

Scanning the horizon

A silhouette of a person sitting on a cliff, looking out at a bright sun over a horizon. The sun is low in the sky, creating a lens flare effect. The person is sitting with their back to the camera, looking towards the right. The background is a clear sky with a few wispy clouds near the horizon.

What can a distance-reading methodology reveal about the motivations for founding newspapers in the nineteenth century?

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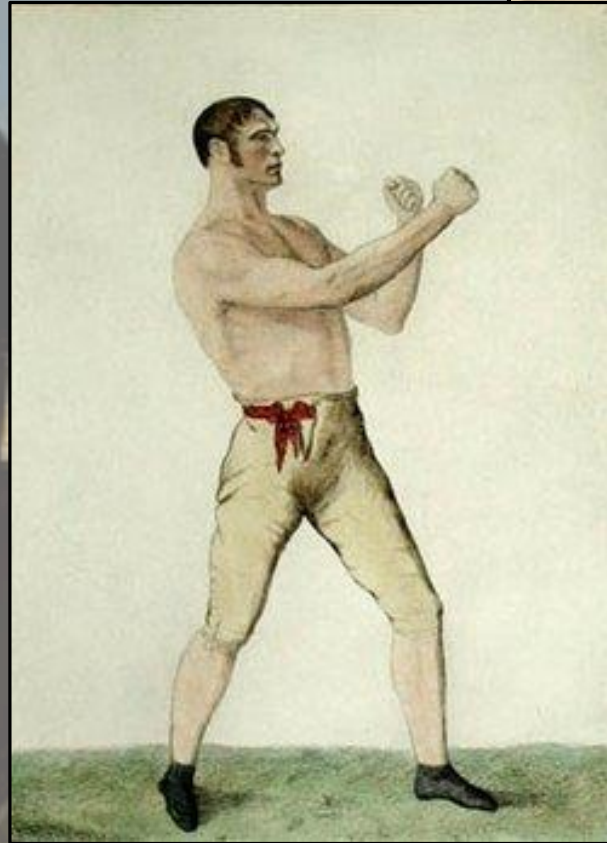
Introductions...

THE NEW TOM SPRING'S LIFE IN LONDON AND SPORTING TIMES.

No. 1.]

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 28, 1843.

PRICK 1d.



DICK CURTIS, "THE PET OF THE FANCY,"

Born Feb. 1, 1802, died Sept. 16, 1843.

How did newspapers announce their arrival in print?

MEMOIR OF DICK CURTIS, THE "PET OF THE FANCY."

Among the many heroes who have achieved a title in the temple of pugilistic fame, few have won the distinction than the subject of this sketch. Dick Curtis was decidedly the most pugilist among the light weights of modern times, and the severity of his deliveries unequalled by any boxer of his weight, which never in his fighting trim exceeded nine stone. Dick Curtis and George Curtis, both figured in the many heroes who have achieved a title in the temple of pugilistic fame, few have won the distinction than the subject of this sketch. Dick Curtis was decidedly the most pugilist among the light weights of modern times, and the severity of his deliveries unequalled by any boxer of his weight, which never in his fighting trim exceeded nine stone. Dick Curtis and George Curtis, both figured in

rounds, occupying fifty-seven minutes, at Maidstone, on the 28th of August in the same year. This placed his reputation as a fistic aspirant on high ground, and Lenney, George Cooper (the Gipsy), Peter Warren (three times), Hares, Ned Savage, Barney Aaron, and Jack Tisdale, successively yielded to his conquering fists. His sole defeat was by overmatched in weight (a stone), in height, reach, and youth. In fact, there was nothing of his weight to fight Curtis, and, spoilt by victory, he shared the fate of many of the best men. By this defeat, however, he incurred no disparagement; the mill was a game one, and Dick only succeeded in

and chough," with his clies well lined, he was one who could keep the shiners; and his life might be expected, was chequered, draught-b fashion, with white and dark spots. At one pe he was a Boniface, and kept a public-house Blackman-street, in the Borough; but Dick had then "sown his wild oats," he had a bad lot a him, and the business left him, or he left the b ness, no matter which. Notwithstanding the fortunate affair of Brighton Bill, Dick's ser were still sought in every fight of note, and t who placed confidence in him had never any re to complain in

THE NEW TOM SPRING'S LIFE IN LONDON.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 28, 1844.

THE EDITOR TO HIS READERS.

"Give you good den, faire courteous company;
We'll have a word with ye."—BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

THERE are some customs which, like good wine, become excellent by age, and among these we may reckon the good old fashion of saying something introductory by way of address, preface, or prologue, to periodical, pamphlet, or play.

One of the wise men of Greece, whom we scorn to quote in the original, lest we should be deemed learned overmuch, says, in phrase as pithy as correct, "know your opportunity." The Editor flatters himself he has chosen his aright for a bow in presenting a new sporting paper, combining cheapness and quality.

