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Writing the Contemporary in the Periodical Press: Art and News 1893–1906

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Writing the Contemporary in the Periodical Press: Art and News 1893–1906

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ABSTRACT

The primary function of the press has been represented as a mediator, located in the imaginary ‘between’ events and readers, which delivers the ‘news’. While embracing its contingency, this paper argues that ‘news’ is not confined to the newspaper press or limited to political or financial news, as historians of the press have long assumed in tacitly endorsing a taxonomy of the press, which identifies newspapers as the core format of historical journalism with periodicals ranged below in a queue based on decreasing frequency. Rather, it is argued here that contemporaneity, the appeal of the protean ‘new’, is the common denominator of *all* historical serials, and the most important lure of all readers to all serial titles, newspapers and periodical alike.

Initially exploring the original link of the press to Mercury, the carrier of news between events and readers, the paper delivers a qualitative case study of non-political news. The New Art Criticism is a gripping viral story in the British press about French art in Britain in the 1890s and the following decade. The network of critics, first neophytes and then celebrities, that mustered around the problematics of English art and its gatekeepers at the fin de siècle, illustrate the reporting of the troubled reception, by British galleries, of the French school of painting. They also limn the culture wars between the broad categories of advocates and enemies on the one hand, and individual journalists and periodicals on the other. Just as the newspaper press seeks to influence governments and the reading public politically about current affairs, so the art critics campaigned to influence museum policy and events.

KEYWORDS

News, British periodicals, New Art Criticism, French painting, E. Degas, J. M. Whistler, Royal Academy, New Journalism, columns, scissors and paste, contemporaneity

RÉSUMÉ

La presse dans sa fonction principale a été représentée comme un médiateur situé dans un espace imaginaire ‘entre’ les événements et les lecteurs, et qui transmet les ‘nouvelles’. Tout en tenant compte de leur contingence, cet article affirme que les ‘nouvelles’ ne se confinent pas aux journaux ni ne se limitent aux nouvelles politiques ou financières, comme le prétendent depuis longtemps les historiens de la presse en souscrivant tacitement à une taxonomie qui voit dans les journaux le format principal du journalisme historique et situe les périodiques bien en dessous en une fin de ligne marquée par leur fréquence décroissante. L'article soutient plutôt que la contemporanéité, l'attrait de la ‘nouveau’ protéiforme, est le dénominateur commun de *toutes* les publications sérielles historiques, et l'attrait principal qu'exerce sur tout lecteur tout titre sériel, qu'il soit de journal ou de périodique.

Explorant pour commencer le lien originel entre la presse et Mercure, porteur des nouvelles entre les événements et les lecteurs, l'article propose l'étude qualitative d'un cas de nouvelles non politiques. La ‘critique du nouvel art’ (New Art Criticism) est une histoire virale accrocheuse pour la presse britannique sur l'art français en Grande-Bretagne dans les années 1890 et la décennie suivante. Le réseau des critiques, initialement des néophytes puis des célébrités, qui s'est engagé autour de la problématique de l'art anglais et de ses gardiens à la fin-de-siècle, illustre la réception troublée par les galeries britanniques de l'École française de la peinture. Ces débats dessinent aussi les guerres culturelles entre les grandes catégories de défenseurs et d'adversaires d'une part, et entre journalistes particuliers et périodiques de l'autre. De même que les journaux cherchent à influencer politiquement des gouvernements et les lecteurs sur l'actualité, de même les critiques d'art ont fait campagne pour influencer la politique et la programmation des musées.

MOTS-CLÉS

Nouvelles, périodiques britanniques, ‘critique du nouvel art’ (New Art Criticism), École française de peinture, E. Degas, J. M. Whistler, Royal Academy, Nouveau Journalisme, rubriques, couper-coller, contemporanéité

The telegraph and the printing-press have converted Great Britain into a vast agora, or assembly of the whole community, in which the discussion of the affairs of State is carried on from day to day in the hearing of the whole people.

The journalist may regard himself as but the keeper of a peep-show, through which men may catch glimpses of the great drama of contemporary life and history.

I am but a comparatively young journalist, but I have seen Cabinets upset, Ministers driven into retirement, laws repealed, great social reforms initiated, Bills transformed, estimates remodelled, programmes modified, Acts passed, generals nominated, governors appointed, armies sent hither and thither, war proclaimed and war averted, by the agency of newspapers.

W.T. Stead, 'Government by Journalism', *Contemporary Review*, no. 49 (May 1886)

News and the New

Since its inception, the primary function of the press has been represented as a mediator located in the imaginary 'between' events and readers, which delivers the 'news'. In conjoining *government* and journalism as Stead does above, he goes to the extreme, reconfiguring readers as legislators and constituents to dramatize his argument for the mediating power of the press of his day. Contemporaneity, the appeal of the protean 'new' is the common denominator of *all* historical serials, not only newspapers as Stead alleges elsewhere.¹ The functions of serials — as a technology of communication and a carrier of information — are flagged historically by titles that invoke Mercury as a mediator between the event and the user. This winged servant carried and speedily delivered messages among the Greco-Roman gods, and among nineteenth-century readers and papers in Leeds, Liverpool, Bristol, Northampton, and Kent:



Fig. 1 Newspaper mastheads alluding to Mercury

Mercury also migrated from the name of a god to 'Mercuries', a generic noun in English for the messengers of the post and press who embodied these functions of technology, speedy delivery and information — or not, as usage in the *Athenaeum* 1864 exemplifies: 'Those chicken-hearted Mercuries [the post boys] always pulled up in Hammersmith, before they faced the common'.²

1 Stead, 'Prospectus', 'The Daily Paper', *Review of Reviews* (Nov. 1893). For further discussion of Stead's efforts to reconcile news-rich, fact-oriented newspapers with the novel, see Laurel Brake, "'Fiction of Another Sort': News and the Novel in W. T. Stead's Journalism", in *Au Bonheur du feuilleton*, ed. by Marie-Francoise Cachin, Diana Cooper-Richet, Jean-Yves Mollier, and Claire Parfait (Paris: Créaphis, 2007), pp. 179–92.
 2 Quoted in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, *Athenaeum* (2 May 1864).



Fig. 2 The Roman God Mercury by Giovanni da Bologna, 1580

Despite the fields of media history, communication studies, and theory that problematise mediation and ‘thicken’ it to transform it from a transparent technology of instant conveyance to one of interruption, re-mediation and interpretation, this notion of the direct and rapid transport of intact ‘information’ survives. Serials from the nineteenth century onward continued to invoke it in newspaper and periodical titles alike, such as *Trewman’s and Exeter Flying Post*, the *Morning Herald* (and all the ‘Heralds’), the *Morning Chronicle* (and all the ‘Chronicles’), *Galignani’s Messenger*, *Il Messagero*, the *Telegraph*, the *Mirror* and all the ‘Observers’ (*L’Obs/Le Nouvel Observateur*); and it hovers in the notion of re-view, the retrospect of the recent past from the present: *La Revue des Deux Mondes* (and all the reviews).



