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Article

Character Sketches and 'Middles' in the *Pall Mall Gazette*

Rebekah Cohen

The *Pall Mall Gazette* printed several series of character sketches during its first year of publication in 1865, including contributions by George Eliot, Leslie Stephen and Anthony Trollope. This essay examines character sketches published in these early issues for their bibliographical antecedents and rhetorical strategies. It first traces influences on the design of the *Pall Mall Gazette* to situate this newspaper's intervention in the nineteenth-century serial market, before close reading sketches by Eliot and Trollope for their social commentary and satire on everyday life. The essay argues that these sketches belonged to a category of newspaper writing Victorian contributors understood as 'middles'. By exploring the typical features of character sketches and their placement in serial texts, it sheds light on how 'middles' worked as a historical genre in the mid-nineteenth century.

In his introduction to the series of Cambridge university character sketches he published in the *Pall Mall Gazette* in 1865, Leslie Stephen explained his aim of capturing 'many characteristic features of one of the most characteristic products of English society'.[1] As institutions, Oxford and Cambridge reflected in microcosm for Stephen 'our present peculiarities, and with them they mingle strangely traditions and customs brought unimpaired from long past centuries'.[2] Stephen's remarks are not only a defence of his subject matter, the traditional English university, but also a justification for writing in his chosen form: the sketch. More specifically, the newspaper sketch, for this series was published at irregular intervals in the *Pall Mall Gazette* from March through May of 1865. The rhetorical work of the sketch form, as Stephen imagines it, is to observe the 'characteristic features' belonging to participants in a particular milieu, and he envisages sketch writing as a practice that crafts these generalizations to stand for a larger portrait of 'English society'. Although Stephen's words strike us now for their narrowness, given only a selective insight into 'English society' might be derived from an institution very few citizens in 1865 possessed the means or status to access, this limitation was a precondition for the humorous tone he adopted. The *Pall Mall Gazette* balanced its small circulation against a wide sphere of influence among metropolitan literary and intellectual circles (a year later, George Eliot referred to the *Pall Mall Gazette* as 'the best of the daily evening papers') and against this backdrop, the satire in Stephen's sketches depends on his

[1] Leslie Stephen, 'Sketches from Cambridge. I. – Introductory', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 1 (23 March 1865), 364.
[2] Stephen, 'Sketches from Cambridge. I. – Introductory', 364.

audience recognizing the types under scrutiny.[3] He explores their narrowness without overturning their prevalence, depicting dons who have 'taken the very shape of the walls within which they live', whilst claiming to defend from 'false caricature' the stereotype this portrayal upholds.[4] Stephen's Cambridge sketches, never printed in his name and enigmatically signed 'A Don', belonged to a wider tradition of satirical sketch writing that clustered in the pages of the *Pall Mall Gazette* in the 1860s.

The *Pall Mall Gazette* printed several series of unsigned character sketches in its middle pages during 1865, its first year of circulation. Anthony Trollope's set of hunting sketches ran from February to March, after which Stephen's sketches of Cambridge types appeared.[5] Interspersed throughout were standalone contributions, notable among which are George Eliot's anonymous 'A Word for the Germans' and 'Servants' Logic', as well as her articles on 'Futile Falsehoods' and 'Modern Housekeeping', which she wrote in the imagined persona of 'Saccharissa'.[6] Trollope's series of sketches on British tourists abroad began in August, followed by another set that autumn on character types among clergymen.[7] Rarely did these series overlap with one another, but neither was there a regular sequence to the intervals left between the appearance of individual sketches within a series. Their recurrence suggests the character sketch was well-suited to this newspaper's middle pages. Exploring the relationship between this form (the character sketch) and its format (their placement in the middle pages of the *Pall Mall Gazette*) can further our understanding of the connections between genre and materiality in Victorian serials more broadly.

Scholarship on nineteenth-century periodicals and newspapers has turned often to genre-focused approaches to these print media.[8] Fionnuala Dillane explains the occasionally 'controversial' reception which genre has received in periodical studies as being in part due to a scepticism towards 'categorization' in a field shaped by 'cultural material approaches'.[9] Periodicals resist the identification of their texts with genre categories because of the vexed question as to what a periodical text *is* in the first place. Dillane quotes the series of questions Lyn Pykett posed decades ago, when the field of periodical studies was still nascent: '[w]hat is a text in the field of periodicals study? Is it the individual essay? The issue? The volume? A run defined in some other way – say by the period of a particular editorship?'.[10] Contributions belonging to different genres—such as serialized novels, poetry, or the essay—sit side by side and constitute the miscellaneous content that suggests the periodical could itself be considered a genre of writing, categorized according to the subject matter, pricing, location, and targeted

[3] 'George Eliot to François D'Albert-Durade, 21 September 1866', in *The George Eliot Letters*, ed. Gordon S. Haight, vol. 4 (New Haven, CT, 1956), 311. See Laurel Brake, *Subjugated Knowledges: Journalism, Gender and Literature in the Nineteenth Century* (Basingstoke, 1994) for more on the *Pall Mall Gazette*'s reception.

[4] Leslie Stephen, 'Sketches from Cambridge. No. VIII. – Dons', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 1 (24 April 1865), 683.

[5] For the first sketch in Trollope's series, see: 'The Man Who Hunts and Doesn't Like It', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 1 (9 February 1865), 19. After the first full citation for each sketch, subsequent references will cite Trollope's sketches by page number and occur parenthetically in the text.

[6] George Eliot, 'A Word for the Germans', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 1 (7 March 1865), 201; 'Servants' Logic', 1 (17 March 1865), 78–9; 'Futile Falsehoods', 1 (3 April 1865), 186–7; 'Modern Housekeeping', 1 (13 May 1865), 880. Subsequent references to these articles will cite the page number parenthetically in the text.

[7] For the opening sketches in these series, see: Anthony Trollope, 'The Family that Goes Abroad because it's the Thing to Do', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 1 (3 August 1865), 1719–20; 'Clergymen of the Church of England. I. – The Modern English Archbishop', 2 (20 November 1865), 1093–4.

[8] Recent examples include: Laurel Brake, 'Markets, Genres, Iterations', in Andrew King, Alexis Easley and John Morton (eds), *The Routledge Handbook to Nineteenth-Century British Periodicals and Newspapers* (London, 2016), 237–48; Laurel Brake, Fionnuala Dillane and Mark Turner, 'Nineteenth-Century Reviews and Reviewing: Communication, Compression, and Commerce', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 55 (2022), 155–75.

[9] Fionnuala Dillane, 'Researching a periodical genre: Classifications, codes, and relational terms', in Alexis Easley, Andrew King and John Morton (eds), *Researching the Nineteenth-Century Periodical Press: Case Studies* (Abingdon, 2018), 74–91 (78).

[10] Lyn Pykett, 'Reading the Periodical Press: Text and Context', in Laurel Brake, Aled Jones and Lionel Madden (eds), *Investigating Victorian Journalism* (Basingstoke, 1990), 3–19 (11), cited in Dillane, 'Researching a periodical genre', 78.

audience.[11] The sketches contributed to the *Pall Mall Gazette* displace ideas of genre as authorially determined and highlight instead the workings of authors within collaborative processes of serial production.

Contributors wrote for magazines and newspapers with these genre requirements in mind. Dallas Liddle argues that 'maximizing our knowledge of the historical discourse genres published *in* periodicals' can further our understanding of the 'contending and competing worldviews' such genres represented for periodical writers.[12] Cynthia Bandish's study of Bohemian thought in *Belgravia* magazine identifies comparable tensions between a periodical's ideological 'meta-narrative' and the Bakhtinian 'heteroglossia' imparted by a given issue's individual voices.[13] Sketches in the *Pall Mall Gazette* both upheld the journal's typical stance towards contemporary issues *and* conveyed an original, humorous interpretation of this standard. Contributors' understanding of how this form fitted within the newspaper's genre mix influenced their negotiation of these reciprocal aims.

By the 1860s, mid-century sketch writers could trace their literary heritage back to the metropolitan surveys conducted by Lamb, Hazlitt, or Dickens, and they combined this with traditions of satire popularized by caricaturists and sporting magazines.[14] Sketches accommodated a style of writing that was both incidental and reflective, rooted in the present yet able to connect particularities with more general trends in contemporary life. These aesthetic conventions suited the priorities outlined by the *Pall Mall Gazette*'s founders, the publisher George Smith and journalist Frederick Greenwood, in their prospectus: 'to bring into Daily Journalism that full measure of thought and culture which is now found only in a few Reviews'.[15] To accomplish this, they would combine news reporting with content that resembled the literary periodical essay. '[B]y far the greater part' of the paper, claimed the prospectus, 'will be made up of original articles, upon the many things which engage the thoughts, or employ the energies, or amuse the leisure of mankind'.[16] The arrangement of material inside the journal—how each number was 'made up'—was imagined by Smith and Greenwood as key to making the variety of their project legible to readers on the level of the individual issue.

It was therefore no coincidence that character sketches contributed as 'original articles' featured predominantly in the middle pages of the *Pall Mall Gazette*. Nineteenth-century writers understood the newspaper 'middle' as a genre of serial prose that corresponded to a miscellaneous mode of writing distinct from fiction or reportage. James Fitzjames Stephen combined work for the *Pall Mall Gazette* with contributions to publications with a reputation for literariness, including the weekly *Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science, and Art* and George Smith's other periodical venture, the monthly, fiction-oriented *Cornhill* magazine. Reflecting on what was distinctive about the genres that organized mid-century serial content, Leslie Stephen recalled how his brother and a fellow contributor, Thomas Collett Sandars, became 'the two principal manufacturers of what were called "middles" – the articles which

[11] Dillane, 'Researching a periodical genre', 74.

[12] Dallas Liddle, *The Dynamics of Genre: Journalism and the Practice of Literature in Mid-Victorian Britain* (Charlottesville, VA, 2009), 9, 155 (original emphasis).

[13] Cynthia L. Bandish, 'Bakhtin's Dialogism and the Bohemian Meta-narrative of *Belgravia*: A Case Study for Analyzing Periodicals', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 34 (2001), 239–63 (241).

[14] For more on the sketch as a metropolitan form see, for example, Gregory Dart, *Metropolitan Art and Literature, 1810–1840: Cockney Adventures* (Cambridge, 2012); Martina Lauster, *Sketches of the Nineteenth Century: European Journalism and its Physiologies, 1830–50* (Basingstoke, 2007). On the influence of graphic satire and humour writing, see: John Strachan, 'Jorrocks's Canon: Dickens, Surtees, and 1830s Print Culture', in John Gardner and David Stewart (eds), *Nineteenth Century Literature in Transition: The 1830s* (Cambridge, 2024), 218–40.

[15] 'The Pall-Mall Gazette', *The Times* (7 January 1865), 11. For a detailed account of George Smith and Frederick Greenwood's careers, see J. W. Robertson Scott, *The Story of the Pall Mall Gazette: Of its First Editor Frederick Greenwood and of its founder George Murray Smith* (Oxford, 1950).

