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European Periodical Research 2020–30: Voices and Visions from the ESPRit 2021 Roundtable

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ABSTRACT

This paper, a reflection of the roundtable from the ninth ESPRit annual conference in Bochum, brings together five researchers from different disciplines: history, linguistics, translation studies, media studies, and English. It signals their experience in periodical research, raises several methodological and cross-disciplinary questions, and briefly looks into future developments nurtured by current practice and open questions. It represents a lively moment in exchange as international research on periodicals swiftly evolves.

KEYWORDS

history, linguistics, media studies, translation studies, definitions, time and periodicals, public collections, Europe

A virtual event under COVID-19 restrictions, the 2021 annual ESPRit conference at Ruhr University Bochum, Germany, was beautifully organized via pre-registered computer-accessible papers and panels.¹ Speakers then met for short Q&A Zoom sessions to discuss the topics presented, as well as points raised in the comments previously made on videos and posters on the conference website. In this fruitful and intense structure, the 16 June 2021 roundtable I was honoured to chair and moderate was something of an exception. Gathering scholars from different disciplines for short inputs without prior recording, it was meant to reflect the liveliness of the research field on periodicals and open vistas towards the future. ‘European Periodical Research 2020/2030 — Some Voices and Visions’ was by no means comprehensive. Personal research interests and experience fuelled general thematic ideas and drew out medium- to long-term goals. This paper should catch something of its lively spirit in the hope to contribute to on-going discussions on such perspectives, targets, and ambitions in European periodical research.

History and Periodical Studies: A Perspective by Fabio Guidali

We start with Fabio Guidali, a research fellow in Contemporary History at the University of Milan, whose inquiries often take stock of German periodicals. Guidali gained a joint PhD in Contemporary History from the University of Milan and the Freie Universität in Berlin. He investigates the history of intellectuals and culture in twentieth-century Europe, with particular attention to associations, networks, and forms of political commitment. His research also focuses on the history of journalism, on the popular press, and on digital history. He is a member of the ESPRit Committee and has been active in organizing the annual postgraduate workshop with Laurel Brake and myself since the 2019 conference in Athens.

FG: I am mostly self-trained in the field of international periodical studies — and I know that many of us might not agree on calling this area of work ‘a field’, it being rather a crossroads or an intersection, but I am using the expression for the sake of argument.² I remember that the Professor, trained in the 1960s, who taught me History of Journalism on a Communication Sciences BA programme, never showed us a magazine or analysed the layout of a periodical. For her, newspapers mainly were historical sources of information and provided the basis for a political reflection on the past, according to the sole ‘ideological’ perspective of the magazine’s producer. As Gaye Tuchman would put it, the newspaper was seen as a place for ‘stories, no more, but no less’, a ‘selective reality, rather than a synthetic reality’.³ In this sense, my first look at periodicals was certainly appropriate and legitimate, but a bit narrow.

Only through personal reading and experience — some of which abroad — did I broaden my horizons. I now look at a periodical as a semantic object (or ‘komplexer Gegenstand’, a complex object or subject).⁴ As I showed in a recent article published in the *Journal of European Periodical Studies*, I try to keep together the political, social, and economic dimension, the cultural and ideological dimension, and the dimension

1 See Christian A. Bachmann and Nora Ramtke, ‘Planning Virtual Conferences in the Humanities: A Detailed Look at the 9th International ESPRit Conference’, *Journal of European Periodical Studies*, 6.2 (2021), 109–18.

2 Laurel Brake, ‘Debating Point: “Articles” or “Essays”? A View from the Bridge’, *Journal of European Periodical Studies*, 1.1 (2016), 91–92; Alexia Kalantzis, ‘Les études périodiques au croisement des disciplines’, *Revue d’histoire littéraire de la France*, 120.1 (2020), 5–10.

3 Gaye Tuchman, ‘Telling Stories’, *Journal of Communication*, 26.4 (1976), 93–97.

4 Vincent Fröhlich and Jens Ruchatz, ‘Komplexität und Vielfalt: Plädoyer für eine medienwissenschaftliche Zeitschriftenforschung’, *MEDIENwissenschaft: Rezensionen | Reviews*, 35.2–3 (2018), 157–73.

of praxis, that is, how a cultural artefact may be used, how the readers may interpret the artefact itself, the kind of fruition, its materiality as ‘sense-giving’ element, etc.⁵

Clearly, I personally experienced multi-disciplinarity and I had the chance to become aware of the importance of theory in historical studies, something that is not taken for granted in this area of expertise, at least in Italy (as newly reminded by Carlotta Sorba and Federico Mazzini).⁶ My aim has always been to discover a good point of view or tactical approach (for instance: translations in illustrated magazines⁷) to analyse what is fundamentally polymorphous.⁸ To me, it certainly feels like it has been a journey.

Nevertheless, when I consider our roundtable’s topic — ‘European Periodical Research 2020/2030’ — I think we should in some way reconsider how my former Professor looked at periodicals. Indeed, we should not forget that the real focus of periodical studies is not just a corpus of newspapers and magazines per se, but journalism as a whole. Periodicals should be seen in a broader analysis of the political, social, and cultural dimensions of a specific period of time, as they tell us a lot about the self-interpretation of an epoch, either through crime news, cultural dissemination, or any other category of article, editorial choice, and relationship to time and performativity.

We should never forget the wider *context* of every page in a periodical or a cultural artefact, and this strikes me as all the more important today, as we are faced with the progressive erosion of history as a discipline. History — that is, the search for truth about the past, as Lynn Hunt recently stated — cannot just be an excuse to produce a new top-rated Netflix series or some raw materials of history that politicians can interpret in their own self-interested way.⁹ It is our duty — as historians, literary historians, art historians, etc. — to narrate the complexity and contradictory nature of history. I really feel this responsibility and I believe I have to find a way to let it become part of my research and my teaching. Concentrating on periodicals as semantic objects, but losing the political dimension, and above all the broader sense of history, which we are partly responsible for, would be a mistake.

