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## **“Of the Making of Magazines there is no End”: W.T. Stead, Newness, and the Archival Imagination**

When the British journalist W.T. Stead (1849-1912) launched the *Review of Reviews* in 1890, he excused his new monthly on the basis of its bibliographic function:

Of the making of magazines there is no end. There are already more periodicals than any one can find the time to read. That is why today I have added another to the list.

For the new comer is not a rival, but rather an index and a guide to all those already in existence. (“Programme” 14)

Stead’s justification for adding yet another publication to the overwhelming number of periodicals was that his new title would make this abundance manageable. “In the mighty maze of periodical literature,” writes Stead, “the busy man wanders confused, not knowing exactly where to find the precise article that he requires and often, after losing all his scanty time in the search, he departs unsatisfied” (“Programme” 14).<sup>1</sup> The *Review of Reviews* was intended to “supply a clue to that maze in the shape of a readable compendium of all the best articles in the magazines and reviews” (“Programme” 14). One aspect of the bibliographical challenge presented by periodical publishing could be managed, creating more space in the already crowded market, but at the cost of creating a further challenge, as the issues of the *Review of Reviews* joined the other publications accumulating on the shelves.

This paper focuses on the rhythms of periodical publication, particularly the novelty of the current issue and its relationship with the accumulating archive that periodical publication leaves in its wake. The current issue establishes its novelty through the way it differs from its predecessor, yet magazines, like all serials, are predicated on repetition, where novelty is

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<sup>1</sup> See Mussell and Paylor.

tempered by formal features such as layout, typeface, certain features or articles, even the recurrence of the name itself. The current issue proclaims its novelty, but does so within a framework that links it to its predecessor; equally, the repetition of formal features might temper the new, but the accumulated (and accumulating) back issues constitute a past, a background against which the new can emerge.<sup>2</sup>

The dynamic of seriality means that serials such as periodicals and newspapers address a moment that is provisional and is destined to pass. For the *Review of Reviews*, which was oriented towards the monthly periodical, its belatedness was unproblematic. However, in Stead's earlier career as a newspaper editor, firstly on the *Northern Echo* (1871-1880) and then at the *Pall Mall Gazette* (1883-1889), belatedness and provisionality were pressing problems. Whereas each issue of the *Review of Reviews* was intended to occupy a month before it was relegated to the past, the newspaper had only a day. Throughout his career, Stead experimented with different publication modes in an attempt to manage the flow of seriality. The *Pall Mall Gazette*, for instance, was complemented by a series of "Extras," published intermittently when occasion or content permitted. The Extras supplemented the rhythm of the newspaper, allowing Stead to prolong a debate, usually by gathering together timely material and then setting it out at length. While working on the *Review of Reviews*, he did something similar, using book publication – sometimes in series, sometimes not – to complement the seriality of the magazine, soliciting responses in other periodicals that could, in turn, be recapitulated in the *Review*.

Stead's management of rhythm over his career lays bare the central dynamic of serial publication. On one hand, serial publication is structured by a drive for novelty, in which the

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<sup>2</sup> See Mussell, *Nineteenth-Century Press* 50-56, and "Elemental Forms."

new replaces the old; on the other, this newness is always tempered by things from the past. Stead's journalistic instinct – he was oriented towards the new, whether this was the next scandal, the latest technology, his next project – was complemented by his bureaucratic imagination, his concern for the provisionality of the moment and all those moments that had passed. While editing the *Pall Mall Gazette* he initiated half-yearly indices, which changed an ephemeral medium into an accessible resource; the *Review of Reviews* was itself an index to that month's periodicals, but was also supplemented by an annual index, exerting bibliographic control over a larger portion of the accumulating periodical archive. This paper is in three sections. The first considers the way serials like magazines define a present for which the current issue is relevant. Despite the different periodicities of his newspaper and magazine, Stead was committed to coining the moment, justifying the relevance of his publications through the way they embodied the concerns of the day. As this was a moment that must pass, the second section considers how supplements allowed it to be extended by creating new temporal niches. Finally, I turn to the archive. The progression of newspapers and periodicals necessitates the repetition of features from their pasts, but this section examines the status of what gets left behind. As the provisional “now” of periodical publishing is underpinned by what has come before, Stead's backward review of the archive propelled his journalism forward.

The open-ended nature of serials such as newspapers and periodicals imposes certain generic conditions and, to understand the making of magazines, we must turn to the impulses that underpin their publication. Like other serials, magazines are structured by a drive for newness and novelty, carefully tempered by a set of forms mobilized from the past, and a desire for accumulation, to be saved up and so constitute an archive. Stead's career provides a way to

understand these apparently contradictory drives, in which the creation of the archive provides the conditions for the new.

