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Transatlantic influences in periodical editing: from Francis Jeffrey’s Edinburgh Review to Horace Greeley’s New-York Tribune

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In the 2 April 1836 number of the *New-Yorker* the editor Horace Greeley, who was just 25 years old and in the early stages of his career, remarked on the relevance of British Periodicals to the North American public. He singled out the *Edinburgh Review* for particular tribute: ‘We believe the general opinions and spirit of “the Edinburgh” are more consonant with the feelings and tastes of the educated classes of this country than those of either of its rival Quarterlies.’

There are some key words in that brief declaration. Greeley’s concern with ‘opinions,’ ‘spirit’ and ‘taste,’ and the pointed emphasis he places on their location within the nation’s ‘educated classes,’ suggests an area of common ground between him and the editors of the *Edinburgh*, though his publications were of a very different format and style. Whig politics, abolitionism and an agenda of social reform, though significant, were not the only areas of concurrence. Looking back over thirty-four years of the *Edinburgh*, and forwards to an American age of journal publication and literary growth, Greeley was poised at a turning point in which the transatlantic tables of influence were about to be dramatically revised.

This essay cannot take account of all of the British and North American periodicals that were significant to transatlantic relations during the first half of the nineteenth century, but it aims to make some interesting comparisons. Most of all, I want to highlight crucial networks of reciprocity and exchange that emerge. We can then begin to see a clearer picture of how a distinctive, 

American journal tradition emerged out of the influence of the British periodicals, and especially from those based in Edinburgh or with mainly Scottish contributors. I also want to emphasise the manner in which stylistic and critical methodologies formed a literary bridge across the ‘Great Divide.’

Writers such as Charles Brockden Brown and Washington Irving developed essay styles that were informed by the eighteenth-century British examples of Addison, Steele and Johnson (although Brockden Brown evinces mixed feelings towards these three in his editorial to the first number of the *American Register*).

Irving further took notice of Walter Scott’s poetry and fiction, and of Jeffrey’s reviews for the *Edinburgh*. British editors and reviewers, and most particular those writing for the leading Scottish periodicals, responded in turn. The conversations that ensued, and which were often spread across many years, are fascinating and revealing. Throughout a time when political relations between Britain and America were at best strained, and at worst in a state of crisis, the exchange of ideas, knowledge and aesthetic principles through the periodical press provided a forum of public debate outside the more usual routes of official diplomacy and trade. Transatlantic studies today can look back at these lines of knowledge transfer, and their effects upon public attitudes and literary evolution, in order to develop a better understanding of the ways in which culture, language, the arts and the sciences interact when they cross international zones such as the Atlantic Ocean.

The contents of each of the *Edinburgh Review*, the *Quarterly Review*, and the *North American Review* (begun in 1815, based in Boston, and the most successful of the North American reviews of the nineteenth century) show some of the main parallels that emerged on the two sides of the Atlantic. Their articles cover a comparable range of books and events, are structurally similar, and employ many common methodologies. They frequently offered the same illustrative extracts from reviewed books.

Under the initial editorship of William Tudor, the *North American Review* achieved immediate success with its format, and so continued it virtually unchanged throughout the subsequent editorships of Jared Sparks (1817–1818).

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and 1824–1830), Edward Channing (1818–1819), Edward Everett (1820–1823), Alexander Hill Everett (1831–1835), John Gorham Palfrey (1836–1842), Francis Bowen (1843–1853), Andrew Preston Peabody (1853–1863), and James Russell Lowell (1863–1872). However, imitation motivated by commercial intention or adulation is too simplistic an explanation for the similarities between the Edinburgh and North American, and we need to look for deeper developmental structures. Scotland emerges as an intellectual location of immense importance. Critical strategies, language and rhetorical styles in these leading periodicals from each side of the Atlantic, employ similar patterns and protocols that had emerged from the debates of the eighteenth-century Scottish Enlightenment. The question is, how do they evolve in relation to literary journalism in the nineteenth century?

The North American acquired a conservative reputation that its main Scottish precursor, the Edinburgh, did not. That reputation has remained, but we do well to re-evaluate its true nature within the context of the North American’s production. Whilst the North American indeed maintained an anglophile editorial policy and tended to privilege reviews of British and European publications over those of contemporary American writers, its contributors nevertheless constituted the main public voice countering the Scottish reviewers’ criticisms of an emergent American literature. The first number of the North American contained an ‘Essay on North American Language and Literature,’ in which the commonplace issue of Standard English as an effective literary language for America is addressed:

> Literature seems to be the product […] of a national language. Literary peculiarities and even literary originality being, the one little more than the peculiarities of language, the other the result of that uncontrolled exercise of mind, which a slavery to a common tongue almost necessarily prevents. If then we are now asked, why is this country deficient in literature? I would answer, in the first place, because it possesses the same language with a nation, totally unlike it in almost every relation; and second, delights more in the acquisition of foreign literature, than in a laborious independent exertion of its own intellectual powers.³