Fig. 3 Further mastheads of newspapers and reviews

These omnibuses of aggregated information ‘*deliver*’, in a timely and open-ended series at regular intervals, reports of events to readers within reach of their distribution network, a geographical locus of information — the imagined community — that has changed radically over time, as print formats are digitally dispatched and re-mediated by technologies that neither Mercury and his employers nor nineteenth-century editors ever imagined. Likewise, the shift in the sixteenth century from ‘new’ as an adjective

(a new discrete message about a recent event) to its commodification as the collective noun ‘news’ — a thing in itself, also suggests the position of news in-between, by its silent reference to the past which news is displacing in the present.

This notional present, the window in which the issue is ‘new’, is itself unstable in real time.³ The *date stamp* on each number of a serial is an identification marker that seeks to locate and fix each one in the sequence of the run; and it ties the newspaper ‘report’ to a narrow window of time present. However, the routine practice of newspaper editors or sub-editors of ‘scissors and paste’ journalism, in which they source their latest editions from earlier stories in other papers, which they then reprint, enlarges the present, distending it into the past, or the ‘original’ iteration into the future, beyond the date of the source.⁴



Fig. 4 ‘Scissors and paste’ in the news industry, lithograph by L. Crusius, 1900, Wellcome Collection

The skeletal editor in Fig. 4 cuts and pastes stories instead of researching and writing them. ‘Dead’ to original writing, he raises the ‘dead’ story from old papers, tweaks it for reprinting in his own title, and compiles the ‘morgue’, the in-house repository of old stories that many editors kept for future reference and use. Digital humanities media historians (such as Melanie H. Beals, Ryan Cordell, Paul Fyfe, and Stephan Pigeon)

- 3 Many have discussed the unstable status of dated issues in time, including Margaret Beetham, Mark Turner, ncese, and James Mussell. See for example, James Mussell, *The Nineteenth Century in the Digital Age* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2012), p. 34; Mark Turner, ‘Periodical Time in the Nineteenth Century’, *Media History*, 8.2 (2002), 183–96; and Mark Turner, ‘The Unruliness of Serials in the Nineteenth Century (and in the Digital Age)’, in *Serialization in Popular Culture*, ed. by Rob Allen and Thijjs van den Berg (London: Routledge, 2014), pp. 11–32; Margaret Beetham, ‘Toward a Theory of the Periodical as a Publishing Genre’, in *Investigating Victorian Journalism*, ed. by Laurel Brake, Aled Jones, and Lionel Madden (London: Macmillan, 1989), pp. 19–32.
- 4 For recent commentary on ‘scissors and paste’, see Will Slauter, *Who Owns the News? A History of Copyright* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2019), pp. 87–125.

have recently been engaged in distant reading of the nineteenth-century practice of scissors and paste, collecting digital evidence by tracking the geographical trails of newspaper stories across different titles.⁵ Many news items then are part of a long series of reprinted versions, in-between other reprints. The 'daily' news seeks to appear authoritative, date stamped, and self-contained, *resisting* its in-betweenness, qualities that deliver its business model predicated on instant obsolescence. Knowing that some of its stories are not 'original' and have been re-mediated from other and earlier sources, it also knows that reports in any single issue will be superseded in the next number by later 'reporting', a word that courts reification and objectivity in the face of eclipse.

Moreover, many daily titles and some weeklies in the nineteenth century had multiple editions per day with the same date, which deleted or tweaked some 'reports' to make room for more up-to-date others. Time is a pervasive element in the news industry; it is variously faceted, both synchronically and diachronically.⁶ Between old and an ever-evolving new, the news is always poised on the edge of displacement, the rapid loss of its presentism, as it is unseated by the future that pushes it to the past, in the wake of the most recent news. Thus, the promise of the press, represented in all of those 'NEWS' titles is belied routinely by the next edition or issue. As a serial commodity, it is never complete and always 'in-between'. Mark Turner, writing on the 'unruliness' of serials observes 'publication presents itself as a "complete" history, a coherent whole rather than something that is broken up into less meaningful fragments of time, even as they admit the project's incompleteness. [...] both concludes and continues. [...] there is no such thing as "completion" in a culture of seriality.'⁷

If the presentism of the press is precarious, it is also its primary selling point, and an imperative ingredient in serial publication, embedded in press items and formats. Contemporaneity lurks in its adverts, its reviews of new books, current theatre, dance productions, musical recitals, and art exhibitions, its coverage of sports events, its 'notes' or gossip about Society, and its coverage *about* Societies — scientific, linguistic, philosophical, literary or philatelic. These all have a news component. Irrespective of whether this range of news occurs in each issue, its diversity fuels the advertising revenue on which all titles depend, while broadening the readership base. However, in the nineteenth-century *newspaper* press, ads are the main element of titles that incorporate diversity. That is because in most nineteenth-century and twentieth-century British newspapers, two categories of news took precedence: political news and financial news. For working journalists and editors, historical and contemporary readers, and press historians, this reductive distillation of the broad concept of news distinguished the rough and ready division between the daily and weekly newspaper press with their 'hard core' of news, from the periodical press, largely without this type of news.

Business intelligence that moved between Trade, markets and readers was the impetus for the earliest newssheets that consisted of advertising sheets and accounts of the movement of trade and commodities (like the *Shipping News*), which by the eighteenth century took the forms of reports of the latest (money and commodity) market prices, of shipping arrivals and departures, and of ads, combined with some news reporting. Political news, however, colonised the press, and by the nineteenth century

5 M. H. Beals, Ryan Cordell, and Paul Fyfe are part of the project *Oceanic Exchanges: Tracing Global Information Networks in Historical Newspaper Repositories, 1840–1914*, online resource. Stephan Pigeon, a research student at McGill University, writes persuasively on 'scissors and paste' practices across the nineteenth-century press.

6 For more on time and the press, see the special issue on 'Ephemera', *Media History*, 18.1 (2012); Beetham; Turner, 'Periodical Time in the Nineteenth Century'; and Turner, 'The Unruliness of Serials in the Nineteenth Century'.

7 Turner, 'The Unruliness of Serials', p. 26.

dominated British dailies and some weeklies' news coverage. London daily newspapers prioritised reports of the latest national and foreign news toward the front of issues, and most *other* departments of the paper and correspondence mostly concerned *politics*. As seen in W. T. Stead's notion of 'Government by Journalism' quoted above, the assumption was that politics is the basis of news and newspapers.

Moreover, most British newspapers, metropolitan and local, until late in the nineteenth century, were affiliated with a political party or persuasion. This was another unmistakable link with contemporaneity, and with a function of the press that exposed its position between the current political agenda and party, and its readers. When, occasionally, titles changed their political allegiances, the entire framework of the 'news' shifted to the new political parties or groups that the newspaper supported, parties that in turn supported the newspaper through exclusive 'leaks', official party notices, and adverts, and whose members or supporters the paper could rely upon as readers. These support structures were crucial to the papers. Few titles in the first half of the nineteenth century could survive independent of political parties or groups, or the politicised readers, whose views they reflected and shaped.

