

Walter Sickert and Print Culture, 1890—1930s

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## Abstract

This thesis explores the relationship between the art of Walter Sickert and print culture from 1890 to 1938. It argues that print culture in this period was essential for the creation and communication of Sickert's art. The topic of print culture is adopted as a revision of, and intervention within, the currently dominant discourse of paint in Sickert studies. It provides new insights into questions of originality and reproduction, as well as the relationship between form and narrative in Sickert's art. I introduce theories of intermediality, examining the qualities possessed by—and yet appropriable from—each medium, in order to see how painting can be printerly. This study is facilitated by my discovery of previously overlooked and buried print materials related to the imagery in Sickert's paintings and drawings, including the little magazines of the 1890s and 1910s, a diverse range of mass print ephemera, such as posters and postcards, and the mid-Victorian periodical illustrations that Sickert used as sources for his late paintings.

Through these materials I explore the different facets of print in relation to Sickert's art. Chapter one examines Sickert's drawings printed in the little magazines and argues that his artistic idea was rooted in journalism. Chapter two focuses on the printerly language of Sickert's paintings from three perspectives, focusing in turn on line, colour, and montage. It argues that Sickert's use of paint was in dialogue with his understanding of print media, and was further developed as social commentary. Chapter three investigates Sickert's paintings appropriating topical news stories, and examines a wider print culture that influenced the way these artworks were created and perceived. Chapter four examines Sickert's late series, the *English Echoes*. It analyses a set of *Echoes* in light of their source illustrations, and suggests potential interpretations for each *Echo*, attending to their intersections with contemporary cultural narratives as well as Sickert's own artistic journey. The chapter also focuses on the act of "echoing," a perspective that provides a new way to understand the originality of these works.

# Table of Contents

<b>Abstract</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Table of Contents</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>List of illustrations</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Acknowledgement</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Author’s declaration</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>12</b>
The literature on Sickert and the need for a print-focused perspective	16
Research methods and theories, and defining print for this study	32
Thesis structure	46
<b>Chapter One: Art on Paper: Sickert and the Little Magazines</b>	<b>48</b>
<i>1.1 Making a whirlwind in English art</i>	<i>51</i>
1.1.1 Sickert, Whistler, Vivian, and Impressionism	51
1.1.2 The “ <i>Whirlwind</i> Cartoons”: Drawing as news	56
1.1.3 The “ <i>Whirlwind</i> Diploma Gallery of Modern Pictures”	70
<i>1.2 Modern life on the page: fitting into the nineties</i>	<i>74</i>
1.2.1 Being the <i>Cambridge Observer</i> : with a continental accent	75
1.2.2 The <i>Yellow Book</i> : Paintings as illustration	77
1.2.3 Dialogue of the <i>Idler</i>	83
<i>1.3 Illustrations and writings for the New Age</i>	<i>92</i>
1.3.1 Drawing the social theme	93
1.3.2 Drawing and criticism	102
<b>Chapter Two: The Printerly Painting</b>	<b>110</b>
<i>2.1 Line, hatching, and grid</i>	<i>112</i>
2.1.1 Line in the tradition of printmaking and Sickert’s views on the linear aspects of pictures	112
2.1.2 The grid	120
<i>2.2 Colour</i>	<i>132</i>
2.2.1 From the play of white and black to camaieu	133
2.2.2 Separation of colour	141
2.2.3 Coloured camaieu: Anachronism	145
2.2.4 Moving colour	150

2.3 <i>Montage</i>	155
<b>Chapter Three: Painting the News—Topicality, Motifs, and Audiences</b>	<b>166</b>
3.1 <i>The Camden Town case: drawing for an audience to see and touch</i>	172
3.1.1 Newspaper reportage of the murder	174
3.1.2 Sickert's appropriation: from motif to topic, and drawing for viewers	178
3.1.3 Tactile reality effect: nude photography	182
3.1.4 Clients between the "stalls and pit"	191
3.2 <i>"Coloured" as topic</i>	195
3.3 <i>To be closer</i>	210
<b>Chapter Four: The <i>English Echoes</i>: Archiving and the Circulation of Images</b>	<b>221</b>
4.1 <i>The sources for the English Echoes and the illustrators of the 1860s</i>	224
4.1.1 Discovering lost names—Sickert the archivist	227
4.1.2 Sources for illustrations: art as popular wares	239
4.2 <i>Sickert's appropriation: the past of the present, and the "present" of the past</i>	244
4.3 <i>Images in circulation: English Echoes, Gilbert's illustration, and the ILN</i>	262
4.4 <i>Problematised originality</i>	270
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>279</b>
<b>Appendix: My discovery of 23 source illustrations for the <i>English Echoes</i></b>	<b>283</b>
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>299</b>
<b>Illustrations</b>	<b>320</b>

## List of illustrations

- 0.1 Walter Sickert, *La Porte St Denis*, 1930, Paisley Art Gallery.
- 0.2 Walter Sickert, *Second Turn of Katie Lawrence*, c1888, Yale University Art Gallery.
- 0.3 Walter Sickert, *La Hollandaise*, c1906, Tate.
- 0.4 Walter Sickert, *HM King Edward VIII*, 1936, The Beaverbrook Art Gallery
- 0.5 “Walter Sickert and Thérèse Lessore in his studio,” photograph, 1938.
- 1.1 “Charles Bradlaugh.” *Whirlwind*, June 28, 1890, 9.
- 1.2 George Cruikshank, illustration for *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, 1853.
- 1.3 Walter Sickert, *Portrait of Charles Bradlaugh*, 1890, National Liberal Club, London.
- 1.4 Walter Sickert, *Study of Charles Bradlaugh*, c1890, National Portrait Gallery, London.
- 1.5 Walter Sickert, *Mr Charles Bradlaugh at the Bar of the House of Commons*, 1891, Manchester Art Gallery.
- 1.6 “The Late Charles Bradlaugh, M.P.,” *Illustrated London News*, February 7, 1891, 15.
- 1.7 Walter Sickert, “Portrait of Thomas Bayley Potter,” *Whirlwind*, July 5, 1890, 25.
- 1.8 Walter Sickert, *George Moore*, 1890-1, Tate.
- 1.9 Walter Sickert, “Portrait of Henry Labourchere,” *Whirlwind*, July 12, 1890, 41.
- 1.10 ‘H. Labouchere, M.P.,’ *Punch*, April 2, 1881, 154.
- 1.11 “The New House of Common Scheme,” *Pall Mall Budget*, February 9, 1893, 213.
- 1.12 Ernst Friedrich von Liphart, “Portrait of Flaubert,” *La Vie Moderne*, May 15, 1879, cover.
- 1.13 “Exposition Des Independant,” *La Vie Moderne*, May 1, 1879, 54.
- 1.14 “Friedrich Max Muller,” in William Rothenstein, *Oxford Characters*, 1896.
- 1.15 Portrait of Friedrich Max Muller, in William Rothenstein, *Oxford Characters*, 1896.
- 1.16 Sidney Starr, “The Whirlwind Diploma Gallery of Modern Pictures—No.5: At the Piano” [drawing after Whistler], *Whirlwind*, August 9, 1890, 104.
- 1.17 James Abbot McNeill Whistler, *At the Piano*, 1858-9, The Taft Museum, Ohio.
- 1.18 Walter Sickert, “The Whirlwind Diploma Gallery of Modern Pictures—No.1,” *Whirlwind*, July 12, 1890, 40.
- 1.19 Wilson Steer, *Knucklebone, Walberswick*, 1888-9, Ipswich Museum, UK.
- 1.20 Degas, *Beach Scene*, c1869-70, The National Gallery, London.
- 1.21 Henry Blackburn, ed., *Academy Notes*, 1893, 81.
- 1.22 Walter Sickert, *Café des Tribunaux, Dieppe*, c1890, Tate.
- 1.23 Walter Sickert, untitled drawing of Dieppe, c1893.
- 1.24 Walter Sickert, “Le Puits Salé,” *Cambridge Observer*, February 7, 1893, 7.
- 1.25 Walter Sickert, “Dieppe,” *Cambridge Observer*, March 7, 1893, 7.
- 1.26 Walter Sickert, “Scheveningen,” *Cambridge Observer*, February 14, 1893, 7.
- 1.27 Walter Sickert, “The Old Oxford Music Hall,” *Yellow Book*, April 1, 1894, 85.
- 1.28 Walter Sickert, “The Old Bedford Music Hall,” *Yellow Book*, July 1894, 221.
- 1.29 Aubrey Beardsley, cover of the *Yellow Book*, April 1894.
- 1.30 Walter Sickert, “Hotel Royal, Dieppe,” *Yellow Book*, January 1895, 80.
- 1.31 ‘Three Pictures,’ *Yellow Book*, July 1894, 220.
- 1.32 Aubrey Beardsley, “Night Piece,” *Yellow Book*, April 1894, 127.
- 1.33. “The Idler’s Club,” *Idler*, April 1895, 266.

- 1.34 Title page of Sickert's music hall drawings, *Idler*, April 1895, 168.
- 1.35 Walter Sickert, "The boy I love is up in the gallery," *Idler*, April 1895, 169.
- 1.36 Walter Sickert, 'Kate o'grady, you're a lady,' *Idler*, April 1895, 170.
- 1.37 Walter Sickert, 'Topical and extempore,' *Idler*, April 1895, 171.
- 1.38 Walter Sickert, "A very nobby suit, A shiny hat and boot, That's man, that is the cause of all our woes!" *Idler*, April 1895, 172.
- 1.39 Walter Sickert, "Minnie Cunningham." *Idler*, April 1895, 173.
- 1.40 Illustration in Percy Fitzgerald, *Music-Hall Land* (London: Ward and Downey, 1890), 31.
- 1.41 G. K. Chesterton, "The Ideal Citizen." *New Age*, August 10, 1911, 340.
- 1.42 Tom Titt, "Mr. Anthony M. Ludovici," *New Age*, February 3, 1914, 448.
- 1.43 Walter Sickert, "A Pail of Slops," *New Age*, July 13, 1911, 252.
- 1.44 "Risks Run by Servants," *Penny Illustrated Paper*, February 23, 1907, 116.
- 1.45 A maid carrying a bucket of coal, *Penny Illustrated Paper*, February 23, 1907, 116.
- 1.46 Walter Sickert, "And I Drive the Bus that Mary Rides on." *New Age*, July 20, 1911, 276.
- 1.47 "Some Drawing by W. Wroblewski," Supplement to *New Age*, September 7, 1911.
- 1.48 Fred Richards, "Temple of the Sibyl," *New Age*, February 19, 1914, 497.
- 1.49 Walter Sickert, "The Comb," *New Age*, January 18, 1912, 276.
- 1.50 Walter Sickert, "Where Can it Be," *New Age*, April 4, 1912, 540.
- 1.51 Edward Wadsworth, "The Farmyard," *New Age*, April 30, 1914, 815.
- 2.1 Walter Sickert, *That Old Fashioned Mother of Mine*, c.1928, V&A, London.
- 2.2 Canaletto, *Imaginary View of Venice*, 1741, The Met.
- 2.3 Walter Sickert, *Venice, the Rialto and the Palazzo Carmerlenghi*, c1902, Private Collection.
- 2.4 Walter Sickert, *Don Juan and Haidee (Idyll)*, 1934, The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent.
- 2.5 Kenny Meadows, illustration for George Noel Gordon Byron, *Illustrated Byron with Upwards of Two Hundred Engravings from Original Drawings* (London: Henry Vizetelly), 1855, 187.
- 2.6 Walter Sickert, *Miss Earhart's Arrival*, 1932, Tate.
- 2.7 Utagawa Hiroshige, *Hōki Province: Ōno, Distant View of Mount Daisen*, 1853, York Art Gallery.
- 2.8 Walter Sickert, *Second Turn of Katie Lawrence*, c1888, Yale University Art Gallery.
- 2.9 James McNeill Whistler, *The Dance House: Nocturne*, 1889, Hunterian Art Gallery, Glasgow.
- 2.10 Walter Sickert, *The Ghetto*, c1897-8, Private Collection.
- 2.11 Eadweard Muybridge, "Various acts of motion," *The Human Figure in Motion*, 1860s.
- 2.12 Walter Sickert, *L'Hotel Royal, Dieppe*, 1894, Museums Sheffield.
- 2.13 Antonio Mancini, *Portrait of John Lowell Gardner II*, 1895, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston.
- 2.14 Albert Moore, *Nude Figure Study for Birds of the Air*, c. 1878, V&A.
- 2.15 Albert Moore, *A Summer Night*, 1885-90, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool.
- 2.16 Walter Sickert, *The Invalid*, c1939-40, Private Collection.
- 2.17 Ugo da Carpi, *David Slaying Goliath [After Raphael]*, c1518, Minneapolis Institute of Art, USA.
- 2.18 Walter Sickert, *Emigrants at Melbourne*, 1932, Private Collection.
- 2.19 Walter Sickert, *Portrait of A Lady-Mrs David Margesson*, 1931-2, Private Collection.
- 2.20 Walter Sickert, *The Gardener's Daughter*, 1932-3, Christie's.
- 2.21 John Gilbert, 'Siegbert Climbing the Fence to Assist the Invalid Girl', *The Leisure Hour*, 24 July, 1856, 456.

- 2.22 Frank Miles, *The Gardener's Daughter*, late 19th century (published), V&A.
- 2.23 Frank Miles, *I've been Roaming; The Gardener's Daughter*, 1872, Private Collection.
- 2.24 Edward Henry Wehnert, *Gardener's Daughter*, 1860, provenance unknown.
- 2.25 *Battersea Park*, early twentieth century, postcard, possessed by the author.
- 2.26 Walter Sickert, *The Rectory*, c1939, Private Collection.
- 2.27 Walter Sickert, *The Brighton Pierrots*, 1915, Tate.
- 2.28 Walter Sickert, *The Wheatsheaf*, c1928-9, Private Collection.
- 2.29 George Cruikshank, "CAPRICORNUS\_\_A Caper-o'-corns", *The Comic Almanack for 1846*, December 1846, Yale Center for British Art.
- 2.30 "Corn Capers." *The Comic Almanack* (London: John Camden Hotten, 1846), 131.
- 2.31 Walter Sickert, *study for Entente Anglo-Russe*, c.1928-9, Islington Library, London.
- 2.32 Frank Brangwyn, *British Empire Panel (12) India*, c.1930, Glynn Vivian Art Gallery, Swansea.
- 2.33 Thomas Saunders Nash, *The Apple Pickers*, 1927, Ashmolean Museum.
- 2.34 Walter Sickert, *The Rt Hon Winston Churchill*, c1927, National Portrait Gallery, London.
- 2.35 George Albert Smith, *A Visit to The Seaside*, film, 1908.
- 2.36 Walter Sickert, *The Wave*, c1931-2, The Potteries Museum and Art Gallery.
- 2.37 John Gilbert, "The Famishing Weed and Shell Gatherers Surprised by a Heavy Wave", *The Leisure Hour*, April 7, 1859, 209.
- 2.38 Walter Sickert, *Portrait of Sir Hugh Walpole*, 1928, The Fitzwilliam Museum, UK.
- 2.39 Walter Sickert, "Lou! Lou! I Love You." *New Age*, July 6, 1911.
- 2.40 Therese Lessore, *Victoria Park—'Let's go Home Sis!'*, 1929, Manchester Art Gallery.
- 2.41 Walter Sickert, *Self-Portrait*, 1897, Mark Samuels Lasner Collection.
- 2.42 Félix Vallotton, *Portrait du Graveur Félix Vallotton*, 1891, in *L'Art et L'Idée*.
- 2.43 Francis de Jongh, *Félix Vallotton*, photograph, date unknown.
- 2.44 Walter Sickert, *Portrait of Israel Zangwill*, 1897, National Gallery Scotland.
- 2.45 Cover of *Israel Zangwill*, published by T. Yoseloff, 1957.
- 2.46 Walter Sickert, *La Favorita [After Kenny Meadows]*, c1932, Private Collection.
- 2.47 Kenny Meadows, untitled illustration, *The Illustrated Byron*, 1855, 236.
- 3.1 Max Radiguet, "Faits Divers", cover for *L'assiette au beurre*, September 8, 1906, Gallica.
- 3.2 Walter Sickert, *The Prussians in Belgium*, c1912, Private Collection.
- 3.3 Spencer Gore, *Gauguins and Connoisseurs*, 1911, Private Collection.
- 3.4 Walter Sickert, *Summer Afternoon or What Shall We Do for the Rent?* c.1907-9, Kirkcaldy Museum & Art Gallery.
- 3.5 Walter Sickert, *The Camden Town Murder or What Shall We Do about the Rent?* c.1908, Yale Centre for British Art.
- 3.6 Walter Sickert, *L'Affaire de Camden Town*, 1909, Private Collection.
- 3.7 "Ghastly Tragedy in Camden Town," 21 September, 1907, *Illustrated Police News*.
- 3.8 "Discovery of the Camden Town Horror!," 21 September 1907, *Illustrated Police Budget*.
- 3.9 Lucy Hartmann, *Albine*, reproduced in *Catalogue Illustré du Salon de 1899* (Paris : Société nationale des beaux-arts, 1899), 50.
- 3.10 "Pears Soap", *The Graphic*, June 21, 1890, 711.
- 3.11 Walter Crane, "Snow White," *Households Stories by Brothers Grimm*, 1963.
- 3.12 Richard Andre, "Snow White in Coffin", *Grimm's Fairy Tales*, 1899.
- 3.13. James Gillray, *A Whore's Last Shift*, 1779, British Museum.

- 3.14 Walter Richard Sickert, *Study for "L'Affaire de Camden Town,"* c1909, Private Collection.
- 3.15 Walter Sickert, *La Hollandaise,* c1906, Tate.
- 3.16 Réne Le Bègue, *Académie,* 1902, The Met.
- 3.17 "Reclining nude with flower display," c1910s, postcard.
- 3.18 Walter Sickert, *Second Turn of Katie Lawrence,* c1888, Yale University Art Gallery.
- 3.19 Edgar Degas, *The Ballet Scene from Meyerbeer's Opera, "Robert le Diable,"* 1876, V&A.
- 3.20 Walter Sickert, *Peggy Ashcroft and Paul Robeson in Othello,* c1935-6, Private Collection.
- 3.21 "Coloured Othello", newspaper illustration, 1930 [in Wendy Baron, and Richard Shone, eds. *Sickert, Paintings* (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 1992), 328.]
- 3.22 "Our Captious Critic," *The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News,* June 7, 1930, 640.
- 3.23 "The Negro Othello. Paul Robeson as Shakespeare's mighty man of colour", *The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News,* June 7, 1930, 641.
- 3.24 "Paul Robeson's Triumph", *The Daily Herald,* May 30, 1930, 9.
- 3.25 "Peggy Ashcroft as Desdemona and Paul Robeson as Othello at the Savoy Theatre." *The Daily News and Westminster Gazette,* May 21, 1930, 11.
- 3.26 John Raphael Smith, *A Woman Holding a Black-Face Mask,* c. 1794–1800, Paul Mellon Collection.
- 3.27 Walter Sickert, *Variation on Othello,* 1933-4, Bristol Art Gallery and Museum.
- 3.28 Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *The Beloved,* 1865-6, Tate.
- 3.29 Walter Sickert, *Horses of St. Mark's, Venice,* 1905-6, Birmingham Museums Trust.
- 3.30 Walter Sickert, *The Miner,* c1935-6, Birmingham Museums Trust.
- 3.31 "Scenes at the Mine-Strike 'Front'", *Daily Express,* October 18, 1935, 24.
- 3.32 Walter Sickert, *King George V and his Racing Manager: A Conversation Piece at Aintree,* 1929-30, Royal Trust.
- 3.33 "A Look Around the News", *The Graphic,* January 3, 1931, 3.
- 4.1. "Books of the Day", *Illustrated London News,* April 9, 1932.
- 4.2. "Sickert "Echoes" Engravings by One of Our First Contributors", *Illustrated London News,* April 9, 1932, 557.
- 4.3 Walter Sickert, *Suisque Praesidium,* c1927, Private Collection, Scotland.
- 4.4 'Embarking for the East', print on ceramic pot lid.
- 4.5 Walter Sickert, *La Traviata. Echo of Sir John Gilbert,* 1927, Private Collection.
- 4.6 John Gilbert, "Count de Joyeux, M. de Verboix, and Politia de Champvans", *London Journal,* July 19, 1856.
- 4.7 *Catalogue of An Exhibition of "English Echoes,"* 1931, 12. National Art Library, UK.
- 4.8 *Catalogue of An Exhibition of "English Echoes,"* 1931, 13. National Art Library, UK.
- 4.9 *Catalogue of An Exhibition of "English Echoes,"* 1931, 14. National Art Library, UK.
- 4.10 Kenny Meadows, illustration for *The Illustrated Byron,* 1855, 342.
- 4.11 Walter Sickert, *Vicinique Pecus,* c1930-1, F. H. Mayor.
- 4.12 Kenny Meadows, illustration for *The Illustrated Byron,* 1855, 573.
- 4.13 Walter Sickert, *Her Serene Highness,* c1931-2, Private Collection.
- 4.14 Walter Sickert, *Gwen Ffrangcon-Davies in Lady with A Lamp,* 1932, Pallant House Gallery, Chichester.
- 4.15 Walter Sickert, *La Louve,* 1932, Tate.
- 4.16 William Roberts, *The Ballet,* c1932, National Gallery of Scotland.
- 4.17 Aby Warburg, *Picture Atlas Mnemosyne,* Panel 47, 1928-29, The Warburg Institute, London.

- 4.18 *Catalogue of an Exhibition of Recent Paintings by Richard Sickert, A.R.A.* 1932, National Art library, London.
- 4.19 Walter Sickert, *The Idyll*, 1932, Ferens Art Gallery, Hull.
- 4.20 John Gilbert, "An Embarrassing Moment," *The Leisure Hour*, May 5, 1859, 273.
- 4.21 Brian Cook, book Jacket designed for *English Village and Hamlets*, 1934.
- 4.22 Walter Sickert, *Emigrants at Melbourne*, 1932, Private Collection, UK.
- 4.23 John Gilbert, "Sketches of Emigrant Life: —i. The Voyage," *The Leisure Hour*, August 5, 1852, 497.
- 4.24 Walter Sickert, *Irish Migrants Landing at Melbourne*, 1932, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne.
- 4.25 John Gilbert, 'Emigrants Landing at Melbourne', *The Leisure Hour*, May 25, 1854, 321.
- 4.26 Walter Sickert, *Health and Wealth, The First Australians*, c1932-5, Private Collection.
- 4.27 John Gilbert, "Sketches of Emigrant Life: —ii. The Arrival," *The Leisure Hour*, August 12, 1852, 513.
- 4.28 Frederick Goodall, *An Irish Eviction*, 1850, Leicester Museum & Art Gallery.
- 4.29 George Frederic Watts, *Irish Famine*, 1850, Watts Gallery.
- 4.30 Walter Sickert, *Fireworks on Primrose Hill to Celebrate the Taking of Sebastopol [After Francesco Sargent]*, 1931-2, Private Collection.
- 4.31 Francisco Sargent, "Firework on Primrose Hill," *The London Journal*, June 14, 1856, 201.
- 4.32 Christopher Nevinson, *La Mitrailleuse*, 1916, Tate.
- 4.33 Walter Sickert, '48, c1930, whereabouts unknown.
- 4.34 G.F. Sargent, "Porte de St Denis," *The London Journal*, April 1, 1848, 49.
- 4.35 Walter Sickert, *Ludovico Magno*, c1930-1, Philips Collection, Washington DC.
- 4.36 Walter Sickert, *Porte St Denis (Paris)*, c1930-1, Philips Collection, Washington DC.
- 4.37 Walter Sickert, *La Porte St Denis*, 1930, Paisley Art Gallery, Scotland.
- 4.38 Walter Sickert, *The Third Republic*, 1932, Peterborough Art Gallery.
- 4.39 William Hogarth, *The Gate of Calais, or The Roast Beef of Old England*, 1748-9, Davison Art Center, USA.
- 4.40 Walter Sickert, *Summer Lightning*, 1931-2, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool.
- 4.41 John Gilbert, 'The Unexpected Rencontre,' *The Leisure Hour*, November 22, 1855, 737.
- 4.42 Detail of the text in "Books of the Day," *Illustrated London News*, April 9, 1932, 557.
- 4.43 Walter Sickert, *The House Keeper's Niece*, c1931-2, whereabouts unknown.
- 4.44 John Gilbert, "The Introduction," 1862, *The Leisure Hour*.
- 4.45 Walter Sickert, *Woman's Sphere*, 1931-2, Government Art Collection, London.
- 4.46 John Gilbert, "Julia Reading the Newspaper to Captain Rushton," 1856, *The Leisure Hour*.
- 4.47 Walter Sickert, *Le Tapis Vert*, 1931-2, Private Collection.
- 4.48 John Gilbert, "The Way to Ruin," 1854, *The Leisure Hour*.
- 4.49 "The Camera as Recorder: Recent Events by Photography," *Illustrated London News*, April 9, 1932, 545.
- 4.50 "From the World's Scrap-Book: News Items of Topical Interest," *Illustrated London News*, April 9, 1932, 552.

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## Author's declaration

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for a degree or other qualification at this University or elsewhere. All sources are acknowledged as references. I receive assistance with proofreading and editing by Dr. Bill Roberts, in accordance with the University's Guidance on Proofreading and Editing.

## Introduction

This is *La Porte St Denis* (1930, fig. 0.1), painted by Walter Sickert in 1930, probably from a photograph he took earlier that year.<sup>1</sup> In this painting of a street view, Sickert catches a glimpse of posters on an advertising column in a foggy Paris street. As a colourful temporary architecture, the column dominates the centre of the image, with Porte St Denis itself in the distance as a mere grey silhouette. It is perhaps an early morning, and the ubiquitous print is already clamouring on its own before the city fully awakens. Sickert's painting captures changes that people had perceived in the city since the mid-nineteenth century, as noted by a journalist in 1896:

The real architecture today, the one that grows from the living and pulsating environment, is the poster, the proliferation of colours under which disappears the stone monument, like ruins overtaken by nature. It is the temporary edifice demolished every night and reconstructed every morning, made of tawdry and changing images that annoy and cry out to the passer-by, that pander, provoke, laugh, guide, and accost him.<sup>2</sup>

Sickert's painting and the journalist's description illustrate each other, demonstrating that the everyday scene was undergoing a shift, with print materials playing an important role. The presence of print seems to have receded in our time, overshadowed by the allure of gleaming screens and light boxes. However, advertising columns such as that in the painting, known as *colonnes Morris* in French, were a novelty in the nineteenth century, and appeared for a definite purpose. They

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<sup>1</sup> Baron proposes that Sickert went to Paris in October 1930 in connection with the exhibition of his work at the Galerie Cardo, and it was probably in this visit that Sickert took photos for the motif *La Porte St Denis*. Wendy Baron, *Sickert: Paintings and Drawings* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 471.

