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Forms of Affect, Relationality, and Periodical Encounters, or ‘Pine-Apple for the Million’

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ABSTRACT

The social, economic, intellectual, cultural, and material relations that comprise periodical encounters have been attended to in analyses that invoke the concept of the network, what Nathan Hensley has described as a ‘chain of visible or material interactions among human and nonhuman entities’. The affective dimensions of these relations, however, are neither material nor always visible, yet they are fundamental to all such interactions. This article argues that the periodical’s capacity to communicate, the contours, scope, and effects of that capacity, and in particular its genre traction, are everywhere underscored by a relationality that is charged with affect and emotions, shaped by what Raymond Williams famously described as ‘structures of feeling’. My focus on the haptic currents that drive periodical exchanges (taking examples from George Eliot at the *Cornhill Magazine*, Joseph Conrad in *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, and James Joyce in the *Irish Homestead*) follows from important theorizations of the unique affordances of this ‘most time-oriented of print forms’ (Beetham). Affect, feelings, and emotive responses are messy and cannot be pressed into a discrete methodology, but when considering the open-ended, multi-textured, serial form that is the periodical, there is something to be gained, I suggest, from trying to understand the operations of affect, its openness, its aleatoric potential, and its emotion-based effects.

KEYWORDS

Periodical affect, ‘structures of feeling’, relationality, networks, genre, repetition, discursive disruption, haptic, George Eliot, *Cornhill Magazine*, Joseph Conrad, *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, James Joyce, *Irish Homestead*.

1 I am grateful to the editors for their very helpful suggestions and to colleagues at ESPRit’s Stockholm conference in September 2015 (where an earlier version of this paper was presented) for invaluable insights.

Introduction

This transhistorical, transdisciplinary, transnational new journal, part of the multilingual network, ESPRit, offers a welcome platform for scholarship that foregrounds European perspectives. Along with the exciting prospect of encountering unfamiliar and neglected archives and actors, the *Journal of European Periodical Studies* offers a space for meaningful comparative analyses through shared methodologies, conceptual vocabularies, and theoretical interests that will help to forge connections across our national boundaries, period gates, and particular areas of interest. However, recognizing the inevitability and practical reality of our intellectual, temporal, or disciplinary leanings on display throughout this admittedly Anglo-centric, nineteenth-century-inflected essay, I will start by turning to something familiar to us all: encounters with exotic fruit, and specifically, the pineapple. The pineapple offers me one way into a more broadly conceived discussion about the affective dimensions of the periodical. It functions as an evocative gesture and compact signifier of how affect and emotions figure so persistently in the terms that writers, editors, critics, and readers use to describe their interactions with periodicals as objects and as textured amalgams.

‘A more surprising thing than pine-apple for the million was the publication of *Romola* in a shilling magazine. We read it there with mingled admiration and doubt of its being the right thing in the right place.’² This is how one critic describes initial encounters with George Eliot’s serialized novel in the popular literary miscellany, the *Cornhill Magazine*, in 1862. The discursive disruption effected by the publication of this dense historical narrative in a monthly magazine is captured provocatively in the loaded, affective metaphor of the pineapple: layered assumptions about ‘taste’ are registered here in both sensuous and social terms. The affective affront — more astonishing than the notion of luxurious ‘pine-apple’ for the masses — draws specific, if implicit, attention to the interactions of genre, class, and sensate bodies, both individual and social. This example from the *Cornhill*, the publication of an alienating, modernist narrative by James Joyce in the ‘Weekly Story’ spot of the agricultural magazine, the *Irish Homestead* in 1904, and the striking positioning of Conrad’s bleak ‘Heart of Darkness’ as lead story in the celebratory one-hundredth issue of the decidedly imperialist *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* in 1899 will be invoked in what follows to emphasize the multiple affective dimensions of periodical interactions.

The periodical’s capacity to communicate, and the contours, scope, and effects of that capacity, I suggest, are everywhere underscored by affect and emotions. I argue that the periodical format is crucial to the politics and the potency of the affective encounter. And finally, I show how reading for affect enriches our understanding of those interactive, interlocking, shifting matrices that comprise periodical aesthetics, periodical politics, periodical forms, and production modes that have informed various typological, conceptual, and thematic approaches to the study of periodicals over the past fifty years.

This focus on the haptic currents that shape periodical exchanges follows from important theorizations of the unique affordances of this ‘most time-oriented of print forms’.³ The periodical, as Margaret Beetham, Laurel Brake, Lyn Pykett, and James Mussell, for example, have argued, is characterized by its seriality — its repetitive structures and formats and its changing content. The polyvocality of an individual issue coexists with its serially reinforced, distinctive, singular identity, captured most obviously and visibly in its repeated title (for example, *Revue des deux mondes*, the *Yelloook*,

2 [Anon.], ‘Review of *Romola*’, *Globe and Traveller* (21 September 1863), p. 1.

3 Margaret Beetham, ‘Time: Periodicals and the Time of the Now’, *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 48.3 (2015), 323–42 (p. 325).

Imago, Světová literatura).⁴ A dynamic interplay of sameness and difference structures the periodical's relations with readers and facilitates the swift, regular production of the object for consumption, which I am foregrounding here as also an inherently affective object. Beetham's rightly influential account of the 'closed' and 'open' nature of the periodical speaks directly to the affective: that balance of temporal regularity, recognizable format (title, layout, font, design), and, broadly speaking, cultural, social, political positionality that together reassure and satisfy, confirm, or fulfil expectations and desires in tension with the open potential of this multi-textured, multiple-authored mode, 'which refuses the closed ending [...] allows for the possibility of alternative meanings' and is 'associated with the potentially disruptive',⁵ in ways that might jar or jolt or delight or astonish more than pineapple for the million. Mussell has described these particular features of the form in terms that draw on the affective, expressive capacities of rhythm and rupture: 'Each successive issue must assert its difference from its predecessor, introducing enough singularity to disrupt the rhythm but not enough to break it entirely.'⁶ While acknowledging the always ambient, unpredictable agency of readers, Mussell explains that 'the dynamic of seriality entailed a sort of contract':

Publishers attempted to anticipate the demands of their readers by giving them more of what they had already demonstrated they wanted, and readers repeatedly spend their money on the understanding that they would not be disappointed.⁷

I am not interested in exploring or further theorizing untethered affect and its autonomous aspects.⁸ Building on the work outlined above, I am emphasizing relationality — relations of affect, emotive response, and cultural forms. Of course, relationality as a concept shaping cultural interactions is nothing new to us. It is almost forty years since Raymond Williams's influential theorization of 'structures of feeling', for instance, in his analysis of the cultural politics of texts, their operations within and beyond the realm of the known and interested, conscious or rational thought.⁹ This is the territory of the affective, through and in the body, and between bodies. It describes those forceful contacts between the individual and social.¹⁰ More recently, Nicholas Dames has reminded us of the pervasive affective registers of Victorian periodical criticism, the given understanding of a text as 'technology for the production of feeling', as Rachel