### **The new and the known**

In July 1885 Stead served two months of a three-month sentence for abduction. In the course of his undercover investigation into child prostitution, “The Maiden Tribute to Modern Babylon,” Stead demonstrated it was possible to procure young girls by purchasing one, Eliza Armstrong.<sup>3</sup> Prompted by a rival newspaper, her parents claimed Stead had deceived them and he was charged accordingly. At the trial, the Crown found that Stead had not obtained Eliza’s father’s consent and he was imprisoned, along with some of his accomplices. Shortly after his release, Stead published two essays in the highbrow *Contemporary Review* that attempted to justify himself to a cultural elite coterminous, but not identical, with the establishment that jailed him. In the first, “Government by Journalism,” Stead defended himself against accusations of sensationalism. Firstly, he naturalised sensation, remarking that life, thought and existence “are built up by a never-ending series of sensations” and that “when people object to sensations they object to the very material of life” (“Government” 670). What these “anti-sensationalists,” as Stead called them, really objected to was sensations in “unexpected quarters”: “the novel, the startling the unexpected [...] the presentation of facts with such vividness and graphic force as to make a distinct even although temporary impact upon the mind” (670-1). As the British public “often takes a deal of rousing” (673), journalists, peddlers of the new, needed to create such sensations. This was not sensation for the sake of it, however, mere “froth-whipping or piling up the agony, solely for the purposes of harrowing the reader,” but sensationalism as means to an end (671). In a

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<sup>3</sup> For the Maiden Tribute, see [W.T. Stead] “Notice” and “Maiden Tribute.” For more on the Maiden Tribute, see Walkowitz; Eckley 49-102; Mussell, ““Characters”” 24-6.

maddening piece of logic, Stead claimed that the “sensationalism which is indispensable is sensationalism which is justifiable” (671). Sensation was not an optional technique, to be used depending upon the situation, but instead *must* be used whenever there was justification.

Stead’s concern for rousing the public derived in part from a problem inherent in seriality. Every issue of a newspaper or periodical must be different from the one before, but this novelty is always tempered by familiarity. As Margaret Beetham has argued, every issue “is different but it is still ‘the same’ periodical” (28). Repetition is formal and has a genre effect, rendering what might otherwise be distinct features into instances of a type. As recognizable print genres, newspapers and periodicals announce their seriality through the way that they look. Readers know that the issues in their hands are parts of a larger series; they also know, because they have seen such serials before, what they are likely to see again, whether these are formal features such as mastheads and layout, or a particular type of content. Given that the nineteenth-century market for newspapers and periodicals was so competitive, publications were designed to fit specific niches, targeting configurations of readers at particular moments (Beetham 28; Turner 191). Seriality was part of the way these publications slotted into the lives of readers, coming to hand at convenient moments while also helping provide the rhythms that structured everyday life. However, the metronomic beat of serial publication transformed the distinct and novel into instances of the same and, for Stead, this rhythm risked lulling his readers to sleep. Without “a continual stream of ever-renewed sensations,” Stead writes, “we should neither hear, nor see, nor feel, nor think” (“Government” 670). Only sensation from “unexpected quarters” could jolt the reader from the everyday.

Stead's reputation as a campaigning journalist was established before he joined the *Pall Mall Gazette* in 1880 but, once he had taken over as editor in 1883, he was responsible for a string of sensational campaigns, many of which propelled him to international notice.<sup>4</sup> Stead was adept at manipulating the forms of the newspaper to achieve maximum impact. I have written elsewhere about the way Stead teased his readers in the build-up to the "Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon," warning the "squeamish and prudish" on Saturday not to buy the paper on Monday ("Notice to our Readers").<sup>5</sup> A less well known example is the way Stead broke the Hughes-Hallett scandal. Hughes-Hallett had been thrown out of the house in which he was staying after being found with his step-daughter. The article, printed in the main editorial space (the "middle") on page eight, pulled no punches, stating in stacked heads that this was a "House of Commons Scandal," that there was a "Revolting Accusation"; and promised details of "Colonel Hughes Hallett and his victim" ("A House of Commons Scandal" 8). The article gave an engraved sketch of Hughes-Hallett, while cross heads promised further revelations, disclosing his dubious interests in acting (and poodles). To make sure his readers got to page eight, Stead led the front page with a story entitled "The 'Honourable and Gallant' Member" that named Hughes-Hallett in capital letters and baldly stated he had seduced his stepdaughter (1).

For Stead, sensation was a way to grab the attention of readers, but scandal was the means to define a moment. As William Cohen argues, modern scandal "is a function of mass media," requiring a sufficiently diverse public to whom the private deeds of individuals might be revealed (14, 7). Scandal needs a scandalized: a public in whose name action might be demanded. W.T. Stead, according to Cohen, was the "most prominent Victorian scandalmonger" (7) and Stead himself claimed that the editor was "better than any man able

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<sup>4</sup> See Mussell, "Characters."

<sup>5</sup> Mussell, "Characters" 24-5.

to generate that steam, known as public opinion, which is the greatest force in politics” (“Government” 661). The daily appearance of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, with its regular sections, meant that it was always already partially written and causing a sensation provoked a reaction that could fill the demarcated white spaces of the paper. As an evening paper, it could report on events as they emerged during the day, as well as take advantage of the press reaction in the morning’s papers. For instance, Stead was delighted when he learned the *Pall Mall Gazette* was going to be condemned in Parliament after the publication of the first Maiden Tribute article and alerted his readers accordingly (“Mr C. Bentinck”). The question came too late to appear in Tuesday’s paper, but he lavished attention on it, and the subsequent reaction, in Wednesday’s (“A Flame” 1; “Pall Mall Gazette Exposure” 10). Scandal and its sensational effects – the thrill of revelation and the subsequent spectacle of the reaction – could define a moment, making the new and novel establish the now.