<sup>2</sup> Written by the French journalist and writer, Marie-Justin-Maurice Coste, whose pen name is Maurice Talmeyr (1850-1931), in "L'Âge de l'affiche," *Revue des Deux Mondes* 137 (September 1, 1896): 209. Quoted from Laura Anne Kalba, *Color in the Age of Impressionism: Commerce, Technology, and Art* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2021), 149.

were named after the French printer Gabriel Morris and his son Richard Gabriel, who won the competition to obtain the concession of exclusive advertising space in Paris in the 1860s, as part of Baron Haussmann's project to renovate the city. The columns, in cast-iron, with a hexagonal awning and a pointed dome decorated with scales and acanthus leaves, were painted forest green to blend in with the treetops along the Parisian boulevards. There were more than four hundred Morris columns in the busy areas of Paris, and, together with other minor public structures such as kiosks, fountains, and public toilets, these ubiquitous columns were just as important in creating a visual modernity in the city as the grander and better-known landmarks of the era, such as the triumphal arches and the Eiffel Tower. This visual modernity was complemented by the development of print culture in the mid-nineteenth century, as the installation of advertising columns meant that print became a common and indispensable means of displaying and accessing information. The columns, covered with bright and artificially coloured prints, would light up dreary vistas in the daytime, especially on gloomy days. The impressionist morning glow in the distance, as depicted in *La Porte St Denis*, pales in comparison to the colourful prints in the foreground.

The advertising columns were not alone; they resonated with prints found elsewhere, in streets and interiors, connecting different spaces and people, and forging a relation between commerce and visibility. Restaurants presented their menus in windows along sidewalks, catching the attention of passers-by. The images of entertaining performers in street posters were echoed in the pages of newspapers, magazines, and brochures that also advertised shows. These printed materials were read and distributed in different places, and might intrigue collectors in a similar way to books. People might pass by and disregard prints, as the journalist observed and as Sickert depicts; people might also establish a loose connection with the advertising column, just as Sickert portrays by including a man standing beside it. The man may have just finished searching for information on the prints, and then stood, contemplating, with his head lowered. Alternatively, he might be waiting here for

something else, but whilst waiting, who is to say that he would not have turned his head to glance at the posters on the column? His decision to stay close to the column also shows that the column's presence transforms this space in some way. He might inform a friend (in an age before the invention of mobile phones) that he will wait by the coloured column next to Porte St Denis, so as to be spotted easily.

I wish to argue here that prints at this time were not only to be read and looked at, but also to be experienced. The emergence of print itself defines an era, characterised by new printing technologies (with colours), diverse methods of image production and reproduction, burgeoning industries facilitated by print (such as packaging and the publishing industry), the emergence of new social gathering spaces, print's seamless integration with other practices (such as the combination of print and architecture), and the development of new genres of writing.<sup>3</sup> All of these developments shape the view of the world both visually and conceptually. Collectively, they contribute to the establishment of print culture, which exerted a significant influence on artistic production and reception. Sickert's painting demonstrates this connection between print culture and modern art. Sickert placed the advertising column at the centre of the painting, with clarity and an arresting visual intensity. Meanwhile, the Porte St Denis, the first of the four triumphal arches to be erected in Paris—which witnessed the workers' riot of June 1848, and through which Queen Victoria passed in 1855, in the year of the Paris Exposition—is given only a background presence, dissipating like smoke. The gate, though bearing historical and cultural significance, has lost its centrality in visual representation. In other words, the emerging print culture has affected the visual structure of painting. The print-covered column is not only a represented fact, but is woven into the syntax of the pictorial space: the square shape and details of the posters built up the painting in the same way the blocks and windows of the architecture in the background do. The posters' colours, imagined by Sickert from the black-and-white photograph, also serve as

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<sup>3</sup> For a discussion of the definition of print culture, see The Multigraph Collective, *Interacting with Print: Elements of Reading in the Era of Print Saturation* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2018), 2.

literal patches of colour in the painting, and thus not only as social realities but as formal components. Additionally, as a painting worked from a photograph (another kind of print), but which retains a somewhat “realistic” quality and fulfils a documentary role, Sickert’s work poses the issue of transposition from one medium to another, an important concern for modern artists.

Grounded in the era of print and focusing on the interaction between art and print culture, this study aims to reveal how print as both a medium and social context shapes and intervenes in the pictorial space and reception of painting. The study proceeds from three premises.

Firstly, the traditional view of print culture’s relation to art has been to see it as a part of popular culture;<sup>4</sup> only in recent decades has there been a focus on the role that print’s own specificity as a medium has had on art. Studies of modernism and periodicals, for example, have considered the role of print’s visual qualities in the expression and disruption of meaning.<sup>5</sup> Yet there is more to be explored, including the scope of print’s references, and its profound effects upon human perception, language, understanding, convention, and—with these—upon artistic creation and aesthetic concepts. Inspired by this art-historical trend, this study emphasises the particularities and qualities of print as a medium and a technology, as well as print’s interaction with other realms. Sickert’s *La Porte St Denis* exemplifies the profound influence of print culture in shaping experience and aesthetics at this time; as such, it effectively demonstrates the need for a comprehensive and adaptable understanding of the range of prints, and of the connections and distinctions between print and popular visual culture more broadly.

Secondly, studies of modernism have spared no effort in narrating the medium of paint, typified by the high formalist theories of Clement Greenberg, and numerous

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<sup>4</sup> As discussed in Thomas Crow, *Modern Art in the Common Culture* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996).

<sup>5</sup> See Koenraad Claes, *The Late-Victorian Little Magazine* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018); Faye Hammill and Mark Hussey, *Modernism’s Print Cultures* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016); and Peter Brooker and Andrew Thacker, eds., *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines*, Volume I: Britain and Ireland 1880–1955 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

discourses of the materiality of paint and other artistic media. This inertia has typified studies of Sickert, who has been described as a painterly painter. However, the rationale for, and usage of, artistic media do not appear suddenly and without origin; rather, different mediums interact with one another. By considering print as an influential medium, I aim to provide a fresh account of Sickert's art, and of the relationship between print and painting more generally. In particular, the intervention of print into paint will help to provide a new perspective upon some of the existing interpretative challenges in Sickert studies. These challenges include issues concerning paint, authorship, conflicting opinions regarding his early and later career, and the nature of creativity. To some extent, this study is a revisionist analysis of the medium of paint.

Lastly, Sickert's own experience intuitively lends itself to this research. Sickert was a journalist, writer, painter, printmaker, and illustrator—all pursuits connected to print culture. His connection to print culture has been loosely narrated in biographies and other studies, but never systematically, and with only limited consideration of the interrelationship between the different media he employed. My research attends both technically and conceptually to a broad range of print, viewing it as an enduring aspect of Sickert's career.

This study emphasises the incursion of print into painting. In what follows, I first review how the authority of the discourse on painting became established and the main issues arising from the dominance of this discourse in previous Sickert studies. Based on this, I elaborate the need for a perspective drawing on print culture to engage with the relevant issues. I then explain the methods, theories, and materials employed in this research, before outlining the structure of the thesis.

## The literature on Sickert and the need for a print-focused perspective

The most distinctive feature of Sickert studies is their emphasis on the artist's

use of paint, with interpretations having followed different theoretical trends, from a focus on paint as a formal element to its use as a conveyor of narrative. In her 1973 monograph on Sickert, Wendy Baron confirms his obsession with the “quality of paint,” and interprets this as a primarily formal concern. Baron highlights Sickert’s experiments with the proper use of paint, showing that Sickert was averse both to the Whistlerian *alla prima* technique—which results in a liquid surface of “poor quality”—and to Harold Gilman and Charles Ginner’s use of impasto, which made them the “thickest painters in London.”<sup>6</sup> While chronicling the formal development of Sickert’s oeuvre, Baron raises the question as to whether Sickert used narrative as a pretext to practise his formal experiments.<sup>7</sup> Thus opposing paint to content, Baron’s enquiry suggests an understanding of paint as a formal element.

Baron’s stance is reminiscent of the modernist prioritisation of form over content, which is largely shaped by Roger Fry. In Fry’s abundant writings and ideas, “plastic consideration,” “paint,” and “form” are among the key words. The way he clarifies these notions is often through analysing specific examples, which is not easy to be rephrased by subsequent scholars, and not easy to gain a clear definition for each term. Yet, it is at least possible to delineate a relationship among these terms. For Fry, the plastic consideration is in opposition to literature or the “pure illustration.”<sup>8</sup> Form, as I understand, is not a specific element in a picture for Fry, but more of an evaluative quality, which a good plastic art should possess. The material, paint, used in a painting is the medium of plastic expression, the means to create form. Thus, we can see that paint was given priority in the creation of a painting, and connected mainly to the pictorial realm. Fry even replaced the honorary title of “artist” with

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<sup>6</sup> Baron, “1913 to Autumn 1914, The Ideal Use of Paint,” in *Sickert, Painting and Drawings*, 91. For Sickert’s criticism on Whistler, see, Walter Sickert, “Wriggle and Chiffon,” *The New Age*, June 9, 1910, 129–30. For Sickert’s criticism on Gilman and Ginner, see, Walter Sickert, “The Thickest Painters in London,” *The New Age*, June 18, 1914, 155. Both are reprinted in Anna Gruetzner Robins, ed., *Walter Sickert: The Complete Writings on Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 243–247, and 378–381.

<sup>7</sup> Wendy Baron, *Sickert* (London: Phaidon, 1973), 186.

<sup>8</sup> Roger Fry, “Some Questions on Esthetics,” in *Transformations: Critical and Speculative Essays on Art* (New York: Chatto & Windus Press, 1927), 16.

“practitioner of paint.”<sup>9</sup> Such view on painting is reflected in Fry’s comment on Sickert’s art in 1911, when he said, for the artist, things “have only their visual values, they are not symbols, they contain no key to unlock the secrets of the heart and spirit.”<sup>10</sup> Similarly, John Rothenstein later wrote that, “like Degas, Sickert was interested in his models only as shapes and colours.”<sup>11</sup> These comments on Sickert’s art, accords with Sam Rose’s view that Fry approached Sickert’s works in a purely formalist way, in an attempt to hypothetically reconstruct Sickert’s artistic intentions and to disregard the artist’s own views.<sup>12</sup>

Indeed, Sickert did not consider himself as a formalist, and use the word form in a different sense, opposing it to colour; the artist John Swan, for example, was described by Sickert as “a man of form, not a man of colour.”<sup>13</sup> This recalls the tradition of the design and colour rivalry. Indeed, Sickert viewed form as the foundation of draughtsmanship, which, the aim is to tell stories.<sup>14</sup> In this sense, form, in Sickert’s use, is similar to ‘design’, and it is the way to narrative purpose, his criterion of good painting. At the same time, the use of paint also constituted the essence of a good painting. In this sense, for Sickert, form and quality of paint were of equal weight in a good painting, but he did not elaborate the relation between paint and the narrative, so his stance is easily be interpreted in Fry’s view, to subordinate paint as the opposite of the narrative—the formal aspects.

The separation of form and content is seen in studies on Sickert following Baron’s, including Rebecca Daniels’s thematic exploration of popular culture as the subject matter that modernised English art,<sup>15</sup> and William Rough’s study of how

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<sup>9</sup> Fry, “J. S. Sargent,” in *Transformations*, 131.

<sup>10</sup> Roger Fry, “Mr. Walter Sickert’s Pictures at the Stafford Gallery,” *The Nation*, July 8, 1911, 536.

<sup>11</sup> John Rothenstein, *Walter Richard Sickert (1860–1942)* (London: Beaverbrook Newspapers, 1961), 5.

<sup>12</sup> Sam Rose, “‘With an almost pathetic fatality doing what is right’: Late Sickert and His Critics,” *Art History* 37, no. 1 (2014): 127.

<sup>13</sup> Walter Sickert, “The Royal Academy,” *The Speaker*, May 8, 1897, reprinted in Robins, *op. cit.*, 166.

<sup>14</sup> Sickert expresses these ideas from time to time in his writing. See, for example, “Drawing. Messrs Dowdeswell’s Galleries,” *New York Herald*, April 1, 1889; and “A Critical Calendar,” *English Review*, March 1912. Both reprinted in Robins, *op. cit.*, 26 and 300.

<sup>15</sup> Rebecca Daniels, “Walter Sickert and Popular Culture” (PhD. Diss, University of Oxford, 2006).

theatre informed Sickert's themes.<sup>16</sup> In these studies, the relationship between art and life is emphasised, with artists regarded as positively participating in modern life, and painting as a visual document of modern life rather than a mere play with pictorial surface.

Yet other scholars have rejected this demarcation of formal and thematic readings and the simple equation of narrative themes with modernity. In response to the twenty-first century impetus to bring English modern art into the history of British social and cultural modernity, they have tried to overcome the binary of form and content, seeing form as integral to narrative by adopting social-historical methods whilst maintaining a keen reading of the visual effect of paintings. This interpretative turn has been made possible by seeing the external material world in connection with the materiality of paint. Paint is not only a formal element but can narrate. David Peters Corbett pioneered this new methodology by prioritising the visual qualities of paintings and considering how paint and other visual qualities are deployed and reintegrated to make meaning.<sup>17</sup> For Corbett, the visual focuses on the facture of a painting, including paint, form, colour, and shape on the surface.<sup>18</sup> Compared to verbal arguments, the visual, for Corbett, was capable of providing unmediated knowledge in the mid-Victorian period and early twentieth century, as the ability of language to communicate reality had been brought into question.<sup>19</sup> Artists were intuitively attracted to exploring their medium's ability to provide an unmediated rendering of reality. Paint was opposed to verbal language but considered capable of generating narrative meaning. For example, the yellow brushstrokes expressing the rail in front of the stage in *Gatti's Hungerford Palace of Varieties: Second Turn of Katie Lawrence* (fig. 0.2) are, for Corbett, a gesture through which Sickert speaks of the materiality of paint itself, which "cannot claim a direct transcription of the world

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<sup>16</sup> William Rough, "Walter Sickert and the Theatre c.1880–c.1940," (PhD. Diss, University of St Andrews, 2010).

<sup>17</sup> See the introduction to David Peters Corbett, *The World in Paint: Modern Art and Visuality in England, 1848–1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004).

<sup>18</sup> Corbett, *The World in Paint*, 11.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 18–23.

but rather asserts its physicality in constructing its account of the world.”<sup>20</sup> The surface of Sickert’s painting, a “fluctuating web of colour and brushstrokes” that are “knotted together,” is superior to the loyal imitation of reality.<sup>21</sup> At the same time, Corbett considers that Sickert’s depiction of low-life subject matter such as the Camden Town murder, together with the pictorial surface, represents the anxiety of urban experience and attempts to grasp its disorder.<sup>22</sup> This social-historical reading is continued, within a more specific context, in Daniels’s study of the Camden Town nude paintings, in which the expressive brushstroke of black on the protagonist’s face (fig. 0.3) is related to the history of contagion in Edwardian England, and the harsh tonal contrast represents the disquieting atmosphere of Edwardian London.<sup>23</sup> Here, paint adopts a realistic role to denote a social fact. Following this trend of relating the materiality of paint to specific social and cultural references, Merlin Seller unveils the history of remembrance in the interwar period, which he finds embedded in Sickert’s use of paint.<sup>24</sup> For Seller, the dryness of the paint is representative of English soil and thus embodies Englishness.

Combining form and content, these scholars suggest that paint and form serve as the emblems of an aesthetic modernity, which is viewed in turn as a diagnosis of modernisation. This perspective identifies the duality of modernity, as famously articulated by Matei Călinescu, wherein one aspect represents progress while the other embodies an aesthetic concept that reflects on that progress.<sup>25</sup> Charles Harrison has also argued that modernism is a reaction to modernisation.<sup>26</sup> I agree with the approach

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<sup>20</sup> David Peters Corbett, “Seeing into Modernity: Walter Sickert’s Music Hall Scenes, c. 1887–1907, and English Modernism,” *Modernism/Modernity* 7, no. 2 (2000): 298–99.

<sup>21</sup> Corbett, *The World in Paint*, 199.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 7–15.

<sup>23</sup> Rebecca Daniels, “Walter Sickert and Urban Realism: Ordinary Life and Tragedy in Camden Town,” *The British Art Journal* 3, no. 2 (2002): 59.

<sup>24</sup> Merlin Seller, “Material Memory: The Work of Late Sickert 1927–42,” (PhD. Diss, University of East Anglia, 2016), introduction and passim.

<sup>25</sup> Matei Călinescu, *Five Faces of Modernity: Modernism, Avant-Garde, Decadence, Kitsch, Postmodernism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1987), 41.

<sup>26</sup> Charles Harrison, *Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 6.

of relating both form and content to modernity, since Corbett, Seller, and Daniels's studies of paint as a formal element each expand the discussion of form in modern art, and suggest that form, for Sickert, is different to Fry's idea of it, which had greatly influenced the interpretation of art since the early twentieth century. On the other hand, modernity in their writing is not merely an equation of themes in modern life but is shaped through pictorial manipulation. Furthermore, this social-historical method, with paint as the object, provides an acute reading of the phenomenology of the pictorial surface, encouraging a focus on the work itself, and thus attempts to loosen the relationship between the artwork and the author. I will return to this last point later. At this juncture, however, I wish to point out some precariousness in their studies.

Firstly, though Corbett promotes the visual qualities in his analysis, it is paint that dominates, and the analysis becomes a description and imagination of the overall atmosphere, especially in the case of the Camden Town nude paintings. It seems that, in his analysis, every brushstroke plays a similar role. Yet a line of paint and a dot of paint are different. Paint, brushstroke, and other visual elements are sometimes flattened. Not only does this erase the possibilities of paint, but it also limits the interpretation of form or visual quality. Seeing paint as an omnipotent symbol solidifies the dominance of paint and restricts the interpretation of Sickert's work.

Secondly, the reason Corbett proposes that verbal language cannot provide a true understanding of reality is partly because of the arbitrariness of words in relation to their referents. However, his attribution of meaning to the paint surface is also arbitrary and metaphoric.<sup>27</sup> As such, what is the difference between verbal and visual language? Furthermore, if, as Corbett argues, artists deploy their media within a system of meaning, could more analysis of the system be revealed? As an artist keen on sorting out artistic lineages, did Sickert ever develop a syntax of expressive language to describe modernity? Given that Sickert attempted to draw attention to the

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<sup>27</sup> As Corbett himself recognises, paint is a metaphor for communicating reality. Corbett, *The World in Paint*, 12.

medium of paint in his paintings, why did he not use impasto to articulate its materiality more emphatically? Why does paint appear as it does?

The attention given to Sickert's use of paint has also led to contrasting opinions on his early and late works, especially with regard to the creativity and originality of his later output. These disparate views began with his early critics, such as Clive Bell who refers to his late works as "unlucky transcriptions of Victorian Illustrators."<sup>28</sup> While there have been revisionary studies of the late works (such as those by Seller and Daniels, discussed below), these tend to view late Sickert under the totally different and new identity of Richard Sickert.

The reason why the preoccupation with Sickert's approach to painting has led to a division between the early and late work is that paintwork is commonly linked to the creativity of the artist. Fry, especially in his later writings, considers that the plastic value of the medium is a component of a good painting, but that the medium itself is not as important as an artist's vision, with the artist using the material in a synthetic way.<sup>29</sup> From this perspective, Fry relates visual qualities to the genius and sensibility of an artist. This view may provide a context for the criticism of Sickert's late career, when he largely adopted print as the basis of his painting, and when the conflict between print and paint reached its peak. Addressing the lost originality of late Sickert, Daniels argued, having located the original sources (mid-Victorian periodical illustrations) of many works in the *English Echoes* series, as well as paintings copying the designs of newspaper photographs, that Sickert restored the aura of these mass-produced images, and thus demonstrated his creativity.<sup>30</sup> This is an odd and reductive reading of Walter Benjamin's discussion of aura. On the one hand, Daniels simply regards the aura as inherent in a painting, tacitly standing for the superiority of painting over other images, without tracing how different imageries interacted and

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<sup>28</sup> Clive Bell, "Sickert at the National Gallery," *The New Statesman and Nation*, September 6, 1941, 230.

<sup>29</sup> This view appears from time to time in Fry's earlier writings, collected in *Vision and Design*, but becomes more prominent in his later writings, collected in *Transformations*, and especially in his writing on Rembrandt's inner vision. Fry, "Some Questions in Esthetics," *Transformations*, 39–40.

<sup>30</sup> Rebecca Daniels, "Press Art: The Late Oeuvre of Walter Richard Sickert," *Apollo* 156, no. 488 (2002): 30–35.

shaped the discourse of originality in Sickert's time. On the other hand, since Sickert's sources—mid-Victorian periodical illustrations—were not reproductions of any artworks, what were their auras about? And how can the aura of engravings be transferred to paintings? This view of painting continues to position it as the salient feature of art, providing limited new insight into Sickert's late works, and eschewing the historical significance of the debate on originality in the 1930s. After all, while it is good to trace the illustrations on which Sickert based his paintings, the painting as a constructed image is far more than a mere reproduction of the original, and the life of a painting does not cease when it is made, but continues in its conversation with the world. In line with Richard Morphet's view, Daniels has claimed Sickert as a precursor to Pop art.<sup>31</sup> This would seem to give Sickert a new identity. However, this claim is based on hindsight, and on Sickert's appropriation of the readymade, and is a simple transplantation of the discourse on Pop art after 1945 onto the 1930s. It seeks the "pop qualities" in Sickert without delving into the nuanced historical relationship between the artist and mass production. Nonetheless, Daniels still reminds us to consider what happened between the time of Sickert's appropriation of popular culture and the emergence of Pop art. Can we regard Sickert's works as Pop art per se? Could Sickert's art become a new art in its own right, rather than serving as ready-made materials in an established art-historical narrative?

Unlike Daniels, Seller does not equate Sickert's use of paint with his originality; instead, he proposes to decentralise the role of the author in the interpretation of art, and adopts a quasi-phenomenological method—conversing with artworks—to narrate Sickert's late works.<sup>32</sup> He sets Sickert's works in relation to the social context of the interwar period in Britain, and reflects on the materiality of paint as open to "subtly and nuanced ontological and political meanings."<sup>33</sup>

Though effective in disclosing the wider world that Sickert's works emerged from and shaped, Seller's social-historical-cum-phenomenological reading, drawing

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<sup>31</sup> Richard Morphet, "The Modernity of Late Sickert," *Studio International* 190 (1975): 35–38.

<sup>32</sup> Seller, "Material Memory," Introduction.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

connections between representation and the external world, seems to ignore painting as a process of transmission from the artist's hand, and lacks a sense of the actuality and intricacies involved in the creation of a work. After all, painting is a world of process as well as a traditional craft. The immediate conditions of making a painting, from patronage to consideration of artistic lineage and the materials at hand, are all part of history. Seller's neglect of Sickert's immediate historical conditions can be shown in one of his analyses of a portrait. Seller argues that the handling of paint in the portrait of Edward VIII (fig. 0.4), a work based on a press photograph, cannot compete with the immediacy provided by film, which also presented the King's image to wider audiences.<sup>34</sup> Seller writes that the paint in Sickert's painting "froze time," and that Sickert "stilled new media ... and ... grounded events."<sup>35</sup> This account makes sense for the period when film and radio became popular and vital in the creation of celebrity culture in the 1930s, and implies the transmission between media. However, Seller omits mention of the immediate source that Sickert used for his painting—the print of the King—and still refers to late Sickert as painterly.<sup>36</sup> Seller seems to regard print as a transparent medium. However, is it not print that shows a "material, dry, indifferent, and stilled remnant"?<sup>37</sup> Did Sickert never reflect on the aesthetics of print? In a word, while Seller acknowledges the advent of new media in the 1930s, he ignores the immediate medium, print, that was still at work in that period. He does not provide a clear explanation as to why Sickert's painting appears the way it does, and why print, rather than any other media, was adopted as its source material.

Both Daniels and Seller attempt to show that late Sickert was as creative and original as in his earlier career, but they do not really delve into the discourse on originality in the 1930s. Their dominant emphasis on paint also overshadows other qualities of the works, as also seen in the research of Baron and Corbett. There is a lack of attention on paint's relation with time and the laws of its development of paint,

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 326–36.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 336.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 336.

hindering an exploration of why paint is as it is. Instead, materiality is bound up with a predetermined context.

I point out these difficulties and shortcomings in order to propose that there is space to explore the pictorial language that Sickert used. His language (which indeed has paint as a prominent feature), does not come from nowhere, but is shaped by, inherited from, and entangled with then popular artistic views. As such, it had a specific meaning in his time. Here I wish to refer to Fry's view that there are different plastic values for different artists, because artists have different motivations.<sup>38</sup> In this case, painting should be approached in different ways, with more exploration of these factors. In order to do this, I propose that more emphasis should be given to print culture's relation to Sickert's art for two reasons. Firstly, print itself is an art with its own language; it has a form and content that informed Sickert's painting practice, his understanding of his medium, and of a modern condition mediated by print. Secondly, the rivalry of print and painting itself exemplifies the duality of modernity with which artists were concerned.

By talking of a rivalry between print and painting, I am referring to their ability to make images and their roles in communication. To an extent, they compete in these fields, and their status in this trade is fluid. This relates to the advancement of print technology. A useful example here is that manual printing regained its importance, and a nostalgic status, after mass printing became readily available. This suggests a duality of modernity within print: when its development reaches a certain point, it dissolves its association with progress, as well as its impersonality, by celebrating its involvement in human labour. The evolution of print also had a revolutionary impact on the purpose and status of art, as famously discussed in Benjamin's writings on the concept of aura.<sup>39</sup> In its fluidity, print also had a dynamic relationship with painting. As a medium with a long history of continuous development, printing's status as old or new is relative, and its relation to painting is also not fixed. We can see reflections

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<sup>38</sup> Fry, "On Some Modern Drawings," in *Transformations*, 203–8.

<sup>39</sup> Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (London: Vintage, 2015), 87–99.

on painting and print in the work of the Cubists and Surrealists. In sum, the duality of print in terms of its relation to modern society was, and should be understood to have been, an immediate condition for art to respond to. It is their relationship that shapes the concept of modernity.

In Sickert studies, there are indeed suggestions of the role that print played in the creation of painting, even though scholars have not always been aware of its significance. Rough's discussion of the theatrical influence on Sickert's painting uses theatre periodicals as its supporting evidence. For example, he shows that the compositions of many of Sickert's interior portraits were informed and mediated through the production photos of protagonists in interiors published in the magazine *Play Pictorial*. Rough reveals the abundant paper materials that circulated at the turn of the twentieth century, and that influenced both the making and appreciation of art. There are also perspectives that recognise the epistemological significance of print as a form of communication. Corbett considers the urban experience of the late Victorian era as unknowable because we know that world through maps, abstracted and idealised, as a "conceptual city,"<sup>40</sup> and we have reasons to relate this unknowability to the newspaper's partial representation of the world. As Jason Hill and Vanessa Schwartz have shown, for some readers newspapers are a primary means of making sense of the world; however, while they provide readers with news from far beyond their immediately sensible horizon, readers' knowledge is also subjected to the "mechanism's limits in delivering reality and the very partiality of such truth," with this partiality embodied in the role of news picture.<sup>41</sup> The partiality of the world viewed through print is taken to extremes in the case of hoarders, whose favourite collections are often newspapers—material to reconstruct the world in order to counter the fear of losing memory.<sup>42</sup> We can think here of a typical photo of Sickert in

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<sup>40</sup> David Peters Corbett, "'Gross Material Facts': Sexuality, Identity and the City in Walter Sickert, 1905–1910," *Art History* 21, no. 1 (1998): 45.

<sup>41</sup> Jason E. Hill and Vanessa R. Schwartz, eds., *Getting the Picture: The Visual Culture of the News*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 5.