4 On these defining features of the genre, see Margaret Beetham, 'Towards a Theory of the Periodical as a Publishing Genre', in *Investigating Victorian Journalism*, ed. by Brake, Jones, and Madden, pp. 9–32; Laurel Brake, 'Markets, Genres, Iterations', in *Routledge Handbook to Nineteenth-Century British Periodicals and Newspapers*, ed. by Alexis Easley, Andrew King, and John Morton (London: Routledge, 2016), pp. 237–48; James Mussell, 'Cohering Knowledge in the Nineteenth Century: Form, Genre and Periodical Studies', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 42.1 (2009), 93–103; James Mussell, 'Repetition: Or "In Our Last"', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 48.3 (2015), 343–58; Lyn Pykett, 'Reading the Periodical Press: Text and Context', in *Investigating Victorian Journalism*, ed. by Brake, Jones, and Madden, pp. 3–18.

5 Margaret Beetham, 'Open and Closed: The Periodical as a Publishing Genre', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 22.3 (1989), 96–100 (p. 98).

6 Mussell, 'Repetition', p. 351.

7 Mussell, 'Repetition', p. 348.

8 On the autonomy of affect, see Brian Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002). For a critique of aspects of affect theory and Massumi's work, see Ruth Leys, 'The Turn to Affect: A Critique', *Critical Inquiry*, 37 (Spring 2011), 434–72.

9 Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), in particular pp. 128–35.

10 For an elaboration of 'affect' as a force of encounter, see Melissa Gregg and Gregory Seigworth, 'An Inventory of Shimmers', in *The Affect Theory Reader*, ed. by Melissa Gregg and Gregory Seigworth (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), pp. 1–25.

Ablow puts it, or, as she describes the text's operation in other contexts, as a 'form of insulation *against* feeling'.¹¹ Ablow elaborates:

Texts [...] serve not just as sources of information or even as objects of identification. Instead, they function as barriers, windows, screens; as affective, erotic, and aesthetic objects; as temporal and rhythmic experiences.¹²

As I have been arguing, the periodical, in particular, offers the possibility of being and of housing all such types of texts within one issue; of disrupting our sense of the familiar textures and formats of this unique serial mode with a swerve from patterned, regular features; of reinforcing or anticipating our emotive responses with its reassuring regular rhythms and predictable positioning.

What Is Affect?

Because affect is invoked in a range of disciplinary fields from psychology to urban geography, linguistics to neurophysiology, and because it is characteristically considered to arise outside of the fixing definitions of language, it is notoriously (for some joyously?) difficult to define. It should, in fact, always escape definition according to Brian Massumi.¹³ Since we need some bearings though, here is a description: 'An affect is a non-conscious experience of intensity; it is a moment of unformed and unstructured potential.'¹⁴ Each communicative encounter produces affect, that is, active intensities as haptic, first felt then typically articulated as reactive emotions that constitute a change.¹⁵ The intersubjective nature of our existence as living things is premised on such exchanges, on movement, action, and reaction. This messy realm of the affective, long recognised by Williams as a key dynamic of cultural production, can be re-aired and reconsidered usefully in the context of methodologies that continue to shape periodical research, methodologies that with different sets of emphases, all invoke aspects of relationality, though usually formulated as types of networks. One suggestion I make here is that we put affect and emotions back into these networks.

The productive and rightly influential case study approach on which so much of our work is based, with its huge benefits of thick description and detailed modelling, is fundamentally concerned with social, aesthetic, structural, material, and economic interactions that give the periodical distinctiveness as a cultural object at once shaping and being shaped by wider discursive fields. As we know, such work illuminates both enduring and more transient networks of relations — the editors, writers, illustrators, design teams, patrons, distributors, subscribers, readers, and so on — that constitute

11 Rachel Ablow, 'Introduction', in *The Feeling of Reading: Affective Experience & Victorian Literature*, ed. by Rachel Ablow (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010), pp. 1–10 (p. 5), where Ablow is describing the work of Nicholas Dames, Kate Flint, John Plotz, and Leah Price. See also Nicholas Dames, 'On Not Close Reading: The Prolonged Excerpt as Victorian Critical Protocol', in *The Feeling of Reading*, ed. by Ablow, pp. 11–26 (p. 19).

12 Ablow, p. 9.

13 Massumi, p. 35.

14 Eric Shouse, 'Feeling, Emotion, Affect', *M/C Journal*, 8.6 (2005), journal.media-culture.org.au [accessed 24 February 2016] (para. 5 of 15).

15 See Shouse, paras 3–5, and Massumi, pp. 27–28, for their articulation of the difference between affect and emotion, a distinction Leys questions.

this polyvocal, collaborative form.¹⁶ Recently, versions of network analysis that draw specifically on methodologies and models created for and defining information studies, for instance, have been deployed to structure the macro analyses of big data periodical projects. Tools for text mining, topic modelling, computational analysis, and data visualization are used to map a wider range of (previously digitized) material. Such approaches celebrate the value of different reading models such as ‘distant’, ‘surface’, and what one critic has called, archly, ‘gross’ reading¹⁷ to provide more extensive or vast networks of relations that are pictured for us, described, and thus offer in their way new patterns of understanding and of knowledge.¹⁸ I do not intend to get overanxious about the apparent chasm between these approaches, close and distant, micro and macro. Neither do I want to add to the debates about the need for a particular or singular overarching methodology to distinguish the ‘discipline’ or the ‘field’ to move from the past to the future of periodical studies. That ground has been well covered by a range of journal special issues.¹⁹ We have level-headed interventions on these debates in the form of expansive, informed overviews by Maria DiCenzo, Patrick Collier, and Matthew Philpotts, which are well worth reading for all of us working in periodical research for the illuminating ways in which they point to how much our claims for ‘newness’ and for exceptionality in our respective fields, so often played out on very narrow, periodized turf, in fact, have much more in common with each other than acknowledged.²⁰ DiCenzo indicates the value of more syncretic approaches, what she terms a ‘methodological