[16] 'The Pall-Mall Gazette', 11.

intervened between the political leaders and the reviews of books' at the *Saturday Review*.[17] Opening 'leaders' were usually political, followed by miscellaneous content too contemporary to be fiction, yet more domestic than most leader writing. These 'middles' acquired a hybridity by borrowing features from other categories of prose. The concluding reviews carried a sense of retrospection—as surveys of other, finished works they are predicated on completion. The different genres a reader might encounter within a single issue instructed the creation of a coherent publication when printed together. The *OED* cites an 1837 issue of the *Southern Literary Messenger* and a letter by Fitzjames Stephen from 1862 as the first usages of 'leader' and 'middle' to identify kinds of periodical text, reinforcing how nineteenth-century periodicals and their writers participated in the self-definition and conceptualization of the nature and organization of their works.[18]

As the Stephen brothers show, writers for newspapers and periodicals in the 1860s understood their individual contributions as by nature entangled in a wider process of composition that manifested in the intended, material significance of their place within the multi-authored newspaper. Sketches were a recognizable form for 'middles', and by exploring their function in early issues of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, this essay pursues what David Duff describes as 'research into the history of genre-consciousness'.[19] 'Middles' shifted emphasis away from reporting news to mediating the new, and contributors to the *Pall Mall Gazette* used the sketch to replicate this strategy for mediating difference and change in the habits of everyday life.

I

Smith and Greenwood's deliberate approach to the bibliographical design of their newspaper laid the groundwork for the *Pall Mall Gazette* to become a temporary home for comedic sketch writing in the 1860s. When the first issue appeared on 7 February 1865, the circumstances of its distribution distinguished the content and format of the *Pall Mall Gazette* from its competitor journals in several ways. Firstly, the newspaper did not reach readers until the afternoon, whereas most London-based dailies were printed ready for circulation in the early morning. Secondly, the first issue consisted of eight pages priced at twopence, which (except for the adverts on the back page) comprised a double-columned layout that contained considerably less news than, for example, the six columns per page of closely printed content available in that morning's 16-page, threepenny edition of *The Times*. This contributed a sense of ease to the *Pall Mall Gazette*, suitable for evening perusal under artificial light.

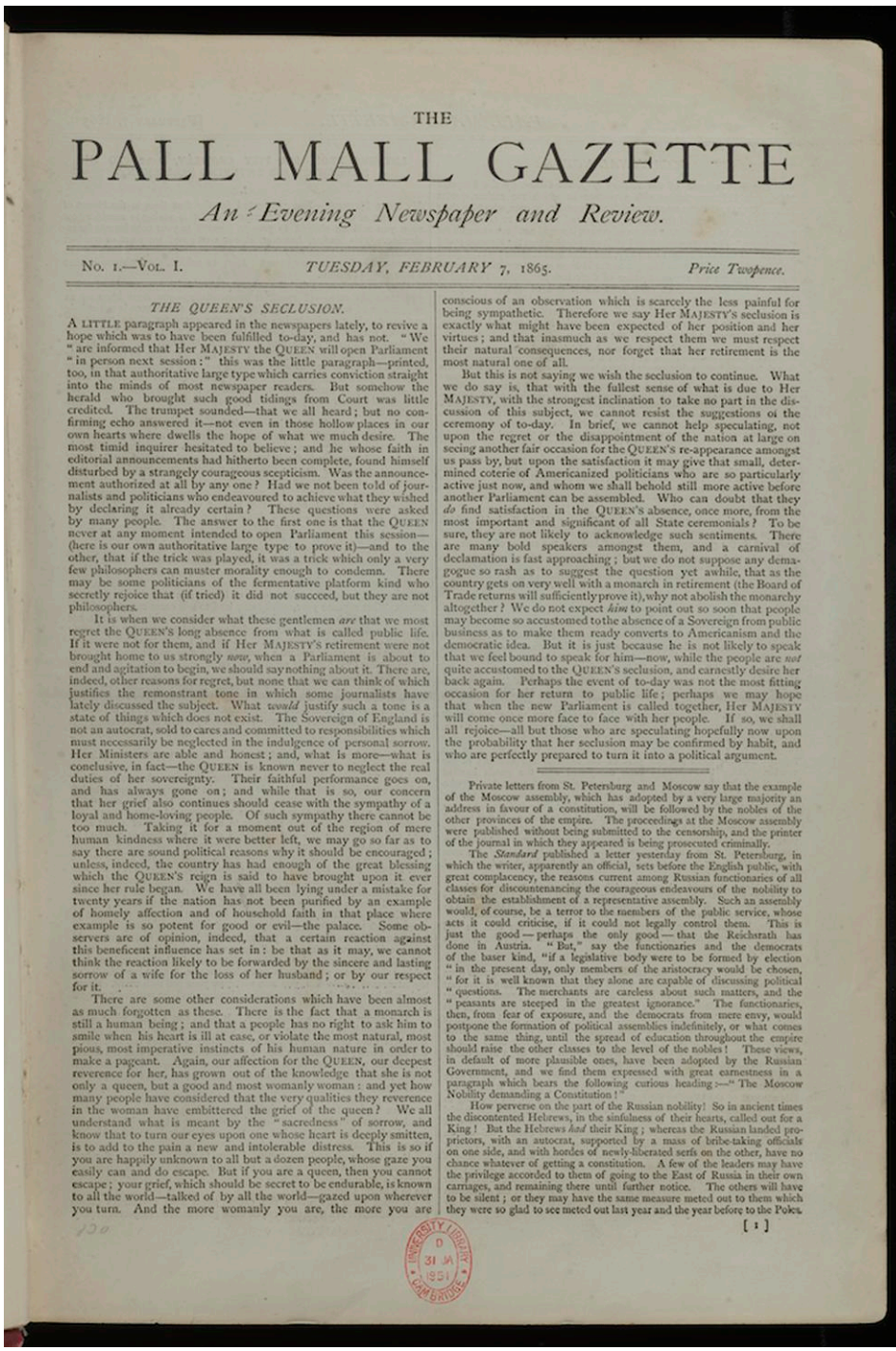
Taking the front page of the first issue of the *Pall Mall Gazette* as an example, the newspaper communicated bibliographically details that reinforced the identity suggested by its subtitle: 'An Evening Newspaper and Review' (see Fig. 1). This layout announced the *Pall Mall Gazette*'s dual aims: to inform readers of the latest current affairs, and to supply on a regular, daily basis the cultural comment traditionally associated with the literary essays found in weekly or monthly magazines. The removal of stamp duties on printing news and on paper in 1855 and 1861 led to reduced overhead costs, circumstances which facilitated the exploration of new formats and genres by the press.[20] The *Pall Mall Gazette* 'straddled the divide between the newspaper and the periodical press from its inception', Laurel Brake summarizes, and

[17] *Selected Writings of James Fitzjames Stephen: The Life of Sir James Fitzjames Stephen, by his brother Leslie Stephen*, ed. Christopher Tolley (Oxford, 2017), 103.

[18] 'leader', n. (1), II.12, <https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/1016612918>, and 'middle', n., 14, <https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/1085434632>, *OED Online*, accessed 29 October 2025.

[19] David Duff (ed.), *Modern Genre Theory* (Harlow, 2000), 2. Dillane applies Duff's terminology differently to demonstrate George Eliot's editorial awareness of the periodical *as itself* a media genre. See 'Researching a periodical genre', 83.

[20] For more on the impact of this market expansion, see: Laurel Brake, *Print in Transition, 1850–1910: Studies in Media and Book History* (Basingstoke, 2001).



THE

PALL MALL GAZETTE

An Evening Newspaper and Review.

No. 1.—Vol. I. *TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 1865.* *Price Twopence.*

THE QUEEN'S SECLUSION.

A LITTLE paragraph appeared in the newspapers lately, to revive a hope which was to have been fulfilled to-day, and has not. "We "are informed that Her MAJESTY the QUEEN will open Parliament "in person next session:" this was the little paragraph—printed, too, in that authoritative large type which carries conviction straight into the minds of most newspaper readers. But somehow the herald who brought such good tidings from Court was little credited. The trumpet sounded—that we all heard; but no confirming echo answered it—not even in those hollow places in our own hearts where dwells the hope of what we much desire. The most timid inquirer hesitated to believe; and he whose faith in editorial announcements had hitherto been complete, found himself disturbed by a strangely courageous scepticism. Was the announcement authorized at all by any one? Had we not been told of journalists and politicians who endeavoured to achieve what they wished by declaring it already certain? These questions were asked by many people. The answer to the first one is that the QUEEN never at any moment intended to open Parliament this session—(here is our own authoritative large type to prove it)—and to the other, that if the trick was played, it was a trick which only a very few philosophers can muster morality enough to condemn. There may be some politicians of the fermentative platform kind who secretly rejoice that (if tried) it did not succeed, but they are not philosophers.

It is when we consider what these gentlemen *are* that we most regret the QUEEN'S long absence from what is called public life. If it were not for them, and if Her MAJESTY'S retirement were not brought home to us strongly *now*, when a Parliament is about to end and agitation to begin, we should say nothing about it. There are, indeed, other reasons for regret, but none that we can think of which justifies the remonstrant tone in which some journalists have lately discussed the subject. What *would* justify such a tone is a state of things which does not exist. The Sovereign of England is not an autocrat, sold to cares and committed to responsibilities which must necessarily be neglected in the indulgence of personal sorrow. Her Ministers are able and honest; and, what is more—what is conclusive, in fact—the QUEEN is known never to neglect the real duties of her sovereignty. Their faithful performance goes on, and has always gone on; and while that is so, our concern that her grief also continues should cease with the sympathy of a loyal and home-loving people. Of such sympathy there cannot be too much. Taking it for a moment out of the region of mere human kindness where it were better left, we may go so far as to say there are sound political reasons why it should be encouraged; unless, indeed, the country has had enough of the great blessing which the QUEEN'S reign is said to have brought upon it ever since her rule began. We have all been lying under a mistake for twenty years if the nation has not been purified by an example of homely affection and of household faith in that place where example is so potent for good or evil—the palace. Some observers are of opinion, indeed, that a certain reaction against this beneficent influence has set in: be that as it may, we cannot think the reaction likely to be forwarded by the sincere and lasting sorrow of a wife for the loss of her husband; or by our respect for it. . . . . .