<sup>42</sup> Daniel Fried, "Compulsive Hoarding: Psychopathologies of Print, Phenomenologies of Text," *Culture, Theory and Critique* 55, no. 3 (2014): 342–64.

his studio with his wife, in a sea of papers and prints (fig. 0.5). While I am not arguing that Sickert was a hoarder in any pathological sense, his practice of collecting prints for future use demonstrates the prevalence of print in his time, and print's clear role in the gathering and creation of knowledge.

Lisa Tickner has proposed a newspaper aesthetic, attributing this to Sickert's Camden Town murder paintings on account of their reference to the murder in their titles, which, as with newspapers, merely reports without revealing further facts of the crime.<sup>43</sup> Tickner's notion also demonstrates the partiality and limitations of newspapers as a way of knowing. This aspect of the experience of the modern city, in Linda Nochlin's words, is a fragmentary vision which typifies the loss of a sense of totality and connectedness, as well as the destruction of value.<sup>44</sup>

Nochlin also suggests that such fragmentation is intimately connected to print technology, and particularly photography, through which the world becomes more easily dissectible.<sup>45</sup> Such fragmentation, ushered in by print, is commonly seen in modernist art, as in Degas's work. Nochlin's view of the technical aspects of print in relation to visual representation offers a way to discuss the formal potential of print, and its relation to painting, as per the first reason I mentioned above for adopting a print perspective. The technical relation of print to painting raises the familiar question: how do artists consider their media?

As mentioned above, Corbett and Seller, by acknowledging the independence of paint's expressivity, each imply artists' creative discovery of their specific media. In relation to this, we might recall the formalist theory that defines modernism in terms of artists' formal criticism of their medium.<sup>46</sup> This idea was extensively theorised by

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<sup>43</sup> Lisa Tickner, "Walter Sickert: The Camden Town Murder and Tabloid Crime," in *Modern Life & Modern Subjects: British Art in the Early Twentieth Century* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), 41–42.

<sup>44</sup> Linda Nochlin, *The Body in Pieces: The Fragment as a Metaphor of Modernity* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1995), 23.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 33–34.

<sup>46</sup> I am not suggesting that modernism should be understood only as a pursuit for the purity of media. After all, there are arts that expand the ability of images, such as Dadaism. I focus on media purity as a key modernist ideal because this idea is relevant to Sickert's art, and to his own emphasis on the

Clement Greenberg, who championed flatness as the defining feature of modernist painting, and as that which distinguishes painting from other art forms.<sup>47</sup> This is the most distinct feature of his formalist theory. However, what is less often noticed in formalist theories is the notion that artistic creation should take place within a system of rules, reacting to existing constraints and making choices in response to resistance and pressure. Only art made under these conditions can possess quality. Following Greenberg, another formalist, Michael Fried, also acknowledged that an artwork should be determined within the conventions of its own medium, and only by sustaining comparison with other works produced according to these conventions can the meaning and value of a work be affirmed.<sup>48</sup> Though Greenberg did not write on print or graphic media, print nevertheless has rules and conventions to which artists may critically respond. After all, both print and painting are pictorial and planar arts. Therefore, when reflecting on the specificity of painting, artists should be aware of print and its formal qualities, and critically respond to. For example, in the 1890s, original prints and graphic art were held to question the very nature of art, leading to an emphasis on the purity of media.<sup>49</sup> In Sickert studies, there are also suggestions of a fluid interplay of printing, drawing, and painting in Sickert's art, though this view needs to be further explored.<sup>50</sup> Based on the premise that one imperative of modern art is to critique its own form, I propose that Sickert developed his formal language with reference to the language of print. This formal language differs from Fry's interpretation of Sickert's art as a "purely formal consideration";<sup>51</sup> rather, it absorbs

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"quality" of art, which is also the concern of formalist critics such as Greenberg and Fried.

<sup>47</sup> Clement Greenberg, "Modernist Painting" (1965), reprinted in Francis Francina and Charles Harrison, eds., *Modern Art and Modernism: A Critical Anthology* (New York: Harper and Row, 1982), 5–10.

<sup>48</sup> Michael Fried, *Art and Objecthood: Essays and Reviews* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), 14–15.

<sup>49</sup> See, Colta Ives, "French Prints in the Era of Impressionism and Symbolism," *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 46, no. 1 (1988): 1-56.

<sup>50</sup> Ruth Bromberg, *Walter Sickert, Prints: A Catalogue Raisonné* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), 42.

<sup>51</sup> Fry, "Mr. Walter Sickert's Pictures at the Stafford Gallery," 536.

the social dimension that print as an art form and cultural product implies, and demonstrates a formal integrity, or, in Richard Shone's words, a "pictorial intelligence"<sup>52</sup> on Sickert's part.<sup>53</sup> The formal aspects of print may also compensate for the arbitrariness and lack of immediate historical relevance in current social-formal readings.

I also wish to clarify my reasons for drawing on the formalist theories of Fry, Greenberg, and Fried. These critics were all active in the twentieth century, and in the midst of modernity and its consequences, as indeed was Sickert. Among these consequences is a separation of cultural modernity, specifically, "a separation of the substantive reason expressed in religion and metaphysics into three autonomous spheres ... science, morality and art," in Jürgen Habermas's words.<sup>54</sup> This separation is related to the specificity of media, since medium-specificity derives from the separation of art from other fields and its move towards autonomy. Sickert, along with these theorists, was exposed to the various discourses and realities of the separation of society and art. They were subject to, and shaped by, the consequences of modernity, and, in this context, they tried to grasp the qualities of modernism and to reinforce ideas of medium-specificity. However, Sickert's perspective as an artist, in relation to the medium, is more historically and empirically grounded, and his practice provides a richer context for the meaning of media to develop. Moreover, by viewing Sickert in line with formalist theorists, I also wish to highlight his role as a critic, since he was productive both in teaching and in writing criticism.

Besides studies on the epistemological influence of print, my research on the relation between print and painting is also informed by studies on the technical and practical aspects of Sickert's graphic art. In 1947, Osbert Sitwell, Sickert's friend,

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<sup>52</sup> Richard Shone, "The Uncensorious Eye," in *Sickert: The Theatre of Life*, ed. Matthew Travers (London: Piano Nobile Publications, 2021), 11.

<sup>53</sup> What I wish to achieve by adhering to an analysis of Sickert's formal development is not to delineate a narrative of progressive artistic innovation; rather, I believe that print provides a substantial formal language for artists to employ in responding to social conditions.

<sup>54</sup> Jürgen Habermas, "Modernity: An Incomplete Project," in *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*, ed. Hal Foster (Port Townsend, WA: Bay Press), 9.

demonstrated the importance of print for Sickert's art by titling a section of his compilation of Sickert's writing "Down Etching-Needle Street."<sup>55</sup> In 1996, Anna Gruetzner Robins published formerly neglected drawings by Sickert and analysed how he explored realist and naturalist ideas in these images.<sup>56</sup> Though Robins's focus is on drawing here, she nonetheless mentions Sickert's friendship with the illustrator Charles Keene, who worked for the magazine *Punch*, and suggests the need for further research on the stylistic connection between the two.<sup>57</sup> In her latest writing on Sickert, in 2022, Robins follows up this connection by arguing that Sickert's use of a fine, unbroken line and cross-hatching is related to Keene's pen-and-ink drawing.<sup>58</sup> She also notes that, by publishing drawings in periodicals such as the *New Age*, Sickert revealed his lifelong love for illustrated journals.<sup>59</sup> In 2000, Ruth Bromberg compiled Sickert's 266 prints for the first time, revealing their different stages and their relation to specific paintings.<sup>60</sup> This catalogue systematically records Sickert's print techniques (particularly in relation to Whistler) and suggests his aesthetic concerns as a printmaker. Notably, Bromberg mentions the reciprocal influence of Sickert's drawing, printing, and painting practices upon one another. However, this point is only briefly mentioned and not pursued through further research. In 2004, the Whitworth Art Gallery's exhibition, *Drawing is the Thing*, included graphic works ranging from sketches and etchings to paintings worked up from drawings, supporting the connection between Sickert's paintings and his works in other media.<sup>61</sup> Baron's 2006 study of Sickert also emphasises drawing as an integral part of his identity.<sup>62</sup> The

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<sup>55</sup> Osbert Sitwell, *A Free House! Or, The Artist as Craftsman: Being the Writings of Walter Richard Sickert* (London: Macmillan, 1947).

<sup>56</sup> Anna Gruetzner Robins, *Walter Sickert: Drawings: Theory and Practice: Word and Image* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1996).

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>58</sup> Anna Gruetzner Robins, "The Look of Sickert: Painting the Self," in *Walter Sickert*, ed. Emma Chambers (London: Tate Publishing, 2022), 16.

<sup>59</sup> Robins, *Walter Sickert: Drawings*, 38.

<sup>60</sup> Bromberg, *A Catalogue Raisonné*.

<sup>61</sup> Alistair Smith and Wendy Baron, *Walter Sickert: "Drawing Is the Thing"* (Manchester: Whitworth Art Gallery, 2004).

<sup>62</sup> Baron, *Sickert: Paintings and Drawings*.

re-evaluation of artworks in graphic media besides oil paint has set Sickert free from the “paint legend,”<sup>63</sup> revealing him as a technician of all the materials that were available to him; as Sickert stated, “every material has its own art.”<sup>64</sup> These studies demonstrate an awareness of a plurality of media, paving the way for an exploration of Sickert’s intermedia practice. However, with regard to my focus, they tend to ignore the particularity of print.

A further study, by Meaghan Clarke, suggests that print should be considered an enduring dimension of Sickert’s career, and relates this to the question of his originality.<sup>65</sup> Clarke reviews the issue of authorship and originality with reference to two lawsuits of the 1890s—involving Joseph Pennell, his wife Elizabeth Robins Pennell, Hubert von Herkomer, Sickert, and other members of his circle—and finds that discussions surrounding these were immersed in print culture.<sup>66</sup> To demonstrate this, I shall briefly review Clarke’s narration of the famous case of 1896 in which Sickert criticised the Pennells for selling transfer lithography (which involves first drawing on paper and then transferring the image to stone) as “true” lithography (printed from drawings made directly on stone), with the Pennells then suing Sickert for libel. To resolve the case, experts were called to examine the difference in visual effect between a transfer lithograph and a “true” lithograph, especially with regard to the rendering of blackness.<sup>67</sup> While experts argued both sides (for a visible difference and for no difference), the final judgement favoured the Pennells; Sickert lost the case and was found guilty of libel.<sup>68</sup>

Clarke reveals that the relationship between print and painting is complex,

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<sup>63</sup> The words “paint legend” are my invention, but they are inspired by previous references, by Rose, Seller, and Wilenski, to a “Sickert legend,” emphasising the authority of the artist. See Rose, “With an almost pathetic fatality”; Seller, “Material Memory”; and Wilenski, “Sickert’s Art.”

<sup>64</sup> Sitwell, *A Free House!*, 226.

<sup>65</sup> Meaghan Clarke, “Seeing in Black-and-White: Incidents in Print Culture,” *Art History* 35, no. 3 (2012): 574–95.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 582.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 587.

especially in terms of the artist's authority.<sup>69</sup> Indeed, the development of print technologies had reached a state of rich diversity, with each technique having its proponents and opponents. Art practitioners might promote a given print technology for their own reasons, yet their stances were not unvarying, and tended to shift according to the market and to the evolution of their own knowledge and ideas. Furthermore, questions of art's authenticity were raised, leading to new understandings. Sickert sued Pennell because he regarded transfer lithography as not made directly by the artist's hand; in turn, proponents of transfer lithography argued that transfer lithographs could preserve the minute details of an artist's drawing; that they were therefore exact duplications rather than reproductions.<sup>70</sup> In this sense, transfer lithography generated different opinions as to whether it amounted to a further stage of mediation. I think more attention should be paid to this mediation, since it affects the making and interpretation of art in various ways, and also pervades Sickert's career. Much of the scholarly discussion of Sickert's originality has centred on the later works, but in fact Sickert's entire career was immersed in a climate of discussion about copying versus originality, and he employed different levels of mediation in his works. This points to the main premise of my research: to examine print's intervention in painting at the turn of the twentieth century, as exemplified in the work of Sickert.

## Research methods and theories, and defining print for this study

So far, I have outlined the need for a print-led perspective on Sickert's art, and have reviewed the neglect of print's intermediary role as well as its role as a medium with unique qualities of its own, that should be understood to have informed the making and interpretation of art. My aim is to address the aforementioned interpretative disputes (the question of originality and the division between early and late works) so

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<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 575.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 586.

as to bring out the unique qualities of Sickert's work, and its relation to his life and his time.

My research question is: how did print media, in its various aspects, interact with painting? My focus is not paint or print, then, but their interaction. I employ the concept of print to intervene in the perennial discourse on paint in Sickert's art. In this sense, print will serve as the social-historical context as well as the concrete material of my study; print is both an "external" and "internal" condition of art. Focusing on the two media, my study explores the intermedial exchange between the two (I will come to intermediality shortly).

By internal and external, I see artworks as dual phenomena: on the one hand there is the artist and their ideas, while, on the other, there is the world that the artwork signifies. I will rely on Sickert's expressed intention, such as those documented in his biographies and criticisms, to help illustrate the development of his artistic style and how different choices were made in the print culture. But at the same time, I examine how his audience understood his paintings by examining the broader print culture. This perspective views the experience of the artwork as more essential to its understanding than locating a "truth" with recourse to the artist's intention. The understanding is "invited" rather than anticipated by the work (or the author).

The entry point of intermediality between print and paint has been practiced in earlier print studies. Here I would like to review some key points in the field of print studies so as to provide an explanation of my approach to intermediality in relation to its existing use. As mentioned at the outset, print culture may be considered an independent field, a "graphosphere," in Régis Debray's terms: a world fundamentally shaped by the mechanical production of print.<sup>71</sup> Print studies is to some extent to explore this graphosphere through different categories of print materials. What I wish to draw attention to are three trends in print studies. Firstly, in addition to traditional materials already present in the realm of print research, such as books, and other print

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<sup>71</sup> Régis Debray, *Media Manifestos: On the Technological Transmission of Cultural Forms*, trans. Eric Rauth (London: Verso, 1996), 26.

materials with longer preservation potential, a current trend in print research is the inclusion of a wider array of printed matter, such as fine art prints, letter press, manuscripts, photographs, and other ephemera. Secondly, attention has shifted from solely examining textual content to a greater emphasis on the visual and perceptible aspects of print. This broader perspective has unlocked a plethora of relationships between print and art, extending beyond the conventional connection drawn between painting and literature, which sees art as “the bride of literature.”<sup>72</sup> For example, as McGann has observed, the visual effect of the pages of literary works may be considered as important for expressive meaning as the text itself.<sup>73</sup> Print can also shape or disrupt existing aesthetic concepts, such as realism, the picturesque, and sensation, as Rachel Teukolsky has discussed.<sup>74</sup> Lastly, more attention is nowadays paid to print’s relation to other fields, including its interface with people (as in the activities of reading, collecting, scraping, sharing, and consuming print) and with other media (the rivalry, merging, and differentiation of media), and its role as an intermediary between people (facilitating correspondence, creating common knowledge, and forging different publics).<sup>75</sup>

I have developed my understanding of print in this study based on these trends. I draw on a wide range of print materials, and the heterogeneous dimensions they point to, but all with a view to forming a particular perspective upon Sickert’s oeuvre. Some prints are the “sources” of Sickert’s works, in terms of both subject matter and technique. Included in this category are such products as mid-Victorian periodicals, fine art prints, newspaper halftone prints, and even film prints. Some prints parallel Sickert’s painting as a visual tradition for the creation and comprehension of his works. In this category, I consider newspaper illustrations, widely circulated commercial prints, and prints made by other artists. There are also prints that

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<sup>72</sup> “Our Address,” *The Illustrated London News*, May 14, 1842, 1.

<sup>73</sup> Jerome McGann, *Black Riders: The Visible Language of Modernism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993).

<sup>74</sup> Rachel Teukolsky, *Picture World: Image, Aesthetics, and Victorian New Media* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020).

<sup>75</sup> See introduction of The Multigraph Collective, *Interacting with Print*.

reproduce artworks, including publications reproducing artworks as general illustrations (as in general-interest newspapers), and publications specifically illustrated by artists (such as modernist magazines). I pay attention to different aspects of these prints, including the space on the page, the formal language (such as line and colour), and the literary referent. In particular, this research is supported by the primary materials I have gathered, including prints that circulated in Sickert's time, and twenty-three old illustrations that Sickert used for the *English Echoes*.<sup>76</sup> By incorporating historical materials into the trajectory of Sickert's aesthetic evolution, I try to get closer to the moment when each pictorial decision was made, aiming to facilitate a more logical and precise analysis, which can inform our comprehension of both Sickert's oeuvre and the broader visual culture of the era. To some extent, my perspective will appear to be technical; however, the technical aspects, in relation to print culture, have also been conditioned within Sickert's social milieu.

Besides print products, my understanding of print also includes the qualities inherent in print materials and those involved in their facture. Visually, prints (of any kind) are characteristically smooth, unobtrusive, and inviting to viewers; in material terms, prints are usually paper-based, light, and suitable for dissemination and touch. The essence of print's facture is its layering, and even a division of labour. The language of print (either the hatching in fine prints, or the dots in mechanical prints) is carefully curated and has developed over the years into a tight, rational, syntactic web—what the print scholar William Ivins Jr calls “the net of rationality.”<sup>77</sup> One of print's roles is to exploit its inherent concern for permanence, aligning with Friedrich Kittler's assertion that print, like any medium, serves the function of data storage.<sup>78</sup> These qualities are what make print distinct from other media, yet they are also open to appropriation. I would like to call them “printerly qualities,” or “printerliness,” in

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<sup>76</sup> A list of the old illustrations is included in the appendix.

<sup>77</sup> William M. Ivins, Jr., *Prints and Visual Communication* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1953), 70.

<sup>78</sup> Friedrich Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1986), 2–3 and passim.

contrast to the popular term “painterly” that characterises Sickert scholarship and modernist painting in general. My understanding of print’s essentials, the intermediality between print and painting, and particularly the term “printerly,” have been influenced by the research of Riva Castleman and Jennifer Roberts on Jasper Johns’s “printerly” paintings. Castleman introduced the word “printerly” in 1986 to describe Johns’s works, wherein he magnifies the actions, operations, and languages inherent in the printmaking process.<sup>79</sup> For example, Johns uses cross-hatching as a motif in many of his works and plays with concepts such as reversion and magnification that are particularly relevant to printmaking. These features make Johns’s works *printerly*, as distinct from a printed drawing.<sup>80</sup> More recently, Jennifer Roberts has developed Castleman’s idea by interpreting Johns’s work through the lens of a fuller reading of the physical operations of printmaking, such as the separation of colour, and the mirroring of space, in a wide range of print.<sup>81</sup> What is more important, however, is Roberts’s emphasis on print as a serious art that facilitates the discussion of important values of “originality, authorship, technique and expression.”<sup>82</sup> My use of the term “printerliness” is grounded in this revaluation of print in artmaking, and the emphasis on the material and formal aspects of print that nurture artists to create “fine art.” The term “printerly” is important for this research because, from an intermedial perspective, it may be used to describe both print and painting. Yet, while Castleman and Roberts mainly consider the visual language of print, I examine Sickert’s printerly paintings within the context of the whole of print culture.

My perspective thus responds to the turn towards examining print’s interaction with other media, as noted above. However, I also consider other aspects, including print’s interaction with people and as an intermediary between people, since print has long been a component of popular culture, providing a means to disseminate common

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<sup>79</sup> Riva Castleman, *Jasper Johns: A Print Retrospective* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1986), 13–14.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>81</sup> Jennifer Roberts, *Jasper Johns/In Press: The Crosshatch Works and the Logic of Print* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Art Museums, 2012), 17–33.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

knowledge and to foster communities and publics, all of which are pivotal to modern art discourse.

As I discuss it, then, print is broad and heterogeneous, and this wide range of print culture is perplexing and contentious at first sight, as Katherine Haskins has shown, recognising the difficulty in defining what constitutes prints and what might be the proper method to study them.<sup>83</sup> According to Haskins, current print scholarship tends to be “balkanised around distinct media, formats, or special subjects,” and this specialisation has failed to restore the appearance of a print that exists in its own right and that may be combined and recombined in other situations.<sup>84</sup> In my research, I acknowledge this confusion in defining prints, but, at the same time, I show that the aspects of print culture in which I am interested arise naturally within Sickert’s practice. In the case of Sickert, both life and work provide a focused opportunity to examine the subtle cuts of print culture that are interrelated in his art, and to see how these cuts interact with other concepts and practices in the cultural sphere, particularly those deeply embedded in artmaking and the understanding of artistic practice.

I will now turn to explain my method. The study of the interaction between print and paint belongs to media studies in a broad sense, and especially to theories of intermediality and media ecology, a variant of postmodern deconstructionist theory that has a wide range of meanings. I mainly use the term “intermediality” to refer to the “intersection between different media,” to the “crossing [of] their borders,” or “their interconnection,” as defined by the *Oxford Dictionary of Media and Communication*.<sup>85</sup> The term was coined in the 1990s, particularly with the advent of computer-based media, so its use mainly refers to the characteristics of many new media artworks. Media scholar Juha Herkman notes that the concept of intermediality

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<sup>83</sup> Katherine Haskins, *The Art Journal and Fine Art Publishing in Victorian England, 1850–1880* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), 5.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 4–5.

<sup>85</sup> Daniel Chandler and Rod Munday, “Intermediality,” in *A Dictionary of Media and Communication* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020),

<https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780198841838.001.0001/acref-9780198841838-e-1394>, accessed June 17, 2023.

concerns the “continuity of media forms and ... the articulation of media through changes in social and cultural contexts.”<sup>86</sup> This aspect is particularly pertinent to Sickert’s artistic practice and for art-historical study, where artistic lineage plays a vital role. Its use is also common in cinematic and theatrical studies, as films and plays are, by nature, combinations of sound, picture, performance, and many other elements. My application of the theory of intermediality borrows largely from film scholars such as Christopher Balme, whose interpretation of the theory in recent decades has proven to be relevant to a broader field of study, including the interaction between print and painting in the context of my research.

Balme identifies three dimensions of intermediality, the first of which is “the attempt to realise in one medium the aesthetic conventions and habits of seeing ... in another medium.”<sup>87</sup> This view suggests an appropriation of media conventions. In order to discern the appropriation, it is essential to identify the conventions of each medium at play. In fact, as media scholar Jens Schröter argues, one premise of the theory of intermediality is to call for a redefinition of individual media, because a medium can only define itself in relation to other media rather than standing alone.”<sup>88</sup> However, there can be a variety of relationships between media, especially so in the case of the relationship between print and painting. For example, print and painting can be understood as matter, as per Seller, to emphasise the various metaphors of materiality. Print can also serve as a means to represent painting, as Benjamin discusses extensively. In such relationships, the referent of print and painting can vary. In the case of Sickert, what I call his printerly qualities will help to enable a means to talk about print.

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<sup>86</sup> Juha Herkman, Taisto Hujanen, and Paavo Oinonen, eds., *Intermediality and Media Change* (Tampere: Tampere University Press, 2012), 11.

<sup>87</sup> Christopher Balme, “Intermediality: Rethinking the Relationship between Theatre and Media,” *THEWIS: Zeitschrift der Gesellschaft für Theaterwissenschaft* 1 (2004): 7, [https://epub.ub.uni-muenchen.de/13098/1/Balme\\_13098.pdf](https://epub.ub.uni-muenchen.de/13098/1/Balme_13098.pdf), accessed June 17, 2023.

<sup>88</sup> Jens Schröter, “Discourses and Models of Intermediality,” *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture* 13, no. 3 (2011): article 3. accessed June 17, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.7771/1481-4374.1790>.

As mentioned above, prints may be smooth, paper-based, dry of surface, composed in strict syntax, comparatively cheap, reproducible, the result of a division of labour, and many other things. These qualities are shared by prints but also distinguish their medium from that of painting, since the privileging of paint in its usual context, particularly that of modernism, lies in its association with a niche audience, authenticity, uniqueness, and creativity. In Sickert's work, however, the characteristics of print emerge; or, rather, he discovers further shared qualities of print and painting. For example, Sickert seeks to create art that could be popular, moderately sized, widely accessible by viewers, commercially viable, relatively smooth (compared to the *impasto* styles that he disliked), and an accurate reflection of the world. In practical terms, his works were made in multiple stages, just as a print requires, and he even collaborated with old masters (as with the *English Echoes*, for which he "collaborated" with John Gilbert) rather than claiming absolute authorship. Sickert also wished for his paintings to preserve what he considered to be good art (again, the *English Echoes* were originally intended to do just this), in the way that a print stores data. He even appropriated the errors that occur in print processes. It is reasonable to believe that Sickert painted with the language of print in mind, or, in other words, that he intermediated the qualities of each medium.

I would like to clarify my approach to selecting the "representative" printerly qualities of Sickert's work. I do not wish to claim that the qualities mentioned earlier fully encompass the entire specificity of the medium of print. Rather, my standpoint is that these qualities of print—such as smoothness—played a significant role in distinguishing print from the modernist emphasis on material surfaces that predominated during Sickert's active years. The qualities of print should be addressed historically, and particularly related to the dominant aesthetics of painting at the turn of the twentieth century.

The second dimension of intermediality is, in Balme's view, a special form of intertextuality.<sup>89</sup> By intertextuality, Balme refers mainly to the relation between

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<sup>89</sup> Balme, "Intermediality," 7.

literature and image, or the study of illustration in literature.<sup>90</sup> However, I wish to develop the term a step further to encompass the broader meaning of intertextuality, influenced especially by Roland Barthes's semiotics, according to which the object of discourse is no longer a concrete work, but a text.<sup>91</sup> "Text" here means not only, for example, mere literary texts, but is flexible and has a wide reference. It could be a story; it could be music, images, characters, dialogues, or even memories; and "it can traverse the work, several works."<sup>92</sup> More importantly, however, texts draw attention to the relationship between themselves and other texts, or other cultural representations. Texts owe more to other texts than to their authors, and reading is thus a creative activity. This understanding of texts echoes Julia Kristeva's concept of intertextuality, which refers to "a mosaic of quotations" whereby "any text is the absorption and transformation of another."<sup>93</sup> In this sense, intertextuality may be applicable both to the creation and to the reading of a text. We can think of Sickert's works, particularly those intended as narrative in nature, as intertexts, since these works (such as the Camden Town murder painting) do not describe a specific event, but are instead made by appropriating a topic and extracting the fundamental core of a narrative. Seeing the narrative of such works as an intertext can help to avoid a mechanical reading of Sickert's paintings as mere illustrations of an event, in the manner of Stella Tillyard, who argues that Sickert constructed his illustration of the Camden Town murder in four paintings, showing the beginning, the duration, and the end of the murder respectively.<sup>94</sup> I do not agree with this reading, and I will argue in the third chapter that Sickert did not depict a particular event, but constructed the picture with other "texts" in mind, as a mosaic. From the viewer's perspective,

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid, 7.

<sup>91</sup> Roland Barthes, "From Work to Text," in *The Rustle of Language*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1986), 56–57.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 58.

<sup>93</sup> Julia Kristeva, quoted in Elaine Martin, "Intertextuality: An Introduction," *The Comparatist* 35, (2011): 148.

<sup>94</sup> Stella Tillyard, "The End of Victorian Art: W. R. Sickert and the Defence of Illustrative Painting," in *Towards a Modern Art World*, ed. Brian Allen (London: Yale University Press, 1995), 191.

reading is always performed with the intrusion of other texts, which may be anything that relates to the work. Recognising this relationship between texts and works can help us to understand the diversity of readings of Sickert's work.