In the same period, even the inclusion of reviews was contingent on the regular Parliamentary recesses, several times a year for long periods, which freed up space for non-political news. Book reviews were subject to time constraints of the political news agenda, and might appear only during Parliamentary recesses. Given the overwhelming political affiliation of most daily newspapers, it is unsurprising that most newspapers in nineteenth-century Britain did not cater for or attract many women, readers who were admitted to holding public office on boards of schools and local authorities only from 1869–70. The transmission of news by press messengers in urban centres was largely from male journalists about political events, male actants from male institutions, to politicised readers, who were also overwhelmingly male.

Titles in the regions, and local and Sunday papers were more inclusive in their copy. They habitually carried a greater range of news than the metropolitan morning dailies, including some, or all, of the following: local news reports, fiction, poetry, book and other reviews, fashion, gossip, local food market prices, local ads and announcements that targeted women readers.⁸ So, 'news' and newspapers are problematised terms in this period, divided between daily papers (or those with multiple issues per week), and Sundays, regional and local weeklies. Up to mid-century, most dailies targeted men, and privileged a restricted range of (political and business/financial) news, while the *Mercuries* transmitting it, and the readers, tended to be similarly male. This accounts *for the prevailing view* in the nineteenth century, which I shall challenge, that news is political/business news, and that it is to be found in newspapers and not in periodicals.

This brings me to a generic point that summarises my arguments so far: the prevailing disposition to regard the function of the press as the transmission of news, meaning political/business news, underlies important fissures in the 'serial' and the 'press' as categories, and a distinction — fuzzy and beset by exceptions — between newspapers (metropolitan, regional, and local), and what I am calling 'periodicals'. These latter include weeklies, fortnightlies, monthlies, quarterlies, and annuals. Periodicals permit and boast a wider range of contents than newspapers, although weeklies may adhere more closely to the political news agenda of the dailies. However, I want to suggest that periodicals of all types *are* oriented, like newspapers, to the contemporary, and that they have a strong news profile. Weighty quarterly reviews, which dominated the high culture periodical press before 1859, consisted of reviews

8 For more about the scope of the provincial press, see Andrew Hobbs, *A Fleet Street in Every Town: The Provincial Press in England, 1855–1900* (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2018).

mainly of new or recent printed commodities — books, periodicals or pamphlets. In turn many of these are advertised for sale by their publishers in ads elsewhere in the issue. The importance of the element of contemporaneity in a book review may be seen in an 1855 piece from a progressive weekly, the *Leader*, on the relatively obscure topic of translation. In it the author humorously references a contemporary novel to spice up the piece, a review of new works originally in German.⁹ Not only in this case are newly published works brought to the attention of the reader by the periodical that selected them for ‘re-view’, but the reviewer inserts a further topical reference to a current novel by a well-known author to embed the review further in the tissue of the present. In a periodical, even editorial copy like this (a review) is located in-between more than one set of parameters: synchronically, it is among other print media of the present, competing for readers and buyers at that moment (other journals, other reviews). It is also ‘in-between’ diachronically, in the past-future economy of serial publication: a Mercury between the *new* event (publication of the new translation) and the reader as a potential consumer of the book.

The news story of the New Art Criticism (hereafter NAC), in the second part of this paper, is a more qualitative study of the profile of the breadth of distribution of a story with a common basis across British serials (newspapers and periodicals 1893–96), and its resurgence a decade later by the same network, who print and reprint their periodical contributions on the topic in books and other articles.

Visual Art as News in the Periodical Press

I want to turn to an example of this expanded category of news that I am proposing, in an investigation of how a protracted news story was created and covered in the London-based periodical press of the 1890s. In the arts, the opportunities for commodification of new literature, drama, and (sheet) music were greater than for fine art: new books were issued for sale monthly on a timetable that paralleled the monthly magazines, with their thick wrappers containing ads for new titles; drama was ubiquitous, at all levels of society, produced in theatres or music halls that sold tickets, advertised, and was regularly reviewed in the press. Visual art was different. While it circulated as a commodity in the public sphere, it was through sales of cheap prints and later, in mid- and late-century, mainly through engravings in illustrated papers and books. These forms of re-mediation did include images of new *fine art*, though less frequently and effectively than graphic work stemming from the serials themselves — woodcuts, illustration, cartoons. Until photography was accommodated to easy reproduction in the press late in the century, graphic art was the field of originality, developed by *Punch* and the *Illustrated London News*, from the 1840s, consolidated by a dedicated title, the weekly *Graphic* from 1869 and its daily scion, from 1890. However, as with new writing and drama, new visual art was appropriated into the up-market periodicals’ news agenda. Art practice and exhibitions were regularly reviewed by critics, who might be journalists, artists, and/or literary authors, ‘reporting’ on the latest current exhibitions to which readers should be alerted, and on which the periodical advised. But the works themselves, the *subjects* of the reviews, were not for general sale to readers, nor were many readers induced (or able) to see them in the galleries, which charged for entry and were often located in London.

Art news sits in periodical miscellanies among many other categories of non-political news that appeared only sporadically in the metropolitan newspaper press,

9 Marian Evans (later George Eliot) was the anonymous author of this review at the beginning of her career, referencing W. M. Thackeray’s recent *The Newcomes*.

and seldom in the specialist press. It is a genre-specific type of news. As we shall see, reporting of visual art, which might appear far from the 'hard' political news agenda that dominated most metropolitan dailies, *does* appear in news campaigns, in weeklies, monthlies, and even certain types of dailies. Reports of visual arts 'events' — involving corruption, rebellions, and feuds, and criticism of outdated institutions and policies — function as news, the subject of leaders, in long-running correspondence, in reviews, 'gossip', news paragraphs, and ads.

One cluster of non-political news in the periodical press, the culture wars around the NAC were sparked in London in 1893 by an exhibition of international art at the new private Grafton Galleries, London. Linked to the longstanding critique of the Royal Academy, the NAC re-emerges in 1903, in an exposure of the purchasing and exhibition policies of the RA. As the oldest and predominant institution of fine art in the UK to confer status on British artists, the RA had generated a long history of resistance and controversy, kindled annually by its Summer Show.¹⁰ In the instance of the NAC, the *Mercuries* both reported events in a war that took place in the galleries, analogous to Parliament or the Crimea, and conducted a war of opinion in their columns.¹¹ As political editorials in newspapers characteristically strive to shift policy and law, so the art columns in the periodicals attempted to shape contemporary events. That an MP moved in Parliament to remove £1000 from public funding of the RA on 22 May 1894 following one phase of this critique is indicative of the potential influence on events of a non-political news campaign.¹²

