



Journal of European Periodical Studies

an online journal by ESPRit, European Society for Periodical Research

Periodicals In-Between Evangelhia Stead

Journal of European Periodical Studies, 4.2 (Winter 2019)

ISSN 2506-6587

Content is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 Licence

The *Journal of European Periodical Studies* is hosted by Ghent University

Website: ojs.ugent.be/jeps

To cite this article: Evangelhia Stead, 'Periodicals In-Between', *Journal of European Periodical Studies*, 4.2 (Winter 2019), 5–9

Periodicals In-Between

EVANGHELIA STEAD

Université de Versailles Saint-Quentin (UVSQ)

Institut Universitaire de France

evanghelia.stead@uvsq.fr

ABSTRACT

This special issue originates from the seventh annual conference of the European Society for Periodical Research (ESPRit) I was entrusted with hosting in Paris on 'Periodicals In-Between: Periodicals in the Ecology of Print and Visual Cultures'. The event took place between the Bibliothèque nationale de France, Inalco and Paris-Sorbonne University in June 2018. A bilingual venue, it brought together young and advanced scholars and discussed the complex parts played by periodicals in a rich array of cultural and scientific settings and milieus from numerous points of view: history of literature, art history, press and media, visual studies, comparative literature, theatre studies, scientific cultures, translation and reception studies. A variety of serial publications were considered: reviews, magazines, parts, supplements, pull-outs, journals, annuals, anthologies, book series, newspapers, even a radio broadcast. This special issue proposes a few select contributions developed into research articles. By presenting them and recalling the conference's main arguments and themes, the introduction offers an overview of investigations, and highlights some of the hypotheses significant for periodical studies today.

KEYWORDS

Periodicals, cultural mediation, literary history, art history, press and media

The international conference of the European Society for Periodical Research (ESPRit) has now developed into a regular yearly rendezvous for periodical research, bringing together both younger and experienced scholars from many fields and countries. The seventh symposium, ‘Periodicals In-Between: Periodicals in the Ecology of Print and Visual Cultures’, which as reference host I organized in Paris in 2018, contributed to the scope thanks to the wide interest it arose,¹ the generous sponsorship afforded by many institutions,² the scientific input from numerous colleagues,³ a broad assistance and strong technical help,⁴ and the centrality of the venue.⁵ My renewed thanks go to all participants, sponsors and persons crucially involved in ensuring the event’s success.

‘Periodicals In-Between’ was a challenge met in three ways: as research assignment; as inter-generational dialogue; as bilingual research input. This introduction reconsiders the research assignment. However, two ‘in-between’ innovations for ESPRit are worth mentioning beforehand as they further the field of periodical studies’ transnational aspiration. The Paris conference inaugurated an international graduate Workshop:⁶ selected Master and PhD candidates on a variety of periodical issues presented their work, benefitting from informed feedback from more experienced scholars and earning free attendance to the conference. Papers were also delivered in both French and English, with bilingual abstracts and PowerPoint presentations in the other language supplementing the inter-generational exchange of experience.

This special issue of *JEPS* documents some aspects of the conference. It presents the three keynote speeches by Alain Vaillant on French literature in-between books and periodicals; by Laurel Brake on periodicals, press hierarchies, news and the new; and by Béatrice Joyeux-Prunel on periodicals as sources for reshaping international art history. The four case studies, by Poppy Sfakianaki, Dounia Badini, Fabio Guidali, and Marie-Ève Thérénty, that follow on precise aspects of periodical performance in-between, mirror a hard choice made among several other eligible and might have been readily extended, as the [abstracts](#) exemplify. A second special issue, in French, on interactions between ‘little magazines’, the mainstream press and publishing at the end of the nineteenth century, is to follow in February 2020 in the *Revue d’Histoire Littéraire de la France*,⁷ providing evidence and further discussing a question already debated in *JEPS* in 2016.⁸

‘Periodicals In-Between’ prompted considering the agency of periodicals as generators, makers or producers in between print categories; as mediators and as cultural

