Periodicals in the Victorian era portrayed and reinforced current gender notions and ideals. Indeed, the Victorian periodical press was a critical cultural site for the representation of competing gender ideologies. This is the first full-length book to examine masculinities and femininities as defined and interrogated in these periodicals. It investigates readers, editors and journalists; and it considers the power of the press at home, in the domestic space, in metropolitan centres and at the margins of empire. The work is based on archival research into a wide range of publications from the 1830s to the *fin de siècle*; from enduring intellectual heavyweight quarterlies through more ephemeral women’s and working men’s magazines, to magazines for boys and girls. The study is informed by the theories and approaches of media and cultural studies and women’s studies. A valuable appendix supplies information about the many periodicals of the period mentioned in the book.

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Nineteenth-century British literature and culture have been rich fields for interdisciplinary studies. Since the turn of the twentieth century, scholars and critics have tracked the intersections and tensions between Victorian literature and the visual arts, politics, social organisation, economic life, technical innovations, scientific thought—in short, culture in its broadest sense. In recent years, theoretical challenges and historiographical shifts have unsettled the assumptions of previous scholarly synthesis and called into question the terms of older debates. Whereas the tendency in much past literary critical interpretation was to use the metaphor of culture as ‘background’, feminist, Foucauldian, and other analyses have employed more dynamic models that raise questions of power and of circulation. Such developments have reanimated the field.

This series aims to accommodate and promote the most interesting work being undertaken on the frontiers of the field of nineteenth-century literary studies: work which intersects fruitfully with other fields of study such as history; or literary theory; or the history of science. Comparative as well as interdisciplinary approaches are welcomed.

A complete list of titles published will be found at the end of the book.
GENDER AND THE VICTORIAN PERIODICAL

HILARY FRASER, STEPHANIE GREEN AND JUDITH JOHNSTON
To our families and friends
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Preface

This book investigates the role of the periodical press in mediating gender ideologies at a time when, as the most significant organ for disseminating knowledge, information and social attitudes, it wielded considerable cultural power. The periodical press in Victoria’s day had a sustained influence on the gendered assumptions of both the home and the colonial culture over which she presided. Journals and magazines became sites of intensified representations of gender and sexual identity and our evaluations and re-evaluations will, we trust, contribute to an understanding of the centrality of journalism in the construction of gender in Victorian cultural history.

We are the first to acknowledge that the scope of our study, given the many thousands of periodical titles published in the Victorian period, is too vast to enable an exhaustive coverage of the field. Indeed the variety is almost irresistible and every title has its fascinating characteristics and personalities, and is redolent with possibilities – comic, political, social and historical. However, we determined that this would be a different kind of work from the many previous excellent studies of individual titles (so invaluable to us) because it was our decision to stand back and examine the larger questions of gender rather than focus closely on particular titles. For this reason our study omits, for instance, regional journals, and we have limited ourselves to journals published for the most part in those powerful publishing centres, London and Edinburgh.

We have, except on rare occasions, avoided reviews and serial fiction in our discussions, because these have been admirably dealt with in such detail and some profusion in other publications. Only exceptionally, where an article served a particular cultural or social function, like for example George Eliot’s review essay for the Westminster titled ‘The Natural History of German Life’, is it included. It has been only recently that other kinds of journalism, outside fiction, have been taken up, recognised now as of very real interest to both literary and cultural studies, as well as relevant to the study of history.

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While we mention by name perhaps 120 periodical titles, we have read many more, including a significant number which began publication before the Victorian age, such as the Gentleman's Magazine, the Anti Jacobin Magazine and the Select Magazine for the Instruction and Amusement of Young Persons. Moreover, although no study of the periodical press could omit those dominant journals of the nineteenth century, the Quarterly and the Edinburgh Magazine, we have chosen to be judicious in our use of them, attempting to balance discussion of these with consideration of other kinds of journal. Those periodicals that continued publishing into the twentieth century were also a part of our study, so that we could gain an understanding of a press not arbitrarily restricted by a specified 'age' or a particular date, but as a continuing phenomenon which came to its zenith as part of that innately Victorian sense of a new, innovative and progressive world.

Material quoted from the various periodicals has, for the most part, retained the original spelling, grammar and punctuation. Obvious errors and misprints have been silently corrected and variant spellings likely to disrupt the reading process have been normalised. Where possible, the anonymous author of a particular article has been located through that wonderful boon to every student of the periodical press, the Wellesley Index, or through other means. Where such authors have been located, their publications are listed in the Bibliography under their names. Where an author has not been located, the work has been cited under the title of the article, rather than 'Anon.', for ease of reference.

At the back of the book we have included an Appendix offering brief details about the periodicals cited in this work. These notes provide, where possible, the run of the journal, the cost of the first issue, the key editor or editors, place of publication, publisher, politics, target readership and a brief general description of the contents. The studies from which the bulk of this information has been gleaned are listed at the head of the Appendix.
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Our book is a collaborative enterprise, not only because it is co-authored, but because so many friends and colleagues have had a significant input. Over the past four years we have all given papers related to the project in both local and international forums: work-in-progress seminars and a dedicated ‘Gender and Victorian Journalism’ seminar at the University of Western Australia; the aforementioned Australasian Victorian Studies Association Conference on the theme of ‘Victorian Mediations: Gender, Journalism and the Periodical Press’; the British Association of Victorian Studies Conference; invited papers at the Universities of Cambridge, Oxford, Exeter and Aberystwyth. It is impossible to acknowledge the input of all those who asked probing questions and made helpful suggestions in these and other contexts over this period, but we would like to single out some who have helped us to clarify the issues we are confronting, and given us the benefit of their own knowledge of Victorian gender issues and the periodical press. We are particularly grateful to Gillian Beer, Laurel Brake, Patrick Brantlinger, Marysa Demoor, Kate Flint, Regenia Gagnier, Lyn Pykett, Valerie Sanders and Joanne Shattock for their generous contributions to our project. Alex Tyrrell generously gave us access to his article on Samuel Smiles before publication, and our indebtedness to other scholars in the field will be evident from the range of our critical references.

Monica Anderson and Victoria Burrows, as Research Assistants at various periods, made an important contribution to the project, not least the extensive wealth of information uncovered by Monica for the material located in the Appendix from which we were able to construct what we trust is useful information on the journals referred to throughout this work. Our colleagues in the Discipline of English, Communication and Cultural Studies, the University of Western Australia, have also supported the project in various ways both intellectual and practical. In particular we would thank Daniel Brown, Kieran Dolin, Gail Jones, Andrew Lynch and Bob White for their unfailing interest and enthusiasm. We would also like especially to thank Sue Lewis and Jocasta Davies for their cheerful administrative support.

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