There are some other considerations which have been almost as much forgotten as these. There is the fact that a monarch is still a human being; and that a people has no right to ask him to smile when his heart is ill at ease, or violate the most natural, most pious, most imperative instincts of his human nature in order to make a pageant. Again, our affection for the QUEEN, our deepest reverence for her, has grown out of the knowledge that she is not only a queen, but a good and most womanly woman: and yet how many people have considered that the very qualities they reverence in the woman have embittered the grief of the queen? We all understand what is meant by the "sacredness" of sorrow, and know that to turn our eyes upon one whose heart is deeply smitten, is to add to the pain a new and intolerable distress. This is so if you are happily unknown to all but a dozen people, whose gaze you easily can and do escape. But if you are a queen, then you cannot escape; your grief, which should be secret to be endurable, is known to all the world—talked of by all the world—gazed upon wherever you turn. And the more womanly you are, the more you are conscious of an observation which is scarcely the less painful for being sympathetic. Therefore we say Her MAJESTY'S seclusion is exactly what might have been expected of her position and her virtues; and that inasmuch as we respect them we must respect their natural consequences, nor forget that her retirement is the most natural one of all.

But this is not saying we wish the seclusion to continue. What we do say is, that with the fullest sense of what is due to Her MAJESTY, with the strongest inclination to take no part in the discussion of this subject, we cannot resist the suggestions of the ceremony of to-day. In brief, we cannot help speculating, not upon the regret or the disappointment of the nation at large on seeing another fair occasion for the QUEEN'S re-appearance amongst us pass by, but upon the satisfaction it may give that small, determined coterie of Americanized politicians who are so particularly active just now, and whom we shall behold still more active before another Parliament can be assembled. Who can doubt that they *do* find satisfaction in the QUEEN'S absence, once more, from the most important and significant of all State ceremonials? To be sure, they are not likely to acknowledge such sentiments. There are many bold speakers amongst them, and a carnival of declamation is fast approaching; but we do not suppose any demagogue so rash as to suggest the question yet awhile, that as the country gets on very well with a monarch in retirement (the Board of Trade returns will sufficiently prove it), why not abolish the monarchy altogether? We do not expect *him* to point out so soon that people may become so accustomed to the absence of a Sovereign from public business as to make them ready converts to Americanism and the democratic idea. But it is just because he is not likely to speak that we feel bound to speak for him—now, while the people are *not* quite accustomed to the QUEEN'S seclusion, and earnestly desire her back again. Perhaps the event of to-day was not the most fitting occasion for her return to public life; perhaps we may hope that when the new Parliament is called together, Her MAJESTY will come once more face to face with her people. If so, we shall all rejoice—all but those who are speculating hopefully now upon the probability that her seclusion may be confirmed by habit, and who are perfectly prepared to turn it into a political argument.

Private letters from St. Petersburg and Moscow say that the example of the Moscow assembly, which has adopted by a very large majority an address in favour of a constitution, will be followed by the nobles of the other provinces of the empire. The proceedings at the Moscow assembly were published without being submitted to the censorship, and the printer of the journal in which they appeared is being prosecuted criminally.

The *Standard* published a letter yesterday from St. Petersburg, in which the writer, apparently an official, sets before the English public, with great complacency, the reasons current among Russian functionaries of all classes for discountenancing the courageous endeavours of the nobility to obtain the establishment of a representative assembly. Such an assembly would, of course, be a terror to the members of the public service, whose acts it could criticise, if it could not legally control them. This is just the good—perhaps the only good—that the Reichsrath has done in Austria. "But," say the functionaries and the democrats of the baser kind, "if a legislative body were to be formed by election "in the present day, only members of the aristocracy would be chosen, "for it is well known that they alone are capable of discussing political "questions. The merchants are careless about such matters, and the "peasants are steeped in the greatest ignorance." The functionaries, then, from fear of exposure, and the democrats from mere envy, would postpone the formation of political assemblies indefinitely, or what comes to the same thing, until the spread of education throughout the empire should raise the other classes to the level of the nobles! These views, in default of more plausible ones, have been adopted by the Russian Government, and we find them expressed with great earnestness in a paragraph which bears the following curious heading:—"The Moscow Nobility demanding a Constitution!"

How perverse on the part of the Russian nobility! So in ancient times the discontented Hebrews, in the sinfulness of their hearts, called out for a King! But the Hebrews *had* their King; whereas the Russian landed proprietors, with an autocrat, supported by a mass of bribe-taking officials on one side, and with hordes of newly-liberated serfs on the other, have no chance whatever of getting a constitution. A few of the leaders may have the privilege accorded to them of going to the East of Russia in their own carriages, and remaining there until further notice. The others will have to be silent; or they may have the same measure meted out to them which they were so glad to see meted out last year and the year before to the Poles.

Fig. 1. First front page of the *Pall Mall Gazette*. Cambridge University Library, NPR.C. 90. Reproduced by kind permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library.

this section will explore how the *Pall Mall Gazette* joined other serials that combined coverage of current affairs with 'original articles'.[21]

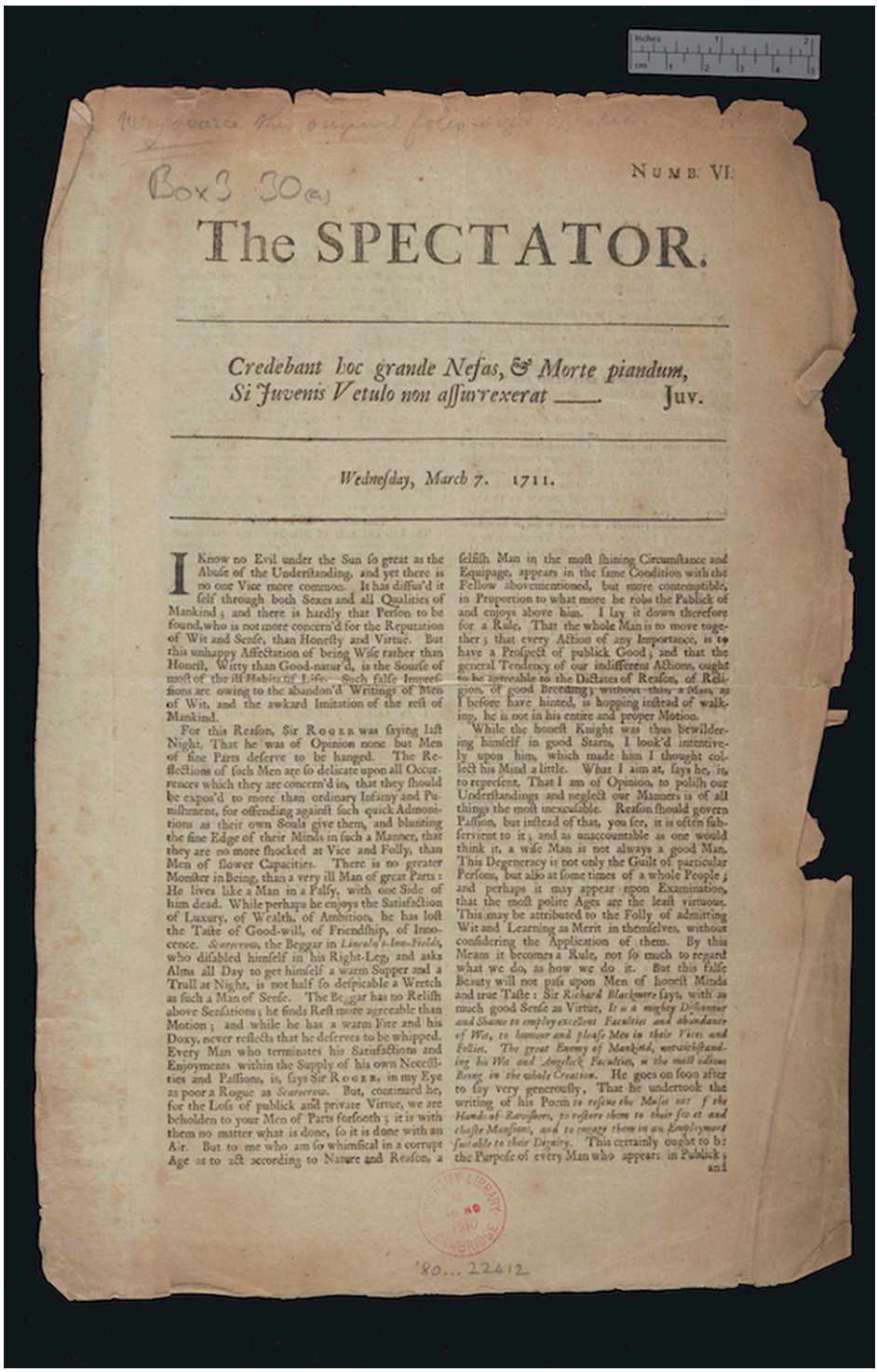
While experimenting with new forms, the *Pall Mall Gazette* placed deliberate emphasis on looking backwards to sharpen the scope of its contribution in the present. Foremost among its antecedents were the witty essays printed in Addison and Steele's daily *Spectator*. Smith reflected in a draft of his autobiography that he had long hoped to publish 'a little daily sheet, something after the style of "the Spectator", and "the Tatler", of the days of Addison and of Steele'; following Thackeray's refusal to help, Smith's idea remained dormant until 'Mr. Greenwood proposed to me to undertake the publication of a small evening newspaper of about twelve pages'.[22] Smith's initial inspiration was for 'a little daily sheet', and Greenwood similarly imagined that their newspaper should be a 'small' one. Both equated dailiness with smallness, matching the temporal scale of the paper with its material length. Addison and Steele wrote for the *Spectator* with this balance in mind, producing essays which deliberately prioritized everyday life as suitable for the prescribed spatial and temporal constraints of their publication.[23] Yet despite their shared dailiness and the emphasis likewise placed by the *Pall Mall Gazette* on understanding contemporary experience through genres inclined towards discursive comment, the differences between the *Spectator* and the *Pall Mall Gazette* outweighed their commonalities. Whereas the former consisted of a single essay plus adverts printed on one half-sheet of paper, the latter covered a range of genres across its folded pages, which expanded in number from eight to 12 and with additional advertisements reached 16 by 1866. The sketches and other miscellaneous contributions that 'made up' the 'Review' side of the journal featured alongside reports on national and international news and the financial pages.

Another eighteenth-century precursor was the *Anti-Jacobin*, which combined an array of genres: poetry, essays, and other comment on current affairs by a coterie of Tory satirists during the parliamentary session of 1797–1798. In a special feature commissioned for the 10,000th issue of the *Pall Mall Gazette* in 1897, Greenwood explained how he had modelled the aesthetic of his newspaper on the *Anti-Jacobin*:

> all that was quaintly graceful in the old-fashioned form of the *Anti-Jacobin* could be repeated, and even improved upon. It was on a large quarto page of two wide columns […] the details could be followed – the old-faced type, the lettering of the title, the italic capital head-lines, and other conducive trifles; while the columns could be lengthened into elegance, and so at the same time provide a more spacious and convenient sheet.[24]

The arrangement of information on the front pages of these periodicals demonstrates the continuities between their designs. The *Spectator* (see Fig. 2) provided a benchmark that the *Anti-Jacobin* (see Fig. 3) would have styled itself against, and their influences converged on the front page of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, with all three, for example, adopting a double-columned layout. The *Pall Mall Gazette* replicated from the *Anti-Jacobin* the use of double rules for its masthead and reproduced in a slimmer typeface the italic headlines for articles. Each communicated the issue date in a ruled section beneath the title, so that the eye is drawn first to the title and then the date as it travels down the page. As James Mussell explains, serials

[21] Brake, *Subjugated Knowledges*, 98.
[22] Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, Typescript copy of 'Recollections of a long and busy life' by George Smith, 1895, MSS.23191–23192, 99–101.
[23] Markman Ellis, 'Time and the Essay: *The Spectator* and Diurnal Form', in Thomas Karshan and Kathryn Murphy (eds), *On Essays: Montaigne to the Present* (Oxford, 2020), 97–113.
[24] Frederick Greenwood, 'Birth and Infancy of the "Pall Mall Gazette"', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 1000 (14 April 1897), 1–2.