In this sense, the way my former Professor looked at newspapers and magazines was maybe out-dated, but compelling and urgent at the same time. In fact, not only has the use of periodicals as a ‘simple’ source of information never gone out of fashion, but we also have to re-conquer the political dimension of the act of creating periodicals. The relationship between institutions, political power, and magazines or newspapers, and their ideological function as creators of new types of audience should at least appear alongside other ways of studying periodicals, which probably scholars trained in the field of literary and text-centred studies in some way feel more comfortable with.¹⁰ If Franco Moretti is an epitome of a more general tendency, to put it bluntly, we have to re-conquer the historical meaning of the study of cultural artefacts in a post-Moretti scenario.¹¹ We cannot be satisfied with the study of the correlation between objects

5 Fabio Guidali, ‘Afterword: In the Eye of the Beholder? A Proposal for a Popular Culture Artefacts Checklist’, *Journal of European Periodical Studies*, 5.1 (2020), 99–105. See also Marie-Ève Thérenty, ‘Pour une poétique historique du support’, *Romantisme*, 143.1 (2009), 109–15.

6 Carlotta Sorba and Federico Mazzini, *La svolta culturale: Come è cambiata la pratica storiografica* (Roma: Laterza, 2021).

7 Fabio Guidali, ‘A Historian’s Approach to Quantitative Analysis: The Case of Translated Short Stories in Italian Women’s Rotocalchi (1933–1938)’, in *Literary Translation in Periodicals: Methodological Challenges for a Transnational Approach*, ed. by Laura Virginia Fólica, Diana Roig-Sanz, and Stefania Caristia (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing, 2020), pp. 153–74.

8 Évanghélia Stead, ‘Les recherches sur les périodiques: Un entretien avec Gábor Dobó’, in Évanghélia Stead, *Sisyphes heureux: Les revues littéraires et artistiques: Approches et figures* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2020), p. 18.

9 Lynn Hunt, *History: Why It Matters* (Cambridge: Polity, 2018).

10 Morena Corradi and Silvia Valisa, eds, *La carta veloce: Figure, temi e politiche del giornalismo italiano dell’Ottocento* (Milan: FrancoAngeli, 2021).

11 Franco Moretti, *Distant Reading* (London: Verso, 2013).

in general, that is, images, portions of text, literary genres. It is not enough for us to answer the question ‘what?’ We must also be interested in understanding phenomena; we must want to respond not only to ‘what?’ but also to ‘why?’ We should be interested in causality, in the hermeneutics of meanings. It was often digital technologies, with their immense possibilities — just as in the case of Franco Moretti — that led us to forget that our task is also to answer the question ‘why?’ and not just ‘what?’

One last point: the COVID crisis, which is changing our political and cultural framework, seems not to have preoccupied us as scholars. Should we not be concerned with, or at least attentive to the ways the press has been reporting a matter of such epic proportions? Should we not find a way to avoid ignoring that? In this sense, I ask myself how to be a historian today to the best of one’s ability, that is, dealing with the past through the lens of today’s issues, and dealing with the present using the keys to interpretation that history provides. Should I put my research interests on hold and do research using historical methodology on something that is nearer to the present, such as online newspapers and blogs, for instance? In the next ten years, we will need much analysis on the subject, in my opinion, and it is something we should be aware of right now.

I will certainly not abandon my research on intellectual periodicals in the twentieth century, which was actually the topic that guided me towards this field of studies, nor the focus on popular magazines in general, but my broader aim is to find a way to connect several media in my research and my teaching. This kind of ‘intermedia’ or ‘cross-media’ studies may become more and more present in our field as we are increasingly considering an ecology of media less distant in time. In fact, this could be a way not to lose touch with one of the main features of journalism, that is to say its link to modernity.

The links between periodicals and modernization as far as the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are concerned are well known, and therefore we should also manifest them as regards the twenty-first century. We at ESPRit are the ones who can do it, and I am aware that many of us already do so when we teach, but I believe that we should not exclude this direction of research in the framework of our Society. It is also our responsibility towards postgraduates, who need to get to grips with the full potential and range of periodical studies.

Linguistics and Periodical Studies by Mara Logaldo

Following the historian’s perspective, we turn to the linguist. Mara Logaldo holds a PhD in English Studies from the University of Genoa. An Associate Professor of English Linguistics and Translation at IULM University, Milan, she teaches English for Specific Purposes and Audiovisual Translation. Her research interests include rhetoric, discourse analysis, multimodality, and pragmatics applied to media texts. She has published on New Journalism, captions in photojournalism, dubbing, subtitling, and other language issues in early film journals, and co-edited a collection of papers and a special issue of *JEPS* stemming from the Sixth Annual ESPRit conference ‘Conflict in the Periodical

Press' (IULM, 2017), which she hosted in Milan.¹² She served as Conference Liaison Officer in the ESPRit Committee from 2018 to 2022 and has recently succeeded Kristin Ewins as Chair of ESPRit.

ML: As a linguist with a literary background (a PhD thesis on the structural function of metaphor in Henry James's fiction of the late 1890s–early 1900s), I have always shunned strict disciplinary boundaries; namely, allegations addressed to linguists by literary scholars (to a much lesser extent by historians) of excessive language focus, and, conversely, accusations by linguists of literary scholars for being too centred on themes and cultural contexts, rather than on the linguistic and textual nature of their objects of study.¹³ I am convinced that the combination of the linguistic approach with other disciplinary perspectives is an opportunity for mutual enhancement that can only benefit the analysis of media texts and, even more cogently, the study of periodicals.