Field sports are now better understood, more followed, and the taste for them more general than at any other period. Coursing, and the turf, in particular, have received a vast accession of patrons in every rank and grade; on these topics the Editor has several papers in preparation, among which he may enumerate a REVIEW OF THE RACING SEASON, 1843; wherein he will discourse largely on the events of the present year, and prospects of the next, irrespective of interest, bias, or prejudice, for or against, "lots," "stables," or "owners;" together with a perfect "Treatise on the choosing, rearing, breeding, and training, the Long Dogs," in which everything practically useful, and worth knowing by "lovers of the leash," shall be compiled, collated, and originated, by one who loves

"The sport on holt or heath,
With greyhound lithe and free,
Which coursing yields, on plain or fields,
To its goodlie company."

A FEW BIRTHDAY VERSES ON No. I.

THIS is our birth-day! and, kind friends, you see,
We sport, to suit the day, a new-made coat;
Could we do less to meet such company,
And keep "Tom Spring's" good character afloat?
And, gentle reader, you shall find, that we
Have not put all our venture in one boat;
First numbers "talk" great things, and show but few,
Have patience, give us scope, and see what we will do.

We've seen some "Life in London" in our day,
(Pocket and prudence whisper "p'hraps too much;")
And we will here, by past experience, nay,
Show those its fun who as yet "know no touch"
Of all its larks, its sprees, and jokes, and waggeries;
Its funniments, its cheats, its flams and gaggeries.

The "Fancy," too, (the very name is good,
For wit and sense with "fancy" are united;)
The milksop whine of canters hath withstood,
And the good boat of English pluck hath righted—
Old England's game and spirit ne'er shall sink,
While we can wield a pen, and spread its fame in ink.

Nor will we leave untouch'd the noble deeds
Of every valley where the horn is heard,
"Set in a note-book," riders and crack steeds,
And they who "whoop a hare," or "bag a bird."
Find out a scribe to "quoit" their sayings down,
And in our columns spread their "doings" o'er the town.

Give you rare hunting songs and fancy rhymes,
Such as will "set the table in a roar;"
And scare blue devils at the worst of times,
And turn crabb'd politics clean out at door.
Give you the courser's catch—the fisher's glee;
For sport an echo finds in harmony.

Well, we will do all this: high leaps, hard runs,
Horses and riders, cricket, cudgels, cocks,
Billiards and barrels, game, and grouse, and guns,
Percussion powder, detonating locks;
Crack packs, sleek studs in field, in kennel, stall,
We'll note 'em down, and journalise them all.

And here a wish *at home*, and eke *abroad*;—
Prads in the stable sleek, and "clever" out;
Hounds staunch and faithful at your slightest nod;
Opening, sagacious, with the huntsman's shout.
Birds plenty, and of hares a *quantum suff.*,
To tire the harriers, and make greyhounds "puff."

Or, if the Race-course more affect your mind,
Then may success await your "bookish" sport;
And steeds more certain and more swift than wind,
The rivalry of generous contest court.
Nay, wheresoe'er shall point your love of fame,
May you still "bear the bell" and "bag the game;"

THE N

Whilst we, your chroniclers, gaze anxious on,
And bring your triumphs faithfully to book;
Record where skill and courage truly shone
In ring, in field, in covert, or by brook;
And, gleaming help and character from you,
We'll "write, at least, our *Sporting* records true."

Here we break off, in hopes that you will find
In this, our page, "life" in its every hue,
Of sport and fun the very soul and mind;
And honour given to every man where due.
Creating "life" where life was not before,
And giving fun and wit one weekly fillip more.

Health, then, to all, who cheer us on our way;
May each, as years roll on, more happy be;
And never may one hearty reader say,
We've "missed our cast," or "parted company:"
Whilst we, encouraged by successes past,
Make each *new number stronger than the last.*

And when, some twelvemonths hence, at volume *two*,
You find we're not like Shakspeare's witches *three*,
Who held out to men's eyes a charming view,
Which straight passed off in smoke and flattery.
Then say, "You've kept right well unto your text,
You've stuck to us this year, we'll stick to you the next!"
October 27, 1843.

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METHODOLOGICAL FOCUS – FROM THE WORK OF URIEL HEYD

Focus on ‘neglected’ minutiae of papers – index, manifesto.

Plus wider cultural impact – on auction registers (collections) and in theatrical productions.

All intended to address the cultural history of the press in C18th – ‘reading practices, readers’ responses and the ever-changing experience of consumers’. (Heyd, 2012, pp.3-4)

‘Heydian paradigm’ – systematic, comparative methodology applied to a series of newspaper ‘manifestos’ (over 100, British and American).

For my PhD project, distant reading of opening editorials was applied to a collection of C19th papers.