- 16 See, for example, *Victorian Periodicals Review*, special issue ‘Victorian Networks and the Periodical Press’, 44.2 (2011); *American Periodicals*, special issue ‘Networks and the Nineteenth-Century Periodical’, 23.2 (2013); or monographs that offer different conceptual approaches to networks such as Eric B. White, *Transatlantic Avant-Gardes: Little Magazines and Localist Modernism* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013); Caroline Bressey, *Empire, Race and the Politics of Anti-Caste* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014); Mary Shannon, *Dickens, Reynolds, and Mayhew on Wellington Street: The Print Culture of a Victorian Street* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015); Marianne Van Remoortel, *Women, Work and the Victorian Periodical: Living by the Press* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).
- 17 On close and distant reading, see Jeffrey Drouin, ‘Close- and Distant-Reading Modernism: Network Analysis, Text Mining, and Teaching *The Little Review*’, *Journal of Modern Periodical Studies*, 5.1 (2014), 110–35; on surface reading, see Margaret Cohen, ‘Narratology in the Archive of Literature’, *Representations*, 108.1 (2009), 51–75; on ‘gross reading’ and its limitations, see Amanda Gailey, ‘Some Big Problems with Big Data’, *American Periodicals: A Journal of History and Criticism*, 26.1 (2016), 22–24.
- 18 See for example, *Journal of Modern Periodical Studies*, special issue ‘Visualizing Periodical Networks’, 5.1 (2014); Dallas Liddle, ‘Genre: “Distant Reading” and the Goals of Periodicals Research’, *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 48.2 (2015), 383–402; Natalie M. Houston, Lindsay Lawrence, and April Patrick, ‘Bibliographic Databases and “The Golden Stream”: Constructing the *Periodical Poetry Index*’, *Victorian Review*, 38.2 (2012), 69–80; contributions by Ryan Cordell, Elizabeth Hopwood, Benjamin Fagan, Kim Gallon, Jeffrey Drouin, Amanda Gailey to ‘Digital Approaches to Periodical Studies’ forum, *American Periodicals*, 26.1 (2016), 2–24; Anne Dewitt, ‘Advances in the Visualization of Data: The Network of Genre in the Victorian Periodical Press’, *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 48.2 (2015), 161–82; Laurel Brake, ‘“Time’s Turbulence”: Mapping Journalism Networks’, *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 44.2 (2011), 116–27. For a frank overview of what he terms the advantages and limitations of the trope of the network, this ‘now-ubiquitous metaphor’, see Nathan K. Hensley, ‘Network: Andrew Lang and the Distributed Agencies of Literary Production’, *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 48.3 (2015), 359–82 (p. 366).
- 19 See, for instance, *American Periodicals*, 25th Anniversary Special Issue, 25.1 (2015); *Victorian Periodicals Review*, special issues ‘Critical Theory’, 22.3 (1989) and ‘Return to Theory’, 48.3 (2015); *Journal of Modern Periodical Studies*, special issue ‘Magazines and/as Media: Periodical Studies and the Question of Disciplinarity’, 6.2 (2015); *ESC: English Studies in Canada*, special issue ‘Magazines and/as Media: The Aesthetics and Politics of Serial Form’, 41.1 (March 2015); and Ann Ardis, ‘Towards a Theory of Periodical Studies’, MLA Convention 2013, special session 384 (4 January 2013), Boston, USA, [seeps.princeton.edu](https://www.princeton.edu) [accessed 24 February 2016].
- 20 Maria DiCenzo, ‘Remediating the Past: Doing “Periodical Studies” in the Digital Era’, *ESC: English Studies in Canada*, 41.1 (March 2015), 19–39; Patrick Collier, ‘What Is Modern Periodical Studies?’, *Journal of Modern Periodical Studies*, 6.2 (2015), 92–111; Matthew Philpotts, ‘A Return to Theory’, *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 48.3 (2015), 307–11. I share DiCenzo’s view that defining or marking out of the ‘field’ or ‘discipline’ may not be possible, necessary, or even useful. I am mindful too of the singularly ‘Anglo’ dimension to my examples here, limitations of my linguistic ability and transnational knowledge, both of which I hope will be improved in time by this new journal.

pluralism', as a way of harnessing the rich variety of practices that feature in our periodical research.²¹ I want to be clear that what I am proposing here is not an alternative or new key to all methodologies but an additional dimension — not a competing system, but an accreting layer. It is messy and vague at times. Affect, feelings, and emotive responses cannot be shaped into a methodology, and though frustrating for those who prefer graphs, reproducible, predictable, transferable methods, and definite structures, I suggest there is something to be gained from trying to understand the operations of affect, its openness, its aleatoric potential, and its emotion-based effects, in particular when considering the open-ended, multi-textured, serial form that is the periodical.

A moment of relational encounter is first affective before it is, to use Massumi's terms, captured and closed as a particular consciously registered and named emotional response that is recursively 'situated'.²² The relation between felt affect and named or situated emotive reaction (delight, disgust, anger, boredom, comfort, well-being) draws attention to the effectiveness (or otherwise) of the periodical's anticipatory structures²³ or indicative genre codifications. These reactions are indexed to the periodical's constant assertions of positionality — its distinctive efforts, and its capacity, to micro-manage feelings that follow from its defining aspects: seriality, temporal regularity, repetitive content, and repetitive frames (regular features, standardized structure, layout, design, etc.). These dynamic emotive exchanges, which incorporate feeling and reason at once, pertain to encounters between readers, writers, artists, editors, and to the relations between people and objects, that is, the periodical as a physical, tactile, visual, and social object.²⁴ The forceful aspects of the social and material relations that comprise periodical encounters have been attended to in analyses that invoke, for instance, Bruno Latour's social network — what Nathan Hensley has described as a 'chain of visible or material interactions among human and nonhuman entities'.²⁵ The affective contacts of that chain, however, are not always material nor always visible, yet they are fundamental to all such interactions. Unlike the nodes and edges produced in big data network visualizations or the rich descriptive narratives of centrifugal and centripetal flows of people and ideas that cluster around, say, that legendary nineteenth-century British, satirical magazine *Punch* or *Sinn und Form* — the influential literary cultural Berlin journal operating since 1949 — affective relations are not always mappable or available for 'networking'.²⁶ However, in the shift from encounter to narrated account of that encounter, from what I will describe in my first example as a type of discursive disruption to reorienting response, in the striving to move from the feelings that are produced at the 'edge of semantic availability',²⁷ to structurization, we learn something of the periodical as a dynamic, affecting object and something of the cultural political positioning of the subjects that encounter it. An understanding of genre as inherently social, relational, and contingent is central to the transformative possibility or charge in all forces in such communicative exchanges. The communication that happens between

21 DiCenzo, p. 20.

22 'Formed, qualified, situated perceptions and cognitions fulfilling functions of actual connection or blockages are the capture and closure of affect. Emotion is the most intense (most contracted) expression of that *capture*', Massumi, p. 35.

23 The phrase is John Frow's, see John Frow, *Genre* (London: Routledge, 2006), p. 104.

24 Though not referring to periodicals, Caroline Levine has theorized multiple versions of such encounters in her account of clashing forms, institutional, cultural, and linguistic, see *Forms: Whole, Rhythm, Hierarchy, Network* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015).

25 Hensley, p. 360

26 On *Punch's* networks, see, for instance, Patrick Leary, *The 'Punch' Brotherhood: Table Talk and Print Culture in Mid-Victorian London* (London: British Library, 2010); on *Sinn und Form*, see Stephen Parker and Matthew Philpotts, *'Sinn und Form': The Anatomy of a Literary Journal* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2009).