W. T. Stead's advocacy of 'Government by Journalism' in 1886 mooted a top-down model, with the editor leading readers to informed and moral responses to contemporary politics through the messages of the journal. Positing the popular newspaper press as the only Bible the 'Millions' had at their disposal, Stead positioned editors as biblical prophets, and their readers as ignorant believers requiring to be led to the promised land. However, in upmarket serials, relations between editor/title and reader tended to be dialogic and more faceted in this period of the New Journalism, involving a plurality of voices. Whereas controversies in the daily newspaper press appeared in leaders or correspondence pages, and tended to address institutions — media titles or political parties, in periodicals and certain types of newspapers, controversies were likely to appear in 'columns', often signed in some way (by initials, or pseudonym) by a recurring critic attached to that unit of the journal. These critiques were often more personal, and resulted in debates between 'columns' if not always individuals.¹³

In the 1893 controversy about the NAC, debate was polymorphous: among named critics between periodicals, between critics and institutions, and between critics and artists. Participating in the more personal discourse ushered in by the New Journalism of the 1880s, this controversy of the 1890s featured 'names' of journalists in the upmarket press, who were celebrities of sorts. Thus, 'D. S. M.', 'G. M.', P. G. Hamerton, 'A Philistine' [J. A. Spender], W. H. Pater, Joseph Pennell, and 'Harry Quilter' were all recognizable critics, novelists, artists, and/or journalists. The main protagonists — D. S. MacColl,

10 For example, see D. S. MacColl's acerbic reviews in the *Fortnightly Review* in 1893 and 1894: 'The Royal Academy (No. I)', *The Fortnightly Review*, vol. 53 (June 1893), 881–89, and 'The Royal Academy (No. II)', vol. 55 (June 1894), 721–30.

11 Julie Codell, 'Art Periodicals', in *The Routledge Handbook to Nineteenth-Century British Periodicals and Newspapers*, ed. by Andrew King, Alexis Easley, and John Morton (London: Routledge, 2016), p. 381, cites Bourdieu on the dynamic between art and art criticism: 'art is produced not only by artists but also by art discourses [... which] become a "stage in the production of the work, of its meaning and value".'

12 See 'Occasional Notes', *Pall Mall Gazette* (22 May 1894), 2.

13 Named 'columns' were a type of signature, although they were not necessarily written by the same journalist. Some were additionally signed, but many remained anonymous, as in this controversy in the *Spectator* and the *Westminster Gazette*.

George Moore and Spender — were lodged in specific titles through their employment as journalists — the *Spectator*, the *Speaker*, and the *Westminster Gazette* respectively, which assured them regular access to pursue the story.

While the *Spectator* and the *Speaker* were weeklies, with numerous ‘columns’, including ‘Art’, the *Westminster Gazette* was a daily, albeit a special type that helps explain its readiness and capacity to accommodate visual art news. It was an evening paper, which exonerated it from carrying the detailed Parliamentary reports, and foreign and domestic news that took up most space in morning dailies; its readers had already been supplied with those necessary components of political news. Also, it was still in the 1890s a direct descendent of the *Pall Mall Gazette* (1865 ff), an evening daily of a particular type, a hybrid combination of a daily and a review that was dedicated to accommodation of reviews and the arts. The *PMG* had been a leading developer of the New Journalism under Stead’s editorship, and it and he favoured personal journalism *and* campaigns. The *Westminster Gazette* then had the space and the ethos to include book reviews and the arts, and to use campaigns to sell papers. Additionally, it was a new title like the *Speaker*, and they both had an enhanced incentive to make their name, and to gain sales and readers through their sensationalist/distinctive campaigns. ‘The Philistine’, from the *Westminster Gazette*, was one of the chief protagonists in the NAC debate, and as assistant editor, he had assured regular access to space, even though his frequent returns to the subject appeared in separate news items and art coverage, rather than in a designated ‘column’. Still, his contributions were *signed* ‘The (or ‘A’) Philistine’, unlike other pieces in the *Gazette*, *and* like the columns of his two main protagonists in the weeklies, ‘G. M.’ in the *Speaker*, and ‘D. S. M.’ in the *Spectator*.

The NAC then raised issues about the politics not of Parliament, but of a cultural institution, the Royal Academy, and about what constituted ‘The Foundations of Art Criticism’ (cf. Hamerton 1893). It comprised a debate about where authority lay among the officials of the Academy and among art critics, which was part of larger deliberations among journalists about the virtues of the gentleman amateur versus the professional.¹⁴ Who, the new art critics asked, was best qualified to write meaningful art criticism, the artist or the literary critic, the professional or the amateur, at a time when artists, critics, and journalists were all seeking professional status. On what criteria were the decisions of the hanging committee and the policies of the board of the RA based? Stemming initially from the exhibition of Degas’s painting, *L’Absinthe* (or *Au Café*), at the opening of the Grafton Galleries in February 1893, the nub of these nineteenth-century debates has extended into the present. In periodicals focusing on the press and the history of art, interpretation of the ‘NAC’ continues.¹⁵

The affair of the NAC occupied the media intensively for nearly nine months, between February and October 1893, which is a long time in the press, tailing off in frequency into 1896. It involved a number of — what shall we call them? ‘Reporters’ won’t do as these journalists were *creating*, shaping, and developing this news story, and stoking the rivalry among the journals and critics, but also between positions. There were eight named and two anonymous creators, with its principal interlocutors, Spender and MacColl, secure at their papers, the *Westminster Gazette* — new, cheap,

14 For the debate about professionalization and amateurism, see Julie Codell, *The Victorian Artist: Artists’ Lifewritings in Britain, ca. 1870–1910* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), and Marcus Huish, “Whence this Great Multitude of Painters?”, *Nineteenth Century*, vol. 32 (November 1892), 720–32.

15 See Kate Flint, ‘The “Philistine” and the New Art Critic: J. A. Spender and D. S. MacColl’s Debate of 1893’, *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 21.1 (1988), 3–8, and Kimberley Morse-Jones, ‘The “Philistine” and the New Art Critic: A New Perspective on the Debate about Degas’s *L’Absinthe* of 1893’, *British Art Journal*, 9.2 (2008), 50–61.

penny daily — where Spender was assistant editor, and the *Spectator* — venerable, sober, weekly — where MacColl was art critic. According to Kate Flint, the issue at stake was *not* the status of the single Degas painting.¹⁶ Rather, there were issues around the values of criticism and painting, including the relative importance of form, technique, morality, and comprehensibility, and the type and role of the art critic: whether their approach was as a professional *art* critic or an ‘ordinary’ generalist, one who *interpreted* the work of art for informed readers, or simply *judged* it for the general reader.