Proceeding from Balme's notion of intertextuality, I propose that a further text-image relation, or intermediality, obtains in the case of print media, which relates to print's ability to represent and reproduce painting and even print itself. How the print of an artwork appears constitutes the paratext of the work and influences its reading. As Haskins argues, a printed image of an artwork sends "a message about a message," and this "makes the information transfer especially context-sensitive. A message about a message is also a form of metadata, or information about information."<sup>95</sup> This point is key for studies of modernist journals, where the materiality of printed text and bibliotic aspects have been duly considered. Jerome McGann, for instance, notes that in any text "meaning is transmitted through bibliographical as well as linguistic codes," and that these two signifying systems work together to generate the overall meaning of a text.<sup>96</sup> I propose the context of print as a further dimension of intermediality because Sickert's works were made for, and reproduced within, periodicals, and should be understood in light of this.

The final dimension of intermediality, in Balme's view, is the "transposition of content between media."<sup>97</sup> I appropriate this dimension of intermediality for two reasons. First, this view implies a sequence whereby the transposition happens, with one media following, adapting, and appropriating the other. Balme's approach to this dimension is often to describe the phenomenon of adaptation, particularly in the case of films derived from literature, so that one becomes the remediation of the other. This sequence often arouses a debate as to which is the better version of the story. A similar sequence may be observed in the transposition between print and painting, though

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<sup>95</sup> Haskins, *The Art Journal*, 2.

<sup>96</sup> I should clarify that "text" here probably refers to literary text, rather than the wider sense of Barthes's definition. Jerome J. McGann, *The Textual Condition* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), 57, 67.

<sup>97</sup> Balme, "Intermediality", 7.

debate here turns to the controversial issues of copying and originality, since print and painting are both planar and visual arts, and share many similarities. Also, a reiteration can unconsciously canonise or otherwise fortify the status of the version being repeated, creating a relation between itself and the earlier version that galvanises the question of originality. At the same time, and as in the case of Sickert, the connection between originality and transposition has a geographical dimension. Sickert's music hall subject was thought to be a transplantation of the Paris cafe-concert into London, and contemporary reviewers regarded Sickert as a follower of Degas, and his works as "rather feeble echoes of Degas' work, without, however, any traces of Degas' firm and incisive draughtsmanship."<sup>98</sup> Sickert's originality was denied while the work of the elder French artist was considered original. In this sense, Sickert's art was, from the beginning, seen only as a "version" of its predecessors, and was involved in a struggle for independence and originality. The second reason that I use this term is that intermediality as transposition often plays a role in the construction of nationalism, insofar as this features reiterations, revivals, or at least reminders of the old, which is a way to consider the origins of the nation. By retelling stories of the past, art works such as literature can play a significant role in contextualising everyday life and they facilitate the preservation of cultural memory, which emerged as a crucial aspect of nationalism. These transpositions of the works and cultures of one period to another, and from one medium to another, as Lynne Walhout Hinojosa argues, have normally pursued nationalist objectives, seeking to elicit specific sentiments within the contemporary social milieu.<sup>99</sup> Sickert's works, especially the late works of the *English Echoes*, reflect the discourse of intermediality as transposition. Sickert's use of others' illustrations certainly generated discussion of copying and originality. His retrospective revelation of the English sources also

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<sup>98</sup> "In the Picture Galleries. The Camden Town Group," in *The World*, June 21, 1911, in *The Camden Town Group in Context*, ed. Helena Bonett, Ysanne Holt, and Jennifer Mundy, Tate Research Publication, May 2012, <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/research-publications/camden-town-group/author-unknown-in-the-picture-galleries-the-camden-town-group-r1104272>, accessed July 13, 2023.

<sup>99</sup> Lynne Walhout Hinojosa, *The Renaissance, English Cultural Nationalism, and Modernism, 1860–1920* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 10.

implies a gesture of tracing a cultural origin, and thus implies a cultural nationalism in the guise of media interrelation. Seller mentions that nostalgia was a loaded word in the 1930s, and these considerations have not yet been thoroughly discussed.<sup>100</sup> The case of Sickert may also contribute to the theory of intermediality, revealing more about the specificity of each medium, and how he discovered the characteristics of his media in terms of “storage, processing, and transmission.”<sup>101</sup>

Having identified the various meanings of intermediality for my study, I would like to point out how they sit in the wider world of media ecology. The term “media ecology” was coined by Neil Postman, following Marshall McLuhan’s idea of media as messages.<sup>102</sup> It refers to a view of the whole picture, or environment, of media, suggesting that each individual medium changes the whole picture, not only in terms of content, but also on the deeper level of commonsense, perception, and concept.<sup>103</sup> This explains the fundamental driving force of intermediality, as it foregrounds the locomotion between media. My aim in introducing the concept of intermediality is to suggest that we can understand media not as causing particular effects in a linear manner, but rather as particular forms of communication, consciousness, and culture that emerge out of particular media ecologies.

My intermedial approach is inspired by other studies of artists’ paintings and prints, which have provided both a guide for my own as well as a historical lineage for Sickert’s practice. Stephen Bann has studied several French artists who worked in parallel roles as both “assiduous artisan” and “star of the Salon” in the early nineteenth century, discussing the productive interchange between their printing and painting.<sup>104</sup> Bann considers the whole issue of image reproduction, and how artists

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<sup>100</sup> Seller, “Material Memory”, 33.

<sup>101</sup> Kittler distinguishes these three functions of a medium in *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, 2–3 and passim.

<sup>102</sup> Neil Postman, *Technopoly: The Surrender of Culture to Technology* (New York: Vintage, 1993), 18. See also The Multigraph Collective, *Interacting with Print*, 11.

<sup>103</sup> Postman, *Technopoly*, 18.

<sup>104</sup> Stephen Bann, *Parallel Lines: Printmakers, Painters, and Photographers in Nineteenth-Century France* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001), 3.

achieved their desired effects in different media, how the future path of development of a medium was subject to a process of experimentation, and how printmaking informed artists' understanding of both legal and conceptual notions of authorship. These issues were still at work in Sickert's era, and remain at work today. The "parallel" role and these accompanying issues is also evident in later artists' career as well, such as artists of the 1860s, including social realists and Idyllists like Frederick Walker, George John Pinwell, John William North, and Robert Walker Macbeth.<sup>105</sup> Yet the parallel identities of these artists changed under the conditions of the numerous reproduction techniques of the nineteenth century. This further triggered the discussion of pictorial modernity and the aforementioned phenomenon of cultural modernity characterise by separation. Clive Bell succinctly claimed in 1914 that descriptive pictures had become otiose, since they could not compete with the *Daily Mirror* in "telling us more about 'London day by day'."<sup>106</sup>

The histories of these artist-illustrators reflect a strong antithesis between the worlds of art and the press in the latter half of the nineteenth century, and suggest how modernist criticism would develop to revere the notion of art's autonomy. Sickert's art could be accommodated in this context. However, by adding to our understanding of the specificity of his media, my research will show that Sickert went one step further in blurring this boundary, and that the qualities of media are not fixed, but are discovered and redefined over a long period of time.

Awareness of the boundary between print materials and paintings is evident in recent Sickert exhibitions. From 2021 to 2023, there were three exhibitions dedicated to Sickert, first at Piano Nobile Gallery in London, then at the Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool, and finally at Tate Britain in London. These three exhibitions provided a timely opportunity for me to view Sickert's works extensively and closely. In particular, seeing the *English Echoes* in person revealed to me the visual impact and

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<sup>105</sup> See, Andrea Korda, *Printing and Painting the News in Victorian London: The Graphic and Social Realism, 1869–1891* (Farnham: Ashgate: 2015); and Donato Esposito, *Frederick Walker and the Idyllists* (London: Lund Humphries, 2017).

<sup>106</sup> Clive Bell, *Art* (New York: Stokes, 1914), 19–20.

immense scale of these works in a way that reproductions cannot match, and which contribute to their meaning. Notably, the three exhibitions presented different perspectives on the issues of print culture and authorship with which I am concerned in this research. The Tate exhibition was a retrospective, and so was organised chronologically. The first room, full of Sickert's self-portraits, was especially impressive in introducing the artist's strong identity, suggesting a curatorial tone centred on the author. This highlight, focusing on the artist's identity, may have built upon the earlier one at Piano Nobile, which stressed the character of the artist and his models. The following rooms at Tate Britain were arranged by theme, with galleries devoted to the Camden Town nudes, Dieppe, Venice, and the *English Echoes*. The colour of each room was remarkable, suggesting different ways of viewing. The Camden town nudes and the music hall paintings were hung on walls painted dark green or dark purple, seemingly to recreate the dark environments of the interiors and music halls where Sickert worked. The room displaying the *English Echoes*, however, was painted white, setting off the works' bright and printerly colour, and reminiscent of the white pulp from which these paintings derived. The white walls were reminiscent of the modernist white cube, whose aim was to excise distraction and to direct viewers' focus upon on the artwork alone. This arrangement of wall colours implies a curatorial approach to viewing the earlier and later works completely differently, with the coloured walls suggesting narrative connotations and the white walls presenting Sickert as a total modernist who tried to rid his work of narrative associations. At the same time, the last room, showing the *English Echoes*, displayed news photos in a glass case, in contrast to and at a distance from the paintings on the wall. This physical distance evinced the boundary between mass culture and high art. This boundary was, however, minimised in the Liverpool exhibition, where the print material that formed the social context of Sickert's work— such as sheet music with an image of singers—was framed and hung on the wall next to the paintings. Other exhibits on display included hats and fans that Sickert painted, showcasing how Sickert's art arose from an intimacy with this vibrant culture.

The Liverpool exhibition also displayed Sickert the artist in a different way—not by asserting his dominating and chameleon-like identity through his self-portraits, but by exploring the materials he used and the techniques that he developed, as demonstrated by the grouped drawings that were framed and mounted on the wall. This strategy diluted the authority of painting and presented a better understanding of the creation of his work. It also implied an intermediality between the different media that Sickert employed. A video and an article in the catalogue further considered the paper and techniques that Sickert used, significantly enriching my understanding of his printerly language. My approach inclines more to the Liverpool exhibition, though I hope to provide a fresh view of Sickert that differs from his exhibition history.

My research has greatly relied upon digitised periodicals and other print materials, including the modernist journal project led by Brown University, the Victorian journals held at HathiTrust Digital Library, and the numerous newspapers collected by Gale Database and the British Newspaper Archive. However, I still insist on the importance of viewing the physical prints, since scans cannot convey their wholeness, and screens cannot convey their materiality. The qualities that are lost in the digitised prints are what matters for my research, since they are the interface where print and people meet.

## Thesis structure

This thesis comprises four chapters, each addressing a specific facet of print and its connection to Sickert's art. Nonetheless, the characteristics of print defy easy categorisation as they synergistically interact with painting. For the purposes of narration, I have organised the chapters according to the most prominent aspects of print as these are evident in the works that each chapter considers, following a broadly chronological order.

Chapter one deals with the relationship between the little magazines of the 1890s and 1910s and Sickert's illustrations published therein. I explore how Sickert achieved and disseminated his impressionism on paper, and refined the idea of line in

his years of working with periodicals. This chapter also allows us to see how Sickert's early career within print culture set a tone for the rest of his life. Chapter two systematically considers the printerly language that Sickert developed from various print objects, including engravings, etchings, posters, postcards, old magazines, and even film prints. I trace this development from three perspectives: linearity, colour (including the monochrome), and montage. My main argument is that Sickert combined painterly tradition with modern print techniques and aesthetics, and also deployed this language as social commentary. Chapter three considers Sickert's paintings of topical news stories, situating print's function of creating a public that reads the same content in order to show how this context of common knowledge influenced the creation and perception of artworks. My three examples of news stories here are the Camden Town murder of 1907, the discussion of the black actor in *Othello* in 1930, and the miner's strike of 1935. I argue that these topics merged into Sickert's pictorial interest (his motif). This chapter also shows that Sickert developed different visual strategies for different topics, inviting audiences in various modes, but always reflecting the characteristics of the age of mechanical reproduction. Chapter four focuses on print's reproductive aspects and their relation to Sickert's late works, the *English Echoes*. This chapter is aided by my discovery of old illustrations that are the "sources" of the *English Echoes*, as well as newspapers that reproduced these works alongside their sources. I argue that Sickert mimicked the reproductive function of print as an archival tool in his paintings to preserve "good art" according to his standard. Sickert's practice is situated in the trend of photographic archiving practices since the mid-nineteenth century, and so provides a way to rethink of the question of originality in both personal and cultural terms.

## Chapter One: Art on Paper: Sickert and the Little Magazines

Regarded as a leading figure in the English art world at the turn of the twentieth century, Sickert has been the focus of considerable discussion, especially for the multi-faceted modernity of his oil paintings and art criticism. However, an important but overlooked aspect of his artistic career is his engagement with the ‘little magazines’ in the 1890s and 1910s, including the *Whirlwind*, the *Cambridge Observer*, the *Yellow Book*, the *Idler*, and the *New Age*. His role in the *Whirlwind* is mentioned by Denys Sutton only as a source of income and a space to promote his impressionism, while Baron dismisses the portraits Sickert created for the *Whirlwind* as “stylistically unexciting.”<sup>107</sup> Neither writer delves into Sickert’s works, and the expression of his artistic ideas, in relation to the context of the page. While little has been written about the *Cambridge Observer*, the latter three magazines have a considerable scholarship, though this mainly focuses on figures such as Aubrey Beardsley, Henry James, and Jerome K. Jerome, while Sickert’s contributions have been only briefly touched upon.<sup>108</sup> In my view, the scant record of Sickert’s works for these magazines has overlooked their interest as a distinctive form of drawing printed on paper, as well as the importance of the immediate context in which they appeared, since these magazines were places where all kinds of art forms—painting, photography, and literature—shared a presence on paper, as the “multimedia platform par excellence of modernism.”<sup>109</sup> Moreover, the little magazines were different from general interest periodicals. As defined by Suzanne W. Churchill and Adam McKible, they were “non-commercial enterprises founded by individuals or small groups intent upon publishing the experimental works or radical opinions of untried, unpopular, or

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<sup>107</sup> Denys Sutton, *Walter Sickert: A Biography* (London: Michael Joseph, 1976), 31. Baron, *Sickert: Paintings and Drawings*, 24.

<sup>108</sup> Robins introduces Sickert’s role in the *New Age* in the introduction to her compilation of the artist’s writings. See Robins, *op. cit.*, xxvii–xxxvi. Robert Scholes discusses Sickert’s debate with T. E. Hulme and Ezra Pound on the use of images in Robert Scholes, *Paradox of Modernism* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 67.

<sup>109</sup> Julian Murphet, *Multimedia Modernism: Literature and the Anglo-American Avant-Garde* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 77.

under-represented writers”.<sup>110</sup> This definition of the little magazines reveals that the reproduction of art and the expression of artistic ideas were key aspects of their culture. In addition, the materiality of the little magazines should be noted—for example, they were usually in black and white, due to their limited financial support. Thus, rather than being the expression of a fixed set of modernist ideas, Sickert’s modernity (as understood by himself and later scholars) was expressed, negotiated, and refined in these magazines. This chapter examines the process by which Sickert’s art took shape in these little magazines.

As such, the research objects are not the magazines themselves, but the magazines as an arena for art. My argument in this chapter proceeds along two lines. First, I examine how Sickert’s contribution fitted the agenda of each publication, in terms of their selection of content and the many paratexts shaping the understanding of it. Second, I attend to Sickert’s awareness of the specificity of print as a medium, as it was incorporated into his art practice. Besides studying these little magazines, I also draw on other relevant publications for comparison in order to demonstrate both Sickert’s artistic lineage and the distinctiveness of his practice.<sup>111</sup> The chapter is organised chronologically, discussing each of the five magazines that Sickert engaged with in turn. In the first section, I explore Sickert’s relationship with the *Whirlwind* editors and his role in the *Whirlwind*. The *Whirlwind* was the first magazine dedicated to promoting impressionism in England. This agenda can be observed from the two columns edited by Sickert, the “*Whirlwind* Cartoons” and “*Whirlwind* Diploma Gallery of Modern Pictures.” By studying the features of drawings printed in the *Whirlwind* and the interrelation between the paratext of the magazine and Sickert’s

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<sup>110</sup> Suzanne W. Churchill and Adam McKible, introduction to *Little Magazines & Modernism: New Approaches*, ed. Suzanne W. Churchill and Adam McKible (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 6.

<sup>111</sup> Anne Helmreich has also proposed that even though the little magazines were a distinctive phenomenon in the nineties, their predecessors and more colourful contemporary competitors should be considered, as the little magazines strived to distinguish themselves from each of these. See Anne Helmreich, “The Death of the Victorian Art Periodical,” *Visual Resources* 26, no. 3 (2010): 242–53. Kate Flint takes a similar view, in “Moral Judgement and the Language of English Art Criticism 1870–1910,” *Oxford Art Journal* 6, no. 2 (1983): 64.

works, I delineate the impressionist ideal for Sickert and his followers. This section shows that Sickert's vision of impressionism is not limited to the use of paint, but is rooted in the practice of periodical illustration. His artistic expression is tailored by way of attention to the material characteristics of magazines.

The second section attends to Sickert's contribution of images of modern life to the *Cambridge Observer*, the *Yellow Book*, and the *Idler* between 1893 and 1895. Rather than being the chief editor, as at the *Whirlwind*, Sickert's role in these three magazines was less autonomous, as he worked with many other contributors. Examining these three magazines, I explore several facets of the relationship between art and print culture. Firstly, I consider Sickert's relationships with the other contributors—mainly writers—that shaped the reception of his pictures. The reproduction of Sickert's work, and its mingling with texts and other pictures, prompted him to refine his awareness of the specificity of his own medium and art, foreshadowing the printerly languages that I discuss in the second chapter. In addition, the three magazines' reproduction of different sets of pictures reflects his recognition of the different character of their publics, and his adaptation to the magazines' differing preferences. This process suggests that artistic communication is not solely about expressing individual creativity, but also involves a nuanced understanding of the audiences being addressed.

The third section discusses Sickert's contribution to the *New Age*, beginning in 1911 and ending in 1914—the period when he formed the Camden Town Group. Sickert both wrote and drew for the magazine. I explore the different strategies he took to speak for and defend his art in two phases, and argue that his awareness of the linear form of the print context facilitated him in this.

This chapter brings into focus some overlooked publications (the *Whirlwind* and the *Cambridge Observer*) and the issue of art as communication, with Sickert discussed as the one key figure that has not been fully considered in previous studies of these magazines. My focus is on the entirety of Sickert's experience with these magazines, with a view to how this experience enables a better understanding of his

later works.

## 1.1 Making a whirlwind in English art

### 1.1.1 Sickert, Whistler, Vivian, and Impressionism

The *Whirlwind* was established in 1890 by Herbert Vivian (1865–1940) and Stuart Erskine (1869–1960) as the organ of their political appeal to liberal individualism. This weekly magazine, initiated on June 28, 1890, produced twenty-six issues before concluding in December 1890. Vivian graduated from Cambridge in 1896 and pursued a journalistic career after graduation. He had a high profile: he was acquainted with Thomas Bayley Potter, MP for Rochdale, for whom Sickert later made portraits, and Winston Churchill, and he had a strong political aspiration to follow the true kingship and to restore the House of Stuart to the throne. In 1890, when Vivian was studying at Mr Scoones, the crammer for the Diplomatic Service, he met a fellow student, Stuart Erskine, a descendant of the Erskine Earls of Buchan.<sup>112</sup> Vivian did not recall the details of his acquaintance with Erskine in his memoir, but the two young men shared a similar ambition and enthusiasm for their political ideals, and for self-expression, which prompted them to co-found the *Whirlwind*.

Vivian and Erskine were the proprietor-editors of the *Whirlwind*, and yet Sickert had a key presence in the magazine. The triad of Vivian, Erskine, and Sickert was responsible for producing its content (though in December 1890, shortly before the magazine folded, Sickert resigned and his position was replaced by Sidney Starr), and they never gave commissions to other authors. As with many little magazines founded by small cliques and coteries at the time, Sickert's engagement was partly due to nepotism. The *Whirlwind*'s political stance, as Vivian wrote in the introduction to the first issue, adhered to the old Manchester School, which was led by Richard Cobden, Sickert's father-in-law. Thomas Bayley Potter, the successor to Richard Cobden, at

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<sup>112</sup> Herbert Vivian, *Myself Not Least, Being The Personal Reminiscences Of "X"* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1923), 87.

times invited Vivian and Sickert to his home, so the two young men met often.<sup>113</sup> It may have been Sickert's association with Cobden that gave Vivian the idea to work with Sickert.

Another link between Sickert and the *Whirlwind* editors is Sickert's master, Whistler. Whistler and Vivian enjoyed a long and friendly acquaintance in 1889, after Vivian published a short article in the *Sun*.<sup>114</sup> Vivian, in his memoir and editorial essays, exalted Whistler as a prominent artist, but it was Whistler's eccentric character and worrying financial situation that held his attention.<sup>115</sup> In a sense, the *Whirlwind* was an attempt to emulate Whistler in politicking, and a platform to financially benefit him. Whistler's new book, *The Gentle Art of Making Enemies*, published by William Heinemann in 1890, recorded reviews and letters that he exchanged with other critics and writers. The book was repeatedly advertised in the *Whirlwind*, along with Whistler's lithographic series *Songs on Stone*, that sold with the newspaper.<sup>116</sup> Other drawings by Whistler were reprinted in the columns. Whistler's legendary and controversial status in England, and his complex relationship with the press, provided a model for Vivian to draw the attention of the public and to elicit discussion. In most issues, the newspaper featured a column titled "As a Looking Glass," which reproduced nearly two pages of reviews about itself by other publications. As Whistler's book had done, the *Whirlwind* included both negative and positive appraisals. The *Daily Graphic* described the *Whirlwind* as "a publication, the main purpose of which seems to be to take more absurd views of life than any other existing periodical," while *Vanity Fair* thought it "refreshing in its impudence."<sup>117</sup> The cohort of Whistler, Vivian, and Sickert rightly aroused attention, with the *Hawk* concluding that "like most young boys, they have issued a thoroughly characteristic

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<sup>113</sup> Vivian, *Myself Not Least*, 157.

<sup>114</sup> Vivian's article tells us that Oscar Wilde took Whistler's words as his own, and that this anecdote caused a breakdown of the friendship between Wilde and Whistler, while fostering that of Whistler and Vivian. *Ibid.*, 77.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 76–77.

<sup>116</sup> See *Whirlwind*, November 1, 1890, 80; and November 8, 1890, 96.

<sup>117</sup> "Voilà Ce Que L'on Dit de Moi, Dans la Gazette de la Hollande," *Whirlwind*, July 5, 1890, 31–32.

Whistler-cum-Oscar Wilde Prospectus.”<sup>118</sup> Indeed, the term “Whistler’s followers” became familiar art jargon in the 1880s, as Robins has argued, and Whistler insisted on bringing his followers together to develop a close working and social group.<sup>119</sup> The founding of the *Whirlwind* suggests the influence of the master and the cooperation of two generations.

Besides Vivian and Sickert’s shared personal relation—Whistler the master—the two young men shared a mutual need to work together. Sickert had already enjoyed a reputation for the music hall paintings that he made intensively from 1887 to 1889, and his becoming a member, in 1888, of the New English Art Club, the society that brought together artists who had mostly studied in France, had earned him a name as a follower of the French Impressionists. But he was thirty years old in 1890 and needed to consolidate his position in the London art world. His first attempt to do so was to hold an exhibition. On December 2, 1889, Sickert and his fellow artists, including Théodore Roussel, Sidney Starr, and Phillip Wilson Steer, held an exhibition, “London Impressionists,” at the Goupil Gallery in London. However, Sickert had resigned from his post as the London art critic for the *New York Herald* in June, because it required too much of his time.<sup>120</sup> Joining the *Whirlwind* in 1890 therefore became a sound option, since it provided an alternative platform for him to promote this inaugural exhibition of impressionism in England. What is more, Sickert and his fellow London impressionists had a different view of impressionism from their French predecessors, and so a periodical was ideal insofar as it allowed enough space for them to explain their own vision of art.<sup>121</sup>

In the preface to the exhibition, Sickert espoused an impressionism that departed from its early definition (such as *plein air* practice). Instead, he claimed that

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<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> Anna Gruetzner Robins, *Fragile Modernism: Whistler and his Impressionist Followers* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), 5.

<sup>120</sup> Matthew Sturgis, *Walter Sickert: A Life* (London: Harper Perennial, 2005), 170.

<sup>121</sup> In order to make a distinction between Sickert’s idea of impressionism, as expressed in the *Whirlwind*, and the Impressionism of French artists such as Monet and Degas, I capitalise the latter. Beyond this, the meanings of each use of the term may not necessarily differ.

what comes to the eyes, when closely examining a painting, is not a clearer representation of the texture of the objects, but the “quality” of paint.<sup>122</sup> As such, an impressionist painting, the essence of which is not realism, should demonstrate this quality. His fellow exhibitors expressed an even more unorthodox view of impressionism. George Thomson, one of the artists shown at Goupil, stated in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, before the exhibition opened, that “all our great artists are impressionists,” including Gainsborough, Hogarth, the arch-impressionist Turner—even Velasquez and Rembrandt.<sup>123</sup> An impressionist in this sense should keep his eye open to the world and paint what he finds fairest therein. In this sense, the group advocated a universal standard of good art under the banner of “impressionism,” which was then a word tinged with controversy.

Vivian knew Sickert, and his unconventional view of impressionism, before the *Whirlwind* was established. Prior to the exhibition, the *Sun* arranged an interview with Sickert, which Vivian hosted, and in the course of which the two discussed the definition of impressionism. Sickert declared that the title “London Impressionists” did not define the stylistic parameters of each of the exhibitors.<sup>124</sup> Later, in letters in the *Scots Observer* and *Art Weekly*, Sickert described himself and his peers as “self-styled London Impressionists.”<sup>125</sup> The interview between Sickert and Vivian strengthened their connection, and it was possibly the self-styling of the London impressionists as different from their French counterparts that explains Vivian’s invitation to Sickert to be the art editor for the *Whirlwind*. As mentioned above, the *Whirlwind* was essentially an explicit organ of Vivian and Erskine’s individualist stance, which was reinforced by Sickert’s columns. In the “Introductory” to the first issue, Vivian claimed that “in politics we shall be individualist, instantly protesting against the encroaching tyranny of ‘our grandmother the state’.”<sup>126</sup> They emphasised

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<sup>122</sup> Walter Sickert, “Impressionism,” in Robins, *op. cit.*, 59.

<sup>123</sup> George Thomson, “Impressionists in London,” *Pall Mall Gazette*, November 29, 1889, 2.

<sup>124</sup> “Topical Interview,” *Sun*, September 8, 1889. Reprinted in Robins, *op. cit.*, 56–57.

<sup>125</sup> Walter Sickert, “Letter,” in Robins, *op. cit.*, 61.