The ideal occasion to delve into the relationship between the linguistic and more often adopted literary-historical approach in periodical studies came last year thanks to Oliver Scheiding and Sabina Fazli's invitation to contribute a chapter on 'Magazines and Linguistics' to their edited collection on *Zeitschriftenforschung*.¹⁴ I will therefore draw from this fertile experience and summarize my arguments, which addressed several key issues.

The first straightforward question was whether linguistics constitute a minor presence among the disciplines involved in periodical studies. This might sound rather strange, given the huge critical work carried out by linguists on periodicals, especially since the 'qualitative turn' introduced by critical discourse analysis in the 1980s.¹⁵ The linguistic approach was indeed seen as paramount in early definitions of periodical studies' methodologies. Stuart Allan, for example, listed five 'conceptual tools' to understand the *codified* language of newspapers and magazines: 'content analysis, semiotics or semiology, critical linguistics, sociolinguistics and critical discourse analysis'.¹⁶ More recently, appraisal theory has also effectively demonstrated how ideology and evaluation are conveyed through language in magazines, and pointed to all the different ways in which the writer's judgment, appreciation, and affect can surface within the text.¹⁷ Furthermore, since the introduction of the multimodal approach, linguists' interest in newspapers, journals, and magazines has been just as focused on

12 See Mara Logaldo, *Cronaca come romanzo: Truman Capote e il New Journalism* (Arcipelago: Milano, 2003); Mara Logaldo, 'The Last Laugh? A Multimodal Analysis of Captions in Photojournalism', *Polemos*, 11.1 (2017), 247–66; Mara Logaldo, 'Doppiaggio, sottotitoli e altre questioni linguistiche nelle recensioni cinematografiche, dalle riviste del cinema muto a Bianco e nero', in *Leggere per scegliere: La pratica della recensione nell'editoria moderna e contemporanea*, ed. by Andrea Chiurato (Milano: Mimesis, 2020), pp. 239–60; Mara Logaldo, Giuliana Garzone, and Francesca Santulli, eds, *Investigating Conflict Discourses in the Periodical Press* (Bern and New York: Peter Lang, 2019) and the 3.1 (2018) *JEPS* special issue on the topic with co-editors Paolo Giovannetti and Andrea Chiurato.

13 Mara Logaldo, *Figura e rappresentazione in Henry James* (Alessandria: Edizioni Dell'Orso, 2000).

14 Mara Logaldo, 'Zeitschriften und Linguistik', in *Zeitschriftenforschung – Disziplinäre Perspektiven und empirische Sondierungen: Eine Einführung*, ed. by Oliver Scheiding and Sabina Fazli (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2022). I thank the editors for allowing me to use these notes.

15 According to Bell and Garrett, since the 1980s, more than 40% of the papers published in *Discourse & Society* have been based on media texts, especially magazines and newspapers. See Allan Bell and Peter Garrett, *Approaches to Media Discourse* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 1998), p. 6. See also Colleen Cotter, *News Talk: Investigating the Language of Journalism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010). On discourse analysis, see Teun A. van Dijk, *News as Discourse* (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1988); Norman Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language* (London: Pearson Education, 1995).

16 Stuart Allan, *News Culture* (Maidenhead: McGraw Hill/Open University Press, 2010 [1999]), p. 98.

17 James Robert Martin and Peter White, *The Language of Evaluation: Appraisal in English* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

covers, illustrations, and text-picture relations as on articles and editorials.¹⁸ Linguists have also looked at periodicals as texts that best display processes of popularization, thus contributing to knowledge dissemination through discursive practices aimed at a general audience of readers.¹⁹ As underscored by Bhatia et al., popularization of specialized knowledge in magazines combines ‘interaction and information’, and ‘glossy magazines on popularization of science are to be found in almost every kiosk’.²⁰ Since their appearance, computational methods, in particular, represented a common tool, which combined newsroom ethnography with applied linguistics, thus bridging the gap between the study of language and the study of periodicals.

Yet, theorists of periodical studies cannot help but wonder whether the linguistic approach, although undeniably useful to conceptualize the distinctive textual and paratextual dynamics of periodicals, is able to go beyond ‘their individual components’.²¹ The set idea that linguists, although embracing many of the categories and tools of periodical studies to investigate pragmatic and social practices, tend to focus on single items and ‘become preoccupied with the empirical details [...] in a way that is largely divorced from broader theoretical and explanatory concerns’, has been a persisting one.²² Conversely, scholars of periodical studies have often bypassed close linguistic analysis to focus on the extra-linguistic context — the historical, social, economic, political, literary, artistic aspects conveyed by newspapers, journals, and magazines — insisting ‘on the value of reading across full issues and multi-year runs of serial texts rather than cherry-picking individual items’.²³

I will only fuel the debate with a quote from Matthew Philpotts’s position paper published on the occasion of the Boston MLA Convention on ‘Periodical Theory/Methodology’ in 2013:

[O]ne of the distinctive characteristics of the periodical is the plurality that extends *beyond the textual dimension*. [...] Any adequate conceptualisation of the discursive function of a journal’s name, then, depends on a truly holistic approach that explores the interrelationships between the diverse elements that shape that function.²⁴

18 On the multimodal approach, see Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen, *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design* (London: Routledge, 1996); Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen, *Multimodal Discourse: The Modes and Media of Contemporary Communication* (London: Bloomsbury, 2001). On visual analysis, see, for instance, Suzanne Eggins and Ruth Iedema, ‘Difference without Diversity: Semantic Orientation and Ideology in Competing Women’s Magazines’, in *Gender and Discourse*, ed. by Ruth Wodak (London: Sage, 1997), pp. 165–96.