Reading n
press and public in
Britain at
URIEL

‘Evidence was deemed sufficiently sound and representative only within the framework of the larger discourse and in the context of other sources.’
(Heyd, 2012, p. 26)



VOLTAIRE FOUNDATION
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

Key, generic features identified by Heyd

32 *Reading newspapers, press and public*

reflexive aspect is counterbalanced by the overt self-promotional intentions. While some writers later offered their self-reflections in formats ranging from columns to memoirs, these were always retrospective. The manifestos, on the other hand, were forward-looking. Thus they were somewhat less weighed down by the realities of what had actually happened and they provide historians with a much clearer picture of the papers' original ambitions, although clouded by self-promotion.

An introductory manifesto ticked several boxes: explaining editorial policy (typically promising impartial, non-slandering and accurate assurances regarding the qualities of content (authentic and accurate intelligence both foreign and domestic), a lamentation on the state of the newspaper world (too crowded a market) and some more practical information (first and foremost about advertising in the paper). The *London chronicle* in 1757 summed up the content of the sub-genre: 'an Account of the Importance of their Design, the Extent of their Plan and the Accuracy of the Method which they intend to prosecute', while branding such manifestos as 'an infection that has seized the whole Fraternity'. Even if 'It has been lamented that of the little Time allotted to Man, much must be spent upon Superfluities [...] and the Author of almost every Book retards his Instructions by a Preface', the paper still found the manifesto particularly useful for a periodical publication: 'Though not always necessary when the Reader has the Book complete in his Hand, and may find by his own Eyes whatever can be found in it, yet may be more easily allowed to Works published gradually in successive Parts: of which the Scheme can only be so far known as the Author shall think fit to discover it'.⁵

By the mid-century, the significance of these manifestos was so established as to delay publication of other materials. In its third issue in 1751 the *London advertiser* explained that 'extraordinary demand for our Introductory Paper, Obliges us to reprint it this Day; and to Postpone till To-morrow a Secret History we are very unwilling to defer'.⁶ Newspapers were certainly aware that the public understood the pitfalls hidden within the introductions. Thus the self-aware *World* (1787) set the tone by explaining: 'Like many other *Great Men* coming into Office, We might promise a great number of fine Things You might believe, and We never intended to perform: - But as We are not PRIME MINISTERS, and as You do not yet know Us - Perhaps You might be right in not trusting to what We advanced'.⁷ By 1794 an almost legal caveat, 'we enter into no engagement but what we hope we shall be able to keep', was

5. *London chronicle*, 1 Jan. 1757. See below, p.114-115

included in the *Telegraph's* introduction, which acknowledged that 'the formality of introduction' is 'a custom that has long been established'.⁸

For American newspapers, just as in Britain, manifestos were practically a mandatory part of early issues.⁹ Sometimes a handbill advertisement preceded the first issue, aimed at creating a 'buzz' and boosting subscriptions.¹⁰ By 1745 newspapers, as well as their manifestos, were well known to the American reading public. So the *Maryland gazette* declared that: 'The Advantage of a News-Paper, whereby whatsoever is useful and entertaining, at home or abroad, is communicated to the Public, being so universally known, renders it unnecessary to recommend a Thing of the Kind; however, since it might be look'd upon as unfashionable to usher one into the World, without a Word or two by way of Introduction'.¹¹

The claims made in these manifestos were suspect, as several newspapers noted. The well-written, if short, introduction to the *Political intelligencer* (New Brunswick) proclaimed in 1783: 'Too much puffing is frequent, [and] on this occasion, made use by the publishers'.¹² And to counter ineffectual 'puffing', the Bostonian John Gill wrote a manifesto for the *Continental journal* in 1776, noting that he had decided to 'omit all pompous representations and promises, reflecting his intended publications'.¹³

By the end of the eighteenth century, a thriving newspaper world was reflected in this source - a world which saw itself as an essential component of the political system, a protector of liberties, and a disseminator of information for the advancement of both citizens and country. A confident republican language, highlighting a 'rhetoric of diffusion', was manifest.¹⁴ All these roles made the newspaper press, at least in its own eyes, a political, social and cultural unifying agent, especially in America.

8. *Telegraph*, 30 Dec. 1794 [1794-1797]; see Stanley Morison, *The English newspaper* (Cambridge, 1932), p.198.
9. Out of more than one hundred newspaper manifestos examined, sixty are discussed in detail in this chapter. When place of publication is unclear it is noted in the first footnote where dates of publication, based on the Library of Congress information, are also given. Name changes are not noted, and in many cases publication was not continuous. When a publication moved to another town it was considered as discontinued.
10. A slightly different approach was taken by the *Connecticut courant*, which printed an issue numbered 00 because it is 'a Specimen of which the Publick are now presented with: *Connecticut courant*, 29 Oct. 1764 [Hartford, CT, 1764-1914].
11. *Maryland gazette*, 17 Jan. 1745 [Annapolis, MD, 1727-1800 +].
12. *Political intelligencer*, 14 Oct. 1783 [New Brunswick, NJ, 1783-1785].
13. *Continental journal*, 30 May 1776 [New Haven, CT, 1775-1800 +].
14. Warner, *Letters*, p.125.

