

A Mixed Picture



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Media Transfer and Media Competition
in Illustrated Periodicals, 1840s-1960s

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Media Transfer and Media Competition in Illustrated Periodicals, 1840s-1960s

An Introduction

«It must not [...] be forgotten that some of the unexampled success of this little work is to be ascribed to the liberal employment of illustrations,» posits Charles Knight in the *Preface* to the first bound volume of *The Penny Magazine* in December of 1832.¹ Evidently – and unsurprisingly – the commercial significance of illustrations for such periodicals was acknowledged from the outset. A decade later, in the first volume of *The Illustrated London News*, its founder and editor Herbert Ingram is fascinated by a question impossible for him to answer: «What will it do for the future?»² Ingram highlights the archival function of periodicals when he assumes that they «will pour the lore of the Antiquarian into the scholar’s yearning soul, and teach him truth about those who have gone before him, as it were, with the Pictorial Alphabet of Art».³ One of these early scholars, Mason Jackson, confirms «[t]he inherent love of pictorial representation in all races of men and in every age», which to him explains how «the illustrated newspaper has become a prominent feature on the journalism

of every country».⁴ When Jackson published his treatise on *The Pictorial Press: Its Origin and Progress* in 1885, he was so deeply involved with illustrated periodicals in his role as the *Illustrated London News*’s art editor that it seems fair to assume that his notion of multimodal communication was strongly shaped by the medium long before he sought to write its history. Following Ingram’s conviction, Jackson, too, assumes the purpose of the illustrated press to be that of «an inexhaustible storehouse for the historian»,⁵ or, as the German *Illustrierte Zeitung* puts it in 1843, the illustrated press depicts «ein treues Bild der Gegenwart den Gegenwärtigen und den Zukünftigen».⁶ From the outset, therefore, the illustrated press was fascinated by the anticipation of its retrospective exploration by future historians.

With regard to the future of illustrated journalism, another early practitioner and scholar, Clement Shorter, the *Illustrated London News*’ editor in the early years of the 1890s, asserted that «[i]t is largely a matter as to the extent to which

- 1 [Charles Knight]: *Preface*. In: *The Penny Magazine* 1 (1832), pp. iii-iv, here p. iii.
- 2 [Herbert Ingram]: *Preface*. In: *The Illustrated London News* 1 (1842), pp. iii-iv, here p. iii.
- 3 [Ingram]: *Preface*, p. iv. On the archival function of periodicals see Gustav Frank / Madleen Podewski: *The Object of Periodical Studies*. In: Jutta Ernst / Dagmar von Hoff / Oliver Scheiding (Eds.): *Periodical Studies Today. Multidisciplinary Analyses*. Leiden, Boston 2022, pp. 29-53, especially pp. 38-47.
- 4 Mason Jackson: *The Pictorial Press: Its Origin and Progress*. London 1885, p. 1, 2.
- 5 *Ibid.*, p. 361.
- 6 «offer a faithful image of the present to the present and the future». *Vorwort*. In: *Illustrierte Zeitung* 1 (1843), not paginated.

- 7 Clement K. Shorter: *Illustrated Journalism: Its Past and Its Future*. In: *The Contemporary Review* 75 (1 January 1899), pp. 481-494, here p. 493.
- 8 Robert Hodge / Gunther Kress: *Social Semiotics*. Ithaca 1988; Hans-Jürgen Bucher: *Mehr als Text mit Bild: Zur Multimodalität der illustrierten Zeitungen und Zeitschriften im 19. Jahrhundert*. In: Natalia Igl / Julia Menzel (Eds.): *Illustrierte Zeitschriften um 1900: Mediale Eigenlogik, Multimodalität und Metaisierung*. Bielefeld 2016, pp. 25-73.
- 9 Shorter: *Illustrated Journalism*, p. 494.
- 10 See Kevin G. Barnhurst / John C. Nerone: *The Form of News. A History*. New York, London 2001; James Moran: *Printing Presses: History and Development from the Fifteenth Century to Modern Times*. Berkeley 1973; Madleen Podewski: *Mediengesteuerte Wandlungsprozesse. Zum Verhältnis zwischen Text und Bild in illustrierten Zeitschriften der Jahrhundertmitte*. In: Katja Mellmann / Jesko Reiling (Eds.): *Vergessene Konstellationen literarischer Öffentlichkeit zwischen 1840 und 1885*. Berlin, Boston 2016, pp. 61-79; Nikolaus Weichselbaumer: *Linotype und Teletypesetter. Satztechnologie als Taktgeber für die Entwicklung des Zeitungslayouts*. In: Andreas Beck / Nicola Kaminski / Volker Mergenthaler / Jens Ruchatz (Eds.): *Visuelles Design: Die Journalseite als gestaltete Fläche / Visual Design: The Periodical Page as a Designed Surface*. Hannover 2019, pp. 37-53.
- 11 See e.g., Gerry Beegan: *The Mass Image: A Social History of Photomechanical Reproduction in Victorian London*. Basingstoke, New York 2008; Thierry Gervais: *L'illustration photographique: Naissance du spectacle de l'information (1843-1914)*. Thèse de doctorat d'histoire et civilisations, EHESS 2007, <https://issuu.com/lhivic/docs/l-illustration-photographique>.