19 Helena Calsamiglia and Teun A. van Dijk, ‘Popularization Discourse and Knowledge about the Genome’, *Discourse and Society*, 15.4 (2004), 369–89.

20 Vijay Bhatia, Eleonora Chiavetta, and Silvana Sciarrino, eds, *Variations in Specialized Genres: Standardization and Popularization* (Tübingen: Narr Francke Attempto, 2015), p. 10.

21 Sean Latham and Robert Scholes, ‘The Rise of Periodical Studies’, *PMLA*, 121.2 (2006), 517–31 (p. 518).

22 See Ruth Wodak and Brigitta Busch, ‘Approaches to Media Texts’, in *Handbook of Media Studies*, ed. by John Downing et al. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2004), pp. 105–23 (p. 105). The quote is from Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, ed. and introd. by John B. Thompson, trans. by Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991 [1982]), p. 2.

23 Faye Hammill, Paul Hjartarson, and Hannah McGregor, ‘Introduction: Magazines and/as Media: Periodical Studies and the Question of Disciplinarity’, *Journal of Modern Periodical Studies*, 6.2 (2016), vi–vii.

24 Matthew Philpotts, ‘Defining the Thick Journal: Periodical Codes and Common Habitus’, paper presented at the MLA 2013 Special Session ‘What is a Journal? Towards a Theory of Periodical Studies’ [accessed 12 November 2020].

This answered the main question raised at the 2013 Convention, the necessity ‘to construct typological and comparative categories that capture the full range of aesthetic, material, and social features of the periodical’.²⁵

The papers presented at the Bochum ESPRit Conference show this approach, which eschews idle separations between disciplines. Indeed, a consistent number of them focus on both linguistic and broader cultural aspects in magazines and journals: besides my analysis of the translation of comics in the Italian magazine *Linus* (1965–), several speakers have dealt with translation/adaptation as a core issue in periodicals — Jutta Ernst, Gaëtan Regniers, Sandra Parmegiani, and Rosalie Engels, in particular. This interest in translation is certainly expected in a conference focused on competition and transfer, since language, along with pictures, is the main vehicle for circulating ideas and formats through time and space. Translation and multilingualism are key elements when studying national, transnational, and transcultural processes displayed and activated by periodicals, as well as cost-effective strategies for production and distribution. These issues have indeed been tackled also in past conferences. At the Milan ESPRit Conference of 2017, for example, Merike Ristikivi and Sebastiaan Vandenbogaerde discussed the crucial role played by language in Belgium and Estonia in defining national identity both in legal texts and in periodicals, providing evidence that ‘journals, law and language are and remain closely connected to each other’.²⁶ I would also like to mention Marianne Van Remoortel’s study on trilingual fashion plates in the Dutch fashion press of the 1860s, presented in Athens in 2019, and the online conference organized by Bénédicte Coste and Caroline Crépiat at the Université de Bourgogne “L’indépendance du mot” et l’autonomie de la traduction: Décadence, périodiques, traductions’ (2 October 2021), which focused on magazines as vehicles for the international circulation of works by Decadent writers through translation. Looking at recent conferences, it is worth mentioning the [359V session presided by Paul Fyfe](#), which, in keeping with the MLA 2022 convention theme, was on multilingualism in nineteenth-century periodicals and periodical studies.²⁷

Another widely investigated aspect in periodicals is text-image relations studied with the methodological tools of literary and media studies, history of the press, and gender studies. We are all indebted to Evanghelia Stead for her extensive work on the interaction between visual and verbal features in periodicals.²⁸ With reference to the Bochum conference, let me mention Ruth Mayer’s paper on the transatlantic mass magazine culture of the 1920s, as well as Maaheen Ahmed’s presentation on ‘Children’s Magazines in Interwar France’; and Jens Ruchatz’s paper on ‘Photographic Migrations’, from the perspective of media studies. The same can be said about the panel with Sabina Fazli and Oliver Scheiding, who also focus on the interplay between design, themes, and voice in magazines.

In conclusion, I wonder whether the alleged disciplinary ‘distance’ between periodical studies and linguistics is mainly a question of self-representation rather than a matter of substance based on how periodicals, as objects of study, are conceived.

25 Ibid.

26 Merike Ristikivi and Sebastiaan Vandenbogaerde, ‘Arenas of Linguistic Conflicts: The Legal Periodical Press in Belgium and Estonia’, in *Investigating Conflict Discourses in the Periodical Press*, ed. by Giuliana Garzone, Mara Logaldo, and Francesca Santulli (Bern: Peter Lang, 2020), pp. 199–216.

27 In addition, RSVP and ESPRit organised a joint workshop on multilingualism. See Paul Fyfe and Fionnuala Dillane, ‘[Multilingualism and Periodical Studies: A Report from an RSVP + ESPRit Workshop](#)’, *Journal of European Periodical Studies*, 7.1 (2022), 29–33.

28 I will just mention one of her latest publications: Évanghélia Stead, *Sisyphé heureux: Les revues littéraires et artistiques: Approches et figures* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2020).

Backward Glances by Jutta Ernst

Addressing a core feature in periodicals, time, Jutta Ernst, Professor of American Studies at Mainz University working at the intersection of periodical and translation studies, engaged with periodicals' retrospective views and prospective research. Her work has focused on the mobility of authors, editors, media, texts, and ideas, as well as on the shifts in language, style, and format accompanying transcultural dynamics. Her most recent publications include *Amerikanische Modernismen: Schreibweisen, Konzepte und zeitgenössische Periodika als Vermittlungsinstanzen* (2018), and the co-edited volumes *Transkulturelle Dynamiken: Aktanten – Prozesse – Theorien* (2015), *Revisionist Approaches to American Realism and Naturalism* (2018), and *Shifting Grounds: Cultural Tectonics Along the Pacific Rim* (2020).

