

RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

"was closer in style to Edmund Burke than Oliver Cromwell."

In America, however, there was no such tolerance. Expanding rapidly in the late 19th century, American Fundamentalism severed its transatlantic ties and pursued an "anti-liberal militancy" at home. (The British, Marsden notes, never quite understood the 1925 Scopes "monkey" trial.) The phenomenal growth of the movement, he suggests, was helped by several factors. Large parts of the United States were insulated from intellectual life; a tradition of "unopposed revivalism" had encouraged theological conservatism; and the rapid transition in the United States from Romanticism to the "Second Scientific Revolution" left many clergymen "not always thoroughly prepared" for emerging modes of religious thought.

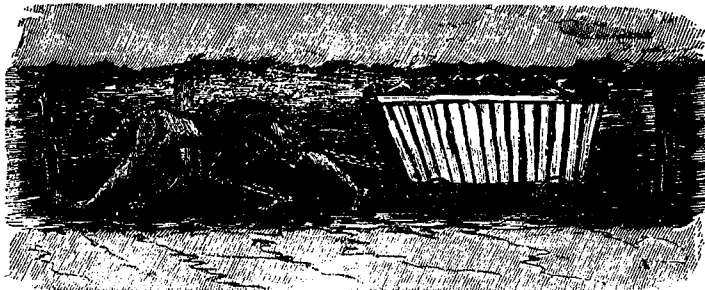
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Graphic Coverage

"The Development of Social Reportage in English Periodical Illustration During the 1840s and Early 1850s" by Celina Fox, in *Past & Present* (Feb. 1977), Corpus Christi College, Oxford OX1 4JF, England.

Illustrated journalism flourished in English periodicals after the invention of machine wood engraving in the 1830s. But unless one includes the "elevated, anodyne sentiment" of the *Illustrated London News*—the most successful periodical of the time—there were few precedents for graphic hard-hitting news reportage. It was left, says the Museum of London's Celina Fox, to the more enterprising partisan publications to show the possibilities of pictorial muckraking journalism.

Thus, when a furor arose in 1842 over the Report of the Children's Employment Commission, which contained illustrations of a child hauling a coal wagon (below), one Member of Parliament—and much of the public—insisted that the sketches be deleted. Instead, the pictures were released to the press. "True, the



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sketches were often 'disgusting,'" explained the accompanying commentary in Douglas Jerrold's *Illuminated Magazine*, "but for that very reason the cause, not the sketches, should be removed." *Punch* responded by printing a cartoon in which impoverished miners were surrounded by scenes of luxury. The *Illustrated London News*, however, maintained its "tasteful neutrality above the grubby, strife-torn world" and refused to print the pictures.

Although conditions in England merited solid social commentary, Fox writes, the rise of the illustrated periodical, then as later, did not necessarily bring serious reporting. Illustration was usually used to promote narrow religious or partisan causes; by appealing to the already converted, such magazines won only limited influence. Only the combination of a resourceful editor and a sizable readership enabled periodicals like *Punch* and Jerrold's *Illuminated Magazine* to take a serious look at the "condition of England."

Public Figures, Private Rights

"The Demise of the Public Figure Doctrine" by John J. Watkins, in *Journal of Communication* (Summer 1977), P.O. Box 13358, Philadelphia, Pa. 19101.

Since its celebrated 1964 decision in *New York Times Co. v. Sullivan*, the U.S. Supreme Court has sought to reconcile First Amendment guarantees of freedom of the press with the individual's right to freedom from defamation. *New York Times* stated that "public officials" claiming to have been libeled in the press must prove "reckless disregard of truth" or "knowledge of falsity" on the part of the publisher to recover damages. The doctrine was extended to public figures in 1967, and in 1972 to the private individual in cases involving the public interest—the "involuntary public figure."

But in recent years, writes Watkins, a 5th Circuit Court of Appeals law clerk, the Supreme Court has chipped away at the "public figure doctrine" by defining narrowly what is meant by "public figure." In the landmark 1974 case, *Gertz v. Robert Welch, Inc.*, the Court ruled that Elmer Gertz, civil-rights activist, prolific legal writer, and frequent subject of newspaper articles, was not a public figure. Two years later, it held that Mary Alice Firestone, former wife of the tire heir and a socialite who actively sought publicity, was also not a public figure. In four subsequent cases, courts have ruled on the "public" or "private" status of individuals, but in none of these cases have the courts established precisely what is meant by "public" or "private."

Without guidelines to help editors and newsmen determine an individual's status, defining the term "public figure," one judge noted, is like "trying to nail a jellyfish to the wall." The present system of libel law, Watkins contends, "savages" the First Amendment and could lead to "crippling press self-censorship."