NUMB. VI.

The SPECTATOR.

Credebant hoc grande Nefas, & Morte piandum,
Si Juvenis Vetulo non assurrexerat ——. Juv.

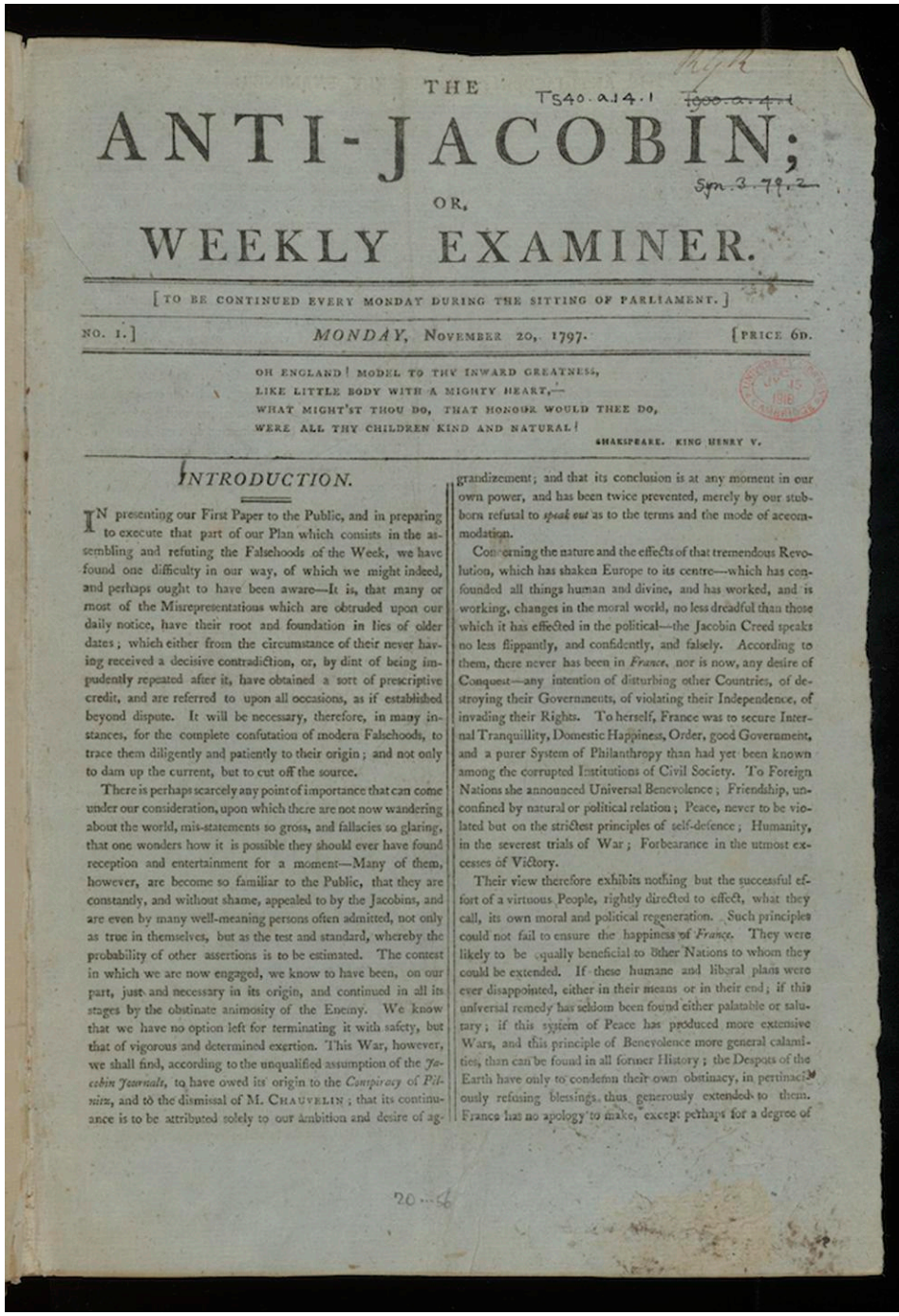
Wednesday, March 7. 1711.

I Know no Evil under the Sun so great as the Abuse of the Understanding, and yet there is no one Vice more common. It has diffus'd it self through both Sexes and all Qualities of Mankind; and there is hardly that Person to be found, who is not more concern'd for the Reputation of Wit and Sense, than Honesty and Virtue. But this unhappy Affectation of being Wise rather than Honest, Witty than Good-natur'd, is the Source of most of the ill Habits of Life. Such false Imperfections are owing to the abandon'd Writings of Men of Wit, and the awkard Imitation of the rest of Mankind.

For this Reason, Sir ROGER was saying last Night, That he was of Opinion none but Men of fine Parts deserve to be hanged. The Reflections of such Men are so delicate upon all Occurrences which they are concern'd in, that they should be expos'd to more than ordinary Infamy and Punishment, for offending against such quick Admonitions as their own Souls give them, and blunting the fine Edge of their Minds in such a Manner, that they are no more shocked at Vice and Folly, than Men of slower Capacities. There is no greater Monster in Being, than a very ill Man of great Parts: He lives like a Man in a Palsy, with one Side of him dead. While perhaps he enjoys the Satisfaction of Luxury, of Wealth, of Ambition, he has lost the Taste of Good-will, of Friendship, of Innocence. *Scarecrow*, the Beggar in *Lincoln's-Inn-Fields*, who disabled himself in his Right-Leg, and asks Alms all Day to get himself a warm Supper and a Trull at Night, is not half so despicable a Wretch as such a Man of Sense. The Beggar has no Relish above Sensations; he finds Rest more agreeable than Motion; and while he has a warm Fire and his Doxy, never reflects that he deserves to be whipped. Every Man who terminates his Satisfactions and Enjoyments within the Supply of his own Necessities and Passions, is, says Sir ROGER, in my Eye as poor a Rogue as *Scarecrow*. But, continued he, for the Loss of publick and private Virtue, we are beholden to your Men of Parts forsooth; it is with them no matter what is done, so it is done with an Air. But to me who am so whimsical in a corrupt Age as to act according to Nature and Reason, a selfish Man in the most shining Circumstance and Equipage, appears in the same Condition with the Fellow abovementioned, but more contemptible, in Proportion to what more he robs the Publick of and enjoys above him. I lay it down therefore for a Rule, That the whole Man is to move together; that every Action of any Importance, is to have a Prospect of publick Good; and that the general Tendency of our indifferent Actions, ought to be agreeable to the Dictates of Reason, of Religion, of good Breeding; without these three a Man, as I before have hinted, is hopping instead of walking, he is not in his entire and proper Motion.

While the honest Knight was thus bewildering himself in good Starts, I look'd intentively upon him, which made him I thought collect his Mind a little. What I aim at, says he, is, to represent, That I am of Opinion, to polish our Understandings and neglect our Manners is of all things the most inexcusable. Reason should govern Passion, but instead of that, you see, it is often subservient to it; and as unaccountable as one would think it, a wise Man is not always a good Man. This Degeneracy is not only the Guilt of particular Persons, but also at some times of a whole People; and perhaps it may appear upon Examination, that the most polite Ages are the least virtuous. This may be attributed to the Folly of admitting Wit and Learning as Merit in themselves, without considering the Application of them. By this Means it becomes a Rule, not so much to regard what we do, as how we do it. But this false Beauty will not pass upon Men of honest Minds and true Taste: Sir *Richard Blackmore* says, with as much good Sense as Virtue, *It is a mighty Dishonour and Shame to employ excellent Faculties and abundance of Wit, to humour and please Men in their Vices and Follies. The great Enemy of Mankind, notwithstanding his Wit and Angelick Faculties, is the most odious Being in the whole Creation.* He goes on soon after to say very generously, That he undertook the writing of his Poem *to rescue the Muses out of the Hands of Ravishers, to restore them to their Sex and chaste Mansions, and to engage them in an Employment suitable to their Dignity.* This certainly ought to be the Purpose of every Man who appears in Publick; and

Fig. 2. A front page of the *Spectator* (pictured is issue no. 10). Cambridge University Library, NPR Misc No. 6. Reproduced by kind permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library.



THE

ANTI-JACOBIN;

OR,

WEEKLY EXAMINER.

[TO BE CONTINUED EVERY MONDAY DURING THE SITTING OF PARLIAMENT.]

NO. I.] *MONDAY*, NOVEMBER 20, 1797. [PRICE 6D.

OH ENGLAND! MODEL TO THY INWARD GREATNESS,
LIKE LITTLE BODY WITH A MIGHTY HEART,—
WHAT MIGHT'ST THOU DO, THAT HONOUR WOULD THEE DO,
WERE ALL THY CHILDREN KIND AND NATURAL!

SHAKSPEARE. KING HENRY V.

INTRODUCTION.

IN presenting our First Paper to the Public, and in preparing to execute that part of our Plan which consists in the assembling and refuting the Falsehoods of the Week, we have found one difficulty in our way, of which we might indeed, and perhaps ought to have been aware—It is, that many or most of the Misrepresentations which are obtruded upon our daily notice, have their root and foundation in lies of older dates; which either from the circumstance of their never having received a decisive contradiction, or, by dint of being impudently repeated after it, have obtained a sort of prescriptive credit, and are referred to upon all occasions, as if established beyond dispute. It will be necessary, therefore, in many instances, for the complete confutation of modern Falsehoods, to trace them diligently and patiently to their origin; and not only to dam up the current, but to cut off the source.

There is perhaps scarcely any point of importance that can come under our consideration, upon which there are not now wandering about the world, mis-statements so gross, and fallacies so glaring, that one wonders how it is possible they should ever have found reception and entertainment for a moment—Many of them, however, are become so familiar to the Public, that they are constantly, and without shame, appealed to by the Jacobins, and are even by many well-meaning persons often admitted, not only as true in themselves, but as the test and standard, whereby the probability of other assertions is to be estimated. The contest in which we are now engaged, we know to have been, on our part, just and necessary in its origin, and continued in all its stages by the obstinate animosity of the Enemy. We know that we have no option left for terminating it with safety, but that of vigorous and determined exertion. This War, however, we shall find, according to the unqualified assumption of the *Jacobin Journals*, to have owed its origin to the *Conspiracy of Pilnitz*, and to the dismissal of M. CHAUVELIN; that its continuance is to be attributed solely to our ambition and desire of aggrandizement; and that its conclusion is at any moment in our own power, and has been twice prevented, merely by our stubborn refusal to *speak out* as to the terms and the mode of accommodation.

