife, Sarah (*b*.1801), had seven: George, Sarah, James, William, Jane, Edward and Susannah. They were listed as 'booksellers' at 24 Fetter Lane in *Pigot and co.'s London & provincial new commercial directory* (1824), 46; and as 'booksellers and lawstationers' in *Kent's original London directory* (1826), 87. Their partner, Robert Thomas Weaver, retired in December 1827, dissolving their partnership (now with a bookshop at number 60 Paternoster Row), *Perry's Bankrupt and Insolvent Gazette* (1827), 74.

[218] For a full list of periodicals see page 137 and the bibliography.

their book production, publishing works on machinery, currency and the Corn Laws, collections of comical songs, theatrical miscellanies, children's literature and a series of trade guides. These guides encompassed bricklaying, brass-founding, hat-making and acting, but the most successful were the *Bookbinder's manual* (1828) and the *Printer's pocket book* (1829). In 1829 Cowie and Strange began to publish their first radical economic and political works, becoming publishers to the British Association for the Promotion of Co-operative Knowledge (BAPCK) and issuing cheap reproductions of a series of articles by Thomas Perronet Thompson (1783-1869) from the *Westminster Review*. Selling for two- or three-pence, this '*POOR MAN'S POLITICAL LIBRARY*' (engaging Bentham's greatest happiness principle, Catholic Emancipation, the 'taxes on knowledge', slavery and the Ricardian theory of rent) was calculated to appeal to a common readership, and exemplified Cowie and Strange's strategy of diffusing cheap anti-establishment print.[219] This broadening publishing repertoire heightened Cowie and Strange's profile in London, but the large scale of their output did not ensure commercial success. In November 1829 they filed for bankruptcy, and in 1830 the firm of Cowie and Strange was dissolved.[220]

---

[219] See Thomas Perronet Thompson, *Catholic state wagon* (1829). These 'cheap Reprints' were a collaboration with Chappell, Cowie, Purkess and Wilson; the latter of whom had well-documented radical links; see E. Nye, 'Effingham Wilson: the radical publisher of the Royal Exchange', *Publishing History*, Vol. 36 (1994), 87-102.

[220] *Perry's Bankrupt* (1829), 683. They were listed as trading 'booksellers and publishers' at Fetter Lane and 55 Paternoster Row in *The Post-Office* (1830), 94. They were allowed certificates until 8 October, *Perry's Bankrupt* (1830), 580. They briefly moved to 64 Paternoster Row in late 1829.

Table 3.1: Periodicals published or printed by Cowie and Strange, 1822-34 (n=65)

Title	Genre	Dates	Price/per.	Title	Genre	Dates	Price/per.
London Mechanics' Register	T	1824-6	3d/w	*Citizen*	P	1832	2d/w
Register of Arts and Sciences	T	1823-6	3d/w	*Slap at the Church!*	R	1832	1d/w
Paul Pry	L	1826	3d/w	*New Entertaining Press*	P	1832-3	1d/w
Ass; or Weekly Beast of Burden	L	1826	4d/w	*Quid! or, Tales of My Messmates*	L	1832	3d/w
Christian Moderator	R	1826-8	1s/m	*Episcopal Gazette*	R	1832	2d/m
Watchman and Police Recorder	L	1826	3d/w	*Original Weekly Miscellany*	L	1832	3d/w
Casket	L	1827-9	1d/w	*Cab*	L	1832	½ d/w
Literary Cabinet	L	1827	3d/w	*Calendar of Crime and General Advertiser*	L	1832	1d/w
Spirit of the Times	L	1827-8	3d/w	*Thief*	L	1832-3	2d/w
Censor	L	1828-9	n/a	*Comic Magazine*	L	1832-4	1s/w
Brighton Co-operator	P	1828-30	1d/m	*London Penny Journal*	P	1832	1d/w
Associate and Co-operative Mirror	P	1829	1d/m	*Idler*	L	1832	1d/w
Monthly Theatrical Review	L	1829	?/m	*Political Unionist*	P	1832	2d/w
Birmingham and Co-operative Herald	P	1829-30	1d/m	*Doctor*	T	1832-7	1d/w
Olio	L	1828-33	3d/w	*Penny School-Book*	T	1832	1d/w
British Co-operator	P	1830	6d/m	*New Penny Magazine*	P	1832	1d/w
Magazine of Useful Knowledge	P	1830	2d/fn	*Boys' and Girls' Penny Magazine*	L	1832-3	1d/w
Tiddy Doll	L	1830	1d/w	*Physician*	T	1832	1d/w
Annual Parliaments	P	1830-1	2d/w	*Penny Pirate*	L	1832	1d/w
Paul Pry	P	1830-1	7d/w	*Poor Richard's Journal for Poor People*	L	1832	2d/w
Talisman	L	1829-31	n/a	*People's Penny Pictures*	L	1832	1d/w
Carpenter's Monthly Political Magazine	P	1831-2	?/m	*Squib*	P	1832	1d/w
Political Letters	P	1830-1	4d/irreg.	*Slap at the Times*	P	1832	1d/m
Political Anecdotist	P	1831	2d/w	*The Truth*	P	1832	1d/w
Political Letter	P	1831-2	3½d or 7d/w	*The Penny Story Teller*	L	1832-7	1d/w
Carpenter's Political and Historical Essays	P	1831	1d/w	*The Penny Story Book*	L	1832	1d/w
Album, or Miscellany of Amusement	L	1831	2d/w	*London Weekly Magazine*	?	1833	?/w
Patriot	P	1831	2d/w	*Whig Dresser*	P	1833	1d/w; 6d/m
Fool's Cap	L	1831	1d/w	*Cobbett's Magazine*	P	1833-4	?/m
National Omnibus	L	1831-3	1d/w	*Penny Cyclopaedia*	T	1833-43	1d/w; 9d/m
Intelligence	P	1830-3	7d/w	*Bell's Literary Intelligence*	L	1834	1d/w
New Casket	L	1831-3	1d/w	*Official Gazette of the Trades' Unions*	P	1834	3½d/w
Figaro in London	P	1831-9	1d/w				

Far from ending their association with cheap periodicals (and each other) this dissolution coincided with their increasingly central role in the 'war of the unstamped' and the campaign for parliamentary reform. Cowie and Strange were not prominent in major reform associations such as the Radical Reform Association (RRA), the National Political Union (NPU), the Metropolitan Political Union (MPU) or the National Union of the Working Classes (NUWC), but associations with leading figures in these organizations confirmed their radical credentials. These personal networks enabled them to exploit the increased demand for cheap political literature during the reform crisis of 1829-32.

When Strange opened a shop at number twenty-one Paternoster Row in 1830 he became publisher to the radical journalist William Carpenter, whose two-penny *Political Letters and Pamphlets* signalled the beginning of the unstamped resistance.[221] From these warehousing and retail premises Strange sold most of the radical unstamped papers of the period, and was the principal vendor of Hetherington's *Penny Papers*. Strange also published many of Cobbett's works, including *Eleven lectures on the Belgian and French revolutions* (1830) and *The trial of William Cobbett* (1831). These partnerships gained Strange some celebrity, and the imprint of 'Strange, 21 Paternoster Row' became a radical signifier.[222] In spite of these associations, Strange's oeuvre continued to diversify, blending politics with populist literary, satirical and bawdy genres.

Following his bankruptcy in 1830, Cowie relocated to the Strand and several other locations in the City, and over the next five years also became involved in the

---

[221] Cowie and Strange, for instance, were prosecuted three times between 1828 and 1830 for failing to register periodicals as pamphlets at the Stamp Office or to pay stamp duty; they had their fines commuted to £27 in total; *HoC.AP*, Return of prosecutions and fines against printers and publishers, 1830, **1830** (407) XXV. 539.

[222] By 1831 Strange was listed as a 'bookseller and publisher' at 21 Paternoster Row; *The Post-Office* (1832), 380. Between 1851 and 1861 he operated from 8 Amen Corner (though some imprints place him at 80 Newgate Street), and between 1862 until his death, from 3 Amen Corner.

publication of unstamped periodicals, including the *New Casket* (1831-3), the *Political Unionist* (1832) and the *Boys' and Girls' Penny Magazine* (1832-3). The penny comic weekly, the *Figaro in London* (1831-9), a collaboration with Strange, boasted a circulation of 70,000 numbers in 1832.[223]

The political motivations of many cheap publishers can only be inferred from their output and prospectuses, and the distinction between what they believed and what they believed would sell is unclear. Nonetheless, a couple of surviving letters, written to and from Francis Place in 1831, reveal some features of Cowie's political sensibilities. Place was at this time collecting material for a biography of Thomas Spence (1750-1814), and in letter enclosing a number of relevant items, Cowie observed that

> [Aside from the book, the] others are pamphlets… one only may be of use, that is the sketch of C. Fox on Earl Grey's motion for reform 1797 as I perceive that the anti-reformers quote speechis [sic] of eminent men. This may answer the purpose of illustrating his [Spence's] opinion - but by the bye I consider those opinions futile - it is the present we should look to, and not either past or the future…[224]

The fact that Cowie had Spencean works in his possession indicates his interest in the subject, and, combined with references to the reform bill of 1797, the negative use of the term 'anti-reformer' and his familiarity with Spencean doctrine (whether 'futile' or not), the letter suggests his reformist points of reference. Cowie's participation in radical associational culture is substantiated in a letter sent to Place in March 1831 by Robert Charles Fair, a Smithfield shoemaker and radical poet. Fair claimed to have

---

[223] Cowie moved premises frequently. In 1830 he worked from 18 Goswell Road; in 1831 from 42 Wych Street; and in 1832 he was insured as a printer at 1 Bell Sauvage Yard, Ludgate Hill; Guildhall Library, Records of Sun Fire Insurance Office, Mss. 11936/536. He then occupied premises at 312 Strand, 13/14 Newcastle Street (1833-6), Bishop's Court, Old Bailey (1836) and Stonecutter Street (1836-7). In his later career he worked from Cleave's old shop at 110 Shoe Lane (1842).

[224] Letter from George Cowie to Francis Place, [n.d.], add. mss., 27,808, fols. 330-1. For a copy of Spence's short-lived weekly penny periodical, *Giant Killer; or Anti-Landlord* (which appeared on 6, 13 and 20 August 1814), idem, fols, 138-332. See also T. S. Knox, 'Thomas Spence: the trumpet of jubilee', *Past and Present*, No. 76 (1977), 75-98.

'several times visited [Spence in] his lodges' and enclosed a number of tracts for Place's perusal. The impetus for his correspondence, he noted, had come from Cowie:

> Mr George Cowie, with whom I have several times acted at the commemorations of the important and glorious acquittals of 1794, has requested me to forward you any information in my possession relative to Thomas Spence.

The treason trials of 1794, in which Thomas Hardy (1752-1832), John Horne Tooke (1736-1812) and John Thelwall were acquitted of high treason, were a celebrated event in the radical calendar, and Cowie's part in these commemorations further suggest his radical sympathies.[225]

In June 1832 Cowie was fined £20 for selling the unstamped anti-clerical *Church Examiner* (1832), and this prosecution, Cowie and Strange's legal wrangles with the Stamp Office and their founding membership of the Society for the Protection of Booksellers (for which Carpenter acted as treasurer), cemented their reputation as champions of press freedom.[226] Between 1822 and 1834 their known *cheap* periodical output of fifty-eight titles comprised two religious periodicals (3.4% of all the titles they produced); six technical titles (10.3%); twenty-two political titles (37.9%); and twenty-eight literary titles (48.3%).[227] After 1835 Cowie published only a small number of periodicals, the last of which was the Chartist newspaper, the *Southern Star* (1840). Between 1841 and 1851 he worked as a compositor in Clerkenwell, but details of his later life remain obscure. Strange in his later career as a cheap publisher, however, continued to court controversy. In subsequent years he produced periodicals advocating physical education and mesmerism, but his repertoire continued to rely on

---

[225] Letter from Robert Charles Fair to Francis Place, 9 Mar. 1831, add. mss., 27,808, fols. 320-1. For the trials see J. Barrell and J. Mee (eds.), *Trials for treason and sedition*, eight vols. (2006-7), ii-viii.

[226] On his death it was noted that '[f]or some time past Mr Strange has been deriving benefit from his early providence in becoming a member of the Booksellers' Provident Institution'. The thirty-third report showed that £1,634,15s. 10d. had been dispensed to 528 members by 1870; *Bookseller*, 3 Oct. 1871.

[227] Compare this to the cheap periodical market overall: technical (13%); religious (20.1%); political (24.1%); and literary (39.6%). See chapter one, 127-30, and appendix 2.

tested formats, including *Chambers's London Journal* (1841-5), the *Penny Illustrated News* (1849-50) and the *Bookbinders' Trade Circular* (1850-77). Strange's commercial opportunism was demonstrated by his unauthorized publication of a catalogue of sketches made by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert; *The royal Victoria and Albert gallery of etchings* (1848). These were abandoned only after the prince himself secured an injunction in a high-profile case. The scandal (in which it transpired that the images had been procured from a printer in Windsor) forced Strange to go into hiding in France for over a year, leaving his son, William, in charge of a business with mounting debts and threatened with legal proceedings by several disgruntled associates.[228]

In 1852 Strange relocated to number eight, Amen Corner (west of Paternoster Row) and in 1861 was still trading as a bookseller with his son and four apprentices. His bankruptcy in 1860 and comments about the 'indecent' content of his latest periodical, *Fast Life* (1859-60), served as a reminder of his tendency towards controversy and predilection for risqué literature (he was convicted in 1857 for selling the 'obscene' *The women of London* [n.d.], and his son, William, had published an edition of the graphically anti-clerical *The confessional unmasked* in 1852).[229] Reporting on one of his many legal wrangles, *The Times* quoted the judgement that Strange was 'old and crafty', but following his death on 5 September 1871 the *Bookseller* noted that, alongside Cowie, he was 'one of the early pioneers of literature in the then

---

[228] Only fifty-one copies of the work were printed; see W. A. Copinger, *The law of copyright*, 3rd edn. (1893), 11-17 and F. J. Hall and P. Twells, *Reports of cases*, two vols. (1850-1), i, 1-28. For a recent survey of the case, see J. Plunkett, *Queen Victoria* (2003), 16-17 and 28-9. Louis James records how Strange, in alliance with George Berger, John Cleave and J. M. Clarke, plagiarized Charles Dickens' *Christmas carol* in 1844. Although ordered to pay costs, they instead 'threatened Dickens with a beating', *Fiction for the working man* (1963), 52; *TT*, 11, 15, 17 Jan. 1851.

[229] Strange was bankrupted by such prosecutions three times in his career (1830, 1832 and 1860); *TT*, 4 Nov., 1829; 30 Mar. 1835; 6 Jan. 1840; 4 Feb. 1840; 7 Nov., 11, 14, 15 Dec., 1849; 17, 19, 27, 29, 30, 31 Jan., 23 May, 2 Jun., 28, 29 Nov. 1849; 12 Jun., 25 Apr., 30 Nov., 1850; 11, 17 Jan., 4, 24 Feb., 1851; 24 Jul 1852. He was prosecuted alongside William Dugdale; see I. McCalman, *Radical underworld* (1988), 221.

unpalatable form of periodicals, especially those of a political kind'. The *Athenaeum* observed that he was 'much respected in the Row' and commended 'his unwearied perseverance'. These were all realistic judgements of bookseller-publishers who had indiscriminately championed cheap literature and straddled both rough and respectable print cultures.[230]

II

The rise and fall of Cowie and Strange, 1822-30

i. Breaking through: cheap technical periodicals and associational networks, 1822-5

What types of cheap periodical did Cowie and Strange produce, and why and how did they attempt to break into the cheap market? What made them think this was a commercially viable market, and on what literary precedents and institutional bases did they draw? Cowie and Strange's career began in the context of decreasing radical mobilization and a strategic turn to issues of self-improvement, the widely publicized success of cheap periodicals, the establishment of educational institutions for artisans and mechanics in London and the permeation of the march of intellect as a trope to describe these phenomena. John Limbird's two-penny *Mirror* had demonstrated the potential of turning the cheap weekly format to mainstream, 'popular' and apolitical audiences, but it was from a periodical more explicitly aimed at the 'working classes' that Cowie and Strange first drew inspiration: the *Mechanic's Magazine*.

The *Mechanic's Magazine* was a sixteen page, thirty-two column octavo weekly, profusely illustrated with woodcuts and sold every Saturday for three-pence. It was founded by the radical journalist Joseph Clinton Robertson and the political economist Thomas Hodgskin in August 1823, and published by Knight and Lacey on Paternoster Row. In 1824 it boasted a weekly circulation of 16,000, and beneath the

---

[230] *TT*, 24 Feb. 1851; *Bookseller*, 3 Oct. 1871; and *Athenaeum*, 23 Sept. 1871.

banner mottos 'knowledge is power' and 'ours and for us', its targeting of a readership of 'intelligent Mechanics' marked it as the print epitome of 'low scientific culture'.[231] Knight and Lacey's experiment with the cheap scientific periodical was an important factor behind Cowie and Strange's decision to enter the market with a technical weekly, and public debates surrounding the formation of the LMI provided a further institutional impetus. Throughout his editorship of the *Mechanic's Magazine*, Robertson claimed to have solely originated the idea of the LMI, but by 1824 he had turned against what he believed had 'become a Mechanics' Institute only in name', criticizing its elite patrons (and in particular the election of Francis Place junior as a member of the 'working classes').[232] This feud meant that the LMI could not rely on the *Mechanic's Magazine* for positive coverage, and it was in order to fill this niche that Cowie and Strange broke into the cheap market. In a prospectus for the *London Mechanics' Register* printed in October 1824, they claimed that:

> The Proprietors and Publishers of this work [Cowie and Strange] are members of the London Mechanics' Institution, and have been repeatedly applied to by some of their brother members to establish a work of this kind, by which they may have a perfect and correct account of the Lectures, and of every minute information respecting the Institution: under these solicitations, the present work is humbly submitted to all the Mechanics of Great Britain…[233]

Addressed to 'the humble Mechanic', the *London Mechanics' Register* was explicitly marketed as a 'cheap scientific periodical'. It was in target readership, style

---

[231] See chapter five, 287-99, and my entry in *DNCJ*. See also, W. H. Brock, 'British science periodicals and culture: 1820-50', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, Vol. 21 (Summer, 1998), 47-55; S. Sheets-Pyenson, 'Popular science periodicals in Paris and London: the emergence of a low scientific culture, 1820-1875', *Annals of Science*, Vol. 42 (1985), 549-72; *MM*, 30 Aug. 1823.

[232] Robertson complained that 'few of whom [the committee] are of the class of London Mechanics, and which, in all its transactions, shows an utter want of that workmanlike energy and independence by which the Mechanics of London are so honourably distinguished'; *MM*, preface to vol. ii, 28 Nov. 1824.

[233] Prospectus for the *LMR*, Oct. 1823 in add. mss., 27,824, fol. 45. There is a suggestion that Place was one of the 'brother members' encouraging Cowie and Strange. It was claimed that supporters of the *Mechanic's Magazine* had been ripping down billstickers and prospectuses of Cowie and Strange's periodical, but they did share the same international retailers from mid-April 1825, including A. and W. Galignani, 18 Rue Vivienne, Paris; C. Wiley, New York; and Carfrae, Rio Janiero. See my entry in *DNCJ*.

and format almost identical to the rival *Mechanic's Magazine* (though a less polished product - particularly in its early numbers), fusing a content of 'Natural and Experimental Philosophy, Practical Mechanics, Astronomy, Chemistry, Literature, and the Arts' with non-technical articles, ranging from the history of coffee to animal cruelty and Voltaire's philosophy. Cowie and Strange's aim 'to encourage the efforts of incipient genius' by publishing the letters of the 'Operative Artisan' and the periodical's self-presentation as 'a light and agreeable companion… as well as a vehicle of useful information' differed from Knight and Lacey's strategy only in the nature of the coverage of the LMI: where Robertson criticized, Cowie and Strange issued paeans to the LMI. The *Mechanic's Magazine* was the most successful cheap scientific periodical designed to enlighten working people on their own terms, for their own benefit and in their own language, while Cowie and Strange's *Mechanics' Register* was less successful and reflected the overlapping print strategies of elite social reformers, artisan self-improvers and opportunistic cheap publishers.[234]

Cowie and Strange continued to publish the *Mechanics' Register* until January 1826, but after April 1826 the periodical was published by Hunt and Clarke at number six, Tavistock-street, Covent Garden and printed by William Clowes (1779-1847). It then became the *New London Mechanics' Register and Magazine of Science and the Useful Arts* (1827-8). A revealing insight into Cowie and Strange's initial motivation was offered in the preface to the first volume. For Hunt and Clarke, the 'over-excitement of the moment' and the desire to profit, quite as much as a desire to enlighten, were the original motivating factors:

> One of the natural consequences of the vast and sudden impulse given to the public mood by the establishment of popular institutions for the diffusion of knowledge [the LMI], was the production of numerous cheap periodical

[234] *LMR*, preface to vol. iii, 1826; ibid., 19 Mar. 1825; ibid., preface to vol i, 1825; and add. mss., 27,824, fols. 45.

> publications. In the over-excitement of the moment, however, the writers of such books by far exceeded the necessary proportion of readers, and the vendors outnumbered their customers… and consequently much was printed for which their was no demand. The result was inevitable - the multitude of periodical tracts died away as rapidly as they had appeared.

They went on to suggest that the periodical format, far from increasing sales, actually hindered it: '[w]e are rather desirous of publishing a correct and permanently useful *volume*, than an accommodating *number*', they noted, defending their new strategy of producing an annual volume almost entirely comprising the LMI lectures.[235] The success of the *Mirror* and the *Mechanic's Magazine*, and the requirement of the LMI to find a vehicle to publicize its lectures, therefore formed the literary and institutional drivers behind the timing and manner in which Cowie and Strange entered the cheap periodical market in 1822: the opportunity for profit presented itself, the cheap technical format was proven and a 'new' readership of LMI members could be guaranteed once the *Mechanics' Register* became its official organ.[236]

ii. Branching out and bankruptcy: from technical organs to religious and literary experiments, 1826-9

The period 1826-9 saw a plateau in the production of cheap periodical titles, but also a diversification of content. Cowie and Strange's changing practices and publishing repertoire throw light on this development. In early 1826 their career reached a turning-point, reflected in a move into additional premises at number sixty, Paternoster Row. This move was symbolically important, bringing Cowie and Strange to the centre of the respectable book and periodical trade (indeed, the previous use of the premises at number sixty as a depository by the RTS demonstrates a physical, if

---

[235] *New London Mechanics' Register*, preface to vol. i, 1827.
[236] Cowie and Strange were committee members of the LMI and donated several works to its new library, including the *LMR* and the satirical *Ass*; add. mss., 27,824, fol. 104.

not strategic, move towards the mainstream).[237] Once on 'the Row', Cowie and Strange continued to produce cheap technical periodicals, including the sixteen-page technical *Register of Arts and Sciences* (between 1826 and 1827); a three-penny weekly similar to the *Mechanics' Register*, established by the bookseller George Herbert in October 1823. The proprietors claimed to 'receive and avail ourselves of the ideas of the mechanic and the artisan in whatever language they may be framed.' They aimed to cut through the 'babble' of elite scientific language, and promised to accept letters from artisans and mechanics 'however crude and indigested they may appear.' As with their first periodical outing, therefore, Cowie and Strange continued to focus on cheap technical literature aimed at a humble readership.[238] It was also in 1826 that Cowie and Strange began to publish the *Christian Moderator* - their first, and only, 'orthodox' religious periodical.[239] A thirty-two page shilling monthly edited by William Bruce, it aimed to provide 'liberal Dissenters' with information on Irish religion and 'religious parties'. The *Moderator's* pricing and content marked it as an anomaly in Cowie and Strange's repertoire, but underlying its motivation was a familiar commitment to diffusing knowledge: 'knowledge can only be considered valuable when it is applied to a valuable use', they announced.[240]

The real innovation Cowie and Strange made in 1826-9 was in bringing the production of cheap satirical, literary and theatrical periodicals to Paternoster Row, experimenting with titles such as the *Paul Pry*, the *Ass; or Weekly Beast of Burden*, the *Watchman and Police Recorder*, the *Casket*, the *Literary Cabinet*, the *Spirit of the Times* and the *Olio*. Ephemeral and with low circulations, these literary organs were predecessors of the unstamped press of the early 1830s and reflected the overlapping

---

[237] The building had been used as the site of a Female Friendly Society and as the depository of the RTS until the mid-1820s; *The British imperial calendar* (1817), 251, 285; ibid. (1822), 279, 319.
[238] *Register of Arts and Sciences*, 18 Oct. 1823.
[239] The other two - *Slap at the Church!* and the *Episcopal Gazette* - were both anti-clerical.
[240] *Christian Moderator*, 1 May 1826.

unrespectable and respectable traditions of the cheap periodical mode. The first category, including the *Paul Pry*, *Ass* and *Watchman*, were set apart from many cheap literary periodicals by their political references, caricatured images of public figures and irreverent journalistic style. In tone they imitated the squib literature of the Regency period, but the integration of satirical poems, images, articles and letters with the cheap weekly periodical format was a novelty of the 1820s.

Their short-term success with the *Mechanics' Register* and move to 'the Row' had increased their prominence in the metropolitan periodical trade, but Cowie and Strange faced financial challenges during the economic malaise of 1825-9. The stagnation of the cheap technical periodical market by 1826 (the *Mechanics' Register* was sold and many other titles died off) precipitated their turn to less improving formats, and it was in this context that the veteran pornographer Edward Duncombe entered the scene. Duncombe's brother, John, had been prosecuted for selling the *Republican* in 1819, and both men continued to circulate radical literature in the 1820s. Their continuing associations with unrespectable Spencean journalism were demonstrated by their publication of William Benbow's (*bap*. 1784-*c*.1852) bawdy *Rambler's Magazine or Fashionable Emporium of Polite Literature* (1822-3) in which they acted as part of a publishing network that included Benbow, William Dugdale (1799/1800-1868) and John Mitford (1781-1859). The Duncombes' two-penny literary *Hive* (1822-4) (one of the first cheap periodicals of the 1820s, and a model for Limbird's *Mirror*), however, was a pioneering example of cheap apolitical periodical literature.[241]

In April 1826 Cowie and Strange began to publish Edward Duncombe's three-penny weekly *Paul Pry*; an organ that fused the bawdiness and risqué journalism of

---

[241] I. McCalman, *Radical underworld* (1988), 208-10; A. J. C. Rüter, 'William Benbow as publisher', *BIISH*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (1940), 1-14. For the *Hive*, see above, 8.

the 1810s with a cheap weekly format conducive to wide circulation. Duncombe's editorial alter ego, 'Paul Pry', was a pervasive image of the 1820s, having been played by the famous actor, John Liston (*c*.1776-1846), in John Poole's (*c*.1786-1872) successful play of 1825. The quintessential curiosity of the Paul Pry character had considerable cultural resonances, and in Duncombe's hands he became a totemic figure of intrusive journalism (often contriving the device of a 'forgotten' umbrella in order to return to a location to eavesdrop). In the first number over which they had proprietorial control, Cowie and Strange drew on their experiences of the LMI to satirize its plan to offer gymnastic classes to artisans and mechanics (dismissively styled 'Gymn-ass-tricks' by Duncombe). Embellished with a Robert Cruikshank (1789-1856) etching, this number ridiculed 'the three grand promoters of knowledge and the art of tumbling, - Brougham, Hume, and Birkbeck'. The latter was shown to have in his hand

> his *nostrum de mechaneo*, with which, he intends to dose the working classes of Great Britain, until their bowels digest without *labour*, and the *system* becomes so salutary, that matter shall be no more required to supply the waste of matter, and life flow on, supported only by the etheral [sic] essence of useful knowledge![242]

Duncombe continued that '[a]t the lecturer's foot lies a volume of the "Mechanics' Magazine," for what reason I know not, except to shew that he has *dropped* it, because it has not reported his lectures.' A kilted and handstanding Hume is accompanied by a bewigged Brougham riding a broom next to the judgement that

> the working classes can have no possible necessity of such hop-jack tricks. Only fancy a crowd of sawyers, carpenters, and smiths running away from their useful and healthful labour, twice or thrice a week, to consume three or four hours each time in hopping, jumping, and tumbling!

---

[242] *Paul Pry*, 1 Apr. 1826. See also the poem, 'Gymnastics (A New Song)', which began by engaging 'The "March of Intelligence" spreading so rapidly', and concluded with the verse: 'And as the example than precept is better,/ Each "knowledge-march" Captain,/ Grown gymnastical,/ Shall display feats of vigor, to serve, to serve as a whetter,/Unto mechanical shoulder-blades all'; *Paul Pry*, 15 Apr. 1826.

Political points are scored against Hume and Brougham, the LMI is discredited, and appeals made to artisan sensibilities in the naming of specific trades. This appeal to the working tradesman in the context of amusement as well as instruction was an enduring feature of Cowie and Strange's publishing repertoire and indicates their move away from improving periodicals to more satirical offerings by 1826.[243]

By publishing the *Ass* - a four-penny weekly satirical periodical allegedly edited by Robert Mudie - Cowie and Strange again targeted a relatively humble readership. A sixteen-page octavo, the *Ass* invoked the editorial character of the load-carrying donkey, and its banner motto, 'One of a Million' and verse 'I grant that I'm and Ass; but that's a roomy class', was calculated to make a connection with such readers.[244] If there was any doubt that the title grew out of Cowie and Strange's commitment to diffuse cheap knowledge to a common readership, the ass's load (copies of 'the *New Times*, *Lancet*, *Bell's*, *Cobbett's*, *Life in London*, *Examiner*, *Times*, *Herald*, *John Bull*, *Courier*, *Chronicle*, and *Pulpit*') referenced many of the newspapers and periodicals marketed towards a 'popular' readership by the 1820s. Further, its 'Dedication to the Mechanics of England' (printed in May 1826) was permeated by paeans to 'honourable' labour:

> Like me, you are doomed to carry the panniers, - like me, you get the hardest of the labour and the hardest of the fare, - like me you are apt to be beaten when the fault is your masters… What I am in the world of letters, you are in the social world… Yes, my dear fellow-labourers… They cannot help us, and therefore let us help ourselves; - let us be diligent in the acquisition of knowledge, and in the practice of industry; and we must, we shall, let the world see that we can triumph over all the accidents of the times.

---

[243] Ibid. *Paul Pry's* circulation was relatively modest: Duncombe claimed that '[t]he Proprietors of PAUL PRY anxious to evince a readiness and compliance to the wishes of their numerous Friends, have determined not to insert ADVERTISements [sic] in their Sheet, in order to have more from for Miscellaneous Matter'; but it was likely that he had attracted few advertisers; ibid, 4 Mar. 1826.

[244] See its comments on the LMI's gymnastic club, and the question 'what, gentle readers, are to be the arts and sciences taught in this same JEM-NEST-EGG academy? Any thing that will make wages higher or bread cheaper? Oh no! nothing of that kind. They are to be, *leaping*, *climbing*, *running*, *jumping*, *riding the wooden horse*, and *throwing the javelin*'; *Ass,* 1 Apr. 1826.

The empathy shown with artisan and mechanic readers in earlier technical periodicals is repeated here in the more inclusive appeal to 'fellow-labourers' and in subsequent references to the context of machine-breaking. This topicality demonstrates the rapidity with which the cheap periodical format could respond to events, though it is unlikely that the working mechanic would have found convincing the ass's assertion that declining wages and the threat of machinery were unavoidable 'accidents of the times'.[245]

This engagement with the condition of the metropolitan working people is manifest in another of Cowie and Strange's periodicals of 1826: the *Watchman, and Police Recorder*, another three-penny, sixteen-page octavo. The *Watchman* was significant for being disseminated principally in London's East End by the bookseller S. Very on Fleur-de-lis Court, Spitalfields. Targeting this East-End readership, it promised 'a weekly succession of the most valuable and interesting cases that occur in the whole of the Police Offices', and directed its readers to cases from Worship Street Office and Bethnal Green parish in which journeymen silk-weavers were being prosecuted for machine-breaking. The short life of the periodical suggests that targeting a readership of degraded silk-weavers was a commercial risk too far, but again Cowie and Strange demonstrated their desire to produce cheap content in a format that might appeal to common readers.[246]

Cowie and Strange also experimented in these years with respectable literary periodicals derivative of the eighteenth-century 'bon ton' magazine format. Their incentive was evidently financial, and the proven success of the *Mirror* provided them with a model with which to appeal to a more inclusive 'popular' readership.

---

[245] *Ass*, 6 May 1826.
[246] *Watchman*, 2 Sep. 1826.

After the final number of the *Ass* had been printed, for instance, it had been announced that the periodical had been suspended 'from the consideration that the more laborious classes of the people have now little need to spend their money even for my pure, valuable, and truly matchless wares'.[247] It was less the 'need' than the ability of artisans and mechanics to spend four-pence a week that encouraged Cowie and Strange to expand their target readership in these years. The weekly penny *Casket* was launched in February 1827, jointly published by Cowie and Strange until January 1829. An eight-page, sixteen-column octavo, it carried poetry, short stories, snippets of useful information and parlour games, and closely followed the format of the *Mirror* through its incorporation of an engraved image. Priced at one penny, it was among the cheapest periodicals of the decade, and its relative longevity suggests that it was able to undercut the two-penny literary miscellanies. Continuing with the cheap Saturday literary format, Cowie and Strange launched the three-penny, sixteen-page octavo *Literary Cabinet and Journal of Belles Lettres* (1827) which survived for just three numbers. Both the *Casket* and *Literary Cabinet* were recycling formats that had broken through in the early 1820s, but they were notable in point of cheapness.[248]

In September 1827 Cowie and Strange recommenced the *Spirit of the Times; or Weekly Condenser of Periodical Literature* (1827-8), a synoptic three-penny weekly originally published between 1825 and 1826. Brian Maidment has demonstrated how the original *Spirit of the Times* was significant for its use of woodcut illustrations, suggesting that the didactic visual mode sat alongside the topical and amusing image,

and that such co-existence

---

[247] *Ass*, undated preface.

[248] Henry White's *Casket; or Treasury of Taste* (1819-20) and John Chappell's weekly shilling *British Stage and Literary Cabinet* (1817-22) were models for these experiments. The vogue for invoking the images of mirrors, cabinets and caskets reflected a desire to appear domestically fashionable and functioned as a description of the proposed knowledge-storing function of the periodical.

> underlines the complex battles over the nature and purpose of vignette illustration going on at this time, with a crude, broadside-derived woodcut tradition competing with the sophisticated linear energy of polite caricature.[249]

The re-launched title, a collaboration with Effingham Wilson (1785-1868), was explicit in its aim to fuse instruction and amusement. Renaming the periodical the *Beauties of the Magazines, and Spirit of the Times* (itself a phrase of the moment) in 1827, Cowie and Strange were unequivocal about the enlarged readership and purpose of their new organ, and invoked rhetoric redolent of the march of intellect. The preface to the first volume (written in February 1828) claimed that:

> The rapid advance among the middle and lower classes of society in scientific and literary attainments may be, in a great measure, justly attributed to the excellence of the Periodical Literature of the present day… The object of the present Work, [therefore] is to select from the whole of the Periodical Literature, those articles most worthy of being preserved...[250]

iii. Summary conclusions: Cowie and Strange, 1822-30

The expansion of Cowie and Strange's publishing repertoire from the cheap technical weeklies with which they had broken through in 1824-6 reveals a number of developments in the cheap market of the 1820s. Firstly, the turn away from technical periodicals suggests that the market was unable to absorb the plethora of such titles produced in the early 1820s. Secondly, the depressed state of the book trade in 1825-9 caused Cowie and Strange to turn to cheap satirical periodicals in collaboration with print technicians from the radical underworld, carrying the squib tradition of the post-war period into a new generation of cheap periodicals. And thirdly, the turn to respectable cheap literary magazines in the later 1820s suggested that the polite magazine tradition was also carried into the cheap periodical market. These conclusions suggest a paradoxical publishing context, in which the fashionable

---

[249] B. Maidment, *Into the 1830s* (1983), 12-13.
[250] *Beauties of the Magazines*, preface to vol. i, Feb. 1828.

magazine tradition was juxtaposed with a cheap print populism with roots in the pamphlet, bawdy ballad and crim. con. narrative: a struggle indexed by the coexistence of 'polite' and 'crude' vignette illustrations. This was a crucial moment of experimentation, and the result was that the unstamped press of the 1830s inherited a diverse repertoire of ideas and forms.

III

A radical solution: co-operative experiment and the unstamped press, 1828-32

The years 1828-9 signified Cowie and Strange's turn to cheap co-operative and radical periodical literature. The impetus behind this move was a combination of the failure of their cheap literary organs, the proliferation of metropolitan co-operative and radical associations and the reinstitution of parliamentary reform and opposition to the 'taxes on knowledge' on the national agenda. Cowie and Strange were among the first bookseller-publishers to identify the commercial potential of cheap co-operative and radical publishing, but such broadly 'political' periodicals did not constitute the totality of their repertoire. As unstamped publishers they continued to experiment with satirical, literary and technical periodicals, and their output suggests that beneath a pattern of proliferating titles, cheap periodicals were diversifying in content. Ian Haywood's suggestion that in the 1830s '[t]he radical carnival was a romance of "improvement" and sensation' is astute; though the origins of this 'carnival' ought to be located in the previous decade of experimentation.[251] In content and form, Cowie and Strange's most successful periodical, the *Figaro in London* (which fused politics, news, gossip, literary excerpts, illustrated caricature and satire), ought therefore to be characterized as a direct descendent of *Paul Pry* and the *Ass*.

---

[251] I. Haywood, *The revolution* (2004), 136.

i. Co-operative experiments, 1828-30

Co-operative trading associations established by artisans and mechanics proliferated in London during the late 1820s. The most important of these institutions was the London Association for the Promotion of Co-operative Knowledge (later the British Association) in which Hetherington, Lovett, Carpenter, Watson and Cleave were all prominent members.[252] For Cowie and Strange, who had been involved with the LMI, the turn towards the co-operative movement is unsurprising, and between 1828 and 1830 they published five of the earliest English co-operative periodicals, as well as dozens of co-operative tracts.[253] This association began in September 1828 when they published Dr. William King's (1786-1865) *Co-operator* (1828-30); a four-page penny monthly periodical founded in Brighton in May 1828. The *Co-operator* addressed the condition of the trades, crime, pauperism and the exchange system beneath the banner motto 'Knowledge and Union are power: Power, directed by knowledge, is happiness: Happiness is the end of creation.' King's nostrums were summarized thus:

THINGS AS THEY ARE	THINGS AS THEY MAY BE
Ignorance	Useful Knowledge
Pauperism	Moral and Religious Principles
Crime	Independence
Envy	Provision for Sickness, Old Age etc
Hatred, Malice	Common Labour
All Uncharitableness	Common Property.[254]

[252] For the BAPCK see I. Prothero, *Artisans* (1977), 239-66 and G. Claeys, *Citizens and saints* (1989), 174-86.

[253] For an earlier co-operative periodical, see George Mudie's three-penny weekly Owenite *Economist* (1821-2). Mudie was also involved in a fortnightly, six-penny periodical published by Hetherington; the *Political Economist and Universal Philanthropist* (1823-5). The most important early title was the shilling *Co-operative Magazine* (1826-30). Owned and produced by the first London Co-operative Society, it was the sole periodical organ of metropolitan co-operation until 1828. Published first by Knight and Lacey, it featured numerous contributions from the co-operative theorist William Thompson (1785-1833). In its pages, Thompson developed a radical critique of competitive individualism, publicized his belief in popular education - calling for the independence of mechanics' institutes from 'middle class' control - and outlined his plans for sexual equality; see my entry in *DNCJ*.

[254] *Co-operator*, 1 May 1828.

It listed weekly the growing number of co-operative societies founded in Brighton, Worthing, Derbyshire, Nottingham, Leeds, Manchester, Canterbury and London. The first association in London was the society based at number thirty-six Red Lion Square, and this was followed in a matter of weeks by societies in Greenwich, Hoxton, Stepney, Bethnal Green, Hampstead, Marylebone and Westminster. The *Co-operator* was a retrograde step in terms of format, carrying no illustrations or distinct departments in a single-column of prose. It nonetheless demonstrated King's attempt to break into the cheap market in order to reach metropolitan artisans and mechanics. His choice of Cowie and Strange as his London publishers is indicative of their perceived ability to reach this readership, their profile outside the metropolis and the level of their involvement in co-operative associational culture by 1828.

This association was strengthened in 1829 by their publication of two other penny monthly co-operative periodicals: the *Associate* [*and Co-operative Mirror*] (1829); and the *Birmingham and Co-operative Herald* (1829-30); the latter edited by William Pare (1805-1873). Further, the radical and co-operative *Weekly Free Press*, edited by William Carpenter, began to carry adverts placed by Cowie and Strange in January 1829, and they became founder members of the 'First Westminster Co-operative Trading Society' in June 1829.[255] These co-operative links were strengthened in associational networks with men who would become leading unstamped publishers in the 1830s, and in this context the publication of the *Associate* was a key moment. This penny monthly ran for twelve numbers between January and December 1829; but unlike the *Co-operator* and the *Birmingham and Co-operative Herald* (a penny monthly, comprising four single-column pages without illustrations) it was deeply rooted in metropolitan co-operative culture. It also allowed Cowie and Strange to

[255] *WFP*, 13 Jun. 1829.

experiment with comic woodcut illustrations and satires. One running series, entitled the 'Co-operator's Catechism', was derivative of Hone's 'Political Catechisms' of 1816-19, and demonstrated the appropriation of such satirical devices by the early co-operative press. The *Associate* was published and sold at Cowie and Strange's premises on Paternoster Row and the Co-operative Bazaar on Grenville Street in Hatton Gardens, and was jointly published by the houses of Sherwood, Gilbert and Piper on the Row, James Watson on Windmill Street in Finsbury and George Purkess on Wardour Street in Soho. It was, in sum, among the first publishing collaborations between four of the most prolific publishers of unstamped periodicals, long before the reform crisis broke, and in a co-operative context.

The centrality of co-operative activity to Cowie and Strange's publishing practices in these years was confirmed when they became the publishers to the BAPCK, publishing two-penny reprints of its proceedings in October 1829. In April 1830 they established links with other cheap metropolitan publishers via the *British Co-operator* (1830); a six-penny monthly periodical of twenty-four pages and forty-eight columns co-published by George Virtue. This periodical, more innovatively presented than previous co-operative organs, was published by Sherwood, Gilbert and Piper, Watson and Cowie and Strange. Its varied content included reprinted and original articles on co-operation, politics, the rights of women, book reviews, Owen's voyages and contact details for the forty-two co-operative societies that had been established in London by April 1830.[256] This better-quality title was followed by an attempt to establish a cheap co-operative periodical encompassing the range of useful and entertaining genres with which Cowie and Strange had been experimenting over the last decade: the two-penny *Magazine of Useful Knowledge and Co-operative*

---

[256] *British Co-operator*, 1 Apr. 1830.

Miscellany (1830). This fortnightly co-operative and radical periodical was significant in terms of format, content and personnel, and demonstrates how Strange's publishing repertoire had become increasingly political throughout the later 1820s. Published by Strange and issued by the BAPCK, the *Magazine of Useful Knowledge* was edited by Carpenter and reflected the increase in political tension surrounding the questions of parliamentary reform and the 'taxes on knowledge' in its banner motto: 'Learning has declared war against ignorance' and reprinting of Southey's lines, 'Train up thy children, England, / In the ways of righteousness - and feed them with the bread of wholesome doctrine'.[257]

Opposed to Owenite co-operation (though not Owen), Strange's periodical drew together the useful knowledge format of the 1820s with co-operative content and political radicalism, and was among the first unstamped political periodicals of the 1830s. In reprinting details of a meeting of the BAPCK on the 'taxes on knowledge' in early November 1830, it quoted William Carpenter's stand against the taxes in his *Political Letters*. It likewise reported Watson's rallying cry ('Mr. Carpenter was the first to step into the breach: was there another ready to take his place, if he were dragged into a dungeon?') and Cleave's complaints that some booksellers were refusing to stock Carpenter's periodical and several newspapers even refusing to advertise it.[258] The *Magazine of Useful Knowledge* did not have such problems with distribution, claiming that it was sold 'by all Booksellers, and Co-operative Storekeepers'. Its varied content (including poetry, correspondence, lectures, advertisements and articles on science, literature, machinery, wages, living conditions and slavery) arguably softened its radical message, perhaps explaining how it escaped

---

[257] *Magazine of Useful Knowledge*, 1, 15 Oct. 1830. E. Royle, 'Mechanics Institutes and the working classes, 1840-1860', *Historical Journal*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (1971), 305-21.
[258] *Magazine of Useful Knowledge*, 30 Oct., 13 Nov. 1830. See also William Carpenter, *Proceedings of the third co-operative congress* (1832), published by Strange and printed by Cowie.

prosecution by the Stamp Office. It was explicitly addressed to a readership of artisans and mechanics, noting that in presenting them with articles on 'metaphysical science' it was responding to the time pressures acting on 'the majority of our readers, [which] are scarcely compatible with those researches and habits of severe study which are indispensable in pursuing enquiries of this nature.' Thus, before Hetherington had begun to issue his *Penny Papers*, the appropriation of the unstamped format in a radical context, and presented as a vehicle of political and cultural emancipation, had been attempted in a co-operative periodical.[259]

To summarize, Cowie and Strange's co-operative experiments revealed several broader changes in the cheap periodical market between 1828 and 1830. Firstly, the failure of their literary and technical periodicals reflected a plateau in the cheap market, and they consequently embraced the opportunity to exploit a readership tied to the institutional bases of co-operation. Secondly, the move into co-operative publishing seemed to have been more than a commercial expedient, and Cowie and Strange were increasingly involved in co-operative associational culture during these years. Thirdly, the association with print technicians such as Watson, Cleave, Carpenter, Hetherington, Virtue and Purkess laid the infrastructural bases for the rapid mobilization of the unstamped press in 1830. And fourthly, in terms of content and format, Cowie and Strange were in the vanguard of cheap publishers applying the lessons of the cheap market of the 1820s to a nascent co-operative and radical press (including illustrations and a miscellaneous content of useful knowledge, satire, poetry, comment and news). It is unclear to what extent their bankruptcy in 1830 and their associations with radical pressmen were radicalizing experiences (on the one hand they may have stimulated existing tendencies, while on the other they merely

---

[259] *Magazine of Useful Knowledge*, 1 Oct. 1830.

provided a commercial opportunity); and rather than replacing their technical, religious and literary periodical output, co-operation added another dimension to their repertoire. Nonetheless, the experiments of these years cultivated the personal networks and associations that would underpin their activity as unstamped publishers well into the 1830s.

ii. The radical unstamped, stamped newspapers and 'Figaro-mania', *1830-2*

Cowie and Strange received their political baptism early in the reform crisis of 1829-32. The personal networks they had cultivated as co-operative publishers meant that by 1830 there were already periodical publications bearing their name that opposed the 'taxes on knowledge' and advocated radical parliamentary reform. From October 1830 onwards the scale of Cowie and Strange's output reached an unprecedented level. The radical unstamped periodical was an important driver of this expansion, and Cowie and Strange worked with leading radical pressmen to produce a large number of cheap political works. Although they continued to work together, Cowie and Strange began to pursue separate periodical formats: Strange cheap, unstamped weekly periodicals, and Cowie stamped weekly newspapers. The continuities of these titles with previous publications persisted, and their quintessential unstamped periodical, the *Figaro in London*, fused political, theatrical, satirical and comic illustrated genres. A penny comic weekly with radical content, *Figaro's* impact on the cheap periodical market was profound, and its editor, Gilbert Abbot à Beckett (1811-56), termed the widespread practice of copying its format 'Figaro-Mania'. It was, in sum, the most successful title in a cheap publishing repertoire that had been developed over the previous decade.[260]

---

[260] *Figaro in London*, 25 Feb. 1832; see my entry in *DNCJ*.

a. William Carpenter, the Political Letters *and the radical unstamped*

Among the most productive relationships in the unstamped periodical market in the early 1830s was that cultivated between the radical writer William Carpenter and William Strange between May 1830 and late 1832. Carpenter had been a journeyman bookbinder in Finsbury, but in the 1820s had begun to work on Christian periodicals and encyclopaedias with the religious compiler William Greenfield. At this point he had become a 'sectarian preacher', and, according to Francis Place, was 'a shrewd cunning voluble fellow, precise, plausible and persuasive'. Place overstated Carpenter's 'cunning' as a public speaker and writer, although these skills were undoubtedly honed as a member of the BAPCK, and as editor of the *Weekly Free Press* and of Strange's *Magazine of Useful Knowledge*. On 4 May 1830, in alliance with Strange, Carpenter began to publish the four-penny, sixteen-page octavo political missives collected together as the *Political Letters and Pamphlets*. These 'letters' represented the opening salvo in the putative 'war of the unstamped', and in them Carpenter interwove the campaigns for radical parliamentary reform and press freedom.[261]

In *A Monitory Letter to the People of England* (29 October 1830) Carpenter took sole responsibility for the 'letters', claiming that 'there is no person but myself either directly or indirectly concerned in the thing; and that the whole responsibility rests upon me'. The context of mounting legal repression explains this pronouncement, but the fact that this periodical was issued from Strange's premises on Paternoster Row

---

[261] Add. mss., 27,795, fol. 165, quoted in Hollis, *The pauper press* (1971), 309. In the context of his editorship of the *Charter* (1839-40) newspaper, Place described Carpenter as 'a particularly ill qualified man for his office, he had been a journeyman tradesman, then a sectarian preacher, was then employed upon a newspaper, and successively, on several others, every one of which he assisted to destroy. It was he who suggested the Charter newspaper and being a very cuning [sic] fellow succeeded in persuading the Working mens [sic] Association to assist in its establishment', add. mss., 27,821, fol. 22. Carpenter had been a founding member of the Metropolitan Political Union in March 1830, along with Hetherington, Cleave, Lovett and Watson; add. mss., 27,789, fol. 145.

suggests that Carpenter did not write, print and publish the 'letters' alone. Indeed, Strange's publication of most of Carpenter's later periodicals, pamphlets and books indicate that he assisted him in the early months of the periodical.[262] The *Political Letters* took as their motto Thomas Denman's comment that '[s]evere as it [the newspaper stamp duties bill] is, it will not effect what its proposers [sic] contemplate, unless they put a dagger to the throat, and wrest the pen from the hand of those who can write', and were published 'for the avowed purpose of trying with the government the question of law' relating to the Stamp Duty. This agenda anticipated Hetherington's claim that the *Poor Man's Guardian* had been '[e]stablished contrary to "Law," to try the power of "Might" against "Right"', and the notion of an intellectual and moral revolution in this context, rather than a physical one, also first appeared in the *Political Letters*.[263]

Although he did not promote political revolution, Carpenter did invoke revolutionary rhetoric, announcing the beginning of a perilous moment in national life: a 'climacter of the world has arrived', he wrote, before quoting Thomas Bailey's statement in *A discourse on the cause of political revolutions* (also published by Strange in 1830) that 'revolutions are the result of increasing intelligence.' This theme of the potential of knowledge to emancipate stemmed from Carpenter's belief in the moving force of Christian morality, and his radical programme might be seen as expanding Strange's literary and technical publishing repertoire, adding morality to 'the might of intellect':

> the improvements hitherto effected have been principally confined to inventive genius, - to the creation of artificial power, rather than a universal application of its benefits… Between the achievements of science and art, and the advancement of virtue and happiness, there is, it is evident, a fearful dissimilarity: intellect has been more victorious than morality.[264]

---

[262] *Political Letters*, 29 Oct. 1830.
[263] Ibid. *Poor Man's Guardian,* 9 Jul. 1831.
[264] *Political Letters*, 18 Feb. 1831; ibid., 8 Apr. 1831.

Carpenter was frequently depicted as an ultra-radical in these years, but his commitment was primarily to constitutionalist radicalism. Between 1830 and 1832 Strange published a large number of Carpenter's constitutionalist works, including *The people's book* (1831). In its preface, Carpenter addressed the 'reformers and the anti-reformers', suggesting that 'the former will find much in them [the following pages] to increase their zeal and activity in the glorious struggle…[while] the latter may find… that the state of the representation is not the most pure and perfect that could be desired.' Published in April 1831 and costing five shillings and sixpence, *The people's book* sketched the history and composition of Parliament, 'The Rights of Englishmen' (enshrined in the Magna Charta, the Bill of Rights, Habeas Corpus and the Act of Settlement), an analysis of the House of Commons and a 'peep at the peers'. In adverts taken out in cheap periodicals Strange marketed the work as a 'reformer's handbook', and, in conjunction with John Wade's *Extraordinary black book* (1831), it was regarded as essential reading for supporters of radical reform.[265]

In April 1831 Carpenter and Strange began to produce their cheapest periodical yet, comprising weekly penny political tracts later published as *Carpenter's Political and Historical Essays* (1831). These tracts were printed in twelve-page, single-column format, and embraced the topics of parliamentary reform, natural and civil rights, trade unionism, the 'progress and influence of knowledge', emigration and the history of Ireland. In May 1831 Carpenter was committed to the Kings' Bench prison for six months for refusing to pay a £120 fine for publishing unstamped periodicals,

---

[265] William Carpenter, *The people's book* (1831), preface (26 Apr. 1831). Place represented Carpenter as an ultra-radical. During a meeting of the National Political Union on 21 March 1832, he noted that in a debate about the reform bill '[t]he rational side was taken principally by Messrs Roebuck, Place, Perry, Noel and the Chairman, the revolutionary by Messrs Wakley, Rogers, Fox Smith and Carpenter', add. mss., 27,792, fols, 12-17. Carpenter always stressed his constitutionalist credentials: at a meeting at the Crown and Anchor on 19 June 1832 he defended the right to assembly and to petition, but expressed sympathy with those who felt violence was the last option left open to the 'common people', add. mss., 27,797, fols. 238-44.

but he and Strange continued to produce cheap political periodicals. The *Political Anecdotist and Popular Instructor* (1831), a two-penny, sixteen-page, thirty-two column radical miscellany of facts, figures, anti-Tory creeds, dialogues and 'grammars', appeared in June and July 1831, and was followed by the short-lived two-penny radical *Patriot* (1831). If there was any doubt as to the target readership of these periodicals, Carpenter's *Address to the working classes on the Reform Bill* (1831) provided confirmation. A two-penny sheet issued in October 1831, Carpenter began with the appeal '[a]llow one of your own class to offer to your consideration a few observations on… the ministerial measure of reform'. Carpenter's self-presentation as 'one of your own class' was a rhetorical ploy, and in February 1832 he was elected to the council of National Political Union as a member 'not of the working classes'.[266] Nonetheless, his commitment to providing cheap political literature for common readers continued, and in June 1831 Carpenter, Strange and Cowie began to produce the *Political Letter* (1831-2) in both stamped and unstamped weekly formats. The *Political Letter* was a cheap newspaper, comprising a miscellaneous content of news, politics, science, literature, sport and law, and promising a commitment to 'the productive classes of society' and the Benthamite creed of 'the greatest happiness of the greatest number'. As with Carpenter's earlier foray into newspaper journalism with the *Weekly Free Press*, the *Political Letter* claimed independence of party, an opposition to corruption and a desire to provide 'rational' and moral amusement. Issued in three-penny half pence and seven-penny numbers, it demonstrated how Carpenter's experience in newspaper journalism had opened new publishing avenues for Cowie and Strange.

---

[266] *Address to the working classes on the Reform Bill* (1831), 1-2; add. mss., 27,791, fol. 222.

Cowie and Strange's target readership was often a more capacious 'popular' constituency, particularly in their more expensive periodicals. Between 1830 and 1832 Cowie had expanded his repertoire, although his move into the higher price market of stamped weekly newspapers with the seven-penny *Paul Pry* (1830-1) was short-lived. The title of *Paul Pry* identified it as a descendent of Cowie and Strange's periodical of 1826, and this incarnation, initially edited by the young dramatist Frederick Fox Cooper (1806-1879), bore many similarities to its cheaper antecedent; not least its motto ('I hope I don't intrude!'), the editorial device of adopting the persona of 'Paul Pry' and its satirical and irreverent tone. Published and printed by Cowie on the Strand, it combined a reformist political outlook with sporting content in an attempt to break into the profitable Sunday newspaper market. Politically, it opposed 'your Cobbetts, O'Connell's [sic], Carliles, Carpenters, Taylors, *et id genus omnes*, [who] have drenched with their seditious and impious nostrums.' Summarizing its political principles it suggested that:

> WE ARE REFORMERS - not such reformers as HUNT and COBBETT, not such LEVELLERS as TAYLOR and CARLILE. We are willing to follow in the ranks of such men - such ULTRA TORY REFORMERS - as the Marquis of BLANDFORD and Mr ATTWOOD; who are actuated by a desire to promote the benefit of all classes, by throwing open the elective franchise to every one of those who, by wisely using such a privilege, would prove that they knew its value, and estimated its worth accordingly.[267]

That a well-established opposition to 'old Bone grubber Cobbett' (a reference to his stewardship of Paine's bones following his return from America in 1819)[268] and 'Henry Hunt, the Blacking Man' was extended to 'Agitating Dan' (O'Connell) in the context of the early 1830s is unsurprising given the paper's dislike of perceived 'rascality' and 'demagogues'. Its stated sympathy for '[t]he POOR SILK WEAVERS - and all other victims to the ruinous free trade system' suggests another line of

---

[267] *Paul Pry*, 28 Feb. 1831; 13 Mar. 1831; 14 Mar. 1830.
[268] See *ODNB*.

continuity. The turn on Carpenter was perhaps disloyal, but Cowie had no reservations about inserting advertisements for *The people's book* and *Anecdotes of the French Revolution* (1830); Carpenter's works published and printed by Cowie and Strange. The newspaper, like its predecessor, found much satirical potential in the LMI: in February 1830 it carried the notice that although '[t]here is no question that we live in an age of improvement… thanks to the "march of intellect" and the London Institution… the latter noble seminary for learning, situated on the quags of Stinkmolee [sic]… shows signs of decay.' Cowie's periodical thus carried into the Sunday newspaper market a brand of 'Fun, Wit, and Humour' cultivated in the cheaper satirical periodicals of the 1820s.[269] There were several significant differences characterizing the later *Paul Pry*, however, including its eight-page, twenty-four (then thirty-two) column format, its higher price, its explicit inclusion of news, its appeal to a 'popular' readership in line with most other Sunday newspapers and its employment of Pierce Egan as sporting correspondent from December 1830. These changes resulted from the more capital-intensive organization of the paper, and when *Paul Pry* was incorporated into the weekly stamped *Intelligence* (1830-3) Cowie returned to the penny format with the *National Omnibus and General Advertiser* (1831-3).