JE: Time and periodicity are major categories, which, since the inception of periodical studies, have garnered major interest among scholars. It has often been the contemporaneity, the timeliness, and the newness that stood in the centre of investigations. This comes as no surprise as the periodicals themselves have often pointed to their modernity and path-breaking editorial agenda. Whether daily newspaper, weekly newsmagazine, or life-style magazine, being up-to-date or even avant-garde has always been a major selling point in their markets. The title of a periodical often gestures towards its self-set goal of being closely related to the present. Thus, there exists an Italian fashion magazine by the name of *Latest* (2017–), which is available in Italian and English, both in print and digital versions. Or one might mention the Vienna-based *Vanguardist* (2009–), which publishes in English and German and bears the subtitle 'Progressive Queer Magazine'.

What is often understudied, however, is a periodical's relation to the past. Importantly, links to bygone times might take very different forms. There are, for instance, magazines that comprise texts by authors long dead because their editors think that these contributions speak to the sociocultural needs of the present, thereby establishing what the US American critic Van Wyck Brooks termed 'a usable past'.²⁹ This holds true for Eugene Jolas, who showed in the modernist magazine *transition* (1927–30 and 1932–38) a particular interest in early German Romanticism and included texts by Novalis and Friedrich Hölderlin in his own English translations.³⁰ In line with this, Jolas and his then co-editor Elliot Paul had declared in June 1927: 'We are not interested in literature that wilfully attempts to be of the age.'³¹ Or, to take a contemporary example, the quarterly *Delayed Gratification* (2010–) 'revisits the events of the last three months to offer in-depth, independent journalism in an increasingly frantic world', hence subscribing to slow journalism. *Vogue* (1892–), one of the most successful international fashion and lifestyle magazines, in the year 2000 started to include a regular column dedicated to the past under the heading 'Nostalgia', and released special issues and anniversary collector's editions that pertain to earlier times.³² Likewise, in March 2017, the Axel Springer Media House launched a magazine called *Die Dame*, thus harking back to a magazine of the same name, which, between 1912 and 1937, had appeared under the auspices of the Ullstein publishing house in Berlin.

29 Van Wyck Brooks, 'On Creating a Usable Past', *Dial*, 64.764 (11 April 1918), 337–41.

30 Novalis, 'Hymns to the Night', trans. by Eugene Jolas, *transition*, 18 (November 1929), 73–78; Friedrich Hölderlin, 'Hoelderlin's Poems of Madness', trans. by Eugene Jolas, *transition*, 21 (March 1932), 164–70; Friedrich Hölderlin, 'The Titans', trans. by Eugene Jolas, *transition*, 27 (April–May 1938), 48–50.

31 Eugene Jolas and Elliot Paul, 'Suggestions for a New Magic', *transition*, 3 (June 1927), 178–79 (p. 178).

32 Caroline Weber, 'Looking Back in Vogue', *New York Times*, 2 December 2011; see, for instance, the September 2017 issue, a collector's edition celebrating *Vogue's* 125th anniversary, as well as the December 2017 special issue with the motto 'Then & Now'.

Whether a re-launch or rather remake, adaptation, or an instance of cultural translation is a question deserving closer scrutiny.

In short, it would be worthwhile to pay more attention to a magazine's self-retrospection. Such a retrospective orientation might include a conscious building of tradition, which could help a particular periodical to define its place in the here and now. Alongside synchronic constellations, diachronic configurations of periodicals and other print products, such as anthologies, single-authored works in book form, or exhibition catalogues, should prove of interest. Significantly, these bridges over time might not be solely content-related. The typography and page design of a particular magazine can be studied in relation to precursor periodicals, thus allowing for insights such as the one that contemporary independent magazines have a lot in common with the 'little magazines' of modernism.³³

Last, but not least, I would like to point to an important institutional aspect: the role of libraries and their collection building. In order for future scholars to be able to raise questions and find answers with regard to current periodicals, the titles that we today subscribe to or buy at a newsstand need to be collected and preserved. And this applies not only to allegedly high-cultured, long-lasting magazines, but also to those which are run on a shoestring budget and perish after two issues. In a world where serialized print media are increasingly published in English or in multiple languages and are distributed to like-minded communities across the globe, one needs a certain confidence that European libraries share their responsibilities in collecting periodicals and in making them available to interested users, regardless of national borders and linguistic affiliations. Which institutions preserve *Burnt Roti* (2016–), *NXS* (2017–), *It's Freezing in LA!* (2018–), *Kinfolk* (2011–), *Cereal* (2012–), or *The Weekender* (2011–)? Moreover, a close cooperation between librarians and scholars seems advisable in order to ensure that a particular periodical is adequately described in a library catalogue. To give one example: that a magazine is published in Barcelona does not necessarily make it a Spanish-language magazine as the biannual *Apartamento: An Everyday Life Interiors Magazine* (2008–) proves.³⁴ In conclusion, it is today that we have to adopt suitable measures that will allow future periodical scholars to cast backward glances. In this sense, the present is a crucial moment in time.

The Parts and the Non-Existent Whole: A Plea for 'The Larger Picture' in Periodical Research by Jens Ruchatz

In such an expanding field as periodical studies, it is necessary to elaborate overall generic definitions, insists Jens Ruchatz, Professor of Media Studies at Philipps-Universität Marburg. From 2016 to 2022 he acted as deputy speaker of the research unit 'Journalliteratur' ['Journal Literature'], in which he led the sub-project 5 'A Media-Oriented Comparison of Fragment Migration: Photographs in Periodicals and Books in the Twentieth Century'. His research interests include history and theory of photography, periodical and serial forms in media, culinary media, history of the interview, and media reflection.