The same article drew on Scottish writers as empirical examples, contrasting Walter Scott’s use of English to ‘render native beauties of idiom’ with Allan Ramsay’s and Robert Burns’s preference for a vernacular ‘that was made for them, and which only can give them their true form and pressure.’ The issues addressed by the reviewer concern the function of language within different national environments, and the response of creative writers. Firstly, the literary use of the English language is remarked upon in terms of its effectiveness in England, North America and Scotland. Secondly, there is a comparison of North American and Scottish authors’ exertions of their ‘intellectual powers’ of description. Scott is posited as a model that American writers had apparently failed to look to, but might do well to note in order to render their own nation’s ‘idiomatic beauties’ within the dominant commercial and socially acceptable language. Importantly, Scott was one of the best-selling authors in America throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, and his example was immediately accessible to readers of the North American. The reviewer further cites Ramsay and Burns as poets who used the Scottish vernacular to produce a truer form of representation. We should note, however, the use of past tenses. Whilst Ramsay and Burns are each referred to as having been outstanding national poets in the vernacular, the more significant factor is that both of them preceded Scott. Scott anthologized songs and ballads by each in his Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border, which was compiled and received as an antiquarian collection. For most merchant and middle-class readers on either side of the Atlantic, Scott was a natural successor to Ramsay and Burns, and a more modern literary figure. His providential values and approach to narrative history appealed to an American public keen to establish their autonomy and move forwards with a vibrant sense of national identity. Scott’s powerful influence on Irving, and Irving’s favourable reception in Britain once Scott had helped persuade Murray to publish The Sketchbook, reveals both writers to be figures of profoundly trans-Atlantic (rather than merely national) significance.

Five years later, Edinburgh reviewer and wit Sydney Smith, in his second article commenting on American writers asked his infamous and well-known rhetorical questions, ‘Who reads an American book? Who goes to an American

4. Ramsay and Burns, of course, also wrote in English.
The furious reaction in the *United States* to Smith’s remarks found a public platform immediately in the pages of the *North American*, prompting Francis Jeffrey in turn to add his voice to the debate in the following number of the *Edinburgh* (33: 395–431). Jeffrey insisted that his periodical was not anti-American in principle, and that the tone of his reviewer’s comment had either been misconstrued or taken in a poor spirit. Certainly, the North American periodical press took Smith’s words at face value, even though the rest of his article contained much that was complimentary. He had described Americans as ‘a brave, industrious, and acute people,’ and declared himself ‘a friend and admirer of Jonathan,’ but those more positive remarks were lost in the lines in which he disparaged American attempts at the arts. The real point of contention in his article was, as one might expect, slavery. Guaranteed to raise the blood of the *Edinburgh* reviewers more quickly than any other subject, Smith’s remarks on literature were followed by a final question, which asked ‘under which of the old tyrannical governments of Europe is every sixth man a slave, whom his fellow-creatures may buy, sell and torture?’ (33: 395–431). Four years afterwards, in July 1824, he wrote a further article on America in the familiar guise of a review of recent travel books. Again, the conclusion denounced the ‘great disgrace’ of slavery, with Smith anticipating a ‘bloody servile war […] which will separate America into slave states and states disclaiming slavery’ (41: 442). He ends his review by stating that he found it ‘impossible to speak of [slavery] with too much indignation and contempt,’ and that ‘but for it we should look forward with unqualified pleasure to a land of freedom.’

The *North American Review*, at first a bi-monthly and later a quarterly literary journal, emerged from Boston, and the degree of its immediate and sustained success indicates its representation of mainstream interest, taste and opinion in New England during the early decades of the Nineteenth Century. However, I

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6. Smith’s prediction of the American Civil War is quite well known, as is Alex de Tocqueville’s in the first volume of *Democracy in America* (1835).
want also to look at two successful, but quite different, periodicals printed in Philadelphia, and begun during the years immediately before the emergence of the North American. The Port Folio was commenced in 1801, and the Analectic Magazine, containing selections from foreign reviews and magazines (edited by Washington Irving from its first issue until January, 1815) first appeared in January 1813. Read comparatively, these two periodicals reveal the extent to which North America’s ongoing literary relationships with Britain, and its concerns about democracy and individual freedom, were at the forefront of public consciousness.

The patrician editorial attitude of the Port Folio testifies to the levels of feeling and public concern that dominated the opinions of polite society in Philadelphia at the time. Edited by Joseph Dennie under the pen name ‘Oliver Oldschool’ until his death in 1812, when his associate and fellow Federalist, Nicholas Biddle succeeded him, this successful review adopted the common format of placing editorials, original reviews and local miscellanea within a framework of selected articles re-published from British and European journals.7 Beginning as a weekly newspaper with just eight pages, the format was revised in 1809 into a monthly review of a more substantial nature, with more than one hundred pages. Whilst the original prospectus announced ‘a New Weekly Newspaper, Submitted to Men of Affluence, Men of Liberality, and Men of Letters,’ the 1809 prospectus for the new series claimed that the journal was aiming at a much broader class of readership. However, the new series fine plates—‘elegant engravings,’ in the words of Dennie’s new prospectus—maintained the Port Folio’s reputation as a quality publication. Upholding reactionary Burkean principles (Burke is very frequently quoted) and social elitism, the Port Folio nevertheless declared that it looked to the Edinburgh and its reviewers as exemplars of style and taste.