27 Williams, p. 134.

subjects and periodical objects, the production of different intensity effects, can be predictable or unpredictable when related to an understanding of genre as active and mobile rather than rigidly static, deterministic, and fixed.

Discursive Disruption: 'Pine-Apple for the Million'

Staying in my personal comfort zone, my first example is the decision to publish *Romola* in serial form in George Smith's *Cornhill Magazine* in 1862 mentioned in my introduction.²⁸ The instance presents one of the more obvious ways in which attention to the affective constitutes attention to genre, network, audience, and the politics of aesthetics. The serialization registers as significant in critical and historical accounts of British publishing for a number of reasons, and not least, for the astronomical fee offered to George Eliot by Smith, who was determined to net this increasingly celebrated fiction writer for his relatively new middle-class, shilling monthly, founded in 1860. The *Cornhill's* sales were already flagging after a spectacular start; the fiction line-up, on which those sales depended, was not promising.²⁹ Smith needed the injection of publicity, a draw. George Eliot, he decided, was his answer. Coming off the success of her popular rural narratives set in the English Midlands and much admired for their pathos, humour, and drama (*Adam Bede*, 1859; *Mill on the Floss*, 1860; *Silas Marner*, 1861), she was a name he needed. Smith notoriously poached her from John Blackwood, the publisher who had fostered her literary work since the anonymous publication in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* in 1857 of the novellas later republished as *Scenes of Clerical Life* (1858).³⁰ With the lure of Smith's extraordinary offer of 10,000 pounds for a novel in sixteen instalments, who could resist? Not George Eliot, even though she seemed to be in aesthetically resistant mode. *Romola* signalled a dramatic departure from her previous work. The story centred on the eponymous character, the daughter of a fifteenth-century Florentine bibliophile, whose disappointing marriage to a charming murderous political climber leaves her turning to the punishing asceticism of the Catholic fanatic, Savonarola, in the search for structure and meaning in her life. How far we are from the bucolic pastoral Warwickshire of the early nineteenth century that made the novelist so hugely popular by 1862. How far we are from the sharp-tongued witticisms of countrywomen like her Mrs Poyser and plain moral speakers like the solid carpenter Adam Bede.

Reviewers were startled, as noted in my introduction, and I am mindful of the emotive charge of that word 'startled'. There are three related details that I want to recall from that previously cited review of the republication of *Romola* in novel format: the metaphor, 'pine-apple for the million'; the deliberate labelling of the *Cornhill* as a 'shilling' magazine; and the expression of mingled 'admiration' and 'doubt' that this was the 'right thing in the right place'.³¹ These details suggest the discursive disruption and the operative effect of recursively situated responses that are at once emotional, social, and political.

28 George Eliot's *Romola* appeared in the *Cornhill* in fourteen instalments from July 1862 to August 1863, two fewer instalments than planned originally.

29 On the flagging interest in the *Cornhill's* fiction, see Carol Martin, *George Eliot's Serial Fiction* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1994), p. 305. The subtitle to Martin's chapter on the serialization of *Romola* in her pioneering study led me to the pineapple: "The Serialization of *Romola*: "A More Surprising Thing than Pine-Apple for the Million", in Martin, pp. 123–81.

30 Martin observes that Smith's strategy did not work: sales continued to fall and she cites John Blackwood's observation by way of one explanation: 'if the story is the one I suppose, I have no doubt it will be a fine thing, but it was doubtful in my mind how far it would bear being given in fragments in the Magazine and certainly it would not suit the readers of the *Cornhill*', Martin, p. 305, n. 2.

31 [Anon.], p. 1.

In the past decade or so, important and enabling work has been done on the periodical's operational, theoretical, and bibliographical codes.³² This work looks to the ways periodical modes stabilize in terms that allow for comparative analysis of different publications across time and space, and the tracing of influence and interchange along synchronic and diachronic axes across national and periodized boundaries. Here I want to attend to how periodicals are *destabilized*, however temporarily. These moments of destabilization, I suggest, are affective ruptures. They can be signalled in obvious ways by a format shift: as William Atkinson puts it in affective terms, 'the font a magazine uses for its title becomes as familiar to its readers as a human face'; or as Louis James notes: 'The format of a periodical becomes a tone of voice, a way of conditioning our responses.'³³ A change of font or a format shift is a discursive disruption, a play, first on our senses as a precursor to 'conditioning our response'. Such changes are an attempt to (or effect of) moving responses in another direction, as we do with a sudden change in tone of voice or facial expression. Equally, it is worth remembering that the repetitions of font, format, title, and header, regular features, for example, also condition our responses with their reliable familiarity producing the opposite of rupture. It is the contrast between anticipated repetition and actual swerve from the expected that creates affective intensity. Destabilization can also follow the inclusion of specific content that can be read to run counter to the typical material found in the run of a periodical's pages, for instance a nationalist poem by W. B. Yeats in W. E. Henley's Tory-imperialist *National Observer*³⁴ or a 'surprising' type of fiction in a magazine, like the *Cornhill*, that had a 'type' that dominated, a type that readers expected and publishers sought and authors usually delivered.

The affective response is not simply about readers' responses then — though reader accounts play into any analysis of the affective. It is rather to offer one approach to analysing or attending to the purpose and effects, the aesthetic politics and attendant political positioning of both genre and genre interruption in this dynamic circuit. As Mussell puts it, our understanding of periodicals 'is not just a question of writers and readers', it is also a question of genre: 'genre describes the way that form structures social relationships and so can be applied to all the practices that craft periodicals as objects, from the design of type to the layout of particular issues'.³⁵ Debra Rae Cohen, in a study of periodicals in a transmedial context, has also provided a useful theorization of the relationship between the social and textual forms. She focuses on three key words — '*ergodic*, used to denote text that requires non-trivial reader decision-making; *flow*, applied to the practices of media continuity; and *sociability*, or the creation of media occasion' — to describe and understand the means of by which the 'media consumer' is engaged.³⁶ A consideration of affective capacities works alongside these theorizations

32 See, for instance, Peter Brooker and Andrew Thacker, 'Introduction', *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines*, ed. by Peter Brooker and Andrew Thacker, 3 vols (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2009–13), I (2009), pp. 1–26 (see especially p. 6); Matthew Philpotts, 'Defining the Thick Journal: Periodical Codes and Common Habitus', *Journal of Victorian Culture Online* (blog) (24 December 2012), blogs.tandf.co.uk/jvc [accessed 19 January 2016].

33 William Atkinson, 'Bound in *Blackwood's*: The Imperialism of "The Heart of Darkness" in its Immediate Context', *Twentieth-Century Literature*, 50.4 (2004), 368–93 (p. 370); Louis James, "'The Trouble with Betsy": Periodicals and the Common Reader in Mid-Nineteenth-Century England', in *The Victorian Periodical Press*, ed. by Joanne Shattock and Michael Wolff (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1982), pp. 347–66 (p. 351).