JR: Compared to many members of ESPRit, I still feel like a novice to periodical studies. I started thinking about periodicals — illustrated magazines and photographic publications by instalment, mainly — eight years ago, when I was invited to participate

33 See Jutta Ernst, Oliver Scheiding, and Sabina Fazli, 'Outside the Mainstream Press: Language, Materiality, and Temporality in Microzines' in this issue of *JEPS*.

34 In the [German Periodicals Database \(ZDB\)](#), the English *Apartamento* is listed as a Spanish-language magazine.

in establishing the research unit ‘Journal Literature’. At the time, I was familiar with some generalities concerning the history of photojournalism, but studying how photographic pictures perform in the context of the magazine made me enter a new field. My discipline, media studies in its German variant, does not currently study print media (even if it once emerged from literary studies).³⁵ Nonetheless, observing how periodicals deal with pictures, with the core interest of bringing out their mediality, amounts to following a *media studies objective*, which, in turn, situates me at the margins of periodical studies — at least with regard to the published research.

My first impression, as a newcomer to periodical research, was how difficult it was to find one’s way in the field. This may be due to the multidisciplinary outlay of periodical research in general, *even more so* when the research interest lies in pictures. It remains striking, though, how few systematic publications there are to guide you. Here, I do *not* refer primarily to a lack of introductory publications of the textbook type.³⁶ I rather consider the overwhelming prevalence of monothematic research articles (and books), which study few magazines, sometimes just one (or in fact most often just some elements thereof, or a few exemplary issues). Due to its fragmentation, periodical research seemed to me hardly recognizable as a cohesive field, even barely a field at all.³⁷ It has yielded plenty of quality scholarship, very detailed and knowledgeable accounts of particular magazines, with the likes of the London-based literary monthly the *Cornhill Magazine* (1860–1975), the French long-running illustrated weekly *L’Illustration* (1843–1944), the popular German family magazine *Die Gartenlaube* (1853–1944), or the British art and literature quarterly the *Yellow Book* (1894–97) being studied over and over again, somehow giving the impression of forming further fields *within* the field. To consider such publications as ‘case studies’ would be misleading, as they do not overtly identify what the material studied might actually be a *case of* — apart from being a specimen of the periodical. When they are situated in a larger context, they usually do not relate to the medium of the magazine itself, but to Victorian culture, literary modernism, the representation and production of class, etc.

It might be due to my *déformation professionnelle* (or rather *déformation disciplinaire*), but I miss accounts on how all the particular magazines studied separately merge to form *the* magazine as a recognizable *medium*, albeit complex and contradictory, changing and certainly open, but nonetheless an entity situated in relation to competing and interacting media. There is, for example, a definite lack of comprehensive historical accounts bridging the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries, let alone the twenty-first century in which digitally immaterialized and hyper-material magazines co-exist. The study of the Victorian magazine, most extensively researched, has — amongst the plethora of close-up micro studies — yielded valuable theoretical insights which might point to the core of the magazine, but which have so far rarely been transferred to other epochs and cultures. Even overriding histories of national magazine

35 See Vincent Fröhlich and Jens Ruchatz, ‘Komplexität und Vielfalt: Plädoyer für eine medienwissenschaftliche Zeitschriftenforschung’, *MEDIENwissenschaft: Rezensionen | Reviews*, 35.2–3 (2018), 157–73.

36 The situation seems to be changing. I thank Evangelhia Stead for directing me to *Manuel d’analyse de la presse magazine*, ed. by Claire Blandin (Paris: Armand Colin, 2018), a notable exception, as it offers a systematic guide to dealing with magazine material, structured primarily around genres. It is, however, focused on more recent titles, primarily from France, and conceived from a communication studies point of view. In contrast, a more multi-disciplinary and comprehensive approach is chosen in Oliver Scheiding and Sabina Fazli, eds, *Zeitschriftenforschung – Disziplinäre Perspektiven und empirische Sondierungen. Eine Einführung* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2022).

37 Even if this observation has a history dating back to the 1980s, it is only rarely brought up, let alone remedied. See Faye Hammill, Paul Hjartarson, and Hannah McGregor, ‘Introducing Magazines and/as Media: The Aesthetics and Politics of Serial Form’, *ESC: English Studies in Canada*, 41.1 (2015), 1–18 (pp. 4–5).

cultures or magazine genres are scarce. To put it positively: There's a desideratum for research that defines the quintessence of the magazine, not only particular exemplars.

My plea for a more integrative periodical research could be easily and convincingly rejected by pointing to the unfathomable diversity of periodicals, which could make it impossible to speak of 'the' magazine. To insist that talking about particular *instances* of the periodical is the only sound practice is certainly justified by the insight, put so brilliantly into words by Mark W. Turner, that periodicals are 'unruly'.³⁸ But if periodical research has so far produced a somewhat insular knowledge, concentrating on certain salient objects in the vast field of periodicals, *so many* islands have been explored now that it is not just possible, but expedient, to start *drawing up a map* (or at least maps) to put them in relation to each other with regard to *the* magazine as a complex medial totality. We need systematic approaches which can build on the vast amount of excellent studies already undertaken — making them readable as cases, and in turn contributing to a broad view on periodical media. This means reflecting on methodologies that negotiate specificity and generalization, that reconcile the respect for the prime material we analyse *with* an interest in drawing a larger picture of the medium, its constituents, and their changing relations.³⁹ We have to reflect on which details might be sacrificed without damaging the comprehensive view of the medial network that forms 'the' periodical. And when we research particular magazines, we should design them as case studies from the beginning and provide our studies with inbuilt links, which contribute to connecting our insights, gained from the particular material, with the magazine at large.