In October 1808, an editorial by Dennie called for a quality North American quarterly review to compare with the best British periodicals, remarking on the Edinburgh’s ‘splendid reputation and extensive sale and currency,’ and suggesting that it should be the model to follow:

Powers similar to those which [...] continue to emblazon the Edinburgh review should be enlisted. Mere heavy and prosing criticism would never be read…. No dishes but poignant dishes must appear. There must be attick salt and the caustick Cayenne of lampoons. The company [should be] enlivened by merriment, wit and satire. Epigrammatick sentences and brilliant sarcasms should relieve the seriousness of literary discussion.  

Dennie’s contributions were flamboyant, and included some extraordinarily caustic outbursts about Jacobinism, revolution and the threat that he felt popular democracy posed to social stability in the United States. He consistently separated American society into the educated class of men, with ‘genius, talents, principle and property’ (4: 159) and the aspiring masses, classed as ‘natural brute beasts […] an impudent and savage gang.’  

Like Burke, he delighted in employing passionate metaphors, florid similes, and sensational adjectives in order to engage his reader’s feelings and excite their fears of social chaos. This kind of journalism has led historians such as Richard Hofstadter to remark that many Federalists of the period frightened themselves and their followers with their own propaganda.  

Ironically, given the accusations of sedition and seduction ‘by arts and by force’ that Dennie levelled at the radical British and American press, his articles were so partisan and extreme in their anti-Jeffersonian tone that he had been himself charged with seditious libel in 1805. He was subsequently acquitted, and the *Port Folio* continued along its established lines.

Following the *Port Folio*’s review of Joel Barlow’s *Columbiad*, in which Barlow’s patriotism is praised before his manner of versification and use of American neologisms is dissected, Dennie again cited the *Edinburgh* as his

9. Dennie’s descriptions were frequently more offensive than those I have used here.  
precedent. He asserted that ‘his reviewer’ had ‘affected the sterner style of the Edinburgh Review, and displayed much of its wit, and all of its severity…. We think most of his strictures correct, and we did not hesitate, no, not for a moment to give place of honour to his production.’¹² Dennie’s self-defence, for he was the reviewer, is followed by a reprint of the *London Monthly Magazine*’s review of Barlow’s poem (434–450). That review likewise attacks Barlow’s ‘orthography and neology,’ but adds the insult of interpreting those faults as a kind of belligerent nationalism (434–450). The inclusion of an elegiac, verse epistle to Walter Scott in the same issue as the original *Columbiad* review reinforces the pro-British bias of the *Port Folio*. With lines such as ‘Here, though care-infected / Too sure the poet’s laurels die,’ and a promise that, whilst ‘Columbia’s Genius heaves the sigh / Think not thy border Muse, neglected / Even here shall pass unhonoured by,’ it is not surprising that negative comment on an American work should provoke disappointment amongst a wider and more populist public (1:84).

Charles Brockden Brown emerges as another significant North American editor and critic in of the first decade of the nineteenth century. Brockden Brown, who turned from writing novels and towards journalism during the late 1790’s, knew Dennie and contributed several articles on literary, scientific and social topics to the *Port Folio*. His essays are usually cited as evidence of the renunciation of his earlier liberal, reformist sympathies influenced by William Godwin’s English radicalism, in favour of ‘safer’ models of order and propriety. The rationale that dominates his writing in this period indeed contrasts with the more sensational passages he used to build suspense in novels such as *Wieland*, *Ormond*, *Arthur Mervyn*, and *Edgar Huntley*. However, I want to suggest that the four years between 1806 and 1810 in which he edited and wrote for the Philadelphia-based *American Register, or General Repository of History, Politics and Science*, show his appeal to a new kind of imagination. Brockden Brown’s novels are transatlantic studies in their own right, with their exploration of the effects of literature upon the American psyche. Characters from Europe, or inspired by European sturm-und-drang or gothic literary

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traditions, mesmerize, haunt, deceive and manipulate others after their migration to Philadelphia and Delaware. Brown’s concern with British and American literary relationships comes to the fore again in 1806, in his ‘Review of Literature’ for the first issue of the American Register. That comparative study comprises a discussion of the major European nations’ Britain’s and North America’s literary influences on their own and each other’s public. Brown criticizes England as a literary autocracy, in which London ruthlessly transposes the hierarchical power structure of the Union onto the British press. He considers publishing as an aspect of transatlantic manufacture and trade:

Books flow in upon us from the great manufactury of London, in the same manner as they make their way to Bristol, York, Edinburgh and Dublin. As the inhabitants of these cities get their books from London, their cloths from Manchester, and their hardware form Birmingham, so do those of Baltimore, Philadelphia, New-York and Boston…. (174)

Brown then makes a comparison between liberal, progressive America, where opportunities are ‘being made’ across the nation, and the restrictive environment he sees constraining competition in Britain:

In Great Britain, almost all publications of any value appear in London. In America, there are twenty or thirty towns, maritime and inland, and some of them situated at opposite corners of the empire, in which books are occasionally printed. New York, Philadelphia and Baltimore, carry on the chief trade, but they are perhaps nearly equal to each other in the extent to which this trade is carried by them…. (175)

After Brockden Brown died in 1809, tributes from Philadelphian Federalists determined him as a conservative. Forty years later, in 1846, Margaret Fuller re-asserted his status as a progressive in her ‘Papers on Literature and Art’ (1846), insisting on his originality and fidelity to principle. We do well to consider the critical approach that unfolds in his periodical essays and which frequently develops, rather than revokes, the more obvious calls for social change in his fiction.

Dennie died the year before Francis Jeffrey’s visit to America in the fall of 1813, but the editor of the *Edinburgh* met Nicholas Biddle during social events in Philadelphia. He recorded the meeting in the journal he kept of his visit, comparing Biddle’s journalism with that of two politically conservative contributors to William Gifford’s *Quarterly Review*:

Nearly the first literary person in Philadelphia [Biddle] has for some time conducted a periodical work called the *Portfolio*, in which, though the far greater part consists of acknowledged extracts from English journals and other such, there are occasionally some original essays pleasingly and modestly written. I shall endeavour to bring a number or two with me. His conversation is somewhat shallow and somewhat priggish, though not without vivacity and talent. Like all other Americans, he dogmatises on politics – and condemns passionately. He is several degrees above Simpson, and not above Horace Twiss – who, by all that I can see, would be prodigiously admired in America and might put himself near the head of their literature.¹⁴

Jeffrey’s remarks shift from the local and particular, introducing Biddle in the context of Philadelphia and the *Port Folio* (the journal entry recalls a ‘society’ party at which the two men met), to the national, positing him as typical of ‘all other Americans.’ In so doing, Jeffrey situates Biddle, the *Port Folio* and more general American tastes in journalism, as closer to the constitutional Toryism of the *Quarterly Review* than to the Whig reformism of the *Edinburgh*.

It is regrettable that Jeffrey did not meet Washington Irving during his American visit, for he, too, was editing a review based in Philadelphia during those years.¹⁵ That publication, the *Analectic Magazine*, puts a rather different angle on American patriotism. Also sold in cities and major towns throughout New England, in New York and southwards through Virginia, South Carolina and Mississippi as far as New Orleans, it quickly gained a wider readership than the *Port Folio*—possibly because Irving himself was based in New York. Essentially, the *Port Folio* looked towards a Britain that had stood against

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revolutionary France and which had used authoritarian procedures to control Jacobinical literature and the freedom of popular speech. The Analectic is similarly a journal with a distinctly British bias, and Irving was as much a Federalist, with a love of tradition, as Dennie and Biddle. Under Irving’s editorship, however, the Analectic embraced a relationship with Britain that was of a more reciprocal and forward-looking nature. Stanley Williams later remarks that the Analectic ‘was a short cut to the best in Blackwood’s and the Quarterly Review,’ though, of course, in Irving’s time as editor, Blackwood’s had not yet been begun. Indeed, Blackwood’s is very similar in form and content to the Analectic and an argument can be made for considering it an example of the influence of American editorial practices on the British periodical market. Irving met Murray, Scott, Moore and a host of other active figures in the periodicals and literary publishing world after arriving in Britain in 1815. It almost certain that the reviews would have been a subject for conversation.

Irving established the Analectic by publishing selected articles from across a broad range of the British and North American reviews, along with original articles by and about both American and British writers. His first three issues, for example, contained an extract from Scott’s Rokeby, which he claimed his New York office had managed to procure before the poem had left the press in Britain (Irving was already an ardent admirer of Scott, and had corresponded with him), an account by Byron of the opening of the Drury Lane Theatre, the Quarterly’s review of Moore’s Irish Melodies, Jeffrey’s Edinburgh review of Maria Edgeworth’s Tales of Fashionable Life, a review of The works of Robert Treat Paine (by Irving), an original review of Chateaubriand’s The Martyrs, and a review of The Remarkable Child: Native of America from the Literary Panorama, October 1812. Within such a framework, Irving interpolated anecdotes, informational items and letters. Contrasting articles from British, continental European and American reviews featured in each issue, representing a panorama of inter-periodical debate, whilst the Analectic’s own reviews presented readers with comment on a range of books and poems.