capitalists may be found to run enormous risks for an uncertain result».⁷ From this perspective, it is predominantly the market that will decide on what succeeds with capital pre-determining what to test out in the first place. Evidently, the combination of textual and visual features in the press has proven successful both economically and socially. For this reason, magazines and newspapers have been analysed as examples of multimodal communication and image semiotics.⁸ As Shorter suggests at the end of the nineteenth century: «the illustrated newspaper can no more be crushed out».⁹ As it turns out, it is here to stay – in scholarship as much as in the everyday media landscape, even though it was recognized early on in its history that change is an important driver of the pictorial press. Constant change of the pictorial press later became a topic of research in its own right.¹⁰ In fact, technological advances such as the rise of photography were integral to ushering in the age of the «Mass Image», changing and shaping the illustrated press for ever. And periodical studies have taken account of this.¹¹ Some developments, like the introduction of photography or halftone printing, proved outright revolutionary and affected periodicals in profound ways. The recent emergence of content creation using machine learning software tools is a new revolution already underway, with jobs of creators increasingly being replaced by «operators» that «prompt» evermore capable software programmes to generate texts and images tailored – albeit not by human tailors – for the respective purpose.

Considering periodicals both as objects and agents of a market that is de-

termined by competition and transfer raises awareness on how the press undergoes a continuous process of change on many levels, e.g., the economics and technology of information gathering and transmitting, of printing and dissemination, of typography and design, of making and multiplying pictures across geographic and cultural space, and time. When in the first volume of *The Illustrated London News* Ingram brazenly claims that his periodical «opened up the world of *Illustration* as connected with News, and the quick-sighted and sound-judging British public peopled it at once», he speaks from a distinctively national perspective. Speaking for the whole editorial board in the first-person plural, he adds: «We know that the advent of an Illustrated Newspaper in this country *must* mark an epoch» and asserts that the «[p]ublic have been greedy for it and have devoured it eagerly».¹² It is clear that the large-scale introduction of multimodal serial communication has permanently changed how we gather and process information as well as what we expect print and (later) other media to be like. However, the colonial underpinnings of Ingram's rhetoric obscure the fact that the success of the illustrated periodical press was based on economies of international competition and cross-cultural transfer from the outset.

Periodical research, nationally organised, as it is still today to a large extent, has long perpetuated this limited national view when examining the importance of the illustrated press for processes of cultural and political nation building.¹³ As a result, scholarship has focused heavily on

a small set of prominent illustrated journals such as *The Illustrated London News*, *The Penny Magazine*, *Die Gartenlaube*, or *L'Illustration*, which have then been contrasted with so-called 'little magazines'. As fundamental and important as these approaches are, several scholars have argued more recently for multidisciplinary analyses and a transculturally informed widening of periodical research.¹⁴ Being an outcome of the 9th annual conference of the *European Society for Periodical Research* (ESPRit) on «Periodicals Formats in the Market. Economies of Space and Time, Competition and Transfer», this volume wants to contribute to the liberation of periodical research from the narrow corset of national research perspectives.

Surprisingly enough, this objective turns out to be compatible with the interest for specific local cultures and regions, as Marguerite Corporaal's contribution «Transferring Connemara. European Illustrated Periodicals as Transnational Agents of Regional Remediation, 1870-95» demonstrates. Quite the opposite, the fascination with regions in countries of nineteenth century Europe that marks the starting point of Corporaal's argument, heavily based on the circulation of images and narratives about regions by borrowing, reprinting, re-using and translating across the borders of serials and nations. Rooted in an interconnected economy by means of official trade and less official piracy in news and illustrations, cultural conceptualisations of the region in illustrated periodicals have a significant transnational dimension. Since the nineteenth century, the circu-

lation of texts has been fuelled by technical, distributional, and economic connections, but also by people who moved or were forced to move within or beyond European borders. Migration and colonialism are therefore significant sources both for the transnational circulation of printed material, the transfer of regional representations, and the articulation of local identity in and through magazines. Shromona Das, in her chapter «The Humour of Anxiety: Caste, Emasculation and Female Deviancy in Colonial Bengali Caricatures, 1870s–1930s» discusses Bengali humorous periodicals that are more than adaptations, namely an act of cultural appropriation and subversion by accommodating the wit and aesthetics of the colonial model of the British Empire's *Punch* within the cultural context of Bengali humour. Her argument concerning the gendered nature of the aesthetics and politics of humour that is associated with an attempt to establish an upper caste 'masculine' tradition of journalism brings the discussed Bengali periodicals not only in competition with the colonial model, but also with other non-satirical magazines of their time.