The *Review of Reviews* was unsuited to breaking scandal and causing sensation. As a monthly, it was rarely in a position to beat the dailies and weeklies and, as a review of reviews its main source of content was derived from other (nearly always) monthly publications. Nonetheless, the *Review of Reviews* was also concerned with the moment, albeit a different kind of present than that established by the daily rhythms of the *Pall Mall Gazette*. After leaving the *Pall Mall Gazette*, Stead was now editor, proprietor, and publisher but, if the newspaper editor was “the uncrowned king of an educated democracy” (“Government” 664), he was now exiled from newspaper journalism and adrift amongst the more leisured monthlies (Brake, “Who is ‘We’?” 58). His response was to rethink his readership in the light of the *Review*’s belatedness. In his first address Stead claimed that because a “daily newspaper is practically unreadable beyond twenty-four hours distance by rail of its printing office” only a monthly could be “read throughout the English-speaking world” (“To All



English-Speaking Folk” 15). The circulation of the *Pall Mall Gazette* was relatively low (the occasional spike aside, it ranged from eight to twelve thousand) but its influence, as a metropolitan daily, was substantial. The *Review of Reviews* was intended for readers throughout the empire and beyond, and quickly reached a circulation of fifty thousand, settling at one hundred thousand within a few years (Brake, “Stead Alone” 84). Simultaneity is a product of media technologies: despite what Stead called “the shrinkage of the world,” the increased geographical scope of the audience for the *Review of Reviews* required a longer period of time (“To All English-Speaking Folk” 17).

Rather than seek close connection with the present, something facilitated by the diurnal rhythm of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, the *Review of Reviews* was retrospective, bringing the reader up to date. It maintained its link with journalism: as Brake notes, its “technic” was “scissors and paste journalism,” and Stead’s methods included “information gathering, accurate transcription, and organization into the format of the journal” (“Stead Alone” 85, 82). The *Pall Mall Gazette* extracted widely from its rivals in the morning, even featuring a regular department, “Epitome of Opinion,” whose purpose was to summarize the morning papers, and the *Review of Reviews* continued these practices. As a journalistic monthly, the *Review of Reviews* was also oriented to the timely. Every issue opened with Stead’s “The Progress of the World,” a survey of the month’s events that cast them as part of a narrative leading up to the present and, in 1897, he added “The Topic of the Day,” identifying “the leading political event that is commanding public attention” (“After Seven Years” 100). Another prominent feature were Stead’s “Character Sketches,” which focused on a notable personality who was made to stand for the moment. Even the reviews of content from other publications – the regular sections “Leading Articles in the Reviews” and “The Reviews Reviewed,” which interleaved lengthy quotations from other periodicals with editorial comment and criticism –

had the effect of rendering lengthy articles into sets of key points that reflected timely concerns.<sup>6</sup> In the pages of *Review of Reviews*, other periodicals became newsworthy, part of the apparatus that shaped the moment.

Articulating such moments gave serial publications presence, as the potential disruption of newness was accommodated to their serial forms. Adopting a common strategy, Stead aligned himself with his publications. Stead had long argued for personality in journalism: even as a salaried editor on the *Pall Mall Gazette*, he saturated it with his character. For Stead, this was a journalistic technique: “the personality of the editor is the essential centre-point of my whole idea of the true journalism” he argued, but this personality was not wielded by the editor alone (“Future of Journalism” 663-4). A convinced spiritualist, Stead was once told that he had a “loose soul,” allowing other minds “to be hitched to [his] hand” (Harper 56). However, this worked both ways: Stead lamented that the spirits he channelled wrote Steadese, but this was precisely what he demanded of his staff (Crofton 8). Occult or not, Stead’s influence was everywhere in his publications, wielded by him and his staff as part of the way they made sense of the world. As moments passed, the publications went on, reframing the (recent) past as examples of the new. A textualised Stead was part of that frame, staying the same by managing content as it changed.

## **Extra**

Stead used serial media to constitute the moment and so constitute a version of himself; however, such moments inevitably passed. This effect was particularly acute for the *Pall Mall Gazette*. In “Government by Journalism” Stead argued that the editor could better

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<sup>6</sup> For Stead and abstracting, see Dawson, 175-183.

represent the public as his mandate was “renewed day by day” by votes cast in the form of “a few daily pence” (655). “Editors alone of all mortals live up to the apostolic injunction,” Stead writes, “and, forgetting the things that are behind, ever press forward to those which are before” (655). However, this forward progress, this reliance on change and movement, which Turner describes as the “natural state of being for periodicals” (184), relies upon relegating the present to the past, on forgetting. Stead’s solution was to prolong the moment by stepping out of seriality.

The *Pall Mall Gazette* was accompanied by its half-yearly index (discussed in the next section); an illustrated weekly, the *Pall Mall Budget*; and the irregular series of *Pall Mall Gazette* Extras. The *Pall Mall Budget*, advertised as the “weekly edition of the *Pall Mall Gazette*,” was a three penny weekly published on a Friday and intended for readers in the country and abroad.<sup>7</sup> Like the *Review of Reviews*, the *Pall Mall Budget* was retrospective, collating the events of the week and reprinting them for an audience imagined as further away and so occupying a different moment. It provided a complementary, weekly rhythm to the dailiness of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, but it was intended for its own distinct readership. The *Pall Mall Gazette* Extras, however, played a different role. Occasional publications yet numbered in their own sequence, the Extras punctuated the dailiness of the *Pall Mall Gazette* without exerting a rhythm of their own. They were supplements in Derrida’s sense: asserting the integrity of their parent publication while also acknowledging its insufficiency.<sup>8</sup> If seriality is a way of acknowledging that time goes on and that there will always be more to write about, then serial publications also insist that whatever happens can fit within a set of forms established at some point in the past. The Extras were an attempt to reconcile this contradiction, making room outside the set boundaries of the daily.