34 Linda Hughes discussed this apparent disjuncture between ideology and poetic content in her paper 'The Life and Death (and Life and Death) of W. E. Henley's *Observer*: Tracking Poetry as a Research Analytic', 47th Annual Conference of the Research Society For Victorian Periodicals, 'Life and Death in the Nineteenth-Century Press' (10–11 July 2015), Ghent University, Belgium.

35 Mussell, 'Repetition', p. 347.

36 Debra Rae Cohen, "'Strange Collisions": Keywords Toward an Intermedial Periodical Studies', *ESC: English Studies in Canada*, 41.1 (2015), 93–104 (p. 94).

of the forceful interactions of content and form and the decisive choices that define the exchanges among ‘consumer’, periodical content and form, and other media.³⁷

For the purposes of our discussion here, the periodical’s forceful encounter suggests how communicative expressions act upon the body, both of other texts (those intertextual relations that are so essential to how genres function) and of other individuals, and how such experiences activate, structure, confirm, or reinforce a particularized politics. Raymond Williams’s elaboration on encounters with institutional or cultural forms, which I am repositioning in terms of the anticipatory structures (material and symbolic) of periodical forms that are established through iterative and imitative patterns, is worth recalling here. There are direct refusals of particular cultural forms that reinforce binary positions: the conservative affronted by and rejecting the radical socialist paper, and the feminist challenging the prescriptive inscriptions of culturally constructed, self-interested, ‘received’ versions of femininity forged in the pages of domestic women’s magazines through word, image, and the trans-authorial voice that constitutes patriarchal ideology, would be obvious cases in point. These examples are assured positions, confident politics, binary, not dynamic relations. ‘There is a frequent tension between the received interpretation and practical experience’, Williams notes, ‘[w]hen this tension can be made direct and explicit, or when some alternative interpretation is available, we are still within a dimension of relatively fixed forms.’ There are times, however, he explains, when the disruption is not blatant, binary, predictable, assured, monologic, or containable: ‘the tension is often an unease, a stress, a displacement, a latency: the moment of conscious comparison not yet come, often not even coming’.³⁸ Such reactions can occur in the body and mind of the reactionary and the committed feminist. And we are reminded too, once again, of the more invisible, affective relations that constitute the opposite of disruption or displacement: the way the periodical emerges and operates as a distinct genre striving to produce a particular type of reading experience, or ‘received interpretation’, precisely because of its dispositional tendencies that call into being, most often unconsciously, particular affect orientations from those returning, loyal readers or readers familiar with the particular textures and forms and codes of particular types of texts.

Back to the Pineapple: Taste, Aesthetics, and Affect

To return to the *Globe and Traveller’s* list for the play between received interpretation and discursive disruption:

1. The pineapple
2. The shilling magazine
3. The right thing in the right place

I will start at the end of this list: the right thing in the right place implies a secure sense of genre forms. There is the categorization of *Romola* as a particular type of literary fiction (this and subsequent reviews suggested it was high-brow art, complex historical fiction).³⁹ There is the given understanding (that anticipatory structure) that the *Cornhill* is a magazine that houses/makes at home a different type of reader and a different type of fiction, not least, a type more suited to serial format than this slowly unfolding narrative of Florentine history. In addition, there was discontent among some readers that this was not the type of George Eliot novel to which her audiences

37 Cohen, p. 102.

38 Williams, p. 132.

39 An extensive list of reviews of *Romola* are provided in Martin, pp. 267–70.

were accustomed. Carol Martin's *George Eliot's Serial Fiction* surveys these responses in detail. But the 'outcries against *Romola*', Martin demonstrates, were particularly focused on where the story was located: in Florence and in a magazine. On the latter point, she notes the 'outcries' came from the narrative 'being presented initially to the wrong audience, who were readers with other expectations, and who were naturally disappointed'.⁴⁰ Part of my query here is to put pressure on that notion of 'natural' disappointment. Citing the *Globe and Traveller* again:

its [*Romola*'s] first appearance in a cheap and popular miscellany was a disadvantage undoubtedly — so refined and highly-finished a masterpiece did not find its proper public immediately, and the wrong sort of readers cried out, 'This is *hard* reading, dull reading'.⁴¹

That dissonance between story and context is related to the audience, format, and mode of production (a shilling monthly) with all the attendant implications about class and social purpose embedded in this production and economic choice — a middle-brow leisure magazine, which the reviewer specifically categorizes, too indiscriminately, as a 'cheap and popular miscellany'.⁴² The categorizing move, of course, reinforces the legitimizing and rational authority of the reviewer who is positioned above the messy territory of the affective and the related affordances of serial fiction with its sensational thrills and emotive cliff-hangers. The metaphor, 'pine-apple for the million', emphasizes those points of class and exclusivity. The pineapple, a signifier for wealth, or at least a signal of upward social mobility by the middle decades of nineteenth-century Britain, is crucially an affective image that reaches to capture the forceful effect on the body — on the individual body, the social body, the consuming body — of this rupture. The word is suggestively visual, tactile (that distinctive, armour-like skin), sensual. The surprise of George Eliot's *Romola* in the *Cornhill* is constructed here as affective, not rational only, not just emotional, as an immediate, haptic, sense response. As noted above, this emphasis on the senses carries doubled registers of taste. 'Taste is an orchestration of the sensible', Ben Highmore has argued, 'a way of ordering and demeaning, of giving value and taking it away'.⁴³ Drawing attention to how food is organized around the consuming body, he explains, 'it is hard to imagine that what we term culture is not in the end (and endlessly) driven by the peculiar admix of affect, sensual perception and bio-power that is instanced by taste'.⁴⁴ Brian Maidment has reminded us of one provocative example of the biopolitical affect of the pineapple in the early nineteenth century: dustmen who came across discarded pineapples, leftovers from presumably luxurious feasting in other people's houses, were reported to have grazed their faces trying eat the fruit, in ignorance, through the skin. Maidment writes that William Heath's 'The March of Intellect' (1829), with its socially symbolic representation of a dustman eating a pineapple (and knowing how to eat it), 'is both a satire on working-class pretensions and an expression of wonder that something so scarce is available to such an ordinary person'.⁴⁵ The aesthetic judgement that views George Eliot's *Romola* in serial form in

40 [Anon.], p. 1, cited in Martin, p. 138.

41 [Anon.], p. 1, cited in Martin, p. 138.

42 The fact that Smith also secured the artist Frederic Leighton to illustrate the instalments for a considerable fee should be enough to signal that the production in actual and symbolic terms was not 'cheap'.

43 Ben Highmore, 'Bitter After Taste: Affect, Food and Social Aesthetics', in *The Affect Theory Reader*, ed. by Gregg and Seigworth, pp. 118–37 (p. 126).