Irving is without doubt one of the most important figures in the development

of transatlantic literary relations, as a periodical essayist and a writer of fiction. His *Sketch-Book* and *Bracebridge Hall* received immediate acclaim from virtually every British reviewer, with Jeffrey particularly complimentary. His periodical essays and editorship of the *Analectic* were commented on in *Blackwood’s* in 1824, in John Neal’s series on ‘American Writers.’ Neal was himself American, and his contributions to *Blackwood’s* constitute an example of transatlantic reciprocity in their own right. As Fred Pattee notes, they provided the first comprehensive History of American Literature, and the first American series to break into the British review press.\(^1^7\) Neal likens Irving’s ‘newspaper’ style to Oliver Goldsmith, because of its ‘grave pleasantry’ of tone. He further links the fictional persona of Geoffrey Crayon with Irving’s identity as an editor, reviewer and periodical essayist. His comment on the *Analectic Magazine* concentrates on Irving’s four naval biographies, declaring them ‘eloquent, simple, clear and beautiful’ examples of American literature. Generic distinctions between periodical essays and creative literature are further blurred as Neal repeatedly states that Irving had ‘the heart of a poet,’ citing the sketch of a Native American witnessing from his bark canoe the ‘apparition of a sea-fight’ between the British and the United States on Lake Erie.\(^1^8\)

Transatlantic division remained an issue, however. Gifford, editor of the *Quarterly Review*, was particularly notorious for his anti-American attitudes in publishing articles that depicted the United States as a profligate, barbarous and corrupt land. Language and literature’s emergence over the previous half-century, out of the Scottish Enlightenment debates on the progress of civil society, became the benchmarks by which American development was judged. In Britain, Samuel Johnson’s *Dictionary* had established spellings and literary precedents for the lexicon and grammar of the English language. Until Noah Webster published his *American Dictionary of the English Language* in 1828, Americanisms did not have the support of a similar form of legitimisation. The reviewers, literature and the arts in general consequently became weapons in


\(^{18}\) *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, 17 (January 1825), 63.
the power politics of English and North American debate. 19

It is salient that the Scottish reviewers of the early nineteenth century were educated in a nation where their own vernacular language and dialect had come to be regarded as ungainly and undesirable. Jeffrey had remarked, before going to Oxford, that he intended to lose the Scottish accent that he found embarrassing. His articles for the Edinburgh, along with those of his contributors, are written in Standard English and betray nothing of the spoken tones that he was unable to shed. But whilst Scottish writers and intellectuals used English and sought to relegate their Scotticisms, many residents of the independent United States were not so willing to conform to patterns of speech and grammar prescribed by a British elite. The Scottish reviewers’ articles, which were viewed by many patriotic Americans as linguistic and literary colonialism, had a double-edged effect. On the one hand, they constrained anything more than token moves towards journalistic independence by periodicals like the North American Review. On the other, they inspired more progressively-minded Americans to seek greater freedom of expression in writing about and for their own nation.

The reviews’ debate over American English raged for more than two decades, with remarks frequently taken out of context rather than considered fully within the articles in which they originated. Robert Walsh, who was born in Baltimore and, like Jeffrey, a lawyer by profession, was a contributor to the Port Folio under Dennie’s editorship, and assisted Charles Brockden Brown, who also trained as a lawyer, with The American Register. He succeeded Brown as editor at the end of 1809, and continued until the journal ceased publication in 1811. Noticing the domination of the British periodicals by quality quarterly reviews, Walsh then established The American Review of History and Politics, and General Repository of State Papers as North America’s first quarterly review. He edited the American Review of History and Politics and, becoming increasingly active in journalism in Philadelphia, contributed articles and reviews to several other magazines including the Analectic. In addition to editing

the conservative *American Quarterly Review* from 1827, Walsh also began and edited the *National Gazette*, a Philadelphia newspaper, from 1821 to 1836. Walsh’s 512-page book, *An Appeal from the Judgements of Great Britain respecting the United States* (Philadelphia, 1819) is a major text in the debate over American literature. Walsh was appealing against the criticism levelled at America by British reviewers, and he names the *Edinburgh* and *Quarterly* reviews as primary offenders. In his 1820 review of that book, Jeffrey defended both the *Edinburgh* and *Quarterly*, countering that in earlier articles the *Edinburgh* had expressed its opinion that American ‘party-pamphlets were written with great keenness of spirit; and that their orators frequently displayed a vehemence, correctness, and animation, that would command the admiration of any European audience’ (*ER*, 33, 410).\(^{20}\) He reiterated the *Edinburgh*’s 1802 suggestion that ‘Literature was one of those finer Manufactures which a new country will always find it better to import than to raise’ and assented to Smith’s 1818 claim that American readers ‘get books enough from us in their own language.’ But after referring back to Smith’s review (411), Jeffrey then drops the earlier reference to the Atlantic passage. He was aware of the extent to which editions of British books were being produced by American printers, and we must consider that he may have been hinting at the ready availability of American imprints of most major British works, and not merely to imported books. Commercial motivation would thus have entered the argument, implicating the American print and book trade as suppliers to the nation’s reading public.