- 1 Over a hundred proposals for panels, individual contributions, and workshops responded to the call for papers, sixty-seven of which were presented in parallel sessions from 27 to 29 June 2018.
- 2 Sponsors included the Bibliothèque nationale de France and BnF Partnerships (RetroNews), the CHCSC at Versailles Saint-Quentin University (UVSQ), the Fondation des Sciences du Patrimoine (FSP), the Institut national des langues et civilisation orientales (Inalco), the Institut Universitaire de France (IUF), the Maison des Sciences de l’Homme (MSH) of Paris-Saclay, the School of Humanities at Paris-Saclay, Paris-Sorbonne University, and four university presses.
- 3 The scientific committee included Prof Philippe Kaenel (Université de Lausanne), Dr Maaïke Koffeman (Radboud University), Prof Matthew Philpotts (University of Liverpool, then ESPRit Chair), Dr Ivanne Rialland (UVSQ), and Dr Hélène Védrine (Sorbonne-Université).
- 4 Special thanks go to Hélène Védrine, Christopher Stead, and Philipp Leu for their support, as well as to Christine Bénichou, Roxane Bot, Aurélia Desplain, Sacha Gouffier, Mélodie Hack, Wendy Labbé, and Maximilien Petit.
- 5 The conference was hosted by the Bibliothèque nationale de France, Inalco, and Paris-Sorbonne University.
- 6 Co-organized by Hélène Védrine and myself at Paris-Sorbonne University on 26 June 2019. The scientific committee also included Laurel Brake and Céline Mansanti.
- 7 “Petites revues”, grande presse et édition à la fin du XIX^e siècle’, ed. by Alexia Kalantzis and Evangelia Stead, *Revue d’Histoire Littéraire de la France*, no. 1 (2020), special issue. Articles by Evangelia Stead, Vincent Gogibu, Matthew Creasy, Elisa Grilli, Alexia Kalantzis, and Julien Schuh.
- 8 See ‘Reconsidering “Little” versus “Big” Periodicals’, *Journal of European Periodical Studies*, 1.2 (2016), special issue.

operators; or as catalysts questioning, from the eighteenth to the twenty-first century, standard history (or histories) in several fields.

Material periodical culture was discussed in its multiplicity of constituent parts, instalments, supplements, insets, printouts, pull-outs, annuals, prints for subscribers, albums, spring-off book series, or periodicals themselves as bound volumes, turned into 'books'. Parallel to these set-ups, periodicals often gave birth to publishing houses, using their printers' networks and treating their issues as experimental or conventional test cases and economic drivers. Poppy Sfakianaki shows how *Verve*, Tériade's art review, sustains fine and art printing, as well as being an outlet for illustrated and artists' books.

Mediation, promotion and cultural diplomacy was a major topic in the conference that discussed periodicals as backers, sponsors, and advocates for publishers, galleries and art dealers, exhibitions or theatre groups. This is reflected in Marie-Ève Thérénty's paper on Gallimard and Fabio Guidali's on Rizzoli. Periodicals as intellectual agents nurturing or converting intellectual, scientific, spiritual, professional, trade, or social identities transmitting news for many movements, communities, clubs, universities or circles of influence was also a prominently discussed topic, particularly regarding press bureaus, allophone press for expatriates, anarchist libraries, feminine editorship or salons. Science and theatre periodicals were at the centre of two appealing panels of specialists. In this issue, Fabio Guidali's paper investigates periodicals shaping female readers' representations in interwar Italy according to foreign social models, far from the ideology of the Fascist regime.

Not surprisingly, the theme was also reflected in many papers on translation and transnational circulation of authors, texts, genres, iconography and poetics that studied exchange, re-uses, remediation or hybridization. Dounia Badini's study on *Sb'ir* and Fabio Guidali's essay on middlebrow cultures epitomize this in two strongly different contexts: poetry debates in the Arab world on one hand, negotiation in fiction and translation as branding on the other. Further, periodical mediation in numerous cultural, political, scientific, literary and artistic fields revealed lasting inter-agency with other media and alternative forms of cultural and financial capital. Badini's paper on *Sb'ir*'s Thursdays and the relations of the Lebanese review with western poets, Guidali's reading of Rizzoli's periodicals as 'educational tools', 'parables' or 'mere sources of entertainment' also reflect this, as does Sfakianaki's work on medieval miniatures rubbing shoulders with modern visual culture in *Verve*, or again Guidali's paper across foreign fiction, cinema, photography, and the picture industry.