To conclude, I plead facing the challenge to produce more comprehensive and systematic accounts, which do *firstly* offer an orientation and contextualization for the study of single titles and particular phenomena; *secondly*, a platform for exchange that organizes the national, historical, and generic diversity of the research in the field; and *thirdly*, a starting point for controversial discussion not only about singular objects but more about *what* we are doing and *what* we are dealing with when we research periodicals. I think that ESPRit, its conferences, and its journal offer an ideal space for international and interdisciplinary exchange, which is necessary to advance this project.⁴⁰ To continue with a metaphor I have already used, we should not only discover new archipelagos but keep in mind that we need, at the same time, to contribute to the overall mapping of the periodical. And there are encouraging signs that this is finally starting to happen.

What Europe? Periodical Studies, the Transnational, and the Transimperial by Fionnuala Dillane

The roundtable ended with a general consideration on how to define Europe by Fionnuala Dillane, a Professor in the School of English, Drama, and Film at University College Dublin with research interests in the nineteenth-century periodical press, genre, and gender. Her monograph *Before George Eliot: Marian Evans and the Periodical Press* (2013) was joint winner of the Colby Book Prize. She is co-editor of five collections

38 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 Thijs van den Berg (London: Routledge, 2014), pp. 11–32.

39 An example of how this might look is in my view Tom Gretton's 'The Pragmatics of Page Design in Nineteenth-Century General-Interest Weekly Illustrated News Magazines in London and Paris', *Art History*, 33 (2010), 680–709.

40 This aim is also set by our Society's own digital journal *JEPS*. See Marianne Van Remoortel et al., 'Joining Forces: European Periodical Studies as a New Research Field', *Journal of European Periodical Studies*, 1.1 (2016), 1–3 (p. 1).

of essays on Irish culture, President (2022–24) of the *Research Society for Victorian Periodicals*, and an ESPRit Committee member.

FD: I am a specialist in nineteenth-century British periodical and print cultures. There are limitations to specialisms such as mine when it comes to the global, boundary-crossing, ubiquitous print medium of modernity that is the periodical. The great gap in my knowledge and understanding of the relationships amongst European periodical cultures is one reason for my membership of ESPRit. Linguistic, national, and period boundedness are limitations that ESPRit, along with the *Journal of European Periodical Studies*, strive to overcome: their multi-lingual, multi-national, temporally generous remit make them distinct scholarly platforms. In so many scholarly conferences, however, programme panels continue to cluster around tempo-cultural frames, and for practical reasons, English dominates as the most widely shared language; a reinforcing distinction that has become default. Those of us who are too comfortable in having English as a first (and often only) working language should do more to challenge that presumption.

The silo approach has been challenged in two significant trends in periodical studies over the past ten years or so, both of which, I suggest, point the way forward to new currents and ongoing developments in twenty-first century periodical studies. The first change has been the rise in transcultural and comparative and/or transnational periodical studies, typically combining big data approaches with selective case studies. Such work is most wide-reaching in project-based groups or research collaborations because of the significant pooling of technical skills, knowledge, expertise, and time. It is a scalar shift that has required infrastructural change. Private companies have invested in the development of digitization software and cornered markets in database production (such as Gale and ProQuest). Regional, national, and EU-based policy shifts in research-funding increasingly look for and support collaborative work with wide impact-oriented outputs. From a systemic perspective, as digital humanities and other scholars have outlined, there are limitations that pertain when access to archives is privatized and when the selective politics of database construction and the built-in obsolescence of digital projects reshape our source material.⁴¹ But alongside these significant challenges, we have the opening up of access for so many through free resources and collaborative projects that have empowered periodical researchers to remodel the temporal, spatial, and linguistic parameters of periodical studies. At the heart of it, we can say that the infrastructural changes have helped to answer provocative, open questions that propel research, reshape our understanding of the operations and power of media, and reorient our assumptions. Take for example, digital humanities projects such as ‘*One More Voice*’ led by Adrian S. Wisnicki that continues to make freely available a database of the work of a range of journalists as part of its recuperation of non-European writings, images, and films in British and Imperial archives. The resource’s interface can be translated into over a hundred languages; it accommodates connection from areas with varying degrees of bandwidth; and it is purposefully enabled for access via assistive devices. Another example is the ‘*Agents of Change*’ project (2015–21) that has sought to map

41 See, for example, Ryan Cordell et al., ‘Digital Approaches to Periodical Studies’, *American Periodicals*, 26.1 (2016), 2–24; James Mussell, *The Nineteenth-Century Press in the Digital Age* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Maria DiCenzo, ‘Remediating the Past: Doing “Periodical Studies” in the Digital Era’, *ESC: English Studies in Canada*, 41.1 (2015), 19–39.

the social, cultural, and political impact of women editors in the public sphere and has left us with a freely accessible dataset of thousands of journalists.⁴²

The second trend is the more concentrated focus on the mediality and intermediality of media. The former includes attention to the particular affordances of the periodical press, about which we have heard much over the course of the ESPRit 2021 conference, including the combined meaning making of text/illustration; interpretative and productive functions of paratexts; theorizations of the affective power of seriality; of miscellaneity; heterogeneity; ephemerality, and so on, features that are exemplary of newspaper and periodical production and enhance our readings of individual titles and writers in the dominant case study mode. In relation to intermediality, we witness a flourishing of ongoing work on the periodical in relation to other media formats including borrowings, influences, and distinctions such as print/digital relations.⁴³