With the American review world seeking an autonomous identity, urged on by the criticism from the Scottish reviewers, the emergence into the field of James Fenimore Cooper in 1820 marked a turning point. I would like here to emphasise Cooper’s importance as an American reviewer of American literature for American periodicals. In 1820 he published *The Spy*, but at the same time he was becoming a contributor to various journals, and notably wrote for Charles Kitchell Gardner’s *The Literary and Scientific Repository, and Critical Review* (New York). The *Literary and Scientific Repository* was, as its full name leads one to expect, another journal based on the model formats of the *Edinburgh*

\(^{20}\) For Jeffrey’s full review see 395–431.
and *Quarterly Reviews*. But, as James Beard and Richard Gravil have noted, Gardner and Cooper sought to promote the cultural independence of American writers.21 The inaugural edition of July, 1820 began with a review of General James Wilkinson’s three-volume *Memoirs of my own times*, preceded by the words ‘Original’ in a prominent font and bold type. Wilkinson’s publication was proclaimed as a ‘new kind of literature’ that evaded the usual, anglophile criteria of definition and genre, and that had confused critics who had paid it no attention to date. More to the point, it was upheld as an American work of real ‘value to society.’ 22 Without Smith or the *Edinburgh* being specifically identified, it is clear that the *Repository* was responding to the by then infamous article. Gardner followed the Wilkinson review with five reviews taken from the *Edinburgh*, three from the *Quarterly* and three from *Blackwood’s*. More than just interesting selections, these articles represent conflicting attitudes in the leading British periodicals to the Peterloo massacre, to its political repercussions and to works by a selection of the most prominent British and American authors. Jeffrey’s review of Walsh was printed in the following issue.

By April 1821 original articles predominated in the *Repository*. Amongst Cooper’s contributions were reviews of Clarke’s *Naval History of the United States*, Scoresby’s two volumes on the Arctic describing *The Northern Whale Fishery*, Catherine Sedgwick’s *A New-England Tale* and Irving’s *Bracebridge Hall*. As Beard states, like Cooper’s *Spy*, the *Literary and Scientific Repository* constituted a ‘radical experiment in a country flooded with British books.’ Indeed, the *Repository* should have been a success, if the indignation of other American reviewers over criticism from Britain had been representative of the views of the reading public at the time. But arguably, the American periodical reading market (in this case that of New York) was still not ready for a publication that set out to prioritise its own literary and intellectual productions. The *Literary and Scientific Repository* failed to establish a viable reader base, and collapsed after just two years, the May 1822 issue being the last. Benjamin Coles, another


of its contributors, wrote in disappointment to Cooper in July 1822, comparing the lack of support they had received with the success of the Quarterly Review in Britain, which he noted ‘now produces Murray 6000 pounds a year’ (Beard).

By the beginning of the 1830’s, the argument between the reviewers over British and American Literature had been running for so long that it had passed its peak as a topic of interest, and was becoming ‘old news.’ Most of the more experimental attempts by editors to find an American way that could afford both dignity to the nation and financial success to the publishers and owners, had failed. A way forward was clearly needed.

The 1830’s, consequently, became another decade of innovation, and a significant number of new North American magazines appeared. These included the Southern Literary Messenger (Richmond, monthly, August 1834), with Edgar Allan Poe as its editor between 1835 and 1837; Burton’s Gentleman’s Magazine (Philadelphia, monthly, July 1837 to December 1840), also with Poe as an editor between July 1839 and June 1840); and the Knickerbocker Magazine (New York, monthly, January 1833), with its miscellany of fiction, poetry and other contributions by authors that have since become canonical names. The Boston Quarterly Review emerged in January 1838 and ran until October 1842, when it became Brownson’s Quarterly Review. The early transcendental The Western Messenger (monthly, Louisville, Kentucky, 1836) was under the editorship of James Freeman Clarke until 1839, and carried articles from leading New England writers, including Margaret Fuller.