All four case studies stress the multifaceted roles of periodicals in diverse settings: Sfakianaki looks into the deluxe *Verve* (a title denoting eloquence and inspiration in French, vitality and dynamism in English) as the origin of Tériade's publishing career of illustrated and artists' books; Badini discusses the many channels of a Lebanese review as a media forum heralding modernization of poetry and the Arab world generally; Thérénty throws light on Gallimard's policies in a diversified series of middlebrow magazines all depending on a strongly earmarked publishing approach; Guidali shows how Rizzoli's *rotocalchi* embed Hollywood photojournalist imagery and a selection of foreign cultures in Fascist Italy. They all explain how periodicals endorse, promote, convert, mirror, reveal, and interact.

Breaking new ground, contributions to the Paris conference looked at ways of considering periodical time economies between quotidian and alternative cultures, on the one hand; and challenged standard narratives, thanks to extensive research on periodicals, on the other.

A distinguished print specialist, Laurel Brake, examined in a keynote the very notion of 'news' and the 'new' spanning the mainstream press, art journals and reviews. She contests the view that the basis of modern information lies only in newspapers,

with periodicals in tow as a sub-category, and asks for a revision of press hierarchies. She convincingly defends the idea that news is not only financial or political, but also artistic and cultural. The periodical press also stocks, conveys and negotiates all types of news. As in the case of the New Art Criticism intense arbitration, periodicals have a political impact and relevance. NAC debates, financial allocations and misappropriation of funds by the Royal Academy substantiate the point. Similarly, Alain Vaillant points out that book history specialists also consider periodicals as a sub-category, although periodicity not only determines general media practices, but also defines periodicals as one of the most potent communicational basis for our societies from the eighteenth century to the 1950s.

What questions emerge when we consider periodicals as key drivers of print and visual cultures, their exchange value, and their function as cultural operators? Keynotes by literary historian Alain Vaillant and art historian Béatrice Joyeux-Prunel called for new ways of looking at either field, both showing that periodicals disrupt current narratives and inherited outlines or patterns.

Focussing on French literary history from the eighteenth century to now, Alain Vaillant claims that modern literature cannot be properly investigated if not also through the daily and periodical press of the time. He challenges the very concept of 'pre-original' publication, qualifying (in critical editions for erudition's or scruple's sake) texts in newspapers, reviews or journals prior to their inclusion in books, as if publishing in a journal or a review was not genuine. Taking into account the fact that the press is the key publication medium throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Vaillant draws an altogether different literary history through periodicity, pitted against a legitimizing 'unconscious bibliolatry'. He shows how such debates spring from a fundamental, indeed Aristotelian, distinction between opus and act of communication, between individual author and group work, between diverse and specific ('authorial') on one hand, indefinite and collective on the other. Conversely, the complex interplay between books and serials (both newspapers and periodicals) allows for a more dynamic literary and publishing history in four main periods, up to today's digital cultural restructuring. Another of its advantages is the way it highlights historical and political dimensions of social phenomena.

Adopting a different perspective, Béatrice Joyeux-Prunel presents counter narratives of transnational art history of the avant-garde over a century (1860–1960) by using micro-history, social history and cartography based on digital research. Importance, diffusion and agency of art journals in motion create the avant-garde by promoting artists along with international Salons and major galleries. As such, art journals are elite extensions and propaganda instruments. Their circulation builds a network of 'little' forces to greater effect than the mainstream press. Digital research on centres and peripheries provides new insights into the constructions of international reputations rather as 'a virtual media-related activity than as one anchored in a given metropolis'. Art history has favoured up to now interwar Paris and post-second-world-war New York as hegemonic artistic centres, but extensive investigation presents 'a more transnational, social and polycentric approach', bound to nuance the canon.