Critics who favoured scientific professionalism valued form and other painterly qualities, and dismissed morality and comprehensibility as criteria for art, while ‘The Philistine’ and his supporters insisted on a close link between acceptable morality and art in evaluation of work, and that the comprehensibility of a work to the ordinary viewer took precedence over form or technique. Both critics were experienced art practitioners, but ‘The Philistine’ castigated work on the basis of its subject: Degas’s scene was repulsive, and denied the status of art.¹⁷ This tone, of categorical rejection, is partly explained by the nature of the title for which Spender worked, a new, cheap daily, poised to make its way in a competitive market, a defensible point made less sympathetically by D. S. M. and his supporters, who sneered at ‘The Philistine’ as ‘a self-conscious populiser’. Harry Quilter raucously rabble-roused in a letter to the editor of the *Gazette*, referring to ‘D. S. M.’ as ‘this little amateur whom Oxford has sent us, and who can find nothing worthy of his admiration outside the little room where the discredited divinities of the New English Art Club hide their diminished heads, and vainly seek, with the promise of a free afternoon tea, to entice visitors to the gallery.’¹⁸ Their audience was quite different than D. S. M.’s at the *Spectator*, an up-market weekly costing six times as much, where R. H. Hutton, a distinguished literary editor had reigned over its arts coverage since 1861; its audience was educated, tempered, upper middle-class, knowledgeable about art, and more likely to get to the Grafton Gallery if they were London based.

This visual arts story became news, and was carried *across* the press, by these quite different daily and weekly titles, but also appeared in the clubland daily and pioneer of the New Journalism (the *Pall Mall Gazette*), a new generation liberal weekly (the *Speaker*), and two specialist art monthly magazines. Even after the editor of the *Spectator* stopped debate on 15 April 1893, it was pursued for years in dailies, monthlies and quarterlies in the London press. This indicative list of articles provides a snapshot of the degree to which this arts topic spread among serials and critics, and for how long:

January 1893. M. H. Spielmann, ‘Art in March. Mr. Burne-Jones, Ex-A.R.A.’, *Magazine of Art*, vol. 21

17 February 1893. ‘The Grafton Gallery’, *Westminster Gazette*, 1.16, 3

18 February 1893. ‘A Private View at the Grafton. From a Special Correspondent’, *Westminster Gazette*, 1.17, 6 [A report on ladies’ and men’s fashion with names of famous attendees]

25 February 1893. D. S. M., ‘The Grafton Gallery’, *Spectator*, vol. 70, 256–57

25 February 1893. G. M., ‘The Grafton Gallery’, *Speaker*, vol. 7, 215–17

16 Flint, p. 5.

17 Flint, p. 5; ‘The Grafton Gallery’, *Westminster Gazette* (17 February 1893), 3–4

18 Harry Quilter, Letter, ‘The New Art Criticism’, *Westminster Gazette* (15 March 1893), 3.

[1] March 1893. D. S. MacColl, 'Mr Whistler's Paintings in Oil', *Art Journal*, 88–93

4 March 1893. G. M., 'The Grafton Gallery II', *Speaker*, vol. 7, 247

9 March 1893. A Philistine, 'The NAC. A Philistine's Remonstrance', *Westminster Gazette*, 1.33, 1–2

10 March 1893. [Anon.] 'The National Art', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 7

11 March 1893. 'The Philistine', Letter, 'The NAC', *Westminster Gazette*, 1.35, 3

13 March 1893. W. P. H., Letter, 'The NAC', *Westminster Gazette*, 1.37, 4

15 March 1893. Harry Quilter, 'The NAC' [letter of derision about D. S. M. and *PMG* article above], *Westminster Gazette*, 1.38, 3

16 March 1893. 'Correspondence', *Westminster Gazette*, 1.39, 3 [letters on 'The NAC' from W. B. Richmond, Aaron Watson, and D. S. M. who denies he wrote the piece from the *PMG* as Quilter assumes]

18 March 1893. D. S. M., 'The Standard of the Philistine' [reply to Quilter], *Spectator*, vol. 70, 357–58

25 March 1893. D. S. M., 'Subject and Technique', *Spectator*, vol. 70, 387–89

25 March, 1 and 8 Apr 1893. G. M., 'The NAC' I–III, *Speaker*, vol. 7, 341–43, 367–68, 398–99

1 April 1893. D. S. M., 'Art'. 'Notes on a Recent Controversy' *Spectator*, vol. 70, 421–22

1 April 1893. Correspondence from B. A. Browning and W. B. Richmond, *Spectator*, vol. 70, 420

1 April 1893. C. W. Furse, 'The Grafton Gallery', and Anon., 'Studio Gossip', *The Studio*, 1.1, 33–34 and 36.¹⁹

15 April 1893. Editor of *Spectator* draws debate on this issue to a close.

BUT→

¹⁹ This first issue of the *Studio* is pervasively focused on Beardsley, whereby it positions the new journal in the NAC camp, which is explicitly endorsed by Furse in his distinction of the Grafton Gallery from 'the Burlington House [Royal Academy] air, as of toothless old women mumbling sentimentalities' (p. 33) and in some paragraphs in 'Studio Gossip': 'The New Critics have this advantage. They have burned their ships. They have closed their Ruskin for ever. They have chosen their own gods. [...] Our Philistine, on the other hand, bears upon his shoulders the weight of a waggon-load of Ruskinian and other theories. Art to him must still be beautiful' (p. 36).

10 June 1893. W. H. Pater, 'Mr. George Moore as an Art Critic', *Daily Chronicle*, 3

June 1893. D. S. MacColl, 'The Royal Academy, No. 1', *Fortnightly Review*, vol. 53, 881–89 [An acrimonious review of the summer show, the speeches, the selections, and the overall policy of the RA]

September 1893. P. G. Hamerton, 'The Foundations of Art Criticism', *Contemporary Review*, vol. 64, 405–14. [a reply to Pennell, probably to his April *Studio* piece on Beardsley]

4 September 1893. Anon., 'Art and Artists', *Star*, 1733, p. 2. [Comment on Hamerton in *Contemporary Review*. The author of this anonymous and dismissive piece might have been Pennell himself, art editor at the *Star* in 1888]

October 1893. Anon., 'The New Criticism', *Artist*, vol. 14, 295

May 1894. Mary Whitall Costelloe, 'The New and Old Art Criticism', *Nineteenth Century*, vol. 35, 828–37

June 1895. Harry Quilter, 'The Relation of Criticism to Production in Art', *National Review*, vol. 25, 466–81

June 1895. Harry Quilter, 'The Gospel of Intensity', *Contemporary Review*, vol. 67, 761–82

October 1896. Anon. [Julia Mary [Cartwright] Ady], 'NAC', *Quarterly Review*, vol. 184, 454–79

One of the strongest assets of NAC as a story was its catchword ID, the memorable and short phrase 'NAC', appropriated over the years to treat diverse aspects of art criticism, and losing sight quickly of the RA and Degas in many instances. Commentary on work by the young Aubrey Beardsley (whose subjects were risqué) and the older Whistler (whose painting technique was still controversial) quickly became fodder for this culture war. The attachment of the story to the Royal Academy was another lure to wide coverage in some papers, as were named celebrities, artists and critics. Feelings ran high, and invective could be clever, if brutal. Serials remained a stage on which the arguments between conservative and modern art critics were performed, often at a high pitch. In time names of contemporary British artists and writers (Whistler, Beardsley, Oscar Wilde, and John Davidson) replaced those of Degas, Moore, and MacColl.