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Research rationale:

To ascertain if short-lived C19th newspapers had 'generic' aims/objectives, comparable with periodicals that had a longer life in print?

Does the sub-genre of the introductory address develop over the century?

Do the introductory addresses offer clues that might suggest that brevity was not necessarily evidence of failure?

To start with, let's apply Heyd's method to a VERY well-known, long-running newspaper...

To the Public.

TO bring out a New Paper at the present day; when so many others are already established and confirmed in the public opinion; is certainly an arduous undertaking; and no one can be more fully aware of its difficulties than I am: I, nevertheless, entertain very sanguine hopes, that the nature of the plan on which this paper will be conducted, will ensure it a moderate share at least of public favour; but my pretensions to encouragement, however strong they may appear in my own eyes, must be tried before a tribunal not liable to be blinded by *self-opinion*; to that tribunal I shall now, as I am bound to do, submit my pretensions with deference, and the public will judge whether they are well or ill founded.

It is very far from my intention to detract from the acknowledged merit of the Daily Papers now in existence; it is sufficient that they please the class of readers whose approbation their conductors are ambitious to deserve; nevertheless it is certain some of the best, some of the most respectable, and some of the most useful members of the community, have frequently complained (and the cause of their complaints still exist) that by radical defects in the plans of the present established papers, they were deprived of many advantages, which ought naturally to result from daily publications. Of these some build their fame on the length and accuracy of parliamentary reports, which unquestionably are given with great ability, and with a laudable zeal to please those, who can spare time to read ten or twelve columns of debates. Others are principally attentive to the politics of the day, and make it their study to give satisfaction to the numerous class of politicians, who, blessed with easy circumstances, and a leisure better to do, than to amuse themselves with watching the motions of ministers both at home and abroad; and endeavouring to find out the springs that set in motion the great machine of government in every state and empire in the world. There is one paper which in no degree interferes with the pursuits of its contemporaries; it looks upon parliamentary debates as sacred mysteries, that cannot be submitted to vulgar eyes without profanation; political investigations it apprehends to be little short of treason, and therefore *loyally* abstains from them; it deals almost solely in advertisements; and consequently, though a very useful, it is by no means an entertaining paper. Thus it would seem that every News-Paper published in London is calculated for a particular set of readers only; so that if each set were to change its favourite publication for another, the commutation would produce disgust, and dissatisfaction to all; the politician would then find nothing to amuse him but long accounts of petty squabbles about trifles in Parliament, or panegyrics on the men and measures that he most disliked; or libels on those whom he most revered. The person to whom parliamentary debates afford unexpressed delight, would find himself bored with political speculations about the measures that the different courts in Europe might probably adopt; or disgusted with whole pages of advertisements, in which he felt no concern;— whilst the plain shop-keeper who wanted to find a convenient hour for his business, and the servant who purchased his paper in hopes of seeing in it an advertisement directing where he might find a place to suit him, would have their labour for their pains in perusing publications filled with senatorial debates, or political essays and remarks, which would direct them to nothing less than the house or place they wanted.—A News-Paper, conducted on the true and natural principles of such a publication, ought to be the Register of the times, and faithful recorder of the state of intelligence; it ought not to be engrossed by any particular object; but, like a well covered table, it should contain something suited to every palate; observations on the dispositions of our own and of foreign courts should be provided for the political reader; debates should be reported for the amusement of the politician; and who may be particularly fond of them; and a due attention should be paid to the interests of trades, which are so greatly promoted by advertisements.—A paper that should blend all these advantages, and by steering clear of extremes, hit the happy medium, has long been needed by the public.—Such, it is intended, shall be the UNIVERSAL REGISTER, the great object of which will be to facilitate the *commercial* intercourse between the different parts of the community, through the channel of *Advertisements*; to record the principal occurrences of the times; and to abridge the account of debates during the sitting of Parliament.

It is no less the interest of the proprietors of News-Papers, than of the public, that every encouragement should be given to advertising correspondents; yet this private interest of the proprietors is frequently sacrificed to the rage for parliamentary debates, to the great injury of trade; for the extreme length of these debates so greatly retards the publication of the News-Papers which are noted for detailed accounts of them, that the advantages arising from this species of intelligence, though highly acceptable in itself, are frequently over-balanced by the inconveniences occasioned to people in business by the delay. These inconveniences are great and many; it generally happens, that when either House of