44 Highmore, p. 126.

45 Brian Maidment, *Reading Popular Prints, 1790–1870*, 2nd edn (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), p. 62. See also Brian Maidment, *Dusty Bob: A Cultural History of Dustmen, 1780–1870* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007).

the *Cornhill Magazine* as more surprising than ‘pine-apple for the million’ is scorched through with overlapping bodily, social, and affective implications of taste in its layered designation of consumers. This is not the place to follow the specific case of a reviewer’s partisan logic, speculating in retrospect with their own class-based assumptions about why what is designated a sophisticated piece of art fails to reach a receptive audience in a popular magazine. Rather it is to make the broader point that all parties to this force field constitute a dynamic relational encounter:

George Eliot ↔ *Cornhill* ↔ Readers ↔ George Eliot

Such encounters are premised on a wide range of factors to do with access to and levels of education, the historical moment, questions of gender and class: affect has politics, or more particularly, it produces back-filled politics, a recursive repositioning of belonging or expulsion that is revealing, ongoing, and potent. An understanding of what is the ‘right thing in the right place’, however, is irrevocably challenged by confronting *Romola* in the *Cornhill*, even if the return is quickly to a status quo. The experiential encounter with this text at this time in this place resets the relations between readers and fiction, readers and *Cornhill* fiction, and readers and the *Cornhill*. The adjustments (here, rejection mostly) are figured in affective terms and in this way usefully indicative of recursive practices that constitute the ongoing micro-regulations of relations among readers, writers, producers, and text that shape, in this particular case, a periodical’s communicative potential.

That George Eliot’s relations with both literary miscellanies and her reading public are recalibrated by this encounter was not a surprise. She expected change. She sought it. Her letters from this time to her friend, Sara Hennell, provide an interesting insight into a wider affective politics at play. She protests, in a well-known articulation of her desire to escape the ‘George Eliot’ brand that was so central to her success: ‘If one is to have freedom to write out of one’s own varying unfolding self, and not be a machine always grinding out the same material or spinning the same sort of web, one cannot always write for the same public.’⁴⁶ Marian Evans’s ‘varying, unfolding self’, her capacity to remain open, her potential to be affected and to effect creative change via aesthetic encounters (with their attendant reliance on affective exchange) are being paralysed or stymied, she implies by her earlier successes in a particular mode: the tyranny of static understandings of genre; the noose of a particular, circumscribed fame; the fixed grid of received interpretation. That said, this experiment was not a success. George Eliot was always tortured by the process of writing but many critics have observed that the composition of *Romola* presented particularly acute physical and mental anxieties. Her journal for 6 July 1862, days after the first instalment appeared in the July issue of the *Cornhill*, and as first impressions trickled in, records:

The past week has been unfruitful from various causes. I have not been sufficiently determined in my resistance to sensational and external hindrances. The consequence is, that I am no farther on in my MSS, and have lost the excellent start my early completion of the 3rd part had given me.⁴⁷

46 14 July 1862, *The George Eliot Letters*, ed. by Gordon S. Haight, 9 vols (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954–78), IV (1955), p. 49.

47 6 July 1862, *The Journals of George Eliot*, ed. by Margaret Harris and Judith Johnston (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 112. Martin speculates that ‘Readers’ responses to the change in subject matter were probably part of the “sensational and external hindrances” that affected Eliot’s concentration in early July’ (p. 133).

And as if to fully embody the affective dynamic, George Eliot reports on 10 July that ‘a dreadful palsy has beset me for the past few days — I have scarcely made any progress. Yet I have been very well in body’.⁴⁸ Though ‘well in body’, that subconscious, latent sense of paralysis that afflicts the doubting writer, is played out on the body.⁴⁹ Arguably, the capacity to be more immediately affected by the ongoing-ness of writing and the flow of reader responses is experienced all the more acutely when producing work serially, publishing before the final text is completed, and, crucially, appearing in a format, the periodical magazine, that is neither controlled by the author’s name nor restricted to a ‘George Eliot’ audience. This is a riskier, more fluid exchange. But it also has more affective potential — the surprise of finding a story, a poem, a column, an opinion, that one would not expect to find within the pages of a particular type of miscellany — a pineapple that you might happen upon and are open to eating, however it may hurt. As I have been arguing, the possibility of unpredictable affective experiences is particularly relevant for the print mode that is the periodical, which, like the non-print formats of radio, television, or the web, is open, always in-process. Its genre admixture, its seriality, its repetitive frames and expected and unexpected content, its reliability and ruptures are fundamental to its identity and constitutive of what Massumi defines elsewhere as ‘interaction in the making’.⁵⁰

Genre, Shock, and the Familiar

The named feelings that we index to affect — surprise, shock, repulsion, indifference, and so on — matter. The intensity or charge of the response — the articulated or nominated feeling — signals a particular social, political, and aesthetic interaction with the material at hand, whether an estrangement is produced or a minor micro-shift, what Massumi terms the ‘slightness of ongoing qualitative change’ or the ‘grandness of periodic rupture’ and everything in-between.⁵¹ My second example hones in on ‘shock’. It turns on the publication of early drafts of three of James Joyce’s *Dubliners* stories in the *Irish Homestead*, the weekly publication of the Irish Agricultural Organisational Society, established in 1895. Joyce was encouraged to submit some work to the journal by George Russell, the critic, editor, poet, and painter. Russell had a working association with the magazine and was later its editor. Alert to Joyce’s need for ready money, Russell pushed him for some short fiction. The *Homestead*, oriented toward a rural Irish audience, farmers interested in modernizing their practices for maximum economic profits and in forming cooperatives, is not the place that one might expect to place Joyce’s pessimistic, unsettling, and bleak narratives of urban paralysis, religious, and sexual stasis. Russell was clear about the latent affront of a Joyce story in the pages of the journal, familiar as he was with the experimental writer’s work, and advised Joyce to offer something that would not ‘shock’ the reader.

Dear Joyce

Look at the story in this paper The Irish Homestead. Could you write anything simple, rural?, livemaking?, pathos?, which could be inserted so as not to shock the readers. If you could furnish a short story about 1800 words suitable for insertion

48 *Journals of George Eliot*, p. 112.

49 ‘Writing’, as Elspeth Probyn puts it, ‘is interested; it is deeply embedded in contexts, politics and bodies’ and it is, profoundly, ‘a corporeal activity’, Elspeth Probyn, ‘Writing Shame’, in *The Affect Theory Reader*, ed. by Gregg and Seigworth, pp. 71–92 (p. 89; p. 76).