Coverage began in the London press in February 1893 when the Grafton Galleries first opened, exhibiting international art. It was rekindled in May by the publication of George Moore's abrasive book *Modern Painting*, with its chapter 'The New Art Criticism', pieces reprinted from the *Speaker*, reviewed country wide. Opinions of the controversy vary in regional titles, but the *Derby Daily Telegraph* noted on 29 November 1893 an exhibition of paintings by 'D. S. M.', the well-known critic of the *Spectator*, while the *Eastern Daily Press*, Norfolk, suggests that Moore's and D. S. M.'s 'articles about pictures are perhaps the only literature on the subject that anybody reads in

this country'.²⁰ So, this art controversy is subject to the same patterns of distribution accorded to more traditional 'political' news stories, including cut and paste, as the list above shows. In June 1895, two years after the initial spurt of the story, Quilter used the space of two full-length articles in different journals to expound his earlier points from his diatribe in the *Westminster Gazette*. Now feeling justified by the recent 'fall of the great high-priest of aestheticism', Oscar Wilde, Quilter expands his focus to include 'decadence in current art and criticism', as does Mary Costelloe a year earlier. The NAC story appeared in regional and local press reports from Glasgow to Cornwall, Norfolk to Derby.

Periodical Mediation and Networks

If this is an overview of the germ of a 'non-political' news story, it also spurs more focused analysis of four of its participants' relations to each other, George Moore, Walter Pater, D. S. MacColl and Arthur Symons. A realist novelist and a trained artist, George Moore (aged 41) followed the pattern of ambitious men of letters at the time in seeking and finding regular employment, income, and exposure of his name and work as a reviewer in the press. In his perch as reviewer of art exhibitions in the new weekly, the *Speaker*, Moore acquired access to power and cultural capital. Through his stance on the NAC he functioned as the Mercury between exhibition and reader in this liberal weekly, while cementing good relations with peers such as MacColl.

Moore exemplifies another set of parameters in which periodicals are located, between the event and *books*, by reusing his periodical articles as cultural capital to comprise a book. Selecting articles from his journalism, he published a book of collected and re-mediated pieces (appearing in 1893) about what he now magisterially called *Modern Painting*. In this echo of the title of John Ruskin's famous multi-volume *Modern Painters*, published a generation earlier but still holding sway, Moore invoked a comparison with Ruskin while challenging his dicta. Full of sensational expression (the handle for further circulation of the NAC debate across the press), Moore's book is in turn reviewed by an eminent critic, Walter Pater who connects in a daily newspaper to the larger debate along with many others through Moore's book, 10 June 1893, late in the fracas.²¹ Like Moore, Pater routinely harvested his selected periodical work into books, as he had in *Appreciations* (1889) and *Plato and Platonism* (1893), although in this instance he did not live long enough to reprint his Moore review. They both used their periodical reviews, stemming from an event (a new exhibition or book), to constitute a book, a new format for their journalism, in turn to be reviewed in journals by other critics, who might collect their pieces in turn for their new books. Moore's NAC pieces are transferable items of news shuffled between periodicals and books, books which themselves become news, reviews of which recommence the cycle of ever renewed contemporaneity.

In publishing a review that endorsed Moore's point of view, Walter Pater entered the current NAC debate about what constitutes Art, and how definitions impacted on exhibition policies, purchases and membership of London institutions such as the RA and the Tate, the main arbiters of art in Britain. Alleging that their power was pernicious, Moore and D. S. MacColl argued that together the institutions worked to confirm traditional hierarchies of academic European and ancient classical art, and to act as gate-keepers against contemporary art of the French (impressionist) school and

20 Anon., 'Our London Letter', *Derby Daily Telegraph* (29 November 1893), 4; Anon., 'A Good Deal of Indignation', *Eastern Daily Press* (23 August 1893).

21 Walter Pater, 'Mr. George Moore as an Art Critic', *Daily Chronicle* (10 June 1893), 3.

its adherents in Britain, such as Whistler. Led by MacColl's initial intervention, a cluster of other 'new art critics' such as Moore, and the periodicals in which they were based, emerged as the main players of the campaign against the Academy, in which Walter Pater's review of George Moore figures.

For our purposes, Pater's late intervention helps make visible another way in which the press functions 'in-between', as vehicles and consolidators of personal networks. While Pater (1839–94) and P. G. Hamerton (1834–94) were of the same generation, Pater's primary affiliation with the young men MacColl and Moore was personal and positive, unlike Hamerton's hard-hitting assault against the NAC. In the *Contemporary Review* of September 1893 Hamerton was anxious to defend his past judgments about Whistler, citing chapter and verse, but amid the reasoned argument, he makes clear his present position, supporting the more extreme Quilter's nationalist, anti-Gallic position — 'I see the coarse and shapeless daubing that now goes on in France under the name of landscape painting', and Quilter's invective against his ignorant and uncouth opponents, 'the new Whistlerian school of criticism, strong in statement, aggressive and contemptuous in tone, but lacking the note of culture.'²²

Pater's decision to review Moore's irascible book *Modern Painting* in the *Daily Chronicle* newspaper seems to be an attempt to repair network relations between himself and Moore, a younger man, an Irish novelist who had spent time in Paris. Pater's gesture — his favourable review — was a surprise to Moore. Acquainted since 1885 and correspondents, they had fallen out in August 1887, when Pater refused to review Moore's naturalistic novel *A Mere Accident* in another newspaper, due to its violence and its depiction of 'abnormal states of mind'. This failure to consolidate a personal network through publication of a (favourable) review in the past is part of the same phenomenon as the appearance of a favourable review in 1893. Networks are animated and publicised in and by periodicals; this process, which was castigated as 'log-rolling' in the period, is one of the many ways in which the periodical press participates in the print economy by connecting entities with one another.

Without mentioning MacColl, Pater praises George Moore's competence as an art critic in his review, on precisely the lines that the NAC recommend: (Moore's) authority as an artist to write as an expert rather than a literary amateur, the important contribution that French nineteenth-century art, and specifically Impressionism, are making to the contemporary art scene (Pater names Degas among others), and the significance of technique rather than the subject of art. Pater's advocacy of the New Art critics and criticism are clinched by his singling out Whistler and Sargent in the last sentence of the review, whom the NAC identify as being overlooked and undervalued by the RA. Pater's review of Moore's book tacitly supported MacColl and the recent NAC debate, to which Pater's review was making a visible, signed contribution by a famous, respected critic.