Concerning the nature and the effects of that tremendous Revolution, which has shaken Europe to its centre—which has confounded all things human and divine, and has worked, and is working, changes in the moral world, no less dreadful than those which it has effected in the political—the Jacobin Creed speaks no less flippantly, and confidently, and falsely. According to them, there never has been in *France*, nor is now, any desire of Conquest—any intention of disturbing other Countries, of destroying their Governments, of violating their Independence, of invading their Rights. To herself, France was to secure Internal Tranquillity, Domestic Happiness, Order, good Government, and a purer System of Philanthropy than had yet been known among the corrupted Institutions of Civil Society. To Foreign Nations she announced Universal Benevolence; Friendship, unconfined by natural or political relation; Peace, never to be violated but on the strictest principles of self-defence; Humanity, in the severest trials of War; Forbearance in the utmost excesses of Victory.

Their view therefore exhibits nothing but the successful effort of a virtuous People, rightly directed to effect, what they call, its own moral and political regeneration. Such principles could not fail to ensure the happiness of *France*. They were likely to be equally beneficial to other Nations to whom they could be extended. If these humane and liberal plans were ever disappointed, either in their means or in their end; if this universal remedy has seldom been found either palatable or salutary; if this system of Peace has produced more extensive Wars, and this principle of Benevolence more general calamities, than can be found in all former History; the Despots of the Earth have only to condemn their own obstinacy, in pertinaciously refusing blessings thus generously extended to them. France has no apology to make, except perhaps for a degree of

Fig. 3. First front page of the *Anti-Jacobin or Weekly Examiner*. Cambridge University Library, T540.a.14.1. Reproduced by kind permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library.

balance novelty between issues and continuity across a print run to create an identity that remains current and persistent over time.[25]

These typographical features were not unique to the periodicals under discussion, but their presence signalled a common goal: the necessity of promoting contemporaneity. The genteel Mr Spectator promised in the first issue of Addison and Steele's periodical to 'publish a Sheet-full of Thoughts every Morning, for the Benefit of my Contemporaries'.[26] Imagining potential readers with their 'Paper [...] punctually served up [...] as a Part of the Tea Equipage', the *Spectator* invoked its contemporaneity to ground its moral idealism in custom and routine.[27] The writers for the *Anti-Jacobin* committed to 'assembling and refuting the Falsehoods of the Week'.[28] Both periodicals put forward a programme for upholding an ideal of conduct, but whereas the *Spectator* adopted a single, presiding persona who posed as self-appointed, Whig advisory to the public on its collective behaviours, with the emphasis on the cumulative effects of individual improvement, the *Anti-Jacobin* drew ranks against political opponents at the end of the century, aiming to counter revolutionary spirit with invective. The mixture of reportage and 'original articles' stipulated in the *Pall Mall Gazette* prospectus relied on both the rhetorical position of individuals posing as representatives of social authority, and on a sense of a curated, editorial consensus. Mark Hampton summarizes the political ambitions of the mid-nineteenth-century press as wrestling with an 'educational ideal' of speaking *to* a mass audience and a 'representative ideal' of speaking *for* them.[29] By reimagining the bibliographical features associated with past literary coteries, these aims filtered into the *Pall Mall Gazette*'s design as an upmarket daily that appealed to an elite readership, proposing to inform its readers of contemporary topics from a perspective tailored to their social remove.

The *Pall Mall Gazette* used format to distinguish between imitation and what it meant to be written (in Smith's words) 'after the style' of these eighteenth-century periodicals. Smith and Greenwood signalled that by looking to the past for a novel way to document the present, they would update the contemporary, mid-nineteenth-century newspaper format with a nostalgic 'style'. And they balanced its nostalgic format with conventions of the modern press. Greenwood recalled 'the 1864 or 1865 Saturday Review' as another model for 'the idea for the original Pall Mall'.[30] One visual tactic used by the *Saturday Review* and repeated by the *Pall Mall Gazette* in its inner pages was the distinguishing of leaders from 'middles' by printing the latter in a smaller typeface. Repurposing without imitating the format and page layout belonging to existing or historic serials created a material index of the *Pall Mall Gazette*'s aspirations for similarly repurposing the wit and comic style of the literary culture to which its forebears belonged.

The *Pall Mall Gazette*'s title also conjured a periodical heritage that helped designate this journal a suitable home for satiric sketch writing in the 1860s. Named after the fictional newspaper 'written by gentlemen for gentlemen' in Thackeray's *The History of Pendennis* (1849–1850), this coded a reference to an earlier age of sketch writing, a form at which the recently deceased Thackeray had excelled throughout his career.[31] As a serial format, gazettes initially appeared in Restoration Britain as instruments for statecraft and surveillance over what news became public. The King and his Secretaries of State commissioned and controlled the first *Oxford Gazette* (soon renamed the *London Gazette*) from 1665, and this official publication

[25] James Mussell, *The Nineteenth-Century Press in the Digital Age* (Basingstoke, 2012), 30.
[26] Joseph Addison, 'No. 1 Thursday, March 2, 1711', in *The Spectator*, ed. Donald F. Bond, vol. 1 (Oxford, 1987), 5.
[27] Addison, 'No. 10 Monday, March 12, 1711', in *The Spectator*, ed. Bond, vol. 1, 45.
[28] 'Introduction', *Anti-Jacobin or Weekly Examiner*, 1 (20 November 1797), 1–2.
[29] Mark Hampton, *Visions of the Press in Britain, 1850–1950* (Urbana, IL, 2004), 9–14.
[30] 'Birth and Infancy of the "Pall Mall Gazette"', 1.
[31] William Makepeace Thackeray, *The History of Pendennis*, ed. John Sutherland (Oxford, 1994), 410.

was the first to adopt what became the recognizable format for a newssheet: two columns printed on a folio half-sheet of paper.[32] Smith and Greenwood's newspaper turned this association between gazette formats and governing powers into an ironic twist on the kind of authority promoted by its pages—namely, the opinions and tastes of Victorian clubland in Pall Mall. Their borrowed title foregrounded a self-conscious proximity between seriousness and satire. Mark Turner, considering the 'social configuration of the men's clubs and its links to the cultural formation of periodicals', contrasts the contents of the *Pall Mall Gazette* with Smith's *Cornhill* magazine.[33] The *Cornhill* targeted a family audience, and the hybrid scope of the magazine interspersed miscellaneous non-fiction alongside serialized fiction by leading authors. 'Whereas serial fiction was often read communally, as in the family circle, non-fiction articles were designed to be personal and digested individually, and periodical literature suited the men's daily commute into town', he writes, and it is exactly this 'sort of literature' Turner sees as 'pioneered by George Smith in the *Pall Mall Gazette*'.[34] Turner's argument suggests this consolidation of magazine fiction leant new definition to miscellaneous pieces like the prose sketch, and more clearly defined their generic scope.

The prose sketch was a staple part of the periodical fare offered by weekly miscellanies, and the usually unsigned, heterogenous contents of these magazines offered another important antecedent to the *Pall Mall Gazette*. *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal* sold for one-and-a-half pence and aimed to provide affordable 'food of the best kind' to satisfy an 'appetite for instruction'.[35] Character sketches in *Chambers's* put into practice this educative aim. The first issue, for example, introduced a series of 'Biographic Sketches' outlining the remarkable lives of Scottish public figures.[36] Dickens established *Household Words* in 1850 to rival *Chambers's* combination of instruction and entertainment. His twopenny magazine attracted readers with its 'process articles': sketches exploring the materials and manufacture of mid-century commodities, ranging from 'What There Is in a Button' to 'A Paper-Mill'.[37]

The *Leader*—a progressive, sixpenny weekly commenced in 1850—offered a different model for combining 'leaders' with miscellaneous articles and reviews. Co-founders George Henry Lewes and Thornton Leigh Hunt organized their periodical into two halves: the first section concerned politics, followed by an arts and literature section.[38] Harriet Martineau's fictionalized 'Sketches from Life' appeared in the *Leader* during its first year and supported the journal's agitation for reform.[39] Smith recruited Lewes as an advisor to the *Pall Mall Gazette* from the paper's beginning, receiving Lewes's help with the prospectus in December 1864.[40]

Smith was disappointed, however, that Lewes would not consider reviving 'Vivian': the urbane, bachelor persona he had adopted when writing theatre reviews for the *Leader*.[41] Smith considered Lewes's Vivian persona as desirable as his journalistic expertise, further highlighting Smith's aim of blending incisive commentary with a clubland tone in his new publication.

[32] For more on the gazettes printed during the Restoration, see: Joad Raymond, *The Invention of the Newspaper: English Newsbooks, 1641–1649* (Oxford, 1996); James Sutherland, *The Restoration Newspaper and its Development* (Cambridge, 1986).
[33] Mark W. Turner, *Trollope and the Magazines: Gendered Issues in Mid-Victorian Britain* (Basingstoke, 2000), 35.
[34] Turner, *Trollope and the Magazines*, 35–6.
[35] 'The Editor's Address to His Readers', *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal*, 1 (4 February 1832) 1–2. See also: E. Foley O'Connor, 'Chambers's (Edinburgh) Journal, 1832–1956', in Laurel Brake and Marysa Demoor (eds), *Dictionary of Nineteenth Century Journalism in Great Britain and Ireland* (Gent; London, 2009), 106.
[36] For the commencement of this series see: *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal*, 1 (4 February 1832), 5–6.
[37] Catherine Waters, *Commodity Culture in Dickens's Household Words: The Social Life of Goods* (Aldershot, 2008); 'A Paper-Mill', *Household Words*, 1 (31 August 1850), 529–31; 'What There Is in a Button', *Household Words*, 5 (17 April 1852), 106–12.
[38] Rosemary Ashton, *G. H. Lewes: A Life* (Oxford, 1991), 97–8.
[39] See Harriet Martineau, 'Sketches from Life', *Leader*, 1 (9 November 1850), 788–9, for the commencement of this series.
[40] 'GHL Journal, 25–30 December 1864', in *Letters*, ed. Haight, vol. 4, 172.
[41] Ashton, *Life*, 224.

Different periodicals similarly recruited London-based personae for sketching contemporary life in the 1860s. Throughout his prolific career, George Augustus Sala transported his urban, chatty persona between periodicals. He combined it with the role of special correspondent for the *Daily Telegraph* in a series republished as *My Diary in America in the Midst of War* (1865), whereas Sala's 'Streets of the World' in the shilling monthly *Temple Bar* (competitor to Smith's *Cornhill*) framed reflections on foreign and domestic characters through local topographies.[42] Against this backdrop of instruction, amusement, and perspicacity adopted by its antecedents and contemporaries, the *Pall Mall Gazette* positioned its early sketches as satirical forms for dissecting contemporary character types.