50 Massumi, p. 9.

51 Massumi, p. 1.

the editor will pay £1. It is easily earned money if you can write fluently and don't mind playing to the common understanding and liking for once in a way. You can sign it any name you like as a pseudonym. Yours sincerely

Geo. W. Russell.⁵²

As has been noted by Joyce critics, the first of the stories, 'The Sisters', published in August 1904 under the misspelled pseudonym 'Stephen D.edalus',⁵³ offers the opposite of all Russell suggested. It recounts a young Dublin boy's memory of the death and subsequent wake of a Catholic priest, nursed by two sisters who it seems wilfully ignore the signs of the priest's breakdown, possible loss of faith, and his ambiguous relationships. 'It is complex rather than "simple"; it is not "rural" in any respect; and it deals with death and abnormality, not "livemaking", as Florence Walzl bluntly observed.⁵⁴ 'Eveline' and 'After the Race' that followed in September and December, respectively, stuck to this grim territory and the editor of the journal, H. F. Norman finally told Joyce 'no more', due to vociferous complaints from readers, from both urban and rural backgrounds.⁵⁵ The point here is not (or not simply) to track readers' hostile, disturbed, astonished, or delighted responses when they encounter in the regular weekly story spot for that issue estranging, urban narratives. Readers confronted Joyce's 'The Sisters', under the cosily familiar, frequent, and welcoming, 'Our Weekly Story', header opening out across a one and half-page spread with the remaining half-page containing an unmissable advertisement for 'Dairy Machinery and Appliances of Every Description' including 'Refrigerating machines', 'Milk pumps', and 'Cream separators'.⁵⁶ This is not a simple case of clashing codes that locates the sophisticated and subversive modernist stories of stymied, uncompromising bleakness in a clean binary opposition to the readers of the nationalist periodical with its expressed agenda of positive, national self-sufficiency. Neither is it simply (or only) evidence of straightforward pragmatism. Joyce, typically broke and planning his escape to Switzerland with Nora Barnacle for which he needed funds, would plausibly publish anywhere for cash. Amidst both of these explanations there are messy, multiple affective registers: Joyce's apparent 'shame' about publishing work in the 'pig's paper', as he later called it in *Ulysses*;⁵⁷ readers driven from shock to anger to action by the encounter so that they wrote letters of complaint to the editor; there is the editor's own opaque agenda in facilitating this discursive disruption, fully anticipated by Russell as potentially shocking, yet allowed, not once but three times, by Norman, whose only editorial intervention was to suggest to Joyce that he change a place name in the first story.⁵⁸

We can easily point up the break in codifications effected by these publications. We can note the way repeated structural frames offer sameness and difference — the title and header repeat (*Irish Homestead*; 'Our Weekly Story'), the content changes. Yet the 'Our Weekly Story' tag signals a collective trans-authorial interpellation in that 'our'. There is a reinforcing of what constitutes that constructed group belonging, that

52 *The Letters of James Joyce*, ed. by Stuart Gilbert, 3 vols (London: Faber, 1957), I, p. 43.

53 'Stephen Dedalus', 'The Sisters', *Irish Homestead* (13 August 1904), pp. 676–77; repr. as b/w photo facsimile in Cyril Pearl, *Dublin in Bloomtime: The City James Joyce Knew* (London: Angus & Robertson 1969), pp. 24–25, www.ricorso.net [accessed 2 April 2016].

54 Florence L. Walzl, 'Joyce's "The Sisters": A Development', *James Joyce Quarterly*, 10.4 (1973), 375–421; repr. in *James Joyce Quarterly*, 50.1–2 (2012–13), 73–117 (p. 75).

55 Richard Ellmann, *James Joyce* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 165. 'Eveline' was published in the 10 September 1904 issue; 'After the Race' on 17 December 1904.

56 *Irish Homestead* (13 August 1904), p. 677.

57 Ellmann, p. 164.

58 Ellmann, p. 164.

particular social, cultural, and economic network registered in the temporal repetition ('weekly'): every week 'we' come together. There is the generic security provided for readers that the text they will encounter will be a short story, and more usually, a short story of a particular kind. This is the periodical as a captured and closed, reassuringly regular form. But it is also and at the same time an open, affective object because the stories in periodicals change, because periodical editors are unpredictable, because multi-textured weekly publication accommodates whims and distractions, and because writers need money to satisfy their desires and needy writers can be fortunate enough to have friendly relations with those who have access to quick production modes such as weekly magazines. There is always, therefore, the potential for shock.⁵⁹ In this messy layering of emotions, I am trying get at what Philpotts has described as the periodical's textures. I am thinking in particular of the interaction he explains as 'the experiential quality that informs genre expectations [...] the cognitive experience of reading that is so strongly influenced by distinctive irregularity and self-similarity of form', which he offers as a defining feature of the periodical's dimensions.⁶⁰ Such reading experiences and textures, I suggest, might be amplified through reading for affect.

Homely Affects: The Periodical as 'Hospitable House'

My final brief example will address that tension between what appears to be one articulation of irregularity but could equally be read as repeated or familiar form: Joseph Conrad's unsettling, ambiguous narrative of imperial exploitation, 'The Heart of Darkness', published in serial form in the imperialist and conservative *Blackwood's Magazine* in 1899. This serial might seem to suggest rupture, a dissenting counter-politics that runs against the grain of its context, more especially when the first instalment of Conrad's story is given pride of place in the celebratory March number of *Blackwood's* that marked the thousandth issue of the magazine in its eighty-two-year history.

As Atkinson, among others, has shown, 'The Heart of Darkness' is a story with a complex critical history. Atkinson outlines how Conrad's story was read in the 1950s and 60s as resistant to and critical of the racist ideologies that were so pervasive and commonplace in the writer's time and typical of the magazine in which it was published. There was a critical reversal in the late 1970s with Chinua Achebe damning Conrad for his 'offensive deplorable book'. Later critics, such as Edward Said and Patrick Brantlinger, sought to find a middle ground between championing Conrad for his 'against the grain' radical discursive disruption placing the story in a conservative Tory magazine and outright condemnation of the writer as, in Achebe's words, a 'thorough racist'.⁶¹ The suggestion that Conrad's work can be read against the grain, however, is questioned by Atkinson in his illuminating account of the material context in which Conrad's story first appeared, where he troubles what he calls 'the rescue operation on a classic text whose politics seem reactionary'.⁶² Atkinson analyses the material that was published alongside 'The Heart of Darkness' in *Blackwood's* to mount a compelling

59 Garry Leonard writes that 'most of the stories in the *Irish Homestead* extolled the virtue of the Irish countryside, its presumed ability to supply all the material and spiritual solace any man or woman of Ireland might require', see Garry Leonard, 'Dubliners', in *Cambridge Companion to James Joyce*, ed. by Derek Attridge, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 87–102 (p. 93); see Katherine Mullin, *James Joyce, Sexuality and Social Purity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 57–58, for a lively reading of Joyce's second story, 'Eveline', as antithetical to what is presented as the prescriptive agenda of the *Irish Homestead*.