While each of the ventures I have just listed merits lengthier study, I want to spend the rest of this paper looking mainly at the emergence of Horace Greeley into the periodicals marketplace as a major new editorial force. Greeley’s weekly New-Yorker, which first appeared in 1834, and subsequently the New-York Tribune daily newspaper with its weekly companion the New-York Tribune Weekly that he established in partnership John McElrath in September 1841, are in appearance quite unlike the Edinburgh, the Quarterly Review, Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine, or any of the other major British reviews and critical journals (though there are some stylistic similarities to Blackwood’s). Their format is that of the newspaper. However, they differed considerably from the regular newspaper in their content. Greeley’s background—his family were
poor, his father lurched form one failed venture to another, and his formal schooling ended when he was 14—contrasts markedly with the High School and University educations that Jeffrey and his main group of lawyer-contributors to the *Edinburgh* had benefited from. On the other hand, like Jeffrey and the *Edinburgh* reviewers, Greeley was an articulate pro-reform, anti-slavery Whig mover and shaker of opinion. His editorials and articles for his own newspapers, which have been aptly described as ‘superior in incisive comment, intellectual challenge, diction, and effective analysis,’ had a significantly impact on readers from a wide range of social and economic backgrounds, influencing their attitudes towards support for his social and political causes. Greeley’s publications became the most successful newspaper journals of the nineteenth-century on the American side of the Atlantic, and his statement in the March 26th 1836 *New-Yorker* that ‘we have now about 7,500 [subscribers]’, after an initial run of 250, compares with the early success that the *Edinburgh* had achieved. Liveliness of approach, manifested through editorial and contributor brilliance, had a great deal to do with both publications’ appeal.

Literary contributions, which included the romantic epistolary feature ‘Letters of a Monomaniac,’ and European correspondent features such as ‘Mr Brooks’ Letters from Italy’ (reprinted from the *Portland Advertiser*) were regular columns, whilst a range of critical works and stories by American and European authors were serialized. Indeed, Greeley’s use of serialisation and the insertion of a miscellany of small factual notices, together with anecdotes, short stories and original poems, some by himself, is another instance of the editorial practice adopted earlier in the *Analectic* and *Blackwood’s*, which had each adopted those strategies in order to widen their appeal. Jeffrey and the editors of the *Quarterly Review* did not serialize material because the length of time between numbers meant it would have been difficult for readers to maintain interest.

Whilst running the *New-Yorker* Greeley also began the Whig campaign paper *The Jeffersonian* in Albany on February 17th, 1838, and the New York Whig paper *The Log Cabin* in 1840. The weekly *Log Cabin* reached a peak circulation of 80,000 in 1841, before Greeley amalgamated it with the *New-Yorker* to produce the *Tribune Weekly* from September 18th of that year. Together, the

*Tribune* and *Tribune Weekly* rapidly acquired a readership in excess of 30,000. The *Tribune Weekly* comprised the more serious items from its daily counterpart, and featured a miscellany of literature, reviews, political opinion columns, reports on Congress and state governmental matters, reports on business, transport developments and a host of other matter from across the United States. It was outspoken on the wrongs of slavery, campaigning for abolition throughout the nation, and printed articles on Native Americans within the community that make for interesting comparison with the attitudes towards Highlanders in Edinburgh a century earlier. The ‘Indians’ are primitivized by modern standards, especially with regard to their customs and languages, but they are represented as a benign presence (Margaret Fuller elevated the *Tribune’s* stand on Native American rights to a new level, in her columns after 1844). Greeley also did an enormous amount to establish a new kind of transatlantic journalism. He published Poe’s short story ‘Eleonora’ in the first number of the *Tribune*, together with the first episode in his serialization of Dickens’s *Barnaby Rudge*.

The inclusion of *Barnaby Rudge* signals Greeley’s concern with promoting the literature of social realism, and demonstrates his interest in the power of literature to shape public opinion both in Britain and America. If we look back to Henry Brougham’s ‘Don Pedro Cevallos’ article for the *Edinburgh* in 1808, with its attack on the class structure of Britain, its raising of the spectre of mob rebellion and the controversy it generated,24 we get a sense of the radical stance Greeley took in publishing a work which turns, in Dickens’s own words, on ‘multitudes, mob violence and fury’ and which culminates in the sack of London’s Newgate Gaol. Furthermore, words from Smith’s 1824 *Edinburgh* article, which I referred to earlier, can be heard echoing onwards into Greeley’s editorial programme: ‘Mobs are created by opposition to the wishes of the people […] when the wishes of the people are consulted so completely as they are consulted in America—all motives for the agency of mobs are done away.’

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24. *Edinburgh Review*, 13 (October 1808), 215–234. Written largely by Brougham, there has been speculation as to how Jeffrey may have edited this review for publication. The *Quarterly Review* was established in direct response to the the public controversy, by Scott, Gifford and other dissatisfied parties.
Greeley’s publicizing of Emerson’s work and that of other transcendentalists, whilst the transcendental periodical the *Dial* was failing as a commercial venture (publication ceased with the April, 1844 issue), requires much more detailed comment than I am able to give here. The daily and weekly *Tribune* regularly contained extracts from articles in the *Dial*, which had a circulation of only around 300—one tenth of Greeley’s reader base. Hence, the *Tribune* was able to publicize the literary ideals of the *Dial* amongst a wider public than it was otherwise reaching. Margaret Fuller ceased editing the *Dial* in July 1842, and in December 1844 Greeley appointed her as his first official Literary Editor. Her inaugural review for Greeley was of the second series of Emerson’s *Essays*, and it placed the *Tribune*’s review content on a firmly intellectual plane. She immediately consolidated the partnership between herself and Greeley, general editor and correspondent editor respectively, as founded on literary and philosophical sympathy.