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<sup>7</sup> Stead was also co-editor of another weekly, *The Link* (1888). See Hale.

<sup>8</sup> See Derrida, “Structure, Sign and Play.”

Although numbered, the Extras did not succeed one another in the same way as the daily newspaper and so provided a space outside of its rhythm. The first Extra, *The John Bright Celebration at Birmingham* (1883), was tuppence and thirty-two pages, double both the price and length of the *Pall Mall Gazette*. It consisted of verbatim transcripts of speeches, passages from which had appeared in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, but not in full and subject to Stead's interpretation.<sup>9</sup> The Extra provided the opportunity to read the speeches at length and apparently unexpurgated (although the presence of subheads and discursive introductions shows that these were still editorialized); its putative completeness (and the commitment required to read it) made the Extra into something to be kept as a record of the moment.

The Extras were always intended to form a series – *The John Bright Celebration* is labelled “No. 1 ‘Extra’” – but there were two earlier supplements, *The Royal Academy* and *The International Fisheries Exhibition*.<sup>10</sup> Stead conceived these as “Popular Guides,” a sub-series in their own right that were published to coincide with significant events in the capital. They proved to be remarkably successful: despite its unpromising subject matter, *International Fisheries Exhibition* went through sixteen editions of ten thousand each. Stead later decided to include these earlier supplements in the sequence of Extras, renumbering them retrospectively in his advertisements so that the series began with *The Royal Academy*. As subsequent Popular Guides were also included in the series of Extras (and numbered accordingly), this made it much more diverse. Number Six, *Christmas Presents: What to Buy and Where: A Popular Guide*, which Stead explicitly linked to the fisheries exhibition (“When it closes,” Stead writes “another exhibition vaster, and much more popular will open in London” (“Christmas Presents” 16)), was followed by *England, Gordon and the Soudan*:

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<sup>9</sup> See “The Bright Celebration” 14 and 15 June 1883.

<sup>10</sup> Both of which were advertised in *John Bright* 22.

*A Narrative of Facts*, the first of three Extras dedicated to Stead's ill-fated campaign to have General Gordon sent to the Sudan that ended with number 14, *Too Late!*, about his death at the hands of the Mahdi.

Such abrupt shifts of subject matter signal the discontinuities in the series, but they also indicate how different Extras related to their moment of publication. Whereas both the Popular Guides and the more news-like Extras were prompted by contemporary events, the former were explicitly commercial publications whereas the latter were intended as political interventions. The news-like Extras still sold in considerable numbers – *Too Late!* sold fifty thousand copies and number eleven, *Peers and the People*, about the rejection of the Franchise Bill, sold 120 thousand, both far in excess of the circulation of the *Pall Mall Gazette*<sup>11</sup> – but for Stead this circulation was proof of the interest in his various campaigns. Whereas the daily rhythms of the *Pall Mall Gazette* meant that pressure had to be maintained issue to issue, the Extras, which made the case for a particular issue at greater length than permitted in the newspaper, could be set and then produced in as large an edition as necessary. Distanced from the metropolitan concerns of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, they circulated widely: when people as far apart as Windsor, Taunton, Manchester, and Guernsey complained about obscene material flooding the streets in the wake of the Maiden Tribute, it was the tuppenny pamphlet that they cited, not the *Pall Mall Gazette*.<sup>12</sup>

The proliferation of supplements and their subsequent consolidation was characteristic of Stead's method, initiating projects and then subjecting them to bibliographic control. Once he became proprietor and publisher, as well as editor, Stead was free to experiment with his publications. Alongside the *Review of Reviews*, Stead published a successful series of penny

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<sup>11</sup> See *Too Late* unpaginated; *Pictures of 1885* xiv

<sup>12</sup> See "A Hawker" 8; "A Country Rector" 8; "Indecent Publications" 2; "A. R. W." 7.

publications (the “Masterpiece Library”), his annual index (1890-1902), a quarterly (*Borderland* 1893-7), a monthly (*Help* 1891-2), a weekly (*War Against War in South Africa* 1899-1900), two attempts at a daily (*Daily Paper*, 1893 and 1904) and around seventy books and pamphlets. The paratextual spaces of his publications – advertising columns, prefaces, introductions, appendices – were full of lists as Stead put this material in order and reminded his readers what was available. At the centre of this activity was the *Review of Reviews*. Often the originator of these various projects, and always taking up, reflecting on, and commenting upon them, it provided Stead with a flexible space whose rhythm provided for sustained analysis. Passing content from the *Review of Reviews* into other print formats, shifting both its presentation and the moment to which it was addressed, provided an opportunity for the *Review of Reviews* to return to it, whether as published by Stead or as digested by his contemporaries, and comment on it anew.