60 Matthew Philpotts, 'Dimension: Fractal Forms and Periodical Texture', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 48.3 (2015), 403–27 (p. 423).

61 This brief overview is entirely drawn from Atkinson's compact summary (p. 373).

62 Atkinson, p. 374.

case that the periodical specifically advocated a strongly *British* imperialist position. Crucially, it distinguished the heroic civilizing mission of British imperialism from the opportunistic business-oriented advocacy for expansion supported by the then prime minister, Chamberlain. Over the course of the three numbers in which ‘The Heart of Darkness’ appeared, it repeatedly contrasted violent and neglectful French expansionist ideology with what it represented as the effective and humane British colonial projects in Jamaica for instance. In this resolutely pro-British imperial, xenophobic, and specifically anti-European context of the magazine, Atkinson suggests, Conrad’s account of Belgian violence in the Congo would not need to be read against the grain at all: the story could be read straightforwardly to suggest our imperialism is so much better than theirs, to put it crudely.⁶³

What is striking, I suggest for the purposes of our discussion here, is the way so much of Atkinson’s argument is premised on a sense of the affective relationships cultivated at *Blackwood’s*. Here is Atkinson’s summary:

Over time [...] a magazine develops a character. The readers know what sort of ideas will be entertained and what sort will be dismissed. They know what the magazine will laugh at and what it will consider out of bounds for humor. The magazine becomes as predictable, or unpredictable within limits, as a group of friends.⁶⁴

Atkinson’s affective extended metaphor for the magazine’s relational encounters, is reinforced in *Blackwood’s* own reflexive self-characterization articulated in the one-thousandth-anniversary editorial, that same edition that published the first part of ‘The Heart of Darkness’:

Minds change under the same influences; and it might almost be that the same mind, so influenced, has carried on the Magazine from the first number to the thousandth. So it is, too, that ‘Maga’ has a personality more individual, more constant and pronounced, than is seen in any other creature of its kind; and what I mean by personality in a periodical publication (strong clear character is one interpretation of the word) is a great thing.⁶⁵

Atkinson, citing this passage, suggests that ‘the well-established character of *Blackwood’s* would have had a powerful hermeneutic force; thus if readers experienced any minor cognitive dissonance between what they expected of *Blackwood’s* and what they found in Conrad’s narrative, *Blackwood’s* would probably have prevailed’.⁶⁶ I do not want to work in the realm of probability on this: my intention in citing these extracts from *Blackwood’s* and critical responses to them is to point up that these critical assumptions about ‘hermeneutic force’ and ‘cognitive dissonance’ are underpinned by a presumption

63 Matthew Connolly’s more recent analysis of Conrad’s story in the context of *Blackwood’s Magazine* elaborates on some of Atkinson’s points and develops new insights that emphasize displacement and disruption as much as ‘belonging’ from a different angle: ‘Conrad seems most out of place and indeed most disruptive to the magazine when we read his novella as a critique of British leisure and resource accumulation. While *Heart of Darkness* matched both *Blackwood’s* stance against the mass market and its critique of imperial rivals, it also posed challenges to the magazine’s narrative of British exemption from imperial wrong-doing [...] its strongest challenge was aimed at the British enjoyment and management of imperial wealth’, see Matthew Connolly, ‘“But the Narrative is not Gloomy”: Imperialist Narrative, *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* and the Suitability of “Heart of Darkness” in 1899’, *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 49.1 (Spring 2016), 76–99 (p. 78).

64 Atkinson, p. 370.

65 ‘The Looker On’, *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, no. 1000 (February 1899), p. 428.

66 Atkinson, p. 371.

of genre codifications and affective encounter and that these emotive relations operate not just between periodical and reader, but also between periodical and writer. The latent power of this ‘hermeneutic force’ surfaces in Stephen Gwynn’s account of his affective bonds with *Blackwood’s*. This Irish writer and nationalist was a regular *Blackwood’s* contributor and core member of the network of writers, including Conrad, cultivated by the *Blackwood’s* stable in the late nineteenth century, which, as David Finkelstein puts it: ‘involved participating in a particular literary world and addressing a particular audience’.⁶⁷ More than this, though, Gwynn’s own words unconsciously register the association or participation as felt, as affective, something he finds hard to name — that is the way with affective force. He eventually settles on a telling metaphor:

But certain publications have an atmosphere of their own, a personality which is not entirely the editor’s, nor is it made by the readers, nor by the combined influence of all the customary writers. It results from all of these, and when I write, say for *Blackwood’s Magazine*, I feel myself part of a society; I am affected by its tone, knowing in a general way what will interest it, what it will like and dislike. It does not get rid of me as the first audience; nothing by which I cannot interest myself thoroughly is going to interest this circle; but one writes there with a certain pleasure as one goes to a hospitable house.⁶⁸

Conclusion

Gwynn’s effort to put words on what is nominated typically in shorthand terms as the ‘we’ effect of the periodical’s trans-authorial discourse draws attention to the ineffable aspects of his social, intellectual, and economic connection: what we have here is thoroughly inculcated affect. Gwynn finds it hard to explain what he feels and what he knows. I have been attempting to emphasize the affective dimensions of these connections that are often buried in the much-discussed concept of the network. I have argued that the periodical communicates successfully (and sometimes unsuccessfully) through such structures of feeling. Affect, relationality, and emotion can help us to build on, further open up, and further refine the dynamic encounters that we obtain when considering the periodical with its particular genre codifications (material, social, productive, economic, and so on) in fluid, relational terms with the subjects (writers, editors, illustrators, readers, etc.) that co-produce its genre traction. Such modalities, I offer, by way of closing and opening at once, might facilitate readings of that most fluid feature of so many periodicals, the correspondent pages, for example: those open spaces that invite, as a matter of definitional purpose, the articulation of positionality in the decision to respond to or, in more charged terms, *react* to a particular issue in particular terms for a particular publication. Or such reading for feeling might be brought to bear on the content and form of swathes of overtly partisan, polemical, political, or issue-driven periodicals that pervade the periodical scene from its earliest iterations with their particular designs on the feeling reader. Finally, reading for affect should not bypass the more underwhelming feelings such as boredom, feelings that often are anticipated in the efforts of designers, advertisers, writers, and editors to capture the wandering, distracted eye and mind’s eye by various textual and visual stratagems. Attention to the dynamics of the affective offers a rich discursive field for teasing out and determining a whole series of the periodical’s anticipatory codes and, perhaps even more suggestively,

67 David Finkelstein, ‘Decent Company: Conrad, *Blackwood’s* and the Literary Marketplace’, *Conradiana*, 41.1 (Spring 2009), 29–47 (p. 29).

68 Stephen Gwynn, untitled article, *Irish Statesman* (10 November 1923), p. 279.

for reading the in-between spaces extending, transgressing, or reinforcing such codes and their underpinning politics. It is time, perhaps, to start showing some emotion.

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