As the number of illustrated periodicals grew, so did the number of images printed per issue, a vast archive of pictures was created that exceeds more 'traditional' humanities approaches to analysis and interpretation. Recent research on periodicals has utilized image recognition software and other computational approaches to outline ways of processing the enormous number of texts and pictures published and re-published in the pictorial press across the world.¹⁵

- 12 Ingram: Preface, p. iii.
- 13 See Benedict Anderson's seminal study: *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Revised edition. London, New York 2006; and more closely focussed on periodicals: Peter W. Sinnema: *Dynamics of the Pictured Page: Representing the Nation in the Illustrated London News*. Aldershot 1998; Beegan: *The Mass Image*; Laurel Brake / Marysa Demoor (Eds.): *The Lure of Illustration in the Nineteenth Century: Picture and Press*. Basingstoke, New York 2009; Jean-Pierre Bacot: *Le Rôle des magazines illustrés dans la construction du nationalisme au XIXe siècle et au début du XXe siècle*. In: *Réseaux 107* (2001), pp. 265-293; Madleen Podewski: *Akkumulieren – Mischen – Abwechseln: Wie die Gartenlaube eine anschauliche Welt druckt und was dabei aus 'Literatur' wird* (1853, 1866, 1885). Berlin 2020, <http://dx.doi.org/10.17169/refubium-28136>.
- 14 See the edited volumes: Jutta Ernst / Dagmar von Hoff / Oliver Scheiding (Eds.): *Periodical Studies Today: Multidisciplinary Analyses*. Leiden, Boston 2022; Evangelhia Stead / Hélène Védrine (Eds.): *L'Europe des revues II, 1860–1930. Réseaux et circulations des modèles*. Paris 2018; Evangelhia Stead / Hélène Védrine (Eds.): *L'Europe des revues (1880-1920): Estampes, Photographies, Illustrations*. Paris 2008; the study of Thomas Smits on *The European Illustrated Press and the Emergence of a Transnational Visual Culture of the News, 1842–1870*. London, New York 2020; and Clare Pettitt: *Serial Revolutions 1848: Writing, Politics, Form*. Oxford 2022.

- 15 See Paul Fyfe / Qian Ge: Image Analytics and the Nineteenth-Century Illustrated Newspaper. In: *Journal of Cultural Analytics* 3.1 (2018), <https://doi.org/10.22148/16.026>; Jana Keck / Mila Oiva / Paul Fyfe: Lajos Kossuth and the Transnational News: A Computational and Multilingual Approach to Digitized Newspaper Collections. In: *Media History* 29.3 (2023), pp. 287-304; Beatrix Joyeux-Prunel: Internationalization through the Lens: Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Art Periodicals and Decentred Circulation. In: *Journal of European Periodical Studies* 4.2 (2019), pp. 48-69.
- 16 Madleen Podewski: «Blätter und Blüten» und Bilder: Zur medienspezifischen Regulierung von Text-Bild-Beziehungen in der *Gartenlaube*. *Illustriertes Familienblatt*. In: Gunhild Berg / Magdalena Gronau / Michael Pilz (Eds.): *Zwischen Literatur und Journalistik: Generische Formen in Periodika des 18. bis 21. Jahrhunderts*. Heidelberg 2016, pp. 153-173.
- 17 Tom Gretton: The Pragmatics of Page Design in Nineteenth-Century General-Interest Weekly Illustrated News Magazines in London and Paris. In: *Art History* 33 (2010), pp. 680-709; Andreas Beck: Driving Wild Cattle in Illustrated Magazines from Britain to France, and from France to Germany. Migrating Illustrations as a Means of National Self-Assurance. In: *PeriodIcon* 1.1 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.46586/PerIc.2021.1.1-20>.
- 18 Cf. Vincent Fröhlich / Alice Morin / Jens Ruchatz: Logics of Re-Using Photographs: Negotiating the Mediality of the Magazine. In: *Journal of European Periodical Studies* 7.2 (2022) pp. 26-51; Andreas Beck: Crossing Borders between London and Leipzig, between Image and Text: A Case Study of the *Illustrierte Zeitung* (1843). In: *Victorian Periodicals Review* 51.3 (2018), pp. 408-433; Paul Fyfe: Illustrating the Accident: Railways and the Catastrophic Picturesque

However, it has been shown that illustrated periodicals employ specific forms of image-text-relations both on the level of each individual issue and of each periodical.¹⁶ Accordingly, in order to understand how and to what effect pictures are used in periodicals with regard to questions of competition and transfer, close readings of periodicals are of great value. Thus, traditional approaches have proven to make sense of design decisions that go into the mise-en-page of pictures and texts,¹⁷ or the circulation and re-use of images or photographs within periodicals as well as other media formats.¹⁸

Illustrations, just like textual matter, produce and attain different meanings when re-used and literally re-framed in new media contexts. Thus, they not only contribute to cultural exchange, but can lead to significant shifts, and, what is more, to a potentiation of meanings. Reinterpretations through re-use in other national or medial contexts are at the heart of Jakob Kihlberg's chapter on representations of political meetings in mid-nineteenth century periodicals, «A European Visual Imaginary? Political Meetings in Mid-Nineteenth Century Illustrated News Magazines in Great Britain, France, and Germany». Although the periodical press in the 1840s had access for the first time to (and increasingly relied on) shared visualisations of current events by traffic in stereotyped images between different countries, Kihlberg puts the emergence of a common transnational European visual imaginary and political iconography into question. His analysis rather suggests that despite the economic interconnectedness and the

heavy transfer of visual material between European periodicals, we must consider specific national visual cultures of news. Their significance was closely related to a particular nineteenth-century public culture of spectatorship in which oratory performances and political meetings were not only conceived as newsworthy but their visualisation as a political act.