By 1893 Pater had known MacColl over a decade, having met and entertained him when MacColl was an Oxford undergraduate in 1882 and co-editor of the *Oxford Magazine*, to which Pater agreed to contribute. By 1893 MacColl had begun to make a reputation as a critic in the *Spectator*, and as a painter, having started to exhibit regularly at the New English Art Club from 1892. A few months later in autumn 1893 MacColl reciprocated Pater's support of the NAC: he brought together Pater and William

22 P. G. Hamerton, 'The Foundations of Art Criticism', *The Contemporary Review*, vol. 64 (September 1893), 407–08, 412. Hamerton was an experienced publisher of books on French painting and art and editor of the *Portfolio*, a monthly he founded in 1870. He was of Pater's generation, born in the 1830s, publishing from the 1860s, and dying in the 1890s in France where he was from the late 1860s. A negative assessment of Hamerton's piece appeared quickly in the *Star* partly based on Hamerton's long residence in rural France, and the extent to which he was out of touch.

Rothenstein, a young artist, in connection with Rothenstein's first book project, a fine art folio of lithographs, *Oxford Characters*, in which Pater was to appear.²³ MacColl figured significantly then in the last year of Pater's life.

Pater's intervention in the NAC debate just months earlier demonstrates how networks were kept alive through the press. In addition to the function of the press in *enabling* networks, it established and consolidated the reputation of its writers and its own brands (its titles), which thrive on the affiliation of contributors with the titles in which they appear. For the editor of the *Daily Chronicle*, Pater was a prize in raising its profile and literary status, and as a public critic mindful of his own reputation, Pater wanted to be seen participating in the debate on the progressive side of this aesthetic issue, as well as supporting his friends. Pater's publication of a signed review in a daily newspaper also indicates the gradual movement in Britain of literary critics in the last quarter of the century to accede to the times, and to publish in more popular and cheaper formats than the up-market monthlies in which literary and art criticism most frequently appeared.²⁴

There is yet another manifestation of this debate in 1893 that transfers the politics of the NAC to the field of Literature, and introduces a fourth critic, Arthur Symons (b. 1865), to the network of MacColl, Moore and Pater. Of them he is the youngest, almost half Pater's age. Like the NAC campaign, Symons's article, 'The Decadent Movement in Literature' (November 1893), appears in the periodical press, insisting on the contemporary, as news, and alerting readers to its news content by its manifesto tone. Like the NAC, it discusses British and French practitioners in tandem and argues for the merits of nineteenth-century French literature without a health warning. Pater is one of two English Decadents included by Symons in the piece, along with the Goncourts, Verlaine, and Huysmans. The periodical in which Symons's article appeared is less insular and of a different type than the news-oriented metropolitan weeklies and dailies that carried the NAC debate just months before, and the up-market monthlies that pursued it. *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* was an illustrated, popular monthly of entertainment, of high quality and well established. Bidding to keep its share of the market, *Harper's* included two sensational Decadent pieces in November 1893 among its miscellaneous mix of feature articles, fiction, poetry, and criticism. Symons's piece was paired with 'Apollo in Picardy', a signed queer short story by Pater. Late in his life, in this single month of November 1893, Walter Pater through his own story and that of Symons, his young friend, appeared closely affiliated to Decadence. It was an association that this fastidious aesthete Pater had avoided for twenty years. Pater's intervention in the preceding June of 1893 in the NAC, his support of George Moore and his public acknowledgment of the merits of English and French impressionism may be seen as the precursor to the 'coming out' of Decadence in *Harper's* four months later, and of Pater.

Symons went on to revise and reprint a version of his long *Harper's* article on Decadence in the book *The Symbolist Movement in Literature* in 1899, in which he stripped out the British participants, and changed the title and movement. This pattern of Symons's, of re-purposing his output as a journalist by re-mediating articles into books, is repeated throughout his career to the degree that it is *characteristic* of his book production. For Symons, a working journalist with prodigious output, who thrived on the contemporary, periodicals are *always* in-between. Individual articles and reviews are shuffled and re-shuffled to compose *many* book collections over decades, suggesting he

23 Pater unexpectedly died soon after he sat for Rothenstein, before the serial part including Pater and his fellow 'character' was published in April 1895.

24 *The Daily Chronicle* was a liberal daily, notably progressive with respect to the arts; in 1895 for example, Joseph Pennell, who had helped establish Aubrey Beardsley, became the art editor.

must have developed a large and well-indexed morgue of his periodical pieces in order to recombine them efficiently. Apparently extrapolating his primary mode of literary production from journalism, Symons systematically relied on 'scissors and paste'. His long, late obituary tribute to Pater in 1896 in the *Savoy*, the Decadent periodical he founded and edited, drew on his earlier *Harper's Pater*; he immediately reprinted the *Savoy* Pater in a section on 'Contemporary Literature' (my italics) in a volume called *Studies in Two Literatures* in 1897; late in his career in 1932, it reappeared as a standalone book. In the interim, parts of it surfaced in other periodical articles by Symons. That the 1897 *Studies* volume was dedicated to George Moore by Symons cemented the network of these four actants in the NAC and the periodicals in which it took place from 1893 to 1896: Pater reviewing Moore and tacitly endorsing MacColl; Symons on Pater; Moore praising MacColl; and Symons dedicating his book to Moore.

Almost a decade later, MacColl published a large-format art book, *Nineteenth-Century Art* (1902), written in conjunction with an exhibition in Glasgow he had helped curate.²⁵ Symons who reviewed it in March 1903 now re-appears professionally as part of MacColl's network, in a prominent, favourable notice in the *Fortnightly Review*, where MacColl's achievement is enhanced and generalised through the heading of the review article 'The Painting of the Nineteenth Century' (my italics).²⁶ Symons's article exemplifies the mediating functions of periodical content, and its part in a communication circuit from event/exhibition to (MacColl's) book, from the book to (Symons's) periodical review and adverts, and back to Symons's multiple book reprints. This is a typical variation of possible permutations in the cultural industries. For the reader, Symons's review is a 'puff', evidence of log-rolling within a network; between Symons and MacColl, it is a kindness from one critic to another, and the acquisition of cultural capital: MacColl's sense of achievement, affiliation of Symons's name with MacColl and his progressive art politics, and the visibility of an important signed article by Symons in the *Fortnightly*. By this time, MacColl and Symons were professional peers, ascendant critics of their generation: MacColl was the art critic successively of two up-market weeklies — the *Spectator* (1890–96) and the *Saturday Review* (1897–1906), and editor of the *Architectural Review* (1901–05); Symons was at the *Star*, a progressive daily, as theatre critic, at the *Outlook* as art critic, and a frequent contributor to other papers.

Just after Symons's article on MacColl's book appeared in March, MacColl commenced a second serial campaign against the Royal Academy in the *Spectator*, still his periodical base, about the misappropriation by the Academy of the Chantrey Bequest, a fund for the acquisition for the nation of 'outstanding' works. MacColl argued tenaciously between April 1903 and August 1904 that the Trustees had used the fund instead for the purchase of *mediocre* art, because of their failure to understand the merit of contemporary British and continental work. These *Spectator* pieces were duly collected in 1904 in MacColl's book *The Administration of the Chantrey Bequest*.