Parliament has been engaged in the discussion of an important question till after midnight, the papers in which the speeches of the Members are reported at large, cannot be published before noon; nay, they sometimes are not even then ready to press to noon; consequently parties interested in *votes* are essentially injured, as the advertisements, inviting the public to attend them at *seven o'clock*, do not appear on account of a late publication, till some hours after.—From the same source flows another inconvenience; it is sometimes found necessary to *delete* files after they have been advertised for a particular day; but the notice of putting them off not appearing early enough, on account of the late hour at which the papers containing it are published, numbers of people, acting under the impression of former advertisements, are unnecessarily put to the trouble of attending.—It will be the object of the *Universal Register* to guard against these great inconveniences, without depriving its readers of the pleasure of learning what passes in Parliament.—It is intended, then, that the debates shall be regularly reported in it; but on the other hand, that the publication may not be delayed to the prejudice of people in trade, the speeches will not be given on a large scale; the *substance* shall be faithfully preserved; but all the uninteresting parts will be omitted. I shall thus be enabled to publish this paper at an early hour; and I propose to bring it out regularly every morning at *seven o'clock*. The *Universal Register* will therefore have this advantage over the *Daily Advertiser*, that, though published as early, it will contain a substantial account of the proceedings in Parliament the preceding night, which is never to be found in that paper; and compared with the other morning papers it will be found to have the merit of containing in substance, what they give in long detail (which men in business cannot well spare time to read) and, nevertheless, of being published much sooner. These circumstances, it is hoped, will give the *Universal Register* at least an *equal* claim to public favour with the parliamentary papers, and the papers of the metropolis, it is presumed, will find it their advantage to give it the preference.

An essential part of the plan of this new paper is, that, for the convenience of advertising correspondents, their favours shall, *as a ceremony*, be inserted on the very day that they shall direct, provided they deliver them at the office in due time. For the *strict* observance of this rule, the credit of the paper shall stand pledged; and its pretensions to public countenance will be renounced, if this fundamental principle in its institution shall ever be violated, except in cases of absolute necessity, which human prudence cannot prevent.—And here I beg it may be understood that I do not make use of the word *necessity* as a reserve, under colour of which, I may, whenever I think fit, be released from my engagements; I mean by that word a necessity arising from accidents that sometimes happen in the printing business, and from which, the most careful man cannot, at all times, be secure. But so far from wishing to shrink from my engagements, I intend, whenever the length of the Gazettes, Parliamentary Debates, &c. shall render it impossible for me to insert, all the advertisements promised for the day, in *one sheet*, to print an additional half sheet, and publish it with the ordinary paper without any additional charge to my customers.—From the difficulty that people experience in procuring the insertion of their advertisements even in the *Daily Advertiser*; and particularly from the impossibility of obtaining an *early* insertion at some periods of the year, it may be presumed that this regulation will greatly recommend the UNIVERSAL REGISTER to public notice, and procure it support.

These, though in my opinion good, are not the *only* grounds on which I build my hopes of success. I flatter myself, I have some claim to public encouragement, on account of a great improvement which I have made in the art of printing. The inconveniences attending the slow and tedious mode of composing with letters takes up *lengthy* first suggested the idea of devising some more expeditious method. The cementing of several letters together, so as that the type of a *whole word* might be taken up in as short a time as that of a *single letter*, was the result of much reflection on that subject. But the bare idea of cementing was merely the opening, not the accomplishment or perfection of the improvement. The four consisting of types of words, and not of letters, was to be so arranged, as that a compositor should be able to find the former with as much facility as he can the latter. This was a work of inconceivable difficulty. I undertook it however, and was fortunate enough, after an infinite number of experiments, and great labour, to bring it to a happy conclusion. The whole English language is now methodically and systematically arranged at my loom; so that printing can now be performed with greater dispatch, and at less expence, than according to the mode hitherto in use.

In bringing this work to perfection, I had not my own advantage solely in view; I wished to be useful to the community; and it is with pleasure I see that the public will derive considerable benefit from my industry; for I have resolved to sell the REGISTER *One halfpenny UNDER* the price paid for seven out of eight of the morning

A reminder of the generic parameters identified by Heyd:

- A comment on the state of the press
- A statement of editorial policy and aims
- An undertaking regarding quality of content
- Some practical information for advertisers

And

- An 'apology' (explicit or implicit) for the appearance of a new periodical 'the style of the apology for publishing a new paper became an opportunity for differentiation' (Heyd, 2012, p. 83)

N U A R Y 1, 1785.

[Price Two-pence Halfpenny.]

To the Public.

TO bring out a New Paper at the present day; when so many others are already established and confirmed in the public opinion, is certainly an arduous undertaking; and no one can be more fully aware of its difficulties than I am: I, nevertheless, entertain very sanguine hopes, that the nature of the plan on which this paper will be conducted, will ensure it a moderate share at least of public favour; but my pretensions to encouragement, however strong they may appear in my own eyes, must be tried before a tribunal not liable to be blinded by *self-opinion*: to that tribunal I shall now, as I am bound to do, submit these pretensions with deference, and the public will judge whether they are well or ill founded.