Given Stead’s commitment to journalism, it is notable that his supplementary serials tended to be short-lived whereas he was a prolific publisher of one-off publications that were often very successful. Both *Borderland* and *Help*, for instance, began in the pages of the *Review of Reviews* and, as their respective runs came to an end, found their content more or less reabsorbed within it. Neither of Stead’s *Daily Paper* projects succeeded.<sup>13</sup> The first, which attempted to solve the problem of newspaper ownership by selling shares to his distributors (whether newsagents or social institutions), is particularly relevant here. Stead’s proposed daily was conspicuously magazine-like, “almost exactly the shape of the *Review of Reviews*” but “a kind of a cross between the *Pall Mall Gazette* and *Tit-Bits*” ([W.T. Stead] “The Daily Paper, Limited” 464). This curious mix of magazine-like review (*Review of Reviews*), the apolitical, entertaining weekly (*Tit-Bits*) and the campaigning daily (*Pall Mall Gazette*) was

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<sup>13</sup> For the failure of the *Daily Paper* projects see Brake, “Who is ‘We’?”.

meant to throw “a bridge over the abyss which separates the millions who read weekly miscellanies from the comparative few who read the daily papers” (464). However, the transposition of one set of forms into another temporal niche proved too ambitious and when Stead launched another *Daily Paper* in 1903 it was much more newspaper-like: “a twelve page penny evening paper, somewhat larger than the *Westminster Gazette*” (Stead, “The Daily Paper” 572).

Despite the failure of the *Daily Papers* projects, they provide a glimpse of Stead’s understanding of supplementarity. Although the projects themselves privileged dailiness, Stead recognized there were other readers beyond that for a daily newspaper. As Brake has shown, the 1893 *Daily Paper*, the sketch for a newspaper in *Mr Carnegie’s Conundrum*, and the 1904 *Daily Paper* all contained plans for a constellation of publications surrounding the daily (“Who is ‘We’?” 62, 67). The 1893 *Daily Paper*, for instance, was to be accompanied by a series of “Daily Paper Classics,” a penny Saturday paper, a weekly reprint of the serial from the paper, a penny Sunday paper, a half penny tract, and a series of three penny extras. These complex sets of publications, with their own rhythms and readerships, yet intertwined and overlapping content, recognized different types of readers and situated them in specific times and spaces of reading. Ultimately, however, Stead’s desire to connect with readers beyond the daily paper was undone by his failure to attract enough daily readers.

The *Review of Reviews* had a readership that sustained it but, nevertheless, the content of each issue had to pass away. Stead’s solution was one-off publications that complemented the monthly rhythm of the *Review of Reviews* in much the same way the Extras complemented the *Pall Mall Gazette*. While the pressing periodicity of the daily meant the Extras could serve as a point of temporal continuity, a place to consolidate an unfolding narrative and store

it up, these monographical publications – books and pamphlets – offered a way to step outside of retrospective monthliness, their publication constituting events in their own right.

The key supplementary monographs were the *Review of Reviews* annuals. Initiated with *Real Ghost Stories* in December 1891 and encouraged by its success (Stead claimed it sold 100,000 copies in a week (“Introduction” v)), the annuals provided a regular point of publication outside that of the *Review of Reviews*. Putatively Christmas numbers, they were attractively presented for the Christmas market but published in addition to the December issue of the *Review of Reviews*. The coherence of the series was complicated by other publications published throughout the year. *Real Ghost Stories*, for instance, was supplemented by *More Real Ghost Stories* the following month, and *Real Ghost Stories* was itself updated and reprinted, outside the series, in 1897. For sections of the run, the annuals were dedicated to what Stead called his “Series of Contemporary History in Fiction” (“Satan’s Invisible World” 5). This experimental genre, sketched out in the first *Daily Paper* project, attempted to broaden the readership for politics, crucially so that it might include women. Stead thought these annuals had “come to be regarded as the necessary supplement to the *Review* itself”: where the *Review*’s perspective was restricted to a month, the annuals could take a topic from the year, lightly fictionalize it, and then explore it at length (“History of the Mystery” 374). In 1897 he listed these experiments in fiction (“topical tales for our times”) as: *From the Old World to the New* (1892); *Two and Two Makes Four* (1893); *The Splendid Paupers* (1894); *Blastus; Or, the King’s Chamberlain* (1895); and *The History of the Mystery* (1896) (“After Seven Years” 100). There was then a hiatus, when Stead abandoned this genre and opted for investigative journalism and political discussion, before returning to it in 1902 with *In Our Midst*.



From the outset, the annuals had been accompanied by other books. In an advertisement in one of these, *Wanted: A Sherlock Holmes* (1895), Stead referred to *The Yellow Man with the White Money* (1895) (a reprint of *The Splendid Paupers*); *If Christ Came to Chicago* (1894); *Chicago To-Day* (1894); *Fifty Years of the House of Lords* (1894, a reprint from 1881); and *A Guide to Guardians of the Poor* (1895) as “Books for the Times” (“Books for the Times” unpaginated). These other books were distinguished from the annuals by their paratexts and the time they appeared; nonetheless, in terms of content the series were very similar. For instance, *If Christ Came to Chicago*, an investigation into the condition of the city published in March 1894, was not an annual; *Satan’s Invisible World Displayed*, an account of corruption in New York and the former book’s “companion volume,” was published in December 1897 and was the annual for 1898 (“Satan’s Invisible World” 635).