The fact that the layout of periodicals ascribes different meanings to images by recontextualising and reframing them, complicates the idea of a transnational European visual culture. In other words, images are deeply political, both in what they show or don't show, and how they are used and contextualised. As John Hartley convincingly and clearly lays out, [n]o picture is pure image; all of them, still and moving, graphic and photographic, are «talking pictures», either literally, or in association with contextual speech, writing or discourse. Pictures are social, visual, spatial and sometimes communicative. As visual text and social communication they construct literal social space within and between the frames and fields of which they're made. Pictures of all kinds are aesthetic, textual works, capable of personal appreciation and individual interpretation, but at the same they are institutionally produced, circulated within an economy, and used both socially and culturally. Not only is their own internal space organized or framed, but also relations are developed between them and spectators, users, audiences or publics, real or imagined, outside the frame. Pictures

are political as such; it is not merely that some pictures, because of their subject matter, are more obviously public and political than others.¹⁹

Moreover, as French poet Paul Valéry pointed out, the printed page can – and therefore should – be looked at as a picture in its own right: «Une page est une image. Elle donne une impression totale, présente un bloc ou un système de blocs et de strates, de noirs et de blancs, une tache de figure et d'intensité plus ou moins heureuses.»²⁰ Seen from this angle, the page layout itself becomes not only pictorial but a political aspect of the periodical. The re-issuing of texts and pictures, the changing of media formats, the circulation of texts and images through trade or piracy, then, too, is a political act.²¹ That was clearly the case when comics as the epitome of American mass culture were introduced to European intellectual periodicals in the 1960s by a group of left-wing Italian intellectuals, as Mara Logaldo suggests. Her chapter «When *Peanuts* Became *linus*. Re-Contextualisation through Translation» traces the early years of Italian magazine *linus*. After acquiring the rights from the United Features Syndicate, *linus* featured the iconic *Peanuts* comics along with various classical graphic literature and comics of (at that time) lesser-known Italian authors. Paradoxically, *linus* can be seen as an attempt to simultaneously locate comics in and deflect them of a culture of politically ambitious intellectual criticism. This highlights the fact that being part of a periodical that served as a «space of encounter» clearly determined both by its social functions and medial represen-

tations, the comics needed to be made accessible both linguistically and culturally.²²

The way illustrated magazines act as cultural mediators within relations of media competition and transfer becomes even clearer in light of the «cultural Cold War» which was a significant accompanying symptom to the bipolar competition between political systems in the twentieth century. Focussing on «Cold-War Science and Its Illustrated Wonders. Politics, Play and Visual Education of the Italian Youth in the Leftwing Weekly *Pioniere*», Giulio Argenio draws on the mid-twentieth century discussion about comics and illustrated entertainment as a dangerous and potentially morally and psychologically corrupting form of mass communication. Communist education all over Europe used print mass-culture and visual communication to portray the ambition of socialist science and culture in the context of more general ideological controversies and propaganda. In that light, *Pioniere*, a magazine issued by the communist Italian youth and children association, can be seen as a playful version of transnational ideological transfer, namely from the Soviet Union, by visual means that directly address the preferences of the young audience.

However, periodical migration and recontextualization not only has cultural and political implications but may also affect the medial status of textual and visual content, as Will Straw's chapter on «Cross-Border Traffic, Moral Crusades and Hybrid Form in Canadian Print Culture» shows. At the heart of the chapter is a corpus of actual or, more often, alleged

in the *Illustrated London News*. In: *Victorian Periodicals Review* 46.1 (2013), pp. 61-91; Tom Gretton: *Difference and Competition: The Imitation and Reproduction of Fine Art in a Nineteenth-Century Illustrated Weekly News Magazine*. In: *Oxford Art Journal* 23.2 (2000), pp. 143-162.

- 19 John Hartley: *The Politics of Pictures. The Creation of the Public in the Age of Popular Media*. London, New York 1992, p. 28. See also Elke Grittmann: *Das politische Bild: Fotojournalismus und Pressefotografie in Theorie und Empirie*. Cologne 2007; Julia Thomas: *Pictorial Victorians: The Inscription of Values in Word and Image*. Athens, Ohio 2004.
- 20 Paul Valéry: *Les deux vertus d'un livre*. In: *Paul Valéry: Œuvres*. Ed. Jean Hytier, vol. 2, Paris 1960, pp. 1246-1250, p. 1246f.; Kristof Van Gansen: «Une page est une image». *Text as Image in Arts et métiers graphiques*. In: *Journal of European Periodical Studies* 2.2 (2017), pp. 61-76.
- 21 Gustav Frank/Madleen Podweski: «Was aber schön ist, selig scheint es in ihm selbst»: Was wird aus Mörikes «Auf eine Lampe» in Zeitung und Buch. In: Andreas Beck/Nicola Kaminski/Volker Mergethaler/Jens Ruchatz (Eds.): *Visuelles Design: Die Journalseite als gestaltete Fläche/Visual Design: The Periodical Page as a Designed Surface*. Hannover 2019, pp. 261-286.
- 22 On the idea of periodicals as a «space of encounter» cf. Laurel Brake/Julie F. Codell: *Introduction: Encountering the Press*. In: *Encounters in the Victorian Press: Editors, Authors, Readers*. *Palgrave Studies in Nineteenth-Century Writing and Culture*. London 2005, pp. 1-7.