Throughout these experiments, Carpenter, Strange and Cowie continued to work together on cheap political periodicals, and in September 1831 they harnessed the monthly format for *Carpenter's Monthly Political Magazine* (1831-2). This radical political miscellany had the quality of a retrospective, and reflecting on the daily newspaper press, Carpenter launched a defence of cheap periodicals. In particular, he

---

[269] *Paul Pry*, 26 Dec. 1830; 26 Sep. 1830 (for Hunt's 'brayings'); 14 Mar. 1830 and 2 Jan. 1831. The march of intellect had become standard locution by this time, and was abbreviated: '"THE MARCH!" - Another proof of the rapid spread of knowledge in the West occurred in Exeter a short time since, which occasioned considerable mirth among the parties', *Paul Pry* announced, before detailing how a toll keeper had misunderstood the term 'Assessed Taxes' to connote a 'tax on asses'; ibid.

reacted to the argument used to justify the stamp duty that if the price of newspapers were lower their content would sink to the basest level:

> Were the press totally unfettered, the weight of talent would always be found on the side of virtue; and writings of vicious tendency would not only be eclipsed, but put down, by the competition of that which is beautiful and ennobling, against that which is unsound, however glossed, and valueless, however tinselled. It betrays, therefore, a shallow mind, to entertain any prejudice against the dissemination of cheap publications. In a moral, as well as a political, point of view, such publications are of vast importance.[270]

In January 1832 Carpenter, Strange and Cowie worked together in the production of the radical anti-clerical *Slap at the Church!* (1832), edited by Cleave and carrying illustrations by Cruikshank and Seymour. They continued this association in June 1832 with the *Political Unionist* (1832); a short-lived two-penny weekly that aimed to provide a focus for the countrywide political unions. Their final cheap political experiment was the penny *Squib* (1832), but by late 1832 Carpenter's waning popularity within the radical movement encouraged Strange to cultivate links with Hetherington, Watson and Cleave as publisher of Henry Hunt's *Lecture on the conduct of the Whigs* (1832). Between 1830 and 1832 Cowie and Strange had benefited from Carpenter's energy and experience, but they also drew deeply from (and expanded) their own publishing repertoires. In the context of the 'war of the unstamped', Carpenter, Strange and Cowie were among the first to publish and disseminate cheap radical periodicals in defiance of the stamp duty and advocating radical parliamentary reform. This collaboration produced many cheap political titles, but in terms of format these political periodicals were unadventurous, and did not capitalize on Cowie and Strange's background in satirical, illustrated and scientific periodicals.

---

[270] *Carpenter's Monthly Political Magazine*, (Jul. 1832).

b. 'Figaro-*Mania' and the proliferating unstamped*

From mid-1832 Cowie and Strange moved away from publishing narrowly political periodicals and incorporated radical comment into an array of cheap titles. The epitome of Strange's experimentation in these years was *Figaro in London*: a penny comic weekly that combined radical political comment with irreverent anti-establishment squibs, spawning a plethora of imitations in the capital and provinces (dubbed '*Figaro*-mania' by à Beckett, and depicted as the 'cholera' of 'the periodical world').[271] Itself unashamedly based on the Parisian prototype, it appropriated the 'the barber' figurehead and comprised a single-page lead article illustrated with a Seymour woodcut and subsequent pages entitled 'The Interpreter', 'Brevities' and 'Drama'. *Figaro* claimed to be independent of party and driven by a desire to expose 'all kinds of quackery, fraud, or oppression, whether it be Social, Literary, Political, or Theatrical'. Politics was nonetheless an important driver (certain contributions were rejected because they were 'not of a sufficiently political character'), and while à Beckett's claims of independence were justified (his final leader expressing his 'obligations to Tory, Whig, Radical, Republican, Revolutionary, Destructive and Conservative… [because] we have been in the habit of treating them all as fair game'), 'Anti-Reform' remained the principal target.[272]

Figaro drew together the diverse literary, theatrical, visual and political genres characteristic of the cheap periodical market since the 1820s. Its success was assisted by Strange's associations in the cheap market, a point not disputed by the editor: in

---

[271] 'A new disease has lately sprung up in the periodical world… It consists in a strange gout for imitating our work, and we therefore shall call it the *Figaro-mania*… It has lately grown to so great an extent that we think of giving a weekly report, in imitation of the plan adopted by the papers, with regard to the Cholera'; the 'dead' included: the *Patriot*, *Figaro in Birmingham*, *Critical Figaro*, *Literary Test*, *English Figaro*, *Devil's Walk* and *Life in London*; *Figaro in London*, 1, 25 Feb. 1832; 17 Mar. 1832. The 'barber' was invoked in an anti-Semitic jibe against rival publishers: when considering the 'hostility evinced to Figaro in Holywell Street, and other quarters infested by *the Jews*, [correspondents] should recollect that *the peoplesh* have always been averse *to the Barber*', ibid., 24 Mar. 1832.

[272] Ibid., preface to vol. ii, 1833; 14 Jan. 1832; 27 Dec. 1831; 10 Dec. 1831.

reaction to an *Athenaeum* article (supposedly penned by Charles Knight), à Beckett criticized the SDUK for funding the *Penny Magazine* - 'a work intended to crush all existing penny periodicals'. Direct competition for readers was a transparent motivation for the attack:

> It [the *Penny Magazine*], however, carries in its dulness [sic], an antidote to the pernicious influence it was designed to exercise; for we defy any one to take it for amusement who has once seen the *Thief* sent forth from the shop of Strange, our enterprising and truly patriotic publisher. We are sorry to find the *Trade* becoming the innocent instrument of their own ruin: why do they *push* they *Penny Magazine* when they know it is designed to destroy the trade in small periodicals?[273]

Strange's influence and associations can be detected in the advertisements secured for *Figaro*; including Cleave's *Slap at the Church*, Steill's two-penny *Literary Test* (1832), William Kidd's shilling *Comic Magazine* (1832-4), William Howden's *Evangelical Penny Magazine and Bible Instructor* (1832), *Thomas Dibdin's Penny Trumpet* (1832), Cowie's *National Omnibus* and Limbird's *Penny national library of education, use and entertainment* (1830). Many of these periodicals were produced by a single cabal of print technicians (the *Figaro* printers William Molineux and Thomas Richardson, à Beckett, the publishers Cowie and James Gilbert and the writers and artists Thomas Dibdin, William Thomas Moncrieff, Robert Seymour and John Poole). The target readership of most was more inclusively 'popular' than explicitly artisan or mechanic, though their cheapness lowered access costs for common readers. Demonstrating the broad appeal of *Figaro*, for instance, adverts for twenty-one shilling beaver hats (indicating a relatively affluent social level of readership) sat alongside articles addressed to 'fellow-labourers'.[274]

Cowie himself was not involved with *Figaro* until 1835, but had established a rival with his broadsheet-style, penny *National Omnibus* in 1831. A four-page,

---

[273] Ibid., 4 May 1832.
[274] Ibid., 14 Jan. 1832; 17 Mar. 1832; 8 Sep. 1832; 25 Aug. 1832.

twelve-column weekly, the satirical *National Omnibus*, like the *Paul Pry*, attacked paternalistic institutions of improvement (in particular, with an ongoing satire on the SDUK in which reports of the paper's own 'Society for the Diffusion of Useful and Entertaining Knowledge' were printed). The *National Omnibus* was aimed at a 'popular' readership, but its reportage of the grittier side of metropolitan life suggests that it also appealed to a readership more acquainted with the language, mores and locations of a 'rougher' metropolitan culture. One account of the 'SDUEK's' imaginary improving mission in St. Giles and Seven Dials satirized low and high culture in a 'report' about the improvement of the locution, manners and cleanliness of the regulars of a certain dining cellar: 'some have actually desisted from calling the flesh of deceased deer wenson [sic]', it reported, suggesting that 'scavengers' and 'high aristocracy' could now dine together: 'Oh, the beauty and the blessing of this admirable extension and equality of knowledge!'[275] With *Figaro* and the *National Omnibus* Cowie and Strange were therefore attempting to forge an alternative, and more inclusive, 'popular' format than the radical and co-operative periodicals they had been producing since 1828: and with literary and theatrical productions they had found a particularly effective means of maximizing potential audience share.

Two final dimensions of Cowie and Strange's publishing repertoire of these years also had their roots in the cheap market of the 1820s: children's publishing and technical periodicals. The penny *Doctor* (1832-4), a weekly medical magazine that carried anatomical illustrations and sought to 'afford information which shall be intelligible to all' was significant as a return to technical publishing for Strange, as well as for his co-operation with the radical publisher Charles Penny and Howden, publisher of the *Evangelical Penny Magazine*. Along with the penny *Physician* (1832),

---

[275] *National Omnibus*, 27 Apr. 1832; 4, 11, 25 May 1832; 8, 15, 22 Jun. 1832.

it aimed to transmit useful knowledge to a readership of working people, removing jargon and making knowledge accessible to a non-specialist, common readership. In this sense it drew on Cowie and Strange's technical periodicals of the early 1820s, published for the same readership and with the same aim.[276]

A point of variation in Cowie and Strange's repertoire was their publication of the children's penny periodicals, including the *Penny School Book* (1832) and the *Boys' and Girls' Penny Magazine* (1832-3); the latter 'consisting of light, moral, and amusing tales, calculated to improve and instruct the rising generation'. A collaboration with the radical publisher George Purkess, it was an eight page, sixteen-column weekly, embellished with crude illustrations and comprising a range of fairy tales and moral-allegorical stories, including 'Blue Beard, Puss in Boots, Robinson Crusoe, The Battle of Chevy Chase, Baron Munchausen, Doctor Faustus, The Wehr Wolf and The Yellow Dwarf'. But Cowie and Strange's anti-establishment tendency coloured even this periodical: the alarming poem, 'The Factory Girl', depicted how an exhausted child worker died at her father's feet after a day of beatings at the cotton-mill, concluding with the following lines:

All night, with tortured feeling,
He watched his speechless child;
While, close beside her kneeling,
She knew him not, nor smiled.
Again the Factory's ringing
Her last perceptions tried;
When, from her straw-bed springing,
'Tis time!' she shrieked, and died!
That night a chariot passed her,
While on the ground she lay;
The daughters of her master
An evening visit pay;
Their tender hearts were sighing
As negro wrongs were told,
While the white slave was dying

[276] See chapters three and four for the *Doctor*; 213-14 and 245-7.

Who gained their father's gold.[277]

The shocking conditions of child labourers in northern textile towns first came to national prominence in the 1790s;[278] but Cowie and Strange's publication of this poem in a penny periodical (fusing opposition to 'capitalist' mill owners and antipathy to the preoccupation with colonial slavery) demonstrates the permeation of such grievances into children's literature by 1833.[279]

IV

Conclusions: Cowie and Strange's publishing repertoire, 1822-34

This chapter has argued that between 1822 and 1834 Cowie and Strange produced a range of cheap periodicals predominantly, but not exclusively, for common readers. Although motivations for entering the cheap trade varied, in the case of George Cowie and William Strange the bookseller-publisher emerges as simultaneously a rent-seeking economic agent operating in a competitive marketplace, and a literary agent, commissioning, producing and disseminating publications that reflected increasingly radical sensibilities. They thus entered the trade for a combination of commercial and ideological reasons, and harnessed the rhetoric of the march of intellect as a marketing strategy - particularly in the context of the formation of the LMI and the breakthrough of technical periodicals in the early 1820s. Changing economic conditions and the slump in the book trade in 1825-9 forced them to experiment with respectable literary and unrespectable satirical formats, but this did not spare them from bankruptcy. Their output assumed an increasingly ideological hue after 1828 as they became involved in co-operative and radical associational

---

[277] *Boys' and Girls' Penny Magazine*, 1, 24 Apr. 1833; 12 Jun. 1833.
[278] See J. Innes, 'Origins of the factory acts: the Health and Morals of Apprentices Act 1802', in N. Landau (ed.), *Law, crime and English society* (2002), 230-55.
[279] The 'white slavery' rhetoric made famous by Richard Oastler (1789-1861) was pronounced in Joshua Hobson's *Voice of the West Riding* (1833-4); an unstamped radical periodical of particular verve published in Huddersfield; see the *Voice*, 1 Jun. 1833; 6 Dec. 1833; 15 Mar. 1834; 5 Apr. 1834; 3 May 1834.

culture. The networks built in these years provided a platform from which their careers as radical unstamped publishers took off in 1830, and while their association with Carpenter elevated their profiles as publishers, it was a hindrance when he became isolated from the radical movement after 1831. From this point onwards, Cowie and Strange published a series of innovative cheap periodicals that drew on formats they had helped to establish in the 1820s.

The publishing repertoires of Cowie and Strange suggest that the appropriation of print technology by and for the cheap periodical market led in many directions, catering for rough and respectable sensibilities, different subject interests and discrete readerships; that cheap printed knowledge was of increasing importance in the culture and politics of the metropolitan common reader; and that cheap publishing could lead *into* radicalism, as well as away from it. Their careers complicate the story of a cheap market being forged predominantly by pressmen in the crucible of political crisis, and suggest that by the mid-1820s non-political cheap periodicals were widely produced, and that in the early 1830s the unstamped press encompassed a significant number of apolitical titles. Cowie and Strange owned, published and printed at least sixty-five cheap, middle- and higher-price periodicals between 1822 and 1834, encompassing a range of genres. Their motivations for entering the cheap market were a mix of commercial opportunism, a commitment to 'popular enlightenment' through the diffusion of 'useful' and 'amusing' knowledge and a desire to create a free press. Their production of radical periodicals, books and pamphlets suggests sympathy for parliamentary reform, but it was as a result of restrictive legislation and high financial thresholds of entry to the newspaper and book trades that they appropriated and cultivated the cheap periodical format with which their names became so closely associated.

Accounts of the rise in demand for cheap periodical print and the opening up of a public literary space for a new common readership ought to be tempered by the realities faced by cheap publishers. The popularization and democratization paradigms of a 'revolution in popular literature' sparked by political agitation are thus undermined from the direction of fluctuating levels of demand, the assimilation of artisan and mechanic readers into a 'popular' readership and the volatility of the cheap market itself, evidenced by low circulation and the ephemeral nature of many cheap titles. They are further undermined by the nature of this cheap market, in which politics and respectable content sat alongside (and often subordinate to) literary, satirical and rough amusement from the early 1820s onwards. The careers of Cowie and Strange thus demonstrate that there was a determined and sustained effort on the part of some cheap publishers during the 1820s and early 1830s to cultivate the common reader - but that this effort was motivated by economic, as well as political or improving, incentives, and was in many instances frustrated by an inability to secure a viable common readership.

Section II - The march of intellect as representation and practice, 1819-34

CHAPTER THREE

Representations of cultural practice in the popular periodical, 1819-34

Introduction: William Cobbett and popular cultural practice

On Monday 13 December 1819 the radical journalist William Cobbett attended a meeting held at the Crown and Anchor tavern on the Strand. That one of the most popular political writers of the post-war years was in attendance at this established locus of reform politics was unremarkable; yet the nature of that meeting, the identity of its principal attendees and of the project that thereafter occupied much of Cobbett's attention reflected an important shift in the ways in which the cultural practices of the metropolitan lower-middling and labouring classes were represented in periodical print over the next two decades. The meeting had been called to draw up 'a plan for the promoting [sic] of sobriety and frugality, and an abhorrence of gaming' and consisted largely of female reformers from London's artisan class. Prefacing an address to these 'RESPECTED COUNTRYWOMEN' in his *Political Register* in January 1820, Cobbett rehearsed his quintessential assault on state taxation, corruption and inefficiency. The address went on to make one crucial addition to this programme: 'the people', Cobbett observed, could alleviate their material and political sufferings by individually and collectively improving their 'manners and morals'. He began by outlining what he saw as a woman's duty to instigate improvement within the domestic sphere:

> When the wife has once set the example; when she has once driven out the coffee and the tea, I will engage that the pipe, the pot and the gin glass, will speedily follow. There is nothing so destructive of human happiness as the practice of which men are in of spending their evenings away from their own homes. To do this, they are induced by the habit of drinking, in the first place. They next contract a love of ribaldry, singing, and of every thing [sic] that attends places of resort for drinking.[280]

---

[280] *Political Register*, 20 Jan. 1820. For the notion of 'domesticity' in the 1820s, see A. Clark, *The struggle for the breeches* (1997), 179-96; and K. Gleadle, '"The age of physiological reformers":

The consumption of tea and coffee, the practice of frequenting public houses, the abandonment of the family hearth and the degraded appearance of working people were all causes and symptoms of what Cobbett saw as the general 'demoralization' of the metropolis. By setting an example to her husband ('practising domestic economy' and studying the 'history of the progeny of plants and flowers' rather than playing draughts, chess, cards and dice at the gaming table) and to her children (by desisting from the practice of 'giving the child a little drop [of alcohol]') the wife and mother could begin the process of familial improvement. Once they had forsaken such 'vitiated' practices, families could also make financial savings, improve their manners and morals, elevate their minds and achieve 'respectability' and happiness.[281]

This reform of the domestic sphere was more than simply keeping up appearances: it would strike at the root cause of economic inequality, and more so, argued Cobbett, than would educating the people; 'Bibles, religious tracts, gospel-shops, itinerant tub-men, and national schools' were proliferating, he noted in February 1825, but '[t]he mischief [in this context, a subsistence crisis] has quite another source than that of a want of reading and writing. Its source… is the infernal system of taxing, funding, and making paper-money.' Curtailing consumption would reduce government revenue from taxable commodities (including coffee, alcohol, tobacco, lotteries, soap, candles and sugar), thereby reducing the familial tax burden and weakening the financial position of the unreformed, unrepresentative House of Commons. Personal economic, and eventually political, independence, Cobbett concluded, would be the

---

rethinking gender and domesticity in the age of reform', in A. Burns and J. Innes (eds.), *Rethinking* (2003), 200-219.

[281] Cobbett noted, for instance, that '[f]orty shillings squandered on beer or spirits would half cloath [sic] a labouring man from head to foot'; *Political Register*, 20 Jan. 1820. For 'respectability', see W. D. Smith, *Consumption and the making of respectability* (2002), 189-222; and S. Cordery, 'Friendly societies and the discourse of respectability in Britain, 1825-1875', *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (1995), 35-58.

likely results of such an improvement in popular manners and morals. These calls for a reform of the public and private practices of the common people reached a large readership of men, women and children through the circulation of Cobbett's *Political Register*, *Rural Rides* (published from 1821 onwards, and collected together in 1830) and numerous other publications.[282]

Many reformers, however, disputed Cobbett's rural-traditionalist focus, pessimistic account of the condition of the people, defence of 'barbarous' practices such as pugilism and opposition to 'book learning' and 'national education'.[283] Associated debate as to the reality, desirability and consequences of an improvement in metropolitan cultural practice was not confined to radical discourse, and at least four other groups addressed the subject through the medium of the popular periodical press from the early 1820s onwards: religious and philanthropic societies (such as the RTS, through its *Child's Companion* and the SPCK, through its *Saturday Magazine*); secular improving societies (such as the SDUK, through its *Penny Magazine*); bookseller-publishers (such as Cowie and Strange, and motivated by varying degrees of ideological conviction and commercial opportunism); and a readership of lower-middling shopkeepers, artisans, mechanics, labourers and their wives and children. Although they differed in focus, methods and objectives, these groups agreed that the issue of popular morality was crucial to wider debates about the participation of the common people in the political and cultural life of the nation.[284]

---

[282] *Political Register*, 5 Feb. 1825.

[283] See Cobbett's 'Boxing', Aug. 1805, *Political works*, ii, 11-17. For opposition to the education of rural workers see his comments in 1825: 'Yet, only think of JOHN CLODPOLE, with every finger as thick as your wrist, and chaps between the finger and thumb, a quarter of an inch deep, no more capable of turning over the leaf of a book than you are of turning over with the spade, twenty rod of ground in a day', *Political Register*, 5 Feb., 1825.

[284] For an account of the decline of 'popular customs and manners' and the 'recreations of the common people' in the nineteenth century, see R. W. Malcolmson, *Popular recreations* (1973): '"Rational amusement" became a Victorian cliché, an expression of approval only for those pleasures which were patently moral and improving in talent... By the early years of Victoria's reign there must have been few localities which were not experiencing the efforts of parson or squire, employer or chapel,

In this context, the march of intellect trope functioned as a description of widely advocated cultural practices, and the Crown and Anchor meeting revealed a developing desire among certain portions of the metropolitan working population to adopt 'respectable' practices. The meeting raised further questions about exactly which popular cultural practices were (and were not) reconcilable with the imperatives of intellectual and moral improvement, how these were represented and why.

This chapter systematically examines representations of cultural practice in the popular periodical press between 1819 and 1834. Section I identifies two 'representational strategies': a 'realistic' form (primarily deployed in those Sunday newspapers claiming to present readers with an objective account of 'real life'); and an 'idealistic' form (deployed in cheap weekly magazines, legally prevented from reporting news *per se*, but providing readers with impressionistic depictions of generic, historical or foreign practices for strategic reasons). Section II identifies the specific modes of practice (categorized into nine themes and thirty-six activity groups) which comprised the content of twenty selected periodical titles, covering a range of political, religious, literary and technical genres (see appendix 4). It argues that although practices coded as 'self-improvement' (reading, writing and learning) accounted for approximately one quarter of all periodical content, diversity within and between titles was significant. Section III tests this hypothesis by exploring the debates surrounding popular observance of the Sabbath. The existence of strongly

---

philanthropic lady or temperance reformer, Bible society or charitable foundation, to civilize the labouring people and to enlighten them as to their real interests', ibid., 168-9. Malcolmson's account echoed the lament of E. P. Thompson, who described the erosion of 'the most distinguished popular culture England has known' in *The making* (1968), 914. Both accounts capture the sense of transition of the 1820s, but it is the question of how popular cultural practice was re-imagined in the press by both reformers and the common people in this period (and how this differed) that constitutes the focus of this chapter. Malcolmson's account, in particular, has most recently been challenged by Emma Griffin; see fn. 285, below.

contested representations of dominical practices in the popular periodical, it argues, reveals both the merits and limitations of using these sources to interpret popular culture, and the impact of the march of intellect more generally.[285]

By combining quantitative and qualitative analyses, this chapter argues that popular periodicals were reflexive products and shapers of a complex early nineteenth-century social world. This was a world in which those public and private practices underpinning the 'march' featured prominently, but often in coexistence with a range of non-improving cultural forms. The popular periodical therefore emerges as a useful - but highly problematic - source for popular culture. Recognition that print had the power to shape public perceptions of popular moral, social and political agency was hardly new to the periodical press of the 1820s and early 1830s. But the intensity and pervasiveness of depictions of metropolitan cultural practice between 1819 and 1834 indicate a drive to rethink the place of the common people in English society during a period of 'profound... moral and cultural crisis' by subjectifying their lives and experiences - that is, by portraying their experiences in ways which allowed readers to identify with them.[286]

---

[285] For 'self-improvement' see I. McCalman (ed.), *An Oxford companion* (1999), 161-9, 695. For popular culture, see T. Harris, 'Problematising popular culture', in idem., *Popular culture* (1995), 1-28 and E. Griffin, 'Popular culture in industrializing England', *Historical Journal*, Vol. 45, No. 3 (2004), 619-35.

[286] For an incisive overview of the 'crisis' of the 1820s, see A. Burns and J. Innes (eds.), *Rethinking* (2003), 35-45. For the term 'subjectification', and the attempt to more richly characterize the thoughts and behaviour of the common people by making them a subject of inquiry - 'the discursive subjectifying of the working poor, of their being written and of their writing themselves' - see J. W. Childers, 'Observation and representation: Mr. Chadwick writes the poor', *Victorian Studies*, Vol. 37, No. 3 (1994), 407; 405-32. For changing representations of the 'cockney' as a symbol of London's lower-middling and labouring classes, see G. Stedman Jones, 'The "cockney" and the nation, 1780-1988', in D. Feldman and G. Stedman Jones (eds.), *Metropolis - London* (1989), 272-324. For a contemporary description of the 'cockney' as 'brought into life within the sound of Bow bell - pert and conceited, yet truly ignorant, they generally discover themselves by their mode of speech', see Anon, [attrib. Henry Alken], *Real life in London* (1821), 456-7.

I

Representational strategies: cultural practice as a media event and social reality

Popular periodicals were edited by, and received contributions from, a wide range of writers, ranging from politically-motivated labouring or artisanal autodidacts to hack journalists and salaried pressmen of notable social backgrounds. They also targeted a range of specific or more general 'populist' readerships, appealing variously to 'poor children', 'artisans' wives and daughters', 'mechanics', the 'working classes', or, more nebulously, 'the people'.[287] Any analysis of periodical representations must therefore identify not just a periodical's format, genre and content, but also its origins, purpose and target audience. Such a 'history of representations' must resist the temptation to invoke periodicals either as exemplars of the common people's vernacular idiom or of the downward social voyeurism of a semi-patrician 'middling sort'. The first approach overplays the authenticity of the popular press as a voice of popular culture; while the second erroneously dismisses the popular periodical as a vehicle of nineteenth-century bourgeois social norms. The popular periodical is better conceived as a site of negotiation between two interacting and overlapping representational strategies: the first, representation as a revelation of popular practices for the uninitiated, appealing to readers' fascination with a social world from which they were removed; the second, representations of practices that claimed to be first-hand, personalized or authentic. Such representations - 'external' and 'internal' - were simultaneously representations about and of the common people.[288]

---

[287] See chapter four, 240-52.

[288] For 'representations', see P. Burke, *What is cultural history?* (2004), 62-7; A. Edgar and P. Sedgewick (eds.), *Cultural theory* (2007), 339; the essays by K. Halttunen, S. Feierman and S. Rose in V. E. Bonnell and L. Hunt (eds.), *Beyond the cultural turn* (1999), pt. three; and P. Gurney, 'The middle-class embrace: language, representation, and the contest over co-operative forms in Britain,

In a seminal article on popular serials, Jon Klancher argued that the cheap periodical's targeting of a lower-middling readership resulted in it adopting a particular type of 'representational strategy'. Its perspective on cultural practice, he noted, could be likened to a shopkeeper surveying a crowd through a window:

> For all its great expectations, the mass journal was finding its public largely among tradesmen and shopkeepers. This lower-middle class audience dreamed less of cultural domination or political revolt than of simpler social *rapprochement* between classes. Indeed, the mass journal's 'crowd' is always the crowd visible from a shopkeeper's store window.

By constructing an only slightly distanced 'crowd', the 'mass writer' opened a space within which to develop a 'cultural melange' of popular practices for a lower middle-class and elite artisan readership. In his own groundbreaking study of the common reader, Richard Altick likewise concluded that '[i]t was from the class of artisan and small shopkeepers that the periodical reading public received most of its permanent recruits in this period [i.e. post-1819]'. According to this account, the common reader was less 'common' than might be assumed, with the result that periodical representations were detached from genuinely 'popular' experiences: cheap periodicals, by extension, offered readers a merely 'external' - or at least highly distorted - representation of popular culture.[289]

Such an interpretation has some validity, but needs to be complicated. Firstly, what was genuinely 'popular' is unclear, and the implication that a shopkeeper or artisan's experiences were separate from those of the 'common people' proper is unsustainable: if the popular periodical was indeed aimed exclusively at the small shopkeeper and artisan (and there is no evidence that this is the case), it was by that token aimed at a world also inhabited by the shopkeeper's family, his customers and his network of

---

c.1860-1914', *Victorian Studies*, Vol. 37, No. 2 (1994), 253-86. For the evolution of the seamstress as a representational symbol, see L. M. Alexander, *Women, work, and representation* (2003), 57-94.

[289] J. P. Klancher, 'From "crowd" to "audience"', *ELH*, Vol. 50, No. 1 (1983), 171; R. D. Altick, *The English common reader* (1957), 330.

acquaintances. Secondly, popular periodicals made explicit appeals to much more humble readers, and the popular Sunday newspaper (outside the scope of Klancher and Altick's accounts) might reasonably be claimed not only to have been read by the poor in metropolitan society, but also to have represented their social world in a language with which they would be familiar and to have articulated opinions redolent of their own. There is thus no single socio-economic perspective which can be said to have characterized popular periodical representations: while such textual artefacts ought not to be invoked as unproblematic products of popular culture, they were not entirely detached from it.

When considering the construction of the common people's social world through periodical print, the 'history of representations' pioneered by Roger Chartier provides a useful starting point:

> Structures of the social world are not an objective given, any more than intellectual and psychological categories. They are all produced historically in the interconnected practices - political, social and discursive - that construct their figures. It is such differentiations and the schemata that fashion them that are the objects of a cultural history that has come to rethink completely the relation traditionally postulated between the social realm (identified with a very real sort of reality, existent in itself) and the representations that are supposed to reflect it or distort it.

For Chartier, the purpose of cultural history is to 'work up' a space between text and readings and 'to grasp the complex, multiple and highly differentiated practices that construct the world as representation'. 'Representation' can thus be defined as a narrative strategy depicting individuals or groups in a selective, stylized and/or iterative account (often negatively as 'subversive', 'disorderly' or 'immoral', but occasionally positively as 'loyal', 'orderly' and 'moral'), intended to convey a particular image for strategic purposes. It is a function of language (revealing thoughts and reflecting and shaping empirical social experience) and an explication of

perceived practices and norms (with particular resonances in the construction of identities).[290]

Sensitivity to the tension between reality and its representation - either reflected or distorted - is crucial in any attempt to assess the depiction of the common people's social world: but such an appreciation does not require the reduction of practice to language. If popular periodical reportage was selective and stylized, it also referred to experienced or observed activity: what Chartier termed 'a very real sort of reality, existent in itself'. As will be demonstrated, representations of the intellectual and moral condition of the common people also functioned as loci of wider debates about popular instrumentality and agency.

Two principal forms of 'representation' can be identified as inherent to the popular periodical. Firstly, textual or visual accounts that purported to reveal the 'reality' of certain practices (usually relating to contemporary or historical events or behaviour); and secondly, accounts designed to present cultural practices in a particular light (often polarizing the idealized, moral and respectable and the familiar, immoral and rough). These differentiated representations occurred side by side in both cheap weekly periodicals and Sunday newspapers, and might be termed the 'realistic' and the 'idealistic' respectively (summarized in table 4.1, below).

---

[290] R. Chartier, *Cultural history* (1988), 13-15. One recent account of pamphlet literature offers a rethinking of approaches to representations of social 'reality'; see S. O'Driscoll, 'Reading through desire: interpretive practices for eighteenth-century popular culture', *British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 2 (2006), 237-253.

Table 4.1: Representational strategies in popular periodicals, 1819-34

	'Realistic'	**'Idealistic'**
Definition	Representations of cultural practice claimed to be accurate, authentic and recent. Objectivity and truth-value also important; naturalistic reportage (e.g. use of indigenous nomenclature such as 'real life' and slang).	Idealized, universal or generic representations of cultural practice that ordinarily encompass only foreign, historical or imagined behaviours. Often subjective and impressionistic.
Application	Recent/contemporary events, particularly sporting, political and other 'newsworthy' events, e.g. a report of a pugilistic bout or the opening of a new mechanics' institute.	Non-contemporary or non-English practices, particularly in descriptions of ancient or foreign customs, e.g. an account of falconry in the Middle Ages, or reading practices in the previous century.
Deployment	Chiefly in the Sunday newspaper; occasionally in cheap format (particularly in radical titles which disregard Stamp legislation on 'news', or in cases where reportage of 'news' is less likely to encourage prosecution).	Chiefly in cheap weekly periodicals, which respond to contemporary events by deploying related stories, e.g. an observation on the state of popular literature can be made obliquely through a 'history' of reading in England. Can also be discerned from editorials in newspapers.

Instances of these representational styles in individual periodical titles and numbers were neither arbitrary nor mutually exclusive. Legal restrictions on the reportage of news embodied in the Stamp Act of 1819 meant that the cheap 'unstamped' weekly periodical concentrated primarily (though not exclusively) on promoting generic 'idealistic' representations. Although influenced by contemporary debates about cultural practice, the reader of a cheap periodical in the 1820s and 1830s was thus frequently presented with a depiction of a social world as the editor thought it had been, or ought to be, rather than as it actually was. This was, however, a tendency rather than a rule, and some cheap periodicals contained matter that referred explicitly to contemporary cultural practices. Sunday newspapers, by comparison, made claims to provide an account of 'real life' in London, offering readers 'realistic' representations of events that had occurred within the previous week. Despite such claims for accuracy - epitomized by inclusion of the phrase 'real life' in some titles - Sunday newspapers contained a disproportionate amount of material on criminal, sporting and political activities in an attempt to maximize

entertainment value. This narrowed coverage resulted in content that distorted, rather than accurately reflected, social reality. Moreover, newspapers often also deployed idealized representations of cultural practices in editorials and letters, or when further details of a story were unavailable. If periodical representations of cultural practice were stylized and selective, yet we may learn from them which cultural practices were deployed, by whom, why and with what success.[291]

II

Defining and measuring 'cultural practice': a content analysis of popular periodicals, 1819-34

i. Definitions and methods

Historians recognize the plurality of experiences and forms connoted by the term 'cultural practice' (ranging from the world of work, attitudes to nature, politics, law, education, literacy and knowledge, health practices, gender and generational roles, religious beliefs, recreational and leisure pursuits and community customs), and a definition of 'popular culture' has already been offered: namely, the diverse repertoire of discourse and practice from which common people drew selectively and strategically as the situation, or their reading of the situation, required. Based on both historical and historiographical usages, this chapter attempts to construct a taxonomy of popular cultural practice in order to assess contemporary depictions of popular manners and morals. Nine 'themes' have emerged from a systematic reading of popular periodicals:[292] the domestic sphere; amusement and recreation (by which is meant especially rougher and more traditional activities); leisure experiences (more

---

[291] *Bell's Life*, for instance, claimed the 'journal should hold up a faithful mirror to the stirring and energetic characteristics, as well as to the more humorous and capricious traits of the age's physiognomy. It should be a picture of human "LIFE," physical, moral, and intellectual - literary, social, and political'; 4 Jan. 1824.

[292] Choosing, first, roughly equal subdivisions into which characteristic subject matter might be divided, and influenced by a desire to capture differences between the content of separate periodicals.

polite activities); religion and belief; self-improvement; respectability and society; work and wealth; law and order; and public contention. Each of these has been broken down into four 'activity groups' (see appendix 3 for the 'grid').[293]

This 'grid' is used to code 7,962 'items' (images, articles, stories and distinct sections of text) found in a sample of 200 periodicals and newspapers (the sampling method is explained below). Each 'item' is coded by theme (into one of the nine thematic categories) and by activity (into one of thirty-six categories). The 'locus and example' level of the grid is designed to make the coding process replicable and to ensure that categories are mutually exclusive. This method has both merits and limitations. Firstly, it provides only a snapshot of content, based on a small sampling of the extant literature. Secondly, the methodology does not ensure complete objectivity, and the grid might be seen as arbitrarily imposing order on a complex world of cultural practices. In spite of these concerns, content-analysis methodology forces a systematic reading of a representative sample of periodicals and newspapers, and the approach enables the tracing of patterns and the establishment of research hypotheses. Twenty periodicals and newspapers published in London between 1819 and 1834 were selected to encompass cheap, middle- and higher-price titles across literary, political, religious and technical genres (see appendix 4). Ten numbers of each title were selected (the first five of a particular year and an additional run of five consecutive numbers).[294]

---

[293] A useful overview of the content-analysis technique can be found in K. Krippendorff, *Content analysis* (2004 edn.). Krippendorff notes that the methodology is most likely to succeed when applied to 'attributations' [sic] (concepts, attitudes and beliefs manifest in 'verbal text' such as morality or character; social relationships (including the negotiation, imposition and acceptance or rejection of authority and power); 'institutional realities' (such as marriage, government and science); and 'public behaviours' (including values and conceptions of the world worked out by narratives in the public domain). Thus, 'content analyses are most likely to succeed when analysts address the linguistically constituted social realities that are rooted in the kinds of conversations that produced the texts being analyzed'; ibid., 76-81.

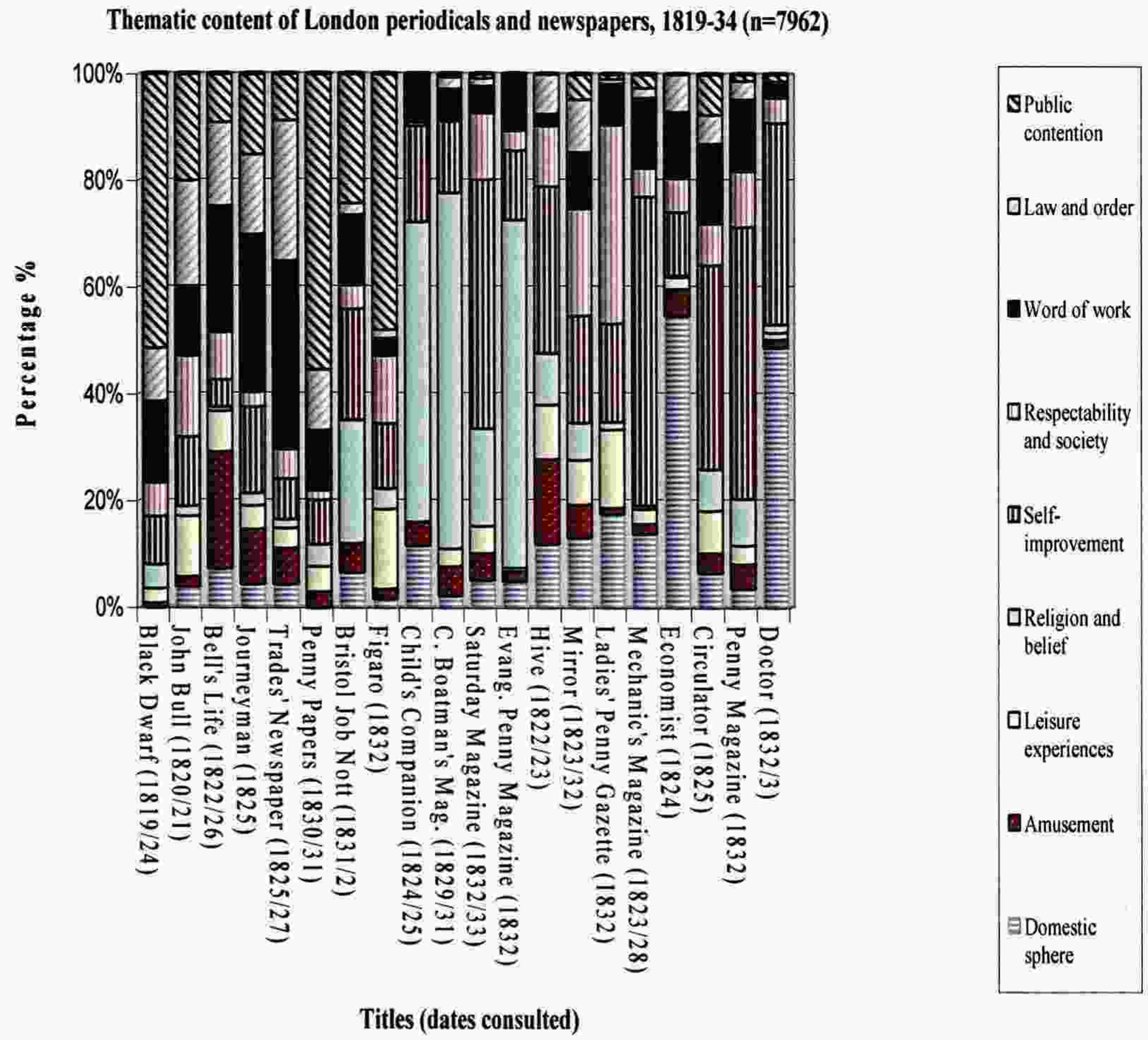
[294] The sample coverage and results are summarized in appendices 4 and 5.

ii. Results: the content of popular periodicals

a. Analysis of individual titles

Appendix 5 and figures 4.1 to 4.5 show the results of both individual and aggregate content analyses. Figure 4.1 (p.188) shows what themes were represented in individual titles, revealing which types of organ represented particular forms of cultural practice. The results reveal that at least eleven of the twenty titles included in the sample were relatively specialized, but that even these titles conformed to a mixed pattern of homogeneity and variety of content. If 'highly specialized' is defined as any periodical or newspaper with over 50% coverage of a single theme, eight periodicals fit this description: the *Black Dwarf* (with 51.4% of content falling into the public contention category); the *Mechanic's Magazine* (57.9% into self-improvement); the *Child's Companion* (56.1% into religion and belief); the *Economist and General Advertiser* (54.6% into domestic sphere); the *Canal Boatman's Magazine* (66.7% into religion and belief); the *Penny Papers* (55.4% into public contention); the *Penny Magazine* (55.45 into self-improvement); and the *Evangelical Penny Magazine* (65.2% into religion and belief). If a looser description as 'quite specialized' sets the minimum threshold at 40%, to the list are added: the *Saturday Magazine* (with 46.7% of content categorized as religion and belief); the *Doctor* (with 48.7% as domestic sphere); and *Figaro in London* (with 47.9% as public contention).

Figure 4.1 [295]



Political titles

Despite this preponderance of relatively specialized titles, the thematic content of nearly all titles varied. The political focus of the *Black Dwarf* (1817-24) was reflected in its coverage of 'extra-parliamentary "constitutional" activity' (27.93%) and 'domestic "unconstitutional" activity' (13.51%), while *Figaro in London* (1831-9) devoted 22.68% to 'parliamentary politics' and 21.41% to 'extra-parliamentary "constitutional" activity'. Yet even these specialized political organs engaged with other themes and activities: the *Black Dwarf* devoted a 15.3% share to work and

[295] This figure shows periodical titles organized first by genre (political, religious, literary and technical), then by date of publication and lastly by dates consulted. This presentation is designed to demonstrate how titles of the same genre could vary widely in content.

wealth (with 'producing and selling' comprising 9.01% of this), and *Figaro in London* 15.2% to leisure experiences (all of which referred to 'paid performances, exhibitions and clubs' - in particular theatrical reviews). Other 'political' titles were even more miscellaneous: the 'Tory' *Bristol Job Nott* (1831-3), for instance, combined 24.2% of coverage of public contention (with 16.48% referring negatively to 'domestic "unconstitutional" activity') with a share of 20.9% for self-improvement (12.09% specifically for 'writing and creating') and 23.1% for religion and belief (16.48% for 'worship and religious feasts'). That a 'Church and King' vehicle aimed at labouring people fused politics with religion is unsurprising, yet the coverage of the theme of self-improvement suggests that the 'Tory' press chose to fight radical print on this ground by the early 1830s.

In the context of 'political' Sunday newspapers, an even more miscellaneous thematic content is revealed: the 'Tory' newspaper, the *John Bull* (1820-92), had roughly equal coverage of public contention and law and order (20% and 19.8% respectively) - with the twin dynamics of 'empire, military and war' (12.48%) and 'illegal activities' (13.63%) featuring as key activity groups - as well as a relatively equal content share between respectability and society (15.2% - the majority of which referred to 'royal, aristocratic and elite practice' [12.68%]), self-improvement (13.1% - mainly 'reading' [7.49%]), work and wealth (13.1% - 'effects of industrialization' [7.97%]) and leisure experiences (11.3% - principally 'consuming, buying and window-shopping' [11.13%]). The reformist sporting Sunday paper, *Bell's Life in London* (1822-86), divided its content three ways between work and wealth (23.7%), amusement and recreation (22%) and law and order (15.7%), with only 9% of content categorized as public contention. The next largest activity groups in *Bell's Life* were 'producing and selling' (15.29%), 'animal sports, domestication and cruelty' (11.5%),

'competitive (human) sports and games' (8.63%) and 'illegal activities' (10.46%). The more overtly radical *Journeyman and Artizans' London and Provincial Chronicle* (1825), by contrast, devoted 15% of its content to public contention (mainly 'parliamentary politics' [5.21%] and 'empire, military and war' [6.93%]), though it balanced this coverage with similar overall shares of content for self-improvement (16.2%) and law and order (15%). The principal activity groups within these latter two themes were 'learning and discovering' (8.55%) and 'illegal activities' (11.09%).

The *Journeyman* was dominated by content categorized as work and wealth (29.6%); a fact explained by its desire to furnish its artisan, mechanic and operative readership with details relating to the repeal of the Combination Laws, trade societies, turn-outs and wage disputes in 1825. The prominence of the activity group 'philanthropy, legislation and the state' (13.39%) within this would seem to corroborate this conclusion. Similarly, the *Trades' Newspaper* (1825-7) was dominated by content categorized as work and wealth (35.3%). For the *Trades'*, however, this comprised mainly the activity groups 'protest, self-protection and workshop customs' (13.57%) and 'effects of industrialization and economic change' (12.21%) - a result that confirms the importance of the *Trades'* as a window into the organization of metropolitan labour in the period.

Religious titles

This pattern, in which 'specialized' periodicals and newspapers revealed an internal heterogeneity (and less specialized organs even more so), is also noticeable in the religious genre. In three cases (the *Child's Companion*, the *Canal Boatman's Magazine* and the *Evangelical Penny Magazine*) religious periodicals were indeed dominated by religious thematic content. The specific religious activity group dominating the *Child's Companion* (1824-37) was 'reading, praying and

proselytizing' (40.65%), which referred mainly to attendance at Sunday schools. In the *Canal Boatman's Magazine* - a weekly penny periodical published by the Paddington Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge among Canal Boatmen (PSPCK) - it was a mixture of this category (36.67%) and 'worship and religious feasts' (26.67%), referring to the drive to get canal workers from the Paddington Basin to its purpose-built chapel. And in the *Evangelical Penny Magazine* (1832) it was 'doctrine and church history' (43.48%), which reflected the editorial policy of publishing abbreviated 'spiritual lives'. This dominant religious message, however, was inflected differently in each periodical according to their discrete readerships. In the *Child's Companion* the religious focus was supplemented by a concern for the role of the child in the domestic sphere (11.6%), and specifically on 'family relationships and friendship' (7.1%). In the *Canal Boatman's Magazine* (1829-31) the self-improvement of workers (13.3%) underpinned the religious message, a theme characterized mainly by 'reading' (9.44%). This concern for readership reflected the drive by the 'Paddington Society' to disseminate spiritual literature, and the magazine itself, to canal workers. And in the *Evangelical Penny Magazine* (1832) the religious message was mixed with themes of self-improvement (13% - again, mainly 'reading' [8.7%]) and details of work and wealth (10.6% - principally 'producing and selling' [also 8.7%]). Such diverse content was clearly aimed at an artisan readership that desired more than merely 'religious' content. Most surprising in this genre were the results for the SPCK's *Saturday Magazine* (1832-54). Although this was relatively specialized, its editors chose a strategy that pushed self-improvement in secular rather than religious terms. These messages of self-improvement (accounting for 46.7% of the periodical's content) and respectability and society (12.4%) compared with 18.8% of content in the religion and belief category - though the principal religious message

seems to have been to encourage formal 'worship' (8.03%). The specific activities underpinning the message of self-improvement were 'learning and discovering' (22.63%) and 'writing and creating' (16.79%).

Literary titles

Literary magazines, the quintessential cheap periodical genre of the early 1820s, marketed themselves as miscellanies, and the label 'literary' (although used by their own editors and publishers) does not sufficiently capture the richness or diversity of their content. Arguably the first cheap literary weekly appearing in the early 1820s was the *Hive; an Original Weekly Publication* (1822-4), in which the theme of self-improvement dominated (accounting for 31.3% of content). The specific activities underpinning 'self-improvement' in the *Hive* were, unusually, 'writing and creating' (17.61%) rather than 'reading' (3.98%) or 'learning and discovering' (9.66%). A preoccupation with the literary craft explains this focus on the process of writing. A genuine miscellany, the *Hive* nonetheless included significant amounts of content relating to amusement and recreation (15.9%), the domestic sphere (11.9%), respectability and society (11.4%), leisure experiences (10.2%) and religion and belief (9.7%): aside from activities driving self-improvement, its three most frequently mentioned activities were 'animal sports, domestication and cruelty' (9.66%), 'medical practices, health and death' (7.39%), and 'paid performances, exhibitions and clubs' (7.95%). The derivative *Mirror of Literature* was likewise characterized by a self-improving motif, though it shared this content with items categorized as respectability and society (both accounting for 20.1%). More specifically, the activity groups 'learning and discovering' (10.58%), 'producing and selling' (10.22%) and 'interpersonal relations' (9.85%) represented large content shares. Work and wealth

(10.6%) and law and order (13.1%) were also important themes in the *Mirror*; and in the former coverage, at least, it was at odds with the prototype it had copied.

Reflecting a shift in this balance, the *Ladies' Penny Gazette* (1832-4) adapted its own representations of cultural practice to suit its intended audience of lower-middling women (whom it explicitly depicted as artisans' wives and daughters). The theme of respectability and society dominated content (37.2%), with an overwhelming majority of items categorized in the activity group 'locution, fashion and cleanliness' (24.5%). This concern with appearances is unsurprising given the aim of the periodical to make 'fashion' available to all, and the second most mentioned activity group ('interpersonal relations, manners and social distinctions' [11.53%]) would seem to verify this. The *Ladies' Penny Gazette* also contained a significant amount of self-improving content (18.4%), with 'reading' (6.92%) and 'writing' (8.36%) activities dominating this thematic content. Women, according to the *Ladies' Penny Gazette*, should be well-educated in addition to being well-dressed. Perhaps unsurprisingly, however, the domestic sphere theme also accounted for a large share of content (17.6%); though this was less about household economy and medical practices than about 'entertainment and celebrations' (including playing music, singing and dancing [10.66% of all content]) and 'familial relationships and friendship' (covering marriage and sexual practices; weddings; and parenthood [4.32%]).

Technical titles

This concern with the domestic sphere also characterized the 'technical' genre (a broad 'scientific' and 'useful knowledge' class - see appendix 1), although variety remained the primary characteristic of these periodicals. The *Economist and General Advertiser* (1824-5) was dominated by the domestic sphere theme (54.6%), and

overwhelmingly by the activity group 'household economy and domesticity' (46.1%), with some items referring to 'medical practices, health and death' (8.31%). In light of its agenda to effect a reform of the spending and familial habits of its lower-middling and artisan readership, this dominance is unsurprising, though by including content relating to the themes of work and wealth (12.5%) and self-improvement (11.8%) (mainly 'producing and selling' [6.07%] and 'learning and discovering' [6.39%] respectively) it broadened its appeal. The *Circulator of Useful Knowledge* (1825) conformed much more to the pattern of the literary miscellany, though it was dominated by self-improvement themes (38.3%), and especially by 'learning and discovery' (24.55%) and 'writing and creating' (8.48%). Like the *Economist*, the *Circulator* gave a significant proportion of space to the theme of work and wealth (15%), and likewise focussed on 'producing and selling' activities (7.76%).

Two final 'technical' cheap periodicals were included in the sample; both highly specialized in content and agenda. The *Mechanic's Magazine* (1823-58) was the archetypal 'low scientific' journal of the early 1820s, driven by an agenda to diffuse scientific knowledge of a technical nature to common readers without jargon and on their own terms. This agenda is demonstrated by the large proportion of content devoted to self-improvement as a theme (57.9%), and in particular (like the *Circulator*) to the activity groups 'learning and discovering' (40.57%) and 'writing and creating' (13.21%). The domestic-sphere theme accounted for a significant proportion of content (13.8%) - particularly the activity group 'household economy and domesticity' (7.86%) - accounting for an almost equal share to the theme of work and wealth (13.2%), which was dominated by 'producing and selling' (5.97%) and the 'effects of industrialization' (3.77%). Finally, the weekly penny *Doctor*, established to disseminate medical knowledge to 'working people', revealed a divide between the

themes of domestic sphere (48.7%) - almost exclusively the activity group 'medical practices, health and death' (43.71%) - and self-improvement (37.7%), mostly addressing activities categorized as 'learning and discovering' (22.96%).

b. Aggregate content analysis

Themes

In the aggregate analysis, two thematic content hierarchies can be discerned.[296] Firstly, in numerical terms (the total number of items coded as a particular theme), the hierarchy is thus: self-improvement (1442 items and 18.11% of the total); work and wealth (1375 and 17.27%); public contention (936 and 11.76%); law and order (922 and 11.58%); domestic sphere (801 and 10.06%); respectability and society (755 and 9.48%); amusement and recreation (645 and 8.10%); religion and belief (552 and 6.93%); and leisure experiences (534 and 6.71%). This numerical pattern (shown in figure 4.2, p.196) is skewed by the concentration of certain newspapers on specialist themes: for example, the sporting Sunday newspaper, *Bell's Life*, focussed primarily on activities categorized as amusement and recreation in the grid (336 [22%] of 1530 items coded). Because *Bell's Life* carried more than ten times the number of items per issue as many periodicals in the sample, the aggregate result is unduly influenced by its content. Strong claims about thematic hierarchy cannot therefore be made on the basis of such crude numerical measurements alone.

[296] See appendices 4 and 5 and figures 4.2 and 4.3.

Figure 4.2

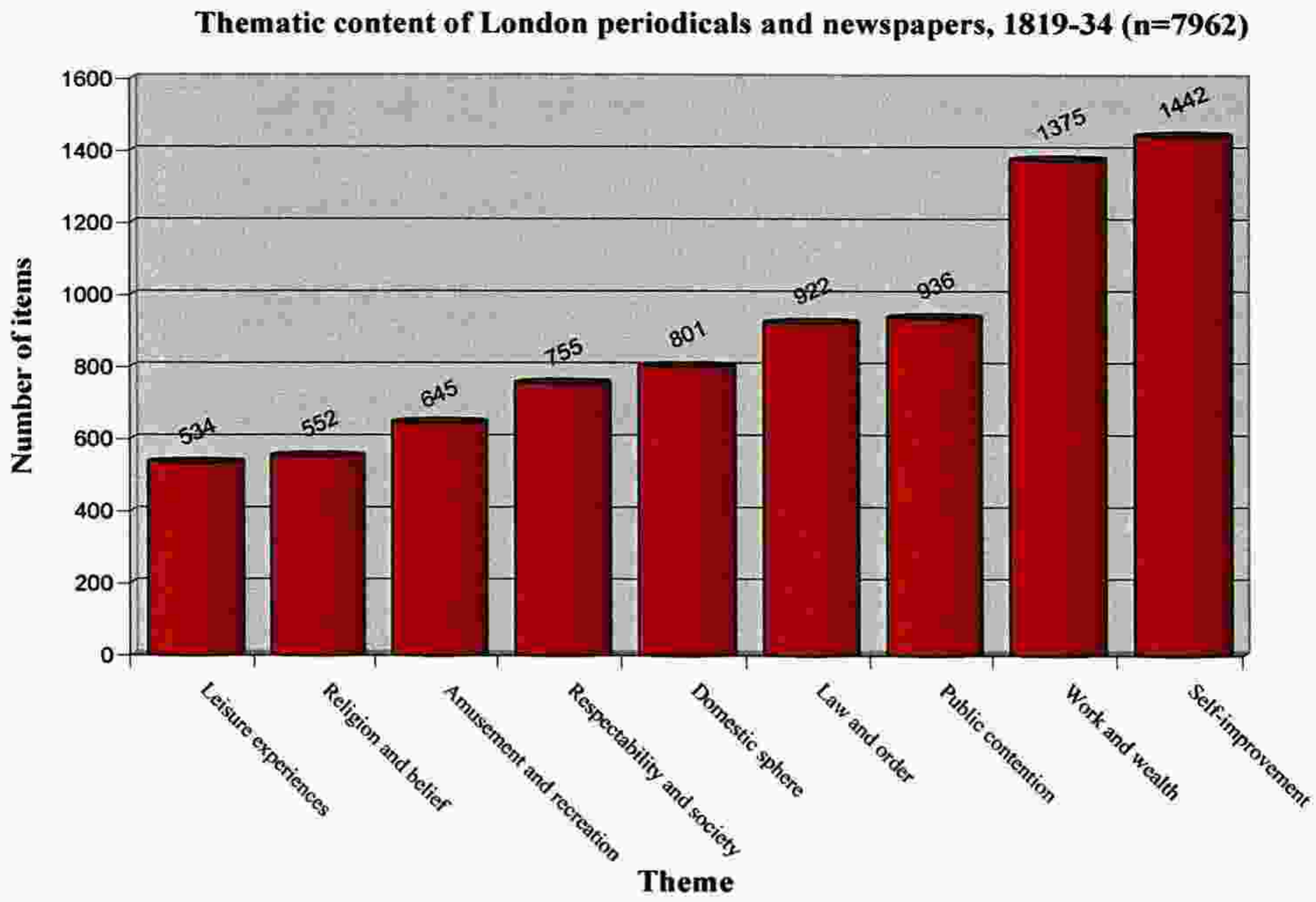
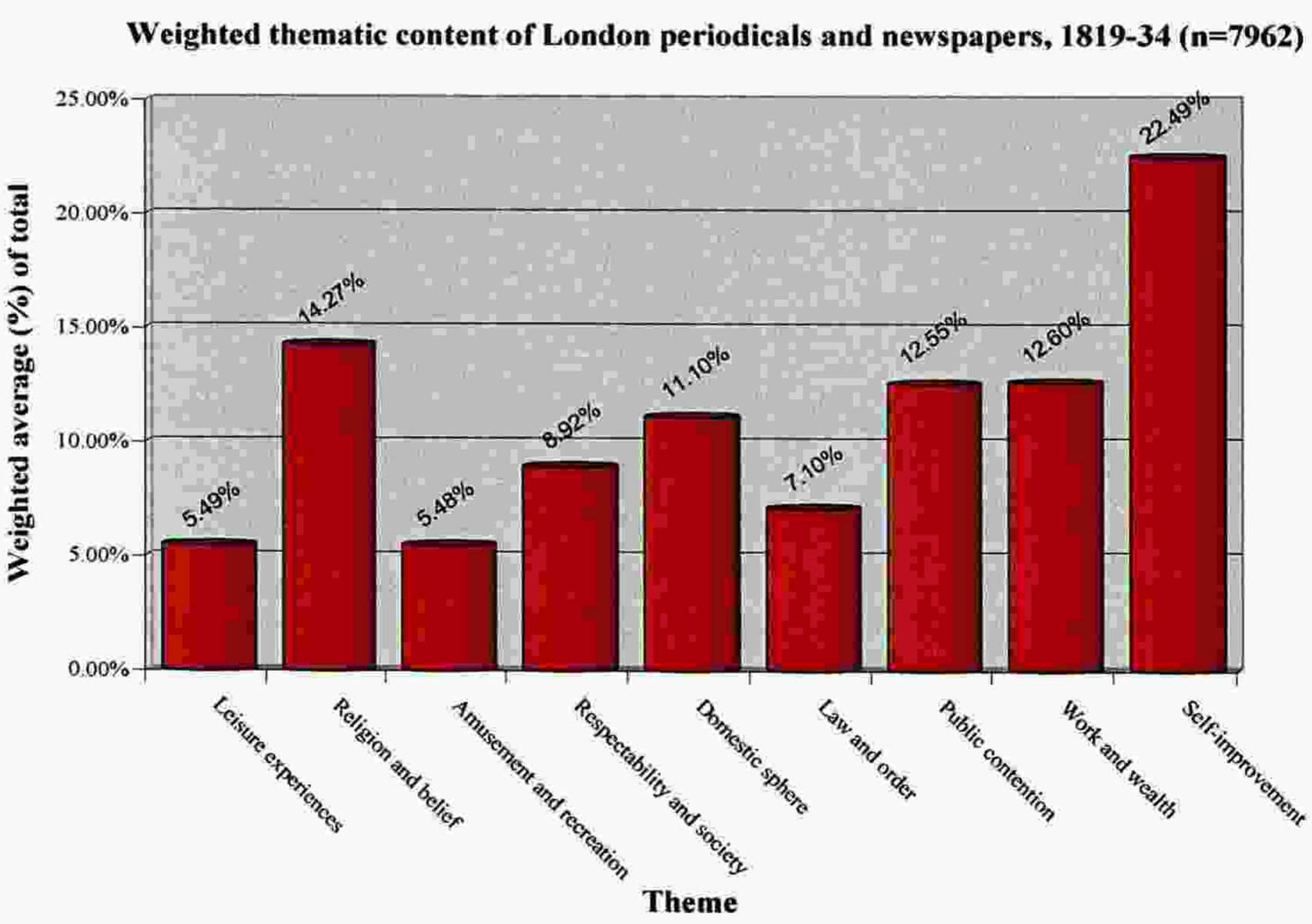


Figure 4.3



The real significance of this hierarchy can be tested if an adjustment is made by calculating the percentage coverage of each theme and activity by title, adding these figures together and dividing by the number of issues analyzed in the sample: that is,

by focussing on average proportionate coverage, independent of issue length. The resulting adjusted hierarchy (figure 4.3, p.196) displays both similarities and differences to the original: self-improvement remains the most pervasive theme with an increased content share of 22.49%; religion and belief nearly doubles its original share, to 14.27%; work and wealth has a reduced share of 12.60%; public contention is relatively stable at 12.55%; the domestic sphere is stable at 11.10%; respectability and society is stable at 8.92%; law and order has a significantly reduced share of 7.10%; leisure experiences is stable at 5.49%; and amusement and recreation has a significantly reduced share of 5.48%. In this adjusted hierarchy the unusually large number of items coded as amusement and recreation in *Bell's Life* has less of a distorting impact on aggregate figures: from an aggregate content share of 8.1%, this theme is reduced to a share of 5.48%. Significantly, self-improvement dominates both the numerical and adjusted content hierarchies, accounting for almost one quarter of all items in the latter analysis (22.49%). The primacy of this theme in both hierarchies suggests that it constituted a persistent theme in the popular press. The proportion of content categorized as public contention remained relatively stable in both measurements, although an increase in the adjusted content measurement coincides with a fall in ranking. Content relating to the themes of the domestic sphere, respectability and society and leisure experiences is also stable across both hierarchies, representing consistently minor aggregate shares. The theme of religion and belief, however, gained significant content share in the adjusted hierarchy, moving into second rank with a share of over 14%.