The books allowed Stead to write about material for which there was no space in the *Review of Reviews*. For instance, Stead could return to investigative journalism, something excluded by the retrospective and review-like nature of the monthly. Also, although he attempted to serialize “journalism fiction” in the *Review of Reviews* in 1903 as he prepared his second *Daily Paper*, this type of writing only really found a place in the annuals (Brake, “Stead Alone” 82). Brake has argued that Stead’s annuals were part of his broader journalistic project. Looking back to Matthew Arnold’s accusation in 1887 that the journalism Stead represented, which he termed “new journalism,” was “feather brained,” Brake sees the annuals as the place where Stead theorized journalism as a kind of art, neither subordinate to high culture nor solely a commercial practice that pandered to the market (Arnold, “Up to Easter” 629-43; Brake “Journalism and Modernism Continued” 152-8).<sup>14</sup> Part of this art was reaching readers and, for Stead, sales vindicated his campaigns. *If Christ Came to Chicago*,

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<sup>14</sup> For Stead, Arnold and new journalism see Brake, *Subjugated*, 83-103; Campbell, 4-6.

for instance, sold 150,000 in a year (“Books for the Times” unpaginated). Other publications were designed to be timely: the diamond jubilee prompted *Her Majesty the Queen and Notables of Britain* (both 1897); Gladstone’s death the following year prompted *Gladstone: A Character Sketch* and *Gladstone in Contemporary Caricature* (both 1898). Such supplementary material, regardless of its genre or intended audience, gave Stead something to write about in the *Review of Reviews*. Publications were announced, excerpted and advertised; reviews were reported and follow-up articles kept the topics alive. For instance, Stead wrote about *In Our Midst* in December 1902, as it was published, quoting liberally, summarizing the plot, but leaving the reader to discover the ending (“*In Our Midst*”); in the following issue, January 1903, Stead quoted from the notices it received in the newspaper and periodical press (“Our New Year’s Annual”).

This constellation of supplements was the result of Stead’s longing for connection. In “Government by Journalism,” Stead writes:

The world has perceptibly shrunk under the under the touch of Stephenson and Faraday, of Hoe and of Edison. If we, like the Germans, had been in the habit of marking our milestones by time instead of distance, this would be much more easily realized. (“Government” 653)

Stead’s fantasy was of total connection, with editor and reader in constant communication. Electrical media (Faraday and Edison) had the potential to do away with the intervals between people and the ponderous business of print designed to fill them, something Stead would keenly explore in its more occult dimensions; until then, however, print constituted the links between Stead and his readers, each print object designed to reach distinct groups of readers located in time and space. The Stead moment was diffuse and experienced through many channels: there were monographical Steads, pronouncing from the pages of books, and

periodical Steads, commenting, for a moment, in each issue as it appeared. Trying to stay in touch meant proliferating moments and so proliferating Steads.

### **Archiving the present**

The diffusion of Steads ensured that he always seemed to be speaking from somewhere regardless of the periodicity of any particular publication. For Derrida, death is about letting go, about trusting one's remains to the other (Derrida, "Fifth Session" 126). Newspapers and periodicals defer their ends for as long as possible, offering up their issues on the condition that they both pass and be replaced. Stead was reluctant to let go, to stop speaking, appearing issue after issue and preferring instead an endless changing of the subject as campaigns were taken up and material was passed between different publications. Yet Stead was also deeply interested in what had passed. Nothing, for Stead, was really ever lost: the problem was how to organise material so that it could be recovered and made new once again.

Stead conceived of journalism in encyclopaedic terms. In a passage celebrating the size of the American newspaper in *The Americanization of the World*, Stead claimed readers browsed rather than read:

In this way a newspaper comes to be almost like a Gazeteer or an Encyclopaedia. No one sits down and reads a dictionary from end to end. He dips into it. So Americans dip into their papers for what they want. Unfortunately newspapers, unlike dictionaries, are incapable of alphabetical classification. Hence arises the tendency which offends so many English readers of exaggerated heading or scare-heads, as they are called in the slang of the profession. (291-2)

Writing in a book with elaborate running heads, Stead was using similar techniques to break up its otherwise linear text. However, he had another solution for the problem of abundance. The *Review of Reviews* was intended, according to Stead, “to be an index and guide,” his “editorial thresher” acting like exaggerated heads to direct attention to that worth reading (“Programme” 14). In “The Need for the *Review of Reviews*,” Stead quotes Robert Herbert Quick, who claimed “we are in great danger from the increasing number and, indeed, the increasing excellence, of our magazines” (575). The problem was not just that there were so many, but that they kept coming. Quick continues: “Read and let the stream flow on, or try to dam the stream up and you will cause an inundation in which you are likely to ‘go under’” (575). Passing, however, is what makes periodicals periodical: Quick proposed that periodicals republish material, defeating seriality by giving readers a chance to catch a repeat; Stead recommended the *Review of Reviews* and its *Annual Index*.

Stead claimed that his interest in archives dated from his time in prison, but from the start of his career his characteristic mode of working – surveying the press, excerpting relevant material – show that his archival imagination was integral to his journalism (Harper 65; Nicholson 11-12). Edith Harper, Stead’s assistant, was put in charge of what he called “the Archive”:

it was his invariable rule to “keep everything”. He almost never destroyed a letter, and the most apparently trivial note of newspaper cutting he liked carefully filed, for as he said “You never know what use it may be, nor of what it may form the connecting link.” (25)

As Harper reveals, however, not everything was kept. Trivial articles may have been excerpted, but whatever it was they were excerpted from was presumably discarded.