Fuller, like Greeley, expressed frustration over the transatlantic division in reaction to Emerson’s writing:

> In England it would seem there are a larger number of persons waiting for an invitation to calm thought and sincere intercourse than among ourselves. Copies of Mr. Emerson’s first published little volume called ‘Nature’ have been sold there by thousands in a short time, while one edition has needed seven years to get circulated here. Several of his Orations and Essays from ‘The Dial’ have also been republished there, and met with a reverent and earnest response.\(^{25}\)

Written for American readers, those words were clearly designed to prompt curiosity and arouse a sense of embarrassment—a people who held reverence, sincerity and earnestness to be national characteristics would not want to be shamed by the English. However, just as Jeffrey had blamed a pre-occupation with the materialism and the necessity of labour for the lack of literary production in America, so Fuller identified the lack of leisure and demands of labour as determinants of reading tastes. She continued her essay with the deduction that the majority of Americans found it hard to identify with transcendental principles

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\(^{25}\) *New-York Tribune* (7 December 1844).
because they remained overly ‘occupied in these first stages by bringing out the material resources of the land […] [although] in England the want of such a voice [as Emerson’s] is as great as here, a larger number are at leisure to recognize that want.’ Thus, her review characteristically became an argument for social change and the need to take account of worker welfare.

Fuller exchanged her post for that of Foreign Correspondent in 1846, when she travelled to Europe. She continued to contribute regular reports on matters of literary, social and political importance until her death in 1850, writing detailed reports on the Italian Risorgimento.26

By appointing Fuller, Greeley provided his readers with regular and rigorous intellectual comment. He commissioned a report on women’s prisons and the problems faced by inmates upon their release, in which Fuller argues forcefully and eloquently the case for rehabilitation and training. The article, and others with which Fuller followed it, addresses many of the same concerns that had been raised by Jeffrey in his review of two volumes on ‘Prison Discipline,’ for the Edinburgh back in September 1818 (30: 479–486). Jeffrey’s praise for the ‘astonishing progress’ of Elizabeth Fry, a leading light of British penal reform and the wife of a Quaker banker, evinced a transatlantic precedent in his own visit to a Quaker-run prison in Philadelphia in 1813. The experimental institution was described by Jeffrey as ‘very remarkable for being the first in which the attempt to combine punishment with improvement of character was made on a considerable scale,’ and he comments that ‘a trade and the elements of education were taught to such as previously had neither’ (Journal).

Similarly, Margaret Fuller’s campaign for women’s education in her prose works and in her columns for the Tribune develops some of the salient points argued by Smith in his progressive review of Thomas Broadhurst’s Advice to Young Ladies on the Improvement of the Mind for the Edinburgh in 1810 (15: 299–315). Shortly after Brougham’s Don Pedro Cevallos article advocating electoral and constitutional reform, Smith had argued on moral, religious and practical grounds that women were as deserving of educational opportunity as

26. Fuller sent her final report for the Tribune in February. She died on July 19th, when the ship in which she was returning to America was wrecked just a few hundred yards from New York.
men. Confronting the effects of gender stereotyping early in childhood, he dismissed arguments about the inferior capacity of women to learn, asserting their right to a sense of ‘dignity and importance’ and suggesting that they might contribute to ‘the stock of national talents.’

Fuller was writing in America, and for a society that was quite different from that of early nineteenth-century Britain. However, conservative attitudes still regarded women as wives and mothers rather than as intellectuals and career professionals. The Tribune had publicized her ‘Great Lawsuit: Man versus men, Woman versus women’ from the Dial, along with Summer on the Lakes, and she took her editorial post at the Tribune in the year before Woman in the Nineteenth Century (a revision of the ‘Great Lawsuit’) went to press. Without any doubt, Fuller’s appointment by Greeley was foundational in raising the public profile of women’s journalism and the transcendental movement, as well as in developing cultural understanding through the furtherance of European and American transatlantic exchange.

The eclecticism of Greeley’s publications epitomises the paratactic philosophy that Susan Manning identifies (10–14) as fundamental to the Union in nineteenth-century American culture. As an editor and writer, he must be seen as instrumental in the establishment of American journal and newspaper periodical traditions. I have been able to demonstrate only a small selection of the evidence that the early nineteenth-century republican ideals and reformist stance of the Edinburgh reviewers on the British side of the Atlantic, the zeal with which they pursued their causes and declared their colours, and the risks taken by the editors in choosing (and revising) material for publication all contributed to the principles and spirit that Greeley upheld as ‘consonant’ with those of educated Americans. Whether as a stylistic model, an antagonist, and consequently as a prompter of American writers and reviewers, or as an example of social reform arbitrated through the pages of the periodical press, the Edinburgh Review’s imprint exists in the annals of American magazine and review traditions, and complementary lineages can be established from Jeffrey’s example through to that of Greeley and long beyond.

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