<sup>126</sup> Stuart Erskine and Herbert Vivian, “Introductory,” *Whirlwind*, June 28, 1890, 2.

the individual's freedom and unique subjectivity, recalling the Impressionist ethos. In fact, the Impressionist works of the 1870s, as many have noted, played a part in contemporary debates over individual freedom versus state power.<sup>127</sup> As noted by Jesse Matz, Impressionism's connection with liberalism lay in its revolutionary brushstrokes, and there is an implied political unconsciousness in impressionist art.<sup>128</sup> In the case of the *Whirlwind*, impressionism for Sickert and Vivian was a common belief to thrust into the London intellectual world. Sickert's dramatic character and unconventional artistic opinions were also what Vivian was looking for as the emblem of his individualism.

Sickert's ambition to be a leading figure in the London art world is clear in the *Whirlwind* foreword: "Art criticism to-day has fallen into contempt.... We have, therefore, arranged signed criticisms from the pen of one of the leading Impressionist painters in the age."<sup>129</sup> He gave himself the epithet "one of the leading impressionist painters," and also stated his aim to use illustrations as serious art criticism, which speaks of his confidence, ambition, and determination to create a whirlwind in the English art world. The cohort of Vivian, Stuart, Sickert, and Whistler also suggests that the *Whirlwind*, a young student-led periodical, allowed more freedom and space for Sickert, the young professional artist, to speak of his own ideas. This could be the reason why, just after resigning from the (London) *New York Herald*, which was regarded as a "Whistler's organ,"<sup>130</sup> Sickert picked up the job as art critic for the *Whirlwind*. The *Whirlwind* was the first English periodical to commit to impressionism in its stance on art, and, as I show in what follows, it had a unique strategy to publish impressionist work, but also faced criticisms stemming from readers' unfamiliarity with impressionism on paper.

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<sup>127</sup> Jesse Matz, *Lasting Impression: The Legacies of Impressionism in Contemporary Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 22.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>129</sup> Erskine and Vivian, "Introductory," 2.

<sup>130</sup> Sturgis, *Walter Sickert: A Life*, 166.

### 1.1.2 The “*Whirlwind* Cartoons”: Drawing as news

The columns that Sickert edited were the “*Whirlwind* Cartoons” and the “*Whirlwind* Diploma Gallery of Modern Pictures” (the latter appearing from the second issue). He made fourteen portraits of people of distinction for the *Whirlwind* Cartoons, each accompanied by a short article on the sitter, from Vivian or himself. Sickert’s images in the *Whirlwind* Cartoons reveal the key element in impressionism to be its classic quality: the expression of light. The first *Whirlwind* Cartoon (fig. 1.1), featured in the first issue (published on June 28, 1890), was a printed portrait of the liberal politician Charles Bradlaugh (1833–1891). Both Sickert and the sitter signed their names in the drawing, which shows Bradlaugh in his study with his head looking down. He is probably reading a letter, as a torn envelope lies on the table beside him. Bradlaugh is shown in profile, as if he is unaware of being captured. What is unconventional here, in this portrait of a distinguished person, is that Sickert captures his sitter with a *contre-jour* effect: Bradlaugh sits by a window so that his face is cast in shadow. Behind him is a bookcase full of papers and clutter, sketchily rendered.

The *contre-jour* effect revealed in the hatching on the face certainly attests to Sickert’s impressionism, prioritising the effects of light above facial clarity. Yet this drawing was not well received: the *Liverpool Evening Express* and many other newspapers referred to the *Whirlwind* Cartoons as a “scrawl style of art,”<sup>131</sup> while the *Society* stated bitterly that

The first number fittingly contains what is called “a portrait of Mr. Bradlaugh,” by Mr. Walter Sickert, one of the saddest things I have seen for some time, which might be mistaken for some crude sketch of “uncle tom” in his cabin, or the “claimant,” when a convict, with his gruel-basin beside him.<sup>132</sup>

These reviews suggest that the style was not deemed suitable for presenting a

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<sup>131</sup> *Whirlwind*, July 12, 1890, 47.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

renowned figure like Bradlaugh in public space, and indeed the impressionist style of drawing was not yet widely acknowledged in 1890s Britain. This critic could not understand the black hatching on Bradlaugh's face as an indication of shadow, but saw it only as a patch of black, as in contemporary illustrations of Uncle Tom (fig. 1.2).

Yet Sickert insisted on this approach to the effects of light, making it the iconic feature of his art, as in the several portraits of Bradlaugh where he adopted a similar angle and lighting. In fact, the *Whirlwind* Cartoon of Bradlaugh was created to promote an earlier oil portrait of Bradlaugh, of 1890 (fig. 1.3). This oil was exhibited in the spring of that year at the NEAC and later purchased by subscription by Bradlaugh's admirers at the National Liberal Club.<sup>133</sup> In this work, Bradlaugh lowers his head, and three-quarters of his face are cast in shadow, as in the *Whirlwind* Cartoon. A study (fig. 1.4) for this painting shows the same profile view, and may have been a more direct inspiration for the Bradlaugh cartoon. In another well-received portrait of Bradlaugh made by Sickert between 1892 and 1893, *Charles Bradlaugh at the Bar of the House of Commons* (1892–3, fig. 1.5), Sickert retains the strong lighting. This full-length portrait was commissioned by a Manchester businessman to present at the Manchester Secular Society. It was shown at the NEAC in April 1893 and purchased by the Manchester Gallery in 1911. It shows Bradlaugh's face at a three-quarter angle, looking slightly up, standing upright, and holding the bar firmly. One of his legs protrudes to the lower foreground of the picture and suggests a self-assuredness of mind. Sickert seems to have conceived this portrait as an iconic depiction of Bradlaugh. For one thing, the whole image appears to borrow the grand manner adopted by Sickert's master, Whistler, to show the respectability of the sitter—the suit is given close attention and sets off the “giant frame” of Bradlaugh.<sup>134</sup> Also, the title of the portrait alludes to Bradlaugh's iconic moment: as an atheist and republican, he claimed the right to make the affirmation of allegiance instead of

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<sup>133</sup> See “Portrait of Mr. Bradlaugh,” *Reynold's Newspaper*, March 15, 1891, 5.

<sup>134</sup> “The Late Charles Bradlaugh, M.P.,” *Illustrated London News*, February 7, 1891, 179.

taking the oath to God and the Queen, at the bar of the House of Commons.<sup>135</sup> Yet I argue that Sickert accentuates this iconic moment with light. Bradlaugh claimed his secular right to affirmation in 1880, before his death in 1890; so, as Baron has noted, this work was produced by painting the head after a photograph taken by Henry Van der Weyde, and employing a model for the body.<sup>136</sup> Notably, even when painting from a photograph, Sickert chose one that emphasised the effect of light, as Weyde was known for being the first photographer in London to use electric light in the studio.<sup>137</sup> The advantage of electric light was its intensity and white colour.<sup>138</sup> Even though Sickert's photographic source for Bradlaugh was likely monochrome, he may nevertheless have been impressed by the electric light, since he painted the portrait in a colder tone than the warmer hue given by gaslight, retaining an intense light to create a strong shadow on Bradlaugh's face, similar to the *Whirlwind* Cartoon and the head and shoulders portrait he had made in 1890. The strong shadow that confronts the viewer is also at odds with the respectful depiction of the subject, since it undermines the desired facial clarity and visual frankness. However, taking the three portraits of Bradlaugh into account, it seems likely that the similar *contre-jour* effects of each are an aspect of Sickert's visual style that he consciously sought to foster. This style is created by the use of a clearly sourced, sharp light of the kind that he promoted in the pages of the *Whirlwind*.

Returning to the *Whirlwind* Cartoon of Bradlaugh, what may have upset the critics could have been Sickert's unmodified realism, as Bradlaugh is depicted in his study, a private and relaxing space, in a manner so candid that it jars with the public profile of a politician. A review of the oil head of Bradlaugh also testifies to this: the

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<sup>135</sup> The Manchester Secular Society, where the painting was initially shown, was actually founded by Bradlaugh in 1866 as a campaigning organisation that promoted secularism and the separation of church and state.

<sup>136</sup> Baron, *Sickert: Paintings and Drawings*, 190.

<sup>137</sup> Heinz K. Henisch, *The Photographic Experience, 1839–1914: Images and Attitudes* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 1994), 215.

<sup>138</sup> For the contemporary observation of the effect of electric light, see Hermann Wilhelm Vogel, *The Progress of Photography Since the Year 1879* (Philadelphia: E. L. Wilson, 1883), 109–10.

critic of the *Northampton Mercury* commented that Sickert's artistic impression falls short of being either a striking or satisfying interpretation of Mr. Bradlaugh's personality, as "the expression is untrue, and ... the lines of the features are weak, the proportions of the face are not nearly massive enough."<sup>139</sup> The *Reynold's Newspaper* reviewer also considered the painter's emphasis on Bradlaugh's agedness to be inappropriate.<sup>140</sup> In general, critics thought that Sickert had failed to capture Bradlaugh's energetic and determined personality and virility, and that the "scrawl style" and "realism" were unacceptable in portraiture.

These critics may have been more accustomed to seeing Bradlaugh's image as shown in the *Illustrated London News (ILN)*, in a photo accompanying an article written in memory of him, where he looks younger, mightier, and more serious (fig. 1.6).<sup>141</sup> The article gives a detailed description of Bradlaugh's appearance:

the mere physical aspects of the man—his giant frame, his fighting face, lined deep with the traces of forty years of struggle, and remarkable for the short nose and overhanging lip, as well as for its unusual breadth and massiveness, his plain ill-cut clothes, worn with a certain stamp of character—were impressive, if they were not entirely engaging.<sup>142</sup>

The *ILN*'s description confirms expectations of Bradlaugh's appearance and personality within his social milieu. When making a visual portrait of a sitter like Bradlaugh, it is essential to convey both likeness and inner character. The halftone photo meets this dual expectation of likeness and virtue, as expressed in his face: Bradlaugh is captured in three-quarter profile, his head slightly raised and frowned, demonstrating his concern. The slightly opened mouth suggests his eloquence. However, this photo, though captioned "The Late Charles Bradlaugh, M.P.," does not

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<sup>139</sup> Mary Reed, "Mr. Bradlaugh's Portrait," *Northampton Mercury*, April 26, 1890, 2.

<sup>140</sup> "Portrait of Mr. Bradlaugh," *Reynold's Newspaper*, March 15, 1891, 5.

<sup>141</sup> "The Late Charles Bradlaugh, M.P.," 179.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*

show Bradlaugh in his old age as Sickert did. The *ILN* may either have chosen a photo from some time ago, or have retouched the photo, as was common in Victorian illustrated journalism.<sup>143</sup> In this sense, the kind of edited “realism” typical of journalism rendered the realism of Sickert less favourable, in turn revealing that “impressionism” for Sickert entailed a refusal to edit the “ugly” aspects of a subject.

Besides their use of lighting and unedited realism, the *Whirlwind* Cartoons present the typical characters of their sitters. In the portrait of Thomas Bayley Potter (fig. 1.7), printed in the second issue of the *Whirlwind*, the sitter is captured with a mess of dishes and glasses in front of him. Potter stares ahead, relaxed but also commanding and self-assured. His right arm is perched on an armrest, and his left hand may have just put down his glass. Vivian was satisfied by this drawing; he described the portrait as capturing Potter in a “very characteristic attitude, leaning back pensively in his chair.”<sup>144</sup> Vivian’s comment shows that Sickert produced a familiar and acceptable image of Potter that was recognisable among their clique. The illustration was praised by the *Rochdale Observer* as “a very true impression of the hon. member in his quiet, meditative moods.”<sup>145</sup>

The reaction to Potter’s portrait in the *Whirlwind* appears to have been more positive than to the portrait of Bradlaugh, probably because the face is not obscured by shadow. But more importantly, it is closer to the kinds of caricatures to which English readers were accustomed. Indeed, the title of the column, “*Whirlwind* Cartoon,” is relevant here, since the term “cartoon,” originally referring to preparatory drawings of the Renaissance, had become synonymous with the kinds of humorous artworks exemplified by *Punch*. In this sense, the “*Whirlwind* Cartoon” may have been intended as a more artistic version of the satirical cartoons featured in English newspapers. “Character” was a typical feature of *Punch*’s illustrations of public

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<sup>143</sup> Gerry Beegan, *The Mass Image: A Social History of Photomechanical Reproduction in Victorian London* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 75–85, 133–34.

<sup>144</sup> Herbert Vivian, “Mr. Thomas Bayley Potter, M.P.,” *Whirlwind*, July 5, 1890, 24.

<sup>145</sup> *Rochdale Observer*, July 2, 1890, 2. It is worth noting that the portrait of Potter was published on July 5 in the *Whirlwind*, but the review of this portrait in the *Rochdale Observer* appeared on July 2. This may have been due to the sharing of content between different presses prior to publication.

figures—this was not necessarily captured by likeness, but rather by an overall impression of temperament and disposition of the portrayed person. Could it be inferred, then, that such a feeling for character is what Sickert meant by “impressionism”?

A clear example of the connection between “character” and Sickert’s impressionism is the portrait of *George Moore* (1890–91, fig. 1.8), which both Baron and Upstone discuss with regard to Sickert’s capturing the personality of his sitter.<sup>146</sup> *George Moore* was described as a “boiled ghost,” and even Moore himself complained that Sickert depicted him like “a booby.”<sup>147</sup> This personality, for Baron, attests to Sickert’s drawing technique in his painting.<sup>148</sup> I agree with this view but would add that the portrait of Moore may have been made with the tradition of satirical cartoons in mind, following his work on the *Whirlwind* Cartoons. The painting of Moore was made between 1890 and 1891, at the time Sickert worked for the *Whirlwind*. Moore’s humorous temperament, overshadowing the typical impressionistic light effects, suggests that Sickert, while producing his illustrations for the newspaper, also developed his role as a caricaturist in other media.

Thus far, it is evident that Sickert’s concept of impressionism primarily centres on the expression of light, unedited realism, and the capture of character. The periodical page became another space to develop these ideas. Yet, what I wish to consider here is not only the meaning of impressionism—as, since the advent of the term, its meaning has been contested—but rather to delve further into the ways in which the characteristics of this vaguely labelled new art, “impressionism,” intersected with the communicative aspects of the newspaper. That is, impressionism here defined itself by attempting to impose its presence within its pages; the meaning of impressionism is thus closely related to the way it is communicated to audiences. The magazines cultivated this meaning, as Sickert was particularly aware.

To begin, we may consider why drawing, reproduced in black and white

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<sup>146</sup> Baron, *Sickert: Paintings and Drawings*, 24–25.

<sup>147</sup> Sturgis, *Walter Sickert: A Life*, 189.

<sup>148</sup> Baron, *Sickert: Paintings and Drawings*, 24–25.

through the technology of photorelief printing, was adopted as a medium with which to demonstrate impressionism. Firstly, this choice may have been a deliberate inheritance from Sickert's mentor, Degas, who himself brought drawing into focus. The drawing of Degas and his fellow Impressionists, which emphasised working in situ, departed from the Académie's emphasis on drawing from prints and casts.<sup>149</sup> The Impressionists valued drawing as a means of experimentation and a way to capture sensation. Richard Thomson has argued that, as early as 1876, drawing was recognised as aesthetically similar to painting, with the critic Louis-Edmond Duranty writing for the second Impressionist Exhibition that "drawing is such an individual and indispensable means ... merges absolutely with the artist's aim, and is inseparably wedded to the idea."<sup>150</sup> This perspective on drawing and its capacity to embody first-hand sensations and artistic ideas shows that drawing was an integral aspect of Impressionism from the early stages of the movement.

Late nineteenth-century developments in printing technology also prompted a connection between pen drawing and immediacy. The 1890s saw a dramatic increase in illustrated publications due to these developments, and, accordingly, artists had to keenly engage with print culture to conceive and create works for printed reproduction.<sup>151</sup> In this context, for some artists, black-and-white drawing, and especially the marked clarity of pen-and-ink drawing (rather than pencil and chalk drawing or photo-mechanically reproduced paintings), was preferred as a way to reproduce paintings. Furthermore, the art of Impressionism was understood by critics in the 1890s to be inherently connected to the concision of pen art. Gleeson White, for instance, thought that "the idea epigrammatically put" is better representative of the

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<sup>149</sup> Christopher Lloyd and Richard Thomson, *Impressionist Drawings* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1986), 9.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, 14–15.

<sup>151</sup> For example, as Henry Blackburn noted in 1896, a London firm alone could produce more than a thousand printing blocks a week. The "process," as Blackburn referred to the technology of producing images in print, enabled artworks to be published and disseminated extensively. On art publishing in the late nineteenth century, see Henry Blackburn, *The Art of Illustration* (London: W. H. Allen & Co, 1896), 72–73.

modern experience of transitoriness than themes “overlaid with details.”<sup>152</sup> In 1892, Charles Harper also wrote that “the pen artist, in his highest expression, is your true impressionist.”<sup>153</sup> In this sense, the requirements of immediacy and concision in impressionism lay not only in the artist’s approach to his canvas, but had also to be communicated in the finished works.

These artistic and practical contexts suggest a broader sense of impressionism, not only as an artistic movement or theory, but as a mode of life that defined perception and the form of information as fleeting, fragmentary, and superficial.<sup>154</sup> This, in turn, invites a parallel with the “New Journalism” of late nineteenth-century Britain. The New Journalism, as coined by Matthew Arnold in 1887, refers to an approach to journalism that made use of literature and subjective description—“to wed literature with journalism,”<sup>155</sup> in Laurel Brake’s words, so as to appeal to an emerging new cultural class with a certain level of knowledge. The phenomenon was criticised by Arnold as yielding to the masses—including female readers—and to commercialism, by offering too many short, fragmentary, and subjective reports, rather than well-researched and objective analyses. One of the distinguishing features of the new way of creating news was to provide records of interviews for readers, in a personalised and accessible tone. The portrait Sickert made for the third iteration of the “*Whirlwind* Cartoon,” of the English politician and writer Henry Labouchere (1831–1912), suggests the informality of this kind of interview. Labouchere (fig. 1.9) is captured in an unselfconscious moment, tilting his head and writing something, with a cigarette in his mouth. Contemporary readers may have recognised Labouchere by his signature cigarette, as he was known to be a chain-smoker. From the drawing, readers could imagine that Sickert sat opposite his sitter, perhaps having lunch with

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<sup>152</sup> Gleeson White, “The Taste of Trifles,” *Studio*, January 1894, 131.

<sup>153</sup> Charles Harper, *English Pen Artists of Today* (London: Percival and Company, 1892), 11. Gerry Beegan elaborates how the speed, fluidity, and concision shown by drawing became the marker of sincere art, in Beegan, *The Mass Image*, 138–39.

<sup>154</sup> Jesse Matz gives an intriguing interpretation of impressionism in Matz, *Lasting Impressions*, 18, 21.

<sup>155</sup> Laurel Brake, “The Old and New Journalism,” in *Subjugated Knowledges: Journalism, Gender, and Literature in the Nineteenth Century* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994), 94.

him, not least because the head is drawn at a moderate scale and at eye level rather than from a slightly raised vantage, as in *Bradlaugh at the Bar*. The drawing itself thus serves as a visual interview between Sickert and the sitter. An interview, of course, would usually entail verbal communication, with the press arranging a photographer to record the moment. Sickert the interviewer elicited not a verbal response from his sitter, but his physique and demeanour in the space of twenty minutes. Sickert was both host and photographer. His drawing was realistic, journalistic, suitable as newspaper portraiture, and at the same time a demonstration of his impressionism.

Compared with other public images of Labouchere, this sense of interviewing becomes more apparent still. In an illustration of Labouchere (fig. 1.10) in *Punch*, one's first impression is of Labouchere the chain-smoker. He is depicted sitting in a smoke-filled room, with legs crossed and arms resting on boxes inscribed "cigaretts" (sic). On the right are three figures, possibly representing his political enemies, who loom up from the smoke. This illustration is captioned "Il *Cigaretto* per esser felice" (the cigarette to be happy); Labouchere's habit of smoking is caricatured together with his political enterprise, and the exaggerated physique renders him a semi-fictional character. Sickert's drawing, by contrast, records only a moment of Labouchere in his office or study, and suggests nothing of his political tendencies. The figure is not distorted as in the *Punch* caricature but is accurately delineated. Simply put, Sickert recorded what he saw, rather than what he knew.

The sense of the "*Whirlwind* Cartoon" as a visual interview was noticed by other publications, since, three years later, some of the cartoons were reproduced by the *Pall Mall Budget* (*PMB*) as illustrations for their own articles. Labouchere's portrait was reproduced on February 9, 1893 (fig. 1.11), to accompany the article "The New House of Commons Scheme." The article recorded an interview with Labouchere about the architectural plan of the House of Commons. During the interview, Labouchere tries drawing the plan for the host, in order to explain his

idea—“let me draw it for you.”<sup>156</sup> The host devotes a paragraph to Labouchere’s drawing: “He made half a dozen attempts, each more hopeless than its predecessors, and then gave up with a burst of laughter at the ludicrous collection of the intoxicated-looking geometrical figures he had created.”<sup>157</sup> The article portrays Labouchere as the architect of the new House of Commons; Sickert’s illustration of Labouchere in his office thus acquires a new appropriateness in the context of this interview.

The *PMB* reproduced a number of other illustrations from the *Whirlwind* for its interview columns. Sickert’s drawings, often featuring close-ups of the interviewees’ heads, served as visual representations of the interviewees themselves. In these cases, Sickert’s images took on a new role, acting as quasi-photographic evidence of the interviews, referencing the moment of their conduct and validating their authenticity. Sickert argued many times that a good painting should always be historical. For example, in his 1890 article *The Gospel of Impressionism*, he wrote that “all the painting to posterity will be evidence of history, no matter Whistler’s or William Powell Frith’s,” thus acknowledging an impressionist as a journalist who has direct contact with their subject.<sup>158</sup> In the time-sensitive realm of periodical publishing, Sickert’s drawings transcended their status as mere graphic demonstrations of impressionist painting, expressing a modern consciousness that stressed timeliness.

This immediacy and intense temporality made the *Whirlwind* a unique example in the history of publishing for impressionism. Though the *Whirlwind* was the first English periodical dedicated to impressionism, there had been French periodicals promoting Impressionism in the 1870s. *La Vie moderne* (1879–1920) is among these, and the portrait drawing in the *Whirlwind* is reminiscent of *La Vie moderne*’s cover illustrations, such as the 1879 portrait of Gustave Flaubert (fig. 1.12) by Ernst Friedrich von Liphart (1847–1932), the magazine’s regular illustrator. Liphart’s training in Paris, under the heavy influence of Impressionism, is evident in this

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<sup>156</sup> “The New House of Commons Scheme,” *Pall Mall Budget*, February 9, 1893, 215.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>158</sup> “The Gospel of Impressionism,” *Pall Mall Gazette*, July 21, 1890. Reprinted in Robins, *op. cit.*, 75–76.

portrait, which is characterised by strong lighting effects. Yet the portrait does not present a spontaneity as Sickert did, serving as a general visual reminder of the sitter, rather than as the latest evidence of a face-to-face interview. The other impressionist drawings in *La Vie moderne* also lack a timely journalistic function. For example, Cassatt's drawing (fig. 1.13), reprinted in May 1879, shows typical impressionistic effects, and showcases her work at the exhibition of the independents. However, its subject, a girl at a theatre, was not originally drawn for *La Vie moderne*. Thus, while the article reports the latest news of the Paris art world, its illustration is not up-to-the-minute. In contrast, both text and image in the *Whirlwind* were as fresh as possible, befitting the idea of timeliness in news production. Indeed, in the preface to the newspaper, Vivian declared that "In HISTORY, we shall be ... establishing the truth at first hand by means of original documents."<sup>159</sup> It was in the journalistic context that Sickert's impressionism was realised.

Another basis for the correspondence between impressionism and the New Journalism was their discussion of subjectivity and objectivity. Impressionism (capitalised) itself embodies the paradox of being both subjective and objective. It is known for its optical realism, but always as seen with the artist's eye and mind. In 1874, Jules-Antoine Castagnary noted that it is the sensation brought by the landscape, rather than landscape itself, that was painted by the Impressionists.<sup>160</sup> Richard Shiff has argued that Castagnary's comment shows that Impressionism is a subjective naturalism, which erodes fragile objectivity.<sup>161</sup> Also, the word "impression," from which impressionism derives, denotes "an effect produced on someone," or "a mark impressed in a surface."<sup>162</sup> This etymology makes clear that an

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<sup>159</sup> Erskine and Vivian, "Introductory," 2.

<sup>160</sup> Richard Shiff, "The End of Impressionism," in *The New Painting: Impressionism 1874–1886* (San Francisco: Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, 1986), 61.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, 61–62.

<sup>162</sup> "Impression," in *Oxford Dictionary of English*, ed. Angus Stevenson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010),

[https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199571123.001.0001/m\\_en\\_gb0403240](https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199571123.001.0001/m_en_gb0403240), accessed November 11, 2023.

impression involves an interaction between a subject and an object. Sickert's idea of impressionism certainly bears the similar dialectic in the subjective and objective. Both of his mentors, Whistler and Degas, upheld the importance of subjective observation of the motif, while the science of optics in the nineteenth century made much of the subjectivity of the eye. At the same time, Sickert maintained an emotional detachment from his subject matter, insisting on an objectivity in painting.

Late nineteenth-century journalism also grappled with the tension between subjectivity and objectivity. Journalism by definition seeks objective facts, although the nature and attainability of objectivity remain debatable. The New Journalism of this era was marked by the expression of personal viewpoints in interviews and a departure from the old journalism that insisted on "unity and anonymity in tone, and avoided private idiosyncrasy."<sup>163</sup> This dialectic parallels Impressionism, where one cannot be entirely certain of truthfulness and objectivity, or of the extent to which a representation follows objective laws, yet it remains a first-hand, close-to-reality account. To some extent, the interviewer is the equivalent of an impressionist painter who uses his own experience to record events. As such, it is the convergence of the subjective and the objective in the making of news that enables the connection between journalism and the art of impressionism.

The *PMB*'s reproduction of Labouchere's portrait demonstrates this connection, on account of its contestable subjectivity and objectivity. As a piece of news, the drawing is not truthful or objective, since Sickert's drawing of Labouchere was not made for the interview that it accompanied. Yet the personal perspective of Sickert, evident in the drawing, was appropriated as evidence of the image's objectivity.

Another connection between the "*Whirlwind* Cartoon" and the New Journalism is their shared interest in commercialism. The *Whirlwind* Cartoons, besides serving as newspaper illustrations and manifestations of Sickert's visual argument, also evince participation in the business of individualism in the 1890s. Each drawing, presented in full page, was signed by Sickert and the sitter, appealing to readers who might be keen

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<sup>163</sup> Brake, *Subjugated Knowledges*, 87.

to collect these images. In fact, either Vivian or Sickert stated that the “*Whirlwind* Cartoon,” besides their function as portraits, also offered the reader, for a penny, “an autographic reproduction of drawings that have hitherto been obtainable only in the somewhat more costly form of proof etchings and drypoints.”<sup>164</sup> The introduction also stated that Sickert’s drawings would differ from the “usual reproductions and copies of published or unpublished photographs, which other papers print.”<sup>165</sup> The editors were likely well informed of the business of individuals and fame, as reflected in print culture. Robert Upstone argues that mass production and a collective mass culture newly characterised British society in the 1890s, and that this was reflected in the fact that people were willing to buy newspapers featuring images of their heroes.<sup>166</sup> Indeed, since 1830, celebrity portraits had adorned the pages of many journals, catering for the voyeuristic appetites of their readers.<sup>167</sup> Illustration was an effective ploy to promote consumption. Images in newspapers grew larger and were sometimes designed as freestanding pages, issued to regular subscribers for collection. Later, image-only issues began to thrive. For example, in the 1890s, William Rothenstein published serialised lithographic portraits of distinguished people in Oxford, with biographical texts by his friends printed overleaf (figs. 1.14 and 1.15 demonstrate the arrangement of text and image). Rothenstein’s lithographs were printed in large quality papers. The original drawings were produced in pencil and the prints looked exactly like them. The lithographs sold well and received much praise for Rothenstein’s reflection of the character and likeness of his sitters, without much caricature or exaggeration.<sup>168</sup> In 1910, Sickert also commented, of these twenty-four

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<sup>164</sup> Erskine and Vivian, “Introductory,” 2.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid.

