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### The Serialization of Victorian Three-Volume Novels: A Preliminary Analysis

Graham Law and Robert L. Patten in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain* posit a “serial revolution” in the nineteenth century in the number of books serialized, the types of serialization, and the networks of serialization. But despite the incredible bibliometric work on serialization by many scholars, basic questions remain: how many novels were serialized, where were they serialized, and how did serialization progress over the course of the century?

Using *At the Circulating Library: A Database of Victorian Fiction, 1837–1901* (found at [www.victorianresearch.org/atcl](http://www.victorianresearch.org/atcl)), my paper analyzes the serialization of three-volume novels. The database contains all 5200 three-volume novels produced during the years 1835–97 and has serialization information for over 1000 titles (including multiple serializations) from over 70 periodicals. Three-volume novels were a significant subset of Victorian fiction and their serialization gives a good indication of overall serialization trends: rates of serialization, types of periodicals, and the gender of authors.

The database confirms the growth in the number of serializations as the century progresses: during 1835–60, fewer than twelve titles are serialized annually; during 1860–1900, more than twenty titles are serialized annually. The increase is driven by the introduction of the shilling monthly magazine and the weekly family miscellany: before 1860 serialized titles appear mostly in monthly miscellanies, during the years 1860–1880 serialized titles appear equally in monthlies and weeklies, and after 1880 serialized titles appear mostly in weekly periodicals.

Going further, the database also shows the influence of gender on serialization. Before 1860, men write most serialized titles. Though women make great strides after 1860, male authors still write the majority of serialized titles. With the exception of Braddon, Oliphant, and Wood, the most prolific serialized novelists are men. Likewise, certain periodicals show a bias: for instance, *Chambers's Journal* features mostly male authors whereas *Temple Bar* features mainly female authors.