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The Role of Newspaper Syndicates, 1860–1900

Charles Johanningsmeier

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Conventional literary history has virtually ignored the role of newspaper syndicates in publishing some of the most famous nineteenth-century writers. Stephen Crane, Henry James, Rudyard Kipling, Robert Louis Stevenson, and Mark Twain were among those who offered their fiction to “syndicates,” firms which subsequently sold the work to newspapers across America for simultaneous, first-time publication. This decentralized process profoundly affected not only the economics of publishing, but also the relationship between authors, texts, and readers. In this, the first full-length study of this publishing phenomenon, Charles Johanningsmeier evaluates the unique site of interaction syndicates occupied between readers and texts. He shows how the economic practicalities of the syndicate system influenced the consumption and interpretation of various literary texts, and through a wealth of historical detail helps revise our understanding of what the term “literary history” can legitimately encompass. He explores the vital role the syndicates played in the professionalization of the literary sphere; they constitute, he argues, a transitional moment between the highly centralized literary publishers of the early nineteenth century, and the emergence of mass-market magazines which accompanied the growth of industrial capitalism. Johanningsmeier’s study provides a literary and historical context for understanding the ordinary reader’s response to crucial developments in nineteenth-century writing.

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CHARLES JOHANNINGSMEIER

State University of New York at Cortland



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Abbreviations

APA-LC	American Press Association Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.
BL-Turner	Tillotson's Newspaper Fiction Bureau materials in the possession of Michael Turner, Bodleian Library, Oxford, England; these are available by application to Mr. Turner.
B-StL	Irving Bacheller Papers, Special Collections, Owen D. Young Library, St. Lawrence University, Canton, NY.
CWB-Alderman	The Clifton Waller Barrett Collection, Manuscripts Division, Special Collections Department, Alderman Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA.
ECSP-Columbia	Edmund Clarence Stedman Papers, Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts, Butler Library, Columbia University, New York, NY.
<i>KAHB</i>	<i>Kellogg's Auxiliary Handbook: Containing a History of the Origin of Auxiliary Printing; With Opinions of Publishers; and Day-Book and Journal Combined: Being a Model System of Keeping Advertising Accounts; Together with Various Useful Articles, Tables, and Calendars.</i> Chicago: A. N. Kellogg, 1878.
MP-Lilly	S. S. McClure Papers, The Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN.
VLP-Newberry	Victor Lawson Papers, the Newberry Library, Chicago, IL.
ZBEN	The Bolton Evening News Archive, Archives and Local Studies, Bolton Metro Library, Bolton, England.