The other significant difference occurs in the context of law and order: from fourth rank in the numerical hierarchy (11.58%), this theme falls to seventh rank (7.10%) when adjusted. This result can be explained by stamp legislation, newspaper

organization and the intended readership of the Sunday press itself: stamp laws allowed only 'stamped' newspapers to report contemporary news and public events (including criminal trials); newspapers were often the only organs that could afford to send reporters to police offices and the courts; and Sunday newspaper editors consciously chose to report crime in response to a perceived desire to read about metropolitan low life. The average-proportions approach reduces the weight of newspapers in the hierarchy and so diminishes the importance of this theme.

These results reveal both the strengths and weaknesses of the adjusted measurement: firstly, the weighting technique renders each item of equal importance to the aggregate result (and thus every textual or visual message is treated as having the same potential effect on the reader, a strength inasmuch as this obviates the bias inherent in comparing titles containing varying numbers of items); and secondly, a weakness of aggregates constructed on this basis is that this can exaggerate the importance of particular themes when titles are dominated by a single theme, skewing results by over-representing titles containing a small number of items. To further illustrate this last point, the religious monthly *Canal Boatman's Magazine* contained 180 items in ten numbers (compared with 1530 items in *Bell's Life* in the same number of issues), so the dominance of religion and belief (66.7%) in this case skews the aggregate result.

Activity groups

A parallel content-analysis of 'activity groups' (see appendices 4 and 5) helps to reveal specific patterns within broader thematic trends. In figure 4.4 (below, p.199) the number of items coded by each activity is shown in columns, while the adjusted activity group averages are shown in figure 4.5 (p.200 - again a matter of calculating average proportionate representation of particular themes). The top five recurring

activity groups were as follows: 'learning and discovering' (10.32% of all items coded); 'producing and selling' (6.5%); 'writing and creating' (6.35%); 'reading, praying and proselytizing' (5.23%); and 'reading' (5.17%). These results are consistent with the crude numerical measurement, except that 'illegal activities' and 'effects of industrialization' reduce dramatically in the adjusted analysis (to 3.83% and 2.88% respectively).

Figure 4.4

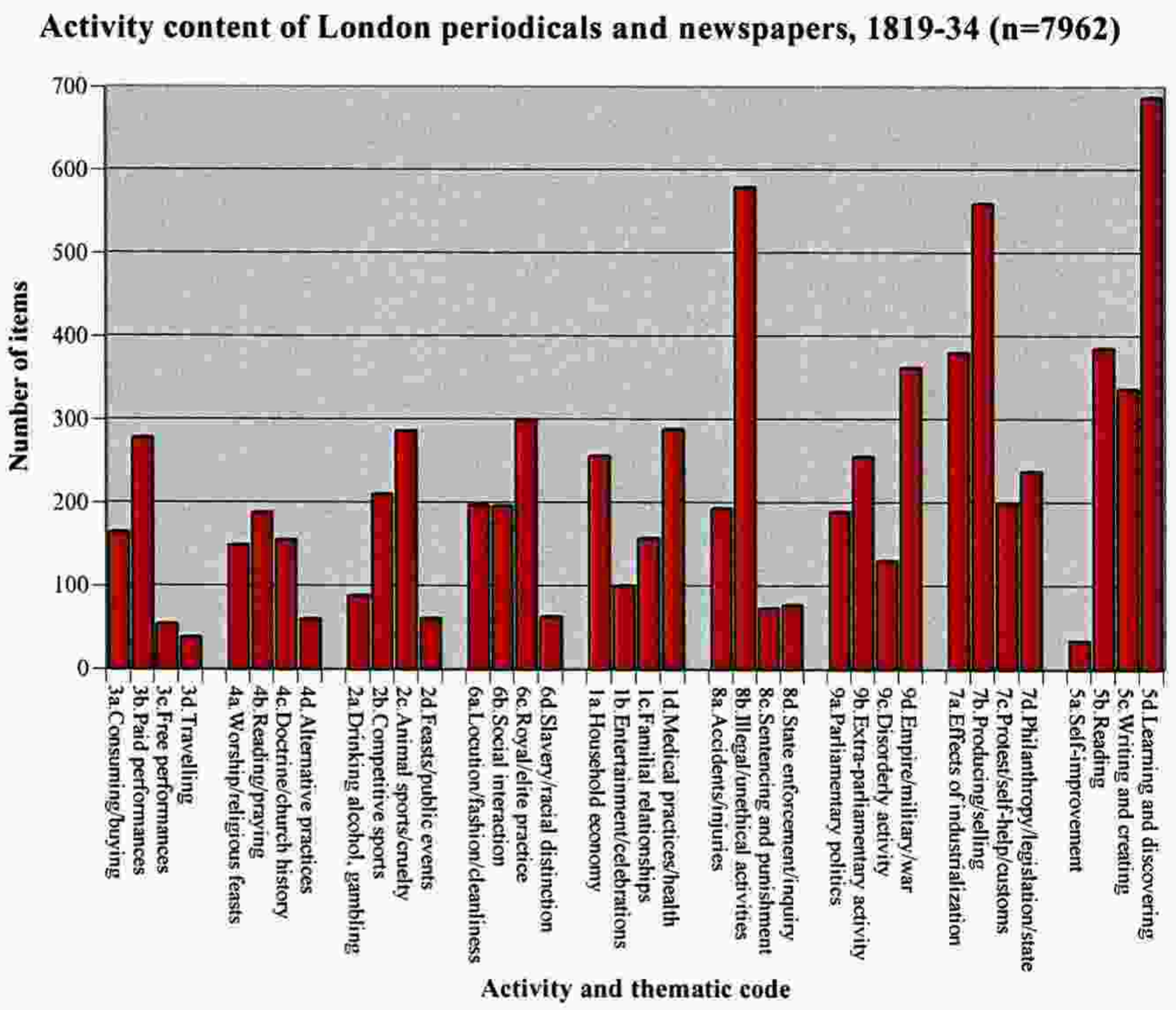
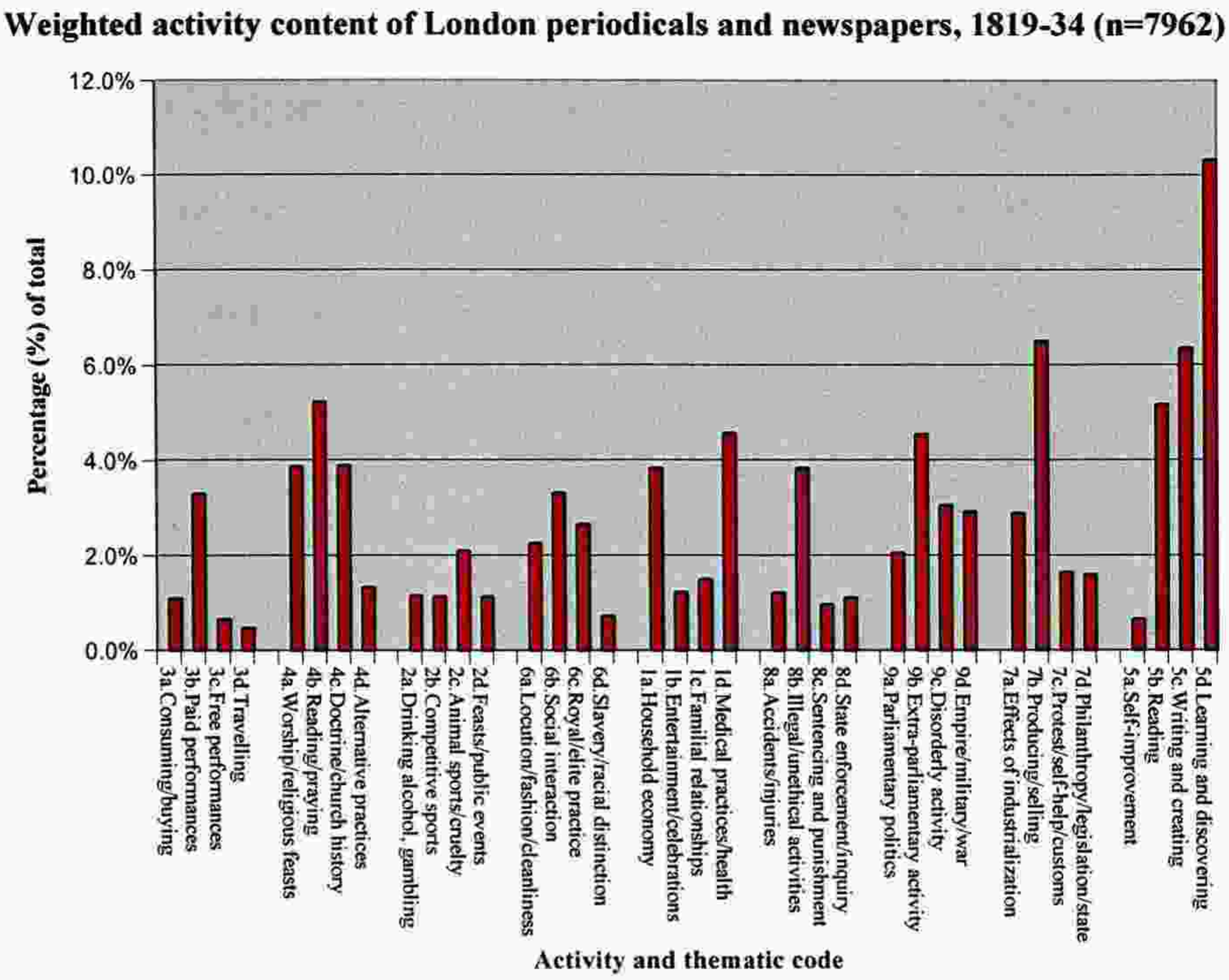


Figure 4.5



The categorization of activity groups clearly involves a series of debatable judgements, but the fact that three of the activities underpinning the self-improvement theme appear in the top five ranking suggest that the world of cultural practice represented in the cheap periodical and Sunday newspaper press was, at least in aggregate measurements, heavily influenced by prevailing preoccupations with self-improvement. Within the self-improvement theme, however, it is shown that 'learning and discovering' (covering a range of schooling, adult educational, professional and elite practices) dominates, with 10.32% of all items coded, while 'reading' and 'writing' are equally balanced (at 5.17% and 6.35% respectively). This suggests that the quintessential practices of reading and writing, although of importance to debates about the march of intellect (and undoubtedly powerful symbols of 'popular enlightenment'), were less represented than other improving practices.

iii. Summary conclusions: cultural practice and periodical content

The foregoing content analysis of 7,962 items found in 200 weekly periodicals and newspapers has revealed significant trends and patterns in the representation of cultural practice. Firstly, in the analysis of individual titles, it appears that even highly specialized titles rarely contained over 50% coverage of a single theme, and that all titles, to varying degrees, were characterized by heterogeneity of content. This should not be surprising given that editors and publishers wished to attract as many readers as possible. More than this, however, individual titles mixed themes and activity groups to reinforce their chosen message to a specific audience. Whether this was always a conscious decision remains unclear. Secondly, in terms of thematic hierarchy, aggregate content analyses reveal the prevalence of items coded under self-improvement and religion on the one hand, and the relative infrequency of items coded under amusement and recreation or leisure experiences on the other. Thirdly, and related to this trend, a pattern emerges in which learning and discovering is the most frequently mentioned activity group; this is joined by writing and creating, reading, producing and selling, and reading, praying and proselytizing as the principal activities represented in the sample. The hypothesis to be taken forward, therefore, is that themes and activities underpinning 'self-improvement' loomed large within periodical and newspaper content between 1819 and 1834, yet coexisted and overlapped with a variety of other concerns.

III

Sunday in London: representations of cultural practice in the 1820s and 1830s

This section examines the development of the contested issue of Sabbath observance from the early 1820s onwards through a rereading of the twenty popular periodical titles discussed above. Debates about Sabbath observance represent a

particularly useful insight into what the common people were portrayed as doing on their day of rest, as well as into how and why such practices were deemed to impact on their moral agency. This case-study therefore asks two central questions: how were Sabbath practices represented in popular periodicals and why?; and what does this reveal about the merits and limitations of using periodicals as a source for metropolitan popular culture? It argues that although concerns about Sabbath-breaking were longstanding - and were periodically deployed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as part of a 'moral crisis' discourse - the debate surrounding popular Sunday practices became increasingly associated with the march of intellect after 1819, particularly in the popular periodical press. Periodical representations were selective, ambivalent and highly stylized, but they reveal how Sunday practices had become loci of wider debates about popular moral, social and political agency by the early 1830s. If the actual practices underpinning popular experiences of 'Sunday in London' were not accurately depicted in the periodical press, the debate itself functioned as a signifier of more fundamental anxieties about the place of the common people in English society.[297]

i. Sabbath observance and the law

Few public debates in the 1820s better convey the contested nature of popular agency than that which engaged with the practices of the common people on the Sabbath. For those who raised the issue in the first place, the causes and symptoms of a perceived moral laxity were the inefficient operation of existing laws forbidding Sunday trading, dwindling numbers of people attending 'divine worship' and the

---

[297] There is very little work on Sunday as a day of recreation, but see W. B. Whitaker, *The eighteenth-century English Sunday* (1940); and J. Wigley, *The rise and fall of the Victorian Sunday* (1980). See also R. J. Hind, 'Working people and Sunday schools: England, 1780-1850', *Journal of Religious History*, Vol. 15, No. 2 (1988), 199-214; M. Dick, 'The myth of the working-class Sunday school', *History of Education*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (1980), 27-41; and R. Coxford, 'A working class Sunday school?', *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*, Vol. 54, No. 1 (2003), 11-16.

failure of the middling and upper classes to set a good example. Moral reform initiatives to increase popular observance of the Sabbath were a recurring feature of a broader reform movement in London throughout the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In 1803 the newly-formed Society for the Suppression of Vice (SSV) stated that one of its principal aims was 'to correct the general profanation of the Sabbath, the scandalous irregularities and indecencies of which… threaten to break down the distinction between that consecrated day, and the six of ordinary labour; and to obliterate all sense of religion…' Religiously-aligned efforts to increase Sunday-school attendance amongst the children of the labouring classes continued apace throughout the 1810s, and the publishing arms of the SPCK and the RTS diffused pamphlet and periodical literature highlighting the need for Sabbath observance throughout the 1820s.[298]

In 1831 the Lord's Day Observance Society (LDOS) was established by evangelicals in London, and, making claims to widespread support amongst working people in urban and rural areas, it continued to fund prosecutions of Sabbath-breaking and to diffuse sabbatarian literature for over half a century.[299] That moral degradation operated at all levels of society was the finding of Sir Andrew Agnew's (1793-1849) Select Committee convened in 1831-2 'to inquire into the Laws and Practices relating to the Observance of the Lord's-day', which reported that there was 'a systematic and widely-spread violation of the Lord's-day, which… cannot fail to be highly injurious to the best interests of the People, and [more ominously] which is calculated to bring down upon the Country the Divine displeasure.' The report went on to detail how the payment of working people in public houses on Saturday nights, the operation of

---

[298] Society for the Suppression of Vice, *Part the first, of an address to the public* (1803), 42. See A Layman, *Observations upon the Sunday newspapers* (1820); and Charles B. Tayler, *The Sunday newspaper; or, Katherine* (1830).

[299] B. H. Harrison, 'Religion and recreation in nineteenth-century England', *Past and Present*, No. 38 (Dec., 1967), 98-125.

Sunday markets and fairs (and particularly the employment of bakers, fishmongers and poulterers), all-night drinking and mass visitations by steam-boat to popular resorts such as Margate, Gravesend and Richmond all revealed a widespread 'violation' of the Sabbath.[300]

As a result of its findings, the Committee recommended the amendment of existing statutes which contained provisions against meetings and assemblies on the Sabbath (21 Geo. 3, c. 49); those outlawing the travelling of carriers, waggoners, carmen and drovers (3 Car. 1, c. 2); and those prohibiting the 'exercising of worldly labour', except that which was necessary or charitable (29 Car. 2, c. 7). These laws, it concluded, gave the Justices of the Peace only limited powers, and its central message was clear: Sabbath legislation needed to be reformed and rationalized. The causes of 'immoral' cultural practice, however, were not simply popular disregard for the Sabbath laws. Legal impotence and the harmful example of social elites were combined in the Committee's criticism of the 'middling classes' who left servants at home during divine worship in order to prepare dinner or look after their houses. Moreover, bakers, fishmongers and poulterers, far from staying open on Sundays to cater for the wives of those artisans, mechanics and labourers who had been paid late the previous night (and who had therefore been unable or unwilling to purchase ingredients for Sunday dinner), actually traded extensively on Sundays in 'the neighbourhood of the wealthier classes'. The money to be made from supplying a 'middling class' demand for fresh bread, fish and poultry - quite as much as the demand among the common people to cook their Sunday dinners in bakers' ovens -

---

[300] *HoC.R*, Select Committee on Observance of Sabbath, 1831-2, **1832** (697) VII. 253. See in particular the deposition of Richard Gregory, detailing the prevalence of Sunday trading in Spitalfields. See also B. H. Harrison, 'The Sunday trading riots of 1855', *Historical Journal*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (1965), 219-45; J. Armstrong and D. M. Williams, 'The Thames and recreation, 1815-1840', *London Journal*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (2005), 25-39; and the account of the young boy taking his 'piece of hot mutton' to be cooked at the baker's in 'Sunday in London', *Leigh Hunt's London Journal*, 11 Mar. 1835.

provided a powerful incentive to trade. The five-shilling penalty levied by magistrates on persons convicted of Sunday trading, the Committee concluded, was ineffective in light of the acknowledged potential for making large profits.[301]

Responses to Agnew's Committee varied, but most commentators were not optimistic about perceived social trends. Drawing together two practices repeatedly depicted as evidence of popular 'demoralization' - reading a Sunday newspaper and participating in animal sports - George Cruikshank and John Wight lamented in their *Sunday in London* (1833) that the common people were left to 'intellectualize... [dog fighting] with Sunday readings from a prime Sunday sporting paper', observing that this was 'magnificent proof' that 'our present age, is, indeed and in truth, the *genu-ine* age of intellect'. For Cruikshank, the 'age of intellect' was little more than a mirage, proven insubstantial by the 'reality' of cruelty to animals and a popular predilection for 'obscene' literature. This catalogue of immoral popular practices was extended to include drinking, gambling, domestic violence, further examples of animal cruelty, travelling to overcrowded public spaces and fighting. The Sunday practices of the 'lower orders' were visualized thus:

> Up and out. A knock over the liver. *Shy* for another; - *lost*. D - n the luck! Go to the barber's. Wife to market. Barber's shop full. Wait for turn - and hour and a half. Another *knock*. Shy for another; - win; strike me lucky! Growling wife. Give her a whack. Take a snooze. Squalling kids; - 'more dinner, daddy!' Dinner be d - d; and the swipes too. Toddle out of it in quick time. Another knock at the *ginnegan*. Ditto repeated. Copenhagen Fields. Capital cat hunt. Slap-up dog fight. Bit of a mill. Toss for a tater and kidney. Tom and Jerry shop. Two pots of heavy above board. Four qvort'ns of max *on the sly*. *Sportin* papers - my eyes! - Lots of pipes. A regular wrangle. Mizzle home. Wife sings out. Give her a *settler*. And so turn in; - rather muzzy. *Tomorrow St. Monday!*

Morally degraded as these practices were, it was not only the lower orders that were guilty of breaking the Sabbath. Cruikshank and Wight went on to demonstrate the

---

[301] *HoC.R*, Select Committee on Observance of Sabbath, 1831-2, **1832** (697) VII. 253.

hypocrisy of the 'middle orders', whose own Sunday activities also chiefly comprised drinking, smoking, travelling and reading the Sunday newspaper:

> Middle Orders
>
> Jolly good breakfast. Uncommon clean shave. Posting the books. Totting up; - profit? - pretty well thank you, Mr Myself. Sunday paper; - full of fun, and coming it strong. Jolly good dinner. Jaunt to somewhere - shay or omnibus. Pity poor horses; - poor devils! Blow a cloud. Three or four grogs - hot with, or cold without. Rattle home again. Pity poor devils of horses; - quite blow'd and dead beat. Cheap riding though. Jolly good supper. A couple of grogs. Another cloud. And so to bed; pretty comfortable.[302]

The overriding perception by the early 1830s, therefore, was that moral laxity on the Sabbath pervaded all social levels. This laxity was located in three specific vices, each of which gave rise to the formation of single-issue moral reform associations in the 1820s and early 1830s: non-attendance at divine worship (the bugbear of the LDOS after 1831); widespread drunkenness (attacked by an emergent temperance movement after 1829, and principally by the British and Foreign Temperance Society); and the prevalence of cruel animal sports (the target of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, founded in 1824). The 1820s and early 1830s were thus a crucial period in which the 'Sunday question' became entwined with debates about popular amusements in particular, and popular agency more generally: such debates, and the attempt to balance an acknowledgement of popular disregard for the Sabbath with criticisms of the middling and upper orders, were particularly evident in the periodical press of the time.[303]

---

[302] George Cruikshank, *Sunday in London* (1833), reprinted in J. Marriott (ed.), *Unknown London* (2000), 221-5. See the similar depiction of the 'higher orders'. See also Charles Dickens' response to Agnew's Committee in Timothy Sparks [pseud. Charles Dickens], *Sunday under three heads. As it is: as Sabbath Bills would make it: as it might be* (1836), 48; and [Charles Dickens], M. Slater (ed.), *'The amusements of the people'* (1996), ii.

[303] B. H. Harrison, 'Religion and recreation', 99-102.

ii. Sunday trading and working

Debates surrounding Sunday trading and working and the perceived decline of Sabbath observance had appeared in popular periodicals long before Agnew's committee was convened in 1831.[304] In May 1824, the three-penny *Economist and General Advertiser* approached the topic with equanimity, comparing ancient and modern representations of popular Sunday practices. Reflecting on existing practices, one article ('Sunday morning views') moved its focus to the early hours:

> Masters of night-houses *rising early* to serve their customers,
> Mechanics' wives helping home their drunken husbands.
> Blackguards, as they lie about, pestered with rags, empty maws, and one of Pharoah's plagues.
> Rule Britannia sung through the streets in various keys, accompanied by hiccups and G - d d - ns.
> Tailors, in a hurry, nodding over their work: agitated dreams of goose and cabbage.
> Gamblers sliding home, pale and penniless.
> Nurses regaling over tea and strong waters, while their patients get a nap.
> Odd-fellows, druids, concerners, eccentrics - all reeling home to take a bilious dose of breakfast.
> City dames in the glory of a Sunday morning's snooze, and - sink the shop.
> Weekly clocks duly wound up.

The predictability of such 'views' was reinforced by the reference to winding up clocks - as though this was the mechanistic and unvarying rhythm of life in London.[305] This impressionistic representation of tailors in particular toiling early into the morning was reinforced in a later article which focused on the activity of the printing industry between one o'clock and two o'clock in the morning:

> Printers and printers' devils [apprentices] pulling away to get off the Sunday newspapers in time. Compositors finding their way home after a day's work, and newsmen running about from place to place with papers under their arms, or swarming about the offices, begging to be served first.

---

[304] For nineteenth-century consumerism, see J. Stobart, A. Hann and V. Morgan (eds.), *Spaces of consumption* (2007), chs. 4 and 6.

[305] *Economist*, 14 May 1825. 'Maws' referred to stomachs; a 'goose' was a tailor's smoothing-iron; and 'cabbage' referred to the cloth off-cuts kept as a perquisite.

This hive of activity was juxtaposed with the leisurely response of 'middling' newspaper readers. Publishing a letter from the imaginary 'Frank Blunderbuss' of 'Gun-street, Artillery-lane' in March 1825, the *Economist* depicted a comfortably-situated middling reader able to 'send every Sunday morning for all the weekly papers'. This reader - complaining that they were all virtually identical in content - was heavily stylized, noting that 'the disappointment occasioned by such flagrant imposition, was worse to me than the failure of my banker… I burnt my wig, and the papers instantly'. Ungrateful, wasteful and impulsive: all of these characteristics jarred with the *Economist*'s message of prudence and steadiness. In this idealized representation, at least, the 'middling-class' Sabbath was far from the grand desideratum.[306]

The early 1820s had thus seen the cheap periodical press pick up on an older recognition that the common people were being placed under work-related obligations on the Sabbath. The specific issue of print technicians being compelled to work into the early hours of Sunday morning was taken up by the weekly *Trades' Free Press* in July 1828 in the context of its own readership. Its editor, William Carpenter, was convinced of the moral necessity of giving his staff a day of rest, reporting that he had made arrangements to obtain 'the news of the whole of Saturday at an early hour, so as to prevent [that]… which as a politician, a moralist, and a sincere friend to the interests of his country, he cannot [but] regard as an evil, striking at the very root of the prosperity of all classes of Society; but most of all, of the industrious classes: viz. that of breaking up the Sabbath as a day of rest and of moral improvement.' Carpenter inflected the issue with his own radical political and economic argumentation:

---

[306] *Economist*, 12 Mar., 6 Aug. 1825. See 28 May, 4 Jun., 9 and 23 Jul., 1825 for the 'Sunday in the Metropolis' series.

> The men who labour on Saturday night and Sunday morning, - what is the Sabbath-day to them? And what right have the multitude to compel them thus to labour for their amusement? It cannot be necessary to do so; and the only object for which they are so employed, is to enrich the greedy capitalist, who cares not how society is corrupted, so that he can add to his ill-gotten wealth. It becomes the working clases [sic] to set themselves fearlessly and united against the trickery of every man who discovers and indifference to the moral welfare of the community… [and] we cannot believe that any of our Subscribers will be found so inconsiderate as to violate a great moral law of the universe, or to compel others to do so by giving a preference to other Papers, merely because the word Sunday is written upon them.

This generic representation of the hapless print technician, consigned to violating 'moral law' by both 'the multitude' and the 'greedy capitalist', drew together several radical arguments about the labouring classes, market forces, political power and morality - but it was also infused with commercial considerations in the form of an appeal to readers to buy the *Trades'* rather than those newspapers that were printed on Sundays. Pecuniary and moral advantage, in Carpenter's view, did not need to be mutually exclusive.[307]

It was not just skilled metropolitan labourers who were being degraded according to a rival Sunday weekly, Thomas Dickie's *Journeyman*. Responding to a poem submitted to the *Mechanic's Magazine* in 1823, Dickie's correspondent, George White, contrasted the traditional, bucolic image of the Saturday night of the rural cottager in 1723 to his experience a century later. '[F]rom their style', noted White, 'it is evident that they [the verses] must have had reference to some very distant period, and I therefore have dated them a century back, and wrote the Saturday Night, of 1823, as a contrast':

> Saturday Night, 1823
> Where, let me ask, is the picture so cheerful,
> Of the Cottager's lot to be found in these times,
> It is only in the Mind's recollection, I'm fearful,
> Of days that are now only heard of in Rhymes.

---

[307] *TFP*, 12 Jul. 1828.

Instead of thus cheerily seeking his home,
He is now to be seen on a Saturday night,
When labour is over and daylight is gone,
With hundreds of others in a pitiful plight,
Seeking relief at the churchwarden's gate,
From whence, with a heart overloaded with sorrow,
He returns to his home bewailing his fate,
With scarcely sufficient to provide for the morrow.

White was well-placed to describe how the cottager's weekly toil increasingly impinged on his day of rest, leaving him exhausted, penniless and with no food for Sunday dinner - though his story of a dramatic decline in living standards ought not to be accepted *prima facie*. The quality of both verses is unremarkable, but they demonstrate how the *Mechanic's Magazine* and the *Journeyman* mobilized generic, idealized representations of the common people to comment on how the strains of the working week affected Sabbath observance. The implication in the *Journeyman* was that debates about the morality of popular cultural practice were far removed from the economic realities facing the poor: how could the Sabbath be a day of moral improvement if working men were reduced to seeking charity from the churchwarden?[308]

Other Sunday papers moved beyond such idealized representations, instead deploying evidence from 'real life' in response to pronouncements against working and trading on the Sabbath. An article in *Bell's Life* in November 1826, for example, highlighted the 'harsh treatment of the barrow-women of the Metropolis'. Women and girls setting up street stalls on the Sabbath, it noted, were subject to three months' imprisonment if they failed to pay a fine of ten shillings. The extent to which such harsh sentences were imposed by magistrates for Sunday trading was exaggerated here (despite claims that the report was based on a genuine case), but the article did

[308] *MM*, 25 Oct. 1823; *Journeyman*, 10 Jul. 1825. White had acted as clerk to the Select Committee formed to consider the reintroduction of the Combination Laws in 1824, and had been mooted as a potential editor of the *Trades' Newspaper* in 1825. He became involved in the running of the *Journeyman*; see I. Prothero, *Artisans and politics* (1979), 177, 179-80, 188-9.

provide an opportunity for the deployment of some powerful anti-magistracy invective, railing against '[e]very hot-headed fool in the Commission, every fanatic who would starve the poor on Sundays for the benefit of their souls, or takes a delight in viewing the various shades of their unshorn beards at Church'. Sabbath legislation in general was depicted as operating against the interests of the poor, and '[s]o long as magistrates will act in this manner, and so long as a barbarous mass of laws allows them scope for the indulgence of every vagary at the expence [sic] of the common people, the burden must increase.'[309]

Cheap religious periodicals repeatedly concerned themselves with perceived circumventions of Sabbath statutes. The *Canal Boatman's Magazine*, for instance, fused criticisms of the payment of workmen on Saturday nights, the labouring of boatmen in the Paddington Basin on the Sabbath and the practice of opening up local shops on Sundays. In February 1830 it launched a petition calling for 'mails, coaches, vans, ships, steam-packets, and boats of every description' to cease travelling on the Sabbath, suggesting that its signatories ought to include 'every merchant, ship or boat-owner, sailor, and boatman', several of the local friendly societies, 'all ministers and people of every denomination' and even Parliament. The consequences of the continued 'neglect of moral cultivation' of the canal basin workers were sketched in emotive terms by the magazine: 'they [the canal boatmen, thereby] become easy prey to Jews, crimps, publicans, and harlots, breaking through all bounds of moral decency and order…' This personification of specific vices - reinforced with generalized representations of moral and political disorder - was calculated as much to galvanize moral reformers into action as to warn the boatmen of such nefarious entrapments. But the issues surrounding working and trading on the Sabbath were thus

---

[309] *Bell's Life*, 19 Nov. 1826.

demonstrably mobilized in the evangelical struggle to (re)moralize the English common people.[310]

iii. Popular amusements: drinking, viewing and family recreation

a. Drinking

Many lower-middling and labouring Londoners did not work on the Sabbath, and debates about popular morality therefore more frequently revolved around their public and private amusements. Drinking was identified as the quintessential vice of the common people, and in the years between 1819 and 1834 varying forms of alcohol were indeed freely available on the Sabbath.[311] Yet representations of drinking and drunkenness varied widely in popular periodicals according to editorial predilection, the purpose of the article and its perceived audience. In most cases, widespread popular drunkenness on the Sabbath was acknowledged as a reality: but the causes of this epidemic, its implications and the moral rectitude of middling- and upper-class commentators remained issues of contention. *Bell's Life*, for example, whilst not endorsing drunkenness *per se*, offered its readers numerous depictions of inebriation, 'sprees' and 'larks'. One series - 'Sketches of Scenes of life in London' - appeared in 1823-4, comprising humorous representations of the adventures of 'Dusty Bob and Black Sal' and providing readers with a vicarious experience of metropolitan low life. Readers were not encouraged to make any moral judgement of the protagonists' behaviour, and the language and tone frequently celebrated such drunken revelry.[312]

Representations of drunkenness among the social and political elite, however, were treated differently. Although popular intemperance did become a target of reform in improving Sunday titles such as the *Weekly Free Press* in the later 1820s, these papers

---

[310] *Canal Boatman's Magazine*, May 1830. For the radical reaction to the Church's hypocrisy, see Hetherington's comparison of the 'splendid mansion' of the Archbishop of Canterbury with the 'crowds of wretched beings whose best homes are shelterless [sic] streets', *Penny Papers*, 10 Oct. 1830.
[311] B. H. Harrison, 'Two roads to social reform', 272-300.
[312] *Bell's Life*, 16 Feb. 1823.

were reluctant to allow drunkenness to be portrayed as a vice exclusive to the common people. In 1829, for instance, the paper conceded that the 'lamentable extent and increase of drunkenness amongst the labouring classes of this country, is in every respect a national calamity and disgrace', but offset this judgement by suggesting that election dinners amongst the metropolitan elite also descended into 'vulgar bacchanalian scenes'. Moral degradation - manifest as drunken excess - was thus as much an affliction of the 'political classes' as of the common people.[313] A less politically loaded representation was deployed in William Strange's *Doctor*, which in August 1832 highlighted the health problems associated with excessive drinking among all social groups. Elucidating its message, the *Doctor* quoted at length from Charles Turner Thackrah's (1795-1833) *The effects of the principal arts, trades, and professions, and of civic states and habits of living, on health and longevity* (1831):

> [t]he grand bane of civilized life is *Intemperance*... Not a class of artisans, and scarcely one of professional men, is to be found, in which intemperance may not be discovered... The most striking effects of intemperance are to be seen among the artisans. The man takes, during the hours of labour, more drink than he requires, and this generally the compound sold under the name of ale... the moral sense becomes blunted, and habit hides the sin. More shocking is the case, when the evil is found among females. When the wife is led to imitate her husband. Most shocking when children, when young children, nay infants, are taught to sip with the mother, and thus acquire a taste for the bane of life and health.[314]

For Thackrah, a drinking habit was acquired by the workman during his weekly toil and by his wife and children in the home: a pernicious family vice exacerbated during Sunday leisure time. *Bell's Life*, the *Weekly Free Press* and the *Doctor* all conceded that heavy drinking was a pervasive (and dangerous) practice among the metropolitan common people; but these organs represented the vice as endemic to English society

---

[313] *WFP*, 19 Dec. 1829; ibid., 10 Oct. 1829. Richard Carlile also opposed the drunkenness of elections: 'a general election, instead of rousing all the virtues of a people, as it should do, rouses all their vices... and becomes a scene of drunkenness, debauchery, and every kind of immorality'; *Republican*, 7 Jul. 1826.

[314] *Doctor*, 29 Aug. 1832.

more generally. All three titles - ranging in political persuasion from moderate to advanced radicalism - thus appropriated the issue of drunkenness on the Sabbath, re-inflected it and redeployed it against a hypocritical social and political elite.

Periodicals of a more didactic tendency, however, represented drunkenness as predominantly the vice of the common people. In an article entitled 'Is there any beer, master?' in November 1829, the *Canal Boatman's Magazine* observed that '[i]dolotry [sic] still reigns, not only in London, but throughout England, to a very alarming extent, particularly among the Boatmen, Carmen, and Dustman [and that]… the idol of many of the above individuals is drunkenness.' The article continued thus:

> It is their God - their chief desire - and their greatest enjoyment. We understand, that when a friend [a missionary] goes to a boat, or a wharf, to invite them to attend the Boatman's Chapel [on Sundays], this question is generally asked, *Is there any Beer, Master?* Imagine this deplorable state of things, if you can. A fellow-creature, perhaps scarcely sober, inquiring if there be any drink at the house of God; as though he said, if there be no beer, I shall have no god to worship; and I shall not be happy, Master.[315]

The verisimilitude of this report is questionable: but it did reflect wider concerns about the 'immortal soul' of the common people (as well as outrage at their religious irreverence). A similarly negative representation was offered to the readers of the *Saturday Magazine* in January 1833. Invoking the anecdotal evidence of the keeper of Newgate prison, one contributor estimated that one in eight deaths in London resulted from excessive drinking. The keeper's judgement that the opening of gin-shops and public houses during divine service exacerbated the problem was then quoted, before the article concluded by lamenting that drinking among 'the lower class of English mechanics and labourers' remained 'one of the great and besetting sins of the land.'[316]

---

[315] *Canal Boatman's Magazine*, Nov. 1829.
[316] *Saturday Magazine*, 12 Jan. 1833.

Opposition to drunkenness was not, however, solely on the grounds of religion or health. In February 1832 the 'Tory' weekly *Bristol Job Nott* - printed, published and circulated in the metropolis, as well as in the provinces - railed against the custom of drinking on Sunday mornings before church services had even begun. 'Job Nott' (the paper's editorial persona) recalled with horror his own experience of the previous Sunday: whilst walking to church, he had caught 'a glimpse of some half dozen fellows, still carousing [and] debating over a newspaper' in the local tap-room. This was, 'Nott' lamented, 'proof of the degraded state of immorality, and contempt of all decency, to which some, it is to be feared multitudes, of our labouring population are reduced.' Despite observing this popular predilection to 'guzzle and dispute, and indulge in coarse ribaldry and uproarious mirth', however, 'Nott' concluded that it was the 'thoughtlessness of masters paying their men on Saturday night' that created such Sunday morning scenes peopled by drunken mechanics, 'weeping wives' and neglected children. In this strategically calculated representation, 'Nott' was attempting to publicize drunkenness as a social problem, identify its causes and suggest a remedy, all without alienating his boasted, socially-inclusive readership of 'masters and men'.[317]

b. Public events: viewing and participating

In addition to drinking, many other Sunday practices functioned as sites of contestation within and between popular periodicals in the 1820s; and many debates likewise revolved around the issue of which social groups were to blame for the demoralization of the capital. Although not an activity limited to the Sabbath, gambling in its many forms (ranging from formal and informal lotteries, wagers on sporting events to card games and private bets) did feature prominently in debates

---

[317] *Bristol Job Nott*, 2 Feb. 1832. For a discussion of 'Nott's' precursor in the 1790s, see R. K. Webb, *The British working class reader* (1955), 43-4.

about popular Sunday amusements.[318] *Bell's Life*, in particular, was keen to highlight the hypocrisy of governmental, religious and philanthropic reforming attempts to shut down lotteries and curtail gambling. In an illustrated verse composition ('Monkeyana: the Gambler's Progress') published in June 1828, the paper drew together the themes of gambling, the march of intellect and what it depicted as social aping:

> We pray you, reader, to inspect
> 'The March of Gaming Intellect;'
> Well worthy of the observation
> Of a pure rising generation.
> Of gaming PUPPYS nothing new,
> Why should not MONKEYS gamble too;
> And, throwing off all moral fetters,
> In vicious courses ape their better[s]?

As a satirical construction, the 'March of Gaming Intellect' inverted the improving claims of the march of intellect men to suggest how, by apotheosizing 'middling' cultural practices and norms, the common people were also being encouraged to replicate immoral elite behaviour.[319]

There were diverse reactions to other popular cultural practices, and some titles pointed out that pugilism - which had been a growing spectator event since the mid-eighteenth century - was not only 'unrespectable', but also illegal. Because of this precarious legal position, pugilistic bouts could occur at short notice, in rural areas and on any day of the week.[320] The specific relevance of pugilism to debates about the Sabbath therefore lay in the fact that common readers were exposed to reports of contests in the Sunday paper: thus, even if they had not attended the event, the experience could be replicated in print on the Lord's-day. *Bell's Life* - predictably, in

---

[318] See J. Raven, 'The abolition of the English state lotteries', *Historical Journal*, Vol. 34, No. 2 (1991), 371-89.

[319] *Bell's Life*, 22 Jun. 1828. For 'The March of Morality; or, the Plaister [sic] Venus' - a satirical poem about an SSV campaign to have classical statues covered up - see ibid., 4 Nov. 1827. For information on 'the very last lottery that will ever be drawn in England', with six prizes of £21,000 see *TFP*, 12 Mar. 1826; *WFP*, 19 Sep. 1829.

[320] See P. Radford, *The celebrated Captain Barclay* (2001), 254-8 and 286-7; and A. Harvey, *The beginnings* (2004), 155-71.

light of its 'sporting' content of pedestrianism, boxing, wrestling, horse-racing, cock-fighting, and bull- and bear-baiting - frequently provided ripostes to the pieties of moral reformers under unequivocal headings.[321] Other titles had a more ambivalent attitude towards such martial pastimes. The inclusion of a long-running section in the *Trades' Newspaper*, entitled 'Sports and passtimes [sic]', for example, suggests that a commercial concern to satisfy readers' demands could coexist with attempts to educate and moralize the common reader. Indeed, a defence of pugilism was offered by its editor, John Anderson, in December 1826, in which he observed that 'an amusement which gives a snatch of fresh air to its citizens, which engrafts a love of fair play on the heart of every man in the country, might be excused now and then.'[322]

The editorial policy of the paper shifted in the later 1820s, and by the time William Carpenter was at the helm of the *Trades' Free Press* in 1828, a less tolerant approach to popular sporting practices was evident. A review of the weekly press in January 1828, for instance, adopted a righteous tone. The majority of the twenty extant Sunday papers, the reviewer (possibly Francis Place) noted, 'found their claims for support on successfully catering to baser passions and pleasures of the multitude - in recording the exploits of boxers, dogs, cocks, and horses; or indulging a still more depraved taste, by narratives of scandal or sensuality.' Articulating his own opposition to such 'brutal' pursuits, Carpenter claimed in December 1829 that

> As the Proprietors [of the *Weekly Free Press*] aim at the improvement of the popular mind, by the diffusion of sound practical knowledge, they do not disgrace their columns by details of prize fights, and those other brutal sports, which tend only to demoralize the people, and to withdraw them from the pursuit of their legitimate rights.

---

[321] See, for example, 'A defence of pugilism', *Bell's Life*, 15 Aug. 1824.
[322] *TN*, 10 Dec. 1826

'Brutal sports' were thus depicted as undermining the political agency of the common people, but it was significant that Carpenter chose to re-inflect Anderson's claims that pugilistic bouts embodied 'manliness' and instilled a love of 'fair play' in the breasts of independent Englishmen. Instead, Carpenter argued, such 'brutal sports' led to nothing but national 'effeminacy and corruption'. Importantly, most popular periodicals argued that pugilism was not solely the pastime of the poor: elite spectators, backers and participants (evident in associations such as 'The Fancy') bore testimony to the fact that an enjoyment of brutal human sports was not constrained by social status.[323]

Viewing or participating in animal sports was a particularly contentious locus of debates about Sabbath pastimes, but likewise demonstrated how immoral amusements were not the sole preserve of the common people.[324] Informal contests between bull-dogs, rats and cocks were widely reported as taking place in London's public spaces on Sunday afternoons, and cat-hunts and other such animal pursuits were likewise represented as principally Sunday amusements, when large numbers of working men and apprentices had leisure to assemble and cause 'mischief'. One year after the foundation of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, a correspondent to the *Economist*, for instance, recalled how he or she had witnessed 'Sunday Sports' of a 'most barbarous description' at Bank-side, Westminster one Sabbath morning in May 1825:

---

[323] *TFP*, 6 Jan. 1828; *WFP*, 26 Dec. 1829. The 'Pugilistic Club' was wound up in 1825, and the 'Fair Play Club' founded in 1828; see P. Radford, *The celebrated Captain Barclay* (2001), 255. See also the advertisements for pugilistic lessons: 'E. Baldwin (known as White Headed Bob), begs leave most respectfully to inform his Friends in the Sporting World, he has opened a respectable ESTABLISHMENT at No. 5, Pickering Place, St James's-street, opposite the Thatched House Tavern, where he intends giving PRIVATE LESSONS in the Art of SELF DEFENCE, to Gentlemen', *Bell's Life*, 29 Jan. 1826.

[324] D. A. Reid, 'Beasts and brutes: popular blood sports, c.1780-1860', in R. Holt (ed.), *Sport and the working classes* (1990), 12-28; and E. Griffin, 'Bull-baiting in industrialising townships, 1800-1850', in M. Hewitt (ed.), *Unrespectable recreations* (2001), 19-30.

> A parcel of men and boys, some of them apparently respectable, took up a small white dog, of the most inoffensive appearance, and threw him into the Thames, having previously fastened a cord round his neck… he then became *fair game*; and most of the party, having provided themselves with some sort of missile, made his yet visible head the object of their most furious attack… and from repeated blows, the poor animal's pain was soon at an end. Such a scene would surely have disgraced a set of savages.

The rhetorical contrast between 'barbarism' and 'civilization' was well-rehearsed in this context; but the suggestion that 'apparently respectable' men and boys could behave thus - and the publication of this letter in a cheap periodical - suggests that animal cruelty, and a desire to eliminate it, permeated several social levels by the mid-1820s.[325]

As with debates about pugilism, however, the issue of animal cruelty revolved as much around its representation in Sunday newspapers as it did around any special status as a Sabbath practice. One of the most infamous animal sporting events of the decade was the contest staged by the menagerie keeper George Wombwell (1777-1850) between two of his lions (Nero and Wallace) and two sets of English mastiffs. Held in Warwick in the summer of 1825, these two separate events (26 July and 2 August) provoked public outrage, with the daily papers leading opposition to what Wombwell publicized as the first lion-bait in England since 1610. In late 1825 the *Trades' Newspaper* published accounts of the baitings - though, somewhat incongruously, it later ran a number of articles on preventing 'cruelty to animals' and reported the meetings of the newly-formed Society for the Suppression of Cruelty to Animals. Such apparent inconsistency on matters of popular cultural pursuit demonstrated an editorial attempt to provide a platform for many competing voices. Representations of the so-called 'Warwick contest' pervaded the Sunday newspaper press in the middle of the decade, with *Bell's Life*, the *John Bull* and the *Journeyman*

---

[325] Letter from 'T. G.', in *Economist*, 28 May 1825.

all carrying detailed accounts of the fight: the latter remarking that Wombwell had proceeded with the second bait despite 'public indignation'.[326]

Details of the (relatively expensive) five-shilling event also percolated into the cheap periodical press - though some cheap titles, such as the *Circulator*, dismissed the event as a hoax, noting that only 'circumstantial details of the battle, [have] appeared in several of the newspapers'.[327] The event did go ahead, and in late 1825, the *Housekeeper's Magazine* (successor title to the *Economist*), carried a woodcut engraving of the 'Lion Bait at Warwick', with the condemnatory comment '[i]s it not astonishing that, in this age of feeling and refinement, such barbarous customs should still be pursued?' The crude woodcut is as revealing for its depiction of the event's spectators: almost every man well-dressed, clean-shaven and sporting a fashionable hat. Such an image - whether a comment on the middling-class nature of the audience, or of a more socially humble, but well-dressed, group - served to demonstrate the incongruity of ostensibly 'respectable' men attending 'rough' amusements. Representations of animal cruelty as a Sabbath-day event or as a staple of Sunday newspaper content thus implied that rough cultural practices were not limited to the lowest levels of society. Moreover, they revealed a tension between a desire to condemn the inhumanity of such contests and a desire to provide readers with detailed descriptions. Moral outrage, it seemed, need not preclude exposure to full, unabridged reports of the very practices being condemned.[328]

---

[326] For bear-baiting and prize-fighting stopping the 'rise of knowledge', see the *TN*, 31 Jul. 1825; ibid., 2 Apr., 11 Jun. 1826; *TFP*, 12 Jul. 1828; *WFP*, 21 Mar., 13 Jun., 18 Jul., 15 Aug. 1829; William Hone, *Every-day book* 26 Jul. 1825; and the *Journeyman*, 7 Aug. 1825.

[327] *Circulator*, 26 Feb., 9 Apr. 1825. Detailed accounts can be found in the *Kaleidoscope*, 2, 9 Aug. 1825; *Edinburgh Annual Register* (1825), 152-7; and *Chambers's Journal of Popular Literature*, 18 May, 1867.

[328] *Housekeeper's Magazine*, [n.d., 1825], 338. See also, the article entitled 'The Voice of Humanity' in the *Canal Boatman's Magazine*, Oct. 1830, which reproduced a bill of fare from Barton, Manchester: '"On Saturday, August 28, 1830, at the house of Miss Alice Cottam, sign of the King's Arms, near Eccles, A. C., with great pleasure informs her friends, and the public in general, that she has, at a considerable expense, engaged an excellent Bull, a Bear, and a Badger, for the gratification of those

In addition to human and animal sporting events, customary celebrations, popular superstitions and Sunday fairs were subject to competing representations. In May 1825, the RTS's *Child's Companion* introduced its young readers to the history of May Day celebrations, pointing out their origin in 'a custom observed by heathens in ancient times', and noting thankfully that 'the custom is now laid aside almost every where… [although] the poor chimney sweepers still keep the holiday'. Such popular customs, in this representation, were little more than a curiosity.[329] Representations of popular customs were more sharply focussed in debates about the Sunday amusements of the common people. In April 1826, for example, *Bell's Life* carried a lead-page report of the recent Easter Sunday celebrations. Despite 'the [economic] distresses of the times', it noted, 'the customary fun and frolic of Easter holidays were kept up during the last week with undiminished spirit':

> On the Sunday… the streets and avenues of the metropolis and its environs were crowded with gaily dressed groupes [sic]. The tea-gardens were thronged, and the consumption of the luxuries, for which those places of public resort are famed, equalled any thing that had been witnessed on any former occasion. In Greenwich Park, too, there was a tolerable must [sic] of those lads and lasses who seek delight in the perilous descent of Holiday Hill… For the most part, however, the softer sex were disinclined to expose their hidden charms to the rude embraces of a brisk 'North Easter,' …and in consequence, a good deal of disappointment was felt, especially among the ancient fraternity of Paul Pry, who had assembled in great numbers to witness the customary exhibition of natural curiosities.

---

who may favour her with their company. The bull will be baited three times a-day, viz. half-past nine in the morning, half-past one in the afternoon, and at five in the evening, every day during the wakes. The bear will be baited at eleven o'clock in the forenoon, and at three in the afternoon. The badger will be baited every evening. The bull, bear, and badger, will be baited on Saturday night previous, to commence at six o'clock precisely, subject to such conditions as shall be then and there produced. The whole is arranged as to form a never-failing source of amusement…'"

[329] *Child's Companion*, May 1825.

The irreverent, bawdy and celebratory tone of the report left the reader in no doubt as to the paper's sanctioning of such amusements: the dressing up, drinking and cavorting of the common people was to be indulged, and even encouraged.[330]

Positive representations were replicated elsewhere, and many improving cheap periodicals - whilst not unequivocally endorsing popular practices - frequently lamented the decline of certain customs. By 1832, for instance, the *Ladies' Penny Gazette* - which made explicit claims for the 'respectability' of its female readership - commented on the lack of Guy Fawkes effigies found on London's streets on 5 November:

> The March of Mind is making sad inroads in every quarter, nor does it seem disposed to give much quarter to aught that savours of the olden times… *Mind* has already *undermin'd* many of those customs and recreations which were in vogue, I may say in vigour, no longer ago than the commencement of the present century. Some it hath utterly *blown away*, making very *light* of them, and ere long it will, most probably, *blow up* Guy Fawkes himself, at least all the annual effigies of him which from 'time immemorial' have been wont to make the fifth of November as busy and as gay as May day itself.[331]

The identification of the 'march of mind' as the cause of declining popular customs and amusements is significant, revealing a genuine anxiety that popular intellectual and moral improvement was sweeping away important traditions.

c. Family recreation

One consistent objection to prevailing Sunday practices voiced by religious and moral reformers was that the day ought to have been a family event. Sabbath observance had long been identified by such reformers as of crucial importance to the domestic lives of the common people. In addition to its periodical, the *Child's Companion*, the RTS published dozens of pamphlets engaging the issue throughout the 1820s, epitomized by one, entitled *Family dialogues; or, Sunday well spent* (1826).

---

[330] *Bell's Life*, 2 Apr. 1826.
[331] *Ladies' Penny Gazette*, 10 Nov. 1832.

This two-penny tract rehearsed a generic scene of domestic order, with 'the widow of a worthy and industrious mechanic' fulfilling her role as the family's intellectual, social and moral cultivator:

> Mother: What a happiness it is, my dear children, to be able thus to assemble together in health and peace, on this day of comfort, enjoyment, and general improvement, and to have been permitted to do so week after week, month after month, and year after year, almost without interruption![332]

'General improvement' on the Sabbath could take many forms, but the listening to and playing of music at home was seen as a particularly good indicator of improvement. Not all periodical commentators approved of such cultivation in the domestic sphere: in an article appearing in the *Bristol Job Nott* in April 1832, for instance, the vogue for 'modern refinement' (in this case speaking French and playing the '*pannor-forty*') was the target of ridicule. The image of the wives and daughters of rural cottagers learning to play the piano was mobilized to attack the 'march' in its entirety: 'You smile; but what is there inconsistent in this', 'Nott' asked, 'is it not of a piece with the march of intellect? Surely, whilst Snob [the husband and father] studies *felosophy* [sic] at the mechanics' institute, Miss Snobbs [sic] may be allowed to thumb the *pannors* a bit at home!'[333] The *Penny Magazine* inflected the issue differently. Deploying his quintessential message of social harmony between the labouring and middling classes, Charles Knight wrote in May 1834 that music was an excellent form of relaxation for the community, which too often debated the questions of politics, theology and 'criticism on public and private character': '[w]e are for the march of mind, but we think it would be much better to music', he concluded.[334]

In terms of public practices, the family Sunday was most widely represented as one spent travelling or visiting attractions. *Bell's Life* was quick to defend the

---

[332] Mary Hughes, *Family dialogues; or, Sunday well spent* (1826), 1-2.
[333] *Bristol Job Nott*, 12 Apr. 1832.
[334] *Penny Magazine*, 17 May 1834.

perceived rights of the common people to visit public spaces on their day of rest. In April 1829, for instance, it reported the 'great discontent' at the 'Exclusion of the Public from Public Walks, in the Tower and before the Custom House' resulting from the theft of some lead and the 'impropriety of females' thereabouts, concluding that

> The smallest open space of the kind is important to the public in that crowded vicinity… Having there [on the Continent, whilst working] seen great courtesy and civility shewn by the tax-consumers towards even the lowest of the industrious tax-payers, they are not pleased with the contrast presented at home.[335]

The issue of popular Sabbath recreations was once again politicized in *Bell's Life*, with the issue of exclusion reduced to a Cobbettite struggle between 'tax-consumers' and 'tax-payers'. Such outrage aside, the 1820s did witness the continuing practice among the lower-middling and labouring classes of taking family walks through the metropolis or embarking on a rural ramble on the Sabbath. The *Saturday Magazine* approached the issue from an intellectually and morally improving angle in its promotion of natural history walks. On the study of 'natural history', an article in July 1832 noted that '[i]t occupies and elevates the mind, is inexhaustible in supply, and… gives to the reflections of the moralizing rambler, admiration and delight'.[336]

Representations of popular Sunday excursions were not all thus idealized. Writing in the *Canal Boatman's Magazine*, two 'friends' of the Paddington Society made the following observation of the throngs of families departing from Gravesend pier on a single Sunday in August 1830:

> [T]he pier presented the most disorderly and disgraceful scene for a Sabbath-day, in a country professedly Christian; more especially for some time previous to, and at the period of the arrival of the London steam-boats, as likewise the same on their departure, when the assemblage of Sabbath-breakers, eagerly engaged in their own will,

---

[335] See the invocation of Coleridge's lines 'Tis sweet to him, who all the week/Through city-crowds must push his way/To stroll alone through fields and woods/And hallow thus the Sabbath day' in [Anon], *Sunday, a poem in defence of the reasonable enjoyments and recreations of the toiling classes of London* (1837).

[336] *Saturday Magazine*, 7 Jul. 1832.

> without any fear of God or eternity before their eyes, is very great… you cannot well conceive the scene of riot and confusion which arises on the embarkation of passengers, who are assailed by the partisans of different boats, intruding their cards for notice, and most vehemently soliciting their favour as passengers.

The image of 'moral degradation' and 'contagion' revealed little sympathy with the 'Sabbath-breakers', but by the mid-1830s such dramatic visions of the popular Sunday were becoming less common.[337]

A more reserved, even sociological, interest in the popular 'Sunday in London' was demonstrated by a retrospective article published in *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal* (1832-53) in August 1844. The editor ran through the list of destinations used for family day trips by the common people in the early 1840s (including Greenwich, Blackheath, Harrow, Richmond, Tottenham, Epping Forest and Hampton Court). His description of the family day out served as a quintessential representation of the common people's Sabbath amusements: after dinner, the 'Smiths' - a working family existing on a guinea a week - set off for Hampstead Heath, with 'Mr Smith' pulling a chaise containing three children, with three others walking behind and 'Mrs Smith' carrying the baby. The narrative progressed to describe their visit to Regent's Park, Somers Town and Chalk Farm, meeting with friends in the local public house, and journey home amongst a 'multitude' of other 'Smith' families, all with sore feet and in ill-humour:

> Just as the Smiths are entering London, the evening service of the churches is finished… The Smiths, with dirty faces, dusty clothes, and screaming children, hang down their heads abashed, and sneak home as quickly and quietly as they can, and… go to bed with a mental resolution not to seek pleasure for the future in such a laborious manner… [but] the Smiths, the very next Sunday, again go to the same place, spend the day in the same manner, and return with the same resolution, which is made only to be broken the next Sunday.

---

[337] *Canal Boatman's Magazine*, Aug. 1830.

This was an image of the popular Sunday which was unthreatening, although couched in reproving terms.[338]

IV

Conclusions: popular periodicals and the representation of cultural practice

This chapter has attempted to identify which forms of metropolitan cultural practice were represented in cheap periodicals and Sunday newspapers; whether these were depicted in positive or negative terms, how and why; and to assess the merits and limitations of using popular periodicals as a source for popular cultural practice. A content analysis of over seven thousand 'items' appearing in a sample of twenty such periodicals (section II) has revealed that roughly one quarter of content was devoted to representations of those practices underpinning self-improvement (reading, writing and learning), but that this content coexisted with representations of a variety of other improving practices (such as religious worship and belief) as well as manifestly non-improving depictions of amusements and recreation, leisure experiences and law and order. A mixed pattern of specialized and heterogeneous content thus characterized popular periodicals; although most organs engaged with issues surrounding self-improvement at some level. If cheap periodicals and Sunday newspapers represented life in London as a complex 'cultural melange' (reflecting a crowded world in which commercial, radical, moral-religious, secular improving and satirical messages coexisted) there was nonetheless a single principle of continuity, born of the specific appeal made by the popular periodical itself to its (perceived) mass audience: whether coverage of the march of intellect was positive or negative, periodical editors and publishers addressed claims that popular cultural practice had improved because they perceived that the majority of their readers came from

---

[338] *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal*, 10 Aug. 1844.

precisely those lower-middling and labouring social groups mobilized in the 'march' trope. Exactly how they engaged with these claims, however, could vary widely.