<sup>166</sup> Robert Upstone, “George Moore 1890–1 by Walter Richard Sickert,” in *The Camden Town Group in Context*, ed. Helena Bonett, Ysanne Holt, and Jennifer Mundy (London: Tate, 2012), <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/research-publications/camden-town-group/walter-richard-sickert-george-moore-r1136820>, accessed December 28, 2021.

<sup>167</sup> Laurel Brake, *The Lure of Illustration in the Nineteenth Century: Picture and Press* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 9.

<sup>168</sup> For contemporary reviews, see “Oxford Characters,” *Saturday Review*, November 7, 1896, 504; and *Athenium*, February 20, 1897, 251.

portraits, that “his (Rothenstein’s) set of transfer-lithographs from famous men are of the highest importance historically and technically.”<sup>169</sup>

The “*Whirlwind* Cartoon” bore some similarity to the *Oxford Characters*. “Likeness” was the keyword in the reviews of both series, since, as portraits to be consumed by a wide public, it was the sitter that was chased after and purchased. Given the serialised nature and the satisfaction of likeness of both series, the lithographic portraits and reproduced drawings could each be considered as journalistic images for regular consumption. Yet they are different from the mechanically reproduced halftone photographs of celebrities, or the *Punch* caricatures that distorted the subjects’ bodies. They retained a personal imprint, evident in the treatment of line, which was sought after by purchasers. In this sense, the “*Whirlwind* Cartoons,” considered in their context on the page, were not only a set of autonomous drawings, nor simply illustrations of periodical articles, but instead a type of image that straddled fine art and journalism, and an early instance of production for the mass portraiture market, since they were produced with the aim to satisfy the niche demands of their readers/buyers.

Whistler’s *Songs on Stone* lithographs also participated in this business. The three lithographs that comprise this series were published as independent works and issued with the *Whirlwind* editions of October 25, November 1, and December 27, 1890. These were “original lithographs, fresh from hand,” by Whistler, rather than reproductions of images, and were packed and sent separately in special cases to avoid damage.<sup>170</sup> Vivian referred to the lithographs as “priceless pearls,” and Whistler produced them for his usual audience—the “rare few” among the Vivian-Sickert-Whistler circle. Whistler’s appearance in the *Whirlwind* was akin to that of a featured guest who utilised the newspaper as a marketing channel. The *Whirlwind* was thus a business opportunity for the modern artist, Sickert included.

The business side of the *Whirlwind* Cartoons confirms Mark Morrison’s view

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<sup>169</sup> “Wriggle and Chiffon,” *New Age*, June 9, 1910. Reprinted in Robins, *op. cit.*, 243.

<sup>170</sup> “Mr. Whistler’s ‘Songs on Stone,’” *Whirlwind*, November 1, 1890, 71.

that the little magazines actively engaged with, rather than ignored, the commercial mass market, adopting advertising and publicity strategies as well as technologies of production from their larger-scale predecessors.<sup>171</sup> This view contrasts with the received idea that the little magazines were not commercially oriented. To some extent, anti-commercialism held true for the *Whirlwind* insofar as it was sold for one penny, featured few advertisements, and did not survive more than a year. However, by publishing free-standing portraiture in the newspaper, and following Whistler's use of publicity and public space to elicit attention and discussion, Sickert and the *Whirlwind* cleverly expanded their commercial potential.

### 1.1.3 The “*Whirlwind* Diploma Gallery of Modern Pictures”

The other column that Sickert edited, the “*Whirlwind* Diploma Gallery of Modern Pictures,” featured black-and-white reproductions of paintings and drawings of modern life. The “*Whirlwind* Gallery” ran for eighteen issues, over the course of which works by Whistler, Sickert, Theodore Roussel, Sidney Starr, Wilson Steer, Giovanni Boldini, and Frank Short were selected and translated into drawings by Sickert and Starr. Among these painters, many had exhibited with Sickert at the London Impressionists exhibition in 1889, and so the *Whirlwind* Gallery may be considered a parallel column speaking for Sickert's impressionism. Yet, rather than simply presenting readers with paintings by these London impressionists, Sickert and Starr (serving as art editor in place of Sickert) consciously rehearsed the language of impressionism in their reproductions in order to reveal how the impressionist sees.

Starr's drawing (fig. 1.16) of Whistler's *At the Piano* (1858–59, fig. 1.17) is typical of the style of translation of the *Whirlwind* Gallery. Its dominant feature is the rapid hatching that occupies two-thirds of the picture. The mother playing the piano is not contoured, and, below the shoulder, her body melts into the background, hatched in the same plane as the piano and floor. Yet in Whistler's original painting, although

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<sup>171</sup> Mark S. Morrisson, *The Public Face of Modernism: Little Magazines, Audiences, and Reception, 1905–1920* (Madison, WI, and London: University of Wisconsin Press, 2001), 5, 9.

the black dress lacks detail, it nonetheless creates a clear shape that is distinct from the background. In the translation, the face of the daughter is cast in shadow and is only slightly lighter than her hair. There is no detail in the whole picture except a suggestion of the lace of the girl's ballet shoes. Was Starr parodying Whistler? If one squints or steps back from Whistler's painting, one finds that Starr's impression is accurate. In such a view of Whistler's original, all that remains is the contrast of black and white; other details, such as the shading of the girl's legs, tend to disappear, which accounts for Starr's plainly drawn execution of the legs, without any shading. On the one hand, by reducing the original to a contrast between blank and hatched areas, Starr emphasises Whistler's own contrast of black and white in this painting, the very aspect that caught his critics' attention. On the other hand, rather than providing details of the painting, Starr restores his personal sensation when encountering the original, which means that in Starr's drawing Whistler's painting itself becomes a *motif* in the eyes of an impressionist. In this way, Starr demonstrates impressionism in two ways, giving both an example of an impressionist painting and a suggestion as to how it may be viewed.

Sickert's translations adopted a different language from Starr's, demonstrating a different mode of viewing. In his translation (fig. 1.18) of Phillip Wilson Steer's *KnuckleBones, Walberswick* (fig. 1.19), he retains the form of the original painting more faithfully than Starr, and employs a variety of formal elements. The beach is composed of meticulously drawn shingle, forming a large medium-toned expanse. The textures of the wave and rock at the far end are suggested by short horizontal lines. The figures on the beach are contoured but have little hatching to suggest volume, and thus appear as white shapes in the picture. Even the boy's black clothing is left blank, probably so as not to interrupt the formal arrangement of the picture. Only the stockings of the girl on the left are coloured black. The whole picture forms a pleasing design of points, lines, and planes, and a meticulous balance of black and white. In this sense, Sickert not only presents his readers with Steer's picture of modern life, in which he considers that "the painter has caught the grace and beauty of

unconscious action,”<sup>172</sup> but also creates a new work that presents the elementary visual components of a picture reminiscent of Whistler’s formal considerations and tonalism.

The subject of Steer’s beach scene may have been specially chosen by Sickert, since it is a reminder of Degas’s *Beach Scene* (c. 1869–70, fig. 1.20). Degas’s painting was made with diluted paint, so the picture surface is as smooth as a watercolour. The whole painting was executed in a flat style that gives a shallow sense of space, with little shadow to suggest volume, and figures that seem to be pasted onto the beach plane rather than really existing within the scene. Steer’s painting and Sickert’s drawing show a similar flatness of space and contrast of white and black clothing. By translating a painting that emphasises formal arrangement in the manner of Degas, Sickert tells the reader of the *Whirlwind* of another way to see a modern painting, one which values its formal qualities, but this form is much clearer and more defined than in Whistler’s shapeless formalism.

To be more specific, Sickert’s translation shows clearly what he thinks form is, and his idea of form also underpins his naughty use of the word “impressionism.” His translation might be an echo of Maurice Denis’s text “Definition of Neo-Traditionalism” (1890), in which Denis states that “a picture—before being a war horse or a nude woman or an anecdote—is essentially a flat surface covered with colours arranged in a certain order.”<sup>173</sup> Denis’s much-quoted statement anticipated Fry and Bell’s critical formalism and Wassily Kandinsky’s theory of the geometrical elements that make up a picture. Sickert’s sense of form is similar to that of these critics, and is clearly revealed in his drawing. Such an approach to viewing art also accounts for his inclusion within the new art critics circle alongside Moore, Elizabeth Pennell, and Dugald Sutherland MacColl, who advocated a morality of art itself rather

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<sup>172</sup> Walter Sickert, “The Whirlwind Diploma Gallery of Modern Pictures,” *Whirlwind*, July 12, 1890, 37.

<sup>173</sup> “Maurice Denis,” *Oxford Reference*, <https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803095710280>, accessed February 21, 2022.

than of subject matter.<sup>174</sup> But besides writing, Sickert has figurative language among his critical tools, and this example shows that he engaged with press culture in more ways than the other writer-critics.

The different shapes and patterns formed by the lines in Sickert's translation also express the texture of Steer's brushstrokes. Robins notes Sickert's observation of the phenomenology of the picture surface and highlights his phrase "the passage of brush," with which he described Whistler's *Harmony in Pink and Grey: Portrait of Lady Meux* (1881–82) in 1892.<sup>175</sup> While I agree with Robins that Sickert's appreciation of surface effect in the 1890s attests to his extraordinary vision, I would add that the experience of reproducing paintings for the *Whirlwind* in 1890, for the purposes of inculcating a modern way of seeing, contributed to his acute artistic vision, since one can only observe and understand an object thoroughly in the attempt to represent it.

As a column devoted to reproducing pictures, the *Whirlwind* Gallery may have referenced the tradition of reproducing art in the manner of indexed catalogues, such as the *Academy Notes*, or the many French equivalents, such as *Catalogue illustré du Salon*. Burlington House published its *Academy Notes* annually, on the occasion of the spring exhibition of the Royal Academy. This tradition was begun by John Ruskin to educate Victorian middle-class taste, and later became a regular annual feature written by Henry Blackburn from the 1870s to the early 1890s. Artworks were either illustrated by the artists themselves or were reproduced as photographs, with the aim of recording the appearance of the exhibits without emphasising their style. Some might appear as studies of the finished oil works, while most would simply outline the main figure and suggest light and shade by hatching (fig. 1.21). The *Whirlwind* Gallery served a similar role as *Academy Notes*: the word "Diploma" in the column's title suggests the idea of the *Whirlwind* as an institution sanctioned to disseminate good art, in the manner of the Academy, and yet the way that Starr and Sickert

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<sup>174</sup> Robins, *op. cit.*, xxx.

<sup>175</sup> Robins, *Fragile Modernism*, 161.

reproduced the originals shows that they also considered the language of reproduction to be something that readers should learn about modern pictures.

In sum, by analysing specific portraits and drawings of modern pictures, we find that the *Whirlwind* allowed Sickert to construct his own identity autonomously, to experiment with journalistic impressionism, and to emphasise the importance of formal language. The *Whirlwind*, as a publicity scheme for the publisher, artist, and editors, also pioneered the creation of a new type of news image that differed from the caricature or photograph. For Sickert, being art producer and editor for the *Whirlwind* gave him, for the first time, a strong identity influenced by, but independent from, his master, Whistler. This independence was different from that of the other journals to which he later contributed.

## 1.2 Modern life on the page: fitting into the nineties

Between 1890 and 1895, before Sickert went to Venice, he met and maintained friendships with many talented writers and artists in London, including Oscar Wilde, George Moore, Dugald Sutherland MacColl, Aubrey Beardsley, Arthur Symons, and Jerome K. Jerome. These men later came to be known as the “generation of the nineties.” The social circle they formed was largely cultivated by the little magazines in which they discussed and debated modern art and literature. An author’s appearance in a magazine would suggest the way that they were received by the wider cohort. Sickert’s friendship with these men brought him more opportunities to appear in the little magazines and also to communicate with these authors. In what follows, I explore how Sickert conversed with other authors and joined a collective identity to fit into the pages of the *Cambridge Observer*, the *Yellow Book*, and the *Idler*. By looking at the works he provided for these magazines, we can also see how Sickert continued to reflect on the effects of the reproduction of art on the page.

### 1.2.1 Being the *Cambridge Observer*: with a continental accent

The publication that Sickert worked for immediately after the *Whirlwind* was the *Cambridge Observer*, though he remained there only for the short period of one year. The *Cambridge Observer* was an undergraduate weekly magazine chiefly edited and promoted by Sickert's younger brother, Oswald Valentine Sickert, with Charles Percy Sanger and Sir Arthur George Tansley as the other editors. Future poet Robert Calverley Trevelyan and philosopher Bertrand Russell were also involved in discussing the prospectus of the magazine.<sup>176</sup> Compared to the older *Whirlwind*, also an undergraduate magazine in Cambridge, the editors and coordinator of the *Cambridge Observer* did not propose for it to be an organ for political viewpoints, but rather, as Russell claimed in the prospectus, aimed to represent the "whole literary power of Cambridge Students."<sup>177</sup> The chief editor, Oswald Sickert, intended the magazine to be serious, "with no conventional fun about proginses [sic] and bedders and Newhamites [sic]."<sup>178</sup> The prospectus was discussed early in 1892, and in May 1892 the magazine began to appear weekly, lasting until 1893.

Sickert's involvement was largely due to his being the editor's brother, and his role as illustrator is suggested by the single mention of his name in the table of contents of each issue. It is not known how much say Sickert had in determining the content, yet, as I will show, Sickert made use of the space of the magazine to continue to exhibit the paintings that he had shown at the NEAC, while also keeping in line with the editorial tone.

Sickert gave up exhibiting music hall paintings at the NEAC shows in 1890, and instead turned to less controversial kinds of portraiture and landscape. He exhibited

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<sup>176</sup> Carl Spadoni, "The Curious Case of the Cambridge Observer," *Russell: The Journal of Bertrand Russell Studies* 2, no. 1 (1982): 87.

<sup>177</sup> Declared in the prospectus of the *Cambridge Observer*, quoted in Kenneth Blackwell, "The Cambridge Observer Question," *Russell: The Journal of Bertrand Russell Studies* 1, no. 2 (1981): 177.

<sup>178</sup> "Bedders" refers to the cleaning staff of Cambridge University, and "Newhamites" is a misspelling of "Newnhamites," referring to the students of Newnham College (for women), Cambridge. Letters from Oswald to R. C. Trevelyan, March 28, 1892, archive of Trinity College, Cambridge, Papers of Robert Calverley Trevelyan and Elizabeth Trevelyan, reference number TRER/6/31.

two paintings, both titled *Café Des Tribunaux*, at the NEAC's spring and winter shows in 1891 (c. 1890, fig. 1.22 shows the spring work), and the spring painting was awarded "Picture of the Year" and reproduced by the *Pall Mall Gazette*. He made drawings after both paintings; however, as Baron relates, the drawing (fig. 1.23) after the spring work has a large area of shadow which does not show well on the page.<sup>179</sup> Yet Sickert was hardly going to pass up this opportunity to remind readers of his success, and so he presented readers of the *Cambridge Observer* with his drawing of the winter painting, executed in a concise manner and with little shading (fig. 1.24).

While Sickert publicised his impressionistic landscapes, this Dieppe subject was also favoured by editors. The *Cambridge Observer* not only offered accounts of Cambridge, but also reached its tentacles toward the continental arts, reproducing French poems and criticism of French and Greek literature, with reviews on Ibsen, Henry Irving, and the dramatist Henry Arthur Jones appearing often. Yet the criticism was usually harsh in its tone, with some French literature noted to be "dull and pointless," and comparisons of English and French writing were at times made. As Katherine Lyon Mix notes, the editors were "defiantly propagandists concerning foreign authors."<sup>180</sup> In accordance with this critical taste for foreign—especially French—arts, and considering its readers to be young students, Sickert, in his total of seven contributions to the magazine, made five landscape drawings featuring continental scenes. The drawing of *Café des Tribunaux* would likely have held particular appeal for students of art and literature, as the café was known for being visited by Wilde, Renoir, Flaubert, and other writers and artists. An etching of Dieppe harbour (1885, fig. 1.25) was chosen for publication, as was a view of wind chairs on the beach at Scheveningen (fig. 1.26), made in 1887. Similarly to his role at the *Whirlwind*, the inclusion of continental scenes renders Sickert a reporter of modern European life, with a view to broadening students' knowledge. Yet the taste for French art suggests that in the 1890s the relation between French and English art was an

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<sup>179</sup> Baron, *Sickert: Paintings and Drawings*, 202.

<sup>180</sup> Katherine Lyon Mix, *A Study in Yellow: the Yellow Book and Its Contributors* (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 1960), 105.

unavoidable question. For example, one of the readers, a friend of Russell's, complained that Sickert and his NEAC fellows' imitations of the French style were not convincing.<sup>181</sup> These considerations may have prompted Sickert to draw a line between his art and literature, and away from the French influence, as articulated in his subsequent engagement with the *Yellow Book* and the *Idler*.

The commingling of drawings and literature suggests that Sickert envisioned a sophisticated audience, and his customisation of content reflects his reliance on a speculative idea of this public. But aligning his drawing with the *Cambridge Observer* was unpromising. Commenting on the magazine's demise following its thirteenth issue, the *Globe* remarked that

it betrayed a popular taste ... appreciation of Persian poetry, art notes in the style of Mr George Moore in his most eccentric moment, and stories produced by an ardent love of realism tempered with a wholesome fear of Proctor—this is not exactly the literary fare to please the average undergraduate.<sup>182</sup>

### 1.2.2 The *Yellow Book*: Paintings as illustration

Sickert's project of publicising his NEAC paintings was continued and aided by the *Yellow Book*, which lasted from 1894 to 1897. The *Yellow Book* was published by John Lane, the proprietor of the Bodley Head publishing house, with the writer Henry Harland as editor and Aubrey Beardsley as art editor.<sup>183</sup> Yet, besides the three chief organizers, the *Yellow Book* was the product of a collaboration of friends and families, according to Evelyn Sharp.<sup>184</sup> Indeed, Sickert and two of his brothers, Oswald and Bernard, were all contributors to the magazine; other contributors, including Max Beerbohm, Arthur Symons, and George Moore, were longstanding friends of the

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<sup>181</sup> Blackwell, "The Cambridge Observer Question," 180.

<sup>182</sup> "Cambridge," *The Globe*, November 28, 1892, 3.

<sup>183</sup> For more on how the magazine was conceived, see Mix, *A Study in Yellow*.

<sup>184</sup> Evelyn Sharp, "A Group of the Nineties," *Manchester Guardian*, January 19, 1924, 7.

Sickerts and the other editors, and the gatherings at which ideas for each issue would brew took place at Harland's home.

This coterie suggests that, while they were not as closely related to each other as the pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood or the Bloomsbury group, the *Yellow Book* formed a loose clique of writers and artists (at least during the stint of Beardsley between 1894 and 1895), which shaped the understanding of their works. For Sickert, this was a challenge: his works were immersed in literature, due to the dominant presence of writers, though the editors' ideal was to treat images and words as of equal significance and autonomy, avoiding "illustrations accompanying any of the 'letter-press'."<sup>185</sup> As I will show, it was in this context that Sickert developed a deeper understanding of the specificity of his working media, while, at the same time, the way his works were presented on the page prompted him to consider how they appeared to the public under different circumstances. This concern remained with him throughout the rest of his career.

Sickert's works appeared in the *Yellow Book* from the first issue in April 1894 to the fifth issue in 1895. Most of the works were music hall subjects that he had painted in the 1880s, such as *The Oxford Music Hall* (fig. 1.27, showing the *Yellow Book* reproduction), made around 1888 and printed in the first issue, and *Little Dot Hetherington at the Bedford Music Hall* (1888), published in the second issue as *The Old Bedford Music Hall* (fig. 1.28) in July 1894. These paintings had not been featured in any other publications up to 1894.<sup>186</sup> The delayed appearance of his music hall paintings in print shows that Sickert had to wait before finally finding a printed vehicle for a subject that had previously been regarded as morbid, vulgar, and merely a pointless emulation of Degas.<sup>187</sup> Indeed, the editors and coterie of the *Yellow Book* embraced this subject, particularly for its theatricality and representation of the

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<sup>185</sup> Karl E. Beckson and Mark Samuels Lasner, "The Yellow Book and Beyond: Selected Letters of Henry Harland to John Lane," *English Literature in Transition, 1880–1920* 42, no. 4 (1999): 401–5.

<sup>186</sup> Even Vivian has a reserved attitude to Sickert's music hall subject, explaining in the *Whirlwind* that "we have never known our art-critic to pass a music hall—unless it were a high-class one." Herbert Vivian, "Reflections," *Whirlwind*, August 2, 1890, 86.

<sup>187</sup> *The Scotsman*, April 15, 1889, 7.

controversial women of the music hall. This shared interest can be traced in the interconnections between the works of the magazine's different contributors. Beardsley's design for the front cover of the first issue (fig. 1.29) depicts a woman wearing a patch and a mask, immersed in pleasure, with a similarly masked man emerging behind her. The whole picture suggests a carnival atmosphere, but, more importantly, it challenges the Victorian mores of "sancta simplicitas" and expresses approval of an artificial and masked identity.<sup>188</sup> This atmosphere echoes Max Beerbohm's article in the same issue, "A Defence of Cosmetics," in which he satirically defends cosmetics, or decorative camouflage, which was then undergoing a revival in an era of "jolliness and glad indulgence."<sup>189</sup> Beerbohm's defence is rather a revelation of the characteristics of decadence and dandyism, which sang for the bloom of artifice rather than of Nature in the urban setting.<sup>190</sup> Specifically, cosmetics were favoured by dandies, prostitutes, and actors. Beerbohm exemplified his argument with reference to music hall actresses, such as the Lloyd sisters, whom Sickert had painted, and Cecilia Loftus, whom Beerbohm had seen at the Gaiety Music Hall, and whose "pretty face was rouged with the best of them."<sup>191</sup> In this sense, Beardsley's cover, of the woman with the mask and coiffures, together with his many illustrations within the magazine, and Sickert's music hall paintings, provided a visual description of the culture of decadence in urban life. Sickert's manipulation of space with mirrors, the arrangements of beams of stage lights in the music hall, as in *The Old Bedford Music Hall* (fig. 1.28), and Little Dot, the actress, who is far from innocent though dressed in white, serve as footnotes to the celebration of the man-made world. If Sickert's music hall paintings were previously regarded only as "a subject ... quite uninteresting,"<sup>192</sup>

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<sup>188</sup> Further public reactions to the cover are recorded in Catherine Slessor, *The Art of Aubrey Beardsley* (London: The Apple Press, 1989), 53.

<sup>189</sup> Max Beerbohm, "Defense of Cosmetics," *Yellow Book*, April 1894, 82.

<sup>190</sup> Holbrook Jackson, *Eighteen Nineties: A Review of Art and Ideas at the Close of the Nineteenth Century* (London: Grant Richards, 1922), 107.

<sup>191</sup> Beerbohm, "Defense of Cosmetics," 77.

<sup>192</sup> "London Letter," *Birmingham Daily Gazette*, April 12, 1889, 4. Similarly, the artificial light in Collins's music hall received attention, but was regarded only as a variation on impressionistic open-air light when the work was exhibited at the NEAC in 1889. See "The New English Art Club," *The*

that subject matter, now had a specific interpretation, and the culture it revealed.

But for Sickert, this was good and bad. It was good insofar as he liked to cause controversy, and the *Yellow Book* attracted far more criticism than he could single-handedly muster. For example, one of his Dieppe paintings, the *Royal Hotel, Dieppe* (fig. 1.30 shows the 1895 reproduction in the *Yellow Book*), was exhibited at the NEAC winter show in 1893, where the crinoline dresses of the female figures were the target of severe criticism: the “marionette-like women in enormous crinolines,”<sup>193</sup> together with “the crude green grass and the opaque purple sky, produce a bizarre and discordant general effect.”<sup>194</sup> Nonetheless, Sickert allowed it to be reproduced in the *Yellow Book* just months after the NEAC show, and this time, Sickert was described as having “caught the detestable mannerism of the *Yellow Book*.”<sup>195</sup>

While the *Yellow Book* was good at encouraging publicity, Sickert was concerned about his own identity as a visual artist. This can be seen in his concern for the relationship between art and literature, and the effects of print on his paintings. Despite the strategic layout that attempted to keep art and literature distinct—all paintings printed in recto in full page, with a transparent sheet applied to separate images from their titles, printed on the facing page (fig. 1.31)—it was unavoidable to perceive a hierarchical relationship between image and text, something toward which Sickert was not inclined. As mentioned above, Sickert’s music hall paintings echoed Beerbohm’s essay, and Beerbohm’s essay was rather critical; thus Sickert’s painting could at best appear, as indeed it does, as a kind of argument, which is not entirely bad. However, there were literary works, including novels and poems, that had a longstanding rivalry with the visual. Symons’s poem, *Stella Maris*, printed in the first issue, narrates an affection for a prostitute. And as Claes has pointed out, a printed picture by Beardsley, the *Night Piece* (fig. 1.32), just precedes Symons’s poem, thus

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*Standard*, April 17, 1889, 2.

<sup>193</sup> “Art Notes”, *Truth*, December 28, 1893, 1409.

<sup>194</sup> “The New English Art Club,” *Graphic*, November 25, 1893, 658.

<sup>195</sup> “The Art of Our Decadence—A Book Very Much of the Day,” *Newcastle Daily Chronicle*, February 8, 1895, 4.

appearing to be an exact illustration of the poet's "Juliet of the night."<sup>196</sup> As such, Sickert's depictions of music hall actresses, who were often associated with prostitutes and considered stars of the night, similarly provide a generalized image of Stella Maris.

For Sickert, this amounted to a violation of the independence of his art. Before the first issue came out, Sickert had predicted this. At the inaugural party of the *Yellow Book*, held in an upper room of the Hotel d'Italia on Old Compton Street, Sickert made himself the hit of the evening by claiming that he "looked forward to the time when authors would be put in their proper places by being compelled to write stories and poems round pictures which should be supplied to them ready-made by their task-masters, the artists."<sup>197</sup> Sickert's statement may well have been an immediate reaction to his being surrounded by writers, and might also refer to Moore's story, produced in relation to Degas's *L'Absinthe* in 1893.<sup>198</sup> Yet, rather than asserting an absolute independence of each art, Sickert actually showed an awareness of the symbiotic relationship between painting and writing, especially in the context of the magazine, where the two could not be completely separated. Sickert did not deny narrative in paintings, but rather understood that there is potential for narrative to emerge from images. This idea of symbiosis suggests a mutual exchange between image and word in aesthetic encounters, echoing Edgar Allan Poe's concept of "graphicality," developed in 1846. Poe coined the term to refer to the creation of strong mental images through descriptive words in written texts, with the mental image thus forming part of the understanding of the text. For example, Beardsley's illustrations for Poe's novel stand not as pure illustrations but convey the "latent anxieties already inherent" to Poe's stories.<sup>199</sup> Poe himself also had an unfulfilled wish to launch an illustrated magazine, which he titled *The Stylus*, and in which high-quality engravings were to be

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<sup>196</sup> Claes, *The Late-Victorian Little Magazine*, 120.