Building on these shifts then, and in line with the fuller focus on trans-imperialism and race in interdisciplinary contexts across a range of fields from medieval to modernist studies, sociology, and linguistics to media studies, I suggest that future directions in European periodical scholarship might include fuller considerations of how 'Europe' is mediated, constructed, 'invented', exported, and imposed in the periodical and newspaper press. This would involve wider acknowledgement of the violence and racism of imperial history and of European totalitarian regimes, with due consideration of the definitional relationships 'Europe' has constructed in relation to central, periphery, and semi-periphery models both within and beyond its borders. The European Periodical after all is a 'form of Empire', to borrow from Nathan Hensley, and a 'performance of political thinking'.⁴⁴ Such work could well include interrogations of the role of the periodical press in the construction of European 'whiteness' from the nineteenth-century onwards in particular through scientific, cultural, religious, and political journals and newspapers. Related to this, there is also the need for further examination of the contested terrains of knowledge brokerage: what counts as knowledge, what counts as value/entertainment/disciplinary or professional norms; who is made 'other' or alien and who is placed 'outside'? Along with the on-going development of discourses on travelling images, travelling words/translation, travelling models of press practice and the circulation of periodical objects and economies, we might also give fuller attention to how that travelling is also an act of inscription, how cultural hegemony is an act of closure (that all-encompassing absorption of all particulars), how borders are porous but are also hard with real effects and intensely felt affects.

Such projects would benefit from large, multilingual teams and would vitally depend on collaborations with scholars working in periodical cultures in the Global South. Such work is still largely outside current European periodical studies, though, I suggest, we will increasingly attend to the ways in which European periodical studies

42 See also other European-based projects at various stages of development and collaborative groups such as the [Transnational Periodical Cultures Research Group](#); the Dutch Research Council-funded project '[Redefining the Region](#)', led by Marguérite Corporaal; '[Children in Comics: an Intercultural History from 1865 to Today](#)', led by Maaheen Ahmed; as well as projects with trans-Oceanic dimensions such as '[Oceanic Exchanges: Tracing Global Information Networks in Historical Newspaper Repositories](#)', and [Transfopress](#), the Transnational Network for the Study of Foreign-Language Press from the seventeenth to the twentieth century.

43 See for example, 'Journallitteratur', the research cluster of our ESPRit 2021 hosts in Bochum or publications such as Évanghélia Stead and Hélène Védrine, eds, *L'Europe des revues 1880–1920: Estampes, photographies, illustrations* (Paris: PUPS, 2008) and Évanghélia Stead and Hélène Védrine, eds, *L'Europe des revues II 1860–1930: Réseaux et circulations des modèles* (Paris: PUPS, 2018). See also Debra Rae Cohen, "'Strange Collisions': Keywords Toward an Intermedial Periodical Studies', *ESC: English Studies in Canada*, 41.1 (2015), 93–104.

44 Nathan K. Hensley, *Forms of Empire: The Poetics of Victorian Sovereignty* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), p. 243.

zmust be considered in a global framework. We need to continue to address more reflexively how ‘Europe’ is discursively constructed, not monolithic, and how it is inhabited differently, as we saw in the work of ESPRit scholars at the 2021 Bochum conference such as Sabina Fazli’s account of visual and textual representation strategies in *Burnt Roti* (2016–), a magazine aimed at British women of second and third generation South Asian identity; Shromona Das’s paper on caricature in colonial Bengali periodicals; Jemima Paine’s work on the Pan-African Press; Frank Newton’s report on indigenous agency and the nineteenth-century missionary press in northwest Alaska.

My interest is in the affective power of the periodical as mode, in those spatial, visual, temporal, and aesthetic economies that give our object of study its particular claims on the construction of the emotional everyday that drives (or determines) our social, cultural, and political lives. The points raised here are historical and current questions that are intimately related while requiring the specificity of the material and lived realities of time and place. Given the precarious position that so many scholars, creators, teachers, writers, and activists in various parts of Europe, at the borders of Europe, and in the wider world, face in terms of academic freedom or freedom of speech, there is an urgency in continuing to understand the relations between hegemonic regimes and the operative codes of popular media forms and influential media formats. As historians of media, we have a contribution to make to these discussions.

The ESPRit 2021 roundtable might just as willingly have raised other burning questions, such as periodical projects and digital outputs, infrastructural limitations, sustainability, and precarious politics of hard copy preservation. Building collections and accessibility, as briefly mentioned above by Jutta Ernst, particularly raises the issue of locating periodicals beyond national boundaries. If time had allowed, we would have readily tackled issues on a more pragmatic basis, since the Society is also concerned with the professionalization of specialists in periodical studies, given how curricula are constructed and jobs are advertised. ESPRit is also eager to further strengthen links between scholarly groups, institutions, and itself, a first step towards a signature of the Mutual Interest Agreement already established. Yet we would have needed much more than an hour to pin down such knotty issues. Also, how to name it: periodical studies, periodical research, print culture studies, or media history? The roundtable was indeed a buoyant occasion, reflecting liveliness in the field. Following issues of *JEPS* will certainly delve into such topics. The ESPRit 2021 roundtable concluded by asserting that ‘periodical studies’ are a vivid part of print culture; as such, its vibrant research has much to gain by keeping such links on the move.

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Collaborative Groups and Projects Cited

- [Agents of Change: Women Editors and Socio-Cultural Transformation in Europe, 1710–1920](#)
- [Children in Comics: An Intercultural History from 1865 to Today](#)
- [Journalliteratur](#)
- [Oceanic Exchanges: Tracing Global Information Networks in Historical Newspaper Repositories](#)
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