Nonetheless, Stead’s impulse was to try and remember everything. Stead recognized that

newness was predicated on its difference to what had gone before. If the present could only be understood with reference to the past, only an archive that remembered everything, no matter how trivial, would provide a suitably wide-ranging framework to evaluate what, precisely, was new.

The “connecting link” aligns Stead’s archival interests with his interests in spiritualism. If the archive allowed him to connect with the past, resurrecting it in order to assay the present, then his interest in occult connections permitted him to revivify the dead. Stead had practiced automatic writing since 1892 and, from 1893, was in regular contact with the journalist Julia Ames, who had died in 1891. It was not just Julia, however: in 1908 Stead published a letter in the *Westminster Gazette* that had been written, in his hand, by Catherine the Great; in 1909 Catherine also contributed an article to the *Contemporary Review*; finally, in 1909, Stead achieved his biggest coup, interviewing (the dead) Gladstone (Harper 109-111, 112, 179-192). That same year, Stead opened Julia’s Bureau, an office through which people could contact their deceased. As John Durham Peters has argued, Stead’s universe was an occult archive in which nothing was lost, even people (170). The problem was how to contact them. As with his paper archives, Stead believed in saving everything, but knew that this was an archival effect. Even the dead needed filing.

Stead’s archival and indexing projects might have aimed to “keep everything,” but they were based on careful selection and organization. Stead began his half-yearly index to the *Pall Mall Gazette* in 1884. A tacit recognition that newspapers were discarded while also a hope that they would be preserved, the index was a paratext that reconceived past issues of the newspaper as an archive. In “Government by Journalism” Stead described the newspaper as a “page from the book of the life of the town in which it appears, a valuable transcript of

yesterday's words, thoughts, and deeds" ("Government by Journalism" 655). The fact the newspaper recorded yesterday's news, necessarily incorporating that day's version of the past and that day's anticipated future, made it more authentic. Like all open-ended serials, newspapers are defined by their miscellaneity and seriality (Mussell, *Nineteenth-Century Press* 28-68). Stead's conception of this material as archive seemingly responds more to the former, miscellaneity, than the latter, seriality. In "A Great Index," an account in the *Pall Mall Gazette* of a visit to Samuel Palmer (of *Palmer's Index to the Times*), the author quotes Macaulay to the effect that a nation's history is to be found in its newspapers but then speculates that any future historian "would stand somewhat aghast before such a ponderous accumulation of facts as a complete set of the *Times* even now presents" (11). Material covered within an index is spatialized, its connections to various moments severed as it is subjected to the index's logic. Yet it is precisely because this material is serial, that each new issue replaces the old, that its connections to past moments persist. Unperfected moments designed to pass, old newspapers provided a way to recover the way the world understood itself (in that newspaper at least). Constituting a "Library of everyday," the newspaper was a record of what was otherwise forgotten as the past was recast to serve the needs of the future (W.T. Stead, *Mr Carnegie's Conundrum* 146; Brake, "Journalism and Modernism" 157).

The *Pall Mall Gazette* indexes made the past recoverable, but only the past as recorded in the *Pall Mall Gazette*. The retrospective glance of the *Review of Reviews* was a way of managing a whole sweep of publications and their relentless seriality. However, as the *Review* selected only the "best that is said on all sides of all questions in the magazines and reviews of the current month" it was explicitly selective, remembering only what Stead thought worth remembering ("the best") from a delimited portion of the press ("magazines and reviews") and in an allotted period of time ("the current month") ([W.T. Stead] "Programme" 14). The

*Review of Reviews* opposed periodical ephemerality, but was itself predicated on a process of forgetting.

The importance of progress means the threat of forgetting is always present in serial publication. This threat is mitigated for works issued in parts by their virtual wholeness; for periodicals, though, only the volume can serve as a larger whole, made present in the issue by the sequence of numbers and continuous pagination. The potential to bind periodicals and make them into archival forms is a guard against forgetting, of being too readily consigned to the moment and discarded. Yet Stead knew that there were few who bound periodicals, “hardly one percent,” and binding was of little use when there were so many to read (“Preface” 6). Instead, Stead relied on journalistic practices, excerpting and digesting content to provide a guide to what was published. The *Review of Reviews* kept readers up to date through its processes of selection, refiguring the month’s publications according to its own principles of what should be remembered.

As Brake notes, a large part of the *Review of Reviews*, a sixth of some issues, constituted bibliographical material (“Stead Alone,” 83, 85). As the period for which this material was relevant was the month in which it was published, it was important that the *Review of Reviews* appeared on time. Stead, though, had difficulty publishing the *Review of Reviews* promptly (he blamed his large circulation) and so, from 1895 until 1897, he published the index separately (Brake, *Print* 76-7; Brake, “Stead Alone” 91). This monthly index, he insisted, was separate from the Annual Index he had been publishing since 1891. Each index, monthly and annual, demarcated its own period as a single moment. Just as binding periodicals into volumes spatialized their contents by making them book-like, so these indices spatialized the periodicals on the shelves, rewriting their relevance from their moment

of publication to that of the index. Both the earlier newspaper index and the periodical index thus worked against their material's integral obsolescence; however, whereas the value of the archived *Pall Mall Gazette* lay in what it revealed about the forgotten past, the *Review of Reviews* indices had a redemptive mission, saving the "best" articles from being forgotten. The index to the *Pall Mall Gazette* was predicated on the timeliness of its content – that the moments it captured had passed – whereas the monthly and annual indices produced by the *Review of Reviews* argued that some content was timeless, regardless of the ephemerality of its medium.