A more specific locus of this debate - and a long-term preoccupation of moral and religious reformers - was the issue of popular observance of the Sabbath. During the 1820s and early 1830s this issue was frequently discussed in the popular periodical press, in terms redolent of wider anxieties about popular intellectual and moral improvement. Engagement with this 'Sunday question' was associated with what has been termed the 'subjectification' of popular Sabbath practices - that is, their vivid and concrete description - using both 'realistic' and 'idealistic' representational strategies. These images were at the same time heavily stylized and strategically loaded: the perspective offered to the reader of the cheap periodical and Sunday newspaper was thus an authentic, but not reliable, reflection of social reality. The power of the press to shape public perceptions of popular practice was, however, fully realized in these years, and several lines of argument emerged. In terms of Sunday trading and working, there was a general consensus that Sabbath-breaking was not a specific malaise of the nineteenth century, and that work demands were imposed on the common people equally by labouring, middling and elite consumers. This recognition resulted in evangelical and secular improving appeals to broad social groupings to desist from Sunday trading - a Sabbatarian campaign that found some support among those workers in trades obliged to labour on Sundays. This consensus was challenged by periodicals claiming to speak with the authentic 'voice of the people', ranging from cheap radical and satirical weeklies to sporting Sunday newspapers. These titles suggested that the reforming initiatives of the RTS, SPCK and SDUK displayed at best ignorance of the economic realities facing the urban and rural worker, and at worst represented a cynical attempt on the part of governing elites

to add to the considerable legal armoury already stacked against the 'rights' of the poor.

Representations of drinking and drunkenness likewise provoked varying responses. An attempt in evangelical periodicals to depict the vice as exclusive to the common people (and thus an explanation for their moral and religious debasement) was opposed in less didactic periodical titles, particularly the Sunday newspaper press. In populist Sunday titles drinking was depicted as the vice of all social groups, and some, such as *Bell's Life*, overtly celebrated the bacchanalia of metropolitan low life. Other cheap and newspaper titles attempted to balance a condemnation of popular intemperance with criticism of the hypocrisy of elite and middling reformers. The theme of elite hypocrisy ran through representations of many other public amusements, with most titles conceding that gambling, pugilism and animal cruelty were practices endemic to all social levels. Some attempted to defend pugilism as a talisman of 'manly independence', but most opposed this and other 'barbarous' sports. The representation of staged animal fights, however, revealed a conflicted attitude: cheap periodical and Sunday newspaper editors simultaneously reproving the baiting of lions in Warwick in 1825 and providing their readers with unabridged descriptions of the event.

A similar tension was evident in the context of a mixed editorial desire to embrace intellectual and moral improving imperatives and to reject such 'improvement' as undermining longstanding popular customs. Easter Sunday, May Day and Guy Fawkes celebrations were, it was argued, being swept aside by the march of intellect. This tension was symptomatic of the popular periodical press more generally during this period, with popular practices increasingly judged according to their perceived intellectual or moral utility: 'rational recreation', for some, was a force of creative

destruction, consigning certain practices to a disreputable past and apotheosizing others as symbols of a new, progressive nineteenth century. But the rethinking of 'Sunday in London' during the 1820s and 1830s did not simply involve the replacement of the rough with the respectable: periodical editors - astute judges of the type of social world to which their reading publics responded - frequently hedged their bets by offering a content which was both entertaining (recounting the details of the Warwick lion-bait, for example) and instructive (providing, in parallel, a 'natural history' of the African lion). Ultimately, popular periodicals present us with a complex variety of responses to debates about popular intellectual and moral improvement. In doing this, they employ a variety of representational strategies. A persistent feature of those strategies is that popular experience was subjectified - namely, rendered in vivid and concrete terms - helping the reader to imagine the viewpoint of the common people thus depicted. Since broad consistency of representational strategy was not matched by similar consistency of message, popular periodicals - while reinforcing the idea that a march of intellect was in progress, and presenting a vivid picture of the milieu within which this 'march' was taking place - did not present readers with any stable or consistent reading of it.

CHAPTER FOUR

Circulations, readers and spaces: reality and rhetoric in the popular periodical, 1819-34

Introduction: 'reading for all'

In the first number of the SDUK's *Penny Magazine* on 31 March 1832, the editor and publisher Charles Knight laid out his grand vision for popular self-improvement in an article entitled 'Reading for all'. In the seventeenth century, Knight noted, the invention of the stage-coach had met with opposition from many who believed that cheaper modes of transport would undermine existing forms of 'personal intercourse'. Such ignorance surrounding the benefits of inexpensive modes of communication continued to exist, he suggested, promising that '[w]hat the stage-coach has become to the middle classes, we hope our Penny Magazine will be to all classes - a universal convenience and enjoyment'. An enthusiastic spokesman of the drive to improve popular intellect and morals in the 1820s and 1830s, Knight in these comments epitomized a widely-held reformist belief that social and political harmony could be (re)established by cultivating the practice of reading among the common people.[339]

Religious and moral-reforming societies also championed the benefits of reading, and penny periodicals such as the RTS's *Child's Companion* and the SPCK's *Saturday Magazine* embodied their attempts to prescribe what the common reader could read, how and where. Knight's 'reading for all' rhetoric, however, concealed the segmented nature of the popular periodical market in terms of readership, genre and format, as well as eliding the anxieties of those periodical producers opposed to his methods and agenda. On one side were those commercial and radical print

---

[339] *Penny Magazine*, 31 Mar. 1832. Knight here introduced his mission to diffuse 'sound knowledge' to 'the very great number of persons who can spare half an hour for the reading of a newspaper, [but] who are sometimes disinclined to open a book.' See also Charles Knight, *Passages*, three vols. (1864-5), ii. Most of the periodicals quoted in this chapter were included in the content analysis in chapter three.

producers who objected to the attempts of Knight *et al* to control and circumscribe the habits of the common reader (and in particular to monopolize the cheap market). On the other, there was a large group of politically conservative titles opposed to Knight's grand claims that the practice of reading itself was a moral, social and political panacea. More fundamentally, these latter titles attempted to refute arguments for the desirability of cultivating a common readership by stressing the relationship between a mass periodical audience and moral or political subversion.[340]

Chapter three of this thesis has demonstrated that representations of practices underpinning a message of self-improvement (reading, writing and learning) accounted for approximately one quarter of all content in a sample of twenty popular periodical titles. This chapter develops such findings in the light of Knight's comments by exploring some of the various perspectives offered by the periodical press on issues of readership and reading. These representations emerge as highly problematic reflections of reality, and all such material must be read at two levels: as a source of insight into actual practices, and as a form of commentary and interpretation on the contested topic of readership and reading itself. A number of specific questions present themselves: what popular periodical titles were actually being read, and in what numbers?; who exactly were the readers of cheap periodicals and Sunday newspapers (and were these different)?; where and when did they read?; and what changes were there in popular reading practices between 1819 and 1834?

This chapter aims to answer these questions by comparing portrayals of reading and readership. In section I it argues that periodical circulation figures were strategically deployed as a means of validating a title's specific message (religious,

---

[340] See J. Barry, 'Literacy and literature', in T, Harris (ed.), *Popular culture* (1995), 69-94; and D. Vincent, *Literacy and popular culture* (1989), chs. 2, 3 and 4. For a collection of essays on reading in the early modern period, see J. Raven *et al* (eds.), *The practice and representation of reading* (1996), especially the introduction.

political, satirical or self-improving), giving rise to a 'rhetoric of success' particularly characteristic of those organs making strong claims for popular improvement. Section II shows how 'common readers' (encompassing the men, women and children of London's lower-middling and labouring classes) were depicted as consuming a range of printed matter, including newspapers, periodicals, books, 'street literature', technical and scientific works, religious texts, poetry and bawdy or improper material. And section III demonstrates how the practice of reading was shown to be located in the domestic sphere, at school, in reading rooms, in public houses, mutual improvement societies, cheap coffee-houses and mechanics' institute libraries. By unpacking what the cultural historian Robert Darnton calls the 'institutional bases of reading' it is hoped to examine the representational history of reading and to develop a more detailed historical sociology of periodical readership between 1819 and 1834. By so doing, the popular periodical can be approached not only as a medium through which the common reader was made a sustained subject of enquiry as an active intellectual and moral agent, but also as a source for representations of the march of intellect in early nineteenth-century popular culture.[341]

I

Periodical circulations and the 'rhetoric of success'

Charles Knight's strong belief in an expansion of the ability of the common people to read was reasserted in his preface to the 1832 volume of the *Penny Magazine*: '[i]t was considered by Edmund Burke, about forty years ago, that there were about eighty thousand *readers* in this country', he began:

> In the present year [1832] it has been shown, by the sale of the 'Penny Magazine,' that there are two hundred thousand *purchasers* of one periodical work. It may be fully calculated that the number of readers of that single work accounts to a million.

---

[341] R. Darnton, *The kiss of Lamourette* (1990), 170-1.

Knight's magazine circulated widely - allegedly selling over 50,000 copies of the first number alone - but such sales figures are difficult to corroborate. His rhetoric nonetheless raises a number of specific questions: how many cheap periodicals and Sunday newspapers actually circulated in the period?; did this increase over time?; how were circulations represented in popular periodicals?; and what was at stake when periodical producers made claims to a large readership?[342]

i. Circulation figures

Calculations of the number of readers of a single periodical or newspaper (ranging from between five and thirty people) are problematic, and the widespread practice of communal reading at home and in workshops, coffee-shops and public houses represents a further barrier to accurately assessing the number of consumers of periodical print.[343] The memoirs of the printer Charles Manby Smith attest to the importance of the practice of reading aloud in workshops in creating an 'audience' for periodical print. Recalling his experiences as a compositor in a London publishing house in 1834, Manby Smith noted that

> 'The Times' newspaper was taken in daily, and it was the office of each compositor in town to read the debates and leaders aloud for the benefit of the rest. When it came to my turn, they could never understand my 'professional' mode of reading, and made me many humble requests for explanation.

The boasts of Manby Smith aside, such recollections serve as a reminder that the aural reception of print remained important well into the 1830s, complicating claims about circulation based on sales figures alone.[344]

---

[342] *Penny Magazine*, preface to vol. i (1832).

[343] Altick was sceptical of Gibbons Merle's claim that each newspaper had about thirty readers; R. D. Altick, *The English common reader* (1957), 349-50. Theodore Hook calculated more modestly: 'We sell Seven Thousand Papers; and it is a small computation to suppose that ten persons read each number'; *John Bull*, 4 Feb. 1821.

[344] Charles Manby Smith, *The working-man's way in the world* (1853), 188. See the similar anecdote relating to the year 1815 in Thomas Carter, *Memoirs of a working man* (1845), 186

Claims about the circulation of popular periodicals in the 1820s and 1830s therefore ought to be read as much as stylized representations as authentic reflections of reality - but some quantified sales evidence does exist. Historians are forced to rely on information internal to periodicals and newspapers in the absence of robust official figures - and these provide at best a guide to the relative size of *claimed* readerships. The circulations of a number of leading periodicals between 1817 and 1825, established in this way, have recently been summarized thus: *Blackwood's Magazine* (1817), 3,700; *The Times* (and *Evening Mail*) (1822), 5,730; the *Edinburgh Review* (1818), 12,000; the *Evangelical Magazine* (1820), 20,000; the *Child's Magazine* (1825), 36,000; and Cobbett's *Political Register* (1817), 50,000.[345] The table in appendix 4 draws on similar data, indicating the circulations that different periodicals claimed to have achieved between 1819 and 1834. In terms of cheap periodicals, a successful weekly political journal such as Wooler's *Black Dwarf* might lay claim to a circulation of 12,000 in the excitable year of 1819, or 16,000 weekly in the case of Hetherington's *Penny Papers* at the height of the 'reform crisis' in 1832. The miscellaneous *Circulator* claimed a circulation in its hundreds, rather than thousands, during the mid-1820s, while the *Mechanic's Magazine* claimed a circulation of 16,000 weekly in 1824 and the *Mirror of Literature* an enormous, and doubtful, one of between 80,000 and 150,000 numbers a week between 1822 and 1825 (it has been suggested that 15,000 a week in 1822 was more realistic).[346] Cheap religious periodicals experienced similarly varying sales, with the *Canal Boatman's Magazine* being distributed gratis at the rate of 1,000 numbers a month in 1829, the *Child's Companion* reputedly selling 20,000 copies monthly in the same year and the

---

[345] J. R. Topham, 'The Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine', in G. Cantor *et al* (eds.), *Science in the nineteenth-century periodical* (2004), 67-90.
[346] J. R. Topham, 'The *Mirror of Literature*', in ibid, 37-66.

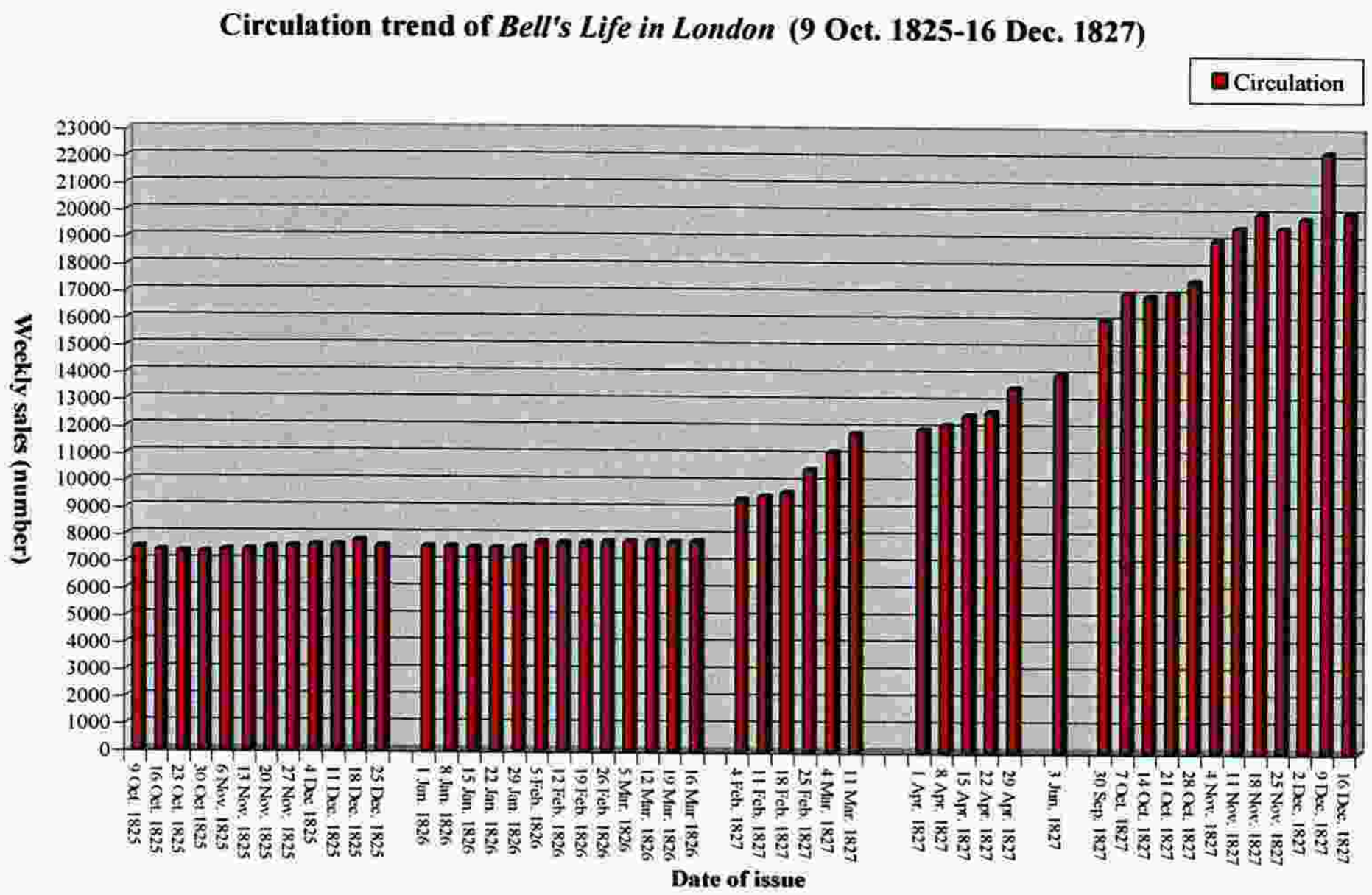
Saturday Magazine claiming to have developed a circulation of 80,000 a week by late 1832.[347]

The Sunday newspaper market was also characterized by widely varying circulations. In contrast to positive representations of the increasing circulation of cheap improving periodicals such as the *Penny Magazine* and the *Saturday Magazine*, the growth of Sunday newspaper sales in the 1820s was often depicted as evidence of declining popular morals. Circulation figures for this 'stamped' format are nonetheless more reliable than those available for cheap periodicals as a result of the practice of editors, publishers and printers signing affidavits on sales figures in order to attract advertisers. The publisher Thomas Dickie made just such an appeal to advertisers in July 1825, swearing before the Mayor that his *Journeyman* had consistently sold between 300 and 500 copies a week and claiming that '[t]his Paper will be found the best medium for ADVERTISING any thing [sic] relating to the ARTS, MANUFACTURES, and COMMERCE. [348] The *Journeyman*'s modest circulation sustained the paper for just thirteen numbers, but Sunday newspapers targeting a broader common readership boasted impressive circulations. In December 1827, the publishers of *Bell's Life in London* signed an affidavit affirming that the paper had a weekly circulation of 26,195 numbers: a tenfold increase since its first publication in 1822. Promising to serve '[j]ustice to our ADVERTISING FRIENDS, as well as to ourselves', the paper's editor published detailed circulation figures, demonstrating the phenomenal growth of the circulation of *Bell's Life* in four separate twelve-week periods between 9 October 1825 and 16 December 1827 (figure 5.1).[349]

---

[347] See appendix 4.
[348] *Journeyman*, 17 Jul. 1825.
[349] *Bell's Life*, 23 Dec. 1827; 9 Apr. 1826. Strings of circulation figures were published from 1824 onwards, but the data for this figure are taken from the issues for 9 Apr., 5 Nov. 1826; 11, 18 Mar., 13 May, 23 and 30 Dec. 1827.

Figure 5.1



The increasing circulation of *Bell's Life* demonstrated a wider (though much slower) growth in the popular Sunday newspaper market during the 1820s, but the specific appeal of this newspaper lay in its moderate reformist outlook, simple but lively style, mixed sporting, commercial and 'crim. con.' content and profuse illustrations. The innovative use of George Cruikshank prints (especially a satirical series entitled the 'Gallery of Comicalities') and other visual items secured a dedicated readership for the paper, and the spike in sales for the issue of 9 December 1827 (22,252 numbers) was attributed by the editor to the inclusion of illustrations of 'Mr Gurney's New Steam Carriage' - an issue so popular that it went through several print runs and continued to be sold throughout the following January.[350]

ii. The 'rhetoric of success'

Although periodicals and newspapers experienced varying levels of circulation, nearly all made references to their own success. Whether the circulation was as low as

---

[350] Gurney paraded Regent's Park in December 1827 and the editor noted that '[t]he curiosity excited throughout the country by the rumours... of the intended substitution of steam-carriages for those drawn by horses, has induced us to take some pains to acquire information upon so novel a speculation'; ibid., 9, 30 Dec. 1827.

300 or as high as 26,000 a week, repeated allusions to 'numerous readers', 'rapidly increasing circulation' and 'unprecedented sales' created the impression that the popular press was expanding rapidly, driven by the demands of a voracious mass readership. Large increases in circulation were discernible through claimed sales in some cases, but the ubiquity of such claims set against the plateau in the number of all periodical titles produced in the later 1820s (and the short lifespan of many) suggests that publishers' boasts were often little more than rhetoric.[351] It is unsurprising that periodical producers were loathe to admit failure in such a seemingly promising marketplace - but this 'rhetoric of success' was the product of a more fundamental claim to popular legitimacy, and was particularly exaggerated in titles propounding a strong political or religious message. In December 1826, for example, the editor of the *Trades'*, John Anderson, issued this reproach:

> Our readers are aware that we have frequently censured, in no very measured tones, the apathy of the working classes, in not promoting the circulation of the Trades' Newspaper; and though it has now increased so much, that we stand fourth, if not third in that respect, on the list of London journals, we must still express our regret that more has not been done by them for its support.[352]

The weekly circulation of the *Trades'* at this time was 600 numbers at most, and Anderson's claim that this ranked the paper third or fourth 'on the list of London journals' was unsustainable. What mattered most for Anderson was not the truth-value of the statement, but rather the reinforcement of the message that the success of one of the first newspapers owned and managed by and for metropolitan artisans and mechanics proved that 'the working classes had laid hold [of] a means of *mutual enlightenment*': if the paper failed, so too did the legitimacy of the radical project of

---

[351] See the extravagant claims for 'the extraordinary and increasing demand for JOHN BULL… It is unparalleled in Newspaper History; *John Bull*, 24 Dec. 1820.
[352] *TN*, 10 Dec. 1826.

'popular enlightenment'. These high stakes were made explicit by William Carpenter, editor of the successor paper, the *Weekly Free Press*, in 1830:

> The peculiar character of our paper… warrants us in regarding its circulation as forming a kind of index, recording the *moral and intellectual improvement of the middle classes of society*; and if there be any thing [sic] gratifying to find that they are preferring the *useful to the merely amusing, the moral to the obscene*, then have we an ample and a rapidly augmenting source of gratification.[353]

Another example of this strategic fusion of circulation and claims to legitimacy can be discerned in the case of the *Canal Boatman's Magazine*, which was forced to cease publication in December 1831. This failure was long anticipated: two years earlier, it had been conceded that 'although its sale is increased', '[the magazine] does not at present quite clear its expenses.'[354] The central evangelical message, however, was not allowed to founder, and the final numbers of the title carried advertisements for the *Christian's Penny Magazine* (1832-8): '[w]hat a number of penny publications have lately sprung into existence', ran one puff:

> we cannot remember the names of half of them - Some we believe have already died a natural death, so much the better, to make room for *The* [sic] *Christian's Penny Magazine*. We presume nearly every family, now has its weekly paper or magazine. Well, be it so, but many of these cheap publications are worthless, and some really of a bad tendency… Not so with this - this is fitted for *all* who profess to call themselves christians [sic]

Failure to communicate the message was averted here not by simply ignoring the reality of a limited circulation (as in the case of the *Trades'*), but by appointing another cheap periodical to act as its new medium. It was unsurprising that the editors of the *Canal Boatman's Magazine* should encourage readers to switch allegiance to the *Christian's Penny Magazine* - both periodicals, after all, were peddling the same

---

[353] *WFP*, 2 Jan. 1830.

[354] *Canal Boatman's Magazine*, Dec. 1830. The practice of sending 'visitors' out to distribute the periodical was often less than successful. In December 1829, for instance, distributors visiting Horace Street (previously Cato Street) reported that 'a zealous Irishman took the trouble to come out into the street, to throw the book [the magazine] in the mud, which was soon picked up by a boy. This reception was easily accounted for; they were Papists…'; ibid., Apr. 1829.

agenda of Christian moral improvement - but the diversion of readers to another title conveniently elided any reflection as to why the original publication had not survived.[355]

This 'rhetoric of success' was on one level a commercial strategy to encourage advertisers, an attempt to reinforce claims to popularity in a competitive marketplace and the result of a desire to create amongst readers the sense that they were part of a larger community. Cheap periodicals, however, did not universally carry advertisements, popularity was impossible to maintain if a title folded and publishers were unlikely to place much faith in imagined communities alone. A key explanation for the prevalence of this rhetoric therefore lies in a fundamental claim made by periodical producers: namely, that the purpose of cheap periodicals and popular Sunday newspapers was to provide common readers with instruction and entertainment. If this readership proved to be smaller than expected, the justification for the publication disappeared. Claims about circulation were therefore as much a stylized representation as a reflection of reality, and if a growth in sales could not be shown, equivocal references to 'success' and 'demand' were invoked to protect the reputation of the title and its message. Popular periodical producers were ultimately making claims to represent the voice of the people or to protect their interests; and if 'the people' did not respond positively to this self-presentation as authentically vernacular or as protector, a crucial form of legitimation was lost.

---

[355] Ibid., Jul. 1832.

II

Varieties of 'common reader' in the popular periodical

The ability and desire to read were quintessential symbols of the march of intellect during the 1820s and 1830s. Discussions about readership revolved around a range of issues, including who was reading what, where, when and why. The 'who' question was particularly important in the context of the popular periodical press, and from the early 1820s onwards many cheap periodical and Sunday newspaper producers moved beyond addressing their organs to 'the people' broadly conceived to experiment with specific 'common' readerships, targeting children, lower-middling women or unskilled and skilled male workers. This multifaceted publishing strategy was the product both of the commercial opportunism of bookseller-publishers and of a more philanthropic intellectual- and moral-reforming agenda pursued by a range of reforming and religious groups.

i. Juvenile and female readers

During the early 1820s children belonging to 'poor' metropolitan families were identified as a viable periodical readership by religious associations such as the SPCK and RTS. Tracts, pamphlets and other religious ephemera had long been distributed to a juvenile readership by moral reformers, and the autobiographies of self-improving men frequently noted that it was religious reading that first instilled in them a passion for learning. Gerald Massey (1828-1907), later a Chartist poet, grew up as the son of a canal boatman in Hertfordshire. Reflecting on the poverty of his upbringing, he observed that

> [t]hanks to the care of his mother [Mary], who had sent him to the penny school, he had learnt to read, and the desire to read had been awakened… The Bible and Bunyan were the principle [sic]… Afterwards, he obtained access to 'Robinson Crusoe', a few old Wesleyan magazines and some battle histories.

The Bible, Bunyan, Defoe and Wesleyan-Methodist literature were staple reading material for the children of poor families, but Anglican and evangelical literature was also widely disseminated.[356]

The readers of the RTS' *Child's Companion*, for instance, were depicted almost invariably as 'poor children' by its editor - although the precise social status of its readership remains unclear. This pocket-sized monthly nonetheless published numerous representations of poor but 'good' children reading religious texts and praying, and 'bad' children breaking the Sabbath (and occasionally suffering gruesome deaths). One celebration of Bible reading in June 1825 ('The pleasure of being able to read') was illustrated with a woodcut of two children reading religious tracts, accompanied by the following textual prompt: '[b]oys and girls who have learned to read, are able to examine the Holy Bible… They can also read this blessed book to aged persons who were not taught when they were young, and to blind people, or those who are sick.'[357] This message of the child's obligations to elderly, illiterate or bedridden relatives was repeatedly reinforced by stories such as 'The Sunday Scholar reading to her [illiterate] mother' and 'Little Sweeps'. Appearing in August 1825, this latter narrative fused panegyrics to Bible reading and attending Sunday school, identifying the story's 'reader' as a Dublin chimneysweep. Having established that the sweep (an occupation used as shorthand for the most illiterate sections of society) could read and write, the story recounted how

> another little sweep, a little older than himself, had taught him to read, by shewing [sic] him the sign-boards and letters over the shop doors, which they read as they went through the city… Should not the desire of the little sweep to instruct his fellow, teach us a useful lesson, and lead us to renewed exertion [?]

---

[356] Gerald Massey, Samuel Smiles (ed.), *Poetical works* (1861), xi.
[357] *Child's Companion*, Jun. 1825.

The message was that if even the 'little sweep' could read, the poor but self-respecting Sunday scholar had little excuse not to master this skill. A combination of fear, entertainment and encouragement was thus mobilized to drive home the message that reading the scriptures led to moral salvation, while either failing to do so, or reading immoral literature, led to suffering.[358]

Lower-middling and labouring women were less frequently targeted as readers, or even invoked in representations of reading. This lacuna particularly characterized Sunday newspapers, which almost universally depicted a masculine readership. Female readers were, however, targeted by commercially driven cheap periodical producers peddling messages about 'domestic economy' from the early 1820s onwards. An example of this genre, the three-penny *Economist and General Advertiser* (succeeded by the *Housekeeper's Magazine, and Family Economist* in 1825-6), was published weekly by John Knight and Henry Lacey in 1824-5. Calculated to improve the morals of female readers, these titles reproduced moralistic images, including the Hogarthian 'Drunken Wife' and the 'Tread-Mill for Women' at Brixton, as warnings against intemperance and criminal activity. Such scenes were juxtaposed with images of domestic bliss (including Christmas Day dinner and families reading together next to the fireplace), and an improving motif was reinforced by suggestions to the housewife on how best to master 'economy' ('the art of being comfortable and happy'). Its content, Knight and Lacey announced in their opening address, would cover 'the Art of House-keeping in every branch', ranging

---

[358] Ibid., Aug. 1825. See Mayhew's depiction of the 'boy crossing-sweeper': 'I can read and write - oh, yes, I mean read and write well - read anything, even old English; and I write pretty fair - though I don't do much reading now, unless it's a penny paper - I've got one in my pocket now - it's the *London Journal*...' in Henry Mayhew, *London labour* (1985 edn.), 263-71.

from 'domestic medical hints' to a 'regular Weekly Article upon the Knavery of Dealers'.[359]

If the housewife or housekeeper were among the publishers' intended readers (appeals were also made to 'Mechanics and the Labouring Classes' and apprentices), Knight and Lacey also provided clues as to the financial resources of this readership by publishing 'wage tables' advising readers on how best to spend their income. These tables were calculated on two levels: a 'Scale of Expenditure for a man with a Weekly Salary of One Guinea, who has a Wife and Two Children to support, and who avoids going into debt', and a scale for 'A man with a Guinea a-week, who seeks and obtains a temporary Credit'.[360] These scales outlined for the female reader how, even if her husband was an 'industrious man', money squandered on 'amusements' and the 'brewer', and interest incurred by buying on credit, were financially ruinous. By implication, these tables indicate what Knight and Lacey believed to be the income of their typical reader: between a Guinea and thirty shillings a week. At the lower end of this scale, the weekly wage of one Guinea (twenty-one shillings, or £1.1s.0d.) represented an income of £54.12s. per annum. This was a modest sum, and although more than the fifteen shillings a week (thirty-nine pounds per annum) received by unskilled workmen in London - a rate set by Marylebone magistrates in December 1826 and contested as insufficient for subsistence - this was well below the £100 per annum income of a 'middling sort' family.[361]

The female readers of the *Economist* were thus not among the poorest in London, but part of a socio-economic group that had little disposable income. Judging by the

---

[359] *Economist*, 22 May and 25 Dec. 1824. The link to Cobbett's definition of 'economy' was clear - see his portrait in the *Housekeeper's Magazine* [n.d., 1825], 1.
[360] *Economist*, 4, 25 Dec. 1825; *Housekeeper's Magazine*, [n.d., 1825], 338. *Economist*, 22, 29 May 1824. These tables were republished in *Poor Richard's Journal for Poor People*, 24 Nov. 1832; a two-penny weekly published by Strange that mobilized the Franklin-esque 'Poor Richard' character.
[361] *TN*, 24 Dec. 1826.

weekly wages of the male in the household, these women were the wives and daughters of London's small shopkeepers, clerks and more highly skilled artisans, mechanics and operatives. Knight and Lacey's own justification for their foray into cheap women's literature suggested that their motivation was the success of existing technical periodicals aimed at a common readership: '[a]lthough occasionally we may offer our readers a little amusement', they noted, 'our aim is to be USEFUL, and in the execution, THE ECONOMIST, we trust, will not rank inferior to the *Mechanic's Magazine* or *Medical Adviser*.' Through its content, mode of address, socio-economic markers and invocation of the precedent of their own *Mechanic's Magazine*, Knight and Lacey's *Economist* therefore aimed to target a readership of relatively humble women and to improve their morals through the diffusion of information about 'housewifery'.[362]

A later attempt to exploit a female readership was the *Ladies' Penny Gazette* (1832-4). In contrast to the domestic message embodied in the *Economist*, this periodical was characterized by a concern to encourage the practice of reading amongst women and to achieve its broader social acceptance. Published by the radical booksellers Benjamin Steill and George Berger, the *Ladies' Penny Gazette* was established at a time of proliferating cheap periodicals in the early 1830s, and specifically targeted 'females in the middling classes of life, tradesmen and farmers' wives and daughters'. In a pre-emptive strike against those who disparaged its aim to 'diffuse a better taste' and the habit of 'mental cultivation' to 'females placed in moderate circumstances', the editor outlined his position thus:

> I do not see that a woman, let her station in life be what it may, is at all more usefully or rationally occupied in more menial or manual employments, than in reading, though it should be but works of

[362] *Economist*, 22 May 1824.

> amusement, or in 'fingering' her piano… not only the schoolmaster, but, as you observe, 'The milliner, is now abroad.'[363]

This editorial was a rebuff to prevailing concerns that the diffusion of cheap periodical literature to tradesmen's wives and daughters and 'young women employed in dressmaking' was inherently dangerous. The technique adopted here was to downplay the gazette's intellectually improving message by stressing its content of fashion, sheet music and society gossip - all of which detractors might find trivial, but not threatening. This did not conceal the reality that the intended readers were humble women who had hitherto rarely been targeted by cheap publishers. Indeed, the *Ladies' Penny Gazette* threatened to challenge the prevalent assumption - voiced by an imaginary complainant, and stating that 'the proper sphere of females in middling life is that of their domestic concerns' - by suggesting that '[e]ven those who are forced to devote much of [their] personal attention to such affairs, may… find sufficient leisure both for reading and for other intellectual pursuits.' The re-inflection of the 'schoolmaster abroad' phrase as '[t]he milliner, is now abroad' linked this discussion to a wider anxieties about the perceived spread of education and literacy, and revealed how editorial representations of readership (admitting to a socially modest female readership, but stressing the harmlessness of the literature diffused) were a complex but crucial rhetorical negotiation.[364]

Some periodical producers attempted to incorporate female readers into a broader common readership by focussing on content calculated to appeal to both men and women. The bookseller-publisher William Strange attempted just such a negotiation in his *Doctor*. Strange claimed that his periodical was 'the first attempt ever made in this country to diffuse among all classes of the community, valuable medical

---

[363] *Ladies' Penny Gazette*, 27 Oct. 1832.

[364] The right of the common reader to access imaginative literature was particularly reiterated: '[t]he romance of real life may be found in the lowest as well as the highest situations'; ibid., 1 Dec. 1832.

information', and, although the three-penny *Medical Adviser* (1823-5) had been established eight years earlier, the cheapness of the *Doctor* was indeed an innovation.[365] Strange's periodical carried a special 'column for the working classes' that focussed on 'the influence of different trades on the health of the working classes', and in particular on the ailments of apprentices, 'artisans' (working with gold, tin, copper and iron), butchers, fishmongers, cart-dealers, tailors and the 'very numerous and respectable class' of weavers.[366] The ethos of the *Doctor* was that readers could cure themselves - or at least protect themselves against 'quackery' - and the naming of these trades gave an indication of the type of readership Strange was aiming to exploit. The repeated assurances that all advice was free, moreover, further suggested that the *Doctor*'s readers were either unwilling, or unable, to pay for medical attention.[367]

The practice of diagnosing correspondent's illnesses in the pages of the periodical itself added another means by which the readership could be represented, and if the assumed monikers are accurate, communications came from one 'Professor Dewhurst', 'a Lawyer of Gray's Inn', an 'actor', 'a Member of the college of Physicians', 'a Merchant's Clerk', 'a needy tradesman', 'a hatter of St. John Long [sic]', 'a Poor Artizan', 'a Poor Mechanic', 'a labouring man', 'a Poor Old Clerk', 'a Poor Servant' and 'an Old Soldier'. Less occupationally specific, but equally detailed, self-descriptions included 'an Unhappy Sufferer', 'a Poor Pedestrian', 'a constant reader, with a mole', and the unfortunate 'reader, with bunions'. In light of its focus on 'family medicine', it was unsurprising that female readers also solicited the advice of the 'Doctor'; and in addition to several correspondents who signed their letters as

---

[365] *Doctor*, 9 Jan. 1833. This mission was restated two weeks later: '[t]he object in starting the Doctor was, to give the best advice to poor people at the least possible expense'; ibid., 23 Jan. 1833.
[366] Ibid., 8, 29 Aug., 12 Sep., 7, 14, 21, 28 Nov., 5 Dec., 1832; see chapter three.
[367] The 'Doctor' himself ran consultations at his office (4 Broadway, Ludgate Hill) on Mondays and Fridays between five o'clock and seven o'clock in the evenings, charging the high rate of 2s.6d; ibid., 27 May and 26 Aug. 1835.

'Mary Anne' or 'Ellen May' there were numerous solicitations from 'a Mother', 'a Poor infirm woman', an 'Old Lady' and a 'Nurse'.[368]

ii. Unskilled and skilled working men

Some cheap periodical producers had thus begun to cultivate specific juvenile and female common readerships by the 1820s and early 1830s; but many continued to target a narrow audience of unskilled and skilled working men. The penny *Canal Boatman's Magazine*, for example, identified its readers as male workers in the less 'respectable' trades of the Paddington Basin, 'including bargemen, Carmen [sic], dustmen, workers in coal-pits, brickmakers and other labouring classes'. Indeed, the 'Boatman's Chapel' was free of charge for a list of occupational groups that included 'Soldiers, Sailors, Boatmen, Carmen, Dustmen, Mechanics, Labourers, Porters, Fruit-sellers, Coachmen, Grooms; yea, for all poor persons.'[369] This appeal to, and representation of, a readership of unskilled working men, characterized the penny 'Tory' weekly *Bristol Job Nott; or Labouring Man's Friend*. Its very title was derivative of a Cobbettite rhetoric in which cheap periodicals presented themselves as the 'friend', 'advocate' or 'guardian' of the poor man, and its repeated addresses to 'the working man', 'the working classes' and the 'honoured readers of the operative class' reinforced its claims to serve this common readership. The *Bristol Job Nott* specifically targeted 'operatives' (and not 'artisans' or 'mechanics'), and clues to the intellectual resources and social status of its readers were frequently provided. In March 1832, for instance, 'Job' commended a letter sent to the publishers placing a weekly subscription for the periodical:

---

[368] Correspondence in ibid., August 1832 and January 1833 issues.

[369] *Canal Boatman's Magazine*, Dec., 1830. See the references to the degraded morals and manners of 'Coachmen, guards, waiters, and others' who mimicked the 'high life' of the gentlemen they served, ibid., May 1830. Wives and children were, by extension, supposed to benefit from this focus on the canal workers; ibid., May 1829.

> Here then is a copy for Job's friends to write after. If they can't come up to it, perhaps they can shape their letters a little after the pattern. To speak plainly, Job is anxious to impress it on the minds of his friends of the wealthier class, that... he wishes to engage the attention of the labouring classes...

The editor's suggestion that his readers might have to copy out the model subscription letter indicated a readership of limited literacy, as did his numerous other references to its modest intellectual accomplishments.[370]

The success of a number of cheap technical periodicals aimed at skilled workers in the early 1820s - not least the *Mechanic's Magazine*, edited by Joseph Clinton Robertson, which boasted that 20% of its correspondents were 'working mechanics' - encouraged several attempts in the summer of 1825 to establish stamped Sunday newspapers appealing to this readership.[371] Robertson himself became editor of the *Trades' Newspaper* in July 1825 in the hope that such a readership could be exploited. The *Trades'* and its rival *Journeyman*, quite apart from their titles, were manifestly newspapers for skilled working men. The *Trades'*, for instance, reported in July 1825 that it had been established because 'the Trade Societies of Journeymen in town and country had united to establish a Newspaper of their own, for the advocacy and promotion of their own peculiar interests' (in particular against the threatened reintroduction of the Combination Acts in 1824-5), while the *Journeyman* justified its own existence thus:

> The march of intellect in the present day, is too powerful and too obvious to require any one [sic] to be told of the utility of a new medium for the diffusion of just principles where it has not existed before... Upon this ground it is, that we tender our services to a particular yet most extensive class of readers... As a Journal, we profess only to offer a *plain paper to plain men*. Now that the public have a weekly 'Sovereign,' and a 'Gentleman,' we shall not surely be charged with quaint adoptions, in furnishing *The* [sic] '*Journeyman*.'[372]

---

[370] *Bristol Job Nott*, 8, 29 Mar. 1832. See the suggestion that some readers did not know what a 'reviewer' was; ibid., 2 Feb. 1832.
[371] See chapter five for a full list of correspondents; 291.
[372] *TN*, 24 Jul. 1825; *Journeyman*, 12 Jun. 1825.

The capital-intensive nature of Sunday newspapers, their high retail cost and the competitiveness of the marketplace meant that, unlike cheap periodicals, a broader readership had to be cultivated in order to maximize the chances of commercial success: but despite their appeals to skilled workers, both the *Trades'* and the *Journeyman* struggled to achieve viable circulations on the basis of this narrow readership alone.

iii. Inclusive readerships: 'popular' Sunday newspapers

Not all Sunday newspapers were enthusiastic about attempts to cultivate a readership of working men, skilled or otherwise. Paradoxically, such titles aimed to control the literary diet of common readers by securing their allegiance to titles that opposed the very principle of widespread access to print. This was a delicate balancing act, and weekly newspapers such as the 'Tory' *John Bull* elided overt criticism of their own humble readers by conflating the image of the common reader with political subversion. This strategy represented a more cynical impetus behind the forging of a 'popular' readership: in order to control the common reader, he or she had to be incorporated into an existing (and safe) audience. Reacting to the first number of the *Trades'* in July 1825, for example, the editor of the *John Bull*, Theodore Hook, noted that

> Brougham finds not only that that the *Edinburgh Review* and its diabolical principles are sinking out of all decent society; but moreover that the work is too expensive to be widely circulated amongst his *fellow* speculatives [sic]; *these deluded people are therefore reduced to establish a vehicle through which the inflammatory venom of the revolutionary school may be conveyed and circulated among the working classes, and thus those who first tried the assault upon the higher orders, with a view to overturn, have* NOW RESOLVED UPON THE PRESENT MODE TO UNDERMINE.[373]

---

[373] *John Bull*, quoted in the *TN*, 24 Jul. 1825.

Hook's wilful misreading of the first number of the *Trades'* as 'revolutionary' (it was, in fact, radical constitutionalist) resulted from the conditions in which the *John Bull* had been founded in 1820. Established to undermine the 'Whig-radical' [sic] defence of Queen Caroline in the infamous royal divorce-suit of 1820-1, the paper found it difficult - and undesirable - to disassociate representations of common readership from radicalism. Hook was careful not to alienate all common readers, however, and poured scorn on any social group that toed the radical line, with polemics aimed more widely at 'the fishwomen [sic], the dustmen, chimney-sweepers, and such gentry, [who were] admirers and followers of HUNT, CAROLINE, WADDINGTON, and Co.' This blurring of social and political lines served as a useful rhetorical device, and by conflating several supposedly radical shibboleths (mechanics' institutes, the *Edinburgh Review*, Brougham and the *Trades'*) Hook attempted to cultivate a readership that was popular but loyal.[374]

Some 'popular' Sunday newspapers attempted to occupy the space between the enlightening agenda of the *Trades'* and the *Journeyman* and the social condescension of the *John Bull* by celebrating low life metropolitan culture. Making specific appeals to both unskilled and skilled labouring readers in the early 1820s, *Bell's Life in London* has been suggested to have constituted 'the only reading matter of a considerable segment of the urban working classes'. The paper certainly made appeals to 'the lowest part of the population', noting in March 1822 that it had been established because '[the] daily labourer [now] enquires for a *Newspaper*', and more provocatively in February 1823 that 'the industrious classes of society feel that they are something more than mere animated clay, and actually presume to form an

[374] *John Bull*, 29 Oct. 1821. The *Journeyman* responded to this form of attack in its own motto: 'Loyal, but Free - obedient, yet independent'.

opinion; that is, to think and express the result of their cognations [sic].'[375] Nonetheless, the paper boasted a readership spanning a wide social spectrum, and its editors eagerly publicized the inclusiveness of their readership. *Bell's Life* had a reputation for publishing striking images, and the visual representation of its readers in its 'letter box' (correspondence) department was particularly revealing: of the six, male characters depicted, four are wearing black 'toppers', one appears to be a clerk (wearing a counting visor) and the last is carrying a hunting rifle. The message was clear: the paper's readers were respectable, but not members of high society.[376] Claims that the paper was 'respectable' were almost universally derided in the 1820s, but *Bell's Life* did provide an unprecedented quality of sporting journalism for all social readerships - and particularly for members of the metropolitan sporting scene that had reached its apogee with the 'Fancy' in the later 1810s. Indeed, like the 'Fancy' itself, *Bell's Life* represented a heterogeneous mixture of high and low life in London, feeding social voyeurism from both directions. It was ultimately successful because it evaded precise social descriptions of its readership, relied on a widespread interest in sporting content and claimed to eschew party politics. This had the effect not only of appealing to a range of readers, but also of avoiding the politically motivated prosecutions of newspapers aimed exclusively at common readers by the Stamp Office.[377]

iv. Summary conclusions: varieties of common reader

Representations of periodical and newspaper readerships offered a mix of rhetoric and reality, complicating conceptualizations of the common reader through the targeting of specific readerships based on social status, economic resources, gender

---

[375] R. D. Altick, 'Nineteenth-century English periodicals', 264; *Bell's Life*, 31 Mar. 1822, 2 Feb. 1823 and 5 Nov. 1826.
[376] Ibid., 9 Dec. 1827.
[377] Edward Duncombe suggested that *Bell's Life* was 'a mere "fancy" paper; yet often contains good satirical poetry', ranking it fourteenth in the metropolis in terms of 'character'; *Paul Pry*, 27 May 1826.

and age. Such representations were more than casual rhetoric: they were a means of improving the likelihood of commercial success and of avoiding political repression. But cheap periodicals and Sunday newspapers did not target mutually exclusive readerships, and the interplay of advertisements and editorial puffs between these serial formats suggests that it was expected that the individual common reader would consume both; though at different times and in different places. A skilled working man by the early 1820s might, with no apparent inconsistency, read the *Mechanic's Magazine* on a Saturday - responding to its appeals for the patronage of 'ingenious mechanics' - while consuming *Bell's Life* on the Sabbath as a member of that title's more inclusive 'popular' readership.

Ultimately, many attempts to cultivate specific common readerships failed, and on balance the most successful titles produced between 1819 and 1834 targeted a 'popular' readership. The attempt to reach specific groups did, however, indicate a novel desire amongst popular periodical producers to refine general conceptions of the common reader. One result of this rethinking was that by 1834 conceptualizations of 'the people' as a readership had been expanded to include a range of subaltern groups (children, women and working men) not previously recognized - or systematically targeted - as periodical readers. Significant though it was, this expansion of notions of 'popular' readership between 1819 and 1834 resulted as much from the efforts of commercial publishers and middling moral-religious reform societies as from any radical success in democratizing print culture.

III

Reading locations: coffee-shops and mechanics' institute libraries

Ruminating over the nature of the popular periodical market in the mid-1820s, the journalist Robert Mudie observed in 1825 that '[t]he newspaper… does best in the alehouse: while the journal, again, is more adapted for home perusal'. The high price of stamped newspapers did encourage many people to club together to hire or buy Sunday papers, and these reading clubs were often located in the public house. The weekly newspaper, however, could also be a private commodity, consumed at home: '[t]hose papers form not only the Sunday instructors of the father and his comrades, but they [also] become the *vade mecum* of his family during the week', Mudie noted. Similarly, although Saturday 'journals' (cheap periodicals retailing for 'the price of one pot of beer') might have been 'more adapted for home perusal', these were also consumed in a plethora of public spaces. Mudie's comments raise questions about where common readers consumed popular periodicals, how this changed over time and how reading spaces were represented in the popular press. They suggest that if issues of circulation and readership were loci of debates about the common reader, so too were the locations in which popular periodicals were consumed. Public houses, book shops, mutual improvement societies, the domestic sphere and a variety of circulating, subscription and private libraries were all represented as spaces in which the common reader was able to access periodical print - but two reading locations in particular became widely contested as symbols of the march of intellect in the 1820s and 1830s: the 'economical' or cheap coffee-shop and the mechanic's library.[378]

---

[378] Robert Mudie, *Babylon the great*, two vols. (1825), i, 156-8.

i. Cheap 'coffee-houses' and '-shops'

According to evidence cited before the Committee on the State of the Police of the Metropolis (1817), by the mid-1810s many journeymen tradesmen habitually visited 'coffee-shops' in the early mornings for breakfast, coffee and saloop (a tea-like hot drink made from powdered sassafras wood). Many of these establishments, however, were described as the 'receptacles of thieves and prostitutes' and more degraded than the worst public houses. Often open throughout the night, these cheap coffee-shops were alleged to sell spirits freely and in defiance of licensing laws, and were repeatedly depicted as murky sites of murder, robbery and political subversion, and as harbouring shady characters like 'George the Groom' and 'Black George'.[379] Such negative associations persisted throughout the twenty years or so after coffee-shops were first established in the metropolis in *c.*1814: but a sustained campaign to reclaim the cheap coffee-house or -shop as a symbol of popular intellectual and moral improvement was waged by those periodical producers most zealously embracing the improving imperatives of the period. This attempt to re-imagine the coffee-shop hinged on public acceptance of its function as a space in which the common reader could be refreshed in both body and mind, away from the public house: such an acceptance was not immediately forthcoming, but the attempt revealed the importance of representations of reading locations to the march of intellect project.[380]

a. Coffee-rooms in the Old Bailey proceedings

The 'coffee-house' had been a feature of metropolitan public life since at least the seventeenth century; but a search of the Old Bailey proceedings reveals that the

---

[379] *HoC.R*, Select Committee on State of Police of Metropolis, 1817, **1817** (233) VII. 151-2, 161-3. For the use of coffee-houses by juvenile offenders, see *HoC.R* Select Committee on State of Gaols, 1819, **1819** (579) VII. 171-2. For the Spenceans' use of coffee-shops as organizational bases in the post-war period, see I McCalman, *Radical underworld* (1988), chs. 7-10.

[380] See Cruikshank's depiction of 'low life' in this context ('Midnight. Tom and Jerry at a coffee shop near the Olympic') in Pierce Egan, *Life in London* (1821-2), 219-21.

related term 'coffee-shop' entered the English lexicon as late as 1814.[381] Over the next twenty years, 'coffee-shops' and 'coffee-houses' were increasingly cited as 'integral' or 'incidental' to metropolitan crime in the proceedings (see table 5.2, p.258). An analysis of ninety-six trials held at five-year intervals (1814, 1819, 1824, 1829 and 1834) reveals that despite an overlap in location, clientele and forms of criminal activity, a meaningful distinction between the terms was maintained (in only four trials were the same premises referred to as both a 'coffee-shop' and a 'coffee-house'). This suggests that only certain types of coffee-room were referred to as 'coffee-shops' - the social and political implications of which were discussed by William Lovett in a letter to Francis Place in 1834. Describing how his own 'coffee-house' on Greville-street, Hatton Gardens, offered his customers ('for the most part working men' but also 'persons in business, respectable situations, and professions') access to a selection of periodicals ('I take five daily papers, three Sunday ones in fact I take in twenty six periodicals including Magazines Reviews &c'), Lovett took exception to the prevailing nomenclature:

> I object to make those distinctions… between the Coffee Houses which the nobility and gentry frequented, and the Coffee Shops where mechanics learned sedition and disloyalty. I therefore call mine a Coffee House, and I hope working men will never consent to call those places by any other name that magesterial [sic] arrogance deemed degrading…[382]

Although it had thus acquired negative connotations, the term 'coffee-shop' nonetheless reflected the emergence of a new type of resort for the common reader, rather than of a pejorative name for a pre-existing one. The Old Bailey proceedings provide a useful means of asking empirical questions about the location, clientele and

---

[381] The following analysis uses information drawn from the *OBP* (www.oldbaileyonline.org, 12 Dec., 2007). For the best recent introduction to coffee-houses, see B. W. Cowan, *The social life of coffee* (2005). For an account of the British preference for tea, see S. D. Smith, 'Accounting for taste: British coffee consumption in historical perspective', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (1996), 183-214. For (patchy) information on specific coffee-houses, B. Lillywhite, *London coffee houses* (1963).

[382] Letter from William Lovett to Francis Place, 17 [?] 1834, add. mss., 27,827, fols. 29-31.

nature of these 'coffee-shops' as compared to the better-known 'coffee-houses'. In the thirty-one trials that mentioned 'coffee-shops' in the sample years, most (74.1%) were unnamed establishments in the Seven Dials, St. Giles, Drury Lane, Smithfield, Hoxton, Shadwell, Spitalfields and Bethnal Green areas. By contrast, in the sixty-five trials that mentioned 'coffee-houses' (mostly based on Oxford Street, the Strand, Grafton Street, Charing Cross, Paternoster Row, around the Royal Exchange or in the City) only 24.5% of establishments remained unnamed. Such 'coffee-houses' were often well-known commercial loci, such as the Jerusalem Coffee-House (an East India Company haunt) and the Chapter Coffee-House on Paternoster Row (frequented by booksellers and publishers). There was thus a consistency of usage that suggests a normative and spatial distinction between the former (anonymous premises in notorious criminal areas in west-central London and the East-end) and the latter (named establishments located in respectable areas). This does not necessarily prove the roughness of the coffee-shop or the respectability of the coffee-house; but it does suggest that issues of nomenclature were recognized as significant, and that specific appellations were deployed strategically in trial depositions.

The social and occupational customer-bases of both types of coffee-room reinforce this sense of a two-tiered - but fluid - system, and can be summarized thus:

Table 5.1: Occupations of prosecutors from Old Bailey trials naming coffee-shops and coffee-houses as 'integral', 1814, 1819, 1824, 1829 and 1834 (n=61)

Coffee-shop prosecutors		**Coffee-house prosecutors**	
Gentleman	1	Crown	4
Clergy	1	Bart.	2
Attorney	2	General Post Office	1
Architect	1	Gentleman	2
Banker	1	Army officer	1
Man of commerce	1	Attorney	1
Linen draper	1	Banker	3
Publican	1	Farmer	1
Coffee-shop keeper	3	Master lamp/oil trader	1
Watchmaker	1	Master builder	1
Tailor	3	Master butcher	1
Letter-founder	1	Musician	1
Blacksmith	1	Coffee-house keeper	10
Soldier	1	Lodging-house keeper	1
Horse slaughterer	1	Watchmaker	1
Laundress	1	Tailor	1
Unknown	1	Public house servant	1
Total	**22**	Coffee-house servant	4
		Labourer	1
		Unknown	1
		Total	**39**

This list suggests a mixed pattern, in which there was a considerable overlap of patrons (attorneys, tailors and watchmakers appearing in both locations), but also a tendency for coffee-shop prosecutors to come from more humble backgrounds (including a private soldier, a blacksmith and a laundress). If the locations and clientele of coffee-shops and coffee-houses suggested a genuine (albeit contingent) distinction which could manifest itself in references to 'respectability' and 'roughness', the role of each in reported criminal activity complicates the picture:

Table 5.2: Role of coffee-rooms in Old Bailey trials, 1814, 1819, 1824, 1829 and 1834 (n=96)

Status in evidence	Role in evidence	Coffee-shop	%	Coffee-house	%
Integral	Scene of crime	5	16.1%	23	35.4%
	Scene of arrest/search for stolen property	7	22.6%	5	7.7%
	Used to plan/perpetrate crimes	1	3.2%	4	6.1%
	Used to store/sell/share stolen goods/spend stolen money	6	19.4%	4	6.1%
	Prisoner(s) regular customer(s)	0	0.0%	1	1.5%
	Scene of prisoner/prosecutor meeting	3	9.7%	0	0 %
	Name of establishment used to obtain credit	0	0.0%	2	3.0%
	Sub-total	**22**		**39**	**61**
Incidental	Staff witness event/prisoner seen entering location	3	9.7%	1	1.5%
	Named as place of resort/business unrelated to crime	1	3.2%	11	16.9%
	Named as location for a meeting with prisoner/destination - never occurred	0	0.0%	5	7.7%
	Premises searched - nothing found	1	3.2%	0	0.0%
	Lodging of prisoner/prosecutor/witness - unrelated to crime	1	3.2%	0	0.0%
	Occupation of witness - unrelated to crime	1	3.2%	5	7.7%
	As geographical marker only	2	6.5%	4	6.1%
	Sub-total	**9**		**26**	**35**
	Totals	**31**		**65**	**96**

These results reveal that coffee-shops were less frequently reported as the scene of a crime than coffee-houses (16.1% versus 35.4%), but were more often the location of a prisoner's arrest (22.6% versus 7.7%) and used to store, sell or otherwise dispose of stolen goods (19.4% versus 6.1%). When both types of coffee-room were mentioned as 'incidental' to the crime, this pattern is replicated: crimes were witnessed by staff, and prisoners were seen entering, coffee-shops more frequently (9.7% versus 1.5%), and coffee-houses featured as places of business unrelated to crime more frequently (16.9% compared to 3.2%).

In summary, the Old Bailey proceedings offer detailed empirical information about the distinct but overlapping locations, clientele and character of coffee-shops and coffee-houses between 1814 and 1834. The proceedings suggest that criminal activity was not exclusive to the cheaper 'coffee-shops' (and indeed that coffee-houses were

more frequently the scenes of crime); but that criminals and stolen property were often to be found in the former. Based on this sample, it appears that although Lovett was justified in arguing that coffee-shops were not overtly establishments wherein 'mechanics' learned 'sedition and disloyalty' (and there were no references to any form of political activity in the witness statements), both types of coffee-room do appear to have been scenes of petty crime. Further, the consistent use of the term 'coffee-shop' to refer to premises in less salubrious neighbourhoods (and with more humble patrons) indicates that, despite Lovett's objections, the type of cheap coffee-room to which the common reader might have access between 1814 and 1834 retained certain unrespectable associations. Cheap coffee-shops were, in sum, unpromising locations for the march of intellect men to apotheosize as spaces of popular improvement - and any attempt to rework the image of the cheap coffee-shop as a space for the intellectual and moral cultivation of the common reader thus had to confront persistent negative public perceptions.

b. Representations of cheap 'coffee-shops' in the popular periodical

In 1821 an Act of Parliament was passed to regulate both the sale of liquor and the opening hours of cheap coffee-shops, and although some magistrates reported an improvement in their character, their reputation throughout the 1820s continued to be tainted by the associations of the post-war period.[383] In particular, the coffee-shop continued to be represented in popular periodicals as a hive of criminal activity, political unrest and seditious literature. Newspapers such as the *John Bull* reacted negatively to the image of working people meeting together to read and discuss the papers, and in May 1821 one of Hook's editorials attacked the 'present system' by

[383] *HoC.Bills*, the Bill for more effectual administration of office of Justice of Peace in metropolis, 1821, **1821** (435) II. *HoC.R*, Select Committee on Laws and Regulations which Restrict Sale of Beer by Retail, 1830, **1830** (253) X. 51-7; 105-6; For the practice of disguising spirits as coffee see *HoC.R*, Select Committee on observance of Sabbath, 1831-2, **1832** (697) VII. 86-7.

which unwholesome literature was made available to common readers in 'cheap coffee-shops':

> It is not the lateness of the hours at which they are open we so much complain of, as the propagation of sedition and blasphemy, which goes on within these sinks of vice. THE TIMES, THE BLACK DWARF, THE EXAMINER and THE NEWS, are the favourite Papers with the keepers and visitors of these dens; the most hardened miscreants of every description are among the latter, and the former are chiefly persons employed by the factionists to keep up a spirit of discontent...