II

Outlining the tone they envisaged 'original articles' would take, Smith and Greenwood emphasized in the prospectus that humour was essential to their scope:

> Humour is too powerful, as well as too pleasant, to be left out of the design; which will lose none of the advantages of occasional trifling. If a thing can be said better in verse than in prose, it will be said in verse. Epigram, but not spite – burlesque, but not vulgarity – will be readily admitted into its columns; and since a joke is often as illustrative as an argument, good jokes will be welcome too.[43]

Their plan was not brought to fruition in exactly these terms. The poems published in 1865 were few and far between; during the first five months of circulation, only six poems were printed. But to focus only on the presence of actual poems in the *Pall Mall Gazette* would be to miss the broader implications of this claim, where 'verse' stands for an interest in experimenting with literary forms and newspaper genres. Questions as to the suitability of 'verse' or 'prose' for newspaper articles asked potential readers to reconfigure their genre expectations of contemporary media formats whilst simultaneously alerting them to expect a literary sensitivity to form. Wit condensed into an 'epigram' or a 'joke' represented a similar brevity to the focus on producing a 'small evening newspaper' of manageable size for daily publication. Satire and caricature defined the sketch 'middles' by Eliot, Trollope, Stephen and others, and this tone transitioned the paper's commitment to brevity in *format* into *form* by way of the sketch. The sketches contributed by Anthony Trollope and George Eliot present case studies for thinking about the verbal strategies they depended on to craft comic character types.

Despite his later belief that he was 'unfit' for the 'trammels' of writing for a daily newspaper, Trollope's two-year stint at the *Pall Mall Gazette* was a product of his business relationship with George Smith.[44] A staunch defender of hunting, Trollope reminisced in his *Autobiography* that 'I have written on very many subjects, and on most of them with pleasure; but on no subject with such delight as that on hunting'.[45] In his series of eight hunting sketches, Trollope sought to establish a set of characters that would minimize what he saw as harmful stereotypes about this sport. 'The truth is that a large and most respectable section of the world still regards hunting as wicked', Trollope wrote in his sketch 'The Hunting Parson'.[46] He aimed to dignify his favourite sport by insisting on its relative banality, and

[42] See: George Augustus Sala, 'The Streets of the World', *Temple Bar*, 10 (January 1864), 183–90.
[43] 'The Pall-Mall Gazette', 11.
[44] Anthony Trollope, *An Autobiography and Other Writings*, ed. Nicholas Shrimpton (Oxford, 2016), 127–8.
[45] Trollope, *Autobiography*, ed. Shrimpton, 45.
[46] Anthony Trollope, 'The Hunting Parson', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 1 (11 March 1865), 244.

repeated comparisons to the 'old days of Squire Western' refer metonymically to the outdated assumptions on which he declines to elaborate, a silence which moreover elides the past with the fictional world of Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones* (1749).[47] As a form belonging to the genre of newspaper 'middles', the sketch mediates between the external reality of current customs, and the semi-fictionalized space of miscellaneous, humorous prose that sought to generalize the experience of contemporary life. Trollope accessed the literary heritage that belongs to the periodical sketch to imbue his own use of this form with the potential to assimilate new ideas and reconcile old ones to the imagination.

Trollope's sketches derive their humour from the mediocrity of the characters he describes. Feats of daring adventure do not belong on Trollope's hunting field. Instead, his sportspeople are foiled by indifferent weather, fall from their horses, get lost in the countryside, fail to keep up with the hunt, and are disappointed in their sport more often than they succeed at it. In the fifth sketch, 'The Man Who Hunts and Never Jumps', Trollope warns that hunting is less adventurous than onlookers might assume:

> The British public who do not hunt believe too much in the jumping of those who do. It is thought by many among the laity that the hunting man is always in the air, making clear flights over five-barred gates, six-foot walls, and double posts and rails – at none of which would the average hunting man any more think of riding than he would at a small house.[48]

Trollope turns the tables: recklessness does not reside in the actions of the 'average hunting man' but in the imaginations of the 'British public'. The imagined 'flights' of the horses 'in the air' turn into flights of fancy, as he ironically scales up his comparison to scale down expectations about the feats that occur on the hunting field. This playfulness with scale occurs within the column and a half allotted to his newspaper sketch, and in doing so Trollope epitomizes the 'burlesque' brevity posited by Smith and Greenwood as so desirable in the *Pall Mall Gazette* prospectus.

Trollope is also interested in how far the deterministic view of character conventionally associated with the character sketch can be manipulated to prescriptive ends. Trollope firmly outlines the appropriate behaviour for a man who hunts but does not jump: '[T]he man who hunts and never jumps, – who deliberately makes up his mind that he will amuse himself after that fashion, – must always remember his resolve, and be true to the conduct which he has laid down for himself. He must jump not at all' (p. 201). His tone anticipates the instructional note sounded in the title of the final sketch, 'How to Ride to Hounds'. The miscellaneous sketch sourced its shifting tones from the variety of its potential audience. Trollope's series is simultaneously a set of humorous sketches for those who recognize the types he describes, a defence of the sport for those who do not, and an opportunity to guide those who wish to know, because the *Pall Mall Gazette* targeted an audience of readers likely to possess the capital and social standing required to participate in this leisure pursuit themselves.

Trollope's sketches depended on their seriality to accommodate these aims. Each hunting sketch follows the progress of a particular outing but as the series progresses, characters encountered in earlier sketches are glimpsed in the background of later ones, giving the impression that each sketch recounts the same hunt but from another perspective. The first two sketches in the series, 'The Man Who Hunts and Doesn't Like It' and 'The Man Who Hunts and Does Like It', evidently encourage comparison. Both function as standalone pieces

[47] Trollope first mentions Squire Western in his second sketch, 'The Man Who Hunts and Does Like It', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 1 (10 February 1865), 27.

[48] Anthony Trollope, 'The Man Who Hunts and Never Jumps', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 1 (7 March 1865), 201–2.

but if read serially, parallels come into focus. Only one day separated their serialization, a trend which persisted across all the series of sketches published in the *Pall Mall Gazette* in 1865 as a way of signalling the start of a series before longer intervals were left between subsequent parts. Commencing with preliminaries to a hunting meet '[a]s the season draws nigh' (p. 19) for the man who does not like it, or 'on an ordinary day' (p. 27) for the man who does, the former finds himself '[g]etting up at six o'clock' (p. 19), and the latter's 'groom comes to his bed-chamber at seven o'clock' (p. 27). Both men dress with mixed irritation and anticipation for the day ahead, yet once out in the fields their fortunes diverge.

Trollope insists in these sketches that character is unchanging—neither man can reverse 'his own nature' (p. 19). Inflexible thought and behaviour belong to the character sketch's conventions of description through generalization, with the humour in the sketch reliant on the pleasure of spotting patterns. *True to type*, both men become locked into patterns of syntax that reinforce the deterministic element of their characters. The man who hunts and does not like it experiences the chase as a series of interrogatives addressed to his own misgivings: 'Why has the scent lain so hot over the up-turned heavy ground? Why do they go so fast at this the very first blush of the morning? [...] Why is it that he can never get over a ditch without some struggle in his saddle, some scramble with his horse?' (p. 19). The man who does like it is characterized by active verb phrases in quick succession, which alert us to his eagerness: 'He sniffs at the wind'; 'He tells himself from outward signs where he is'; 'He scorns to ask a question as he passes countrymen in his course' (p. 27). Trollope approximates a style which tries to mimic the immediacy of the chase. The next sentence abruptly undermines these hurried thoughts, exposing their rapidity as a sign of confusion, rather than confidence, and the man's efforts just now have contributed nothing to his progress in the hunt: '[h]e has been at it now for forty minutes, and is in despair' (p. 27). The parallels draw attention to how the one type blends into the other. The man who does not like it passes unsuspected by his colleagues, who assume '[h]e may have been doing fairly well for what anybody knows, and, as he says nothing of himself, his disgrace is at any rate hidden' (p. 19). The man who does like it also feels himself recognized and followed by 'a host of those who know that he is one of them who like it' (p. 27). Appearances mismatch with actual experience and for both men hunting becomes a mixture of enjoyment and despair.

In 'The Man Who Hunts and Never Jumps', Trollope adopts another narratorial strategy, structuring his sketch around a dialogue between the character and his hunting colleagues. While conversing with 'two or three unfortunates who have lost their way' (p. 202), the man who hunts but never jumps does not spare the stragglers' vanity. He recounts in detail the hunt so far and informs his companions that '"[t]here were five or six men who rode the brook"', and 'names the four or five, not mentioning the unfortunate who had spoken last as having been among the number' (p. 202). At the sketch's close, Trollope reveals that despite the reputation for sagacity and amiability the man who hunts but never jumps has demonstrated so far, his fellow hunting types treat him 'as they would regard a herald on a field of battle'; precisely because he does not participate in the 'fighting', this man is 'esteemed by others' to 'be somewhat lower than his brethren' (p. 202). The focus on conversation formally enacts the idea that this is a man whose talk fills the space where action ought to be.

Trollope builds into his sketch an ambivalence based on an association between the physical exertion of hunting and its attendant risks with a display of traditional masculinity. Gender proved a contested point in Trollope's hunting sketches. In 'The Lady Who Rides to Hounds', Trollope's narratorial persona combines assertiveness with personable jocularity, observing that 'the number of such ladies is very much on the increase' in the hunting field, thereby

offering a dual attraction: 'I like to see three or four ladies out in a field', because '[t]heir presence' helps 'to bring [hunting] within the category of gentle sports'.[49] Two types 'among many possible classifications' receive extended description: 'the lady who rides, and demands assistance' and 'the lady who rides, and demands none' (p. 75). Trollope pronounces on the misapprehensions of parents who forbid their daughters from participating, and proffers advice for maintaining feminine tact and gracefulness in the field.