Stead wanted to make the past, in all its complexity, recoverable, but to do this it had to be transformed from a record of a moment into a searchable database of fact. Stead thought that the editor, like the newspaper, should also be encyclopaedic: the "true ideal of an editor," he wrote, "is a man to whom you can apply for information upon anything at any time" ("Of Things Undone" 30). However, Stead's imagined users of his indices were not just interested in information. The *Pall Mall Gazette* index would be found useful "in all Libraries, and to all Politicians, Journalists, and others who need a handy reference to the Events of the Last Six Months" (*Pictures of 1885* xiv). The Annual Index was indispensable for "librarians, journalists, and students" ("Preface" 6) and in 1895 he argued that there was nothing more valuable for "students, sociologists, politicians" (*Wanted: A Sherlock Holmes* unpaginated). The indices were tools that could make the past, as recorded in the pages of the press, present again. Even the *Review of Reviews* indices, which denied the timeliness of content, could not but direct readers to material oriented to a moment that had gone. Derrida has argued that archives are at least doubly structured by forgetting. First of all, their contents are necessarily selected, the recalled past dependent on what was saved, the material properties of the archive's contents, and its systems of storage and recall. Secondly, Derrida aligns the archive



with the death drive. His “fever” is both a desire to save the past and to destroy it: the archive, writes Derrida, “always works, *a priori*, against itself” (*Archive Fever* 12). Stead’s various archives manifest this fever as his desire to keep everything works against the journalism that it putatively serves. Open-ended serials like periodicals and newspapers move forward by forgetting their pasts; whereas past issues have a presence in the current issue due to the way they look, the novelty of the current issue, what makes it attractive in the moment, is based on how it differs from what has come before. Stead’s fantasy was that these pasts would remain present, a kind of trauma that would make it impossible to move on. Just as his desire for constant connection threatened to undo the place of print, so perfect memory, the unadorned past, dispensed with print’s serial movement through time.

Stead’s archival practice, though, maintained the place of forgetting. Stead’s various projects, whether reviews or indices, were based on processes of selection, consigning material to the past even as these processes produced print objects tasked with remembering. Derrida calls this the archontic principle, an act of consignment that combines depositing material with “gathering together through signs” (*Archive Fever* 3). Stead’s archives were written and, although he made sure to credit the women who worked for him, marked by his presence. Like his other serials, these archival projects provided a virtual body, a place from which Stead could speak, over and over again; but they also had to find their own space on the shelves, subject to other archival practices (or, in Derrida’s terms, the archival practices of an other). One of Derrida’s lessons about the archive is that such acts of consignment are acts of forgetting: drawing things together makes them vulnerable; the archive lies neglected, the books unconsulted on the shelves.<sup>15</sup> Stead might have dreamed of a world where nothing was lost, but he produced an archive that placed loss at its heart. His archival practices brought a

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<sup>15</sup> The word ‘repository’ shares an etymological link with that for tomb. See Stauffer, Mussell “Scarers.”

version of the past closer, providing a framework within which the present might be judged, but did so in a way that meant it stayed past. Without knowing what had come before, there could be nothing new.

## **Conclusion**

The sample issue of Stead's *Daily Paper* in 1893 contained an interview with Lady Brooke obtained via telepathic connection. Stead wrote the interview while on a train from Dover, asking Lady Brooke questions and then letting his hand answer. When he arrived in Victoria, his manager gave him a letter from Lady Brooke on the very subject covered by the interview. "Judge my satisfaction," Stead writes, "when I read the letter, to find Lady Brooke had written with her own hand, and on her own motion, a letter to me that embodied the salient points of the interview" ("Future of the British Aristocracy" 10-11). The lines written in Lady Brooke's hand authorised those lines written by her in Stead's – but Stead had to wait until the lines of the rails brought him back to London before he knew for sure.

Stead longed for simultaneity, for unmediated contact in the moment. In the second *Daily Paper*, he imagined the newspaper as "not merely a nerve centre for the collection and distribution of news, but for the inspiration, direction and organization of the moral, social, political and intellectual force, of the whole community." He despaired that when the "newspaper or magazine was printed it went out into the void, nor was there any means by which I could follow up every individual copy and place every individual subscriber in personal communication with myself" ("The Daily Paper" 572). Direct communication implies a simultaneity, a ubiquitous nowness, that Stead, like many of his contemporaries, dreamed about but never achieved. Instead, he produced a journalism that used the material

effects of seriality to reach and maintain contact with his readers. Making contact issue after issue, Stead crafted his publications to reach particular moments in space and time.

Recognizing that these were moments and there were others to follow, he engaged with the rhythms of serial publication, attending to the way issues succeeded one another, as well as the way different moments of publication overlapped. The current issue of a magazine anticipates the moment when it will be displaced and so relegated to the past, but it does so knowing that it presents a set of forms sufficiently robust to structure a future that is, as yet, unknown. Stead's career makes evident that while the making of magazines relies on propelling forms from the past into the future, it also depends on a kind of passing, in which present forms are forgotten. Stead was deeply invested in novelty and the new, but understood that this depended on what had been left behind.

**James Mussell, University of Leeds, UK**

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