Immoral and cultivating 'sedition and blasphemy', the consumption of cheap periodicals and newspapers by common readers in these locations was depicted as a fundamental cause of radical unrest and popular immorality. Hook's representations were characteristically alarming, but his polemics carried older debates about the propriety, legality and influence of unregulated cheap coffee-shops into the altered political and cultural conditions of the early 1820s. *The Times*, the *Examiner* and the *News* were hardly seditious papers, and even the *Black Dwarf* toed a radical constitutionalist line. Nonetheless, Hook's assertions highlighted the reality that popular periodicals of all formats and genres - and not just 'unstamped' radical titles - were widely read by common people in coffee-shops by 1821. The perceived criminal, seditious and subversive milieu of the coffee-shop itself thus tainted the image of the common reader - irrespective of what was being read - at precisely the moment that reading was being proposed by reformers as a nostrum for moral and political regeneration.[384]

There was, however, another form of opposition to 'coffee-shop' culture emerging in the early 1820s. This account argued not that such establishments were subversive and criminal, but rather that they led common people to aspire to an unachievable level of social respectability: the cheap coffee-shop was no longer dangerous, it was

---

[384] *John Bull*, 7 May 1821.

risible.[385] The emergence of this type of representation, ironically, bore testimony to the successful re-inflection of the image of the coffee-shop by many reformers and cheap periodical producers. Emphasizing the respectability of these spaces, some commentators stressed the variety of reading matter available at such establishments, and credited them with drawing working men away from the public house.[386] In November 1824, for example, Cowie and Strange's three-penny technical weekly, the *London Mechanics' Register* (1824-6) carried an account of the rise of the cheap coffee-shop in London:

> A strange revolution in the habits of the industrious classes has been caused by these establishments. Formerly, the mechanic and labourer had no other mode of passing a leisure half hour than in a public house, where pipe begat pipe, and glass begat glass, until the brain of the votary was turned… Such is now not the case. The industrious man enters a coffee-shop, has his pint of tea or coffee and a round of toast for 5d. or 6d., reads the papers and magazines, and departs refreshed in mind and body…

According to this article, the 500 or so coffee-rooms of the metropolis serviced 15,000-20,000 customers a day, and '40 to £50,000 less are spent annually in public houses, since these coffee-shops against which so much has been foolishly said, raised their modest heads'. In spite of the alarmism of the *John Bull*, therefore, some level of respectability was being claimed for cheap coffee-shops by 1824, hinging crucially on their role in diffusing periodical literature and refreshing the 'mind and body' of the 'industrious classes'.[387]

Coffee-shop proprietors were quick to identify the commercial potential of cheap but respectable coffee-rooms. In 1824 the ex-painter and -glazier John Whittaker took out advertisements in the press for his 'Silver Lion Coffee House' on Goodge-street.

---

[385] See, for instance, Seymour's print, 'The Byron Coffee-House' (1829) discussed in the introduction, 45-7.
[386] Thomas Carter, *Memoirs of a working man* (1845), 190-1. For Carter's earlier reading experiences, see ibid, *passim* and D. Vincent, *Bread, knowledge, and freedom* (1981), 117-18.
[387] *LMR*, 27 Nov. 1824.

Aimed at supplying 'those whose time is valuable, or whose occupation allows but a short time for refreshment', his 'Mechanic's Coffee House' provided refreshment ('COFFEE AND TEA, IN CONSTANT READINESS, AND NOT ONE MINUTE IN SERVING ROLLS, TOAST, MUFFINS, EGGS') and mental improvement (with '[n]ewspapers and Books, Literary and scientific' supplied 'in great variety'). Whittaker's aim to make the 'humble Artisan' 'a better member of society' characterized the rhetoric of an increasing number of coffee-shop proprietors, but the appeal for working men themselves was as much the cheapness of these establishments as their improving mission: coffee was sold for three half pennies per half pint; tea for two-pence per half pint; two slices of bread for two-pence; a bread roll for a penny; an egg for six-pence; a dinner of chops, bread and potatoes also for six-pence; and a steak dinner for nine-pence. These were affordable prices for many labouring people, who at the very least could spend as little as three half pennies to sit in shelter and warmth to read through an otherwise inaccessible selection of serials.[388]

The successful appeal to the pocket and literary curiosity of the common reader accounted for the increasing number of coffee-rooms in the metropolis, and by April 1832 the *Mirror of Literature* estimated that there were over 3,000 in London, and that consumption of coffee had increased by a third since 1829.[389] If the argument that cheap coffee-shops were affordable sites of entertainment and improvement had been made by men like Whittaker, radical pressmen made particularly strong claims that they were effective conduits of printed knowledge. The radical journalist John Cleave, for instance, founded his own 'Hope Coffee House and Reading Room' on King-street, Snow Hill in 1829. In addition to the *Mirror of Literature* and Cowie and Strange's penny *Casket*, Cleave provided his customers with '*[t]he Westminster*

---

[388] Add. mss., 27,824, fols. 15-16, 23-4, 38-40; and 56-8. For the 'ten minute rule' for reading periodicals and newspapers, see *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal*, 1 Jul. 1837.
[389] *Mirror*, 7 Apr. 1832.

Review, morning and evening papers, The Weekly Free Press, Cobbett's Register, various Scotch, Irish, and Provincial papers, Catechism on the Corn Laws, the Associate, Co-operator, Co-operative Herald, Co-operative Miscellany, and other works on Co-operation', as well as 'Coffee 3d. per pint. [and] Good Beds.' The breadth of publications available at Cleave's coffee-shop was impressive, and demonstrates how for just three-pence the common reader could access a veritable radical library by the late 1820s.[390]

That coffee-shops were crucial to the dissemination of a range of radical and co-operative periodicals was reinforced by an appeal made by Cleave's coadjutor, Henry Hetherington, in his *Penny Papers*: '[t]he papers we particularly recommend to Coffee Houses and new Beer Shops', he announced, 'and every other place where the poorer and labouring classes of society frequent; where… they will be able to improve the condition of their minds and bodies at one and the same time.'[391] The battle to achieve respectability for the coffee-shop was not won by the early 1830s; but neither was it solely fought by coffee-shop proprietors and radical pressmen. Eleven years after the *London Mechanics' Register* had first championed the positive effects of the cheap coffee-shop on popular 'habits', Charles Knight was still making claims for the intellectual and moral benefits of such establishments in the *Penny Magazine*. Asking why 'people now take coffee instead of gin and purl' at 'coffee-shops', he suggested that the answer was

> Simply because they have been informed, and clearly understand, that health and comfort are secured by one mode, and the practice of the other is not so serviceable to the body, and that it leads to habits fatal to their character and respectability. [and that] The great body of the working-classes are now in possession of elements of enjoyment superior to those in which they were formerly wont to indulge…

---

[390] *WFP*, 8 Aug. 1829. See Edward Duncombe's scoffing dismissal of such popular 'refinements': 'coffee houses, are [now] all hotels - chop-houses, coffee-rooms and smoking shops, divans', *Paul Pry*, 11 Mar. 1826.
[391] *Penny Papers*, 6 Oct. 1830.

The transformation of the cheap coffee-shop from den of immorality and sedition into a lodestar of self-improvement was clearly exaggerated by Knight (and radicals like Cleave and Hetherington would have objected to the implication that the 'working classes' needed to be 'informed' as to what was in their best interests), but a shift towards generally positive perceptions was discernable by the early 1830s.[392]

Both positive and negative representations of the cheap coffee-room were thus sustainable: the establishment of well-conducted and respectable cheap 'coffee-houses' or '-shops' in London during the 1810s and 1820s did not negate the continued existence of drinking dens frequented by thieves, pickpockets and prostitutes into the 1830s. What was important was less the reality of this coexistence than the representation of cheap coffee-shops as reading locations and conduits of the march of intellect. If, as some cheap periodical producers claimed, these premises were indeed increasingly respectable, this reinforced the message of popular improvement. If, on the other hand, coffee-shops continued to be depicted in popular periodicals as rough establishments, the project for the intellectual and moral improvement of the common reader would be seen to have failed.

ii. Mechanics' libraries and reading rooms

Like the new generation of respectable coffee-shops, mechanics' libraries and reading rooms provided common readers with additional opportunities to borrow and access periodicals from the late 1810s onwards. These public reading spaces were likewise subject to competing representations in the popular periodical press, and ranged in form from rudimentary collections associated with schools, bookshops and other commercial premises to more formal institutions, including circulating libraries

---

[392] *Monthly Supplement of the Penny Magazine*, 31 Jan. to 28 Feb. 1835. Knight continued to champion coffee-houses into the 1840s; *Penny Magazine*, 12 Dec. 1840.

specializing in juvenile, religious or musical literature, subscription libraries, book clubs, Sunday School libraries, co-operative society libraries and mechanics' institute libraries.[393] These latter two forms were predominantly aimed at adult male readers and apprentices working in London's skilled trades (women and children were usually excluded from membership, but some libraries allowed printed material to be circulated amongst members' families), and dozens were established in the metropolis between 1819 and 1834. Some of those accessible to common readers of moderate means are summarized below (see table 5.3, p.266).[394]

The library of the London Mechanics' Institution (LMI), in particular, became a contested symbol of the march of intellect following its establishment in 1823, presenting its management with a dual challenge to its status as a site of popular improvement: doubters of the 'march' dismissed or satirized the library for its attempt to educate 'uncultivated' working men; and working men themselves objected to what was seen as elite control of their own institution. The LMI committee did attempt to balance representations of the library as a resource run by and for common readers with claims that it was a respectable institution through the sponsorship of cheap periodicals in the 1820s and 1830s - but this strategy met with only limited success. The most significant aspect of its attempt, however, was to demonstrate that even supposedly respectable reading locations faced a crisis of public representation in the context of a common readership.

---

[393] For an overview, see J. Innes, 'Libraries in context: social, cultural and intellectual background', in G. Mandelbrote and K. A. Manley (eds.), *The Cambridge history of libraries*, three vols. (2006), ii, 285-300; for the classic text on the mechanics' institutes, T. Kelly, *Early public libraries* (1966), 185-238; I. Inkster (ed), *The steam intellect societies* (1985); and more recently, P. Hoare, 'The operatives libraries of Nottingham: a radical community's own initiative', *Library History*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (2003), 173-184.

[394] These can be found in the database at http://www.r-alston.co.uk/contents.htm.

Table 5.3: Twenty libraries and reading rooms avowedly designed for common readers in London during the 1820s and 1830s

Central London	**North London**	**East-end**	**West London**
SPCK library (est. *c.*1699)	Hackney Literary and Mechanic Institution (1825)	Spitalfields Mechanics' Institution (1825-51)	Hammersmith, Kensington and Chiswick Mechanics' Institution (1825)
London Mechanical Institution library (est. Holborn, 1817 by Timothy Claxton)	Edmonton Mechanics' Institution (1835)	Rotherhithe and Bermondsey Mechanics' Institution (1825) Stepney Mechanics' Institution (1826)	Brentford Mechanics' Institution (1835-90)
LMI library (est. Bloomsbury, 1823)	Barnsbury Park Cooperative Society (Islington, 1831)	East London Mechanics' Institution (est. Poplar, 1826)	Hammersmith Literary, Scientific and Mechanics' Institution (1837-58)
SDUK library at the University College, London (1826)		Chemical and Philosophical Library (est. Tower Hamlets, c.1830)	
Holborn Co-operative Society library (est. 1827)			
Metropolitan Co-operative Society library (Westminster, 1829)			
Western Union Co-operative Society (Westminster, 1830)			
Society for Practical Knowledge (est. Brook Street, c.1830)			
Social Missionary Society Co-operative Society (est. Holborn, 1832)			

a. The library of the London Mechanics' Institution

Established in 1823, the LMI library was initially run by the schoolmaster Robert Christie and a managing committee that included 'working mechanics'. By June 1826

it boasted over 2,500 volumes and reported that 'the number of Members who avail themselves of the advantages of your excellent Library have considerably increased'. Open between ten o'clock in the morning until ten o'clock in the evening (except Sundays), the library was sourced by donations from members and supporters. By the time of its four-year address, it had expanded yet further:

> The Library consists of two branches, one for Reference and the other for Circulation, and contains 3000 volumes, including every work of reputation on science and general literature… and is regularly furnished with all the Quarterly Journals and Reviews; monthly magazines literary and scientific; as well as numerous interesting and useful weekly periodicals.[395]

Access to this large collection was affordable for the skilled working man: in 1826 the annual subscription to the LMI was one pound sterling a year (five shillings per quarter, or about five-pence a week), but by 1829 this had risen to £1.4s per annum, 6s. quarterly (with an additional 2s. 6d. entrance fee) and subscriptions of 3s. each for the 'liberty' of sending 'sons or apprentices either to the Schools or the Lectures'. By the late 1820s, therefore, a subscription of between five-pence and six-pence a week granted access to the circulating library and reading rooms: roughly the cost of two pots of beer, and less than the cost of a Sunday newspaper. Membership of the institution itself fluctuated in the mid-1820s (1,483 members in September 1825; 1,887 in December 1825; 1,522 in March 1826; and 1,772 in June 1826), for which the committee blamed economic conditions, adding hopefully in 1825 that 'many of the Members now in arrears, probably from that cause, will soon be enabled to resume their payments'. The sheer numbers of members, as well as their apparently vulnerable financial position, reinforces the committee's claims that many artisans,

---

[395] *LMR*, 10 Dec. 1826; and handbills dated 7 June 1826, add. mss., 27,824, fols. 104-14 and 129-37. The LMI was described as 'spacious and elegant… consisting of a commodious house, in which there are large apartments for the library, apparatus, reading-rooms, and the secretary and other officers', *Glasgow Mechanics' Magazine*, 14 Jan., 1826.

mechanics and operatives on modest incomes did initially become members - though such numbers were dwarfed by the size of the local population.[396]

The managing committee of the LMI bore ultimate responsibility for administering the library and reading rooms, although there was a dedicated subcommittee. Headed by George Birkbeck (founder and president of the LMI) the executive had a professional 'middling' character, with Dr Gilchrist, John Martineau and Professor Millington all serving as vice-presidents. Genuine attempts were, however, made to represent the institution as the vehicle of, and for, the common reader. An election for the managing committee on 28 February 1826, for example, resulted in two-thirds of the committee-men (eleven of fifteen members) being returned as members 'of the working classes' (including an engineer, a watchmaker, an engraver, a cabinet-maker, a printer, a coach-maker, two carvers and two carpenters). According to the LMI constitution, this was 'in order to insure [sic] to those of that class of society, for whose especial benefit the Institution was established, a preponderance in conducting its affairs…'[397] There was thus a strategic attempt to represent a democratic balance of power in the management of the LMI, although conflicting messages did emanate from the library itself: the numerous 'operative readers' overcrowding the room needed only to look up at a large portrait of Birkbeck to be reminded that self-improvement at the LMI was simultaneously independent and patronized.[398]

In terms of the range of printed matter made available to the common reader, the catalogues of the LMI library reveal that it did stock canonical works of 'scientific

---

[396] *LMR*, 4 Mar. 1826. For the use of the reading room by 'inquiring mechanics', see the *Mechanic's Chronicle*, 23 Sep. 1824. For the rules of library, see the *LMR*, 27 Nov. 1824. Lending durations ranged from one to three weeks, but only one volume could be borrowed at a time. A fine of one shilling was imposed for lending works to non-subscribers, though lending to family members living in the same household was permitted. There was also a rule banning 'any dispute or discussion whatever'.
[397] *Labourer's Friend and Handicraft's Chronicle* (hereafter *LFHC*), Dec. 1823; *MM*, 20 Dec. 1823.
[398] The proposal for commissioning a portrait of Birkbeck was made in December 1824. By 1825 it had been resolved to hang the portrait in the library; *LMR*, 11 Dec. 1824; ibid., preface to vol. ii (1825).

and general literature', including Newton's *Principia*, Adam Smith's *Wealth of nations*, Dr Johnson's *Dictionary* and Sterne's *Life and opinions of Tristram Shandy*. Biographies also featured prominently (in particular works on Milton, Cromwell, Benjamin Franklin and Napoleon); while Mignet's *History of the French Revolution* and Smollett's *Complete history of England* represented just two of the many available historical classics. Standard political and constitutional works such as Montesquieu's *The spirit of the laws* and Locke's essays on government were also stocked, but more partisan works were also freely available, including Voltaire's *Philosophical dictionary*, Volney's *Ruins of empire*, Paine's *Rights of man* and *Common sense*, Wollstonecraft's narrative of the French Revolution, Godwin's *Inquiry concerning political justice*, Cartwright's *Appeal on the English constitution*, Edmund Burke's essays and Owen's *New view of society*. Such comprehensive holdings suggest that from the outset the LMI library offered the common reader a much richer reading experience than might be inferred from its stated mission to diffuse works on science, technology and political economy.[399]

The LMI reading rooms also offered readers access to a variety of daily newspapers by 1833, including the *Courier*, the *Morning Advertiser*, the *Morning Chronicle*, the *Morning Herald*, the *Sun*, *The Times*, the *Constitutional*, the *Standard* and the *True Sun*. The fact that the LMI was closed on Sundays precluded the reading of weekly newspapers on that day, and there is no reference to any Sunday newspapers in the library catalogues. The reading rooms did, however, provide unfettered access to a large number of periodicals (see the marked items in the bibliography). Expensive annual and monthly literary periodicals (including the *Annual Register*, the *Gentleman's Magazine*, the *Monthly Magazine* and the *New*

[399] See the *LMR*, 10 Dec. 1826; add. mss., 27,824, fols. 104-14 and 129-37; and *A catalogue of books in the library of the London Mechanics' Institution* (1833). An edition from 1837 has also survived, but makes few additions. See the bibliography.

Monthly Magazine) were donated, and scientific periodicals targeting relatively sophisticated readerships, such as the *Gentleman's Mathematical Companion* and the *Philosophical Magazine*, were also available. The stocking of cheap technical weeklies aimed at artisans and mechanics was a particularly important aspect of the LMI library's mission, and the *Mechanic's Magazine*, *London Mechanics' Register* and other short-lived cheap titles (including the *Artisan, or Mechanic's Instructor*, the *Mechanics' Chronicle*, the *Mechanic's Gallery of Science and Art*, *Partington's Scientific Gazette* and the *Register of Arts and Sciences*) were all taken in.[400]

The LMI library provided access to at least five of the cheap periodicals included in the content analysis conducted in chapter three (the *Circulator*, the *Hive, or Weekly Entertaining Register*, the *Mechanic's Magazine*, the *Mirror of Literature* and the *Penny Magazine*), but its catalogues also reveal some surprisingly contentious titles. The inclusion of Cowie and Strange's four-penny weekly *Ass; or Weekly Beast of Burden*, was a particularly incongruous choice in light of its political content and caricatures of the LMI, Birkbeck, Brougham, Place and McCulloch. The *Ass*'s satirical references to Birkbeck would have been obvious to any casual reader, and its inclusion in the library therefore suggests one of two possibilities: firstly, that Cowie and Strange were able to donate such a provocative periodical as a result of their membership of the LMI and ownership of its vehicle, the *London Mechanics' Register*; or secondly, that the library committee had not noticed the unflattering caricatures of its president. Both possibilities undermine the argument that the LMI library was a tightly controlled institution that censored satirical or political material.[401]

---

[400] The library also stocked *The British essayists* (1823 edn.), which comprised a range of eighteenth-century periodicals.
[401] *Ass*, 1 and 15 Apr. 1826.

This openness to political discourse, at least in its satirical mode, was also suggested by the inclusion of Theodore Hook's *John Bull's Magazine and Literary Recorder* (1824); a short-lived monthly title derivative of the *John Bull* newspaper and characterized by a similar predilection for *ad hominem* satire. The inclusion of co-operative periodical print, in the form of the six-penny monthly *Co-operative Magazine*, was further proof that radical serials were not entirely censored in the 1820s; but perhaps most surprising was the decision to stock William Carpenter's *Political Letters* - the archetypal radical 'unstamped' periodical of the early 1830s, for the publication of which Carpenter suffered imprisonment. The existence of such overtly political periodicals in the LMI library suggests that even if politics could not be discussed, it could certainly be read.[402] Similarly - and contrary to some contemporary claims - the LMI library stocked religious literature. Indeed, Henry Hetherington donated several freethinking cheap periodicals and pamphlets to the library in the early 1820s, and, although his agenda to disseminate the principles of 'rational Christianity' was hardly subversive, it did represent a partisan religious mission of the sort supposedly eschewed by mechanics' libraries more generally.[403]

Finally, the LMI library stocked fiction and entertaining works, including a large number of novels and plays, and lighter periodicals. Robertson and Thomas Byerley's *Percy Anecdotes* (1820-3) was a light-hearted miscellany of abridged and original literary vignettes, and the *Hive* and *Mirror of Literature* were likewise calculated to amuse as much as to instruct. Cheap fiction in periodical form thus clearly found its way into the LMI library, as did Charles Knight's *Penny Magazine* and *Library of Entertaining Knowledge* (1826-35). More striking, however, was the inclusion of the *Newgate Calendar* (1824-8); an unapologetic melange of crime reports, murders and

---

[402] The library also stocked Carpenter's short-lived radical *Union Magazine* (1832).
[403] See, for instance, Robert Robinson, *The history and mystery of Good Friday* (1823), published by Hetherington.

executions that would have fallen well below prevailing standards of literary respectability. In sum, the LMI catalogues published between 1823 and 1833 reveal that common readers using its library and reading rooms had access to a wide range of book, pamphlet and periodical publications, spanning a range of literary, technical, religious and political genres. The repository was loaded in favour of scientific and literary works, but no systematic attempt was made to proscribe alternative, and often manifestly non-improving, printed matter.

b. Representations of the LMI library in the popular periodical

The LMI library was widely championed by reformers in the early 1820s as the quintessential site of popular intellectual and moral improvement. The publishers Cowie and Strange, for instance, focussed on the specific importance of reading as a 'rational recreation' in their *London Mechanics' Register*, emphasizing the apparent move of large numbers of artisans and mechanics from the public house to the LMI library. The *London Mechanics' Register* was the sponsored vehicle of the LMI, and its representations are not reliable as a gauge of more general public perceptions - but the social status of the library's members, the content of its holdings and the nature of its management did represent loci of a broader debate in the popular press about the perceived opening up of new public spaces for common readers. Issuing a paean to the practical effects of the LMI's mission to diffuse 'science and literature', the publisher Thomas Boys noted in his three-penny *Circulator* in June 1825 that:

> [P]ublic and private sentiment will be eminently benefited by the information incessantly disseminated by the various scientific establishments, the numerous reading-rooms, provided for the decent portion of the working classes, and the general and extensive circulation of cheap periodicals… blending amusement with useful information.[404]

[404] *Circulator*, 11 Jun. 1825. See also the comment on 'mechanics' libraries… filled with simple, quiet earnest men'; *Penny Magazine*, 15 Apr. 1837.

Such positive representations were strongly contested, with reactionary and satirical titles often fusing the image of the LMI library's humble patrons with comments about the seditious or inappropriate range of reading matter on offer. In February 1826, for example, the *John Bull* carried a squib on the LMI library and programme of lectures, with Hook noting mischievously that he was 'sure that the friends of rational improvement will never fear the paper shot':

> The tinkers soon shall worship *Pan* - while all the London shavers, sirs,
> Disdain the unread *Barbari*, their *quondam* friends;
> The coblers [sic] at Minerva's lap, turn *sutors* for her favours, sirs,
> And leave un'tended, in their stalls, their soles and ends,
> The milkmen publish scores of works on Blanco White and Paley,
> The tailors talk false quantities, and scribble fustian daily,
> The pastry cooks to *Tartarus* consign their ice and jellies, sirs,
> And oyster girls read *Milton's* works, or blasphemies by *Shelly*, sirs.
> Run sweepers, run, 'tis now the time for lecturing,
> Every man must be learned in these wise days.

Tinkers, barbers, cobblers, milkmen, tailors, pastry cooks, oyster girls and chimneysweeps: all were mobilized because they signified the most illiterate and degraded in London society. The image of these readers engaging Milton and Paley, coupled with ironic classical references to Minerva (the Roman goddess of handicrafts and wisdom) and Tartarus (a synonym for hell in the ancient world), served to mock the common reader's pretensions to learning - but the reference to oyster girls reading 'blasphemies by Shelly' revealed a more fundamental anxiety about the type of literature seemingly available at the LMI library.[405]

Negative and satirical portrayals of mechanics' institute libraries persisted throughout the 1820s and early 1830s. Eight years after the establishment of the LMI library, the satirist Thomas Hood (1799-1845) was still gaining mileage from grotesque caricatures of its members. One illustrated scene, 'The Library of the Mechanics' Institution' - appearing in the first number of his *Comic Scrapbook* in

---

[405] *John Bull*, quoted in *Morning Chronicle*, 12 Feb., 1826; cutting in add. mss, 27,824, fol. 98.

1834 - depicted a blackened chimneysweep and his son conversing with a librarian in front of a set of bookshelves. The bust of a stern-looking patron was shown looking down on the characters (redolent of the brooding portrait of Birkbeck actually hanging in the LMI library), whose conversation was 'reported' thus:

'Would you be please to say what book it was you meant?'
Asks the Librarian, of the *Suttee* scholar,
'Oh, any thing wot's sweeping in its hargyment -
Summut by Betty Martin - what d'ye call her?
Touching economy.
She as writes books instructive and political,
Shewing the poor they has no chance o' freedom,
Saying the times is dang'rous - *lest wise*, critical,
I'm wery glad my Missus cannot read 'em -
You ax the Son o'me!'

This stylization of the cockney labouring man and his son was redolent of scores of similar satires of the common reader, but the specific choice of the LMI library as a locus of the march of intellect revealed its especially strong association with self-improving tropes. The LMI's perceived agenda to diffuse political economy was also mocked, with the chimneysweep mangling his description of Harriet Martineau's *Illustrations of political economy* (1832) - which was, in fact, stocked by the library - and other clues given as to the minimal literacy of the sweep, his son and his 'Missus'. Like the *John Bull*'s earlier satire, such representations revealed how the LMI library provoked a mixed response of mockery and anxiety: the exposure of the chimneysweep to political economy, like the oyster girl's exposure to Shelley's poetry, jarred both normative expectations of what humble people ought to read, and political preconceptions as to which forms of knowledge might threaten the status quo if made accessible to the common reader.[406]

If the membership and holdings of the LMI library thus provoked uneasy responses from opponents, the nature of the library's management created a schism

---

[406] Thomas Hood, *The comic scrap book*, no. 1 (1834).

amongst the project's architects. The editors of the *Mechanic's Magazine*, Joseph Clinton Robertson and Thomas Hodgskin, for example, were among a number of early projectors of the LMI who seceded in the mid-1820s in opposition to the perceived lack of self-determination afforded to humble members: 'the Institution', they noted in November 1824, 'has become a Mechanics' Institution only in name.' The committee-elections of 1826 provided the LMI with an opportunity to recapture the initiative by representing the institution's management as both authentically 'of the working classes' and 'respectable'. The *London Mechanics' Register* was encouraged to diffuse this message, and Cowie and Strange published the results of the election (paying particular attention to the artisanal occupations of the new committee-men) to reinforce the perception that the institution and its library belonged to the 'mechanics' themselves. In response, Robertson was forced to concede that the new committee did indeed comprise men who were genuinely 'working mechanics', although he did not publish their names or occupations.[407]

The differing representations of the election of 1826 reflected both the specific issues surrounding the management of the LMI library and broader contestations about the nature of the mechanics' institute movement. The credibility of the LMI library as a public space for the common reader was at stake; but neither its portrayal as a democratic institution administered by working mechanics, nor the suggestion that it was controlled by a wealthy elite, quite reflected reality. Indeed, the traditional story of a widespread desertion of the LMI during the later 1820s and early 1830s has been exaggerated, and common readers continued to use the LMI library well into the 1840s.[408] The LMI repository did, however, become increasingly insufficient for those working men who wanted to read political literature of a particularly partisan

---

[407] *LMR*, 10 Dec. 1826; *MM*, preface to vol. i, 28 Nov. 1824.
[408] See the continued aim to provide access to 'mechanics' in the *Rules and orders of the London Mechanics' Institution* (1841).

nature, particularly during the charged political climate of the early 1830s. Combined with its closure on Sundays, lingering doubts about elite patronage and the growth of other public reading spaces (sponsored by the Working Men's Association, the Metropolitan Political Union and the British Association for Promoting Co-operative Knowledge) this did precipitate a turn away from the LMI library. By establishing the precedent of a library designed solely for working men and apprentices, the LMI was to a certain extent a victim of its own success: it had demonstrated the existence of a demand and stimulated the self-improvement of many common readers (including men like Henry Hetherington); but, having availed themselves of such opportunities, many of these readers reinvented the mechanics' reading room as a conduit of radical political education. By the late 1830s, therefore, the LMI library - arguably the most comprehensive and cheapest literary repository that had been made available to London's common readers - was struggling to attract its target membership.[409]

iii. Summary conclusions: coffee shops and mechanics' libraries

Representations of cheap coffee-shops and mechanics' libraries were contested in popular periodicals between 1819 and 1834, intersecting with broader debates about the march of intellect from the mid-1820s onwards. For those reformers and coffee-room proprietors championing the rise of the 'coffee-shop', the challenge was to transform its public image as an immoral and seditious den by representing it as a space in which the common reader could be refreshed in both body and mind. Later in the decade, opposition morphed into satires of cheap coffee-shops' exaggerated social

---

[409] In June 1836 Hetherington and Lovett made the establishment of 'a library of reference and useful information' and a circulating library a priority for the WMA, add. mss., 27,819, fol. 35. For the Political Unions, see Joseph Hume's observation that 'Reading-rooms should be established by every Union, and suitable pamphlets and newspapers ought to be generally read by members'; reprinted in the *Political Anecdotist*, 9 Jul. 1831. See the resolution of the BAPCK in January 1830 calling for 'public libraries and reading rooms, where the poor shall be entitled to the same privileges and advantages, as the richer portion of society now enjoy', *Report of the proceedings at the... quarterly meeting* (1830), 4-5; see also the attempt to establish a 'Metropolitan Co-operative Book Society', *British Co-operator*, Apr. 1830.

respectability, and although these locations retained certain rough associations, this altered oppositional strategy connoted an important shift in public perceptions: by the early 1830s, representations of coffee-shops were as likely to mock the pretensions of the common reader to learning as they were to depict them as seedbeds of moral and political subversion. Such satires could (and did) continue to serve politically partisan ends - but representations of the humble coffee-shop customer were increasingly forced to respond to reformers' claims that the common reader was an improved intellectual and moral agent, and that the coffee-shop was a cause of this improvement.

For the managers of the LMI library, there was initially a similar requirement to overturn reactionary representations. Again, by the later 1820s such opposition was increasingly articulated through satire, with particular emphasis being placed on the folly of the LMI's attempt to cultivate 'rough' working men and apprentices. Public perceptions of the LMI, however, were also affected by the playing out of internecine squabbles in the pages of several cheap titles. The issue here was not the library's pretensions to respectability, but rather its authenticity as a space managed by and for readers 'of the working classes'. The attempts to win public acceptance and legitimacy for cheap coffee-shops and mechanics' libraries as improving spaces involved complex and sustained rhetorical negotiations in the popular periodical press. Thus, although they met with only limited success, both campaigns reveal how specific debates about locations of common readership evoked wider anxieties about the nature of popular intellectual and moral agency.

IV

Conclusions: representations of reading in the popular periodical

Between 1819 and 1834 the common reader was invoked in the popular periodical as both the embodiment and chimera of the march of intellect. This chapter has examined how and why portrayals of the practice of reading were thus contested, attempting to recapture its multilayered representational history. The popular periodical presented readers with a distorted reflection of the social world in which it was embedded, and there was a tension between its specific engagement with reading practices as reality and as representation. Examining the distance between reality and representation, however, proves instructive, and this chapter has compared both internal and external sources to identify in what numbers certain periodicals were being read, by whom and where.

In terms of circulation, a mixed pattern of small and large, decreasing and increasing, sales characterized both the cheap periodical and Sunday newspaper markets. Most publishers and editors - particularly those diffusing strong religious or political messages - nonetheless made claims for the success of their titles in an attempt to legitimize their existence and mission. In this context, representations of circulation ought to be treated as a mix of reality and editorial strategy. Differing responses to the circulation of varying genres, moreover - in particular the generally positive reaction to the sale of cheap periodicals and negative responses to increases in newspaper and 'unstamped' periodical sales - demonstrated that the type of literature diffused, quite as much as the scale of its diffusion, was an essential consideration in discussions about the impact of periodical print on popular intellect and morals. A large circulation - real or imagined - was nonetheless thus a crucial

component of representations of the popular periodical as both a vernacular form and as a guardian of the interests of the common reader.

In terms of varieties of common reader, a mix of specific and inclusive readerships was targeted by popular periodical producers. Thus, within the notion of the 'common reader', discrete juvenile, female and skilled and unskilled male periodical readerships were identified and cultivated from the early 1820s onwards. In spite of this market segmentation, inclusive 'popular' titles proved to be more successful, both commercially and in terms of negotiating political and cultural barriers. The success of some inclusive titles was perhaps unsurprising, but the rhetorical negotiations required to rework the concept of a 'popular' readership could be complex, and many periodical producers failed to achieve a balance between broadening the social appeal of their titles and retaining the loyalty of specific readerships. Sporting newspapers and cheap useful knowledge periodicals proved better able to strike this balance than partisan religious or political titles.

Finally, competing representations of the cheap coffee-shop and the mechanics' library as reading spaces provide an index of wider responses to the relationship between common readership and the march of intellect. Four general responses emerge: a celebratory account (usually radical or reformist) of the move away from the degrading milieu of the public house to either the coffee-shop or the mechanics' library; a persistent depiction of the cheap coffee-shop as a den of immorality and sedition (particularly in satirical and 'Tory' organs); a dismissal of the mechanics' library as insufficiently stocked in religious and political material (also usually from radical pressmen); and a commercial response, engaging claims that coffee-shops provided both enlightenment and entertainment. The rhetorical construction of both locations as 'respectable' reading spaces was an important means by which the

common reader could be shown in a positive light: if popular reading locations were deemed immoral or seditious, the public image of the common reader would be tainted, irrespective of what was being read. In the drive for such respectability, however, a crisis of legitimacy presented itself, with mechanics' libraries in particular struggling to maintain their self-representation as simultaneously 'of the working classes' and 'respectable'. Representations of metropolitan common readerships were thus not unproblematic indices of improved or degraded popular intellect and morals *per se*, but rather competing portrayals in which the issues of circulation, readership and location were contested.

Reading was a deeply embedded cultural activity, and self-improvement more generally was therefore not a disassociated set of alternative cultural practices thrust on an unwilling common readership - a respectable antidote to rough practice - but an important thread in the warp and weft of lower-middling and labouring life in London. This coexistence of the 'rough' and 'respectable' in popular culture is visible through the lens of the popular press in almost every unit of analysis: in the groups of artisan readers of trades' newspapers who demanded a mixed content that simultaneously conformed to, and frustrated, intellectual and moral improvement; in the individual male and female readers who consumed cheap self-improving journals at home on Saturdays and 'gossiping' weekly newspapers at the public house on Sundays; and in the very structure of the popular periodical itself, in which amusing and improving textual and visual messages sat side-by-side with little apparent contradiction. Control over representations of reading was therefore crucial, with the popular periodical's intense and repeated subjectification of the common reader as an intellectual and moral agent functioning as an acid test of the reality of the march of intellect itself.

CHAPTER FIVE

Ingenious mechanics and humble poets: common writers in the popular periodical during the 1820s and 1830s

Introduction

On 1 July 1826 an article entitled 'The March of Knowledge' appeared in the *Newgate Monthly Magazine* (1824-6); a short-lived shilling periodical published in London by the republican and freethinker Richard Carlile and comprising letters and articles from several of his imprisoned coadjutors. The author of this article was Thomas Riley Perry, an obscure pressman who had been sentenced to three years in Newgate in July 1824 for selling Carlile's 1823 edition of Elihu Palmer's deist treatise, *Principles of nature* (1801). Perry was a competent writer, but his essay drew heavily on Carlile's zetetic vision of popular intellectual improvement (itself derivative of the materialist writings of Condorcet and Paine).[410] Having run through an extended list of eminent natural philosophers and poets, he described how intellectual progress was continuing into the mid-1820s amongst 'those useful and most important members of the community, the Artizans and mechanics'. Perry's argument that a 'march of knowledge' amongst common readers was both a cause and consequence of a rejuvenated plebeian rationalism was unsustainable in a decade when freethinking journalists were struggling to attract the large readerships they often claimed. But his invocation of 'march' rhetoric, apotheosis of intellect (and intellectuals) and focus on the benefits of diffusing scientific and literary knowledge was characteristic of many public debates about the intellectual world of the common people during the 1820s:

---

[410] The *OED* defines 'zetetic' as 'proceeding by inquiry or investigation', placing it in the tradition of the ancient Greek 'sceptic' philosophical school. For Carlile's use of the term, and its practical bases, see J. H. Wiener, *Radicalism* (1983), 114-24.

> The importance of a general knowledge of the sciences… has been so clearly demonstrated by every writer at all acquainted with the subject, that it would be superfluous at this time of day to advance any thing [sic] further in support of its importance or necessity. The delights and advantages resulting from literary acquisitions are universally acknowledged. There are few so ignorant as to be unable to extol them, and few so uncultivated as not to wish for their enjoyment. They are the general topics of discourse: the general subjects of declamation.[411]

Perry, like many of Carlile's shopmen, was not a writer by trade, and the influence of his mentor on his thinking is clearly visible.[412] Aspects of Perry's own mental outlook can nonetheless be gleaned from the *Newgate Magazine*, and his argument raises a number of questions about the role of the popular press in bringing the literary productions of 'common writers' (men, women and children from the lower-middling and labouring classes) into the public sphere.[413] Did a general engagement with this image of the 'common writer' find a specific expression in periodical print? To what extent did popular periodicals provide a means through which common writers could articulate a sense of their own intellectual agency? When we do encounter common writers, what was the content of the 'scientific' and 'literary' knowledge to which they were laying claim? And what are the implications of this for the portrayal of the march of intellect as a narrative of the increasing intellectual agency of the English common people?[414]

This chapter aims to recover some of the lost voices of London's 'common writers' by examining a selection of their contributions to popular periodicals between 1819 and 1834. Section I focuses on letters or articles appearing in cheap technical weeklies and engaging 'science' as technology (inventions, discoveries and new

---

[411] *Newgate Monthly Magazine* (hereafter *NMM*), 1 Jul. 1826. The other contributors were Richard Hassell, William Campion, Thomas Jeffries, John Clark, William Haley and John Christopher, all of whom were inmates of Chapel Yard, Newgate prison; *OBP*, 15 Jul. 1824, Thomas Riley Perry (t18240715-151).

[412] See Richard Carlile, *An address to men of science* (1821); 11; 21-2.

[413] In the same article, Perry observed that '[i]t is delightful to an enquiring mind to read the historical gradation of knowledge, to trace the steps, to follow the march of letters…'; *NMM*, 1 Jul. 1826.

[414] The concept of the 'common writer' is my own - there appears to have been no systematic attempt to assess his or her contributions to the popular periodical press in this period.

applications). These contributions came primarily from a small number of skilled working men - though the establishment of cheap titles such as the *Mechanic's Magazine* had widened opportunities for 'ingenious mechanics' to participate in public scientific discourse, if only up to a point. Section II draws on a wider selection of popular periodicals (covering various price ranges and genres) to examine the writings of a number of 'humble poets'. Such 'humble poets', it suggests, were relatively few in number and heavily stylized in their editorial and self-presentation. The myth of this 'native genius' was attractive to middling and elite observers of popular culture; but the popular press provided such common writers with only a limited opportunity for poetic expression. Some poets external to this emerging canon of 'uneducated poets' did succeed in publishing their political, 'Parnassian' and 'commonplace' verses, but periodical editors usually favoured anonymous or named contributions from a small number of established worker poets. This neglected scientific and literary output provides the historian with a sense of how popular expressions of intellectual agency - authentic though many were - were mediated by the periodical press, with editors strategically deploying representations of the 'ingenious mechanic' or 'humble poet' for ideological or commercial reasons. This chapter therefore argues that the breakthrough of the popular periodical press between 1819 and 1834 provided common writers with a genuine, but contingent, means of articulating their own intellectual agency: if the march of intellect was an expression of new forms and levels of 'popular articulacy', such a trope must be treated as a complex fusion of the real and the imagined.[415]

---

[415] For a broad definition of 'popular articulacy', see the comment that its roots were to be found 'in… efforts to achieve social and cultural status as well as political recognition'; J. Money, 'Taverns, coffee houses and clubs', *Historical Journal*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (1971), 18. For a review of attempts to rethink a 'social history of politics and government', and a comprehensive if now somewhat dated bibliography for related studies, see J. Innes, 'Representative histories: recent studies of popular politics and political

I

Ingenious mechanics and technology in the cheap technical periodical, 1821-1834

Three basic assumptions have informed recent writing about the status of science in the nineteenth-century periodical, all of which have helped to deepen our understanding of 'popular science' more broadly. Firstly, that uncritical repetition of a rhetoric of 'popularization' and 'diffusion' has reduced the common reader to a passive receiver - rather than an active maker - of scientific meaning. Secondly, that as well as ideological conviction, historians ought to recognize the commercial motives behind the production of cheap scientific print. And thirdly, that certain popular periodicals represented open-ended loci of discursive negotiation, in which common readers could publicly articulate their own intellectual agency.[416]

This section will test these assumptions in the context of the symbolic and instrumental role of so-called 'ingenious mechanics' in a number of cheap technical periodicals published between 1821 and 1834.[417] It argues, firstly, that the room for manoeuvre afforded to 'ingenious mechanics' as correspondents was restricted by the technological focus of cheap technical weeklies: detailed insights into how the common writer responded to the separate issues of abstract scientific theory or of practical applications of medicine are hard to obtain because editors were concerned to stress the importance of applied, technical useful knowledge. Secondly, it argues that although commercial imperatives were indeed essential to the rhetoric behind, and targeting of, the 'ingenious mechanic', some editors and publishers did appear

---

culture in eighteenth and early nineteenth-century England', *Journal of Historical Sociology*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (1991), 182-211.

[416] The literature is capacious, but see R. Cooter and S. Pumfrey, 'Separate spheres and public places', *History of Science*, Vol. 32 (1994), 237-267; J. R. Topham, 'The *Mirror of Literature*', in G. Cantor *et al* (eds.), *Science in the nineteenth-century periodical* (2004), 37-66; and J. Mussell, '"This is ours and for us"', in D. Clifford (ed.), *Repositioning Victorian sciences* (2006), 107-17. For 'useful knowledge', see J. Mokyr, *The gifts of Athena* (2002), 8-77.

[417] For the term 'ingenious mechanics', see *MM*, 30 Jul. 1825.

genuinely to believe that the acquisition of scientific knowledge was a prerequisite of 'popular enlightenment'. The celebration of the 'inventive genius' of the skilled working man, although overblown, was rooted in a conviction that artisans and mechanics had a central role to play in scientific progress, and even national prosperity. And thirdly, it argues that although cheap technical periodicals were sites of discursive negotiation between correspondents and editors, this was an uneven dialogue, in which editors adjudicated, curtailed or concluded discussion. Furthermore, only about one-fifth of correspondents to cheap technical titles were what might be termed 'working mechanics'. The implications for an understanding of the march of intellect are that although the new generation of cheap technical titles did undoubtedly represent a means by which 'ingenious mechanics' could assert a sense of personal intellectual agency through participation in public scientific discourse, such claims were heavily circumscribed by the format and content of these periodicals.

i. 'Scientific knowledge' and the march of intellect

Depictions of the engagement of the common people with scientific knowledge during the 1820s and 1830s were the product of both long- and short-term transitions in the role of science in English public discourse. Between 1760 and 1830 a metamorphosis in the nomenclature of studying the natural world itself, from 'natural philosophy' to 'science', reflected fundamental changes in the practice and status of science, characterized by subject diversification and the perceived undermining of an older 'Newtonian' model that had intellectually underpinned church and state.[418] William Thomas Moncrieff's comic poem, *The march of intellect* (1830), provides a useful indication of how such debates were being played out by the 1830s:

In the *domestic offices*
(For kitchen's vulgar now)

[418] See the introduction, 25-30.

The march of mind steps by degrees,
And reaches *all below*.
The cook skins now in science' dream, [sic]
Alive to all that passes;
She her potatoes boils by steam,
And lights her fire by gasses.

The scientific 'march of mind', Moncrieff suggests, had percolated down 'below' to kitchen staff, both architecturally and socially. The symbolic technological powers of steam and gas are also mobilized in the poem, performing the mundane task of boiling potatoes; and the image of a scientifically aspirant female domestic servant as the unlikely conduit of the march of intellect unites the themes of 'popular enlightenment', social status and scientific experimentation. The juxtaposition of social standing and the acquisition of scientific knowledge was thus a powerful satirical tool in the context of the 'march' trope.[419]

If the march of intellect was widely contested as a narrative of popular intellectual progress and cultural participation during the 1820s and 1830s, its champions nonetheless continued to celebrate what they saw as the unlimited potential for self-improvement through the acquisition of scientific knowledge. Knowledge diffusers in the cheap periodical market zealously disseminated information on nature, technology and new discoveries, with aims varying from the distraction of the common reader from oppositional political and religious print (as in the case of the SDUK's *Penny Magazine* and the SPCK's *Saturday Magazine*) to the enlightenment of 'the people' in order to challenge the corruption and superstition of Church and state (as in Carlile's *Republican*). Science, broadly conceived, was a vehicle for competing meaning.

Although the level of popular demand ought not to be overstated, the range of

---

[419] William Thomas Moncrieff, *The march of intellect* (1830); see also Thomas Love Peacock, *Crotchet castle* (1831), chap. 2; and C. Steedman, 'Poetical maids', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. 39, No. 1 (2005), 1-27. For the term 'popular science', see the reference to the Glasgow mechanics' institute classroom and library 'as an encouragement to the propagation of popular science', *LMR*, 15 Jan. 1825. See also Charles Knight's claims that his organ engaged 'all works belonging to what may be called popular science and literature', *Penny Magazine*, 31 Mar. 1832.

scientific disciplines embraced by cheap technical periodicals from the early 1820s onwards was increasingly diverse. An attempt to map this complex field was made by the SDUK in March 1827, with a handbill announcing its intention to publish tracts on 'NATURAL PHILOSOPHY', comprising:

Elementary Astronomy	Pneumatics
Mechanical Powers	Optics
Practical Mechanics	Electricity
Mechanical Anatomy	Magnetism
Hydrostatics	Dialling
Hydraulics	Millwork[420]

It is in this intellectual context - one framed both by a long-term debate about the meaning and role of science in society and by a perceived shorter-term increase in popular desire for scientific knowledge - that the establishment of cheap technical periodicals and their solicitation of contributions from 'ingenious mechanics' ought to be set. This section will focus on the technological category of scientific knowledge contained in the cheap periodical press (inventions, discoveries and new applications). The other categories of science (natural philosophy, chemistry and natural history) and medicine (cures, salves and remedies) were an increasingly important form of periodical content in this period; but it was overwhelmingly in the context of technology that common writers corresponded with periodical editors. This may have resulted from the lower threshold of entry into discussions about applied technology for artisans working in skilled trades. It was this image of common people harnessing new technologies such as steam power that most characterized representations of a popular 'march of science' in the period.

ii. Cheap technical periodicals and 'ingenious mechanics'

The term 'common writer' - like that of the 'common reader' - is conceptually and methodologically problematic; but in social and economic terms, he or she came from

---

[420] Add. mss., 27,824, fols. 115-118.

the lower-middling or labouring classes. A specific type of common writer - the 'ingenious mechanic' - is easier to locate, and was systematically targeted by cheap technical periodicals from the early 1820s onwards. Costing between a penny and three-pence, these sixteen-page, thirty-two column weekly octavos were usually profusely illustrated with woodcuts of natural phenomena and inventions. Their format (and often content) was thus a departure from earlier and contemporary expensive technical works; but it was in their cheapness, target audience and enlightening agenda that they were especially novel. They grew out of a particular set of circumstances in the early 1820s, characterized by the foundation of the LMI, the proliferation of cheap periodical literature and the perceived opening up of a market for cheap scientific knowledge. The years between 1823 and 1825, in particular, saw a boom in the production of short-lived three-penny technical periodicals (with over twenty established by 1829), most with an intended readership of metropolitan artisans and apprentices. These included: the *Mechanic's Weekly Journal* (1823-4); the *Medical Adviser* (1823-5); the *Register of Arts and Sciences* (1823-7); the *Artisan; or Mechanic's Instructor* (1824-5); the *Mechanic's Chronicle* (1824); the *Chemist* (1824-5); and the *London Mechanics' Register* (1824-6). These were, according to some historians of science, conduits of a distinctly artisan 'low scientific culture'.[421]

By far the most successful of these titles in terms of circulation and longevity - and complicating the image of an autonomous artisan scientific culture - was the *Mechanic's Magazine* (1823-58). This was the quintessential cheap technical weekly, founded by the patent agent and radical journalist Joseph Clinton Robertson and the political economist Thomas Hodgskin in August 1823, and published by John Knight and Henry Lacey on Paternoster Row. In 1824 it boasted a weekly (Saturday)

[421] S. Sheets-Pyenson, 'Popular science periodicals', *Annals of Science*, Vol. 42 (1985), 549-72. For the phrase 'scientific artisans' see *NMM*, 1 Sep. 1825. See chapter one for the production of technical titles between 1815 and 1834; 127-30.

circulation of 16,000, and beneath the banner mottos 'knowledge is power' and 'ours and for us' targeted a readership of what it termed 'intelligent' or 'ingenious Mechanics'. The *Mechanic's Magazine* offered its readers scientific material with a bias towards practical discoveries in chemistry, mineralogy and engineering, and generally eschewed theoretical discussion. Its earlier numbers included sections on 'domestic economy' and 'domestic medicine', but these were gradually phased out by 1825.[422]

The insertion of communications from artisans and mechanics cultivated a sense of dialogue with its readers (although the editors exercised their right to adjudicate, curtail or conclude long-running discussions), and articles comprising 'that lighter matter, which those who toil… most need' were also included - usually stories, poetry and biographical narratives of inventors who had risen from humble beginnings to secure positions in the scientific pantheon. The standard-bearers of this autodidact tradition were James Watt (an instrument maker who pioneered steam locomotion), Richard Arkwright (1732-92) (a barber who mechanized cotton spinning) and William Herschel (1738-1822) (a pipe boy who became a leading astrologer).[423] Contributing to this mythologizing tendency, the publishers Knight and Lacey named their printing operation 'The James Watt press', and Robertson repeatedly celebrated the ingenuity of 'the British artisan… including all who are manually employed in our different trades and manufactures'. There is evidence that the *Mechanic's Magazine* was indeed purchased and read by the 'skilful artisan or mechanic', but it also attracted readers from other social and occupational groups: Robertson acknowledged

---

[422] See my entry in *DNCJ*. Despite Robertson's radical credentials, the *Mechanic's Magazine* has been dismissed as the *de facto* organ of the London Mechanics' Institute and an exercise in 'middle-class' pedagogy. See the otherwise excellent R. Harrison *et al* (eds.), *The Warwick guide* (1977), 307.

[423] '[W]ithout labour, without perseverance, without science, Sir R. Arkwright would have remained Dick Arkwright, the barber', the *Mirror* noted, 2 Jul. 1825. For a wood-cut image of Watt, see the introduction, 8.

in 1823, for instance, that he was struggling to satisfy his 'numerous circles of readers, as various in their tastes as pursuits...'[424] A publisher's handbill printed on 10 May 1827 - advertising the periodical's content and listing its correspondents up until that point - presented the mission thus:

> The 'Mechanics' Magazine' it was, which first proposed to teach science to mechanics, and invited mechanics to lend their aid to men of science... The number of scientific readers and writers may be safely said to have been quadrupled solely by the means of this Work... and of more than two thousand original communications which enrich its columns, the greater portion are from practical men, who never put pen to paper, for the purpose of benefiting science by their observations, till they were stimulated to do so by our invitations, and found our pages a ready repository for their contributions.

The solicitation of 'practical men, who never put pen to paper' was indeed unusual in 1823, and the handbill contains a list of 219 correspondents detailing the name, title, address and occupation of each - representing about 10% of the total contributions up until 1827 (see table 6.1, p.291). Along with fourteen presidents, founders and secretaries of mechanics' institutions, nine academics, five master manufacturers and one baronet, the *Mechanic's Magazine* did publish correspondence from a significant number of men and apprentices working in handicraft and industrial trades (textiles, wood, metal and other materials): forty-two (19%) were such 'practical men', who by the definitions of the times were described as either 'artisans' or 'mechanics'. External to the trades, the largest single occupational group was teachers and schoolmasters (eleven correspondents - about 5% of the total).[425]

---

[424] *MM*, preface to vol. i (1823).

[425] This table is based on information in the handbill of 10 May 1827 in add. mss., 27,824, fols. 119-120, and uses the same terminology. An asterisk connotes an occupation in the skilled London trades.

Table 6.1: Correspondents to the Mechanic's Magazine, *1823-7*

Occupation/self-description	**No.**	**Occupation/self-description**	**No.**
Academic (Professor/ Doctor/Master of Arts)/FRS/lecturer	9	Land surveyor/surveyor	3
Architect	2	Doctor/surgeon/FRCS/MRCS	6
Author/writer/editor	3	Machine-maker/millwright	3*
Bart./Knight	2	Manufacturer (silk/cotton/steam-engine)	5
Basket-maker	1*	Merchant	1
Builder	1	Mine agent	1
Cabinet-maker	1*	Modeller	1
Calculator of weights and measures	1	'Mr'	70
Carpenter/joiner	4*	Musical instrument maker	1*
Chemical manufacturer	1	Optician	1
Chemist	1	Painter/painter and decorator	2*
Chronometer maker/watchmaker/clockmaker	9*	Pianoforte maker	1*
Civil engineer/engineer	9	Plumber	1*
Clergyman	2	Insurance salesman	1
Coach-smith/coach-maker	4*	Ship builder (master)	2
Collier	1*	Silk manufacturer (master)/'Silk throwster'/mill worker (journeyman)	1/1*
Cotton spinner	1	Silversmith/smith (unspecified)	2*
Engraver/printer	2*	Solicitor	1
'Esquire'	10	Teacher/schoolmaster	11
Military (Royal Navy, Army)	9	Turner	1*
Founder, president or secretary of mechanics' institution	14	Upholsterer	1*
Glazier	1*	Well-borer	2*
Gunsmith	2*	N/a	1
Inventor/patentee	2		
Ironfounder (master)/ironmonger (journeyman)	5/2*	**Total**	**219**

If the 'incognito' contributions from the larger sample of 'more than two thousand original communications' were to be included, it is probable that the proportion of lower-middling and labouring correspondents would be higher. Moreover, the level of personal literacy required to correspond with Robertson was higher than that needed to read the magazine, and embarrassment, lack of time, energy or resources and even suspicion of the periodical's perceived elite associations would have deterred many common readers from contributing. Thus, even if Robertson's claim that the 'greater portion' of correspondence came from humble 'practical men' was rhetoric rather

than reality, there is evidence that a nucleus of highly literate skilled working men did read and contribute to his periodical.[426]

iii. Correspondence: practices, techniques and solutions

In addition to these aggregate measurements, certain individual contributors can be traced through the pages of cheap technical periodicals. On Tuesday 11 November 1823, for instance, a public meeting was convened at the Crown and Anchor tavern on the Strand to discuss the formation of the LMI. Rising before an audience of over two thousand people, the Southwark whitesmith, John Johnson, read out a prepared statement that began thus:

> Brother Mechanics; - Permit an unlettered son of Vulcan, just emerging from the smoke of a forge, to address you, fully impressed with the great benefits that must be delivered by all of us from instruction, and more especially to our children; for knowledge is power.