Symons too characteristically reprints his article on MacColl's book at least five times in different collections over two decades, most effectively in his innovative book on multi-media, *Studies in Seven Arts*, in 1906. A volume entirely comprised of earlier periodical pieces, re-worked and re-mixed, it ranges like his former work on the Decadent and Symbolic movements, across cultures and genres. While Symons consolidated his career after 1906 as a critic and poet, writing for the press and aggregating his output in multiple combinations in successive books, MacColl became Director of the Tate

25 D. S. MacColl, *Nineteenth Century Art* (Glasgow: James Maclehose, 1902).

26 Arthur Symons, 'The Painting of the Nineteenth Century', *The Fortnightly Review*, vol. 73 (March 1903), 520–34; see Laurel Brake, 'Symons and Print Culture', *Volupté*, 1.1 (2018), 74–88.

Gallery in 1906, but persisted in shaping art policy through the press. Both continued to treat art as news, and to use journalism as a Mercury between art events and serial readers, between themselves and other critics, and between serials and books.

As I am concerned with art news in periodical miscellanies that carry a wider range of news, I wasn't intent on discussing the illustrated specialist art press here. However, it seemed methodologically important to investigate it, as I wondered how and if it responded to the vehement debate about the merits of the New Art Criticism, its critics-practitioners, and the contemporary painters and art it championed, influenced by French training and impressionism.²⁷ The answer is that the three established specialist titles — the *Art Journal*, the *Magazine of Art* and the *Portfolio* — responded to the debate about the opening exhibition of the Grafton Galleries in February 1893, and to the art by Degas it harboured, with silence. Carefully excluding reference to the controversy among 'D. M.' [Dugald MacColl], 'Philistine' [J. A. Spender], 'G. M.' [George Moore], and others, it took the position of occupying a higher ground of disinterested, professional critique 'above' journalism. We can conclude that art news in this period, like that of the NAC that goes 'viral', is produced by and found in a specific type of periodical — not specialist, illustrated, or monthly, but largely in weeklies, and evening dailies. It is contingent on its generic context, just as novel instalments characteristically appear in monthlies and weeklies, seldom in dailies, and never in quarterlies. *The Magazine of Art* simply did not review the show, and although Whistler's work featured in both volumes 15 and 16 (November 1892–October 1894), his work is not connected with the New Art Criticism, which is not named anywhere in these volumes. It is left to Claude Phillips, English correspondent for the *Gazette de Beaux-Arts* at this time, as the reviewer of a Whistler portrait at the 5th French Secessionist exhibition, in the Salon of the Champ de Mars, to provide the only reference to it I could find, a dismissive acknowledgement of the Philistines, though not by name: 'Some unwise persons, indulging in a style of criticism which, as regards the consummate Anglo-American artist is now surely quite *démodé*, have attempted to make mock of this singularly interesting performance, ignorant both of what Mr Whistler aims at in art and more especially of what he here aims at in Portraiture.'²⁸ *The Art Journal* does review the Grafton Galleries show, approvingly in a full-length article, if very late in its June number, but although there is praise for Degas, there is no mention of the NAC or critics, despite several articles on relevant subjects in 1893 and 1894. *The Portfolio* reviewed the show in its monthly 'Art Chronicle' section at the back of the issue. It mentioned neither Degas nor the New Art Criticism. A fourth title, the *Studio*, does engage with the debate in its first issue in April, with an eye to 'news'. It even advertises its review of the Grafton Galleries show on its cover, but the author of the piece C. W. Furse attempts to dismiss discussion of the debate on the basis of the new journal's late entry into it. He does, however, insist on the new gallery's distinction from that of the Royal Academy, and the quality of the Sargent and Degas in the show.²⁹ Suffused with coverage of Beardsley, this first issue returns head on to the NAC in its anonymous 'Studio Notes', in what appears as a concerted effort to distinguish itself from the high ground perspective of its rival specialist titles in the field.

27 For an up-to-date and wider discussion of the art press in the nineteenth century, see Julie Codell, 'Art Periodicals', pp. 377–89.

28 Claude Phillips, *The Magazine of Art*, vol. 17 (November 1893), 381.

29 MacColl cites Furse in an article on the RA in the *Fortnightly* (June 1893), as one of three artists who 'no longer care to send [art work] to the Academy' (p. 887). Furse (1868–1904) was a young British painter who had attended the Slade School of Art from 1884, and first exhibited at the RA in 1888, when he was twenty! He became known for his portraits.

This specialist art press however *was* distinct from the miscellaneous press. The specialist titles were all illustrated, prodigiously, ranging from cheap to expensive. Images varied not in quantity, but in quality.³⁰ The original works of art were seldom actually *viewed* by readers however assisted they were by the impressive density of illustration. The assiduous monthly coverage of exhibitions then seems to have worked on two levels: for those who relied on verbal reviews, biographies of artists and printed illustration alone, there were evaluations of individual works and artists to be gleaned from them, with glimpses through ekphrasis of selected works; for readers who got to the galleries, and the artists themselves, the critics' shorthand comments on individual works made more sense, as details that emanated from wider frameworks of evaluation.³¹ In these illustrated papers, the form of news was distinctive from that found in the miscellaneous non-specialist press: reports on contemporary shows with illustrations outweighed the types of art news and criticism found in the miscellaneous press, about the artists as personalities—their reputations, their ranking, and their rivalry, all aspects of the NAC debates.

Foucault prompted us to re-examine authorship by turning analysis to the ways authorship functioned. In his wake, media historians have discussed how periodical editors functioned, and conceptualised and re-conceptualised the 'communication circuit' in which the press always figures. I have attempted to extend the recognition of periodicity as a defining structure of the press, to include two other time-driven definitive elements, its contemporaneity and news, as parts of the formal structures of time in journalism. With these in mind, I have focused on exploring the functions of the periodical, in relation to its multiple contingencies, rather than in respect of any single relation to the editor, author, reader, publisher or advertiser. I have selected a thread of nineteenth-century art news to test this approach.

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Laurel Brake a publié *Print in Transition* et *Subjugated Knowledges*. Ses recherches portent sur la presse du 19^e siècle, l'histoire des médias, les études de genre, les humanités numériques, et Walter Pater. Elle a coédité avec Marysa Demoor *le DNCJ/Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Journalism* et *The Lure of Illustration*; avec E. King, R. Luckhurst and J. Mussell, *W. T. Stead*; avec Mark Turner and C. Kaul *The News of the World and the British Press 1843-2011*, et *ncse*. Parmi ses articles, 'Periodical Formats: the Changing Review', dans *Journalism and the Periodical Press in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, dir. Joanne Shattock, 'Symons and Print Culture', dans *Volupté* (2018), 'The Serial and the

30 The range of prices of the specialist art journals reflects this: the *Portfolio* and the *Art Journal* cost 2/6 and 1/6 respectively in 1887, the *Magazine of Art* costs 1/0 in 1880, and the *Studio* 6d in 1893.

31 See Julie Codell, *The Victorian Artist*, who notes that as full-page periodical illustrations of art works were often re-purposed to adorn parlours, these journals did offer readers some cultural capital.

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