- 23 Cf. Corinna Norrick-Rühl: *Periodicity, Subscription, and Mass Circulation: Mail-Order Book Culture Reconsidered*. In: *Journal of European Periodical Studies* 7.2 (2022), pp. 8-25.
- 24 Evanghelia Stead: *The Economics of Illustration: The Revue illustrée in the 1890s*. In: *Journal of European Periodical Studies* 1.2 (2016), pp. 65-85, here p. 82.
- 25 See Christian A. Bachmann / Nora Ramtke: *Planning Virtual Conferences in the Humanities: A Detailed Look at the 9th International ESPRit Conference*. In: *Journal of European Periodical Studies* 6.2 (2021), pp. 109-18.
- 26 Nora Ramtke / Mirela Husić / Christian A. Bachmann: *Periodical Formats in the Market: Economies of Space and Time, Competition and Transfer*. In: *Journal of European Periodical Studies* 7.2 (2022), pp. 1-7.

Canadian pulp magazines of the 1940s whose publishers digested, repackaged, or transformed content from American or British publications of sensationalist and semi-pornographic character of the previous two decades. Straw argues that this media transfer was directed outwards to the marginal market that was Canada during that period and downwards in terms of quality and cultural value when being re-used as cheap magazine-like prints. Media transfer thus blurs the line between books and magazines and challenges the implicit hierarchy within print culture ranging from hard-cover book publications to cheaply produced serials.²³ Similarly, Christian A. Bachmann's chapter «From the Newspaper to the Book: Little Orphan Annie's Media Entanglement and Transformation» investigates the transformations Harold Gray's comic strip *Little Orphan Annie* underwent when it was extracted from the publication and reception rhythms typical for the daily newspaper that is the *Chicago Tribune* to be re-printed in book form by New York children's book publisher Cupples & Leon. Abridged, re-shuffled, and, most importantly, severed from its former spatial and temporal framing in the newspaper, Annie's books shake up the comic narrative, affect its most basic cultural connections. As Evanghelia Stead reminds us: «Much remains to be done in this field across Europe and overseas, in order to better assess the way visual culture was built. Image-making proves a rich and innovative world based on exchange, circulation and technical innovation. As such, it resolutely challenges our conception of centre versus peripheries and small versus big.»²⁴

The present volume seeks to add to the research on the pictorial press and its politics of transnational and transmedial transfer, collecting (predominately) papers that were first presented at the 9th conference of the *European Society for Periodical Studies* (ESPRit) which was held online at Ruhr University Bochum in 2021.²⁵ As we prepared a selection of papers from the conference for publication in ESPRit's *Journal of European Periodical Studies*,²⁶ it emerged that a trove of papers from across the conference dealt with different aspects of the pictorial press. Because space and time for the special issue were limited, and given the need for large illustrations, we decided to compile a second volume – this time in print. Both publications are part of the same effort to provide even more momentum to periodical studies.

We thank our contributors for sharing their knowledge and ideas and Robin Migowski and Ioana Moldovan for their support in correcting and editing the manuscript. Special thanks go to Mirela Husić, who accompanied and supported the project at its early stage. This publication, like the preceding conference and the related special issue on «Periodical Formats in the Market: Economies of Space and Time, Competition and Transfer» in the *Journal of European Periodical Studies*, was made possible by the generous support of the Research Unit 2288 «Journal Literature» by the German Research Foundation and the Ruhr University Bochum.

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A European Visual Imaginary? Political Meetings in Mid-Nineteenth Century Illustrated News Magazines in Great Britain, France, and Germany

Contemporary research suggests that the early years of illustrated news, the decade after the founding of the *Illustrated London News* in 1842, saw the emergence of a transnational European visual imaginary.¹ By this is meant a shared visualisation of current events available to elites in different countries that read the illustrated weekly news magazines, either foreign or domestic, that were at the time still quite expensive. In certain respects, this is surely true because printed magazines were often exported, the format of the illustrated weekly itself was quickly internationalised and the traffic in stereotyped images between countries was often intense. During the 1840s, magazines like the *Illustrirte Zeitung* and *L'illustration* were founded on the model of the *Illustrated London News* and also imported many images produced by their London predecessor.²

A notable example of imagery that circulated this way is representations of political meetings. Generally speaking, public gatherings of this kind were only tolerated in comparably 'liberal' coun-

tries like Britain, Belgium and the United States but they spread across Europe in visual form through the nascent illustrated press.³ Such images are interesting in their own right because they thematise important questions about popular participation in politics during a turbulent historical period, but the way they were used and reused in different contexts also tell a lot about how news images circulated more generally, and how they functioned. Consequently, an analysis of images of political meetings can also help put the idea of a transnational visual culture of the news into perspective.