Johnson's speech went on to lament a 'criminal indifference' to popular intellectual improvement endemic to all levels of English society, outlining how the absence of 'rational recreation' for the metropolitan common people had resulted in drunkenness, familial breakdown and intra-trade jealousy. Johnson's speech, reported in full by the *Mechanic's Magazine*, fused classical references (identifying himself as a 'son of Vulcan'), Biblical maxims (encouraging mechanics not to '"light their candle, and put it under a bushel"'), scientific imagery (describing the phenomenon of the Northern Lights) and poetic influences (quoting verses derivative of Pope's *Essay on man* [1730-2]). Little is known about Johnson's life before his speech in 1823 (though he was a member of the Benevolent Society of Smiths, established in 1816); but thereafter he became a committee-member of the LMI and a regular correspondent to the *Mechanic's Magazine*. Between 1823 and 1827 he wrote at least six articles for

---

[426] See Place's claim that it 'has been the cause of much time being spent on ingenious speculations, and manual dexterity, and has prevented a large portion of the time thus employed being consumed in frivolous pursuits or wasted in idleness and debauchery', add. mss., 27,823, fol. 291.

the periodical, ranging from a detailed 'Plan to erect an iron tunnel under the Thames' to a more reflective article on 'The cause of the independence of London journeymen'. Such contributions, however minor, throw light on a largely forgotten popular scientific discourse which can be partly recovered by a re-reading of cheap technical periodicals.[427]

In terms of content, the correspondence of 'ingenious mechanics' primarily comprised solutions to problems faced by labourers, working tradesmen and engineers. The sixpenny monthly *Labourer's Friend and Handicraft's Chronicle* (1821-4), for example, embodied not only a belief that 'the labourer should be fairly requited for his toil', but claimed (over a decade before the establishment of the SDUK's *Penny Magazine*) that it would serve as 'a medium for conveying useful knowledge to the industrious classes'. The periodical had a patrician tone - it was, in fact, patronized by the middling 'Society for the Encouragement of Industry and Reduction of Poor Rates' - but in addition to collating information on the condition of the people and publicizing new modes of husbandry, it did provide a platform for humble correspondents. One persistent and articulate contributor was John Denson of Waterbeach, Cambridgeshire, who described himself as a 'labouring gardener'. Denson's articles and letters included an attack on 'great farmers' for not employing the requisite number of 'hands', a short autobiography of his own life as a labourer in London and Brixton and a plan for allowing labourers to cultivate their own land and advising them on how to achieve the highest yield from his system of 'spade culture'.[428]

Denson's ruminations on agricultural labour practices were not particularly technical, though they did make some claim to scientific methods. Most importantly,

---

[427] *MM*, 15 Nov. 1823. For Johnson's other contributions see below.
[428] *LFHC*, Feb. 1822; Jan., Feb., Mar., 1821.

they demonstrate that the *Labourer's Friend* preceded better known titles like the *Mechanic's Magazine* in soliciting the correspondence of common writers - and in an agricultural, not industrial, context. It was, however, from the artisan trades of the metropolis that the 'ingenious mechanics' celebrated by the cheap technical press emerged in their greatest numbers. On 7 February 1824, for instance, the Lambeth turner, Charles Williamson, was granted an illustrated front-page article in the *Mechanic's Magazine* for his 'Improvement on the common lathe'. Williamson noted that '[t]he employment of turning with the foot-lathe is very laborious', and that this observation was born of 'many years experience'. His solution was to add an additional pulley system and adjustable weights to the existing common lathe, reducing friction, rendering the catgut string adjustable in different atmospheric conditions and allowing the lathe to work at different speeds. His design, he concluded, would lighten the labour of the working turner.[429]

The whitesmith John Johnson was also granted substantial space (and the luxury of three woodcut engravings) in Robertson's magazine in May 1824 in an article outlining his design for a 'Standing shoe-making machine'. Johnson was by trade a metalworker, but he claimed that he was responding to '[t]he injurious effect which the sedentary occupations of shoemakers have upon their health', and that it was 'rather surprising… that no pains have been taken to introduce methods of working by which the necessity of sitting might be superseded'. His solution was to combine two previous designs by replacing a foot-treadle with a hand-operated iron pivot system, enabling the shoemaker to stand whilst working. Johnson's willingness to experiment with solutions for improving working practices outside his own trade was partly a result of periodicals like the *Mechanic's Magazine* publicizing and encouraging

---

[429] *MM*, 7 Feb. 1824.

inventiveness amongst mechanics, and in 1824 he was employed by Robertson as an independent judge for a long-running 'mechanical puzzle'. The relish with which Johnson tested several correspondents' solutions was palpable: one 'appearing to me and my fellow workmen impossible', Johnson found to be a viable solution, concluding that 'I would say in future… to the sceptic, only believe - all things are possible.' This sense of the possible was a recurring theme in the cheap technical periodicals of the early 1820s, which repeatedly championed the ingenuity and practical skill of the working mechanic.[430]

Johnson thus gained some status in the 1820s as a manager of the LMI, a skilled smith and an inventor; but some working men from highly skilled trades secured much wider fame. The Soho watch- and clockmaker, William Wynn, for instance, was involved in a lengthy defence of his solution for enabling church and turret clocks to keep the correct time; a system without a counter-spring that won him funding from the Society of Arts. A testament to the perceived usefulness of Wynn's invention was its inclusion in the two-penny *Mirror of Literature*, which was predominantly non-technical in focus.[431] Wynn's invention had large-scale applications, and ambitious engineering solutions were submitted to cheap technical periodicals by many 'ingenious mechanics'. Few, however, were responsible for as many or more diverse inventions than the Scottish journeyman carpenter and joiner, Dixon Vallance. Vallance was described by Robertson in June 1832 as 'our old and ingenious correspondent', with his contributions to the *Mechanic's Magazine* stretching back nearly nine years: in 1824 he had outlined a new cross-cutting saw; in 1825 a new

---

[430] *MM*, 1 May 1824.
[431] Ibid., 3 Jul. 1824; 18 Feb. 1826; 30 Dec. 1826; 31 Mar. 1827; 7 Apr. 1827; *Mirror*, 17 Feb. 1827.

application for lever power; in 1828 a screw-press for making moulds and a new boring machine; and in 1829 a set of pendulum bellows.[432]

Vallance's most ingenious project, however, was what he termed his 'boat with wings' (see figure 6.1, p.299). Granted an illustrated front page of the *Mechanic's Magazine* on 12 March 1825, Vallance's boat sported crank-operated 'wings' (made up of fourteen wooden or sheet-metal paddles, two-feet in length) which he claimed were more efficient (because they caused less friction) and cheaper than the existing paddle-wheel design. Having built a working prototype, Vallance clearly had ambitions to apply steam power to his design, indicated by the short rhyme he composed for the occasion: 'With wings so fitted to each side, / Through the briny waves I'll glide; / Impell'd by steam's all-conquering power, / I'll run at eighteen knots per hour.' Such confidence in scientific progress through the application of steam power was a recurring theme in mechanics' correspondence; but working men like Vallance saw themselves not just as capable of understanding the technologies passed down to them by elite 'men of science', but as peculiarly well qualified to convert abstract theory into useful practice. Through the medium of the *Mechanic's Magazine* and its derivatives, skilled working mechanics thus repeatedly, and forcefully, articulated their sense of active agency in a perceived 'march of science'.[433]

Not all 'ingenious mechanics', however, felt the benefit of publicity or patronage. David Thomas, a working mechanic from Blackfriars, complained in the three-penny *London Mechanics' Register* in February 1825, for instance, that he had 'invented about two years ago a mode of propelling vessels by means of a pump, but was unable to obtain a patent in consequence of its enormous expense'. Recommending a two-

---

[432] *MM*, 30 Jun. 1832; 20 Nov. 1824; 3 Dec. 1825; 19 Jan. 1828; and 17 Jan. 1829.
[433] *MM*, 12 Mar. 1825. For the term 'march of science', ibid., 5 Mar. 1825; for the 'march of chemical and mechanical knowledge', ibid., 1 May 1824.

year protection period to enable poor mechanics to patent their inventions, Thomas concluded thus:

> I would here ask, Sir, whether England does not stand in her own light by preventing the humble class of society from obtaining patents for their inventions; has she not lost many important discoveries that would be of great utility?

Personally aggrieved, sensitive to the lack of protection afforded to humble inventors and making claims that the nation was built on the ingenuity of the 'lower class of society', Thomas fused several concerns in his defence of the importance of 'ingenious mechanics' to scientific endeavour. The editors of the *Mechanic's Magazine*, among many others, agreed with him. Whether Thompson's system for pump propulsion really was superior to steam, as he claimed, remained unproven; but his comments reveal how cheap technical periodicals provided a means by which working men could not only publicize their inventions, but also assert - on their own terms and in their own words - the importance of 'ingenious mechanics' to national prosperity.[434]

iv. Summary conclusions: ingenious mechanics and cheap technical periodicals

The correspondents discussed above were all self-consciously working men: a labouring gardener, a turner, a whitesmith, a watch- and clockmaker, a carpenter and a 'mechanic'. Evidence from the *Mechanic's Magazine* - the most widely-circulated and long-lived cheap technical periodical of the period - suggests that such 'ingenious mechanics' comprised roughly one-fifth (19%) of its correspondents; a proportion arguably representative of the whole generation of cheap technical periodicals produced in the early 1820s. These titles were established in the context of widespread ideological and commercial enthusiasm for diffusing science to the

---

[434] *LMR*, 12 Feb. 1825. See the prospectus for the 'Society for the Encouragement of Invention', which noted the unfairness of patent law: 'Is an inventor humble and poor, who is there to advise and befriend him? He has not access to men of science - no patrons among men of wealth…' *MM*, 18 Jun. 1825.

common reader, and their strategy in placing 'ingenious mechanics' alongside 'men of science' has left a complex picture of who 'common writers' were, what they thought and how representative they were of the common people more generally. The letter-writing working man clearly did exist, but he represented a tiny minority of highly articulate, skilled artisans. For these self-improving few, however, cheap technical periodicals did present a new, and enduring, means of articulating their intellectual agency - albeit mediated by editorial intervention.

In terms of the content of these contributions, correspondents overwhelmingly engaged with science as technology (inventions, discoveries and new applications). The specific correspondence discussed above related to land husbandry, a turning lathe, a carpenter's bench, a tunnel under the Thames, a clock design, a new application of lever power, a screw-press, a boring machine, pendulum bellows, a cross-cutting machine, a boat with wings and a machine purportedly proving the mechanical possibility of perpetual motion.[435] Although impressively articulate and inventive, such correspondence reveals a narrow conception of science, and little can be gleaned from these utterances about what common writers thought about other scientific knowledge forms. The implications for an understanding of the march of intellect are that 'ingenious mechanics' were fewer in number and narrower in their range of scientific enquiry than is suggested by the celebratory narrative of a popular 'march of science'. Notwithstanding this qualification, such common writers were increasingly assigned - and did increasingly claim - a degree of intellectual agency in public scientific discourse during the 1820s and 1830s.

---

[435] The perpetual motion machine was invented by Dixon Vallance, but later proven to be unworkable; *Glasgow Mechanics' Magazine*, 13 May 1826.

Figure 6.1: Vallance's 'Boat with wings', 1825

Mechanics' Magazine,
MUSEUM, REGISTER, JOURNAL, AND GAZETTE.

No. 81.] SATURDAY, MARCH 12, 1825. [Price 3d.

"This is Freethinking: Unconfined to parts,
To send the Soul, an curious travel bent,
Through all the provinces of human thought;
* * * * * *
——— who most examine, most believe." Young.

BOAT WITH WINGS,

INVENTED BY MR. DIXON VALLANCE, OF LIBBERTON, SCOTLAND.

"With wings so fitted to each side,
Through briny waves I'll swiftly glide;
Impell'd by steam's all-conquering power,
I'll run at eighteen knots per hour." D. V.

Fig. 1.

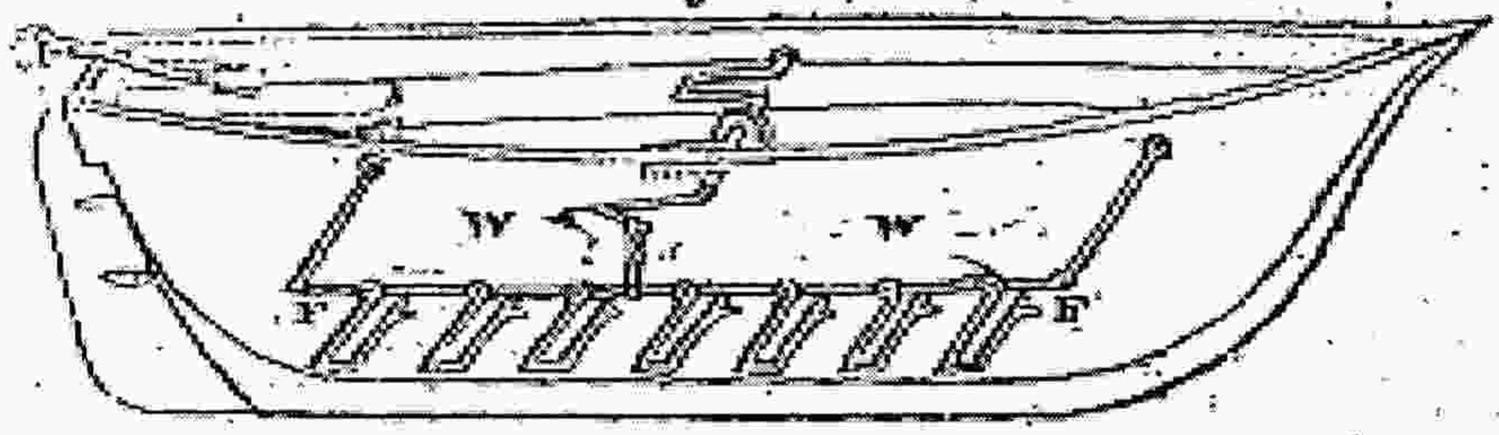


Fig. 3.



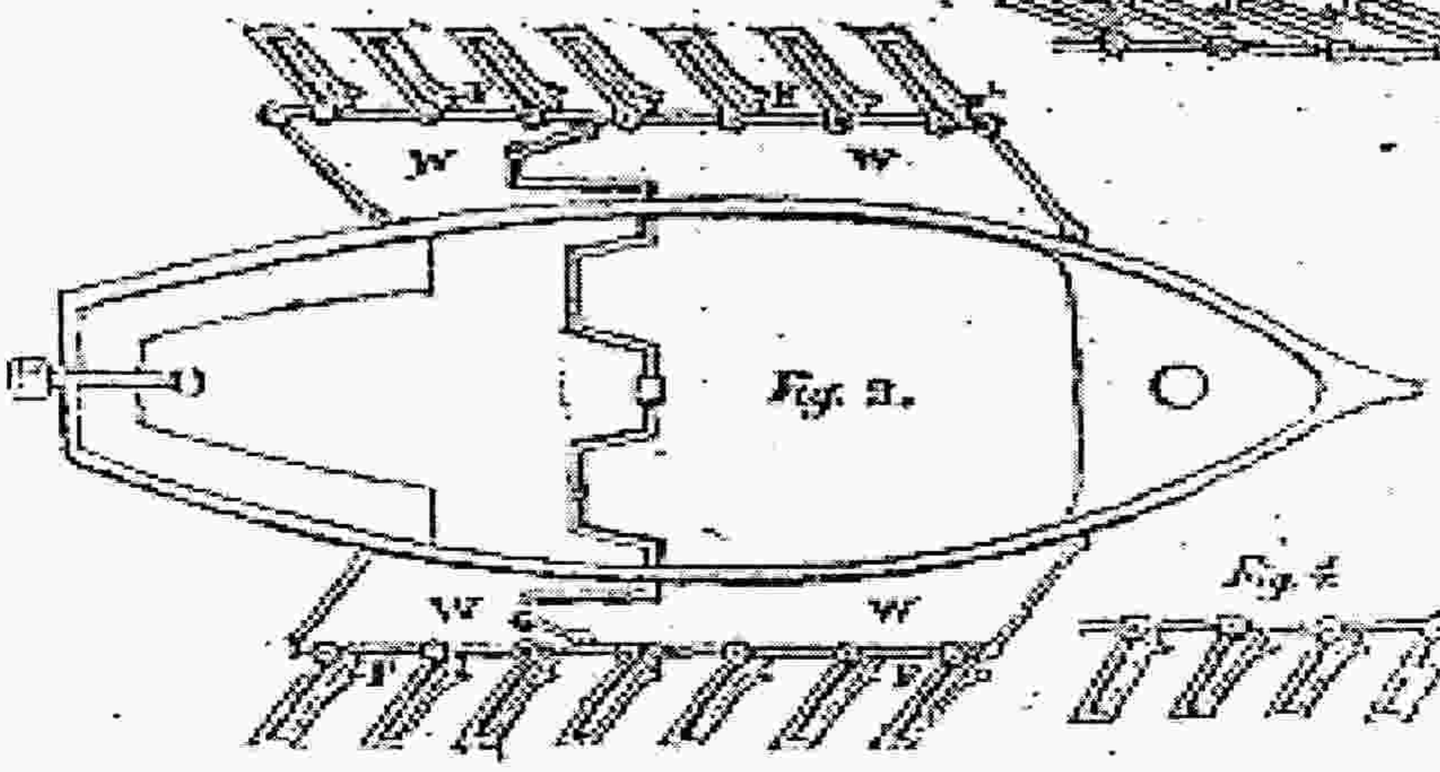


Fig. 4.

II

Humble poets: political, Parnassian and commonplace verse in the popular periodical

In his annotated anthology of self-taught Victorian poets, the literary historian Brian Maidment makes the following assessment:

> In the absence of easily available radical or oppositional literary genres, the continuing use of eighteenth-century modes of moral indignation by ambitious self-taught writers, and the use of near-oral, communal, simple lyric forms and literary occasions by politically or communally motivated writers, both suggest regard for poetic possibility, and a clear awareness of the nature of literary form. In short, much of the writing here is an intelligent response to prevailing literary constraints.

According to Maidment, these 'humble poets' appropriated three interacting and overlapping poetic modes (Chartist/radical, Parnassian and 'homely rhyming') to articulate 'a powerfully expressed social vision'. The 'middle-class' interest in such poetry, he concludes, provided a novel means of 'describing working class cultural activity'. This section examines the content and form of popular poetry in conjunction with an increasing tendency to assign intellectual agency to the common writer - and for them to claim it for themselves. It attempts this through a focus on verse produced by 'humble poets' for the popular periodical press between 1819 and 1834. The benefits of this approach are that much unique poetry that did not make it into the published (and often patronized) collections of the later nineteenth century can be identified and analyzed *in situ*; and that the role of the periodical press in cultivating and mediating popular poetic expression can be better understood. An analysis of this neglected literary oeuvre reinforces conclusions reached in the context of 'ingenious mechanics': namely, that popular periodicals provided a small, highly literate and unrepresentative group of common writers with a genuine, but heavily circumscribed, means of articulating a sense of their own intellectual agency. The humble poet, like

the ingenious mechanic, was thus a mixture of reality and rhetoric, suggesting a need to complicate the heroic story of a flowering of 'native genius' embodied in the 'march of letters' narrative.[436]

i. The 'Romantic' inheritance and the march of intellect

The term 'humble poet' was usually applied to those working people with some experience of agricultural or manufacturing labour who claimed to have been visited by the Muse during stolen moments of reading and contemplation. Usually men, very occasionally youths and rarely women, the geographical and occupational range of these poets was wide; but most emphasized their toil on the land, in the manufactory or in the small workshop for literary or commercial reasons. Robert Southey (1774-1843), the poet laureate, gave an impetus to what he termed 'uneducated poets' in a preface to a collection of poems by a domestic servant called John Jones (*b.* 1774) in 1831, tracing a tradition of 'peasant poetry' back to the sixteenth century.[437] More often inspired by the examples of the Scottish poet, Robert Burns (1759-1796), and the growing celebrity of the Northamptonshire farm-labourer and poet, John Clare (1793-1864), the 'humble poets' of the 1820s and 1830s composed blank verse, sonnets and simple stanzas of varying quality for the popular periodical press.[438] Whereas Milton, Goldsmith and Cowper were frequently emulated, many humble poets were profoundly influenced by the stylistic conventions, subject-matter and moral-political outlook of the 'Romantic' reaction to an Enlightenment apotheosis of

---

[436] B. Maidment, *The poorhouse fugitives* (1992), 13-18. The literature on popular poetry in the Victorian period is enormous; see idem., 'Essayists and artisans - the making of Victorian self-taught poets', *Literature and History*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (1983), 74-91; L. James, *Fiction for the working man* (1974), 201-11; M. Vicinus, *The industrial muse* (1974), *passim*; and M. Sanders, '"A Jackass load of poetry": the *Northern Star*'s poetry column 1838-1852'', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, Vol. 39, No. 1 (2006), 46-66. For the persistence of the 'democratization' paradigm, see Patricia Pulham's comments that the 'democratic movement in art… was to function as one of the defining features of the nineteenth century', that Wordsworth 'democratized' poetry and that the century saw 'the rise of the novel', 'The Arts' in Chris Williams (ed.), *A companion* (2004), 443-456. For humble female poets in the eighteenth century, see D. Landry, *The muses of resistance* (1990), 1-10.

[437] John Jones, *Attempts in verse: with some account of the writer, written by himself* (1831).

[438] John Clare, *Poems descriptive of rural life and scenery* (1820); idem., *The village minstrel* (1821).

reason. A belief in the power of subjectivity and emotion over the abstract panaceas of steam and machinery was transmitted across time and social space, and formed the staple literary diet of many autodidacts with literary aspirations in the 1820s: 'Romantic' works with radical political or philosophical messages were republished in cheap editions (such as Southey's *Wat Tyler* in 1817, Percy Shelley's *Queen Mab* in 1821 and Byron's *Cain* in 1822), and the popular periodicals of the 1820s continued to be infused with romantic rhetoric.[439]

This 'Romantic' inheritance produced a conflicted response to the march of intellect which had its origins in a nostalgia that was simultaneously conservative and radical. In 1830 Southey, by then an opponent to radical and 'liberal' nostrums, struck a blow for the older generation of 'Romantics' in a revised edition of one of his collaborations with Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The devil's walk* (first printed in 1799, and republished in 1830). Southey's additions to the poem, begun in 1827, included a verse specifically targeted at 'utilitarians': clearly the product of his experiences of the 1820s. One Roman Catholic 'daughter' of the satanic 'Cosmocrat' reported how Hell's mission was being conducted through 'schooling' in the metropolis:

Fine progress they make in our liberal opinions,
My Utilitarians,
My all sorts of -inians,
And all sorts of -arians,
My all sorts of -ists,
And my Prigs and my Whigs,
Who have all sorts of twists,
Trained in the very way, I know,
Father, you would have them go;
High and low,
Wise and foolish, great and small,
March-of-Intellect Boys all…

---

[439] M. Butler, *Romantics, rebels and reactionaries* (1981), 138-77; I. Jack, *English literature, 1815-1832* (1963), 130-84.

For Southey, 'Liberalism' and 'utilitarianism' were the intellectual fodder of the march of intellect, and suspicion of increasing numbers of '-inians', '-arians' and '-ists' was frequently aired in a decade when the '-ism' suffix started to be widely applied to older words denoting systems of theory and practice. Significantly, Southey does not identify the 'March-of-Intellect Boys' as a social or intellectual elite: 'High and low, / Wise and foolish, great and small' were all part of the devil's club. The spread of 'universal education' and the march of intellect, lamented Southey, were destroying the social and cultural conditions in which the 'native genius' of poets like Jones and Clare had flourished.[440]

Such ruminations coexisted with other satirical representations of popular intellectual improvement. In 1830 Moncrieff invoked the example of the recently launched omnibus service between Paddington and the City of London to parody the boasts of literary knowledge made on behalf of working Londoners:

Cades now are to *Conducteurs* turn'd.
To intellect they bow;
St. Giles's Greek by all is spurn'd,
They *parlez Francais* now.
Inviting you to take a *spell*,
Lest ennui chance to bore,
They put inside, with you to ride,
Scott, Byron, Crabbe, and Moore.
Shakespeare and Milton they supply,
That those who run may read;
A *circulating library*,
It may be called indeed.

'Cade' was a colloquial cockney term for the drivers of horse-drawn carts, and Moncrieff suggests sardonically how the inculcation of the canonical literature of Shakespeare, Milton, Byron, Scott, Crabbe and Moore had not only increased the literary aspirations of such stock characters, but also turned the omnibus into a

---

[440] Robert Southey, *The devil's walk: a poem, by Professor Porson* (1830). See Southey's comments: 'Impiety has been set up; and the drummers who beat the march of intellect through your streets, lanes, and market-places, are enlisted under it', in idem., *Sir Thomas More: or, colloquies on the progress and prospects of society*, two vols. (1829), ii, 361, 413-4.

'*circulating library*'. The subsequent lines 'Now intellect has three horse power, /'Tis *reading by the mile*', whilst reminding the reader that the 'march' was driven by both intellectual and technological improvement, pours scorn on such mechanistic readings. But Moncrieff's satire, although rooted in unease about the 'march', relied on the plausibility of his characters; and it was in this context that the image of the humble poet became a locus of contestation. For some, such as Southey, he or she represented an articulate strand of popular culture, stretching back to days of bucolic contentment and social stability and at odds with the modernizing, steam-driven march of intellect; while for others, the humble poet was the personification of the 'march' - evidence that the common reader had become the common writer, intelligent and even dangerous.[441]

ii. Political poetry

Political events were crucial in tempting working people to experiment with poetry, and Richard Carlile's freethinking *Republican* served as a particularly effective outlet for original verses written by the radical shoemaker Allen Davenport (1775–1846). Davenport had been active in London's Spencean underworld since the late 1810s (and had already published two poems by 1820), but his early contributions to the *Republican* have been overlooked, ignoring the critical role of periodical print in cultivating and publicizing the work of humble poets.[442] His first poem ('The poet's mite') appeared in September 1822, and represents his response to the imprisonment of Carlile's sister, Mary-Anne, for continuing the latter's publishing ventures. It began thus: 'Accept the mite wrapp'd in these lines, / From a congenial heart; / It is of your enormous fines / Just the twelve thousandth part.' A similarly rudimentary verse on the 'Six Acts' of 1819 appeared three months later, 'versified for the benefit of

---

[441] William Thomas Moncrieff, *The march of intellect* (1830).
[442] See M. Chase (ed.), *The life and literary pursuits of Allen Davenport* (1994).

memory': 'Whoever says an evil thing, / Against the dead or living King', it began, running through a list of republican targets protected by the new legislation (the 'State Representation', 'Mother Church' and 'the Holy Bible'), concluding thus;

Is guilty of a wicked libel;
For which offence, the punishment
Is fine, and long imprisonment:
But, if condemned a second time,
Transported to a foreign clime!

Again, the lines are simply composed (this time in rhyming couplets): but they were written especially for the *Republican* and served to narrate recent legal-political repression in a memorable and replicable way.[443]

The most powerful of Davenport's political-poetic interventions was 'The captive', printed in January 1824 and addressed to another imprisoned acolyte of Carlile, Susannah Wright:

HAIL child of truth! hail glorious woman!
Whom tyranny could not subdue;
Since all the pow'rs that she could summon,
Were baffled and defied by you.
What tho' the Christian bigots blame thee,
What tho' they frown upon thee still;
While truth is thine they cannot shame thee,
Rail and bluster how they will.

Perhaps most significantly, lines from Mary Ann Davenport (his daughter, who died in 1824) were subjoined to the poem:

Tho' all attempts to find out God are vain,
How worlds could come by chance seems very odd;
My *ne plus ultra* is the works of Paine,
And Paine believed in, and adored, a God.

Such verses were not accomplished literary productions; but they demonstrate the overt political-theological function of poetry written by humble men and women in the 1820s. This humble poetry was shaped by the ephemeral and reflexive nature of

[443] *Republican*, 20 Sep. 1822; 6 Dec. 1822.

the cheap political periodical itself: poets were obliged to produce verses in rapid response to events, to identify radical shibboleths for tyro readers and to portray themselves as originating from the 'oppressed' classes in society. If Davenport was capable of better poetry, his contributions to the *Republican* nonetheless gave him access to a large readership and freedom to exercise his political and literary agency.[444]

Producers of popular Sunday newspapers in the 1820s also recognized the ideological and entertainment value of political poetry written by humble people. In the *Trades' Newspaper* family (1825-31), for instance, dozens of verses written by anonymous contributors identifying themselves as 'an artisan', 'a journeyman' or 'a mechanic' were published, engaging the themes of rebellion, revolution, patriotism, co-operation, trade unionism, the constitution and religion. They retained a broadly political agenda, particularly evident in *ad hominem* pieces on Bentham, Cobbett, Henry Hunt, Joseph Hume, Malthus, Napoleon and the managers of the *Trades'*.[445] Occasional boosts in the quality of its poetry section were provided by the republication of verses written by celebrated humble poets. In August 1829, for instance, William Carpenter reprinted a verse from Ebenezer Elliott's (1781-1849) *The village patriarch* (1829) in the *Weekly Free Press*. The 'Corn Law Rhymer's' pastoral poem carried a radical anti-bread-tax message, and the excerpt reproduced by Carpenter drew together several themes relating to the intellectual agency of the self-improving artisan:

> Thrall though he be
> Of brutes who hate him while he feeds them, still
> He feels his intellectual dignity;

---

[444] Ibid., 9 Jan. 1824. For Davenport on ghosts, see ibid. 19 Aug. 1825.

[445] See the 'Ode to Ceres' which refers to Bentham 'whose English is all his own making', *TN*, 26 Feb. 1826; 'Cobbett's Canvass', *TN*, 21 May 1826; 'A Peck at Crowing Hunt', *TN*, 25 Jun. 1826; 'Dog-Day Reflections' (on Malthus), *TFP*, 5 Aug. 1827; 'Napoleon', *WFP*, 11 Nov. 1827; and 'On the Trades' Newspaper', *TN*, 16 Jul. 1826.

Works hard, reads carefully, with no mean skill
Writes, and can reason well of good and ill.[446]

By writing poetry and prose, Elliott argued, working people could retain their 'intellectual dignity' and articulate their opposition to political 'tyrants'. In a preface to *The ranter* (1830), he reiterated this belief in poetry as a cultural and political force: '[t]he utilitarians say, that poets are generally servile fools… while the more elegant critics complain that the union of poetry and politics, is always hurtful to the politics and fatal to the poetry.' Both sets of critics 'can hardly be right', Elliott concluded, 'if Homer, Dante, Milton, Cowper, and Burns were poets.'[447]

iii. The Parnassian strand [448]

Humble poets were not limited to political verse, and Davenport, for one, ruminated over the literary implications of the march of intellect in the *Republican* in December 1826:

> So rapid… has the 'march of intellect' among the common people of this country been, that a great portion of them are not only capable of reading and understanding works of judgement, but works of genius also; and the time is not far distant when public writers will feel the necessity of paying due respect to the judgement of that class of people who have been denominated - the swinish multitude.

His 'Postscript' on the death of Shelley served as his own 'judgement':

Sing weeping Muse! Ah, sing awhile of him,
Who conquer'd prejudice, and broke her fetters -
Tore from the mind the intellectual film,
And half reform'd the dreaming world of letters.[449]

Davenport was not alone in demonstrating such Parnassian aspirations, and in 1822 the Manchester silk-weaver, Elijah Ridings (1802-72), produced several philosophical

---

[446] Ebenezer Elliott, *The village patriarch: a poem* (1829); reprinted in the *WFP*, 29 Aug. 1829. See also his lines, 'Wo-conquering knowledge! When wilt thou remove / Th' opprobrium of the earth - the chain'd in soul?', from 'Love', in idem., *The splendid village: Corn Law rhymes and other poems*, three vols. (1833-35), ii, 176.
[447] Ebenezer Elliott, 'The Ranter', in idem., *The splendid village*, three vols. (1833-35), i, 147; 47-9.
[448] The term 'Parnassian' in this context refers to ambitiously creative or metaphysical verse; *OED*.
[449] *Republican*, 15 Dec. 1826.

pieces specifically for the *Republican*. Ridings' first contribution ('Address to Britons') was a political clarion call (including the line, 'Support Carlile against the knaves'), but this was followed up by a prose paean to 'Shelley, Byron, Moore, Keates [sic], Campbell, Leigh Hunt, [and] Lady Morgan':

> The liberal and enlightened *literati* of the present day have opened a wide field for the mind of the reader to range in - have planted in it the vigorous and ever-verdant oak of inflexible and manly genius - beneath whose shade, the sweet-scented flowers of rhetoric and poesy lie scattered…

Whatever its political functions, Carlile's *Republican* thus actively encouraged humble poets not only to submit their own compositions, but also to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the nature of literary form.[450]

It was, however, in the *Isis. A London Weekly Publication, Edited by a Lady* (1832) - a weekly six-penny republican and freethinking title edited by the self-styled 'Lady of the Rotunda', Eliza Sharples (1803-52) - that Ridings most effectively demonstrated his literary talent. In March 1832 he submitted an unpublished poem entitled 'Poetry without fiction! Inscribed to Isis':

> I sat upon a moss-grown mound, within
> A lonely dell, beneath an ancient oak,
> Whose pendent boughs hung o'er me, and no din,
> Save a pure streamlet's rippling music broke
> Upon mine ear; when suddenly a stroke,
> A flash abrupt as the red lightning's gleam,
> Stunn'd my whole being: 'twas then I awoke
> From faith's deep trance, from faith's unhappy dream;
> 'Twas then I first beheld pure reason's sunny beam.

The imagery of enlightenment through reason was a frequent theme for humble poets of a freethinking bent - but this was an unusually ambitious poem, running to sixteen verses and combining autobiography, detailed description and theological reflection.[451] Two other pieces - a 'Sonnet to Isis' and 'Sonnets (Written on seeing a

---

[450] *Republican*, 22 Feb. 1822; 13 Dec. 1822.
[451] *Isis*, 24 Mar. 1832. The periodical marketed itself as unique in periodical history, with the twenty-eight year-old Sharples claiming to be the first 'Editress' of a publication peddling 'political, moral,

painting of our saviour in a gallery of art)' - followed in mid-1832, as Ridings experimented with new poetic forms and themes in the pages of the *Isis*. By late 1832 he was ready to assume the mantle of literary guide, lamenting to Sharples that 'I am sorry that you have not given us weekly a genuine specimen of the independent muse.' He proceeded to trace the history of English poetry from Chaucer onwards, articulating his belief that the craft of the humble poet was being rendered impotent by elite patronage:

> But, in this age of political and theological disquisitions, poetry must retire, if it do [sic] not assist us in the struggle for freedom. It must retire until we have conquered our enemies... I should wish, my dear *Isis*, to see poetry no longer the Ariel of wealth and power.

Ridings then issued a Parthian shot, ostentatiously displaying his literary accomplishments in an '"Ode to Pyrrha" (Suggested by Milton's translation of the "Ad Pyrrham" of Horace)':

A tender youth, warm with delightful love,
Woos thee on violets in this woodland scene,
Pyrrha, while thou dost bind
In wreaths thy auburn hair,
In beautiful simplicity, alas!
I drank the poison of the world's foul chalice,
When love's pellucid fountain
Was inexhaustible;
But may I not now my Pyrrha now enjoy,
Constant and faithful as thou art to me,
Thine own love-god for this life,
Who gratefully accepts
The sacred worship of the heart from thee?

It was not until 1854 that a collection of Ridings' poetry was published - but the *Republican* and the *Isis* had long since presented him with a formative literary outlet. This little-known output of a minor humble poet is significant as an example of poetic utterances that would otherwise have been lost: but, ironically, Ridings observed that

---

and philosophical instruction'. *Isis* successfully diffused Sharples' discourses on 'infidel' religion, female education and parliamentary reform, and these were bolstered by editorial attacks on the established radical demonology of 'kingcraft, lordcraft, and priestcraft'; see my entry in *DNCJ*.

even periodicals like the *Isis* seemed not to be encouraging 'the independent muse' to come before the reading public - Ridings was himself, he observed, the exception rather than the rule.[452]

iv. Commonplace verse

Politically charged and self-consciously metaphysical verse therefore represented two important strands of the poetry published in the popular press during the 1820s and early 1830s: but humble poets were also particularly effective at describing and narrating everyday experiences and emotions. What might be termed 'commonplace' poetry (deliberately simple and short lyrics that identified and expressed everyday 'urban and industrial experience') was also an important strand.[453] Whereas political and Parnassian verse was usually invoked to display the ideological tenacity or cultural accomplishment of the humble poet, commonplace verse could be used by periodical editors for a variety of competing reasons. The metropolitan press rarely printed verse extolling the provincial vernacular, and this closed off one important means by which humble poets could articulate a sense of identity. Instead, the commonplace verse printed in London-based popular periodicals tended to be identified by its thematic focus on everyday occurrences and responses.

One recurring theme was the leisure pursuits of the common people, giving rise to scores of emulations of Burns' 'The cotter's Saturday night' (1785). Two poems supposedly written by a London 'journeyman mechanic' called T. Ramsneb (actually a palindrome of the goldsmith Ben[jamin] Smart [1757–1833]), demonstrate both the prosaic moral-religious character of much commonplace verse, as well as the recycling of material by periodical editors. 'Ramsneb's' poem, 'Sunday, most affectionately addressed to his fellow labourers, by a working man', appeared in the

---

[452] *Isis*, 26 May 1832; 16 Sep. 1832. See Elijah Ridings, *The village muse* (1854).
[453] B. Maidment, *The poorhouse fugitives* (1992), 16.

Labourer's Friend in April 1821, when Smart was sixty-five, with an accompanying letter announcing that '[t]hey are produced from the pen of one, who… left school with a little knowledge of reading, writing, and the first four rules of arithmetic':

'Tis Sunday morn, and all around is peace;
The hand that toils, by God's command should cease:
And happy he who keeps this one behest,
For 'twill incline his heart to keep the rest.[454]

'Ramsneb' was also responsible for an earlier piece, 'Saturday Night', which first appeared in the *Weekly Entertainer, or, Agreeable and Instructive Repository* (1783-1819) in 1806, but was republished in the *Saturday Magazine* in April 1834:

Our life is but a lengthen'd week,
Through which with toil for rest we week;
And he whose labour well is past,
A Joyful SABBATH finds at last!

The appropriation of such commonplace verse to reinforce the SPCK's message of Sabbath observance and social *rapprochement* was summed up in the editorial note accompanying the poem: 'The author… delights to see his fellow-labourers happy, and is convinced, that one effectual way of being so, is to be content with their lot… His verses, however humble, have a tendency to promote this.' Although the product of a semi-professional writer (albeit one with potentially humble origins), commonplace verse was thus depicted by periodical editors as the quintessential literary mode of the humble poet.[455]

The names of genuine journeymen-poets were rarely attached to their literary productions, and the origin and authenticity of much commonplace poetry is unclear. Certain humble poets producing commonplace verse did, however, achieve national recognition. The poet and engraver, Charles Swain (1801-1874), for instance, had his

---

[454] *LFHC*, Apr. 1821; *ODNB*. Smart also contributed to the *Gentleman's Magazine*. My thanks go to Joanna Innes for solving the anagram and tracking down Smart.
[455] *Weekly Entertainer*, Sep. 1806; *Saturday Magazine*, 5 Apr. 1834. See chapter three for other poems on the theme of 'Saturday Night', 209-10.

work repeatedly published in the press from the early 1820s onwards. Swain's repertoire was wide, incorporating ambitious Parnassian verse (including a little-known version of his epic, 'The mind', which appeared in the shilling weekly *Literary Gazette* [1817-60] in 1828) and a large number of songs. 'Boyhood', which also appeared in the *Literary Gazette* in 1828, was his response to reading Byron's lament, 'Oh, once again who would not be a boy?':

> The dreams of my early youth,
> How beautiful they are - how full of joy -
> When fancy looks like truth,
> And life shows not a tint of sin's alloy.[456]

Although the editors of some popular periodicals wanted to be seen to be providing a means by which the humble poet could express his or her thoughts, others were less enthusiastic. In April 1833, for example, a verse addressing the themes of love and marriage by the London journeyman weaver, T. Poynton, met with a mixed response in the *Advocate; or, Artisans' and Labourers' Friend* (1833); a penny radical weekly edited by John Ambrose Williams and published by the metropolitan Printers' Protection Society. Poynton's 'Song' began thus:

> Down in the valley oft I stray,
> With her I love so dearly;
> To see the lambkins sport and play,
> And skylark singing cheerly [sic].
> Oft by yon river's ebbing tide,
> And when its banks o'erflowing,
> I wish my love walk side by side,
> My arms about her throwing.

Williams' response was equivocal: 'They [the lines] are of course far from being perfect, but they are not so deficient of merit, under the circumstances, as warrant us excluding them from our pages', he began,

> [T]hey are quite as good as those of the Milkmaid of Bath, who made so much noise, as a wonder of creation, some forty years ago. Yet, after all,

[456] *Literary Gazette*, 1 Mar. 1828.

> persons who can employ their time in any other manner, should not attempt to write verses. Poetry is only the amusement of the scholar, and he then only scantily indulges in it. The working man should apply his mind to something more profitable.[457]

Almost forty years after Ann Yearsley (*bap.* 1753, *d.* 1806) came to public notice with her *Poems, on several occasions* (1785), this journeyman weaver was struggling to have his poetry taken seriously. This was all the more surprising because the rebuff came from a radical periodical managed by, and aimed exclusively at, working men, demonstrating how even organs infused with a mission of popular enlightenment continued to question the intellectual 'profit' of humble poetry.

v. Summary conclusions: humble poets in the popular periodical

The poets surveyed above included a shoemaker and his daughter, an iron-merchant, two journeyman silk-weavers, a 'journeyman mechanic' and an engraver. They were all, at some point in their lives, members of the English lower-middling or labouring classes: but there was also much to be gained by both the poet and the periodical editor by marketing them as 'humble poets'. In cheap periodicals like the *Republican* and stamped radical newspapers like the *Weekly Free Press*, it was strategically useful to give a political platform to the likes of Allen and Mary Ann Davenport, Ebenezer Elliott and the scores of anonymous journeyman-poets who submitted verse: if these literate working people were allowed to articulate their opposition to state tyranny - as well as their support for the radical press - editors felt that they could legitimately represent the radical cause as indigenous to the common people. Similarly, the publication of Parnassian humble poetry could be turned to radical ends in the *Republican* and the *Isis*; but what is most remarkable in these titles is less their political use of metaphysical verse than the freedom they granted to men like Davenport and Elijah Ridings to discuss and experiment with poetic form and

---

[457] *Advocate*, 13 Apr. 1833.

content. Long before the works of the majority of the more celebrated nineteenth-century 'humble poets' were published as collections, the popular press was thus acting as a means by which talented working men could develop and publicize their literary skills. In this context, editors played heavily on their role as cultivators of 'natural genius'.

In terms of commonplace verse, there was a mixed editorial response. Because it was deemed to be safer than the political or Parnassian strands (dealing with everyday situations and emotions with an often stoical acceptance of the status quo), periodical titles published by middling philanthropic or religious associations frequently printed this material. The *Labourer's Friend* and the *Saturday Magazine* published humble poems that encouraged industry, social stability and Sabbath observance, while the repeated publication of Charles Swain's poetry in the *Literary Gazette* implied a certain critical acceptance of his work. Surprisingly, whereas these philanthropic, religious and expensive titles published safe poetic effusions, some cheap radical weeklies opposed the writing of poetry by working people: the *Advocate*, for instance, saw humble poetry as an unwelcome distraction from the struggle against political corruption and the destructive impact of machinery on wages. In this case, the verses of one humble poet were published to demonstrate what readers ought not to spend their time doing.

Ultimately, 'humble poets' were few in number, unusually literate and unrepresentative. They were surrounded by a myth of 'native genius', born of a curiosity amongst middling periodical readers that obscured as much as it revealed about the number of common people that wrote poetry and what forms of literary knowledge they possessed. The popular periodical press of the 1820s and early 1830s did, however, offer this minority of common writers a means by which they could be

assigned - or claim - a degree of personal intellectual agency. For some commentators, the march of intellect was sweeping away the conditions in which the 'uneducated poet' could flourish; while for others, 'humble poets' were the epitome of popular intellectual improvement. Although they were genuine - and often highly intelligent - participants in public literary discourse, those 'humble poets' revealed in the pages of the popular periodical were therefore aspects of a stylized image of the 'common writer', cultivated by certain periodical editors, exaggerating a sense of popular intellectual agency and subject to intense contestation.

III

Conclusion: common writers, popular periodicals and the march of intellect

The foregoing analysis of two forms of 'common writer' - the 'ingenious mechanic' and the 'humble poet' - suggests a number of general conclusions relating to the content of popular scientific and literary knowledge and to the role of the popular periodical press in embodying and cultivating a sense of 'popular articulacy' during the 1820s and early 1830s. Firstly, in terms of content, common writers arguably contributed to public scientific and literary discourses in the period, encouraged by the breakthrough, diversification and proliferation of cheap periodicals and Sunday newspapers aimed explicitly at a common readership. Cheap technical titles established in the early 1820s enabled the ingenious mechanic to communicate with editors and other readers, and the publication of humble poetry in popular periodicals provided a genuine outlet for popular literary expression. More specifically, common writers - perhaps unsurprisingly given their generally skilled occupations - displayed a detailed technological scientific knowledge, sharing their inventions, discoveries and new applications of machinery. Abstract theoretical discussions or contributions to medical knowledge were conspicuous by their absence

in these discussions, though this may reflect the agenda of editors as much as the boundaries of the common writer's intellectual world. In terms of literary knowledge, humble poets wrote original political, Parnassian and commonplace verse for the periodical press, demonstrating varying levels of accomplishment. The political poetry could be rhetorically powerful, the Parnassian ambitions justified by moments of artistic achievement and the commonplace verse an honest insight into how the common people viewed everyday experiences.

Secondly, and notwithstanding this impressive technological ingenuity and poetic expression, such instances of 'popular articulacy' ought not to be interpreted as evidence of widespread - or increasing - popular intellectual agency. By its nature, the popular periodical - although seeming to present new opportunities for popular expression - could circumscribe the voice of the common writer. The format and conventions of the periodical meant that editors frequently granted very little space to humble correspondents, were selective in printing contributions and frequently did not attribute letters or articles. The tendency to sign with initials or pseudonyms - or to request anonymity - means that in most cases the historian can only guess at how many common writers actually had their contributions printed. The 'common writer' in the popular periodical was a rare and unrepresentative individual, and even in a title like the *Mechanic's Magazine* - which marketed itself as a repository for the contributions of the common writer - only about one-fifth of correspondents were 'working mechanics'. In the context of the relatively high intellectual, emotional or financial costs facing common writers, the naming of traceable individuals must be treated with suspicion, prompting questions as to why certain writers broke their anonymity, and what strategic purpose this served the editor.

This question as to the motivations of print producers in soliciting and publicizing correspondence from common writers is crucial. Editors clearly cultivated common writers for a mix of commercial and ideological reasons: this was as true of paternalistic titles such as the *Labourer's Friend* and the *Saturday Magazine* as it was of the cheap technical titles of the early 1820s, or even the unstamped radical weeklies - the latter two genres, to varying degrees, both claiming to speak with the authentic voice of the people. The ability to invoke authentic correspondence from common writers implied the popular legitimacy of a particular message, and few opportunities were lost to depict individual common writers as carriers of a periodical's mission - whether this led to their portrayal as loyal and God-fearing, ingenious and poetic, or radical and freethinking. The result of this strategic use of the common writer is that a heavily stylized image confronts the historian, who is obliged to cut through the rhetoric to find the reality. The implications for our understanding of the march of intellect are that in the context of 'ingenious mechanics' and 'humble poets', at least, the popular periodical press represented a genuine - but highly restrictive - means of asserting and claiming popular intellectual agency.

CONCLUSION

Rethinking popular periodicals and the march of intellect in London, 1819-34

This thesis began with an anecdote about Francis Place and the march of intellect. Whilst walking through London's Green Park during the summer of 1828, Place had chanced upon three ragged but clean young labourers discussing the wonders of the solar system. Their articulacy and knowledge impressed on him a profound sense of how certain portions of the English labouring classes had undergone a significant intellectual improvement since the 1790s, driven by improved educational provision, increased levels of literacy, periodic popular political agitation, a burgeoning associational culture and the diffusion of cheap periodical and newspaper print: '[h]ere', reflected Place, 'is a sufficient, practical reply to those who sneer at the march of intellect.'[458]

Taken in isolation, this anecdote reveals something about Place's opinion of who was involved in the putative march of intellect, what types of knowledge they prized, how intellectual improvement and moral reform were interdependent and even how the common people could simultaneously prove and frustrate the claims of the 'march of intellect men'. Thus, children featured prominently as an improved group in society, scientific knowledge was celebrated as driving forward a 'popular enlightenment', education was depicted as a panacea for moral degradation and a semantic distinction between the 'working classes' and the 'dissolute' enabled Place to argue for the reality of popular improvement despite evidence of widespread ignorance and

[458] Add. mss., 27,827, fols. 94-5; see the introduction to this thesis, 1-6. For opposition to Place's version of political economy, see the *Bull Dog* (1826); a short-lived six-penny anti-radical weekly that opposed the use of prophylactics amongst the common people. The paper was ostensibly edited by William Thomas Haley, but Place was convinced that Robert Mudie and Joseph Clinton Robertson were the real forces behind it: the latter, he noted, 'must have written this paper'; see Place's annotation on No. 4, 16 Sep. 1826, 122.

intemperance. The grand march of intellect, Place argued, would enable the English common people to acquire the useful knowledge and moral respectability required for them to win political representation through radical reform.[459]

There is, however, an epilogue to the microhistory of this anecdote which demonstrates how the status of the 'march' trope shifted in English public discourse between the 1820s and early 1830s. Appearing before two separate select committees in 1834 and 1835 (on drunkenness and education respectively), Place repeated almost verbatim his account of the three youths - but in these instances excised any reference to the march of intellect. There are a number of possible explanations for this omission. Firstly, and most prosaically, that Place's testimony had been abridged in order to save space or time. Secondly, that Place did not make reference to the 'march' because he thought it was unimportant to his account. And thirdly, that Place did not mention the 'march' because he thought it would, in some way, compromise the integrity of his argument. This third, most likely, explanation suggests that by 1834 even one of the most vocal champions of the 'march' seemed to have conceded that the term had lost its rhetorical potency, become tainted or even begun to lack credibility. The 'march' endured as a narrative of popular intellectual and moral progress, a categorization of knowledge forms and a description of improving practice for nearly half a century after Place gave evidence to the committees; but his apparent rethinking of the strategic value of 'march' rhetoric suggests that the concept had a

---

[459] The shipwright, John Gast, was less confident about the reality of popular improvement - though he agreed in a letter to Place that intellectual and moral cultivation were closely linked: 'The subject of your valuable tract [Place's *Improvement of the working people* (1834)] is of great important to the Working Classes. I have for more than forty years been connected with bodies of men, and Societies, and I know of nothing which the working population as been concerned in, that as cald forth my disgust, and most decided opposition, so much as that of Drunkenness; and I know of nothing that as had so great attendency to destroy, both their Mental, Physical, and Political existance, as Drunkenness, Ignorance as no doubt been the cause of this great evil prevailing so long, and having the ascendency. The moral energys of the workman; for want of cultivation were never able to resist successfully, the sensitive, whilst they had the means to gratify it'; Gast to Place, 3 Jul. 1834, add. mss., 27,829, fols. 19-20. Gast's spelling has not been corrected. For uses of the term 'popular enlightenment', see footnote 3.

relatively short lifespan, rising to public prominence and falling out of mainstream use between the early 1820s and the mid-1830s.[460]

This thesis has attempted to rethink the march of intellect as a socio-political complex through an analysis of aspects of its discursive properties and material bases, seeking to complicate Place's account of popular improvement as a phenomenon with predominantly political implications. A more detailed understanding of the impact of the 'march' on metropolitan popular culture has been attempted through an examination of who used 'march' rhetoric, when, how, why and what cultural practices were perceived as underpinning popular self-improvement. It has been argued that the 'march' was not simply liberal-radical rhodomontade or a conservative satirical trope (though it was both of these things), but also a meaningful historical construct, serving as a useful shorthand for a range of improving imperatives and practices that were widely assumed to be unique to English society during the 1820s and 1830s. It was thus the product of a specific historical moment: a linguistic and conceptual framework through which prevailing images of the common people as intellectual and moral agents were being reworked - and a repertoire of improving practices experienced - against the backdrop of industrial expansion, technological innovation, population growth, urbanization and a profound sense of moral, social and political unease.[461]

Having established the significance of the march of intellect as an historical problem (asking what exactly the 'march' was, to what extent it was real or imagined and why it was/is important), this thesis has attempted a detailed empirical analysis of London's popular periodical market between 1819 and 1834. This research focus

---

[460] *HoC.R*, Select Committee on Inquiry into Drunkenness among Labouring Classes, 1834, **1834** (559) VIII. 315, 176; *HoC.R*, Select Committee on Education of People, 1835, **1835** (465) VII. 763, 72. This anecdote (with no reference to the 'march') was also published in an article entitled 'London manners as they were and are' in *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal*, 26 Mar. 1836.
[461] A. Burns and J. Innes (eds.), *Rethinking* (2003), 1-70.

responds to both scholarly lacunae and contemporary claims that it was the 'popular periodical' press - cheap weekly periodicals and popular Sunday newspapers - that most clearly embodied and cultivated the march of intellect. For Place, indeed, it was unequivocally the increased diffusion of 'newspapers' and 'Small Publications - [for example] Cobbett' that was driving the phenomenon.[462] Popular periodicals were produced by editors, publishers and printers with a range of commercial and ideological motivations; they were consumed by child and adult, female and male, and skilled and unskilled common readers in respectable and rough locations; and they contained a variety of matter that was both instructive and amusing. They are highly problematic primary sources; but an analysis of their production, dissemination, consumption and content reveals much about their nature as reflexive and socially embedded artefacts of popular culture, and not just as disembodied texts.

A number of conclusions on the relationship between popular periodicals, the march of intellect and metropolitan popular culture have been forwarded in this thesis. The introduction has sketched the long-term context from which the 'march' emerged as a term specifically applied to the intellect and morals of the common people in the late 1810s. In this context, an alternative to the inherited narratives of the democratization or popularization of English politics and culture has been proposed: namely, that a broad-based and long-term preoccupation with the intellectual and moral condition of the common people existed between the 1780s and the 1830s, itself punctuated by brief periods of political excitement. The theme of popular intellectual and moral agency, in this context, emerges as part of a wide-ranging interest in 'reform' between the 1780s and 1830s rather than the product of a single interest group, 'radical', 'reformist' or otherwise. Increasingly, from the 1790s

---

[462] Add. mss., 27,828, fols. 107-10.

onwards, this preoccupation was manifest in a nascent popular periodical press, which claimed to embody and cultivate a sense of popular agency. Such agency could be assigned to, or claimed by, the common reader and referred to the apparently increased capacity afforded to the common people to assert meaningful control over aspects of their lives. This sense of agency - whether real or imagined - could be turned to partisan ends, and there was governmental unease at the perceived impact of widening access to print; particularly in the context of matter that was deemed to be blasphemous or seditious.

This central theme - that the periodical press was enabling increasing amounts of agency to be assigned to, and claimed by, 'common readers' - was powerfully expressed in the post-war radical publications of Cobbett *et al* between 1816 and 1821. But from about 1819 onwards, commentators external to radical print culture invoked the march of intellect as a description of popular intellectual and moral agency. Claims that the new generation of popular periodicals of the early 1820s embodied and cultivated a sense of popular agency were rooted in three basic assumptions: firstly, that the popular press responded to and shaped a latent market of 'common readers'; secondly, that it subjectified the cultural practices of the common people in an attempt to defend or improve them; and thirdly, that it provided a medium through which 'common writers' could express themselves. On closer inspection, all such assumptions prove to be problematic: if the march of intellect was in essence a story about popular agency, its limitations as revealed in an analysis of the popular periodical press suggest that it was a complex mix of reality and rhetoric.

Part one of this thesis ('The march of intellect and the production of popular periodicals') has argued that the story of a rapidly growing popular periodical market, driven by radical print culture, needs to be rethought. Chapter one has demonstrated

that producers of cheap periodicals, in particular, were bookseller-publishers located in the heartland of the traditional metropolitan book trade around Paternoster Row, and not necessarily fugitive political agitators. It suggests that an historiographical focus on the 'unstamped' press - a politically contingent moniker, dependent on Stamp Office intervention - has obscured overlaps in personnel, location and modes of distribution between 'safe' cheap, and 'unsafe' unstamped, titles: both species were members of the same cheap periodical genus. Moreover, although there was a significant overall increase in the number of cheap periodical titles produced between 1815 and 1834 (a rough proxy for the size of the cheap market), internal trends and patterns are more complex. An analysis of a unique dataset of over 1,000 titles has enabled the construction of a model for the breakthrough (1815-19), consolidation and diversification (1820-9) and proliferation (1830-4) of the cheap periodical. Within this trend, an analysis by genre has shown that although radical political titles spearheaded the breakthrough of the cheap format between 1815 and 1819, the 1820s were characterized by the increasing prevalence of literary, religious and technical titles. A plateau in the production of all cheap titles in 1825-9 further complicates the story, and the proliferation of the cheap format in 1830-4 appears to have been driven not only by the resurgence of cheap political titles during the 'reform crisis' of 1829-32, but also by the rapid growth of all other genres (and especially literary titles). The growth of a cheap periodical market, it is argued, was slower and more heterogeneous in terms of content than has previously been acknowledged, suggesting that the story of the rise of cheap radical print - although essential to an understanding of the period - is not alone a sufficient explanation of changes in popular print culture in the early nineteenth century. In sum, the march of intellect - if it was driven by the increased production of cheap periodical print - had distinctly apolitical bases.

Chapter two builds on this analysis by examining in detail the cheap 'publishing repertoire' of George Cowie and William Strange - perhaps the most prolific cheap periodical producers operating in the metropolis between 1822 and 1834. It argues that Cowie and Strange were simultaneously rent-seeking economic agents operating in a competitive marketplace and literary agents, commissioning, producing and disseminating publications that reflected their increasingly radical sensibilities. Entering the cheap periodical market for a combination of commercial and ideological reasons, Cowie and Strange harnessed the rhetoric of the march of intellect in the context of widespread enthusiasm for diffusing 'popular science' through cheap print. An economic malaise in the book trade between 1825 and 1829 encouraged Cowie and Strange to experiment with satirical formats and to establish associational networks with radical and co-operative agitators. Their output assumed an increasingly ideological hue from 1828 onwards, but their publishing repertoire continued to lead in both respectable and unrespectable directions. Their careers complicate the story of a cheap periodical market being forged in the crucible of political crisis, and suggest that cheap publishers produced a wide range of genres for the common reader. If there was a 'revolution' resulting from the commodification of cheap print in these years, it was not characterized simply by the diffusion of a belief in democratic rights or improving imperatives, but also by a pragmatic - and often unscrupulous - targeting of the common people as a potential readership. Economic incentives, quite as much as political conviction, were thus crucial in the broad-based attempt to forge a cheap periodical market.

Part two ('The march of intellect as representation and practice') analyzes periodical editors' attempts to subjectify - that is, to render in vivid and concrete terms - the cultural practices of the common people and their claims to provide a

public platform for popular expression. Chapter three uses a content analysis of 7,962 'items' found in 200 cheap periodicals and stamped newspapers to assess patterns of representation of popular cultural practice in the press. Breaking periodical content down into nine themes and thirty-six activity groups, it demonstrates that even highly specialized titles rarely contained over 50% coverage of a single 'theme'. 'Realistic' and 'idealistic' representations of those practices underpinning self-improvement (reading, writing and learning) accounted for roughly one quarter of the sampled content, but heterogeneity of content characterized popular periodical content. A qualitative analysis of debates surrounding popular observance of the Sabbath suggests that different representational strategies were employed to create an image of popular practice that was heavily stylized and strategically loaded: the perspective offered to the common reader was thus an authentic, but not reliable, reflection of social reality. The power of the press to shape perceptions of popular practice was fully realized in this period, and the drive to subjectify such practices succeeded primarily in embedding a dualistic content of amusing and improving matter in the popular periodical, complicating its credentials as a medium of the march of intellect.

Chapter four develops this theme of representations by focussing on the portrayal of circulations, common readers and reading spaces in the popular periodical. Periodical circulations were in reality a mix of small and large, decreasing and increasing sales; but a 'rhetoric of success' was a crucial component of claims that individual titles were both vernacular and guardians of the interests of 'the people'. Between 1819 and 1834 the common reader was celebrated and contested as the personification of the march of intellect; but periodical representations of reading as a practice were selective and distorted. Comparisons of internal and external sources, however, usefully demonstrate the distance between reality and representation. A mix

of specific and inclusive readerships, for example, was targeted by periodical editors and publishers: discrete juvenile, female and skilled and unskilled male readerships were cultivated in conjunction with more inclusive 'popular' constituencies. The term 'common reader' ought therefore to be seen as referring to a broad social constituency, comprising the lower-middling artisan and his wife and children as well as poorer labouring-class families. Representations of reading spaces were especially contested, proving to be an index of wider responses to the march of intellect. The attempt to represent the cheap coffee-shop as respectable and the LMI library as 'of the working classes' involved complex rhetorical negotiations, and neither campaign was entirely successful. Reading, this chapter concludes, was a deeply embedded cultural activity. Control over representations of reading was therefore crucial, with the popular periodical's intense and repeated subjectification of the common reader as an intellectual and moral agent functioning as an acid test of the reality of the march of intellect itself.

Chapter five assesses the contributions of two forms of 'common writer' - the 'ingenious mechanic' and the 'humble poet' - in an attempt to understand the role of the popular periodical press in embodying and cultivating a sense of 'popular articulacy' during the 1820s and early 1830s. It argues that the common writer did contribute to public scientific and literary discourse - often with impressive levels of technical knowledge or powers of poetic expression - but that this ought not to be interpreted as unproblematic evidence of an increasing sense of popular intellectual agency. The cheap technical periodical could open up its pages to the contributions of ingenious mechanics (one title, for instance, claming that 19% of its correspondents were 'working mechanics') and the Sunday newspaper could print the political, Parnassian or commonplace verse of the humble poet: but the very format and

conventions of the popular periodical meant that contributions were heavily circumscribed. Anonymous contributions, editorial selection and the strategic use of the image of the ingenious mechanic or humble poet as a talisman of popular legitimacy all suggest that the common writer was a fusion of the real and the imagined. The implications for an understanding of the march of intellect are that the popular periodical represented a genuine, but highly restrictive, means of asserting and claiming popular intellectual agency.

Ultimately, the principal question driving this thesis has been whether an analysis of the 'march' trope - embodied in, and cultivated by, the popular periodical - can help to explicate the complex and changing relationship between print and popular culture in the years between 1819 and 1834. The central argument has been that between the 1780s and the 1830s there was a crucial debate about the intellectual and moral condition of the English people, and that this debate was characterized by a tendency to assign to the common people - and for them to claim for themselves - increasing amounts of agency in their own intellectual improvement and moral reform. Such popular agency - whether real or imagined - had long been articulated, in a variety of forms; and its manifestation as the march of intellect was in many ways a departure only in scale and scope. Indeed, although the proliferation of 'march' rhetoric in the 1820s and 1830s did coincide with an expansion in the volume of periodical print available to the common reader, the relationship between the trope and its medium was problematic, suggesting that questions about the relative success or failure of the 'march' are misleading. The choices open to the common reader about how to spend his or her leisure time were exaggerated, and such constrained options as did exist saw the common reader make choices that led in many directions, improving and amusing, respectable and rough.

