Who Contributed to Late-Eighteenth-Century English Newspapers?
Authorship, Accessibility and Public Debate (1790–92)

Johanne Kristiansen
Norwegian University of Science and Technology

DOI: https://doi.org/10.21825/aj.v8i2.15774

Abstract
A dominant narrative shaping how we view the eighteenth-century English press is that newspapers were important forums for debate and opinion, and that they contributed significantly to the gradual broadening of political participation and inclusion. Yet we still know rather little about the contributors to newspapers in this period, and thus about the social accessibility of this public forum. Based on a systematic reading of six daily newspapers from the politically turbulent years 1790–92, this article explores the following questions: Who contributed to late eighteenth-century English newspapers in this important period? How open was the English press to writers from different social backgrounds?

Author Biography
Johanne Kristiansen, Norwegian University of Science and Technology
Johanne Kristiansen holds a PhD from the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, where she currently works as an Associate Professor of English Literature. Her PhD thesis explored the relationship between news infrastructure and newspaper management in England in the late eighteenth century, with a particular focus on the role of news culture and its impact on the British response to the French Revolution. Her current research interests include pseudonymous authorship and the financing of political journalism in the long eighteenth century.

Published
2019-12-31

How to Cite

Issue
Vol 8 No 2 (2019)
Two decades later, she used these experiences to write *Oroonoko*, the story of a prince kidnapped from West Africa, enslaved and taken to a British colony in South America. Janet Todd explains how this extraordinary novella was shaped by the historical and political contexts and beliefs of Behn's time. Matthew White explains how the coffee-house came to occupy a central place in 17th and 18th-century English culture and commerce, offering an alternative to rowdy pubs and more formal places of business and politics. Read more. 'Reason is but choosing': freedom of thought and John Milton. All newspapers in Britain, daily or Sunday ones, can broadly be divided into the quality press and the popular press. The quality newspapers are also known as "heavies" and they usually deal with home and overseas news, with detailed and extensive coverage of sports and cultural events. Besides they also carry financial reports, travel news and book and film reviews. The popular press or the "populars" are also known as tabloids as they are smaller in size being halfsheet in format. News and headlines increasingly replaced the old title page. The English Civil Wars (1642–51) acted as a stimulus to reporters and publishers, and 300 distinct news publications were brought out between 1640 and 1660, although many of these were only occasional reports from the battle front, such as Truths from York or News from Hull. In the early years of the 18th century, the British newspaper was approaching its first stage of maturity. After 1691, improvements in the postal system made daily publication practical, the first attempt at doing so being the single-sheet Daily Courant (1702–35), which consisted largely of extracts from foreign corantos. Henry Muddiman had gained eminence as the "journalist" who edited the London Gazette (from 1666).