<sup>197</sup> Mix, *A Study in Yellow*, 81.

<sup>198</sup> See George Moore, "The Grafton Gallery," *Speaker*, February 25, 1893, 215.

<sup>199</sup> Nathan J. Timpano, "The Legacy of Poe's Graphicality in the Expanded Field," *The Edgar Allan Poe Review* 22, no. 1 (2021): 3.

used.<sup>200</sup> Though the magazine never materialised, Poe's stories attracted many visual artists to illustrate for him, and his concept influenced many artists in the nineteenth century, including Sickert.<sup>201</sup> Both Poe and Sickert encouraged a transgression of discrete media and embraced a holistic and synergistic understanding of art forms. In fact, this is what the *Yellow Book* aimed for. According to Claes, the publisher conceived the magazine with the total work of art in mind, as an integration of form and matter.<sup>202</sup> Sickert has been called a narrative painter, and we should understand this epithet as indicating his concern for the intermedia potential of each art form, a mindset that was prominent in the culture of illustrated periodicals and their cultivation of a "unified discourse of word and image."<sup>203</sup> This was no less the case for the *Yellow Book* as a "complete book."

Nonetheless, awareness of the synergistic relationships between different arts did not prevent Sickert from scrutinising his own medium. The experience of being reproduced in the *Yellow Book* provided the artist with the opportunity to objectively examine his work and to become more aware of the specificity of painting. The *Yellow Book* itself draws the reader's attention to the way it is printed, and to the material qualities of the magazine. For example, the catchword in the bottom right corner of each page serves as a reminder of the first word on the page that follows. Sickert certainly paid close attention to how his work looked on the page. He chose paintings with perceivable tonal contrast and a sense of design. *Royal Hotel, Dieppe* (fig. 1.30), mentioned above, is one such example. Its three women are shown as

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<sup>200</sup> John H. Ingram, "Memoir of Poe," in *The Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, ed. John H. Ingram (London: A&C Black, 1901), lxx–lxxi.

<sup>201</sup> For example, Sickert associated his impressionist idea with Poe and compared his works with Poe's novel. In the preface he wrote for the London Impressionist exhibition in 1889, he claimed that Impressionism "accepts, as the aim of the picture, what Edgar Allan Poe asserts to be the sole legitimate province of the poem, beauty." The preface is reprinted in Robins, *op. cit.*, 59. Sickert's connection to Poe's graphicality can also be seen in his Camden Town Murder paintings, made between 1906 and 1909, in which Sickert did not paint the murder scene but, rather, suggested the narrative, as I will argue in chapter three.

<sup>202</sup> Claes, *The Late-Victorian Little Magazine*, 118.

<sup>203</sup> Stuart Sillars, *Visualisation in Popular Fiction 1860–1960: Graphic Narratives, Fictional Images* (London: Routledge, 1995), 17.

inflated geometric shapes, and are rendered in different shades of grey, creating a rhythmic effect. The contrast between the black dress of the woman in the centre and the white dress of the others plays a decisive role in brightening up the picture. The contrast of the painting itself keeps the electric copy from being too blurry. But the effect is still not satisfactory, and the viewer senses this, as some works are not “destined for black-and-white reproduction.”<sup>204</sup> Sickert himself sensed the unsatisfactory effect, and his final contributions to the *Yellow Book*, in 1895, were all drawings rather than paintings. This shift can be attributed to his realisation that drawings translate more effectively into black-and-white reproductions than paintings. Shortly afterwards, in 1896, during his stint as an art critic for the *Speaker*, he voiced his belief that the electric reproduction of paintings is fraught with challenges, as the gauze is dingy and undistinguished.<sup>205</sup> It is reasonable to conclude that this view was shaped by his experience of working with the *Yellow Book*.

I would also note that it is because he anticipated the reproduction of his work in print that Sickert emphasised the contrast between black and white in many of his paintings. I consider this in more detail in chapter two, but for now we may speculate that this emphasis on black and white issues from a knowledge of print and image reproduction. In this respect, Sickert’s experience with the *Yellow Book* was more influential for his subsequent career than the few short issues he contributed to this magazine would seem to suggest.

### 1.2.3 Dialogue of the *Idler*

In tandem with his narrative paintings within the pages of the *Yellow Book* and his affiliation with the literary circle, Sickert expanded his presence in the space of print by supplying works for another literary magazine, the *Idler* (1892–1911), which had been established by Robert Barr and was co-edited by Jerome K. Jerome. For the April 1895 issue, Sickert contributed a set of five drawings centred around the theme

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<sup>204</sup> *Black & White*, February 8, 1896, 190.

<sup>205</sup> Walter Sickert, “On Line,” *The Speaker*, November 21, 1896, reprinted in Robins, *op. cit.*, 112.

of the music hall (figs. 1.35–39), a set of works that has remained unexamined in previous studies. My primary contention here is that these drawings emerged from his controversial paintings displayed at the NEAC during the early 1890s.<sup>206</sup> They serve as a demonstration of the way that he expanded publicity in printed space. In addition, these drawings provide an opportunity to extend our understanding of how music hall subjects were programmed and exhibited in the public sphere, and, in particular, how the music hall as a physical space and venue fitted into the spaces and communities of the magazine. It is intriguing to consider how Sickert adeptly captures the distinctive essence of music hall performances while also drawing inspiration from established illustrative traditions in his translation of this vibrant scene onto the magazine’s pages. Sickert’s contribution to the *Idler* also serves, again, as a testament to the symbiotic relationship between modern art and the style of New Journalism. His visual renderings of the music hall offer a discreet glimpse into this realm of entertainment, illustrating how such contentious themes were presented and navigated within the public sphere. This is a dynamic brought forth by the distinctive reader culture fostered in print media, which offers the artist a multifaceted landscape to contemplate and engage with.

The title of the magazine certainly echoes the popular concept of the “flâneur” who idles around, and “idler” may refer to the editors and writers as much as the readers. The collective identity of the magazine’s editors and writers was presented through a monthly column titled the “*Idler*’s Club,” in which writers were invited to

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<sup>206</sup> *The Boy I Love is Up in the Gallery* is very close to the oil *Gallery of the Old Bedford* (1894–95), exhibited at the NEAC in the winter of 1895. *Kate O’Grady, You’re a Lady*, according to Baron, is probably a drawing of a now-lost oil painting, *Gatti’s Hungerford Palace of Varieties*. The *Second Turn of Katie Lawrence* which was exhibited at the NEAC in 1888. *Topical and Extempore* did not have an oil version, but the character wearing the top hat and tails, and the similar backdrop, suggest that it was possibly a variation of *Le Lion Comique* (1887), exhibited at the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists in 1887. “A very nobby suit, A shiny hat and boot, That’s man, that is the cause of all our woes!” is related to an oil, *Over the Footlight* (c.1892–94), in terms of composition. Sickert produced many images of these two characters, known as the Lloyd sisters, who began their careers as music hall performers in 1888; and Sickert exhibited paintings of the Lloyd sisters at the NEAC in 1894. *Minnie Cunningham* is close to an oil of the same title, exhibited at the NEAC in 1892.

offer their views on a particular topic. Many of the writers were friends and belonged to the same circles in their personal lives, and, as many other little magazines did, the *Idler's Club* brought real-life intellectual groupings into the print space. As Fiss has observed, the column created an imagined space that provided a vicarious experience of London clubland.<sup>207</sup> However, I would further point out that the *Idler's Club's* strategy was precisely to emphasise its circle as just such a space, to provide an image of the physical gathering space of the club, as depicted in many of the opening images of the club's conversations. A typical image features in the 1895 issue in which Sickert's music hall drawings also appeared. This picture (fig. 1.33) depicts a room of people facing away from the viewer and smoking. Streams of smoke permeate the narrow space and morph into the heading, "The *Idler's Club*." The smoking room is thereby suggested as the space in which the following conversation takes place, and, with this space, readers were provided a glimpse of the writers' world. In a sense, the club is conceived as a place for producing writings, as well as a place offered up to the curious reader's observation.

This expression of space, with its suggestion of the curious gaze, also suggests exploration as the theme of the magazine, as the *Idler's* title itself foreshadows. Indeed, many of the stories featured explorations to wild or urban places, and the illustrations to these stories provided the concrete scene where the stories unfolded, satisfying the curious eye, and even enticing judgments about appearance and aesthetics. Illustrations were normally produced in watercolour with meticulous details, or as half-tone photographs. For example, in the eighth volume is a section entitled "Country Walk," which is composed of eight watercolours, presenting different corners of the country as a visual tour. This kind of content makes the *Idler* a form of newspaper, bringing readers reports from different places.

Sickert's five music hall drawings, I argue, were included as a tour of the corners of London for readers. Each of the five drawings has its own title, but the

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<sup>207</sup> Laura Kasson Fiss, "The *Idler's Club*: Humor and Sociability in the Age of New Journalism," *Victorian Periodicals Review* 49, no. 3 (2016): 417.

collective title “The Music Hall” was printed on its own on the verso in a calligraphic typeface, with decorative and autographic overtones, as if presenting a formal travel diary (fig. 1.34). The first image (fig. 1.35) shows the gallery seats and easily imagines the *Idler*’s reader as a spectator on the ground, peering into the music hall’s interior. At the same time, the audiences standing in the gallery—as indicated by the title “The boy I love is up in the Gallery”, the cheapest seats in the music hall—come under the scrutiny of the *Idler*’s reader as they take the viewpoint of Sickert, who himself sat in the somewhat more expensive seats in the stall. This drawing and its viewpoint reinforce for the *Idler*’s reader their identity as an observer, and accord with Symons’s words that “in a music-hall the audience is a part of the performance.”<sup>208</sup>

The other objects of the reader’s gaze, as depicted in the remaining four drawings, are actors on the stage, including a *lion comique* actor (fig. 1.37) and three famous actresses of the time: Katie Lawrence (fig. 1.36), the Lloyd sisters (fig. 1.38), and Minnie Cunningham (fig. 1.39). The last actress, Cunningham, is titled by Sickert with her name, and is portrayed with identifiable facial features. All four actors are given close-ups, occupying the main space in each picture, and separated from the audience by a railing. Costume details are also portrayed, including Lawrence’s headdress and the *lion*’s hat, and the Lloyds sisters’ fuller figures contrast with the slim Cunningham. Readers are provided with very good visualisations of the characteristics of each performer, and, of course, those familiar with the music hall would have recognised the performers.

This expedition into the music hall also delves into the decorative and architectural features of the interior, from the elevated auditoriums to the varying stage designs of different halls. For example, the gallery view and *lion comique* drawings both depict the Old Bedford Music Hall, whose stained-glass decorations are visible in front of the stage, while Katie performs at Gatti’s Music Hall, identified by the receding structure on the stage. This placement of the actors in the scenes and

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<sup>208</sup> John Stokes, *In the Nineties* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 61.

environments in which they performed is unlike the popular pictures of music halls of the time, which almost always singled out the actors, as in Percy Fitzgerald's book *Music-Hall Land* (1890, fig. 1.40). Performers in Sickert's drawings are rooted to the stage by the depictions of backdrops and decorations that give a sense of the physical settings of his stories. Also noteworthy is Sickert's decision to present the performers one by one, in a manner reminiscent of the "turns"—the succession of performances—that typified music hall shows. Music halls were also called "varieties," meaning a diverse group of performances, and a single show might feature singing, minstrels, acrobats, and even "modern witchery", with each act performing in turn.<sup>209</sup> None of these shows were long and audiences experienced rapidly changing spectacles. In this sense, the readers of the *Idler* may have had a similar experience in turning the magazine page. They would experience variety, from the singing of the actresses to the improvisation, "topical and extempore," of the *lion comique*. We can see that the way in which magazines are read—by the turning of pages—is well utilised.

Readers would be further drawn into the performances by the lyrics that were provided as titles for each of the drawings. Three drawings, "The boy I love is up in the Gallery," "Kate O'Grady, You're a lady," and "A very nobby suit, A shiny hat and boot, That's man, that is the cause of all our woes!," were titled with reference to the lyrics sung by the performers depicted in each. This verbal disclosure not only engenders auditory associations for the readers, but also recalls the sing-along—the unique interaction between performers and audiences—within the music hall, fostering a sense of its community.

Such titling, on the one hand, finds its lineage in the established manner of illustrating music hall themes with lyrics, as in the illustrations in *Music-Hall Land*

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<sup>209</sup> Elizabeth Robins Pennell's article in 1893 paid attention to the varieties and the system of turns. Elizabeth Robins Pennell, "The Pedigree of the Music-Hall," *The Contemporary Review* 63 (April 1893): 575–83. See also Charles Dickens, *Dickens's Dictionary of London, 1882: An Unconventional Handbook* (London: MacMillan & Co., 1882), 187.

(fig. 1.40).<sup>210</sup> On the other hand, it also nurtures the overall conversational feel of the *Idler*'s space. As mentioned, the *Idler*'s Club takes the form of a conversation, and in fact the language in the *Idler* is characterised by a trivial conversational style that allow readers to take pleasure in the author, and thereby to forge a closer affinity with them. This aspect of the magazine aligns with the attributes of New Journalism, and, in 1892, the *Idler*'s Club would evolve into a reader's column, further extending its invitation to its audience.

This manner of inviting readers, together with the sense of space curated by the *Idler*, created a sense of intensified proximity to the world in which the editors lived. The music hall, in turn, was a regular haunt of club members, wherein the veiled smoke would dissipate, yielding a shared space for readers and editors alike.

But who were these readers? I pose this question because it brings into view the relationship between the targeted readership and the content provided in the magazine. While the precise readership of the *Idler* remains uncertain, it is reasonable to assume that a significant portion of it would have comprised the middle class, "the large and influential class of the moderate idlers," as described by an 1892 reviewer,<sup>211</sup> and would have encompassed female readers (as exemplified by an illustration from the 1896 issue, titled "An Idler," in which a woman is seen reading<sup>212</sup>) as well as female contributors. The *Cambridge Observer* also described the *Idler* as suitable to satisfy the vacant hours.<sup>213</sup> From these contemporary reviews, we can see that the *Idler* was not described as unpleasant and nasty; rather, it simply avoided intellectual elitism. In fact, the magazine's eschewal of respectable content posits the reader as a voyeur, which, as Amy Milne-Smith has argued, is a privileged stance of the rich.<sup>214</sup> These individuals were curious to explore, without wishing to be offended. Also, given the music hall's contentious nature in the late nineteenth

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<sup>210</sup> I discuss Sickert's connection with Alfred Bryan, the illustrator of *Music-Hall Land*, in chapter four.

<sup>211</sup> "The Idler," *The Independent*, January 22, 1892, 59.

<sup>212</sup> Hounsom Byles, "An Idler," *The Idler*, August 1896, 127.

<sup>213</sup> *The Cambridge Observer*, May 10, 1892, i.

<sup>214</sup> Amy Milne-Smith, *London Clubland: A Cultural History of Gender and Class in Late Victorian Britain* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 171–76.

century, situating it exclusively as a space for exploration implies that it was not entirely innocuous or secure. This envisioning of the content and readership can be sensed in the way the subject of the music hall was presented. In this light, I would suggest that Sickert provides his audience with a secure enclave from which to scrutinise the music hall and gain insight into it, presenting a sanitised perspective that aligns with aesthetic sensibilities—albeit with sensory innuendo—from which readers could use their imaginations.

The music hall as a space was associated with the darker activities that might occur within it, notably drinking and prostitution. Arthur Symons's many works dealing with imagined erotic encounters at music halls did much to align the subject of music halls with the category of pornography.<sup>215</sup> During the 1880s, the police conducted investigations that aimed to uncover "impurities" lurking within these venues.<sup>216</sup> This cast a shadow of prohibition over the very existence of music halls, even as they thrived as entertainment hubs. Indeed, this tension between the illicit and the merely entertaining was a defining facet of the music hall scene, and implied the space as gendered—like the *Idler's* Club, music halls were normally "masculine enclaves."<sup>217</sup> This gendered space is also linked to questions to authority regarding who possess the legitimacy to articulate professional expertise within it. As Faulk argues, men, along with recognised professionals, are perceived as legitimate entrants into this space, while the non-professional intrusion of women is contentious.<sup>218</sup> This inequity was underscored by Laura Ormiston Chant, who dared to venture into the Empire Music Hall, causing much controversy.<sup>219</sup> In contrast, Elizabeth Robins

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<sup>215</sup> Stokes, *In the Nineties*, 60.

<sup>216</sup> Barry J. Faulk, *Music Hall and Modernity: The Late-Victorian Discovery of Popular Culture* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2004), 76–77.

<sup>217</sup> Faulk demonstrates this point by drawing on the accounts of music hall performers, including the description, in Seymour Hick's memoir, of the music hall as "an annexe of London's smartest clubs, frequented by the best-known Men about Town, who scanned strange faces somewhat critically." Faulk, *Music Hall and Modernity*, 211. Seymour Hick, *The Vintage Years* (London: Cassell, 1943), 152.

<sup>218</sup> See chapter three of Faulk, *Music Hall and Modernity*, 75–110.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*

Pennell, with her expertise in writing about music halls, occupied a more accepted position in the intellectual circle.

Sickert's rendition in the *Idler*, in this sense, offer readers a sanitised version of the music hall encounter, recording it, or presenting a tailored form of professional knowledge that avoids directly laying bare its nastier aspects. His lens offers intimate portrayals of the various performers, positioning them within a neutral, performative space that avoids direct interactions between audience and actor, or among the audience itself. Readers, seated in the comfort of their own chairs, can embark on a secure exploration of this contested space. However, Sickert's realistic portrayal of actors such as the Lloyd sisters, with their bare necks and outfits revealing calves and ankles, together with the dynamics between performers that are implied by the lyrics, hark back to Symons's poem *Stella Maris*, while also provoking a sensory reaction by reminding us that, in 1895, such attire was not commonly donned by respectable women.

At the same time, Sickert's depictions were in line with the views of his cultured contemporaries. Although the music hall was considered to be controversial at a social level, this controversy was seen as harmless by some literary figures. Pennell's article in 1893 shows that the music hall was a distinctive form in English culture, with aesthetic and social values to be explored by discerning scholars.<sup>220</sup> Symons also regarded the music hall as a theoretical archetype. That is to say, these scholars were concerned with the value of this cultural form as historical evidence and aesthetic expression, and stood against simplistic moral condemnations of it.<sup>221</sup> Sickert's drawings, with their objective tone, provided the evidence these scholars were seeking. They display a professionalism, without explicitly depicting the more scandalous activities.

Might it be the case that Sickert had already solidified his standing as a chronicler of music halls by the 1890s, and that this had earned him the credentials to

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<sup>220</sup> See Pennell, "The Pedigree of the Music-Hall."

<sup>221</sup> Stokes, *In the Nineties*, 61.

pronounce on public entertainment venues? His *Idler* drawings capture the essence of music halls as secure, insulated spaces, safeguarded against external intrusion. This manifests as a negotiated harmony between commercial interests and cultural representation, serving as yet another instance of Sickert and the magazine's editors' meticulous calibration of the balance between knowledge and public decorum within the public sphere. Striking this balance entailed consideration of the relationship between different subjects and readers. In addition, for the broader concerns of my project on the relationship between modern painting and popular visual culture, we may also conclude from this example that modern art does not just expose reality, but also undergoes a constant negotiation with it in order to become what it is. The other face of modern painting—as the modern image in magazines—is itself a form of popular culture. This understanding challenges the implicit assumption in previous scholarship (such as Daniel's argument—Sickert modernised English art with popular culture) that modern art and popular culture are two separated fields with time-lag. The *Idler*, itself being an integral part of modern art, can reflect from another perspective that the relationship between “popular” and “modern art” is fluid and dynamic, arising from selective acceptance and rejection, rather than rigidly detached. The audience of these two cultural forms does not strictly belong to different groups but rather forms an intersecting overlap. Magazines—as conjunctions of print, popular diversion, and visual culture—allowed for a “mediated” intersection between modern painting and other more popular facets of life, and in this meeting the notion of “popularity” took shape—as a process rather than an essence, as Stuart Hall argues.<sup>222</sup> Popular culture such as the music hall did not simply exist in and of itself before being appropriated by painting, but became popular alongside painting in a process of mediation.

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<sup>222</sup> Stuart Hall, “Notes on Deconstructing ‘The Popular,’” in *Cultural Resistance Reader*, ed. Stephen Duncombe (London: Verso, 2002), 191.

### 1.3 Illustrations and writings for the *New Age*

The *Idler* was the last major publication in which Sickert published his artworks during the 1890s. After 1895, Sickert mainly resided in Dieppe until 1905. In the meantime, he visited Venice on several occasions; one of his Venice drawings was engraved by Paul Naumann and reproduced in the *Savoy*, on account of his friendship with Beardsley.<sup>223</sup> Under the recommendation of George Moore, he also regularly wrote for the *Speaker* between 1896 and 1897 and for the *Art News* in 1910. Writing art reviews for these general-interest newspapers allowed Sickert to keep a close eye on the London art world as well as to hone his unique writing style.<sup>224</sup> In 1905, he returned to London and decided to consolidate his career there, actively collaborating with others and fostering alliances such as the Fitzroy Street Group in 1907 and the Allied Artists Association in 1908.<sup>225</sup> Notably, the Camden Town Group, formed in 1911, articulately reflected the characteristics of the art of Sickert and his fellows. The members of this group, named after the district in north London, rooted their art in their immediate surroundings. The Camden Town Group artists were undoubtedly aware of Fry's Post-Impressionist exhibition in London in 1910; Fry's writings, wherein he expounded his ideas of form in periodicals such as the *Athenaeum* and the *Burlington*, also provided an impetus for these artists to develop their practices, leading from the examples of Cézanne and Gauguin while advocating a local style of English modern art. Their reflections of the modern world created a new scene in London's art world, witnessed not only in galleries but also in print space—this time in the *New Age*, with Sickert as the scene's primary spokesperson.

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<sup>223</sup> *The Savoy*, April 1896, 145.

<sup>224</sup> Anna Gruetzner Robins describes Sickert's writing style as marked by the use of slang, continental languages, and obscure references to generate multilayered meaning. Anna Gruetzner Robins, "Walter Sickert and the Language of Art," in *Internationalism and the Arts in Britain and Europe at the Fin de Siècle*, ed. Grace Brockington (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2009), 28.

<sup>225</sup> For the formation of these groups in relation to Sickert, see Wendy Baron, "Camden Town Recalled," in Bonett, Holt, and Mundy, eds., *The Camden Town Group in Context*, <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/research-publications/camden-town-group/wendy-baron-camden-town-recalled-r1104354>, accessed September 15, 2023.

In the following, I explore how the new art was articulated and debated in the *New Age* by focusing on Sickert's role in the magazine, which I propose to view in two phases. From 1910 to 1912, he provided the *New Age* with drawings of social themes that were embraced by writers and editors with socialist leanings. These themes, including increasing urbanisation and attendant social issues, were crucial to the idea of the "new." In the meantime, requirements for the "new" art evolved. In fact, when Sickert proclaimed himself "juvenile lead" of the young generation in 1907, he suggested that a division between a new and old generation had arisen—and Sickert stood for the old one.<sup>226</sup> The debate over "the new" culminated in 1914, after the young Wyndham Lewis had begun to mature in his dual affinity with Cubism and Futurism, and after T. E. Hulme and Ezra Pound had joined the *New Age*, expressing their support for abstract art. Consequently, Sickert and his fellow artists had to engage in the conversations over continental innovations and ideas that marked the second phase of the debate in the magazine. My argument here centres on Sickert's awareness of the materiality and mediality of the space in which the debate took place—the monochrome pages of the *New Age*. He utilised the material qualities of the space to argue for his new art, thereby delivering an implicit rebuttal of Hulme's attack on his work.

### 1.3.1 Drawing the social theme

The *New Age* was founded by Alfred Richard Orage, with financial assistance from George Bernard Shaw and Lewis Wallace.<sup>227</sup> Like the other little magazines, it was "written for love" and could not pay its contributors.<sup>228</sup> Even so, the *New Age*

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<sup>226</sup> Christopher Reed discusses Sickert's role as defender of the older generation in the early twentieth century, in Christopher Reed, ed., *A Roger Fry Reader* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), 119.

<sup>227</sup> Ann Ardis, "Democracy and Modernism: The New Age under A. R. Orage (1907–22)," in *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines, Volume I: Britain and Ireland 1880–1955*, ed. Peter Brooker and Andrew Thacker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 211.

<sup>228</sup> Paul Selver, *Orage and the New Age Circle: Reminiscences and Reflections* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1959), 13.

survived from 1907 to 1938 and attracted a stable of unpaid contributors who were at the same time subscribers.<sup>229</sup> Its title suggests a different historical mission from the *Yellow Book* and the other magazines of the 1890s. The idyllic Victorian life had gone and there was a need to envision a new era.

The blueprint for the *New Age* was heavily informed by socialist ideals, but its brand of socialism transcended mere political theory or economic objectives. Instead, its contributors devoted themselves to crafting a coherent socialist framework for the holistic development of culture.<sup>230</sup> Most of the contributors were writers, such as G. K. Chesterton, H. G. Wells, Herbert Read, and Pound. They refused to view politics, literature, and art as “discrete and non-contiguous categories of cultural phenomena.”<sup>231</sup> This, as Ann Ardis has elucidated, entailed featuring literature and the arts as serious content, rather than either the total exclusion of cultural matters from the magazine’s pages or their inclusion solely in response to the public demand for lighter fare.<sup>232</sup> Thus, literature and art in the *New Age* became crucial to the magazine’s commentary on social affairs and its propagation of socialist ideas, to which I will shortly return. For now, I wish to note that literature and art were at the same time expressed in the visual form of graphic illustrations in the service of positions and opinions. For example, Chesterton’s sketchily rendered caricature titled “The Ideal Citizen” (fig. 1.41), which is reminiscent of Hogarth’s satirical etchings, prompted a reflection on British identity and the increased working-class presence in urban areas. Tom Titt, a Polish illustrator, also made caricatures of the *New Age* contributors and political figures (fig. 1.42) that embodied their individual stances. These visual features are reminiscent of the tradition of satirical cartoons in *Punch*, underscoring the *New Age* as a public space where images could be a potent means

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<sup>229</sup> Sean Latham, “*The New Age*, Volume 1 (May 2 to October 24, 1907): An Introduction,” in *The Modernist Journals Project*, searchable database (Brown and Tulsa Universities, ongoing), accessed November 13, 2023. [www.modjourn.org](http://www.modjourn.org).

<sup>230</sup> Wallace Martin, *The New Age under Orange: Chapters in English Cultural History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1967), 62.

<sup>231</sup> Ardis, “Democracy and Modernism,” 209.

<sup>232</sup> *Ibid.*, 214.

for debate. The visual aspect of the magazine also differed from contemporary periodicals in which either no pictorial materials were used (such as the literary journal *The English Review*), or where only photographic images were used to illustrate texts (such as *Harper's Weekly* and the *Saturday Review*). The adoption of black-and-white drawings was largely due to Orage's tight budget. Yet this visuality, constrained by finance, nonetheless shaped the expression of artistic views, the representation of art, and the relation between image and text, as I shall explain by examining Sickert's own contribution.