Similarly, any attempt to portray the 'march' as having consequences for a mid-Victorian sense of 'working-class' self-help or respectability replicates the sort of historical teleology that this thesis has sought to refute. Pervasive yet highly contested, the 'march' was slower, more haphazard and better able to coexist with seemingly contradictory cultural forms than its champions claimed. The reflections of Stephen Bourne, editor of the *Weekly Free Press*, in April 1831, bear eloquent testimony to the power of this narrative of popular progress, even if they cannot be uncritically accepted as evidence of its reality:

> [t]he working classes of England, in 1831, are not the same as they were in 1790. The *schoolmaster* has been among them. The Mechanics' Institutions - the Society for Diffusing Useful Knowledge - the Sunday School teachers have done their proper business, and the newspaper press too has not been backward in the performance of its duty. But there are still higher instructors - experience - calamity - dread of actual want…

'Experience', 'calamity' and 'dread of actual want' - these were universals in the lives of the common people. But the specific significance of the march of intellect was that it did, for a brief moment during the 1820s and early 1830s, represent the locus of a longstanding debate about the place of the common people in English society: a debate in which the voices of at least some of these people could be heard.[463]

---

[463] *WFP*, 2 Apr. 1831; this was the last issue of the paper.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Content taxonomy and examples, London periodicals, 1815-34

Periodical epartment/type	**Primary content/coverage of class as a whole**	**Examples and price ranges**
Commercial/trade (C)	Foreign/domestic trade; industry and manufactures; shipping news; agriculture; commerce; markets; bankrupts; stock market; course of exchange.	*Financial and Commercial Record* (1808-45); £2. 2s, annual subscription, twice weekly. *Exley and Dimsdale's Corn Exchange Circular* (1824-5); 4d, weekly. *London Mercantile Price Current* (1818-64); 1d, weekly.
Literary/theatrical/ satirical (L)	Variety of critical, 'amusing' and 'entertaining', and bawdy satirical content. Characterized by reviews and excerpts of literature, poetry, fiction, criminal narratives, ballads, memoirs, biographies, opera, fashion and manners, theatricals and miscellaneous literature from abroad. Carried correspondence, news of new publications, references to fine or popular arts, natural history, newspaper and periodical cuttings, topographical descriptions, useful domestic hints and advertisements. Also engaged in political and social commentary.	*Quarterly Review* (1809-1967); 6s. *Literary Chronicle and Weekly Review* (1819-28); 6d, weekly. *Ass, or Weekly Beast of Burden* (1826); 4d, weekly. *Mirror of Literature, Amusement, and Instruction* (1822-47); 2d, weekly.
Political/news (P)	Ranging through stamped 'newspapers', review magazines and unstamped penny journals, characterized by coverage of current affairs, parliamentary proceedings, domestic and foreign policy, court news and circulars and military movements. Dominated by an editorial (of radical, Tory, reformist or Whig hue). Many titles branch out into a range of commercial, literary and other news items.	*Trades' Newspaper and Mechanics' Weekly Journal* (1825-31); 7d, weekly. *Saturday Review of Politics* (1822-1938); 5d, weekly. *Penny Papers for the People* (1830-1); 1d, weekly.
Religious/faith (R)	Covering a range of faiths and sects: Christian (Anglican, evangelical, Roman Catholic, Baptist, Quaker, Non-Conformist and Methodist), Jewish, freethinking and anti-clerical. Characterized by biblical, ecclesiastical and other religious content in the form of poetry, sermons, reviews, articles and correspondence. Some include youth departments, biographical sketches, missionary and Sunday school information and advertisements. Many cover a range of spiritual, political, literary and philosophical topics.	*Christian Moderator* (1826-8); 1s, monthly. *General Baptist Repository* (1802-21); 6d, monthly. *A Slap at the Church!* (1832); 1d, weekly.
Technical/specialist useful' knowledge (T)	A large class intended to provide specialist information, knowledge and instruction in a range of fields, including 'science' (mathematics, chemistry, mechanics, astronomy, natural history, botany and phrenology); technical trades and professions (engineering, drawing, law, medicine and the 'useful arts'); and educative endeavours. Usually contained news of allied associations, reviews, lectures, woodcut diagrams, correspondence, information on new discoveries, inventions or patents and biographies of esteemed practitioners. Often had a powerful 'self-improvement' motif.	*British Entomology* (1824-39); 3s.6d, monthly *Lancet* (1823-1968); 6d, weekly. *Mechanic's Magazine, Museum, Register, Journal and Gazette* (1823-72); 3d, weekly.

Appendix 2. Summary of periodicals by type, London, 1815-34

	Commercial	**Literary**	**Political**	**Religious**	**Technical**
	No. Cases (% date range output)	**No. Cases (% date range output)**	**No. Cases (% date range output)**	**No. Cases (% date range output)**	**No. Cases (% date range output)**
	Higher price range				
Date range					
1815-19	16 (8.5)	32 (17)	78 (41.5)	11 (5.9)	51 (27.1)
1820-4	24 (9.6)	48 (19.1)	96 (38.2)	17 (6.8)	66 (26.3)
1825-9	18 (7.5))	48 (19.9)	80 (33.2)	20 (8.3)	75 (31.1)
1830-4	22 (8.8)	49 (19.6)	73 (29.2)	22 (8.8)	84 (33.6)
Totals/ mean ave % total price range output	80 (8.6%)	177 (19%)	327 (35.2)	70 (7.5)	276 (29.7)
	Middle price range				
Date range					
1815-19	1 (2.4)	9 (21.4)	11 (26.2)	15 (35.7)	6 (14.3)
1820-4	1 (2.1)	12 (25.5)	5 (10.6)	18 (38.3)	11 (23.4)
1825-9	2 (3.5)	15 (26.3)	10 (17.5)	18 (31.6)	12 (21)
1830-4	2 (2.5)	16 (20.3)	20 (25.3)	25 (31.6)	16 (20.3)
Totals/ mean ave % total price range output	6 (2.7%)	52 (23.1%)	46 (20.4%)	76 (33.8%)	45 (20%)
	Lower price range				
Date range					
1815-19	1 (2.6)	6 (15.4)	21 (53.8)	11 (28.2)	0 (0)
1820-4	3 (3.8)	29 (37.2)	15 (19.2)	20 (25.6)	11 (14.1)
1825-9	4 (5.9)	25 (36.8)	6 (8.8)	20 (29.4)	13 (19.1)
1830-4	8 (2.5)	141 (43.8)	80 (24.8)	51 (15.8)	42 (13)
Totals/ mean ave % total price range output	16 (3.2%)	201 (39.6%)	122 (24.1%)	102 (20.1%)	66 (13%)

Appendix 3. Thematic and activity grid for content analysis of London periodicals, 1819-33

Theme	Activity group	Loci and examples
1 – Domestic sphere: home, family and health	a. Household economy and domesticity	Cooking, eating, diet, useful receipts and 'housewifery'; brewing; gardening and growing; budgeting, thrift and prudence; mending and fixing; domestic hints (e.g. fire-lighting); accommodation and dwelling.
	b. Entertainment and celebrations	Playing music, singing and dancing; telling stories; family walks; Christmas and Easter celebrations at home.
	c. Familial relationships and friendship	Marriage and sexual practices; weddings, funerals, baptisms; parenthood and childhood; relatives, old age, friends and neighbours.
	d. Medical practices, health and death	Sickness, diseases and death; cures, remedies and salves; public health issues (e.g. cholera); 'quack' trade of physicians, apothecaries and 'gossips'.
2 – Amusement and recreation: drinking, sports and festivities	a. Drinking alcohol, gambling, smoking and pawning possessions	All locations (at home, public house, gin shop, tea garden, workshop, in prison, on the street or elsewhere); customs (e.g. toasting) and results of excesses. State or other lotteries and informal wagers. Tobacco and opium smoking.
	b. Competitive (human) sports and games	Pedestrianism/foot races, football/cricket/fives; cards, dice and skill or chance games; archery, bowling, cudgelling, angling, bell-ringing and others; children's and women's sports and games.
	c. Animal sports, domestication and cruelty	Hunting, bear- and badger-baiting, fights involving lions, dogs, cocks and rats; racing of any animal; pet-keeping; animal cruelty (incl. RSPCA); learned or cunning animals.
	d. Feasts, wakes and public events	Sundays, weekends and holidays; national days (e.g. King's birthday, state funerals, Guy Fawkes night, Trafalgar celebrations); Christmas, Twelfth Night, New Year and Easter; harvest and seasonal days (e.g. Plough Monday and May Day).
3 – Leisure experiences: consuming, visiting and seeing	a. Consuming, buying and window-shopping	Consumables (food, energy and others); clothing, books, periodicals, jewellery; coffee- and tea drinking; eating houses; 'fuddles' and browsing.
	b. Paid performances, exhibitions and clubs	Theatres, pantomimes, concerts, opera and dances; bands, orchestras and choirs; the circus, freak shows, magic performances and fairs; galleries, museums, panoramas, zoological gardens; 'penny clubs', dining clubs, tea-parties and others.
	c. Free performances and spectacles	Street performances (jugglers, Punch and Judy, ballad singers and patterers; animal performers); collective and individual dancing and singing; lecturers; balloon ascents; criminal trials and executions as a spectacle; visiting urban structures (e.g. Woolwich Docks) and green areas (parks, fields and commons) and rural rambling.
	d. Travelling	Steam ferries and ships; steam coaches; omnibuses and coaches; canals; railways; and streets (walking).

4. Religion and belief	a. Worship and religious feasts (in church)	All denominations (Anglican, Roman Catholic, Methodist, Baptist, Millennial, 'Infidel', Quaker and others); contemporary, historical and foreign feasts.
	b. Reading, praying and proselytizing (outside church)	Including missionaries, Sunday Schools, street preaching and activities of SPCK and RTS among others).
	c. Doctrine and church history	Miracles, divine intervention; religious orders; holy places; pilgrimages; spiritual lives; Biblical events; religious maxims.
	d. Alternative and 'superstitious' practices and beliefs	Including ghosts, witches, giant serpents, mermaid sightings; fairy tales, myths and legends; accounts of foreign cannibalism, magic and 'Hindoo Brahmins'; anti-clerical and non-Christian comments.
5. Self-improvement: education, literacy and learning	a. Self-improvement and education in general	Benefits to society; personal burdens.
	b. Reading	Practice of (men, women, children and family); at school, library, public house, mechanics' institute or other location; of periodicals, newspapers, books, technical/scientific works, street literature (ballads, prints etc), poetry and 'improper' or bawdy material.
	c. Writing and creating	Practice of (men, women and children as writers); technical and non-technical correspondence and writing (from artisans, mechanics and humble people); humble autobiographies; professional, elite and popular poetry, squibs and music; professional, elite and popular sculpture, painting and engagement with fine arts; exemplary creative lives.
	d. Learning and discovering	Children at school/learning informally; men and women attending formal lectures and classes (mechanics' institutes and others); informal engagement with learning; popular practices (collecting and natural history as a hobby); professional, elite and humble inventors; travel abroad; etymology; elite scientific practices and discoveries (including chemistry, mechanics, medicine, surgery etc); exemplary scientific lives.
6. Respectability and society: conduct, distinctions and relationships	a. Locution, fashion and cleanliness	Speech patterns and linguistics (e.g. comparison to French, Yorkshire dialect); witticisms and conversation (role in social interaction); male and female fashions and beauty; bathing and personal hygiene.
	b. Interpersonal relations, manners and social distinctions	Romance, sex and courtship; relations between individuals from different social groups, generations and nationalities; moral/allegorical hints on personal virtues; ideals of femininity.
	c. Royal, aristocratic and elite practice	Contemporary, historical and foreign (e.g. royalty attending functions).
	d. Slavery and racial/national distinction	Comments and anecdotes about Scots, Irish, 'black people', Jews and aborigines and others invoking stereotypical characteristics.
7. Work and wealth: labour, trade and the economy	a. Effects of industrialization and economic change	Time-work discipline; poverty, starvation, wages, population, machinery and emigration (political economy); fluctuations in commerce, the revenue and markets.
	b. Producing and selling	Industrial, trade and agricultural production; markets, stalls and shops; foreign imports; humble men, women and children as economic agents.

	c. Protest, self-protection and workshop customs	Craft/trade societies and events; customs (Saint Monday, apprenticeship rites, tramping); wage demands and addresses; turn-outs; subscriptions; combinations; co-operative production; benefit, friendly, saving, loan and insurance clubs.
	d. Philanthropy, legislation, and the state	Poor relief; laws governing trade, work and the economy (e.g. Corn Laws and Combination Laws); extra-governmental activity (e.g. philanthropic and charitable associations).
3. Law and order: injuries, crimes and punishment	a. Accidents, injuries and damage to property	Natural disasters/damage (e.g. thunderstorms); man-made accidents (e.g. stage coach crashes).
	b. Illegal or unethical activities	Theft, financial misdoings, violence, rape, murder, piracy, 'gulling', duelling and other criminal activities.
	c. Sentencing and punishment	Fines, imprisonment, transportation, execution as punishment.
	d. State enforcement and enquiry	Legal profession and courts; police and local authorities; official commissions and enquiries.
4. Public contention: politics, protest and conflict	a. Parliamentary politics	Proceedings of the Houses of Commons and Lords (including debates, readings of Bills, traditions, modus operandi and state openings).
	b. Extra-parliamentary 'constitutional' activity	Election dinners, hustings and chairings; voting; political meetings, clubs and societies; processions and assemblies; petitions, addresses and appeals; local government.
	c. Disorderly and 'unconstitutional' activity	Rioting, mobs and disturbances; drilling, arming, marching and insurrections; 'illegal' meetings; unstamped press campaigns; other 'underground' activity.
	d. Empire, military and war	Diplomacy and international relations; conflict and battles; military/naval intelligence and tales; foreign reform/revolutionary movements; civil war.

Appendix 4. London periodicals and newspapers by price, genre and dates consulted, 1819-33 [464]

Periodical/newspaper (dates published)	Editor/publisher/proprietor	Dates consulted/physical attributes	Price (price range)/frequency (day)	Genre	Circulation figures (approx.)
Black Dwarf (1817-24)	T. J. Wooler (ed. and pub.)	6 Jan. 1819-3 Feb. 1819 and 7 Jan. 1824-4 Feb. 1824 (octavo; 16pp/32 cols)	4d/6d (middle)/weekly (Weds)	Political (radical)	12,000 a week (1819).*
John Bull (1820-92)	Theodore Hook (ed. 1820-41); Shackell and Arrowsmith (prop. 1821)	17 Dec. 1820-14 Jan. 1821 and 1 Jan. 1826-29 Jan. 1826 (41cm; 8pp/3cols)	7d (higher)/weekly (Sun)	Stamped political newspaper (Tory)	750 (1820); 1,827 (1820); 9,000 (1820); 10,230 (nos. 5 and 6, Jan. 1821); 11,560 (1825).
Bell's Life in London and Sporting Chronicle (1822-86)	Robert Bell (ed., pub., prop. 1822); W. R. MacDonald (ed., pub., prop. 1822-6); Vincent George Dowling (ed. 1824-52); William Innell Clement (ed. 1826, pub., prop., 1826-52)	3 Mar. 1822- 31 Mar. 1822 and 1 Jan. 1826-29 Jan. 1826 (39cm; 8pp/3cols)	7d (higher)/weekly (Sun/Mon edns.)	Stamped political and sporting newspaper	2, 800 (1823); 3-4,000 (24 Feb. 1823); 7,600 (1 Jan. 1826); 7,150 (Nov. 1826); 15,949 (23 Sept. 1827); 20,001 (16 Dec. 1827); 26, 195 (23 Dec. 1827); 21, 357 (30 Dec. 1827); 24,000 (15 Jun. 1828).
Hone's Original Weekly Publication (1822-4)	Charles Blunt (ed., pub., prop. 1822)	No. 1, Aug. 1822-no. 5, Sept. 1822 and no. 16, Jan. 1823-no. 20, Feb. 1823 (octavo; 16pp/32 cols)	2d (lower)/weekly	Literary miscellany	N/A
Mirror of Literature, Amusement and Instruction (1822-47)	John Limbird (pub., prop. 1822-47); Thomas Byerley (ed. 1822-6); John Timbs (ed. 1826-38)	24 May 1823-21 Jun. 1823 and 7 Jul. 1832-4 Aug. 1832 (octavo; 16pp/32 cols)	2d (lower)/weekly (Sat)	Literary miscellany	15,000 (1822); 150,000 (02 Nov 1822); 80,000 (1825).*
Mechanic's Magazine, Museum, Register, Journal, and Gazette (1823-58)	John Knight and Henry Lacey (pub., prop., 1823-6); Joseph Clinton Robertson (ed., prop. 1823-52); Thomas Hodgskin (ed., prop. 1823-6)	30 Aug. 1823-27 Sep. 1823 and 5 Jun. 1828-2 Feb. 1828 (octavo; 16pp/32 cols)	3d (lower)/weekly (Sat)	Technical	16,000 a week (1824).*
Child's Companion; or	Religious Tract Society (pub.,	Jan. 1824-May	1d(lower)/monthly	Religious	20,000 a

[464] An asterisk connotes a circulation taken from the *Waterloo directory* (2003); all others are from the sources themselves.

Sunday Scholar's Reward (1824-37)	prop. 1824-37); George Stokes (ed.)	1824 and Apr. 1825-Aug. 1825 (11cm; 32pp/64cols)			month (1829).*
Economist and General Advertiser (1824-5)	John Knight and Henry Lacey (pub., 1824-5)	22 May 1824-19 Jun. 1824 and 9 Jul. 1825-6 Aug. 1825 (20cm; 16pp/32 cols)	3d (lower)/weekly (Sat)	Technical	N/A
Circulator of Useful Knowledge, Amusement, Literature, Science, and General Information (1825)	Thomas Boys (pub,. prop.)	1 Jan. 1825-29 Jan. 1825 and 28 May 1825-25 Jun. 1825 (22cm, 16pp/32 cols)	3d (lower)/weekly (Sat)	Technical	N/A
Journeyman and Artisans' London and Provincial Chronicle (1825)	Thomas Dickie (pub., prop.)	12 Jun. 1825-10 Jul. 1825 and 7 Aug. 1825-4 Sep. 1825 (quarto; 8pp; 32 cols)	7d (higher)/weekly (Sun)	Stamped political newspaper (radical)	300 weekly (1825); 500 plus (12 July 1825).
Trades' Newspaper and Mechanics' Weekly Journal (1825-31)	Joseph Clinton Robertson (ed., 1825-6); John Anderson (ed., 1826-7); William Spencer Northhouse (ed., 1827); William Carpenter (ed., 1828-30)	17 Jul. 1825-14 Aug. 1825 and 7 Jan. 1827-4 Feb. 1827 (26cm; 16pp/32 cols, then 37cm; 8pp/24 cols)	7d (higher)/weekly (Sun)	Stamped political newspaper (radical, co-operative)	628 weekly (Jan. 1827); c. 1,000 (1829).
Canal Boatman's Magazine (1829-32)	A. Snell (pub.); 'Paddington Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge among Canal Boatmen' (prop.)	Apr. 1829-Aug. 1829 and Jan. 1831-May 1831 (demy-octavo; 16pp/32 cols)	1d/gratis to the poor (lower)/monthly	Religious (evangelical)	1,000 (No. 1, Apr. 1829); 1,250 copies of nos. 1 and 2 published (20 May 1829) and distributed gratis.
A Penny Paper for the People, by the Poor Man's Guardian (1830-1	Henry Hetherington (ed., pub., prop.)	25 Dec. 1830-21 Jan. 1831 and 4 Jun. 1831-2 Jul. 1831 (octavo; 4pp/8cols)	1d (lower)/irreg., weekly (Sat)	Political (radical)	12,000-15,000 (1832-1833); 16,000 (1832).*
Brutal Job Nott; or Labouring Man's Friend (1831-3)	J. and W. Richardson (pub., prop.)	15 Dec. 1831-12 Jan. 1832 and 19 Nov. 1832-27 Dec. 1832 (4pp/12 cols)	1½ d (lower)/weekly (Thurs)	Political (Tory)	N/A
Penny Magazine of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge (1832-45)	Charles Knight (ed., pub.); Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge (prop.)	31 Mar. 1832-28 Apr. 1832 and 1 Dec. 1832 to 29 Dec. 1832 (8pp/16 cols)	1d (lower)/weekly (Sat)	Technical	1,600 - 200,000 weekly (1832); 50,000 a week (No. 1, 1832).*
Saturday Magazine (1832-44)	Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (pub., prop.)	7 Jul. 1832-28 Jul. 1832 and 5 Jan. 1833-2 Feb. 1833 (double 8vo; 8pp/ 16 cols)	1d (lower)/weekly (Sat)	Religious	1600-80,000 weekly (1832).
Lady's Penny Gazette; or, Mirror of Fashion,	Benjamin Steill and George Berger (pub., prop.)	27 Oct. 1832-24 Nov. 1832 and 1	1d (lower)/weekly (Sat)	Literary	'the sale of our

[illegible] Miscellany of Instruction and Amusement (1832-4)		Dec. 1832-29 Dec. 1832 (8pp/16 cols)			publication amounted to five hundred copies per hour, for the two or three first days; so that it has exceeded our expectations by many thousands,' (3 Nov. 1832).
[illegible] a Medical Penny Magazine (1832-[illegible]	William Howden, William Strange and Charles Penny (pub., prop.)	1 Aug. 1832-29 Aug. 1832 and 2 Jan. 1833-30 Jan. 1833 (27cm; 8pp/16 cols)	1d (lower)/weekly (Weds)	Technical	N/A
Evangelical Penny Magazine and Bible Instructor (1832)	William Howden (pub.)	13 Oct. 1832-10 Nov. 1832 and 17 Nov. 1832-15 Dec. 1832 (26cm; 8pp)	1d (lower)/weekly (Sat)	Religious	N/A
Figaro in London ([illegible]-9)	Gilbert Abbott à Beckett (ed.); William Strange (pub.)	10 Dec. 1831-5 Jan. 1832 and 1 Dec. 1832-29 Dec. 1832 (27cm; 4pp/8 cols)	1d (lower)/weekly (Sat)	Political (radical comic)	70,000 (1832).*

Appendix 5. Summary results of content analysis of London periodicals and newspapers, 1819-33 (7962 cases)

Item theme	Blck Dwf		John Bull		Bell's		J.man		Trades'		P. Pap.		Br. J. Ntt		Figaro		Ch. Comp.		Can. Bt. Mag.	
1. Domestic sphere																				
a. Household economy and domesticity			1	0.10%	20	1.31%	8	0.92%	2	0.27%			1	1.10%	1	0.32%	2	1.29%	1	0.56%
b. Entertainment and celebrations			1	0.10%	16	1.05%	12	1.39%	4	0.54%										
c. Familial relationships and friendship			35	3.36%	50	3.27%	10	1.15%	14	1.90%			1	1.10%						
d. Medical practices, health and death			4	0.38%	26	1.70%	8	0.92%	12	1.63%			4	4.40%	4	1.28%	5	3.23%	3	1.67%
Totals			**41**		**112**		**38**		**32**				6		**5**		**18**		**4**	
2. Amusement and recreation																				
a. Drinking alcohol, gambling and smoking					26	1.70%	12	1.39%	3	0.41%	1	0.60%								
b. Competitive (human) sports			4	0.38%	132	8.63%	40	4.62%	20	2.71%			1	1.10%			1	0.65%	7	3.89%
c. Animal sports, domestication/cruelty	1	0.90%	12	1.15%	176	11.50%	36	4.16%	17	2.31%					1	0.32%	5	3.23%	3	1.67%
d. Feasts, wakes and public events			4	0.38%	2	0.13%	2	0.23%	10	1.36%	4	2.38%	4	4.40%	5	1.60%	1	0.65%		
Totals	**1**		**20**		**336**		**90**		**50**		**5**		8		**6**		**7**		**10**	
3. Leisure experiences																				
a. Consuming, buying and shopping			116	11.13%	16	1.05%	6	0.69%	6	0.81%	2	1.19%								
b. Paid performances, exhibitions/clubs	3	2.70%			86	5.62%	18	2.08%	11	1.49%	6	3.57%			47	15.02%			2	1.11%
c. Free performances and spectacles					10	0.65%	14	1.62%	6	0.81%										
d. Travelling			2	0.19%	4	0.26%			5	0.68%										
Totals	**3**		**118**		**116**		**38**		**28**		**8**				**47**				**6**	
4. Religion and belief																				
a. Worship and religious feasts	1	0.90%	2	0.19%	4	0.26%	14	1.62%	9	1.22%	3	1.79%	15	16.48%	2	0.64%	1	0.65%	48	26.67%
b. Reading, praying and proselytizing	1	0.90%	6	0.58%	4	0.26%	4	0.46%	3	0.41%	1	0.60%	3	3.30%			63	40.65%	66	36.67%
c. Doctrine and church history	1	0.90%	11	1.06%									3	3.30%			15	9.68%	6	3.33%
d. Alternative/ superstitious practices	2	1.80%			4	0.26%	2	0.23%			3	1.79%			10	3.19%	8	5.16%		
Totals	**5**		**19**		**12**		**20**		**12**		**7**		**21**		**12**		**87**		**120**	
5. Self-improvement																				
a. Self-improvement and education			1	0.10%			4	0.46%	2	0.27%										
b. Reading	3	2.70%	78	7.49%	48	3.14%	30	3.46%	32	4.34%	7	4.17%	7	7.69%	1	0.32%	1	0.65%		
c. Writing and creating	7	6.31%	18	1.73%	6	0.39%	32	3.70%			7	4.17%	11	12.09%	31	9.90%	6	3.87%	17	9.44%
d. Learning and discovering			39	3.74%	24	1.57%	74	8.55%	22	2.99%			2	2.20%	2	0.64%	3	1.94%	4	2.22%
Totals	**10**		**136**		**78**		**140**		**56**		**14**		**19**		**38**		**28**		**24**	
6. Respectability and society																				
a. Locution, fashion and cleanliness			15	1.44%	54	3.53%			4	0.54%			1	1.10%	10	3.19%				
b. Interpersonal relations/social distinctions			1	0.10%	20	1.31%	4	0.46%	11	1.49%			2	2.20%	2	0.64%	1	0.65%		
c. Royal, aristocratic and elite practice	7	6.31%	132	12.67%	48	3.14%	14	1.62%	16	2.17%	2	1.19%			28	8.95%				
d. Slavery and racial/national distinction			10	0.96%	14	0.92%	6	0.69%	10	1.36%	1	0.60%	1	1.10%						
Totals	**7**		**158**		**136**		**24**		**41**		**3**		**4**		**40**		**1**		1	0.56%
7. Work and wealth																			**1**	
a. Effects of industrialization	4	3.60%	83	7.97%	84	5.49%	48	5.54%	90	12.21%	5	2.98%	2	2.20%						
b. Producing and selling	10	9.01%	36	3.45%	234	15.29%	26	3.00%	24	3.26%	4	2.38%	10	10.99%	8	2.56%	3	0.65%		
c. Protest, self-help and shop customs	2	1.80%	5	0.48%	6	0.39%	66	7.62%	100	13.57%	10	5.95%					13	8.39%	10	5.56%
d. Philanthropy, legislation and state	1	0.90%	12	1.15%	38	2.48%	116	13.39%	46	6.24%					2	0.64%				
Totals	**17**		**136**		**362**		**256**		**260**		**19**		**12**		**10**		**14**		**10**	
8. Law and order																				
a. Accidents, injuries/property damage			45	4.32%	56	3.66%	12	1.39%	61	8.28%										
b. Illegal or unethical activities	4	3.60%	142	13.63%	160	10.46%	96	11.09%	109	14.79%	4	2.38%			4	1.28%			2	1.11%
c. Sentencing and punishment			16	1.54%	12	0.78%	4	0.46%	12	1.63%	11	6.55%	2	2.20%	1	0.32%			1	0.56%
d. State enforcement and inquiry	7	6.31%	3	0.29%	12	0.78%	18	2.08%	12	1.63%	4	2.38%								
Totals	**11**		**206**		**240**		**130**		**194**		**19**		**2**		**5**				1	0.56%
9. Public contention																			4	
a. Parliamentary politics	2	1.80%	22	2.11%	24	1.57%	46	5.31%	5	0.68%	4	2.38%	1	1.10%	71	22.68%				
b. Extra-parliamentary activity	31	27.93%	54	5.18%	26	1.70%	12	1.39%	11	1.49%	38	22.62%	6	6.59%	67	21.41%				
c. Disorderly activity	15	13.51%	2	0.19%	30	1.96%	12	1.39%			38	22.62%	15	16.48%	12	3.83%				
d. Empire, military and war	9	8.11%	130	12.48%	58	3.79%	60	6.93%	48	6.51%	13	7.74%								
Totals	**57**		**208**		**138**		**130**		**64**		**93**		**22**		**150**		**155**		1	0.56%
Periodical totals	**111**	**100.00%**	**1042**	**100.00%**	**1530**	**100.00%**	**866**	**100.00%**	**737**	**100.00%**	**168**	**100.00%**	**91**	**100.00%**	**313**	**100.00%**			**180**	**100.00%**

Sat. Mag.		Evan. P. Mag.		Hive		Mirror		Ldies' P. Gzte		Mech. Mag.		Econ.		Circ.		P. Mag.		Doctor		Totals	Weighted ave (%)
3	2.19%	1	0.62%	1	0.57%	10	3.65%	4	1.15%	25	7.86%	144	46.01%	17	3.07%	3	1.75%	12	1.94%	256	
2	1.46%			5	2.84%	7	2.55%	37	10.66%					11	1.99%	1	0.58%	4	1.29%	100	
		2	1.24%	2	1.14%	6	2.19%	15	4.32%	7	2.20%	1	0.32%	3	0.54%					157	
2	1.46%	5	3.11%	13	7.39%	13	4.74%	5	1.44%	12	3.77%	26	8.31%	5	0.90%	2	1.17%	11	1.78%	288	
7		8		21		36		61		44		171		36		6		155		801	11.10%
1	0.73%	1	0.62%	4	2.27%	9	3.28%	1	0.29%											88	
2	1.46%			3	1.70%			1	0.29%	4	1.26%	12	3.83%	1	0.18%	1	0.58%	4	1.29%	210	
2	1.46%			17	9.66%	5	1.82%							6	1.08%	1	0.58%			286	
2	1.46%	2	1.24%	4	2.27%	3	1.09%	2	0.58%	2	0.63%			5	0.90%	3	1.75%	1	0.65%	61	
7		3		28		17		4		6		16		21		8		5		645	5.48
4	2.92%					1	0.36%	2	0.58%												
		1	0.62%	14	7.95%	14	5.11%	49	14.12%			3	0.96%	4	0.72%			4	1.29%	164	
3	2.19%			3	1.70%	4	1.46%			2	0.63%			22	3.97%	3	1.75%			278	
7		1		1	0.57%	4	1.46%			3	0.94%	3	0.96%	5	0.90%	3	1.75%			54	
		1		18		23		51		4	1.26%	1	0.32%	13	2.35%					38	
11	8.03%	18	11.18%							9		7		44		6		4		534	5.49%
8	5.84%	16	9.94%	1	0.57%	3	1.09%														
2	1.46%	70	43.48%	4	2.27%	2	0.73%			2	0.63%			7	1.26%	6	3.51%	2	0.63%	149	
4	2.92%			5	3.41%	9	3.28%							5	0.90%	2	1.17%			188	
25		1	0.62%	7	3.98%	5	1.82%					1	0.32%	27	4.87%	4	2.34%	1	0.31%	155	
		105		17		19		5	1.44%					4	0.72%	3	1.75%	2	0.63%	60	
3	2.19%	2	1.24%			3	1.09%			2		1		43		15		5		552	14.27%
7	5.11%	14	8.70%	2	3.98%	7	2.55%	2	0.58%												
23	16.79%	2	1.24%	31	17.61%	16	5.84%	24	6.92%	4	1.26%	2	0.64%			5	2.92%	4	1.26%	34	
31	22.63%	3	1.86%	17	9.66%	29	10.58%	29	8.36%	9	2.83%	2	0.64%	29	5.23%	10	5.85%	17	5.35%	385	
64		21		55		55		9	2.59%	42	13.21%	13	4.15%	47	8.48%	17	9.94%	26	8.18%	336	
								64		129	40.57%	20	6.39%	136	24.55%	55	32.16%	73	22.96%	687	
										184		37		212		87		120		1442	22.49%
1	0.73%			5	2.84%	8	2.92%														
14	10.22%	3	1.86%	10	5.68%	27	9.85%	85	24.50%	2	0.63%	4	1.28%	2	0.36%			6	1.89%	197	
1	0.73%	1	0.62%	3	1.70%	13	4.74%	40	11.53%	10	3.14%	16	5.11%	18	3.25%	12	7.02%	5	1.57%	196	
1	0.73%	2	1.24%	2	1.14%	7	2.55%	4	1.15%	3	0.94%			19	3.43%	4	2.34%	4	1.26%		
17		6		20		55				2	0.63%			4	0.72%	2	1.17%			299	
								129		17		20		43		18		15		63	
1	0.73%	1	0.62%																	755	8.92%
6	4.38%	14	8.70%	4	2.27%	28	10.22%	3	0.86%	12	3.77%	13	4.15%	31	5.60%	2	1.17%				
						1	0.36%	24	6.92%	19	5.92%	19	6.07%	43	7.76%	20	11.70%	7	2.20%	380	
		2	1.24%							2	0.63%	4	1.28%	2	0.36%			1	0.31%	559	
7		17		4		29		27		9	2.83%	3	0.96%	7	1.26%	1	0.58%			199	
										42		39		83		23		8		237	
																				1375	12.60%
1	0.73%			5	2.84%	13	4.74%	1	0.29%	4	1.26%			8	1.44%	4	2.34%	1	0.31%		
1	0.73%			3	1.70%	4	1.46%	1	0.29%	2	0.63%	22	7.03%	15	2.71%	1	0.58%			193	
2				5	2.84%	10	3.65%	1	0.29%					4	0.72%	1	0.58%	1	0.31%	579	
				13		27		3		6		22		30		6		2		73	
1	0.73%							2	0.58%											77	
						2	0.73%			2	0.63%			11	1.99%					922	7.10%
														6	1.08%					189	
														6	1.08%					255	
1						13		1	0.29%	6	1.89%			19	3.43%	2	1.17%	4	1.26%	130	
137	100.00%	161	100.00%	176	100.57%	274	100.00%	347	100.00%	318	100.00%	313	100.00%	554	100.00%	171	100.00%	318	100.00%	7962	12.55%
																					100%

BIBLIOGRAPHY[1]

1. Manuscript and archival sources

British Library, St. Pancras, London

Francis Place Collection, Additional Manuscripts

27,789-27,797 (Narratives of political events in England)

27,798-27,806 (Collections on the repeal of laws against trade combinations)

27,819-27,822 and 27,835 (Collections on working-men's associations)

27,823-27,824 (Collections on mechanics' institutes and schools)

27,825-27830 (Collections on manners and morals)

35,148-35,151 (Political correspondence)

35,152-35,153 (Private correspondence)

35,154 (Articles by, in the *Trades' Newspaper*; project for a Society for the Diffusion of Political and Moral Knowledge)

37,949-37,950 (Correspondence)

Peel Papers, Additional Manuscripts

40,377, fols. 71-2 (Letter from Joseph Clinton Robertson to Robert Peel, 22 Apr. 1825)

Babbage Papers, Additional Manuscripts

37,186, 37,187, 37,188 and 37,194 (Correspondence between Joseph Clinton Robertson and Charles Babbage, 1832-3 and 1851)

[1] All works are published in London, unless otherwise stated.

National Co-operative Archive, Manchester

Anon, [attrib. Henry Hetherington], 'Biographical sketches of the originators of the Chartist movement' [n.d.] fols. 1-14.

2. Printed primary sources

a. Parliamentary papers[2]

i. House of Commons, Accounts and Papers

Return of ex-officio informations filed for political libel and seditious conduct, in Court of Kings Bench in England, 1808-20, **1821** (438) XXI. 405.

Return of individuals prosecuted for public libel, blasphemy and sedition in England, Wales and Scotland, 1813-22, **1823** (562) XV. 239.

Account of law expenses for prosecutions against printers, publishers and booksellers under Stamp Act relating to books and pamphlets, 1829-30, **1830** (563) XXV. 545.

Return of prosecutions and fines against printers and publishers under Stamp Act relating to books and pamphlets, 1830, **1830** (407) XXV. 539.

Warrant of conviction and commitment of E. Windhurst, 1831, **1831** (275) XV. 99.

Return of number of persons committed in metropolis for sale of unstamped publications, 1831, **1831-2** (40) XXXIV. 103.

Return of number of persons committee for selling unstamped publications, 1831-2, **1831-2** (711) XXXIV. 107.

Return of number of persons committed for selling unstamped publications, 1832-3, **1833** (77) XXIX. 37.

---

[2] Dates refer to the period covered in the document, and (in bold) the year of publication.

Return of number of persons in prison on prosecutions for the sale of unstamped publications, 1831-3, **1833** (679) XXIX. 45.

Return of number of persons committed for selling unstamped publications, 1833-34, **1834** (199) XLVII. 241.

Return of prosecutions for libel by ex-officio information, or indictment in Dept. of Solicitor of Treasury, 1834, **1834** (202) XLVIII. 267.

Return of prosecutions for political libel, blasphemy and sedition; number of informations filed by Attorney General, 1821-33, **1834** (410) XLVIII. 269.

Abstract of answers and returns on state of education in England and Wales, 1833, **1835** (62) XLI.1, XLII.1, and XLIII.1

Information, evidence and conviction of J. Forster, for selling unstamped publications, June 1834, **1835** (555) XLVI. 243.

Return of persons committed by Magistrates for sale of unstamped publications, 1836, **1836** (21) XLI. 427.

ii. House of Commons Bills

Bill to make certain publications subject to duties of stamps on newspapers and to restrain abuses from publication of seditious libels (as amended), 1819, **1819-20** (34) I. 63.

Bill, intituled, Act for more effectual suppression of blasphemous and seditious libels, 1819, **1819-20** (21) I. 83.

Bill for more effectual administration of office of Justice of Peace in metropolis, and for more effectual prevention of depredations on river Thames, 1821, **1821** (435) II. 711.

iii. House of Commons, Reports of Committees

Select Committee appointed to enquire into the education of the lower orders of the metropolis, third report, 1816, **1816**, (495) IV. 165.

Select Committee on state of police of metropolis, and execution of laws for licensing of victuallers. First report, minutes of evidence, appendix (licensing), 1817, **1817**, (233) VII. 1.

Select Committee on the education of the lower orders of the metropolis, second report, 1818, **1818** (426) IV. 55.

Select Committee on the education of the lower orders of the metropolis, fourth report, 1818, **1818** (427) IV. 223.

Select Committee on state of gaols, and best method of providing for reformation of offenders, 1819, **1819** (579) VII. 1.

Select Committee on laws and regulations which restrict sale of beer by retail, 1830, **1830** (253) X. 1.

Select Committee on observance of Sabbath: report, minutes of evidence, appendix, 1831-2, **1832** (697) VII. 253.

Select Committee on inquiry into drunkenness among labouring classes of United Kingdom, report, minutes of evidence, appendix, 1834, **1834** (559) VIII. 315.

Select Committee on education of people of England and Wales, and grants in aid: report, minutes of evidence, appendix, 1835, **1835** (465) VII. 763.

b. Newspapers and periodicals[3]

i. Stamped newspapers

Ballot (1831-2)

Bell's Life in London and Sporting Chronicle (1822-86)

Bell's Weekly Messenger (1796-1904)

Bell's Weekly Dispatch (1801-86)

Chambers's London Journal (1841-5)

†*Courier* (1792-1842)

John Bull (1820-92)

**Intelligence* (1830-3)

†*Morning Advertiser* (1793-1965)

†*Morning Chronicle* (1770-1865)

†*Morning Herald* (1781-1869)

Observer (1791-1952)

Palladium (1825-30)

**Paul Pry* (1830-1)

Pierce Egan's Life in London and Sporting Guide (1823-7)

Penny Illustrated News (1849-50)

Political Letter (1831-2)

Political and Literary Argus (1823)

Sunday Times (1822-1972)

†*Sun* (1792-1871)

---

[3] Those serials marked * (n=66) were printed, published or owned at some point by George Cowie and William Strange; see chapter two. Those marked † (n=46) are among a wider selection that appear in the library catalogue of the London Mechanics' Institution for 1833; see chapter four.

Sunday Monitor (1814-30)

†*Standard* (1827-60)

†*The Times* (1785-1983)

Trades' Free Press (1827-8)

Trades' Newspaper and Mechanics' Weekly Journal (1825-7)

†*True Sun* (1832-7)

Voice of the People (1831)

Weekly Free Press (1828-31)

Wooler's British Gazette (1819-23)

ii. Periodicals

†*Athenaeum* (1829-1921)

Advocate; or Artizans' and Labourers' Friend (1833)

**Album, or Miscellany of Amusement and Instruction* (1831)

Anti-slavery Monthly Reporter (1823-31)

Arlis's Pocket Magazine (1818-26)

†*Artisan; or Mechanic's Instructor* (1824-5)

†**Ass; or Weekly Beast of Burden* (1826)

**Associate* [*and Co-operative Mirror*] (1829)

**Annual Parliaments* (1830-1)

Beauties of the Magazines and Spirit of the Times (1827-8)

**Bell's Literary Intelligence, and New National Omnibus* (1834)

**Birmingham and Co-operative Herald* (1829-30)

Black Dwarf (1817-24)

†*Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* (1817-1905)

**Bookbinders' Trade Circular* (1850-77)

Bookseller (1837-91)

**Boys' and Girls' Penny Magazine* (1832-3)

Bristol Job Nott; or Labouring Man's Friend (1831-3)

**British Co-operator; or Record and Review of Co-operative and Entertaining Knowledge* (1830)

British Entomology (1824-39)

Bull Dog; a Weekly Expositor of Humbug (1826)

**Cab* (1832)

**Calendar of Crime and General Advertiser* (1832)

Canal Boatman's Magazine (1829-31)

Captain Rock in London; or the Chieftain's Weekly Gazette (1825-7)

**Carpenter's Monthly Political Magazine* (1831-2)

Carpenter's Political and Historical Essays (1831)

**Casket* (1827-9)

**Censor* (1828-9) [destroyed]

†*Chambers's Edinburgh Journal* (1832-53)

Chambers's Journal of Popular Literature, Science and Art (1854-97)

Champion (1819-22)

Chemist (1824-5)

Child's Companion; or Sunday Scholar's Reward (1824-37)

Child's Magazine (1823-4)

Christian Gleaner (1823)

**Christian Moderator* (1826-8)

Christian's Penny Magazine (1832-8)

Church Examiner (1832)

†*Circulator of Useful Knowledge* (1825)

**Citizen; an Interesting Weekly Publication on Manners, Morals, and Amusements* (1832)

†*Cobbett's Cottage Economy* (1821)

**Cobbett's Magazine; a Monthly Review of Politics, History, Science, Literature, and Rural and Domestic Pursuits* (1833-4)

**Comic Magazine* (1832-4)

†*Co-operative Magazine* (1826-30)

*[*Brighton*] *Co-operator* (1828-30)

Crisis (1832-4)

Critical Figaro (1832)

Devil's Walk (1832)

**Doctor; a Medical Penny Magazine* (1832-7)

Domestic Visitor (1828-31)

Dry Toast; Prepared for the Sunday Morning Repast (1823)

Economist; a Periodical Paper Explanatory of the New System of Society Projected by Robert Owen, Esq (1821-2)

Economist and General Advertiser (1824-5)

Edinburgh Annual Register (1806-26)

†*Edinburgh Review* (1802-29)

English Figaro (1832)

**Episcopal Gazette; a Journal of Priestcraft and Knavery* (1832)

Evangelical Penny Magazine and Bible Instructor (1832)

**Fast Life* (1859-60)

Figaro in Birmingham (1832)

**Figaro in London* (1831-9)

**Fool's Cap* (1831)

†*Fraser's Magazine* (1830-82)

Freethinking Christians' Quarterly Register (1823-5)

Gauntlet (1833-4)

Giant Killer; or Anti-Landlord (1814)

†*Glasgow Mechanics' Magazine: and Annals of Philosophy* (1823-6 and 1830-1)

Gorgon (1818-19)

**Halfpenny Magazine, or the Witness* (1832)

Harlequin (1829) [destroyed]

Hetherington's Two-Penny Dispatch (1836)

†*Hive; an Original Weekly Publication* (1822-4)

†*Hone's Every Day Book* (1825-7)

Hone's Reformists' Register (1817)

†*Hone's Table Book* (1827)

Housekeeper's Magazine, and Family Economist (1825-6)

Hoxton Sausage, and Jerry-Wag's Journal (1832)

**Idler* (1832)

Isis (1832)

†*John Bull's Magazine and Literary Recorder* (1824)

Journeyman and Artizans' London and Provincial Chronicle (1825)

**Quid! or, Tales of My Messmates* (1832)

Kaleidoscope; or, Literary and Scientific Mirror (Liverpool, 1818-31)

Labourer's Friend and Handicraft's Chronicle (1821-4)

Ladies' Penny Gazette; or, Mirror of Fashion, and Miscellany of Instruction and Amusement (1832-4)

†*Lancet* (1823-1968)

Leigh Hunt's London Journal (1834-5)

†*Library of Entertaining Knowledge* (1826-35)

**Literary Cabinet and Journal of Belles Lettres, Fine Arts, Drama* (1827)

†*Literary Gazette* (1817-60)

Literary Test (1832)

London Alfred; or, People's Recorder (1819)

†**London Mechanics' Register* (1824-6)

**London Penny Journal* (1832)

**London Weekly Magazine* (1833)

**Magazine of Useful Knowledge and Co-operative Miscellany* (1830)

Maids, Wives, and Widows' Penny Magazine, and Gazette of Fashion (1832-3)

Man (1833-4)

†*Mechanic's Chronicle* (1824)

Mechanic's Gallery of Science and Art (1825)

Mechanic's Magazine, Museum, Register, Journal and Gazette (1823-72)

†*Mechanic's Oracle and Artisan's Laboratory and Workshop* (1824-5)

Mechanic's Weekly Journal (1823-4)

Medical Adviser (1823-5)

†*Mirror of Literature, Amusement and Instruction* (1822-47)

Mirror of the Stage or New Dramatic Censor (1822-4)

†*Monthly Magazine* (1796-43)

Monthly Supplement of the Penny Magazine (1833)

**Monthly Theatrical Review* (1829)

Moral and Political Magazine of the London Corresponding Society (1796-7)

**National Omnibus and General Advertiser* (1831-3)

**New Casket* (1831-3)

Newgate Calendar (1824-8)

Newgate Monthly Magazine (1824-6)

†**New Entertaining Press and London Advertiser* (1832-3)

New London Mechanics' Register and Magazine of Science and the Useful Arts (1827-8)

**New Penny Magazine; or Weekly Miscellany of Literature, Science, and Art* (1832)

†*Nic-Nac; or, Oracle of Knowledge* (1822-8)

**Official Gazette of the Trades' Unions* (1834)

**Olio; or Museum of Entertainment* (1828-33)

One Pennyworth of Pig's Meat, or Lessons for the Swinish Multitude (1793-5)

**Original Weekly Miscellany of Humour, Literature, and the Fine Arts* (1832)

Oxberry's Dramatic Biography and Histrionic Anecdotes (1825-1827)

†*Panoramic Miscellany: or Monthly Magazine and Review of Literature, Science, Arts, Inventions and Occurrences* (1826)

Parterre (1834-7)

†*Partington's Scientific Gazette* (1825-6)

**Patriot* (1831)

**Paul Pry* (1826)

**Penny Cyclopaedia of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge* (1833-43)

†*Penny Magazine* (1832-45)

Penny Papers for the People (1830-1)

**Penny Pirate; or Extracts from Spirited Works, Periodical Publications* (1832)

Penny Satirist (1837-48)

**Penny School Book* (1832)

**Penny Story Book* (1832)

**Penny Story-Teller* (1832-7)

People (1817)

People's Penny Pictures (1832)

†*Percy Anecdotes* (1820-3)

Perry's Bankrupt and Insolvent Gazette (1826-83)

Phrenological Journal and Miscellany (Edinburgh, 1823-36)

**Physician* (1832)

Pioneer, or Trades' Union Magazine (1833-4)

**Political Anecdotist and Popular Instructor* (1831)

Political Economist and Universal Philanthropist (1823-5)

†**Political Letters and Pamphlets* (1830-1)

Political Register [in various guises] (1802-36)

**Political Unionist* (1832)

Politician (1794)

Poor Man's Guardian (1831-5)

**Poor Richard's Journal for Poor People* (1832)

†*Portfolio of Entertaining and Instructive Varieties* (1823-9)

Pulpit (1823-71)

Prompter (1830-1)

Prophetic Almanack (1825)

Quarterly Journal of Foreign Medicine and Surgery (1818-21)

†*Quarterly Review* (1809-1967)

Quid! or, Tales of My Messmates (1832)

Quizzical Gazette Extraordinary!!! and Wonderful Advertiser (1819-28)

Rambler's Magazine or Fashionable Emporium of Polite Literature (1822-3)

Republican (1819-26)

Republican; or, Voice of the People (1832-4)

Racing Calendar (1818-34)

†**Register of Arts and Sciences* (1823-6)

Rural Rides (1830)

Saturday Magazine (1832-54)

Scientific Receptacle (1791-1819)

Scorpion (1830)

Shadgett's Weekly Review of Cobbett, Wooler [sic], *Sherwin and Other Democratical* [sic] *and Infidel Writers* (1818-19)

**Slap at the Church!* (1832)

Slap at the Times (1832)

**Spirit of the Times; or Weekly Condenser of Periodical Literature* (1827-8)

**Squib* (1832)

**Talisman, or English Keepsake* (1829-31)

Theatre, or Dramatic and Literary Mirror (1819)

Thief; a London, Edinburgh and Dublin Weekly Journal of Literature and Science (1832-3)

Thomas Dibdin's Penny Trumpet (1832)

**Tiddy Doll* (1830)

Tract Magazine (1824-46)

**Truth* (1832)

Unique (1823)

†*Union Magazine* (1832)

Useful Hints for Labourers (1829-55)

Voice of the People (1830)

Voice of the West Riding (1833-4)

**Watchman and Police Recorder* (1826)

Weekly Entertainer, or, Agreeable and Instructive Repository (1783-1819)

Weekly Police Gazette (1834-6)

†*Weekly Satirist* (1828)

Weekly Visitor (1832-5)

†*Westminster Review* (1824-1914)

**Whig Dresser* (1833)

†*Working Man's Companion* (1831)

Working Man's Friend (1832-3)

Youth's Instructor and Guardian (1817-55)

†*Youth's Magazine or Evangelical Miscellany* (1805-28)

c. Books: pre-1900, source editions and memoirs

Anon., *The book of trades; or, circle of the useful arts* (1824).

Anon., *The moral and political evils of the taxes on knowledge* (1830).

Anon., *Sunday, a poem in defence of the reasonable enjoyments... of the toiling classes of London on the Sabbath Day. By a Friend to Humanity* (Calais, 1837).

Anon [attrib. Henry Alken], *Real life in London; or, the rambles and adventures of Bob Tallyho, Esq. and his cousin, the Hon, Tom. Dashall, through the Metropolis; exhibiting a living picture of fashionable characters, manners, and amusements in high and low life by an amateur* (1821).

Andrew, D. T. C., *London debating societies 1776-1799* (1994).

Andrews, A., *The history of British journalism... with sketches of press celebrities* (1859).

Ashton, J. B., *Modern street ballads* (1888).

Babbage, C., *On the economy of machinery and manufactures* (1832).

Bacon, F., *Essayes. religious meditations. places of perswasion and disswasion (of the coulers of good and euill) From the first edition of 1597* (1924 repr.).

Bamford, S., *Passages in the life of a radical* (1841).

Barrell, J. and Mee, J. (eds.), *Trials for treason and sedition, 1792-1794*, eight vols. (2006-7).

Boase, F., *Modern English biography: containing many thousand concise memoirs of persons who have died during the years 1851-1900, with an index of the most interesting matter* (Truro, 1892).

Bonwick, J., *An octogenarian's reminiscences* (1902).

Bourne, H. R. F., *English newspapers: chapters in the history of journalism* (1887).

Canton, W., *A history of the British and Foreign Bible Society*, five vols. (1904-10).

British Association for Promoting Co-operative Knowledge, *Report of the committee, and proceedings at the fourth quarterly meeting* (1830).

Brougham, H., *Practical observations upon the education of the people, addressed to the working classes and their employers* (1825).

Burke, E., *Speech of Edmund Burke, Esq., on moving his resolutions for conciliation with the colonies, March 22, 1775* (1775).

Burnett, J. (ed.), *Useful toil: autobiographies of working people from the 1820s to the 1920s* (1974).

Burnett, J. (ed.), *Destiny obscure: autobiographies of childhood, education and family from the 1820s to the 1920s* (1982).

Burrows, G. C., *A word to electors: letters to the present generation on the unrestrained use of modern machinery, particularly addressed to my countrymen, and fellow citizens* (Norwich, 1832).

Capper, B. P., *The British imperial calendar* (1817).

Caritat, M., *Outlines of an historical view of the progress of the human mind... translated from the French* (1795).

Carlile, J., *The trials with the defences at large of Mrs. Jane Carlile, Mary Ann Carlile, William Holmes [and others]... being the persons who were prosecuted for selling the publications of Richard Carlile* (1825).

Carlile, M. A., *Bridge-Street banditti, versus the press. Report of the trial of Mary-Anne Carlile, for publishing a New-Year's address to the reformers of Great Britain; written by Richard Carlile... At the Court of King's Bench, Guildhall, London, July 24, 1821* (1821).

Carlile, R., *To the reformers of Great Britain* (1821).

Carlile, R., *An Address to Men of Science; calling upon them to stand forward and vindicate the truth from the foul grasp and persecution of superstition... In which a sketch of a proper system for the education of youth is submitted* (1821).

Carpenter, W., *The people's book: comprising their chartered rights and practical wrongs* (1831).

Carpenter, W., *The rights of nations: a treatise on representative government, despotism, and reform, in which political institutions are deduced from philosophical principles and systematized* (1832).

Carpenter, W., *Political and historical essays* (1831).

Carter, J. T., *Memoirs of a working man* (1845).

Claeys, G. (ed.), *Owenite socialism: pamphlets and correspondence*, ten vols. (2005).

Clare, J., *Poems descriptive of rural life and scenery* (1820).

Clare, J., *The village minstrel, and other poems* (1821).

Cobbett, W. and Derry, J (ed.), *Cobbett's England: a selection from the writings of William Cobbett* (1997 edn.).

Cobbett, W., *Advice to young men and (incidentally) to young women, in the middle and higher ranks of life: In a series of letters addressed to a youth, a bachelor, a lover, a husband, a father, a citizen, or a subject* (1829).

Cobbett, W., *A grammar of the English language, in a series of letters: Intended for the use of schools and of young persons in general; but, more especially for the use of soldiers, sailors, apprentices, and plough-boys* (1818).

Cobbett, W., *Eleven lectures on the French and Belgian Revolutions, and English boroughmongering: delivered in the theatre on the Rotunda, Blackfriars Bridge* (1830).

Copinger, W. A., *The Law of Copyright, in works of literature and art: including that of the drama, music, engraving, sculpture, painting, photography... together with international and foreign copyright, with the statutes relating thereto, and references to the English and American decisions* (1893).

Cowie, G, [attrib.], *The bookbinder's manual* (1828).

Cowie, G, [attrib.], *Cowie's printer's pocket-book and manual* (1829).

Craik, G. L., *The pursuit of knowledge under difficulties; illustrated by anecdotes* (1831).

Davenport, A. and Chase, M. (ed.), *The life and literary pursuits of Allen Davenport: with a further selection of the author's work* (Aldershot, Hants, 1994).

Davis, M. T. (ed.), *London Corresponding Society, 1792-1799*, six vols. (2002).

Davis, M. T., McCalman, I., et al. (eds.), *Newgate in revolution: an anthology of radical prison literature in the age of revolution* (2005).

Defoe, D., *The complete English tradesman, in familiar letters... Calculated for the instruction of our inland tradesmen; and especially of young beginners* (1726).

Dickens, C., *Sunday under three heads. As it is: as Sabbath Bills would make it: as it might be. By Timothy Sparks* (1836).

Dickens, C. and Slater, M. (ed.), *The amusements of the people: reports, essays and reviews, 1834-1851* (1996).

Egan, P., *Tom and Jerry: Life in London or the day and night scenes of Jerry Hawthorn* (1821).

Elliott, E., *The splendid village; corn-law rhymes, and other poems*, three vols. (1833-5).

Elliott, E., *The village patriarch, love and other poems* (1834).

Galt, J., *A letter to the working classes: containing remarks on the French and Belgic revolutions, the national debt, reform, tithes, taxes... with strictures on Cobbett, Carlile, O'Connell, the 'Devil's chaplain,' & Co* (1831).

Gaskell, P., *The manufacturing population of England... with an examination of infant labour* (1833).

Gittings, R. (ed.), *Letters of John Keats/ a selection* (Oxford, 1995).

Gleadle, K. (ed.), *Radical writing on women, 1800-1850: an anthology* (Basingstoke, 2002).

Green, S. G., *The working classes of Great Britain: their present condition, and the means of their improvement and elevation* (1850).

Hall, F. J. and Twells, P., *Reports of cases argued and determined in the High Court of Chancery, during the time of Lord Chancellor Cottenham*, two vols. (1851).

Hardy, T., *Memoir of T. H., founder of... the London Corresponding Society, for diffusing... political knowledge among the people of Great Britain and Ireland, etc. Written by himself* (1832).

Hatton, J., *Journalistic London: being a series of sketches of famous pens and papers of the day* (1882).

Hazlitt, W. and Dart, G. (ed.), *Metropolitan writings* (Manchester, 2005).

Holcroft, T., *Anna St Ives: a novel*, seven vols. (1792).

Hone, W., *The three trials of William Hone* (1818).

Hone, W., *The every-day book, and table-book* (1826).

Hood, T., *The comic scrap book* (1834).

Hudson, P. and Hunter, L., 'The autobiography of William Hart, cooper, 1776-1857: a respectable artisan in the industrial revolution', *London Journal*, Vol. 7, No. 7 (1981), 144-60.

Hudson, P. and Hunter, L., 'The autobiography of William Hart, cooper, 1776-1857: a respectable artisan in the industrial revolution', *London Journal*, Vol. 7, No. 8 (1981), 63-75.

Hughes, M., *Family dialogues: or Sunday well spent* (1826).

Hunt, F. K., *The fourth estate: contributions towards a history of newspapers* (1850).

Hunt, H., *Memoirs of Henry Hunt, Esq* (1820).

Jones, J. S., *Attempts in verse... With some account of the writer, written by himself, and an introductory essay on the lives and works of our uneducated poets, by Robert Southey, Poet Laureate* (1831).

Keating, P. (ed.) *The Victorian prophets: a reader from Carlyle to Wells* (Glasgow, 1981).

Keen, P. (ed.), *The popular radical press in Britain, 1817-1821*, six vols. (2003).

Knight, C., *Passages of a working life during half a century*, three vols. (1865).

Lackington, J., *Memoirs of the first forty-five years of the life of J. L. Written by himself, in a series of letters to a Friend* (1791).