In the present paper, I will first outline the role played by images of political gatherings, such as meetings and demonstrations, in the general context of the early illustrated press. With the help of two examples – a 'repeal meeting' in Dublin and a 'reform meeting' in London – I will then discuss more specifically how individual representations of political meetings could be interpreted and reinterpreted when used in different national and medial contexts. As a con-

- 1 Jean-Pierre Bacot: *Le Rôle des magazines illustrés dans la construction du nationalisme au XIXe siècle et au début du XXe siècle*. In: *Réseaux* 107 (2001), p. 273. Also see Jean-Pierre Bacot: *La Presse illustrée au XIXe siècle. Une histoire oubliée*. Limoges 2005, pp. 39-42.
- 2 Thomas Smits: *The European Illustrated Press and the Emergence of a Transnational Visual Culture of the News, 1842-1870*. London and New York 2020, esp. ch. 2. For a focused study on the workings of such circulation in terms of the production of meaning, see Andreas Beck: *Crossing Borders between London and Leipzig, between Image and Text: A Case Study of the Illustrirte Zeitung (1843)*. In: *Victorian Periodicals Review* 51:3 (2018), pp. 408-433.
- 3 As part of the ongoing research project 'Making the people visible', founded by the Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation, I am investigating how news images in early illustrated magazines were related to notions of 'the people' as a political

force in modern society. I am especially interested in how the transnational circulation of images of political meetings mediated popular political collectivity for the elite readership of these magazines.

- 4 The focus on people assembled has been noted in earlier research. See for example Peter Sinnema: *Dynamics of the Pictured Page. Representing the Nation in the Illustrated London News*. Aldershot 1988, ch. 6; John Plunkett: *Queen Victoria. First Media Monarch*. Oxford 2003, pp. 48-53; Anne Hultsch: *The Crowd and the Building. Flux in the Early Illustrated London News*. In: *Architecture and Culture* 6:3 (2018), pp. 371-386.
- 5 The literature on public culture during the nineteenth century is massive, but for useful introductions to the role of meetings and the spoken word specifically, see for example: Joseph S. Meisel: *Public Speech and the Culture of Public Life in the Age of Gladstone*. New York 2001; Vincent Robert: *Le Temps des banquets. Politique et symbolique d'une génération (1818-1848)*. Paris 2010; Martin Hewitt: *Aspects of Platform Culture in Nineteenth-Century Britain*. In: *Nineteenth-Century Prose* 29:1 (2002), pp. 1-32.
- 6 Another important kind of political gathering was the revolutionary street crowd. This amorphous form of public assembly will not be further discussed here, but imagery related to such crowds played an important role both before and especially during the revolutions of 1848. See Richard Reichardt: *«das größte Ereignis der Zeit»*. *Zur medialen Resonanz der Pariser Feb-*

clusion, I will indicate how such images were related to discourses about popular rule in modern society and, finally, return to the idea of a transnational or European visual imaginary.

Public Culture, Political Meetings and Illustrated News

In the early illustrated news magazines, the very notion of a «news event» – something worth reporting and documenting in pictures – seems to have been closely tied to the idea of public assembly, that is people gathered as audiences or participating in collective manifestations or ceremonies. The dominant logic seems to have been that a large number of people gathering must indicate a newsworthy event; and conversely, if news images showed a sizeable crowd, this indicated that something of importance had taken place.⁴ Such thinking was at work in different circumstances and it resulted in hundreds of images of audiences in crowded halls, people gathered to listen to political debates and onlookers assembled in the streets to watch processions and parades. Illustrated magazines, for example, published innumerable images of crowds celebrating cultural or scientific icons, as well as a never-ending stream of collective festivities and sports events where people were assembled. Other common topics that always included the depiction of spectators were the launching of ships and the opening of new railway lines.

There is nothing natural or self-evident about the fact that news events were

so strongly identified with public gatherings like these; rather, it reflects a particular nineteenth century public culture, centred around spectatorship and public performances – and especially oratory performances.⁵ Political gatherings of different kinds were also part of this culture. For instance, common subjects for pictorial representation were the chambers of parliament or estates in session in different European countries. Other kinds of political assembly that were often pictured took place outdoors: examples include the hustings typical of British election campaigns, and large street demonstrations during the American presidential elections that were remediated across Europe.⁶ Related to political campaigning were also a range of different «reform meetings» arranged by private associations to propagate a political cause or social reform. Such «meetings» often followed a highly standardised format and featured elected representatives, the voting of resolutions, printed proceedings with speeches and audience response etc. Examples include everything from temperance meetings and anti-slavery conventions to peace congresses and the political «monster meetings» of the chartists or the repeal movement in Ireland.