It is very far from my intention to detract from the acknowledged merit of the Daily Papers now in existence; it is sufficient that they please the class of readers whose approbation their conductors are ambitious to deserve; nevertheless it is certain some of the best, some of the most respectable, and some of the most useful members of the community, have frequently complained (and the causes

Parliament has been engaged in the discussion of an important question till after midnight, the papers in which the speeches of the Members are reported at large, cannot be published before noon; nay, they sometimes are not even sent to press so soon; consequently parties interested in sales are essentially injured, as the advertisements, inviting the public to attend them at *ten* or *twelve* o'clock, do not appear, on account of a late publication, till some hours after.—From the same source flows another inconvenience; it is sometimes found necessary to *defer* sales, after they have been advertised for a particular day; but the notice of putting them off not appearing early enough, on account of the late hour at which the papers containing it are published, numbers of people, acting under the impression of former advertisements, are unnecessarily put to the trouble of attending.—It will be the object of the *Universal Register* to guard against these great inconveniences, without depriving its readers of the pleasure of learning what passes in Parliament.—It is intended, then, that the debates shall be regularly reported in it; but on the other hand, that the publication may not be delayed to the

'Apology'

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policies &
aims

editorial debates, or political essays and remarks, which would direct them to nothing less than the house or place they wanted.—A News-Paper, conducted on the true and natural principles of such a publication, ought to be the Register of the times, and faithful recorder of every species of intelligence; it ought not to be engrossed by any particular object; but, like a well covered table, it should contain something suited to every palate: observations on the dispositions of our own and of foreign courts should be provided for the political reader; debates should be reported for the amusement or information of those who may be particularly fond of them; and a due attention should be paid to the interests of trade, which are so greatly promoted by advertisements.—A paper that should blend all these advantages, and by steering clear of extremes, hit the happy medium, has long been expected by the public.—Such, it is intended, shall be the UNIVERSAL REGISTER, the great objects of which will be to facilitate the *commercial* intercourse between the different parts of the community, through the channel of *Advertisements*; to record the principal occurrences of the times; and to abridge the account of debates during the sitting of Parliament.


It is no less the interest of the proprietors of News-Papers, than of the public, that every encouragement should be given to advertising corres-

pondence in procuring the insertion of their advertisements even in the *Daily Advertiser*; and particularly from the impossibility of obtaining an *early* insertion at some periods of the year, it may be presumed that this regulation will greatly recommend the UNIVERSAL REGISTER to public notice, and procure it support.

These, though in my opinion good, are not the *only* grounds on which I build my hopes of success. I flatter myself, I have some claim to public encouragement, on account of a great improvement which I have made in the art of printing. The inconveniences attending the old and tedious mode of composing with letters taken up *singly*, first suggested the idea of devising some more expeditious method. The cementing of several letters together, so as that the type of a *whole word* might be taken up in as short a time as that of a *single letter*, was the result of much reflection on that subject. But the bare idea of cementing was merely the opening, not the accomplishment or perfection of the improvement. The fount consisting of types of words, and not of letters, was to be so arranged, as that a compositor should be able to find the former with as much facility as he can the latter. This was a work of inconceivable difficulty. I undertook it however, and was fortunate enough, after an infinite number of experiments, and great labour, to bring it to a happy issue.

the acknowledged merit of the Daily Papers now in existence; it is sufficient that they please the class of readers whose approbation their conductors are ambitious to deserve; nevertheless it is certain some of the best, some of the most respectable, and some of the most useful members of the community, have frequently complained (and the causes of their complaints still exist) that by radical defects in the plans of the present established papers, they were deprived of many advantages, which ought naturally to result from daily publications. Of these some build their fame on the length and accuracy of parliamentary reports, which unquestionably are given with great ability, and with a laudable zeal to please those, who can spare time to read ten or twelve columns of debates. Others are principally attentive to the politics of the day, and make it their study to give satisfaction to the numerous class of politicians, who, blessed with easy circumstances, have nothing better to do, than to amuse themselves with watching the motions of ministers both at home and abroad; and endeavouring to find out the secret springs that set in motion the great machine of government in every state and empire in the world. There is one paper which in no degree interferes with the pursuits of its contemporaries; it looks upon parliamentary debates as sacred mysteries, that cannot be submitted to vulgar eyes

die of attending.—It will be the object of the *Universal Register* to guard against these great inconveniences, without depriving its readers of the pleasure of learning what passes in Parliament. —It is intended, then, that the debates shall be regularly reported in it; but on the other hand, that the publication may not be delayed to the prejudice of people in trade, the speeches will not be given on a large scale; the *substance* shall be faithfully preserved; but all the uninteresting parts will be omitted. I shall thus be enabled to publish this paper at an early hour; and I propose to bring it out *regularly* every morning at six o'clock. The *Universal Register* will therefore have this advantage over the *Daily Advertiser*, that, though published as early, it will contain a substantial account of the proceedings in Parliament the preceding night, which is never to be found in that paper; and compared with the other morning papers it will be found to have the merit of containing in substance, what they give in long detail (which men in business cannot well spare time to read) and, nevertheless, of being published much sooner. These circumstances, it is hoped, will give the *Universal Register* at least an *equal* claim to public favour with the parliamentary papers, and the *trading* part of the metropolis, it is presumed, will find it their advantage to give it the preference.



