



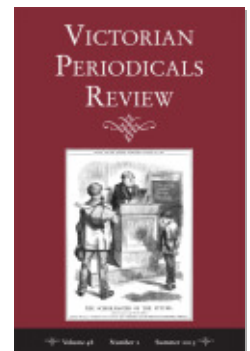
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Periodicals and Journalism in Twentieth-Century Ireland: Writing against the Grain ed. by Mark O'Brien and Felix M. Larkin (review)

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promising his claim to “purity.” Indeed, while the majority of O’Kell’s study demonstrates the various ways Disraeli’s novels were mediums for a process of self-realization, defined by a negotiation between fantasies about himself and the political dynamics in which he participated, he also shows how Disraeli’s fiction developed in response to, and in anticipation of, public opinion. *Coningsby* (1844), *Sybil* (1845), and *Tancred* (1847) were as much part of Disraeli’s process of self-discovery as they were ideological proclamations of Young England. Indeed, as O’Kell notes, it was only after seeing *Sybil* advertised in the window of a Boulogne bookshop that Disraeli felt emboldened to write the first chapter of *Tancred*.

It would seem that Disraeli’s psychological complexities drew strength from his love of fame and public reputation as much as those sources impressed his insecurities. But the need to shape public opinion in an era awash in a sea of print became an increasingly important preoccupation for public figures, and Disraeli was a noteworthy pioneer in that respect. The periodical press functioned as a crucial medium for this project, and O’Kell seamlessly weaves it into his analysis. The result of O’Kell’s study is a fascinating and compelling portrait of one of Victorian Britain’s most colorful figures. If any criticism is warranted, it is only that O’Kell’s summaries of Disraeli’s writings are occasionally more thorough than necessary for advancing his argument. But that is a minor reservation about a book that is certain to set a precedent for years to come.

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Mark O’Brien and Felix M. Larkin, eds., *Periodicals and Journalism in Twentieth-Century Ireland: Writing against the Grain* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2014), pp. 240, \$74.50/£49.18/€55.00 cloth.

The essays in this collection are expanded versions of papers given at the 2012 conference of the Newspaper and Periodical History Forum of Ireland at Kingston University. Fourteen chapters discuss significant titles from 1899 to 1990, emphasizing connections between newspapers, periodicals, and journalism in the broadest sense. Many of the contributors have close associations with the newspaper trade in Ireland. The remit of the book is to evaluate the cultural presence of a selection of titles and to judge “their journalistic activities—and, by extension, their contributions to Irish society and political culture” (11). This is media history, and the journals chosen for study are, as the editors say, representative rather than famous, “best,” or most long-lived.

The first essay, by Colum Kenny of Dublin City University, is the most useful to scholars of nineteenth-century periodicals. Kenny's argument addresses the succession of journals that Arthur Griffith (1871–1922) managed, owned, or wrote for. These six titles were published from 1899 to 1919, each closing down before the next began publication. As they all appeared during the fight for political independence from Britain, Kenny traces their nationalist outlook and examines how the British government responded to their perceived threat. For example, Kenny notes that Maud Gonne wrote an article in Griffith's *United Ireland* about Queen Victoria's visit to Ireland in 1900, describing her as the "Famine Queen" (19). The government's response was to seize all copies of the paper containing Gonne's article. *United Ireland* was itself lost in 1906 when Griffith unsuccessfully fought a libel action brought against the paper by a Limerick parish priest; however, the nationalist cause was reborn in Griffith's new publication, *Sinn Féin*, published from 1906 to 1914, and a pattern of resistance and governmental reprisal was established.

In each of these essays, the focus is on content over form, so it is difficult to get a sense of what the journals actually looked like, and little attempt is made to establish facts such as circulation figures or target audiences—beyond the broad category "nationalist." It is clear, however, that the collection is an attempt to revive the study of periodicals in Ireland, and the annual conferences of the Newspaper and Periodical History group will undoubtedly result in more nuanced examinations of titles from a wider historical and political field.

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Kim Wheatley, *Romantic Feuds: Transcending the "Age of Personality"* (Burlington VT: Ashgate, 2013), pp. xi + 191, \$114.95/£63 cloth.

In this exciting contribution to the study of nineteenth-century periodical culture, Kim Wheatley proposes a daring new mode of organizing and reading periodical discourse. Focusing on the literary feuds of the Romantic period, Wheatley asserts the value of the feud as a text, tracing its pre-occupations and elements against canonical Romanticism. Unlike Mark Parker's 2000 study, *Literary Magazines and British Romanticism*, which set the mode for Romanticist approaches to periodical culture, Wheatley's book rejects the usual organizational structure in which each chapter focusses on a single periodical or the reception of a single publication. Instead, she takes the print feud itself as her object of analysis. Wheatley