Depictions of meetings – whether part of political campaigns or focused on reform causes – were based on general conventions of representation, and they had a specific force as images that depended on this. The interest shown such events seems, at least in part, to have been related to the fact that they provided a certain visual entertainment and could easily be

rendered spectacular. Such effects were directly related to the size of the crowds pictured; the gathering of a large number of people was an essential characteristic of the events themselves, but the way «the mass» was portrayed – sometimes as members of the upper classes, elegantly dressed and therefore enjoyable to look at, sometimes as part of the lower classes and therefore eye-catching in their raggedness – also provided the images with a certain kind of visual appeal.⁷ The sense of spectacle and importance was also enhanced by other means, such as the representation of impressive architectural settings and spacious meeting rooms that often figured in such images.

In images of political meetings, impressions of importance and of spectacle were also conveyed by more formal means, most importantly the «elevated viewpoint» that has been described as typical for illustrated news images during this period by art historian Andrea Korda and others.⁸ This essentially unreal viewpoint, where the observer seems to float somewhere above the heads of the people in the image, «disembodied» the reader-viewer but also permitted certain spectacular effects like impressions of vastness when overlooking the crowd. At the same time, the will to include architectural settings and lavish interiors also pulled many compositions in another direction. In pictures of public meetings, the simultaneous depiction of crowds and decorated walls, galleries, high windows, and especially, the magnificent ceilings that adorned many of the venues, often created a fish-eye effect in terms of perspective, where the crowd is seen from

above while the ceiling etc. is pictured from below.

Compositional means such as these were one way to make political meetings visually interesting, but to appreciate their potential force as images, it is also essential to situate them in a diachronic context of political iconography. These mass-produced news images referenced a whole tradition of political prints focused on the politicised crowd, going back at least to the revolutions of the eighteenth century.⁹ How such references could be mobilised can be illustrated by a representation of the founding meeting of the liberal party of Belgium in 1846, held in the «Salle Gothique» of the City Hall in Brussels (fig. 1). As was typical for images that were produced to commemorate occasions like these, this was a depiction that circulated in different versions; it was published both as a lithographed single sheet print and as a wood engraving in the periodical press. The latter, included in *L'Illustration*, seems to first have been used for a commemorative print issued by the organisers themselves, with the decisions taken at the meeting as well as the names of participants printed next to it.¹⁰

In the raised arms of the participants supporting the creation of a new party, the image itself, and this regardless of version or medium, contains an almost overstated reference to a picture that was already a well-known political icon at the time, Jacques-Louis David's painting «Le Serment du Jeu de paume», or rather the pencil and ink study for that unfinished painting that was first exhibited in the 1790s and then circulated widely in the form of engravings during the first

ruarrevolution. In: Friedrich Lenger and Ansgar Nünning (Eds.) *Medienereignisse der Moderne*. Darmstadt 2008, pp. 14-39; Ségolène Le Men: 1848 en Europe. *L'Image «à la conquête de l'ubiquité»*. In: *Les Révolutions de 1848. L'Europe des images*. Zurich 1988, pp. 19-41.

- 7 Cf. Jeffrey T. Schnapp: «Mob Porn». In: Jeffrey T. Schnapp / Matthew Tiewes (Eds.): *Crowds*. Stanford 2006.
- 8 Andrea Korda: *Printing and Painting the News in Victorian London. The Graphic and Social Realism, 1869-1891*. London, New York 2018, pp. 36, 58, 62. Also cf. Sinnema: *Dynamics of the Pictured Page*, p. 197.
- 9 Studies that focus on the development of such imagery over time are lacking, but good places to start are: Schnapp / Tiewes and Rolf Reichardt / Hubertus Kohle: *Visualizing the Revolution. Politics and the Pictorial Arts in Late Eighteenth-century France*. London 2008.
- 10 An image of the original context of publication for the wood engraving can be found here: [https://www.liberasstories.eu/nl/magazine/longread/genese_van_eeen_partij_\(1846\)/1179](https://www.liberasstories.eu/nl/magazine/longread/genese_van_eeen_partij_(1846)/1179). A reference to an early lithograph of the same meeting can be found in Henri Hymans / Paul Hymans (Eds.): *Bruxelles à travers les âges. Bruxelles moderne*. Brussels 1884, p. 358.

Fig. 1 *L'illustration*. Nr. 175. Paris, Saturday, 4 July 1846, p. 276. Copy of the National Library of Sweden (signature: 177 Af Fol).

half of the nineteenth century (fig. 2). This example is perhaps extreme, since the news image in *L'illustration* is almost over-ambitiously trying to connect a later meeting to one of the founding moments of modern popular politics and the classicising pose with the raised hand abundantly used in the image had already become cliché by the 1840s, to the point of invoking ridicule.¹¹

But whether an extreme example or not, the general tendency to invoke famous moments of popular politics by the use of representative conventions was widespread, and the visual associations often established can certainly explain some of the interest in images of political meetings. To understand the force of such images we need to recognise that they evoked a tradition of both commemorative and documentary image-making that dealt with political events where crowds of people had gathered to protest, debate or overturn established institutions, from the eighteenth-century revolutions onwards.