Undertaking to provide quality

ed; or libels on those whom he most revered. The person to whom parliamentary debates afford unspeakable delight, would find himself bored with political speculations about the measures that the different courts in Europe might probably adopt; or disgusted with whole pages of advertisements, in which he felt no concern;—whilst the plain shop-keeper who wanted to find a convenient house for his business, and the servant who purchased his paper in hopes of seeing in it an advertisement directing where he might find a place to suit him, would have their labour for their pains, in perusing publications, filled with senatorial debates, or political essays and remarks, which would direct them to nothing less than the house or place they wanted.—A News-Paper, conducted on the true and natural principles of such a publication, ought to be the Register of the times, and faithful recorder of every species of intelligence; it ought not to be engrossed by any particular object; but, like a well covered table, it should contain something suited to every palate: observations on the dispositions of our own and of foreign courts should be provided for the political reader; debates should be reported for the amusement or information of those who may be particularly fond of them; and a due attention should be paid to the interests of trade, which are so greatly promoted by adver-

ever I think fit, be released from my engagements; I mean by that word a necessity arising from accidents that sometimes happen in the printing business, and from which, the most careful man cannot, at all times, be secure. But so far from wishing to shrink from my engagements, I intend, whenever the length of the Gazette, Parliamentary Debates, &c. shall render it impossible for me to insert all the advertisements promised for the day, in *one* sheet, to print an additional half sheet, and publish it with the ordinary paper without any additional charge to my customers.—From the difficulty that people experience in procuring the insertion of their advertisements even in the *Daily Advertiser*; and particularly from the impossibility of obtaining an *early* insertion at some periods of the year, it may be presumed that this regulation will greatly recommend the **UNIVERSAL REGISTER** to public notice, and procure it support.

These, though in my opinion good, are not the *only* grounds on which I build my hopes of success. I flatter myself, I have some claim to public encouragement, on account of a great improvement which I have made in the art of printing. The inconveniences attending the old and tedious mode of composing with letters taken up *singly*, first suggested the idea of devising some more expeditious method. The cementing of s-

Practical info
for advertisers

Example of analysis

No.	Title	City	Start Date	End Date	Duration	notes	1st ed. copy	State of Press	Ed. policy & political stance	promise of quality	practical info	Apology' for intro	Other	Total features
160	Hammersmith and Brentford Advertiser	London Local	1861	1866	5	CASE STUDY as a group of commercial publications. Check proprietors, printers etc.	0						NO ED.	0
83	The City Chronicle : Tea dealers' journal and commercial advertiser	London	1840	1845	5	Editors name and address given. Very targeted paper, so a community.	1		1	1		1		3
29	The Instructor, and Select Weekly Advertiser	London	1809	1814	5	HOLDINGS FROM NO. 70	0							0
164	The North-West London Times	London Local	1861	1866	5		0						NO ED.	0
166	The Surrey Standard, and Surrey, Middlesex, Sussex, Kent, Hants & Berks Advertiser	London Local	1835	1840	5	claims to be first paper for the county of Surrey. Pro-Tory	1	1	1			1		3
50	Westminster Journal and Old British Spy	London	1805	1810	5	??? No.3368 ESCHEWS ED.	0							0
157	East London Advertiser	London Local	1862	1866	4		0						NO. ED	0
172	The Dial	London	1860	1864	4	A title of the National Newspaper League Company - 'an attempt hitherto unexampled in the history of the Press'.	1	1	1	1	1			4
98	The London Mail	London	1853	1857	4	Aimed at Indian market.	1	1	1	1		1		4
208	The London Scotsman : A weekly journal of Anglo - Scottish news	London	1867	1871	4	Aimed at Scots emigrants to England & wider Empire.	1		1			1		2

Applying the Heydian paradigm to the short-lived newspaper sample

British Library collection of short-lived newspapers for this PhD project comprises 179 titles, spanning 1800-1881 (with one C18th exception)

147 of the papers were analysed for this exercise (some missing on basis of availability)

131 contained an identifiable editorial opening address (89% of those sampled)