Mackay, C., *Extraordinary popular delusions and the madness of crowds* (1995 edn.).

Poynder, J., *Observations upon Sunday newspapers; tending to shew the impiety of such a violation of the Sabbath... By a Layman* (1820).

London Mechanics' Institution, *A catalogue of books in the library of the London Mechanics' Institution* (1833).

London Mechanics' Institution, *A catalogue of books in the library of the London Mechanics' Institution* (1837).

London Mechanics' Institution, *Rules and orders of the London Mechanics' Institution, established... for the promotion of useful knowledge among the working classes* (1841).

Lovett, W., *The life and struggles of William Lovett* (1876).

Lovett, W. and Tawney, R. H. (ed.), *Life and struggles of William Lovett... With a preface by R. H. Tawney* (1967).

Marriott, J., Matsumura, M., et al. (eds.), *Unknown London: early modernist visions of the metropolis, 1815-45*, six vols. (2000).

Martin, H., *Observations on the importance and advantages of the education of the people* (1826).

Martineau, H., *The history of England during the thirty years' peace, 1816-1846*, two vols. (1849).

Massey, G. P. and Smiles, S., *The poetical works of Gerald Massey* (1861).

Mayhew, H. and Neuburg, V. E. (ed.), *London labour and the London poor* (1985).

McCulloch, J. R., *A dictionary, practical, theoretical, and historical, of commerce and commercial navigation: illustrated with maps* (1832).

Miles, H. D., *Pugilistica: being 144 years of the history of British boxing* (Weldon, 1880).

Miller, P. N. (ed.), *Political writings: Joseph Priestley* (1993).

Moncrieff, W. T. and Cruikshank, R., *The march of intellect: a comic poem* (1830).

Morgan, L., *Italy*, two vols. (1821).

Mudie, R., *Babylon the Great: a dissection and demonstration of men and things in the British capital*, two vols. (1825).

Paine, T., *The political works of Thomas Paine*, two vols. (1817).

Paul, C. K., *Memories* (1899).

Peacock, T. L., *Crotchet Castle. By the author of Headlong Hall* (1831).

Place, F., *A Letter to a Minister of State, respecting taxes on knowledge* (1831).

Place, F., *Improvement of the working people. Drunkenness-Education, etc* (1834).

Place, F. and Thale, M. (ed.), *The autobiography of Francis Place* (1972).

Porson, R. [*pseud.* Southey, R.] and Coleridge, S. T., *The devil's walk* (1830).

Ridings, E., *The village muse, containing the complete poetical works of E. Ridings* (1854).

Robinson, R., *The history and the mystery of Good-Friday* (1823).

Rowe, D. J. (ed.), *London radicalism, 1830-43: a selection from the papers of Francis Place* (1970).

Seymour, R. and Crowquill, A. [*pseud.* Forrester, A. H.], *Seymour's sketches* (1838).

Sharp, R. and Crowther, J. E. (ed.), *The diary of Robert Sharp of South Cave: life in a Yorkshire village 1812-1837* (Oxford, 1997).

Shepherd, T. H., *Metropolitan improvements, or, London in the nineteenth century: displayed in a series of engravings of the new buildings, improvements, &c* (1827).

Sheridan, T., *Lectures on the art of reading*, two vols. (1775).

Skeen, R., *Autobiography of... Robert Skeen* (1876).

Smiles, S., *A publisher and his friends: memoir and correspondence of the late John Murray, with an account of the origin and progress of the house, 1768-1843*, two vols. (1891).

Smith, C. M., *Curiosities of London Life; or, phases, physiological and social, of the great metropolis* (1853).

Smith, C. M., *The working man's way in the world, being the autobiography of a journeyman printer* (1853).

Smith, C. M., *Tom Burton; or, the better way* (1863).

Society for the Suppression of Vice, *Part the first (-second) of an Address to the Public from the Society for the Suppression of Vice* (1803).

Southey, R., *Sir Thomas More: or, colloquies on the progress and prospects of society*, two vols. (1829).

Strachan, J. (ed.), *British satire, 1785-1840*, five vols. (2003).

Tayler, C. B., *The Sunday newspaper: or Katherine* (1830).

Thackrah, C. T., *The effects of the principal arts, trades and professions and of civic states and habits of living, on health and longevity* (1831).

Thomas, D. O. E. (ed.), *Political writings: Richard Price* (1992).

Thompson, T. P., *Catholic State Waggon... From the Westminster Review* (1829).

Thomson, C., *The autobiography of an artisan* (1847).

Timperley, C. H., *A dictionary of printers and printing: with the progress of literature, ancient and modern* (1839).

Vincent, D. (ed.), *Testaments of radicalism: memoirs of working class politicians, 1790-1885* (1977).

Wade, J., *The book of penalties, or, Summary of the pecuniary penalties inflicted by the laws of England on the commercial, manufacturing, trading, and professional classes, in their several occupations and businesses: with an abstract of the local acts and customs of London relative to commerce, trade, and residence* (1834).

Wade, J., *History of the middle and working classes, with a popular exposition of the economical and political principles which have influenced the... condition of the industrious orders (*1833).

West, W. B., *Tavern anecdotes and reminiscences of the origin of signs, clubs, coffee-houses... &c. intended as a lounge-book for Londoners and their country cousins* (1825).

Whittock, N., *The youth's new London self-instructing drawing book: containing a series of progressive lessons* (1836).

Whittock, N., Badcock, J. et al, *The complete book of trades* (1837).

Wooler, T. J., *A verbatim report of the two trials of T. J. W., Editor of the Black Dwarf, for alleged libels* (1817).

3. Printed secondary works

a. Articles

Altick, R. D., 'Nineteenth century English periodicals', *Newberry Library Bulletin*, No. 9 (1952), 255-64.

Altick, R. D., 'English publishing and the mass audience in 1852', *Studies in Bibliography*, No. 6 (1953), 3-24.

Altick, R. D., 'From Aldine to Everyman: cheap reprint series of the English classics, 1830-1906', *Studies in Bibliography*, No. 11 (1958), 3-24.

Armstrong, J. and Williams, D. M., 'The Thames and recreation, 1815-1840', *London Journal* Vol. 30, No. 2 (2005), 25-39.

Aspinall, A., 'The Westminster election of 1814', *English Historical Review*, Vol. 40, No. 160 (1925), 562-9.

Aspinall, A., 'The social status of journalists at the beginning of the nineteenth century', *Review of English Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 83 (1945), 216-32.

Aspinall, A., The circulation of newspapers in the early nineteenth century', *Review of English Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 85 (1946), 29-43.

Aspinall, A., 'Statistical accounts of the London newspapers in the eighteenth century', *English Historical Review*, Vol. 63, No. 247 (1948), 201-32.

Aspinall, A., 'Statistical accounts of the London newspapers, 1800-36', *English Historical Review*, Vol. 65, No. 255 (1950), 222-34 and No. 256 (1950), 372-83.

Beetham, M., 'Open and closed: the periodical as a publishing genre', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, Vol. 22 (1989), 96-100.

Beetham, M., 'The reinvention of the English domestic woman: class and "race" in the 1890s' woman's magazine', *Women's Studies International Forum*, Vol. 21, No. 3 (1998), 223-33.

Beetham, M., 'Periodicals and the new media: Women and imagined communities', *Women's Studies International Forum*, Vol. 29, No. 3 (2006), 231-40.

Belchem, J., 'Republicanism, popular constitutionalism and the radical platform in early nineteenth-century England', *Social History*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (1981), 1-32.

Belchem, J., 'Radical language and ideology in early nineteenth-century England: the challenge of the platform', *Albion*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (1988), 247-59.

Belchem, J., 'The neglected "unstamped": the Manx pauper press of the 1840s', *Albion*, Vol. 24, No. 4 (1992), 605-16.

Belchem, J., 'Reconstructing labour history', *Labour History Review*, Vol. 62, No. 3 (1997), 318-23.

Belchem, J., 'Britishness, the United Kingdom and the revolutions of 1848', *Labour History Review*, Vol. 64, No. 2 (1999), 143-58.

Belchem, J., 'Radical language, meaning and identity in the age of the Chartists', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (2005), 1-14.

Belchem, J. and Epstein, J., 'The nineteenth-century gentleman leader revisited', *Social History* Vol. 22 (1997), 174-93.

Brock, W. H., 'British science periodicals and culture: 1820-50', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, Vol. 21 (Summer, 1998), 47-55.

Cabera, M. A., trans. McMahon, M., 'Linguistic approach or return to subjectivism? In search of an alternative to social history', *Social History*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (1999), 74-89.

Chard, L. F., 'Bookseller to publisher: Joseph Johnson and the English book trade, 1760-1810', *Library*, Vol. 32, No. 2 (1977), 138-54.

Childers, J. W., Observation and representation: Mr. Chadwick writes the poor', *Victorian Studies*, Vol. 37, No. 3 (Spring, 1994), 405-32.

Cooter, R. J., 'Phrenology and British alienists, c.1825-1845. Part II: Doctrine and practice', *Medical History*, Vol. 20 (1976), 135-51.

R. Cooter and S. Pumfrey, 'Separate spheres and public places: reflections on the history of science popularization and science in popular culture', *History of Science*, Vol. 32 (1994), 237-267.

Cordery, G., 'Public houses: spatial instabilities in sketches by Boz and Oliver Twist', *Dickens Quarterly*, Vol. 20, Nos. 1 and 2 (2003), 3-13 and 81-92.

Cordery, S., 'Joshua Hobson and the business of radicalism', *Biography*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (1988), 108-23.

Cordery, S., 'Friendly Societies and the discourse of respectability in Britain, 1825-1875', *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (1995), 35-58.

Coxford, R., 'A working class Sunday school?', *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*, Vol. 54, No. 1 (2003), 11-16.

Darnton, R., 'The symbolic element in history', *Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 58, No. 1 (1986), 218-34.

Desmond, A., 'Artisan resistance and evolution in Britain, 1819-1848', *Osiris*, Vol. 3 (1987), 77-110.

Dick, M., 'The myth of the working-class Sunday school', *History of Education*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (1980), 27-41.

Durden, S., 'A study of the first evangelical magazines, 1740-1748', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, Vol. 27 (1976), 255-75

Dyrenfurth, N., 'Rethinking labor tradition: synthesising discourse and experience', *Labour History*, Vol. 90 (May, 2006).

Eliot, S., 'Patterns and trends and the NSTC: some initial observations, part 1', *Publishing History*, Vol. 42 (1997), 79-104.

Eliot, S., 'Patterns and Trends and the NSTC: some initial observations, part 2', *Publishing History*, Vol. 43 (1998), 71-112.

Feather, J., 'British publishing in the eighteenth-century: a preliminary subject analysis', *Library*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (1986), 32-46.

Feather, J., 'Publishers and politicians: the remaking of the law of copyright in Britain, 1775-1842, part 1: legal deposit and the battle of the library tax', *Publishing History*, Vol. 24 (1988), 49-76.

Feather, J., 'Publishers and politicians: the remaking of the law of copyright in Britain, 1775-1842, part 2: the rights of authors', *Publishing History*, Vol. 25 (1988), 45-72.

Geary, D., 'Labour history, the "linguistic turn" and postmodernism', *Contemporary European History*, Vol. 9, No. 3 (2000), 445-462.

Griffin, E., 'Popular culture in industrializing England', *Historical Journal*, Vol. 45, No. 3 (2002), 619-35.

Gurney, P., 'The middle-class embrace: language, representation, and the contest over co-operative forms in Britain, c.1860-1914', *Victorian Studies*, Vol. 37, No. 2 (Winter, 1994), 253-86.

Gurney, P., 'Working-class writers and the art of escapology in Victorian England: the case of Thomas Frost', *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 45, No. 1 (2006), 51-71.

Harrison, B. H., 'The Sunday trading riots of 1855', *Historical Journal*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (1965), 219-45.

Harrison, B. H., 'Religion and recreation in nineteenth-century England', *Past and Present*, No. 38 (Dec., 1967), 98-125.

Harrison, B. H., 'Two roads to social reform: Francis Place and the "Drunken Committee" of 1834', *Historical Journal*, No. 11, No. 2 (1968), 272-300.

Hendrix, R., 'Popular humor and "The Black Dwarf"', *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (1976), 108-28.

Hind, R. J., 'Working people and Sunday schools: England, 1780-1850', *Journal of Religious History*, Vol. 15, No. 2 (1988), 199-214.

Innes, J., 'Jonathan Clark, social history and England's "ancien regime"', *Past and Present*, No. 115, (May, 1987), 165-200.

Innes, J., 'Representative histories: recent studies of popular politics and political culture in eighteenth and early nineteenth-century England', *Journal of Historical Sociology*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (Jun., 1991), 182-211.

Isaacs, P., 'Byron's publisher and his "spy": constancy and change among John Murray II's printers, 1812-1831', *Library*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (Mar. 1997), 1-24.

Jacyna, L. S., 'Immanence and transcendence: theories of life and organisation in Britain, 1790-1835', *Isis*, Vol. 74 (1983), 311-29.

Jacyna, L. S., 'The physiology of mind, the unity of nature, and the moral order in Victorian thought', *British Journal for the History of Science*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (1981), 109-32.

Joyce, P., 'The end of social history?', *Social History*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (1995), 73-91.

Joyce, P., 'The imaginary discontents of social history: a note of response to Mayfield and Thorne, and Lawrence and Taylor', *Social History*, Vol. 18 (1993), 81-85.

Klancher, J. P., 'From "crowd" to "audience": the making of an English mass readership in the nineteenth century', *ELH*, Vol. 50, No. 1 (Spring, 1983), 155-173.

Knox, T. S., 'Thomas Spence: the trumpet of jubilee', *Past and Present*, No. 76 (Aug., 1977), 75-98.

Kunzle, D., 'Between broadsheet caricature and "Punch": cheap newspaper cuts for the lower classes in the 1830s', *Art Journal*, Vol. 43, No. 4 (1983), 339-346.

Maidment, B., '101 things to do with a fantail hat: dustmen, dirt and dandyism, 1820-1860', *Textile History*, Vol. 33, No. 1 (2002), 79-97.

Maidment, B., 'Essayists and artisans - the making of Victorian self-taught poets', *Literature and History*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (1983), 74-91.

Mitch, D., 'Literacy and occupational mobility in rural versus urban Victorian England: evidence from the linked marriage register and census records for Birmingham and Norfolk, 1851 and 1881', *Historical Methods: a Journal of Quantitative and Interdisciplinary History*, Vol. 38, No. 1 (2005), 26-38.

Mitch, D., 'Underinvestment in literacy? The potential contribution of government involvement in elementary education to economic growth in nineteenth-century England', *Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 44, No. 2, (1984), 557-566.

Money, J., 'Taverns, coffee houses and clubs: local politics and popular articulacy in the Birmingham area, in the age of the American Revolution', *Historical Journal*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (1971), 15-47.

Mussell, J. and Paylor, S., 'Mapping the "mighty maze": the Nineteenth-Century Serials Edition', *Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, No. 1 (2005), 1-25.

Nye, E. W. 'Effingham Wilson: the radical publisher of the Royal Exchange', *Publishing History*, Vol. 36 (1994), 87-102.

O'Driscoll, S., 'Reading through desire: interpretive practices for eighteenth-century popular culture', *British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 2 (2006), 237-51.

Rüter, A. J. C., 'William Benbow's "Grand National Holiday and Congress of the Productive Classes"', *International Review for Social History*, Vol. 2 (1936), 217-56.

Rüter, A. J. C., 'William Benbow as publisher', *Bulletin of the International Institute of Social History*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (1940), 1-14.

Raven, J., 'The abolition of the English state lotteries', *Historical Journal*, Vol. 34, No. 2 (1991), 371-89.

Reay, B., 'The context and meaning of popular literacy: some evidence from nineteenth-century rural England', *Past and Present*, No. 131 (May, 1991), 89-129.

Rowe, D. J., 'Francis Place and the Historian', *Historical Journal*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (1973), 45-63.

Sanders, M., '"A Jackass Load of Poetry": the Northern Star's poetry column 1838-1852', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, Vol. 39, No. 1 (2006), 46-66.

Schwarz, L. D., 'Occupations and incomes in late eighteenth century East London', *East London Papers*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (1972), 87-100.

Schwarz, L. D., 'Income distribution and social structure in London in the late eighteenth century', *Economic History Review*, Vol. 32, No. 2 (1979), 250-9.

Schwarz, L. D., 'Social class and social geography: the middle classes in London at the end of the eighteenth century', *Social History*, Vol. 7 (1982), 167-85.

Schwarz, L. D., The standard of living in the long run: London, 1700-1860', *Economic History Review*, Vol. 38, No. 1 (1985), 24-41.

Schwarz, L. D., 'London, 1700-1850', *London Journal*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (1995), 46-55.

Secord, A., 'Corresponding interests: artisans and gentlemen in nineteenth-century natural history', *British Journal for the History of Science*, Vol. 27 (1994), 383-408.

Secord, A., 'Science in the pub: artisan botanists in early nineteenth-century Lancashire', *History of Science*, Vol. 32 (1994), 269-315.

Secord, A., 'Botany on a plate: pleasure and the power of pictures in promoting early nineteenth-century scientific knowledge', *Isis*, Vol. 93, No. 1 (2002), 28-57.

Secord, A., '"Be what you would seem to be": Samuel Smiles, Thomas Edward, and the making of a working-class scientific hero', *Science in Context*, Vol. 16, Issue 1-2 (2003), 147-74.

Sheets-Pyenson, S., 'Popular science periodicals in Paris and London: the emergence of a low scientific culture, 1820-1875', *Annals of Science*, Vol. 42 (1985), 549-72.

Steedman, C., 'The servant's labour: the business of life, England, 1760-1820', *Social History*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (2004), 1-29.

Steedman, C., 'Poetical maids and cooks who wrote', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. 39, No. 1 (2005), 1-27.

Stone, L., 'Literacy and education in England, 1640-1900', *Past and Present*, No. 42 (Feb., 1969), 69-139.

Sturdy, S. and Cooter, R., 'Science, scientific management, and the transformation of medicine in Britain c.1870-1950', *History of Science*, Vol. 36, No. 4 (1998), 421-66.

Sutherland, J., 'The British book trade and the crash of 1826', *Library*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (1987), 148-61.

Taylor, B., 'Feminists versus gallants: manners and morals in Enlightenment Britain', *Representations*, Vol. 87 (Summer, 2004), 125-48.

Topham, J. R., 'Science and popular education in the 1830s: the role of the Bridgewater Treatises', *British Journal for the History of Science*, Vol. 25, No. 4 (1992), 397-430.

Topham, J. R., 'Beyond the "common context": the production and reading of the Bridgewater treatises', *Isis*, Vol. 89, No. 2 (1998), 233-62.

Topham, J. R., 'Scientific publishing and the reading of science in nineteenth-century Britain: a historiographical survey and guide to sources', *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science*, Vol. 31, No. 4 (2000), 559-612.

Topham, J. R., 'John Limbird, Thomas Byerley, and the production of cheap periodicals in the 1820s', *Book History*, Vol. 8 (2005), 75-106.

Vernon, J., 'Who's afraid of the "linguistic turn"?: the politics of social history and its discontents', *Social History*, Vol. 19 (1994), 81-97.

Wrigley, E. A., 'A simple model of London's importance in changing English society and economy, 1650-1750', *Past and Present*, No. 37 (Jul., 1967), 44-70.

b. Chapters in books

Barry, J., 'Literacy and literature in popular culture: reading and writing in historical perspective', in Harris, T. (ed.), *Popular culture in England, c.1500-1850* (Basingstoke, 1995), 69-94, 232-41.

Beetham, M., 'Towards a theory of the periodical as a publishing genre', in Brake, L., Jones, A. and Madden, L. (eds.), *Investigating Victorian journalism* (Basingstoke, 1990), 19-32.

Beetham, M., 'Women and the consumption of print', in Shattock, J. (ed.), *Women and literature in Britain, 1800-1900* (Cambridge, 2001), 55-77.

Belchem, J., '1848: Feargus O'Connor and the collapse of the mass platform', in Epstein, J. and Thompson, D. (eds.), *The Chartist experience: studies in working-class radicalism and culture, 1830-60* (1982), 269-310.

Belchem, J., 'Beyond Chartist Studies: class, community and party in early Victorian populist politics', in Fraser, D. (ed.), *Cities, class and communication: essays in honour of Asa Briggs* (1990), 105-26.

Belchem, J., '"Temperance in all things": vegetarianism, the Manx press and the alternative agenda of reform in the 1840s', in Chase, M. and Dyck, I. (eds.), *Living and learning: essays in honour of J. F. C. Harrison* (Aldershot, 1996), 149-62.

Brewer, J. and McCalman, I., 'Publishing', in McCalman, I. et al (eds.), *An Oxford companion to the Romantic Age: British culture, 1776-1832* (Oxford, 1999), 197-206.

Britain, I., 'Education' in McCalman, I. et al (eds.), *An Oxford companion to the Romantic Age: British culture, 1776-1832* (Oxford, 1999), 161-69.

Brock, W. H., 'Victorian periodicals and the professions: science', in Don Vann, J. and VanArsdel, R. T. (eds.), *Victorian periodicals and Victorian society* (Aldershot, 1994), 81-96.

Brock, W. H., 'Science, technology and education in *The English Mechanic*', in Brock, W. H., *Science for all: studies in the history of Victorian science and education* (Aldershot, 1996), 1-13.

Brown, L., 'The British press, 1800-60', in Griffiths, D. (ed.), *The encyclopaedia of the British press, 1422-1992* (1992), 24-32.

Brown, L., 'The growth of a national press', in Brake, L., Jones, A. and Madden, L. (eds.), *Investigating Victorian journalism* (Basingstoke, 1990), 133-40.

Eliot, S., 'Some trends in British book production, 1800-1919', in Jordan J. O. and. Patten R. L. (eds.), *Literature in the marketplace: nineteenth-century British publishing and reading practices* (Cambridge, 1995), 19-43.

Feather, J. 'The power of print: word and image in eighteenth-century England', in Black, J. (ed.), *Culture and society in Britain 1660-1800* (Manchester, 1997), 51-68.

Feather, J., 'The British book market 1600-1800', in Eliot, S. and Rose, J. (eds.), *A companion to the history of the book* (Oxford, 2007), 232-46.

Gardner, P., 'Literacy, Learning and Education', in Williams, C. (ed.), *A companion to nineteenth-century Britain* (Oxford, 2004), 353-68.

Gleadle, K., '"The age of physiological reformers": rethinking gender and domesticity in the age of reform', in Burns, A. and Innes, J. (eds.), *Rethinking the age of reform: Britain 1780-1850* (Cambridge, 2003), 200-219.

Guzenhauser, B. J., 'Reading the rhetoric or resistance in William Cobbett's Two-Penny Trash', in K. Wheatley (ed.), *Romantic periodicals and print culture* (2003), 84-101.

Harris, T., 'Problematising popular culture', in idem. (ed.), *Popular culture in England, c.1500-1850* (Basingstoke, 1995), 1-27, 216-22.

Harris, M., 'Periodicals and the book trade', in Myers, R. and Harris, R. (eds.), *Development of the English book trade, 1700-1899* (Oxford, 1981), 66-94.

Hudson, P., 'Industrial organisation and structure', in Floud, R. and Johnson, P. (eds.), *The Cambridge economic history of modern Britain*, Vol. 1 (2004), 28-56.

Innes, J., 'Politics and morals: the reformation of manners movement in later eighteenth-century England', in Hellmuth, E. (ed.), *The transformation of political culture: England and Germany in the late eighteenth century* (Oxford, 1990), 57-118.

Innes, J., 'The "mixed economy of welfare" in early modern England: assessments of the options from Hale to Malthus (c.1683-1803)', in Daunton, M. J. (ed.), *Charity, self-interest and welfare in the English past* (1996), 139-80.

Innes, J., 'Managing the metropolis: London's social problems and their control, c.1660-1830', in Clark, P. and Gillespie, R. (eds.), *Two capitals: London and Dublin, 1500-1840* (Oxford, 2001), 53-79.

Innes, J., '"Reform" in English public life: the fortunes of a word', in Burns, A. and Innes, J. (eds.), *Rethinking the age of reform: Britain 1780-1850* (Cambridge, 2003), 71-97.

Innes, J., 'Legislation and public participation 1760-1830', in Lemmings, D. (ed.), *The British and their laws in the eighteenth century* (Woodbridge, 2005),102-32.

Innes, J., 'Libraries in context: social, cultural and intellectual background', in Mandelbrote, G. and Manley, K. A. (eds.), *The Cambridge history of libraries in Britain and Ireland*, Vol. II, *1640-1850* (Cambridge, 2006), 285-300.

Innes, J., 'Origins of the factory acts: the Health and Morals of Apprentices Act 1802', in Landau, N. (ed.), *Law, crime and English society, 1660-1830* (Cambridge, 2002), 230-55.

Innes, J. and Styles, J., 'The crime wave: recent writing on crime and criminal justice in eighteenth-century England', in Wilson, A. (ed.), *Rethinking social history: English society 1570-1920 and its interpretation* (Manchester, 2003), 201-65.

Jacyna, S., '"Mr Scott's case": a view of London medicine in 1825', in Porter, R. (ed.), *The popularization of medicine, 1650-1850* (1992), 252-86.

Johnson, R., '"Really useful knowledge": radical education and working-class culture 1790-1848', in Clarke, J., Crichter, C. and Johnson, R. (eds.), *Working class culture: studies in history and theory* (1979), 75-112.

Maidment, B., '"Penny" wise, "penny" foolish - popular periodicals and "the March of Intellect" in the 1820s and 1830s', in Brake, L., Bell, B. and Finkelstein, D. (eds.), *Nineteenth-century media and the construction of identities* (2000), 104-121.

Maidment, B., 'Re-arranging the year: the almanac, the day book and the year book as popular literary forms, 1789-1860', in John, J. and Jenkins, A. (eds.) *Rethinking Victorian culture* (Basingstoke, 2000), 91-113.

Maidment, B., 'Victorian periodicals and academic discourse', in Brake, L., Jones, A. and Madden, L. (eds.), *Investigating Victorian journalism* (Basingstoke, 1990), 143-54.

McCalman, I. and Perkins, M., 'Popular culture', in McCalman, I. et al (eds.), *An Oxford companion to the Romantic Age: British culture, 1776-1832* (Oxford, 1999), 214-22.

Mussell, J., '"This is ours and for us"': the *Mechanic's Magazine* and low scientific culture in Regency London', in Clifford, D. (ed.), *Repositioning Victorian sciences: shifting centres in nineteenth-century scientific thinking* (2006), 107-17, 231-32.

Moody, J., 'The theatrical revolution, 1776-1843', in Donohue, J. (ed.), *The Cambridge history of British theatre*, Vol. II., *1660 to 1895* (Cambridge, 2004), 199-215.

Prochaska, A., 'The practice of radicalism: educational reform in Westminster', in Stevenson, J. (ed.), *London in the Age of Reform* (Oxford, 1977), 102-116.

Pulham, P., 'The Arts', in Williams, C. (ed.), *A companion to nineteenth-century Britain* (Oxford, 2004), 443-56.

Reid, D. A., 'Beasts and brutes: popular blood sports, c.1780-1860', in Holt, R. A. (ed.), *Sport and the working class in modern Britain* (Manchester, 1990), 12-28.

Royle, E., 'Newspapers and periodicals in historical research', in Brake, L., Jones, A. and Madden, L. (eds.), *Investigating Victorian journalism* (Basingstoke, 1990), 48-59.

Russell, D., 'Popular entertainment, 1776-1895', in Donohue, J. (ed.), *The Cambridge history of British theatre*, Vol. II., *1660 to 1895* (Cambridge, 2004), 369-87.

Schofield, R. S., 'Dimensions of illiteracy in England, 1750-1850' in Graff, H. J. (ed.), *Literacy and social development in the west: a reader* (1981), 201-13.

Schwarz, L. D., 'Hanoverian London: the making of a service town', in Clark, P. and Gillespie, R. (eds.), *Two capitals: London and Dublin, 1500-1840* (Oxford, 2001), 93-110.

Shoemaker, R. B., 'Reforming the city: the reformation of manners campaign in London, 1690-1738', in Davison, L. (ed.), *Stilling the grumbling hive: the response to social and economic problems in England, 1689-1750* (Stroud, 1992), 99-120.

Shoemaker, R. B., 'Reforming male manners: public insult and the decline of violence in London, 1660-1740', in Hitchcock, T. and Cohen, M. (eds.), *English masculinities, 1660-1800* (1999), 133-50.

Steedman, C., 'Service and servitude in the world of labor: servants in England, 1750-1820', in Jones, C. and Wahrman, D. (eds.), *The age of cultural revolutions: Britain and France, 1750-1820* (Berkeley, CA., 2002), 124-36.

Stevenson, J., 'The Queen Caroline affair', in idem. (ed.), *London in the Age of Reform* (Oxford, 1977), 117- 48.

Sutherland, G., 'Education', in Thompson, F. M. L. (ed.), *The Cambridge social history of Britain, 1750-1950*, Vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1990), 119-70.

Topham, J. R., 'The *Mirror of Literature, Amusement and Instruction*, and cheap miscellanies in early nineteenth-century Britain', in Cantor, G. N., Dawson, G. and Gooday, G. et al (eds.), *Science in the nineteenth-century periodical: reading the magazine of nature* (Cambridge, 2004), 37-66, 261-65.

Topham, J. R., 'Periodicals and the making of reading audiences for science in early nineteenth-century Britain: *The Youth's Magazine*, 1828-37', in Henson, L. et al (eds.), *Culture and science in the nineteenth-century media* (Aldershot, 2004), 57-69.

Topham, J. R., 'Publishing "popular science" in early nineteenth-century Britain', in Fyfe, A. and Lightman, B. (eds.), *Science in the marketplace* (2007), ch. 5.

Topham, J. R., 'Science, natural theology, and the practice of Christian piety in early-nineteenth-century religious magazines', in Cantor, G. N. and Shuttleworth, S. (eds.), *Science serialized: representations of the sciences in nineteenth-century periodicals* (Cambridge, Mass., 2004), 37-66.

Topham, J. R., 'The *Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine* and religious monthlies in early nineteenth-century Britain', in Cantor, G. N., Dawson, G. and Gooday, G. et al (eds.), *Science in the nineteenth-century periodical: reading the magazine of nature* (Cambridge, 2004), 67-90, 265-70.

Williams, R., 'The press and popular culture: an historical perspective', in Boyce, G. et al (eds.), *Newspaper history from the seventeenth century to the present day* (1978), 41-50.

Yeo, R., 'Natural philosophy', in McCalman, I. et al (eds.), *An Oxford companion to the Romantic Age: British culture, 1776-1832* (Oxford, 1999), 320-27.

c. Books

Alexander, L. M., *Women, work, and representation: needlewomen in Victorian art and literature* (Athens, Ohio, 2003).

Altholz, J. L., *The religious press in Britain, 1760-1900* (1989).

Altick, R. D., *The English common reader: a social history of the mass reading public, 1800-1900* (Chicago, 1957).

Altick, R. D., *'Punch': the lively youth of a British institution, 1841-1851* (Columbus, 1996).

Anderson, P., *Arguments within English Marxism* (London, 1980).

Anderson, P. J., *The printed image and the transformation of popular culture, 1790-1860* (Oxford, 1991).

Ashton, T. S. and Hudson, P., *The industrial revolution 1760-1830* (Oxford, 1997).

Aspinall, A., *Politics and the press, c.1780-1850* (1949).

Aspinall, A., *Lord Brougham and the Whig Party* (Stroud, 2005).

Barker, H., *Newspapers, politics and English society, 1695-1855* (Harlow, 2000).

Barnett, D., *London: hub of the Industrial Revolution: a revisionary history 1775-1825* (1998).

Bebbington, D. W., *Evangelicalism in modern Britain: a history from the 1730s to the 1980s* (1989).

Behrendt, S. C. (ed.), *Romanticism, radicalism, and the press* (Detroit, 1997).

Beetham, M., *A magazine of her own?: domesticity and desire in the woman's magazine, 1800-1914* (1996).

Beetham, M. and Boardman, K. (eds.), *Victorian women's magazines: an anthology* (Manchester, 2001).

Belchem, J., *'Orator' Hunt: Henry Hunt and English working-class radicalism* (Oxford, 1985).

Belchem, J., *Industrialization and the working class: the English experience, 1750-1900* (Aldershot, 1989).

Belchem, J., *Popular radicalism in nineteenth-century Britain* (Basingstoke, 1996).

Bellamy, J. M. and Saville, J. (eds.) *Dictionary of labour biography* (1972).

Berg, M., *The age of manufactures: industry, innovation and work in Britain, 1700-1820* (1985).

Berg, M., *The machinery question and the making of political economy, 1815-1848* (Cambridge, 1980).

Berlanstein, L. R., *Rethinking labor history: essays on discourse and class analysis* (Urbana, 1993).

Bonnell, V. E., Hunt, L. et al. (eds.), *Beyond the cultural turn: new directions in the study of society and culture* (1999).

Borsay, P., *A history of leisure: the British experience since 1500* (Basingstoke, 2006).

Bourdieu, P. trans. Nice, R., *Distinction: a social critique of the judgement of taste* (Cambridge, Mass., 1984).

Boureau, A. and Chartier, R., *The culture of print: power and the uses of print in early modern Europe* (Cambridge, 1989).

Boyce, G., Curran, J. and Wingate, P. (eds.), *Newspaper history from the seventeenth century to the present day* (1978).

Borsay, P. (ed.), *The Eighteenth-century town: a reader in English urban history 1688-1820* (1990).

Boston, R. (ed.), *The press we deserve* (1970).

Brake, L., *Print in transition, 1850-1910: studies in media and book history* (Basingstoke, 2001).

Brake, L., *Subjugated knowledges: journalism, gender and literature in the nineteenth century* (Basingstoke, 1994).

Brake, L. and Demoor, M. (eds.), *Dictionary of nineteenth-century journalism* (forthcoming, summer 2008).[4]

Brake, L., Jones, A. and Madden, L. (eds.), *Investigating Victorian journalism* (Basingstoke, 1990).

Brake, L., Bell, B. and Finkelstein, D. (eds.), *Nineteenth-century media and the construction of identities* (Basingstoke, 2000).

Brantlinger, P. *The reading lesson: the threat of mass literacy in nineteenth century British fiction* (Indianapolis, 1998).

Brewer, J., *The common people and politics, 1750s-1790s* (Cambridge, 1986).

Briggs, A., *The age of improvement, 1783-1867* (New York, 1959).

Briggs, A. and Saville, J., *Essays in labour history* (1967).

Brock, W. H., *Science for all: studies in the history of Victorian science and education* (Aldershot, 1996).

Brown, L., *Victorian news and newspapers* (Oxford, 1985).

Brown, P. A. H., *London publishers and printers c.1800-1870* (1982).

Burke, P., *Popular culture in early modern Europe* (Aldershot, 1978).

Burke, P., *What is cultural history?* (Cambridge, 2004).

Burnett, J., Vincent, D. and Mayall, D. (eds.), *The Autobiography of the working class: an annotated, critical bibliography*, three vols. (New York, 1984).

Burns, A. and Innes, J. (eds.), *Rethinking the age of reform: Britain 1780-1850* (Cambridge, 2003).

---

[4] My contributions include: George Cowie, Francis Place, William Strange, John Limbird, the *London Mechanics' Register*, the *Mechanic's Magazine*, *Figaro in London*, the *Trades' Newspaper*, *Isis*, the *Co-operative Magazine* and a subject entry on the 'unstamped press'.

Butler, M., *Romantics, rebels and reactionaries: English literature and its background 1796-1830* (Oxford, 1981).

Cantor, G. N., Dawson, G. and Gooday, G. et al (eds.), *Science in the nineteenth-century periodical : reading the magazine of nature* (Cambridge, 2004).

Cantor, G. N. and Shuttleworth, S. (eds.), *Science serialized: representations of the sciences in nineteenth-century periodicals* (Cambridge, Mass., 2004).

Chartier, R., *The cultural uses of print in early modern France* (Princeton, N.J., 1987).

Chartier, R. trans. Cochrane, L. G., *Cultural history: between practices and representations* (Cambridge, 1988).

Chase, M., *Early trade unionism: fraternity, skill, and the politics of labour* (Brookfield, Vt., 2000).

Chase, M. and Dyck, I. (eds.), *Living and learning: essays in honour of J. F. C. Harrison* (Aldershot, 1996).

Chase, M., *'The people's farm': English radical agrarianism 1775-1840* (Oxford, 1988).

Claeys, G., *Citizens and saints: politics and anti-politics in early British socialism* (Cambridge, 1989).

Claeys, G., *Machinery, money and the millennium: from moral economy to socialism, 1815-60* (Cambridge, 1987).

Clark, A., *The struggle for the breeches: gender and the making of the British working class* (Berkeley, Calif., 1995).

Clifford, D. (ed.), *Repositioning Victorian sciences: shifting centres in nineteenth-century scientific thinking* (2006).

Cole, G. D. H., *A short history of the British working-class movement, 1789-1947* (1952).

Cole, G. D. H., *Attempts at General Union: a study in British trade union history, 1818-1834* (1953).

Colley, L., *Britons: forging the nation, 1707-1837* (2003).

Cordery, S., *British friendly societies, 1750-1914* (Basingstoke, 2003).

Cowan, B. W., *The social life of coffee: the emergence of the British coffeehouse* (2005).

Cressy, D., *Literacy and the social order: reading and writing in Tudor and Stuart England* (Cambridge, 1980).

Cross, N., *The common writer: life in nineteenth-century Grub Street* (Cambridge, 1985).

Cunningham, H. and Innes, J. (eds.), *Charity, philanthropy, and reform: from the 1690s to 1850* (Basingstoke, 1998).

Curran, J and Seaton, J., *Power without responsibility: the press, broadcasting, and new media in Britain*, 6th edn. (2003).

Cushing, H. G. and Morris, A. V. (eds.), *Nineteenth century readers' guide to periodical literature, 1890-1899: with supplementary indexing, 1900-1922* (1944).

Dale, R., *Education and the state* (Lewes, 1981).

Darnton, R., *The business of enlightenment: a publishing history of the 'Encyclopedie', 1775-1800* (Cambridge, Mass., 1979).

Darnton, R., *The kiss of Lamourette: reflections in cultural history* (New York, 1990).

Davidoff, L. and Hall, C., *Family fortunes: men and women of the English middle class 1780-1850* (Chicago, 1987).

Davison, L. (ed.), *Stilling the grumbling hive: the response to social and economic problems in England, 1689-1750* (Stroud, 1992).

Desmond, A. J., *The politics of evolution: morphology, medicine, and reform in radical London* (Chicago, 1989).

Dillon, P., *The much-lamented death of Madam Geneva: the eighteenth-century gin craze* (2002).

Drotner, K., *English children and their magazines, 1751-1945* (1988).

Dyck, I., *William Cobbett and rural popular culture* (Cambridge, 1992).

Edgar, A. and Sedgwick, P. R. (eds.), *Cultural theory: the key concepts* (2002).

Eliot, S. and Rose, J. (eds.), *A companion to the history of the book* (Oxford, 2007).

Eliot, S., *Some patterns and trends in British publishing, 1800-1919* (1994).

Epstein, J., *Radical expression: political language, ritual, and symbol in England, 1790-1850* (Oxford, 1994).

Epstein, J. and Thompson, D. (eds.), *The Chartist experience: studies in working-class radicalism and culture, 1830-60* (1982).

Escott, T. H. S., *Masters of English journalism, a study of personal forces* (1911).

Feather, J., *A history of British publishing* (1991).

Feather, J., *Aspects of nineteenth-century publishing* (Wylam, 1994).

Feldman, D. and Jones, G. S. (eds.), *Metropolis - London: histories and representations since 1800* (1989).

Flint, K., *The woman reader, 1837-1914* (Oxford, 1993).

Ford, T. H., *Henry Brougham and his world: a biography* (Chichester, 1995).

Fox, C., *Graphic journalism in England during the 1830s and 1840s* (1988).

French, H. and Barry, J. (eds.), *Identity and agency in England, 1500-1800* (Basingstoke, 2004).

Fyfe, A. and Lightman, B. (eds.), *Science in the marketplace: nineteenth-century sites and experiences* (2007).

Fyfe, A., *Science and salvation: evangelical popular science publishing in Victorian Britain* (2004).

Geertz, C., *The interpretation of cultures: selected essays* (1973).

George, M. D., *London life in the XVIIIth century* (1925).

George, M. D., *Hogarth to Cruikshank: social change in graphic satire* (1967).

Gilmartin, K., *Print politics: the press and radical opposition in early nineteenth-century England* (Cambridge, 1996).

Gleadle, K., *The early feminists: radical Unitarians and the emergence of the women's rights movement, 1831-51* (Basingstoke, 1995).

Gleadle, K. and Richardson, S. (eds.), *Women in British politics, 1760-1860: the power of the petticoat* (Basingstoke, 2000).

Graff, H. J. (ed.), *Literacy and social development in the West: a reader* (Cambridge, 1981).

Gray, R., *The factory question and industrial England, 1830-1860* (Cambridge, 1996).

Green, D. A., *From artisans to paupers: economic change and poverty in London, 1790-1870* (Aldershot, 1995).

Griffin, E., *England's revelry: a history of popular sports and pastimes, 1660-1830* (Oxford, 2005).

Griffiths, D. (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of the British press, 1422-1992* (New York, 1992).

Goodway, D., *London Chartism, 1838-1848* (Cambridge, 1982).

Habermas, J., *The structural transformation of the public sphere: an inquiry into a category of bourgeois society* (Cambridge, Mass., 1989).

Halévy, É., trans. Watkin, E. I., *A history of the English people in 1815,* five vols. (1924).

Hammond, J. L. and Hammond, L. B., *The skilled labourer, 1760-1832* (1919).

Hammond, J. L. and Hammond, L. B., *The town labourer, 1760-1832: the new civilization* (1917).

Harris, T. (ed.), *Popular culture in England, c.1500-1850* (Basingstoke, 1995).

Harrison, B. H., *Drink and the Victorians: the temperance question in England, 1815-1872* (1971).

Harrison, J. F. C., *Learning and Living, 1790-1960: a study in the history of the English adult education movement* (1961).

Harrison, J. F. C., *Robert Owen and the Owenites in Britain and America: the quest for the new moral world* (1969).

Harrison, P., *'Religion' and the religions in the English Enlightenment* (Cambridge, 1990).

Harrison, R., Woolven, G. B. and Duncan, R., *Warwick guide to British Labour Periodicals 1790-1970: a check list* (Hassocks, Sussex, 1977).

Harrison, S., *Poor men's guardians: a record of the struggles for a democratic newspaper press, 1763-1973* (1974).

Harvey, A., *The beginnings of a commercial sporting culture in Britain, 1793-1850* (Aldershot, 2004).

Haywood, I., *The revolution in popular literature: print, politics, and the people, 1790-1860* (Cambridge, 2004).

Hellmuth, E. (ed.), *The transformation of political culture: England and Germany in the late eighteenth century* (Oxford, 1990).

Henson, L. et al (eds.), *Culture and science in the nineteenth-century media* (Aldershot, 2004).

Herzog, D., *Poisoning the minds of the lower orders* (Princeton, N.J., 1998).

Hewitt, M., *Unrespectable recreations* (Leeds, 2001).

Hilton, B., *The age of atonement: the influence of evangelicalism on social and economic thought, 1795-1865* (Oxford, 1988).

Hobsbawm, E. J. and Rudé, G., *Captain Swing* (1969).

Hobsbawm, E. J., *Primitive rebels: studies in archaic forms of social movement in the 19th and 20th centuries* (Manchester, 1959).

Hole, R., *Pulpits, politics and public order in England, 1760-1832* (Cambridge, 1989).

Hollis, P., *The pauper press: a study in working-class radicalism of the 1830s* (Oxford, 1970).

Holt, R. A. (ed.), *Sport and the working class in modern Britain* (Manchester, 1990).

Hone, J. A., *For the cause of truth: radicalism in London 1796-1821* (Oxford, 1982).

Houghton, W. E. et al (eds.), *The Wellesley index to Victorian periodicals, 1824-1900*, five vols. (Toronto, 1966-89).

Hudson, P., *The genesis of industrial capital: a study of the West Riding wool textile industry c. 1750-1850* (Cambridge, 1986).

Hudson, P., *The industrial revolution* (1992).

Inkster, I., *The steam intellect societies: essays on culture, education and industry circa 1820-1914* (Nottingham, 1985).

Israel, J. I., *Radical enlightenment: philosophy and the making of modernity 1650-1750* (Oxford, 2001).

Jack, I., *English literature 1815-1832* (Oxford, 1963).

Jacob, M. C., *The Radical Enlightenment: Pantheists, Freemasons, and Republicans* (1981).

James, L., *Fiction for the working man, 1830-1850: a study of the literature produced for the working classes in early Victorian urban England* (1963).

James, L., *Print and the people, 1819-1851* (1976).

Janowitz, A., *Lyric and labour in the romantic tradition* (Cambridge, 1998).

Johns, A., *The nature of the book: print and knowledge in the making* (1998).

Jones, A., *Powers of the press: newspapers, power and the public in nineteenth-century England* (Aldershot, 1996).

Jones, G. S., *Outcast London: a study in the relationship between classes in Victorian society* (Oxford, 1971).

Jones, G. S., *Languages of class: studies in English working class history 1832-1982* (Cambridge, 1983).

Jordan, J. O. and Patten, R. L. (eds.), *Literature in the marketplace: nineteenth-century British publishing and the circulation of books* (Cambridge, 1995).

Joyce, P., *Visions of the people: industrial England and the question of class, 1840-1914* (Cambridge, 1991).

Joyce, P., *Democratic subjects: the self and the social in nineteenth-century England* (Cambridge, 1994).

Kaye, H. J. and McClelland, K. (eds.), *E. P. Thompson: critical perspectives* (Oxford, 1990).

Keen, P., *The crisis of literature in the 1790s: print culture and the public sphere* (Cambridge, 1999).

Kelly, T., *George Birkbeck: pioneer of adult education* (Liverpool, 1957).

Kelly, T., *Early public libraries: a history of public libraries in Great Britain before 1850* (1966)

Klancher, J. P., *The making of English reading audiences, 1790-1832* (Madison, Wis., 1987).

Klaus, H. G., *The literature of labour: two hundred years of working-class writing* (Brighton, 1985).

Koss, S., *The rise and fall of the political press in Britain* (1981).

Krippendorff, K., *Content analysis: an introduction to its methodology* (2004).

Landry, D., *The muses of resistance: laboring-class women's poetry in Britain, 1739-1796* (Cambridge, 1990).

Langford, P., *A polite and commercial people: England, 1727-1783* (Oxford, 1989).

Laqueur, T., *Religion and respectability: Sunday schools and working class culture, 1780-1850* (1976).

Leavis, Q. D., *Fiction and the reading public* (1932).

Lee, A. J., *Origins of the popular press in England 1855-1914* (1976).

Lewis, D. M., *Lighten their darkness: the evangelical mission to working-class London, 1828-1860* (Carlisle, 2001).

Lillywhite, B., *London coffee houses: a reference book of coffee houses of the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries* (1963).

Lovegrove, D. W, *Established church, sectarian people: itinerancy and the transformation of English dissent, 1780-1830* (Cambridge, 1988).

Low, D. A., *The Regency underworld* (Stroud, 2005).

Madden, L. and Dixon, D. (eds.), *The nineteenth-century periodical press in Britain: a bibliography of modern studies, 1901-1971* (1976).

Maccoby, S., *English radicalism*, six vols. (1935-61).

Maidment, B., *Into the 1830s: some origins of Victorian illustrated journalism. Cheap octavo magazines of the 1820s and their influence* (Manchester, 1992).

Maidment, B., *The poorhouse fugitives: self-taught poets and poetry in Victorian England* (Manchester, 1987)

Maidment, B., *Reading popular prints, 1790-1870* (Manchester, 1996).

Malcolmson, R. W., *Popular recreations in English society, 1700-1850* (1973).

Mandelbrote, G. and Manley, K. A. (eds.), *The Cambridge history of libraries in Britain and Ireland*, Vol. II, *1640-1850* (Cambridge, 2006).

Maniquis, R. M. (ed.), *British radical culture of the 1790s* (San Marino, CA., 2002).

Mancoff, D. N and Tela, D. J. (eds.), *Victorian urban settings: essays on the nineteenth-century city and its contexts* (New York, 1996).

McCalman, I., *Radical underworld: prophets, revolutionaries and pornographers in London, 1795-1840* (Cambridge, 1988).

McCalman, I. et al (eds.), *An Oxford companion to the Romantic Age: British culture, 1776-1832* (Oxford, 1999).

McKenzie, D. F., ed. McDonald, P. D. and Suarez, M. F., *Making meaning: 'Printers of the mind' and other essays* (Amherst, Mass., 2002).

Miles, D., *Francis Place 1771-1854: the life of a remarkable radical* (Brighton, 1988).

Mitch, D. F., *The rise of popular literacy in Victorian England: the influence of private choice and public policy* (Philadelphia, 1992).

Mokyr, J., *The British industrial revolution: an economic perspective* (Oxford, 1993).

Mokyr, J., *The gifts of Athena: historical origins of the knowledge economy* (Oxford, 2002).

Moody, J. and O'Quinn, D. (eds.), *The Cambridge companion to British theatre, 1730-1830* (2007).

Moody, J., *Illegitimate theatre in London, 1770-1840* (2000).

Morton, T. and Smith, N. (eds.), *Radicalism in British literary culture, 1650-1830: from revolution to revolution* (Cambridge, 2002).

Murphy, P. T., *Toward a working-class canon: literary criticism in British working-class periodicals, 1816-1858* (Columbus, 1994).

Myers, R. and Harris, M. H., (eds.), *A genius for letters: booksellers and bookselling from the 16th to the 20th century* (Winchester, 1995).

Myers, R. and Harris, M. H., (eds.), *Development of the English book trade, 1700-1899* (Oxford, 1981).

Nesbitt, G. L., *Benthamite reviewing; the first twelve years of the Westminster review, 1824-1836* (1934).

Neuburg, V. E., *The penny histories: a study of chapbooks for young readers over two centuries* (1968).

Newton Dunn, B., *The man who was John Bull: the biography of Theodore Edward Hook, 1778-1841* (1996).

North, J. S. (ed.), *The Waterloo directory of English newspapers and periodicals 1800-1900 Series 2* (Waterloo, 2003).

Pearson, J., *Women's reading in Britain, 1750-1835: a dangerous recreation* (Cambridge, 1999).

Perkins, M., *Visions of the future: almanacs, time, and cultural change, 1775-1870* (Oxford, 1996).

Plunkett, J., *Queen Victoria: first media monarch* (Oxford, 2003).

Poole, W. F., *Poole's index to periodical literature, 1802-1906*, rev. edn, six vols. (Gloucester, Mass., 1963).

Porter, R., *Enlightenment: Britain and the making of the modern world* (2000).

Price, R., *British society, 1680-1880: dynamism, containment and change* (Cambridge, 1999).

Prochaska, A. M. S., *Westminster radicalism, 1807-32* (1975).

Prothero, I. J., *Artisans and politics in early nineteenth-century London: John Gast and his times* (1979).

Prothero, I. J., *Radical artisans in England and France, 1830-1870* (Cambridge, 1997).

Radford, P., *The celebrated Captain Barclay: sport, money and fame in Regency Britain* (2001).

Rauch, A., *Useful knowledge: the Victorians, morality, and the march of intellect* (2001).

Raven, J., Small, H. and Tadmoor, N. (eds.), *The practice and representation of reading in England* (Cambridge, 1996).

Read, D., *Press and people, 1790-1850: opinion in three English cities* (1961).

Reid, J. C., *Bucks and bruisers: Pierce Egan and Regency England* (1971).

Richardson, A., *Literature, education, and romanticism: reading as social practice, 1780-1832* (Cambridge, 1994).

Robbins, B., *The servant's hand: English fiction from below* (New York, 1986).

Roberts, M. J. D., *Making English morals: voluntary association and moral reform in England, 1787-1886* (Cambridge, 2004).

Rose, J., *The intellectual life of the British working classes* (2002).

Rose, J. and Anderson, P. (eds.), *British literary publishing houses 1881-1965* (1991).

Royle, E. and Walvin, J., *English radicals and reformers 1760-1848* (Brighton, 1982).

Sanderson, M., *Education economic change and society in England 1780-1870* (Basingstoke, 1983).

Schwarz, L. D., *London in the age of industrialisation: entrepreneurs, labour force and living conditions, 1700-1850* (Cambridge, 1992).

Scott, J. W., *Gender and the politics of history* (New York, 1988).

Shapin, S., *A social history of truth: civility and science in seventeenth-century England* (1994).

Shapin, S., *The scientific revolution* (1996).

Shattock, J. (ed.), *The Cambridge bibliography of English literature*, Vol. IV, *1800-1900*, 3rd edn. (Cambrdige, 1999)

Shattock, J., *Politics and reviewers: the 'Edinburgh' and the 'Quarterly' in the early Victorian age* (1989).

Shattock, J. and Wolff, M. (eds), *The Victorian periodical press: samplings and soundings* (Leicester, 1982).

Sigel, L. Z., *Governing pleasures: pornography and social change in England, 1815-1914* (2002).

Simon, B., *The Two nations and the educational structure, 1780-1870* (1974).

Sinnema, P. M., *Dynamics of the pictured page: representing the nation in the Illustrated London News* (Aldershot, 1998).

Smith, F. B., *Radical artisan: William James Linton, 1812-97* (Manchester, 1983).

Smith, O., *The politics of language, 1791-1819* (Oxford, 1984).

Smith, W. D., *Consumption and the making of respectability, 1600-1800* (2002).

Spater, G., *William Cobbett, the poor man's friend*, two vols. (Cambridge, 1982).

Spufford, M., *Small books and pleasant histories: popular fiction and its readership in seventeenth-century England* (Cambridge, 1981).

St. Clair, W., *The reading nation in the Romantic period* (Cambridge, 2004).

Steedman, C., *Childhood, culture and class in Britain: Margaret McMillan, 1860-1931* (1990).

Steedman, C., *Policing the Victorian community: the formation of English provincial police forces, 1856-80* (1984).

Steedman, C., *The radical soldier's tale - John Pearman, 1819-1908* (1988).

Steinberg, M. W., *Fighting words: working-class formation, collective action, and discourse in early nineteenth-century England* (1999).

Stephens, J. R., *The profession of the playwright: British theatre 1800-1900* (Cambridge, 1992).

Stevenson, J. (ed.), *London in the Age of Reform* (Oxford, 1977).

Stewart, R., *Henry Brougham 1778-1868: his public career* (1985).

Stobart, J., Hann, A. et al. (eds.), *Spaces of consumption: leisure and shopping in the English town, c.1680-1830* (2007).

Sweet, R., *The English town, 1680-1840: government, society and culture* (Harlow, 1999).

Taylor, B., *Eve and the New Jerusalem: socialism and feminism in the nineteenth century* (1983).

Taylor, B. and Knott, S. (eds.), *Women, gender and enlightenment* (Basingstoke, 2004).

Thompson, E. P., *Customs in common* (1991).

Thompson, E. P., *The making of the English working class* (1963).

Thompson, E. P., *The poverty of theory, and other essays* (1978).

Thompson, F. M. L. (ed.), *The Cambridge social history of Britain, 1750-1950*, three vols. (1993).

Thompson, N. W., *The people's science: the popular political economy of exploitation and crisis 1816-34* (Cambridge, 1984).

Todd, W. B., *A directory of printers and others in allied trades: London and vicinity, 1800-1840* (1972).

Turner, M. J., *The age of unease: government and reform in Britain, 1782-1832* (Stroud, 2002).

Uffelman, L. K. (ed.), *The nineteenth-century periodical press in Britain: a bibliography of modern studies, 1972-1987* (Edwardsville, 1992).

Vernon, J., *Politics and the people: a study in English political culture, c.1815-1867* (Cambridge, 1993).

Vernon, J. (ed.), *Re-reading the constitution: new narratives in the political history of England's long nineteenth century* (Cambridge, 1996).

Vicinus, M. J., *Broadsides of the industrial North* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1975).

Vicinus, M. J., *The industrial muse. A study of nineteenth century British working-class literature* (1974).

Vincent, D., *Bread, knowledge and freedom: a study of nineteenth-century working class autobiography* (1981).

Vincent, D., *Literacy and popular culture: England 1750-1914* (Cambridge, 1989).

Vincent, D., *The rise of mass literacy: reading and writing in modern Europe* (Cambridge, 2000).

Wallas, G., *The life of Francis Place, 1771-1854* (1898).

Webb, R. K., *Harriet Martineau: a radical Victorian* (1960).

Webb, R. K., *The British working class reader 1790-1848: literacy and social tension* (1955).

Webb, S. J. and W. B., *The history of trade unionism* (1894).

Webb, S. J. and W. B., *English local government from the Revolution to the Municipal Corporations Act* (1906).

Wheatley, K. (ed.), *Romantic periodicals and print culture* (2003).

Whitaker, W. B., *The eighteenth-century English Sunday: a study of Sunday observance from 1677 to 1837* (1940).

White, C. L., *Women's magazines, 1693-1968* (1970).

Wickwar, W. H., *The struggle for the freedom of the press, 1819-1832* (1928).

Wiener, J. H., *A descriptive finding list of unstamped British periodicals, 1830-1836* (1970).

Wiener, J. H., *Radicalism and freethought in Nineteenth-Century Britain: the life of Richard Carlile* (Westport, Conn, 1983).

Wiener, J. H., *The war of the unstamped: the movement to repeal the British newspaper tax, 1830-1836* (1969).

Wigley, J., *The rise and fall of the Victorian Sunday* (Manchester, 1980).

Williams, C. (ed.), *A companion to nineteenth-century Britain* (Oxford, 2004).

Williams, G. A., *Artisans and sans-culottes: popular movements in France and Britain during the French Revolution* (1969).

Williams, R., *The long revolution* (1961).

Wood, M., *Radical satire and print culture, 1790-1822* (Oxford, 1994).

Worrall, D., *Radical culture: discourse, resistance and surveillance, 1790-1820* (1992).

Worrall, D., *Theatric revolution: drama, censorship and Romantic period subcultures, 1773-1832* (Oxford, 2006).

Wrigley, E. A and Schofield, R., *The population history of England, 1541-1871: a reconstruction* (1981).

Yeo, E. J. (ed.), *Radical femininity: women's self-representation in the public sphere* (Manchester, 1998).

4. Unpublished theses

Fyfe, A., 'Industrialised conversion: the Religious Tract Society and popular science publishing in Victorian Britain' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Cambridge, 2000).

Navickas, K., 'Redefining loyalism, radicalism and national identity: Lancashire under the threat of Napoleon, 1798-1812' (unpublished D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 2005).

5. Online sources[5]

Alston, R., *Library history: the British isles - to 1850* <http://www.r-alston.co.uk/contents.htm>

British Book Trade Index < www.bbti.bham.ac.uk >

British periodicals: collections I and II <http://britishperiodicals.chadwyck.co.uk/home.do>

House of Commons Parliamentary Papers <http://parlipapers.chadwyck.co.uk/home.do>

The making of the modern world: the Goldsmiths'-Kress library of economic literature <http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/MOME>

North, J. (ed.), *Waterloo directory of English newspapers and periodicals*, series II (2003) <http://www.victorianperiodicals.com/series2/default.asp>

Oxford dictionary of national biography <http://www.oxforddnb.com/>

Old Bailey proceedings online <www.oldbaileyonline.org>

[5] This section refers to sources available only online. I have listed sources whose online form exactly replicates its printed form in the printed primary source section. The databases on occasion used to access these are, however, listed in the current section.