Part of the interest in political meetings also seems to have been connected to the much-discussed hazards of popular participation in politics. Images of such events often invoked the potential for demagoguery as well as the risk of riots and social disturbances, not seldom as something exciting for the reader-viewer to watch. The role such threats played in creating visual interest can be exemplified by a news image of a rally in Central Park in New York (fig. 3) in support of the war with Mexico over Texas. Here we overlook a balcony with a speaker and his entourage in front of a huge crowd

in the park. The spectacular qualities of the gathering are tied to the number of people assembled but also underlined by the fireworks lightening up the nighttime sky. In the image, the powerful role of the spoken word in animating «the immense mass» and creating «patriotic enthusiasm» and «a common pulse beating in the veins of all who were there» is obvious.¹² It can be seen most clearly by the shadow on the wall to the right in the picture: grinning at us is a rather diabolic apparition created by the shadow cast by the speaker as he is addressing the crowd assembled below. It is hard not to read this as a revelation of the true character of the man speaking, but importantly it also functions as a comment on the force of demagoguery that contributed to the interest of this populous meeting.¹³

To sum up: Several distinct but interrelated factors contributed to the interest in showing political meetings and demonstrations in early illustrated news magazines. Firstly, a public culture that often equated news events with gatherings of people and where public speaking played a large part. Secondly, a discourse of popular participation centred on the crowd as an important but also potentially destructive actor in modern politics. Additionally, depictions also gained in interest and appeal by the way they presented political gatherings as spectacular events, as well as through intervisual references to other representations that were part of the political imaginary of the time.

- 11 This can for example be seen by how the French caricaturist Cham could, a few years later, use the exact same gesture in the illustrated press to ridicule political enthusiasm: *Le Salon de 1848, caricatures par Cham, L'illustration*. Nr. 270. Paris, Saturday, 29 April, 1848, p. 140.
- 12 *Illustrated London News*. Nr. 219. London, Saturday, 11 July 1846, p. 19.
- 13 Cast shadows as a way to reveal the truth about character is a device that has been used in different pictorial contexts, and the present image could have drawn inspiration from J.J. Grandvilles series «*Les Ombres portées*», published in *La Caricature* in 1830. Cf. E. H. Gombrich: *Shadows. The Depiction of Cast Shadows in Western Art*. New Haven, London 2014, pp. 57f.

« En Belgique, en 1845, année la plus défavorable, 1 accident par 88,000 voyageurs ; en 1844, année la plus favorable, 1 accident par 102,000 voyageurs. De 1853 à 1844, 58 individus ont été tués et 105 blessés sur les chemins de fer belges.

« Sur les railways d'Allemagne de 1841 à 1845 inclusivement,

il y a eu seulement 5 personnes blessées et 4 personnes tuées.

« Dans toute l'Europe, la proportion entre le nombre des individus blessés ou tués sur les chemins de fer, et celui des voyageurs sur les mêmes routes, a été, en l'année la plus défavorable, comme 1 à 494,000 ; dans l'année la plus favorable, comme 1 à 8 millions 889,000.

« En Prusse, selon M. de Reden, 40 à 50 personnes périssent par an en voyageant sur les fleuves ; dans la seule ville de Londres, le nombre des personnes qui sont tuées tous les ans par les accidents qui arrivent aux voitures qui circulent dans les rues est d'environ 500. »

NÉCROLOGIE. — M. Vernin, député successivement aux



(Ce grand libéral est à Bruxelles le 14 juin 1846.)

états généraux, à l'assemblée constituante, au conseil des anciens et au corps législatif, président honoraire de la cour royale de Rome, est mort à Moulins dans sa quatre-vingt-quatorzième année. — M. Aimé Bonpland, célèbre naturaliste, compagnon de voyage de M. Alexandre de Humboldt, avec lequel il a parcouru une grande partie du globe, a été enlevé à la science. — En Angleterre est mort également un chimiste

célèbre, James Marsh, inventeur de l'appareil qui sert à constater la présence de l'arsenic et qui joue un rôle si fréquent et si décisif dans les procès d'empoisonnement. Marsh n'avait que cinquante-sept ans. — Un peintre d'histoire, Anglais, de quelque réputation, M. Haydon, s'est tué la semaine dernière à Londres, dans son atelier. Il s'était tiré un coup de pistolet et s'était manqué ; il avait alors pris un ras-

soir pour se couper la gorge. Une lettre adressée à sir Robert Peel avait été laissée par lui. Aussitôt qu'elle fut parvenue au ministre, bien qu'il se trouvât en ce moment au plus fort de la lutte, il s'empressa d'envoyer à la veuve du peintre un mandat de 200 liv. sterling sur la cassette de la reine, ajoutant à cet envoi l'offre de sa bourse et de son influence personnelle.



SERMENT DU JEU DE PAUME.

Verailles 20 Juin 1789.

Formation des 3 Ordres en Assemblée Nationale (parquet)

Fig. 2 Jacques-Louis David's study «Le Serment du Jeu de paume» engraved by Jean-Pierre-Marie Jazet and printed around 1825. Copy of the Bibliothèque nationale de France (signature: De Vinck, 1462).

Fig. 3 *Illustrated London News*. Nr. 219. London, Saturday, 11 July 1846, p. 20. Copy of the Gothenburg University Library (signature: G per fol 1211).

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