'The Lady Who Rides to Hounds' attracted numerous responses in later issues of the newspaper. Responses moved from the columns of standalone, miscellaneous articles to the correspondence pages, where articles in the form of letters to the editor could engage in a range of political, social, or more light-hearted debates. A letter signed 'Paterfamilias' complains that 'I cannot, as the father of a family' approve 'the presence of English girls in the hunting field' because the attendant 'hurly-burly' and risk of 'accidents' are inappropriate for 'modest Blanches and Dianas'.[50] Trollope replied in another letter two days later, in which he subtly refutes Paterfamilias's version of 'The Lady Who Rides to Hounds' by gesturing towards the foibles of Paterfamilias's character instead:

> I much wish that the truth should be known about hunting as about other of our public amusements, greatly disliking those prejudices and ignorant expectations which fill the minds of many old ladies and many young gentlemen. The old ladies believe in and fear, while the young gentlemen believe in and hope for, certain mysterious iniquities by which hunting and such other pleasures are not, in truth, accompanied.[51]

Trollope hints that Paterfamilias is writing with the same 'prejudices and ignorant expectations' as one of the 'old ladies' or 'young gentlemen', and displaying a feminine frailty or immature credulity unbefitting 'the father of a family'. Crucially, as Fionnuala Dillane has shown, Trollope knew that his opponents were colleagues and fellow contributors to the *Pall Mall Gazette*.[52] During the first six weeks of its publication, circulation numbers struggled to reach above 600, and so any dialogue staged within the newspaper is likely to have belonged to the coterie surrounding its formation.[53] For Dillane, these 'ventriloquised interventions' in the pseudonymous letters pages operate 'as a counterforce to the increasing presence of women in the public sphere', especially when regular, male contributors chose female avatars for their 'queered articulations' of imagined female voices, signing their letters with women's names.[54] Dillane contends that the 'play of personhood removed from the materially real' fashions these letters into 'fictive, manipulative spaces' aimed at undermining the presence of women in public spheres dominated by men, including the press itself.[55]

While the (fictional) Paterfamilias enforced social norms practiced outside the printed page, the letter introduced another dimension of the 'materially real', rooted in the intertextuality generated by the printed page itself. Paterfamilias's letter alludes to 'that charming

[49] Anthony Trollope, 'The Lady Who Rides to Hounds', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 1 (17 February 1865), 75.
[50] 'Fox-Hunting Females', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 1 (25 February 1865), 131.
[51] 'Ladies in the Hunting Field', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 1 (28 February 1865), 147.
[52] Fionnuala Dillane, 'Avatars, Pseudonyms, and the Regulation of Affect: Performing and Occluding Gender in the *Pall Mall Gazette*', in Alexis Easley, Claire Gill and Beth Rodgers (eds), *Women, Periodicals, and Print Culture in Britain, 1830s–1900s: the Victorian Period* (Edinburgh, 2019), 336–51 (344–5). 'Paterfamilias' was Matthew James Higgins, famous for his contributions as 'Jacob Omnium' or 'Paterfamilias' to numerous periodicals, and a frequent writer for the *Pall Mall Gazette* under a range of journalistic personae. See H. C. G. Matthew, 'Higgins, Matthew James [*pseud.* Jacob Omnium] (1810–1868)', <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/13234> *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed 23 June 2025.
[53] Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, Typescript copy of 'Recollections of a long and busy life' by George Smith, 1895, MSS.23191–23192, 106.
[54] Dillane, 'Avatars', 343.
[55] Dillane, 'Avatars', 347–8.

Anonyma whom John Leech used to depict', referring to the illustrations of hunting scenes produced by *Punch* cartoonist John Leech. Leech's 'Hunting Incidents' included instances of women on horseback, and Paterfamilias recreates in prose a scene that already exists as an illustration, urging readers to '(see John Leech *passim*)' to corroborate his letter's 'sketch' of 'modest Blanches and Dianas'.[56] This counter character sketch to Trollope's original piece advertises its greater validity on account of its basis in an already concrete, alternative format. Visual and prose sketches offer an opportunity to creatively imagine character in a way that anchors the immediacy of these occasional pieces in the newspaper within the wider frame of a contemporary literary and artistic trend.

Further letters by other contributors supplemented the debate in subsequent weeks. A letter signed 'A Sportswoman' asserted that riding with the hunt is no more dangerous than attending a 'crowded ball-room' or 'sensational chapel'.[57] Adopting similar methods to Trollope, by turning first to comparison and then reorienting the lens of the character sketch, this writer picks up the bait laid down by Paterfamilias's mention of Leech to ask, 'What has become of our dear old genial "Paterfamilias" of *Punch*?'.[58] A character sketch appeared in the 10 February 1844 issue of *Punch* satirizing the 'Physiology of an "Occasional Correspondent"', another 'Paterfamilias' who is 'always at great pains to inform the editor of the journal he addresses, that he writes his letter, because he feels it is his "duty as a father" so to do'.[59] This intertext sheds another light on the ludic sketching and accompanying correspondence that appeared two decades later in the *Pall Mall Gazette*. Both 'Paterfamilias' and 'A Sportswoman' devote as much space to sketching their opponents as they do to the subject matter in hand. By situating themselves in dialogue with *Punch*, they emphasize that their responses are also conducted *in character*, and in accordance with pre-existing character sketch types, implying that their satire is directed as much at the persona they are writing in as it is at the sketch they are responding to. Sketches generate more instances of sketch-like prose, merging into another form of 'middle', the letter to the editor, a way for coterie members to share contemporary observations and compete for the best comic, literary effects.

Attending to the rich texture of periodical intertexts for the middle pages of the *Pall Mall Gazette* highlights the extent to which the sketch form conferred the literariness this newspaper coveted. Where Trollope tried in his sketches to satirize a present based on its differences to fiction, his respondents resisted this, returning character types that had generated extended, fictional lives of their own to the centre of contemporary debate. The serialization of Trollope's sketches in tandem with these ongoing replies extended the debate across multiple issues and in the process connected these 'middles' to the comic press of previous decades. By 1865, Trollope was a seasoned writer of periodical fiction for the *Cornhill*, and he was formerly a proprietor of the *Fortnightly Review*, a serious journal which notably advocated for signature and opposed the convention of authorial anonymity in print.[60] His unnamed 'middle' persona seemingly conveyed the opposite of these aims, but by turning to character sketch writing, he succeeded in stoking debate across the newspaper's constituent parts. His sketches signalled that established literary traditions and genres would form part of this newly fledged newspaper's profile and imparted a character to its 'middle' pages.

Trollope returned to the character of Paterfamilias in the first of his sketches printed in August on the consumers of a burgeoning tourism industry. In 'The Family that Goes

[56] 'Fox-Hunting Females', 131 (original italics).
[57] 'A Reply to "Paterfamilias"', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 1 (9 March 1865), 220.
[58] 'A Reply to "Paterfamilias"', 220.
[59] 'Physiology of an "Occasional Correspondent"', *Punch*, 6 (10 February 1844), 74.
[60] Mark W. Turner, 'Trollope, Anthony (1815–1882)', in Brake and Demoor (eds), *Dictionary of Nineteenth Century Journalism*, 640.

Abroad because it's the Thing to Do', Trollope placed Paterfamilias and his daughters at the centre of his sketch, gesturing once again to the intertextual links between this newspaper and the satire of *Punch*, as well as at his own *intra*-textual history as a sketch writer in the *Pall Mall Gazette*. Although Trollope's sketches were printed unsigned, readers who followed the debate over propriety initiated in the wake of Trollope's hunting sketches would have recognized the reference embedded in this joke. The recurrence of Paterfamilias initiated another joke particular to this new series of sketches. In making their preparations for a European tour, this family harbours 'no hankering after fashion', and 'are well aware that such tourings are too common to confer fashion or distinction' (p. 1719). Travel has become commonplace, reduced to 'going hither and thither without an attempt to see and know the people of the countries they visit' (p. 1719), with the aim of boasting later 'that they have seen at any rate as much as their neighbours' (p. 1720). Their desire 'not to be behind the world' (p. 1719) necessitates an expansion of the horizons of their experience to fit more neatly into their locally constituted social lives. Paterfamilias belonged in cultural memory to *Punch*, an earlier publication, in which the original iteration of his character type was ridiculed as reactionary. By including this character in his latest sketch, Trollope jokes that Paterfamilias and his family are already 'behind the world'.

III

This process of updating a type that is always already outdated made the sketch a useful form for registering the contours of contemporaneity and mediating novelty. This was the starting point for George Eliot's sketch 'A Word for the Germans', which shared a page in the same issue as Trollope's 'The Man Who Hunts and Does Not Jump'. Eliot published occasional 'middles' during the paper's first months, demonstrating her support for Lewes and Smith; when Lewes became editor of the *Fortnightly Review*, Eliot similarly contributed to its first issue.[61] But publishing in the periodical press also proved consistently generative for Eliot throughout her career, enabling her to range widely across contemporary themes and switch between varied voices.[62]

Eliot positions brevity, and its capaciousness or limits, as the central question of her first sketch, and she communicates this by unpicking the usefulness of character types for articulating identities. Stereotypes clustered around European nationalities rely on a closedmindedness Eliot seeks to counteract in her disavowal of 'certain worn-out phrases about the Germans' (p. 201). Throughout 'A Word for the Germans' Eliot conducts an interrogation of what hides behind linguistic brevity. She returns to the generative and restrictive possibilities of how 'one word stands for many things', and more explicitly couples this interest in the linguistic 'typical' (p. 201) to the workings of the sketch form. Her title introduces this theme in a subtle synecdoche; the singular 'Word' stretches to encompass the ensuing column and a half of prose. Eliot proceeds to problematize the capaciousness of meaning associated with single words and their ability to stand for larger concepts. Brevity expands to include acts of condensed description, whether found in 'caricature' or the 'typical' instances of 'periphrasis' that shape British 'opinions about other nations' (p. 201). The type seeks to be exhaustive in its brevity, and this tension is replicated in the dynamics of the character sketch. 'A Word for the Germans' pursues 'caricature' and types as methods to create scales

[61] For Lewes's editorship of the *Fortnightly*, see: 'GHL Journal, 25–30 December 1864', 172.

[62] For an overview of Eliot's career-long engagement with diverse kinds of print, see: Laurel Brake, 'George Eliot and Print Media: Woman of Letters', *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, 29 (2020) <https://doi.org/10.16995/ntn.1927>.

of comprehension for otherness, their means made available to us out of linguistic play and turns of phrase.

'A Word for the Germans' operates as a sketch on the character of character sketches. This self-conscious questioning pushes against the boundaries of what the sketch form can achieve in a sketch that questions the very methods of sketch writing in the first place. Eliot begins by ventriloquizing the attitude of 'John Bull': 'John Bull is open to instruction', she asserts, and charts the alterations made to John Bull's 'opinions about other nations' (p. 201). Time has worked 'by gentle degrees' to displace the idea of the frivolous 'Frenchman [...] invariably of the dancing-master type' and the 'Italian of John Bull's imagination is no longer exclusively that dangerous jesuitical personage, with dark hair and darker intentions, who avails himself of momentary privacy to feel the edge of his stiletto' (p. 201). The 'type' and the 'personage' share in these examples an adjacency to performance contexts, the display of the 'dancing-master' matched by the affectedness of a stage villain who turns aside to reveal a concealed blade to the audience. Eliot plays with the exaggeratedness of these 'favourite old portable notions' (p. 201) to reinforce their outmoded status but in doing so, she does not elaborate on the nature of the revised 'opinions' that now hold John Bull's conviction. Supplanted yet uncorrected, Eliot leaves these types uncontradicted in a way that makes clear her resistance to character typing is not an outright disavowal of its rhetorical usefulness but a questioning of the accuracy and ubiquity of the assumptions such types produce.