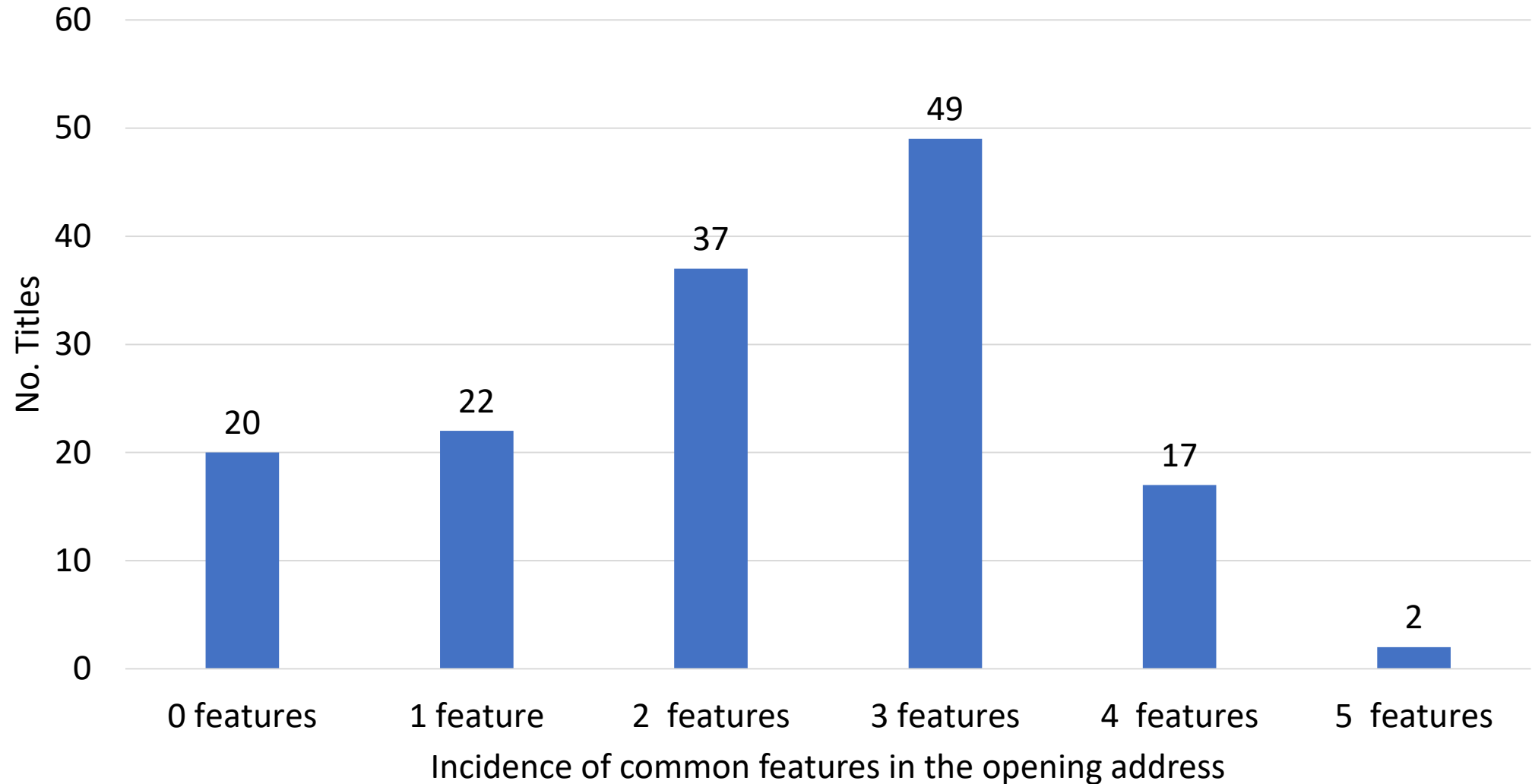
Of the 16 without a 'manifesto', some nonetheless had a leading article making comment on political issues of the day.

The most common feature was the statement of editorial policy/aims – 117/131 (89%)

The least common feature was practical information for subscribers and advertisers – only 36/131 (27.5%) include this here. (Often this information was to be found elsewhere in the paper, hinting at increasing specialisation of functions.)

The 'apology' also less prevalent in this group – 37/131.

Short-lived newspaper opening address analysis



Other findings...

No clear correlation between lifespan and distribution of numbers of features of the opening address in the analysed set.

The longest-surviving papers in this group (5 years or more) often omitted the opening editorial altogether.

The largest group – papers in print for less than a year – have every possible combination of opening editorial features.

Despite its status as a generally-anticipated factor in the launch of a newspaper, neither the content or style, nor indeed the absence of such an address, seems to have been an appreciable factor in the brief life of these papers.

What this analysis does suggest is that the generic features identified by Heyd as emblematic of the C18th manifesto have evolved into a more flexible offering; mirroring the dynamic development of the press itself.


What can a distance-reading methodology reveal about the motivations for founding newspapers in the nineteenth century?
Advantages and shortcomings of Heyd's methodology

Using this comparative methodology can bring to light specific, time-limited aims, in particular with 'specialised' periodicals

Proved to be a good initial 'sweep' to assist with selection of case studies, but -

Comparative distant reading inevitably omits the detailed linguistic and formal analysis that close reading can provide

Jonathan Senchyne, in his review of Heyd's monograph, laments that there are 'moments when literary scholars may want Heyd to provide close readings of individual texts rather than surveys of large amounts of data, as when he explores tantalizing snippets of more than fifty newspaper prospectuses in quick succession.' (Senchyne, 2010, p. 833)



Thank you!



@c19thnewshound