Periodical studies open up new ways and question standard versions of cultural hierarchies. Most articles in this issue also show how intimately periodicals may be linked to politics, either conservative Arab reactions to modernity in *Sh'ir*, or Fascist Italy, pliable to imported liberal female models of behaviour. Some of these links may be surprising: the endorsement of renowned modern artists in *Verve* is also political, and corresponds to more conservative choices, discloses Sfakianaki. Tériade's personal preferences and political relations protect his splendid art journal during the Occupation

but also promote figurative modern art as an integrated part of French cultural heritage after the war.

This *JEPS* issue also confirms the shift in periodical studies from ‘little magazines’ to broader corpora, middlebrow and lowbrow cultures. It tackles the ‘In-Between’ Robert Scholes wished for⁹ amidst a large range of publications (newspapers, weeklies, reviews, magazines), further widened by interactions with other print categories. Several contributions reveal hybridization between genres: literature and news (Brake), art old and new (Sfakianaki), literature and reporting (Thérenty), personal advising adorned with fiction and cinema (Guidali). Subjects vary from panoramic approaches (Vaillant, Joyeux-Prunel) to a pinned down debate (Brake), and from aesthetic prerogatives (Sfakianaki), redefining poetry (Badini), to middle-of-the-road values (Guidali), crime novel, reporting, and sensational biographies (Thérenty).

The seven articles in this issue use a variety of methodologies: Alain Vaillant and Marie-Ève Thérenty are literary historians, both with extensive experience of previous investigations into the press, particularly historical poetics and material history. Laurel Brake combines nineteenth-century British literature expertise and studies of paper and digital print culture. Poppy Sfakianaki and Dounia Badini both use Régis Debray and consider periodicals as ‘mediology channels’ but in diametrically different contexts. Fabio Guidali is a historian interested in widely circulating periodicals from various angles. Béatrice Joyeux-Prunel uses micro-history, social history, cartography and digital teamwork to map art history.

Are they to be deemed periodical specialists, and are periodical studies a field apart, a discipline *per se*? While this issue highlights periodicals as powerful publications in media negotiation and as complex nexuses of intellectual and aesthetic trading, it posits their particular value in contributing to map out a European print history, gradually opening up the specifically European field of our investigations to other areas (such as the Arab world). Periodical studies become more effective in enhancing and nuancing comparative investigations and cultural transfers, in contributing in circulation and reception, in clarifying intellectual and aesthetic trading, rather than in defending a strictly disciplinary field. Yet another reason to think periodicals ‘in-between’.

Evangelhia Stead, fellow of the Institut Universitaire de France, is Professor of Comparative Literature and Print Culture at the Université de Versailles Saint-Quentin (UVSQ, France), a linguist and a literary translator. She has published extensively on fin-de-siècle culture, Greek and Latin myths in modern literature, on literature and iconography, books as cultural objects, periodicals, and the literary tradition of ‘the Thousand and Second Night’. Amongst her books, two co-edited collections on periodicals, *L’Europe des revues (1880–1920): Estampes, photographies, illustrations* (2008, repr. 2011), and *L’Europe des revues II (1860–1930): Réseaux et circulations des modèles* (2018), the edited collection *Reading Books and Prints as Cultural Objects* (2018), and the monograph *La Chair du livre: matérialité, imaginaire et poétique du livre fin-de-siècle* (2012, repr. 2013). A monograph on periodicals, *Sisyphes heureux: Les revues littéraires et artistiques, approches et figures*, is forthcoming in June 2020 (PUR). She is currently working on the reception of Goethe’s *Faust I* in print culture.

9 Robert Scholes, ‘Afterword: Small Magazines, Large Ones, and Those In-Between’, in *Little Magazines and Modernism: New Approaches*, ed. by Suzanne Wintch Churchill and Adam McKible (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), pp. 217–18.