Eliot dissects the misconception that the German people are best described by the profession of 'cloudy metaphysicians' (p. 201) with a sympathy that is nonetheless scathing in its understanding as to why such generalizations might arise. Eliot contends that Kant, 'the most eminent of German metaphysicians [...] is cloudy in no other sense than that in which a mathematician is cloudy to one ignorant of mathematics', and asks '[w]hat book more nebulous than *Euclid* to a reader acquainted neither with the subject-matter nor with the terminology?' (p. 201). Eliot pointedly makes strange the estrangement readers profess to feel when confronted with metaphysics. Taking 'mathematics' as her example, she unpicks the assumption that empirical methods of knowledge-making are automatically more straightforward to understand. Eliot is not concerned with eliminating caricature, but she interrogates the bases on which it rests. In fact, she interprets humour as performing an important social function, part of building a collective humility: '[w]e have no objection to caricatures; each nation should be content to lend itself to the humour of the world in this passive way' (p. 201). As we have seen, Eliot herself finds the opportunity to participate in this comic impulse irresistible. In addition to her opening caricature of John Bull, she constructs her own caricature of Germanic syntax, describing it as 'all stairs and landing-places without any floors' (p. 201).

In an article about maintaining openness to new ideas unconstrained by nationality, Eliot locates in the sketch's capacity for description not only its limits in a tendency towards generalization, but the capacity for a redemptive 'close observation'. For 'a caricature to be good', it must 'come from close observation' (p. 201), but to hold Eliot's own sketch up to this criterion is to be struck with the ambivalence of her attempt. Returning to her refutation of all Germans as 'cloudy metaphysicians', Eliot claims that 'quite as many are bakers, making excellent bread – not inferior, perhaps, to the British in any quality except heaviness' (p. 201). The minor clause turns Eliot's remark into a joke that contains its own punchline. Her syntax resists clarity—is 'heaviness' a mark of 'inferior [...] quality' belonging to British bread, or an inescapable attribute of otherwise commendable German baked goods? Eliot has satirized throughout the idea of easily identifiable national character types, and her aim of complicating this assumption reaches its utmost ambivalence in this example. This uncertainty unites British and German traits as occupying the same position; they could both be the

potential target of her joke. Eliot's satire becomes further impenetrable, enacting a levelling between nations that refutes the prevalence of character type at the same time as its humour depends on a seemingly universal applicability of type, or at the very least the shared nature of certain, typical characteristics.

Further irony accrues as an indigestible 'heaviness' surrounds the message of Eliot's character sketch on character type. She conducts her experiment in 'close observation' within the truncated space of a periodical article, and gestures towards the format, as well as the form, of her sketch. Joking that if Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* 'is not fit for the club table' (p. 201), it is not to do with the author's nationality, but with readers' unpreparedness for Kant's 'terminology' (p. 201), Eliot imagines '[s]ome gentleman there, turning over the pages and seeing such terms as *synthetic judgments*, *antinomies*, and the like' (p. 201; original italics), before giving up in confusion. Picturing her article's likely reception, the indeterminacy of Eliot's sketch persona renders it uncertain whether her deixis, 'there', situates her narrator as writing and observing from within a gentleman's club—a setting from which she would be otherwise excluded on account of her gender—or remains outside, postulating a speculative caricature of clubland instead.

Eliot adopted the female persona of 'Saccharissa', a 'puzzled' housewife braving 'slowness in composition' (p. 880), to voice concerns over the superficialities of social niceties in 'Futile Falsehoods' and the difficulty of managing expenses that exceed one's income in 'Modern Housekeeping'. Although framed as letters to the editor, these articles relied on features associated with the sketch form. Eliot's use of a comically overdetermined persona turned this satire on contemporary excesses into a character sketch of those who perpetuated such habits. Kathleen McCormack suggests that Eliot's gendered persona embeds another layer of irony into her satire on 'women and determinism' in the 'Saccharissa' articles.[63] Eliot, as 'Saccharissa', acknowledged this irony at the end of 'Modern Housekeeping', as she conjectured how other correspondents might reply: 'Perhaps you will say, Why, then, if you are a sensible woman, do you go on doing what you know is objectionable!' (p. 880). This dynamic, whereby her persona is implicated in the object of her satire yet eludes explanation, anticipated the opening line of Eliot's later book of sketches, *Impressions of Theophrastus Such* (1879): 'It is my habit to give an account to myself of the characters I meet with: can I give any true account of my own?'.[64]

We can already see Eliot's sketch form working ironically as both a medium and resistance to 'close observation' in the *Pall Mall Gazette*. The flexible synergies between form and format offered by newspaper genres, especially the 'middle', chime with her formal experiments in the affordances and movements of description and character type (explored differently again in *Middlemarch*). Eliot works to balance comedy and capaciousness, accuracy and abstraction, within this projected technique. If *Impressions* 'foregrounds the fragility of cultural certainties', in Dillane's words, Eliot's *Pall Mall Gazette* articles shared this aim.[65] Her sketches challenged the expectation for description systemic to the sketch form; instead, character is perceived relative to assumptions about contemporary types. The impenetrability of Eliot's satire in 'A Word for the Germans' renders it bathetic in a way that pits the intellectuality of her concerns against their everydayness. This bathos resembles the mediocrity and disappointment so essential to Trollope's hunting types. Both writers' satires challenged the applicability of certain character types by writing another 'caricature' to take their place. Eliot wrote to test how

[63] Kathleen McCormack, 'The Saccharissa Essays: George Eliot's Only Woman Persona', *Nineteenth Century Studies*, 4 (1990), 41–61 (45).
[64] George Eliot, *Impressions of Theophrastus Such*, ed. Nancy Henry (London, 1994), 3.
[65] Fionnuala Dillane, *Before George Eliot: Marian Evans and the Periodical Press* (Cambridge, 2013), 183.

far writing that adheres to a principle of 'close observation' might align with the descriptive language of 'caricature' and transferred this into the knotty semantics of her sketch. Trollope used narrative strategies to create an impression of character as self-evidencing, occluding, or transcending, the observational frame of the sketch-writer.

Eliot and Trollope's sketches shared an interest in the productive or reductive uses of character types, which also brought into focus Smith and Greenwood's bibliographical designs for imparting a distinctive character to their newspaper. The 7 March 1865 issue containing Eliot's 'A Word for the Germans' and Trollope's 'The Man Who Hunts and Never Jumps' also exemplified the typical order of articles and organizational strategies replicated across individual numbers of the *Pall Mall Gazette*. Their sketches occur on pages nine and 10 of this 12-page issue, situated immediately after the lists of stocks and shares, and just before the final, back page of adverts. This placement lends new meaning to the idea of a newspaper 'middle'. Rather than referring to the physical space of the middle pages, miscellaneous sketches come in the 'middle' of more commercial content. The 'Share List' displays figures of 'Closing Prices' relating to 'Business done' that day, and the miscellaneous articles of the latter pages intervene between this focus on goods traded or sold and the items exhibited as available to buy with one's disposable income.[66] Eliot and Trollope's sketches enact a movement from the world of business and external affairs to that of leisure pursuits, from the hunting field to perusing journals on the 'club table'. Yet this movement in the direction of *home* also unfolds on a wider scale. Namely, the contents of these sketches mediate between the international outlook of much of the *Pall Mall Gazette*'s news reporting and the impact of these events on British daily life. Such comedic, lively portrayals of situations recognizable to readers' everyday lives are an interface, or 'middle', in which they can imagine their own lives encountering consequences from ongoing current, political affairs. The news content for 7 March 1865 was no exception; it moved back and forth between events at home and abroad or attended to the inseparability of these imaginatively charged locations. The leading article concerned reactions to the trial of an Italian man sentenced to capital punishment for the murder of an Englishman during a brawl at a London public house, but where eyewitness accounts differed as to which assailant first produced a knife.[67] Eliot's explicit warning against stereotyping neighbouring European nationalities and Trollope's implicit insistence on the equanimity of popular, typically British leisure practices position ideas of national character as central to understanding the mobile, international relations of modern life.

Benedict Anderson influentially theorized the impact of print media on processes of national identity formation as linked to the ability of newspapers to foster 'an idea of steady, solid simultaneity through time' for 'a specific imagined world of vernacular readers'.[68] Metonymic of a wider vision of British character, sketches imparted a sense of this 'simultaneity' to the *Pall Mall Gazette*, because they depended for their humour on a generalized experience of contemporary manners it was assumed readers would recognize. At issue level, 'middles' signalled their status as one genre in a compilation, and the sketch form paralleled this relational thinking at article level in its synthesis of particular examples with general trends. Laura Mandell argues that the 'case history'—accounts of individual 'cases' from which readers abstracted general principles—became conceptually possible following the greater anonymity conferred by mass print, which paradoxically encouraged readers to identify psychologically with textual content.[69] The sketch form enabled contributors to combine

[66] 'Share List – This Day', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 1 (7 March 1865), 200.
[67] 'The Pelizzioni Case', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 1 (7 March 1865), 193–4.
[68] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised edition (London, 2006), 63.
[69] Laura Mandell, *Breaking the Book: Print Humanities in the Digital Age* (Oxford, 2015), 73–100.

instructive description with ludic satire, as their sketch-writing personae imparted a sense of narratorial distance from their subject matter, encouraging readers to identify not with the characters under discussion, but with the ability to deduce and recognize these types as a sign of one's fluency in social customs. This tension between generality and particularity stayed with the sketch in subsequent decades. When W. T. Stead—former editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*—founded the sixpenny monthly *Review of Reviews* in 1890, his programme promised a 'character-sketch of some man or woman who has figured conspicuously before the world in the previous month' in every issue.[70] Stead styled his lengthy sketches as more review-like than belonging to the 'middle' genre as part of his mission to condense for the 'busiest and poorest' the 'movement of contemporary history'.[71]

Stephen foregrounds the importance of selection for creating recognizable types in his conclusion to his Cambridge sketches: 'I might add many other sketches to my limited gallery. I have not attempted to exhaust my materials but to select a few of our most characteristic types'.[72] Stephen's series relies for its coherence on a tension between inexhaustibility and selectivity, with the consequence that what is 'most characteristic' becomes susceptible to replacement. Supposedly incontrovertible as epitomes, but potentially replaceable by 'many other sketches', this susceptibility to change permeated Stephen and other writers' sketches with a sense of their capacity to mediate such changes. Sketches redirected attention from the singular events reported in leading articles to contemporaneity as deduced from within the 'middle' of daily life.

Newnham College, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, United Kingdom

[70] 'Programme', *Review of Reviews*, 1 (January 1890), 14.
[71] 'Programme', 14. On Stead's ideology, see: Stewart J. Brown, *W. T. Stead: Nonconformist and Newspaper Prophet* (Oxford, 2019), 102–6.
[72] Leslie Stephen, 'Sketches from Cambridge. No. XII. – Conclusion', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 1 (26 May 1865), 1018–19.