Sickert began working as an art reviewer for the art supplement of the *New Age* on April 7, 1910. This supplement was launched by Huntly Carter as an additional venue (varying in extent from four to twenty pages) for discussing prominent art-related issues, such as Cubism.<sup>233</sup> Sickert contributed articles regularly on a near-weekly basis during 1910. In 1911 and 1912, however, Sickert published only three articles for the *New Age*. Instead, he launched an illustration column, which continued, on and off, from June 1911 until June 1912, coinciding with the first and second Camden Town Group exhibitions. All the illustrations are drawings, demonstrating his practice in Venice and in his Camden Town studio between 1895 and 1910 and marking his new interest in constructing dramas between two protagonists within interiors. As with the drawings he contributed to the *Idler* and the *Yellow Book*, narrative titles were given to each, such as "A Conversation Piece," "Who Did you Say?," and "Where Can It Be?" However, their publication in the *New Age* infused these narrative illustrations with a socialist undertone, mirroring the realist literature and drama of the time. Under the influence of Shaw, an interest in social themes and labour had come to the fore, with such topics as "class distinctions, opulent idleness, poverty, cupidity, and crime" increasingly favoured by realist writers and playwrights.<sup>234</sup> The playwright William Archer, for instance, advocated a drama that would reveal the "friction arising from bad sociological conditions."<sup>235</sup> Literature

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<sup>233</sup> Scholes, *Paradoxy of Modernism*, 36.

<sup>234</sup> Martin, *The New Age under Orage*, 65.

<sup>235</sup> William Archer, "Fabianism and the Drama," *The New Age*, October 3, 1908, 451.

and reviews on these subjects frequently graced the pages of the *New Age* and sparked controversy. One reader even wrote to the editor: “Sir, -Last week we were edified by a realistic description of a murder; this week we get the above. Cannot THE NEW AGE manage to get along without such stuff?”<sup>236</sup> The letter suggests the vexation provoked among the readership by the new realist literature. As I will argue, the modern images by Sickert and the Camden Town Group artists, examining urban problems, were presented in the *New Age* as revelations of social scenes. The artists enjoyed the subject of squalor, and used graphic materials to investigate what might constitute realism in the urban milieu.

Sickert investigated a wide range of both the male and female working class. “A Pail of Slops” (fig. 1.43) depicts a woman carrying a bucket. The figure’s face is not revealed, yet the title and the girl’s slender figure suggest that this could be a scullery maid, since it was usually young girls who undertook this most strenuous job in the kitchens of the Victorian and Edwardian periods, and pouring slop was among their daily duties. The drawing provokes a physical response, since the slop pail appears here like a chamber pot—smelly, filthy and scorned, in contrast with the cleanliness of the city. One reader wrote to the *New Age* to express the view that the slop pail was an improper subject matter for the magazine:

How does Mr. Sickert’s picture gain artistically or otherwise by the fact that the woman is carrying a slop-pail and not a pail of water? Is THE NEW AGE going in for aphrodisiacs, too? The dog, as we know, finds the smell of “slops” very aphrodisiac, which is perhaps why he is called “the friend of man.”<sup>237</sup>

Some readers were confused by the title:

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<sup>236</sup> “Realism in the New Age,” *The New Age*, July 27, 1911, 310.

<sup>237</sup> “An Earnest Inquiry,” *The New Age*, July 20, 1911, 284–85.

But for its title I should have been prepared to accept the work as a skilful report of a genuine artistic perception; but the title! It was as if some suburban Philistine had been consulted for a description and had honestly suggested what the picture conveyed to him.<sup>238</sup>

While readers mainly reflected on the inappropriateness of the subject, for the editors of the *New Age* the drawing provided visual material for a debate around social welfare, and particularly the recently proposed National Insurance Bill. The Bill had been proposed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, David Lloyd George, to provide insurance for the whole nation, and was introduced to the House of Commons in May 1911 before being approved in December that year. Heated discussions took place prior to its approval, focusing particularly on the condition of the worker, since the Bill proposed that workers, employers, and the nation would all pay into the scheme, and some thought this too burdensome a prospect for the less well off. The scullery maid would certainly count among those who were “too poor to pay voluntarily.”<sup>239</sup> Sickert’s preference for gritty, realistic subject matter thus dovetailed with the magazine’s recent focus.

This drawing might be made years before it has been published in the *New Age*,<sup>240</sup> or at least Sickert may have titled this drawing especially for the *New Age*, since he usually adjusted his titles for different occasions. The illustration also perfectly visualises Sickert’s famous claim: “the plastic arts are gross arts, dealing joyously with gross material facts.... They will flourish in the scullery, or on the dunghill.”<sup>241</sup> Yet the issue of servants and the working class, much discussed and

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<sup>238</sup> Lover of Beauty, “What Does Mr. Sickert Mean by It?” *The New Age*, July 20, 1911, 285.

<sup>239</sup> “Notes of the Week,” *The New Age*, July 13, 1911, 242.

<sup>240</sup> There are two drawings of this maid carrying the bucket, one is this, drawn in chalk on buff paper, printed in the *New Age* and inscribed Sickert’s name and “S. Pancras.” The other is made with charcoal and pencil with longer inscription including the date “1898-7-6-5.” Baron notes that the inscription of the charcoal one was added in 1924 by Sickert, but Sickert himself might be wrong with the date. Baron, *Sickert, Paintings and Drawings*, 199.

<sup>241</sup> Walter Sickert, “Idealism,” *Art News*, May 12, 1910, reprinted in Robins, *op. cit.*, 229.

visualised in the press during the first decade of the century, inspired Sickert to take aim at the social implications of his studies.

Servants were central to the modern working class around 1910. As Virginia Woolf would later note: “the Victorian cook lived like a leviathan in the lower depths, formidable, silent, obscure, inscrutable; the Georgian cook is a creature of sunshine and fresh air.”<sup>242</sup> Significant changes in the new era, including suffrage and welfare reform, largely affected the working class, including servants, and this was reflected in newspapers.<sup>243</sup> Lloyds’s National Insurance Bill was one of a number of actions taken. In 1906, an amendment to the Workmen’s Compensation Bill was approved, to henceforth include domestic workers in the compensation system. A page in the *Penny Illustrated Paper (PIP)* considered this Bill, and featured a visual demonstration of the risks undertaken by maids (figs. 1.44 and 1.45) to facilitate its discussion of the necessity of compensation. These four illustrations may have been taken by a press photographer of a posed model in order to demonstrate the risks attending different domestic errands. Notably, their composition and format is comparable to Sickert’s drawing in the *New Age*, all featuring a long portrait format, with the light focused on the maid performing her duties, contrasting with the black background.

The aim I provide the *PIP* illustration is to show how the servant question was represented and discussed around 1910. And, whether or not Sickert was directly inspired by these illustrations, they show that Sickert’s own studies were unconsciously political. They also show that quite different magazines—in this case, the tabloid-like *Penny Illustrated Paper* and the serious *New Age*—shared some common interests and visual strategies. Communication between different publications and communities was more fluid and intimate than might be imagined.

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<sup>242</sup> Virginia Woolf, *Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1924), 5, quoted in Selina Todd, *The People: The Rise and Fall of the Working Class, 1910–2010* (London: John Murray, 2014), 13.

<sup>243</sup> Todd, *The People*, 16, 22.

However, although they both adopted visual aids, the two periodicals treated this social issue differently and reported it for different reasons. For the *PIP*, the illustrations served as a means to engage readers, since the photographs were evidently staged and presented as a form of anecdotal display, exuding an artificial and unnatural sense of drama. How else could each figure have been conveniently framed within the photograph's composition? Hence, the discussion of the political issue of the Workmen's Compensation Act may have been merely a pretext for *PIP* to print frivolous images, not least since featuring women as the representatives of domestic servants also catered to the audience's interests. In comparison, Sickert's drawing for the *New Age* is both a demonstration of his artistic position as well as a loose illustration of a social issue. It presents the work of the maid without a sense of staging, as her duties and working conditions are not expressed by descriptive means (as in the *PIP* illustrations, where the content might be summarised with words such as "maid making tea"), but rather through the materiality of the drawing. Sickert does not show visual details of the kitchen, and the woman and the pail are delineated in just a few lines, without any shading to suggest volume. Instead, Sickert uses chalk expressively, creating a patch of black not as shadow but to set off the woman and to render a sense of crudity that is enhanced by the strong contrast of the rough texture of chalk on buff paper. The visual language of this drawing is also that which a "suburban Philistine" might speak. This suggests that, rather than merely alluding to social issues, Sickert was more concerned with how reality is conveyed, particularly as he explored the ontological potential of linear language.

Printed in the next issue, "And I Drive the Bus that Mary Rides on" (fig. 1.46) continues Sickert's presentation of the life of the working class, echoing the pictures of the maid. The drawing, also in graphite, depicts a man wearing a top hat, though it is not a flattering portrait, the texture of the graphite suggesting wrinkles. Taking up almost the entire page of the folio, this large close-up jumps out at the reader, impressing them with the rough texture and expression of the character's face. The title provides a clue as to the sitter's identity: "And I drive the bus that Mary rides on"

is a line in the song *The Bus* (or *Mary MacIntyre*) sung by the Irish-born comedian and vocalist Pat Rafferty in 1895. Having begun singing and acting in 1876, Rafferty expanded his career to London music halls in 1888, and it is possible that Sickert heard him performing this song. *The Bus* narrates a bus driver's affection for Mary MacIntyre, a woman who takes the bus every day, though "her fare she won't pay."<sup>244</sup> The driver is "in the old rag," and Mary has to come and go to work "every morn at the break of the day."<sup>245</sup> As in many songs and comedies, *The Bus* charts the daily lives and emotional experiences of the working class of the time. By appropriating the title that narrates the driver's life, Sickert reveals that he cares about the lives of the unnoticed, low-paid, self-deprecating drivers who created the speedy and modern spectacles in the city, in a way that is attuned to current debates within the pages of the *New Age*, such as Carter's proposal to improve the financial conditions of theatres.<sup>246</sup>

In fact, this drawing more likely represents another working-class archetype: the music hall actor. Top hats were not usually worn by bus drivers in the 1910s, whereas the *lion comique*, singing songs praising the virtues of idleness, womanising, and drinking, would wear a top hat to parody the upper class (as in fig. 1.37). Sickert may therefore be suggesting that the sitter, as a *lion comique*, is a worker who has to force a smile.

These two drawings are among Sickert's many portrayals of the working classes that he contributed to the *New Age* in 1911 and 1912. Their implications are twofold. Firstly, these drawings served as a gritty realism to assist in understanding contemporary social conditions, in line with the magazine's socialist agenda. The editorial notes that resonated with the drawings—in contrast to the reviews that complained of the inappropriateness of Sickert's sordid subject matter—suggested that the radical drawing might only be understood by a small circle. Secondly,

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<sup>244</sup> "The Bus, or Mary MacIntyre," (Irish Traditional Music Archive, 1895), ballad sheet, ref. no. 23307-BS.

<sup>245</sup> Ibid.

<sup>246</sup> "A Symposium on the Art of the Theatre," *The New Age*, July 13, 1911, 249.

drawing here becomes Sickert's unique way of representing reality: through coarse and direct, but not quite photographic reproduction. Corbett has argued that Sickert's irrational language expresses the unpredictability of modern life, especially the unpleasant sides more typical of working-class experiences.<sup>247</sup> However, Corbett's focus is on the use of paint. The drawings in the *New Age* reveal that the graphic medium was also capable of showing these conditions, and demonstrate one way in which Sickert experimented with the potential of different media to achieve an unmediated expression.

Sickert was not the only artist prompted by the black-and-white space of the periodical to explore the unmediated potential of graphic media. On September 7, 1911, several of the Polish artist and theology scholar Wladimir Wroblewski's drawings (fig. 1.47) were printed in a two-page art supplement.<sup>248</sup> Each picture depicts a natural landscape using simple lines that form different patterns to describe the basic appearance of an object. Rather than being artistic, they are more like diagrams. The purpose of publishing these drawings is clearly stated on the page:

These drawings are selected, rather at haphazard from one of the artist's latest note-books, and some of them have been slightly reduced for the purpose of publication. The originals were drawn directly with the pen, without any pencil outline. The artist's object has not been to portray any particular scene, real or imaginary, but rather, starting from fundamentals, to decide by experiment what lines and forms are necessary to the expression of the various facts in nature and the various feelings and ideas in the mind.<sup>249</sup>

This explanation suggests that these diagrams are conceptual landscapes rather than realistic depictions, and that exploring the basic elements of nature was not

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<sup>247</sup> See Corbett, "'Gross Material Facts'."

<sup>248</sup> Robert Scholes, "Wladimir Wroblewski," *The Modernist Journals Project*, <https://modjourn.org/biography/wroblewski-wladimir/>, accessed November 13, 2023.

<sup>249</sup> "Some Drawing by W. Wroblewski," supplement to *The New Age*, September 7, 1911.

unusual in the 1910s, since these were explored in abstract paintings. What I wish to emphasise here is that the line has been chosen as the smallest unit with which to express feelings and ideas. Sketches in line more directly reflect observation than copies of a more laboured painting, and may provide an unmediated reflection of nature. Moreover, when it comes to printing in magazines, sketches share their medium, ink, with text. In what follows, I argue that Sickert further explored the close links between drawing and text in his contribution to the *New Age* in 1914, in which he defended his position in graphic form.

### 1.3.2 Drawing and criticism

Sickert stopped providing drawings and writings for the *New Age* in 1913, but returned in 1914 with a new column titled “Modern Drawings,” which best exemplifies images as criticism. Modern Drawings lasted for fourteen issues from January 1, 1914, to April 1914. Its title is reminiscent of the *Whirlwind* Diploma Gallery of Modern Images, but “modern” in the 1910s no longer signified impressionism, since the British art world had by then come under the influence of the new continental innovations of Cubism and Futurism, as introduced by native scholars such as Hulme. Victor Reynolds, a critic for the *New Age*, classified impressionism as an obsolete because its fundamental principles had been developed to the limit.<sup>250</sup> Also, the once-proud narrative tradition of the *Yellow Book* was seen to be against the current trend, with Wyndham Lewis stating that Sickert is a “Bohemian plague-spot on clean English life—part, indeed, of that larger Yellow plague-spot, edited by Arthur Symons.”<sup>251</sup> It is clear that these people classified Sickert and the impressionism he represented as belonging to the old world. After ten issues of Modern Drawings, Hulme launched a column titled “Contemporary Drawings,” inviting comparison with Sickert’s column and thus seeking to outflank Sickert’s stance. The magazine was no longer a place for Sickert to present his personal

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<sup>250</sup> Victor Reynolds, “Reaction as Progress,” *The New Age*, April 7, 1910. 7.

<sup>251</sup> Wyndham Lewis, “Modern Art,” *The New Age*, April 2, 1914. 703.

manifesto but rather a battlefield where he had to defend himself with words and images.

Sickert's *Modern Drawings* spoke for himself and his pupils, emphasising the importance of drawings, and featured his own pen portraits and drawings of domestic life. The column also aligned with the Camden Town Group artists, for the first image of the series, *Portrait of Miss Enid*, was accompanied by Charles Ginner's manifesto of Neo-Realism. Ginner extolled impressionist artists' intimacy with nature and opposition to academicism, resonating with Sickert's own views.<sup>252</sup> In a subsequent issue, Sickert's article *Mesopotamia-Cézanne* expressed an aversion to arrivistes who lacked talent but nevertheless succeeded thanks to the academic formulae invented by Picasso and Matisse.<sup>253</sup> Sickert further supported Ginner by publishing his drawing *Leicester Square* as the second piece in *Modern Drawing*. Other drawings would include John Flanagan's *Study* of a head and hands, which is reminiscent of academic training, and Silvia Gosse's *The Doctor*, which follows a typical Sickertian subject of narrative potential.

For Hulme, these drawings were the "not very exhilarating work of the more traditional school,"<sup>254</sup> and thus the "genuine voice of the old."<sup>255</sup> As he introduced in the first series, Hulme's own column, *Contemporary Drawings*, included "drawings by David Bomberg, Jacob Epstein, F. Etchells, Gaudier, C. F. Hamilton, P. Wyndham Lewis, C. R. W. Nevinson, Roberts, and E. Wadsworth.... One uniting quality they possess in common is that they are all abstract in character."<sup>256</sup>

As Robert Scholes has argued, the main debate in the *New Age* was between the old art represented by Sickert and the new art of abstraction championed by Hulme, Pound, and Lewis, a visual argument that played out in the reproduction of artworks by both camps.<sup>257</sup> Scholes's contention that Sickert failed to understand the new trend

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<sup>252</sup> Charles Ginner, "Neo-Realism," *The New Age*, January 1, 1914, 271–72.

<sup>253</sup> Walter Sickert, "Mesopotamia-Cézanne," *The New Age*, March 5, 1914, 579–80.

<sup>254</sup> T. E. Hulme, "Contemporary Drawings," *The New Age*, April 2, 1914, 688.

<sup>255</sup> Scholes, *Paradoxy of Modernism*, 67.

<sup>256</sup> Hulme, "Contemporary Drawings," 688.

<sup>257</sup> See Scholes, "Old and New in Modernist Art," in *Paradoxy of Modernism*, 33–94.

and lost the battle assumes that what Sickert meant by “modern” was still the subject matter of impressionism as demonstrated in the *Whirlwind* Gallery. However, Sickert’s focus in *Modern Drawings* was not only on subject matter. He did not simply present figurative art as the opposite of abstract art, but rather emphasised drawing’s potential as a legitimate new art. It is this that accounts for the column’s title. Furthermore, Sickert’s enactment of his argument through drawings demonstrates his sense that, as the direct product of the hand and mind, drawing itself might be more explanatory than the prose of the writer-critics.

Sickert’s idea of the “new” drawing sees it as a continuation of an old tradition that has the ability to live in the modern world. One of the *Modern Drawings* was Fred Richards’s *The Temple of the Sibyl* (fig. 1.48). A pupil of Sickert’s, Richards had taken a short summer course at St Ives before later studying under Frank Short, who inspired his pursuit of etching as his chief interest. As inscribed at the bottom of the drawing, Richards’s image depicts the ruins of a temple in Tivoli, Italy. In the context of the *New Age* and the general tendencies of the new artists, this subject seems odd and out of date. The ruins of the Roman world were the subject matter of the old masters; Turner, for instance, had painted and drawn the temple at Tivoli. Richards adopted an upwards-looking viewpoint, emphasising the height of the cliff and the sublimity of the scene in a manner reminiscent of the Romantic tradition. Furthermore, this drawing was made on sight during the artist’s trip to Italy, exemplifying Sickert’s idea that the source of art should be nature.

This drawing also demonstrates Sickert’s view of drawing as a modern business. By 1911, Richards had become a moderately successful illustrator. He was commissioned that year to copy Sir Edwin Poynter’s cartoon of S. David, while in 1913 the publisher Adam and Charles Black invited him to make drawings for the popular *A Sketch-book* series, in which drawings of scenes in Britain and other European cities were printed. *The Temple of the Sibyl* was taken from the *Rome* offprint of the series, just published in 1914. Sickert must have kept an eye on the then-popular publication of graphic art, and wished to promote draughtsmanship. This

suggests that the new drawing, for Sickert, should not only be artistically worthy, but should also fit into the modern commercial world.

Sickert's understanding of the new art also emphasised its ability to be understood by its audience, and this ability, Sickert believed, was related to the use of lines. He elaborated on the new art of drawing in the article "A Stone Ginger," published on March 19, 1914, in a language without "what the French call ambages, without Hulmisms or Rogerisms, ambages ambo [both ambiguous]."<sup>258</sup> Sickert stressed the accuracy that a line could achieve on account of the fact that all straight lines are absolute and all curves can be understood as tangents to such lines.<sup>259</sup> This accuracy in expressing the world is the basis of many disciplines, he argued, including anatomy and botany.<sup>260</sup> Sickert also distinguishes his opinion on painting from Neo-Realism, even that of the Camden Town artists. Both embraced the unity of drawing and painting, but while Ginner thought paint to be the personalised and permanent quality of art, Sickert insisted that drawing is more fundamental: "he [Spencer Gore] became a great draughtsman by the road of colour."<sup>261</sup> The ability of lines to represent objects suggested to Sickert that lines stand in a direct and unmediated relation to the world. Such an idea may have come from his practice and knowledge of etching, since, during the etching revival of the mid-nineteenth century, this had been considered an ideal medium for expressing the artist's thought process, and was akin to drawing or handwriting in its ability to reveal an unmediated individual style.<sup>262</sup> The studies on etching, show an interest in the different appearances and forms of line used, which was associated with the unconsciousness and the practice of shorthand writings and imbued an intellectual quality in the nineteenth century.<sup>263</sup> I will return to

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<sup>258</sup> Here, Sickert quotes Horace, and may be mocking Hulme and Fry's ambivalent critical language. Walter Sickert, "A Stone Ginger," *The New Age*, March 19, 1914, 631–32.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid.

<sup>260</sup> Sickert, "A Stone Ginger."

<sup>261</sup> Walter Sickert, "A Perfect Modern," *The New Age*, April 9, 1914, 718.

<sup>262</sup> Emma Chambers, *An Indolent and Blundering Art? The Etching Revival and the Redefinition of Etching in England 1838–1892* (London: Routledge, 1999), 6.

<sup>263</sup> See Caroline Arscott, "Stenographic Notation: Whistler's Etchings of Venice," *Oxford Art Journal* 29, (3) 2006: 371–393.

the etching revival in next chapter on line; here, we can see that Sickert understood the directness of drawing in the space of magazines, and made much of this in his vision and communication of modern art.

In the pages of the *New Age*, Sickert arranged the visual and textual alternately to argue his understanding of good drawing. In many articles that he wrote for the *New Age* in 1914, he expressed the view that the artist's encounter with the object to be depicted is essential for making a good painting, and that this should be achieved by drawing rapidly.<sup>264</sup> However, in his article "On Swiftness" Sickert uses not painting but literature to make his case. He recalls Flaubert's idea that "a sentence should flow, whatever its subordinated clauses may be, from the beginning to the end with one sustained impulse," and further argues that, in writing, the conclusion must be foreshadowed from the beginning, and must not let go of its hand from the outset.<sup>265</sup> He then gives the example of an excerpt from *Henry V*, exploring how many actor-managers failed to convey the linked whole to the audience.<sup>266</sup> In this way, Sickert demonstrates the idea of swiftness in a language the writer can understand, rather than using visual works with which writers may not be familiar.

But Sickert then shows "swiftness" with his modern drawings. More relaxed than the *Whirlwind* Cartoons, the drawings in the *New Age* are more concerned with depicting a situation rather than a likeness. In many cases, the shaded areas are carried over by continuous hatching (fig. 1.49), and sometimes the exploratory lines are left visible (fig. 1.50). His drawings are full of liveliness but remain ordered—"speed without haste, calm without rest."<sup>267</sup> By demonstrating swiftness through drawing, Sickert shows his awareness of the essence of print—specifically that, before a print can become an object (such as a printed page in a magazine), it is essentially an index, a mark left by one object on another. In this case, a print is evidence, or an index, of

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<sup>264</sup> Walter Sickert, "On Swiftness," *The New Age*, March 26, 1914, 655–56, reprinted in Robins, *op. cit.*, 346–49.

<sup>265</sup> *Ibid.*, 348.

<sup>266</sup> *Ibid.*, 348–9.

<sup>267</sup> *Ibid.*, 349.

an act occurring between particular objects. This indexicality became the key to his argument.

In this sense, Sickert deployed both text and drawing to make a dual argument for swiftness in art, and played with the characteristics of each medium. In his essays he used a writer's language, as he confessed that his concrete example (the script of *Henry V*) could be transposed to the page better than any description of his pictures.<sup>268</sup> In his drawings he provided visual evidence, since images cannot be verbally comprehended. It is this dual argument that Hulme was incapable of making. Early in 1910, Sickert expressed in the *New Age* that "what puzzles me, and inspires me with grave doubts of their competence, is the cocksureness of writers who cannot even draw as well as I do, which isn't saying much."<sup>269</sup>

Indeed, although Hulme's column promoting abstract art is titled "Contemporary Drawings," it was photographic reproductions of studies of paintings rather than pen drawings that he provided. In order to make these works comprehensible for readers, Hulme wrote a short inscription for each reproduction. For example, on April 30, 1914, Edward Wadsworth's *The Farmyard* (fig. 1.51) was printed as a "contemporary drawing." Yet Wadsworth's work was not a drawing but a coloured and rather complete work. Hulme had to explain that "Mr. Wadsworth's drawing this week suffers somewhat by reproduction, as in the original is coloured; the light background being yellow and grey, and the dark parts a very dark blue."<sup>270</sup> Hulme further explained to the reader that the key to understanding the abstract form is to look at the relation between the planes.<sup>271</sup> Compared to Sickert's allusion to Flaubert's idea of writing and his self-explanatory sketch, Hulme does not make his explanation directly perceivable, instead requiring readers to imagine an "original" beyond the page. This contrast may be explained by the fact that Sickert's and Hulme's senses of "drawing" refer to different practices. Wadsworth's drawing is not a

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<sup>268</sup> Ibid.

<sup>269</sup> Walter Sickert, "The Spirit of the Hive," *The New Age*, May 26, 1910, 84.

<sup>270</sup> T. E. Hulme, "A Note on Contemporary Drawings," *The New Age*, April 30, 1914, 821.

<sup>271</sup> Ibid., 821.

spontaneous reaction to its object, because the artist had to digest what he saw and translate it into geometric form, whereas Sickert's drawing adheres strictly to draughtsmanship.

Compared with Hulme's column, Sickert's idea of drawing, and his use of drawing as criticism, reflects his consideration of the ontology of the media of drawing and paper, as well as of the capacity of print. Drawing, for Sickert, meant the touch and trace of a pen or pencil—it preserved the gesture of the hand. The lines, or, in other words, *vestiges* of the pen, are like the flowing handwriting of his ideas. Speaking of Renoir, Sickert praised the French artist's proficiency in design, stating that “it has become a handwriting.”<sup>272</sup> Using drawing as criticism emphasises the relation between hand and mind—indeed, writing in nature is tactile.<sup>273</sup> Etymologically, to “write” means to scratch. The tool for writing points to the external world, and all work by hand is rooted in thinking. In this sense, as criticism, drawing is more direct than the reproduction of paintings. Such a connection between hand and text was later noticed by thinkers such as Martin Heidegger, who, in 1942, considered that “the typewriter tears writing from the essential realm of the hand” in the age of writing's mechanisation.<sup>274</sup> Other technologies, such as photography, have accelerated the detachment of hand and mind. Corporeal humanity has been expunged from printed text. The abstract tendency of art suggests that what is of value is the idea and absolute spirit. Against this tide, Sickert restored the function of the hand by making use of the vestiges of its action as ideas. Whenever Sickert needed to argue with images, he employed drawings, as in the *Whirlwind* and the *New Age*.

Sickert also insisted on the authenticity of his drawings, and he well understood the ways in which a reproduced work appears differently to its original. For example, he thought woodcuts to be “clean and pleasant,” while process prints were “dingy and

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<sup>272</sup> Robins, *op. cit.*, 436.

<sup>273</sup> Constance Classen, ed., *The Book of Touch* (Oxford: Berg, 2005). 6.

<sup>274</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Parmenides*, trans. Andre Schuwer and Richard Rojcewicz (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1992), 80–81.

undistinguished.”<sup>275</sup> From his constant experimentation with print media, he learnt that print was able to preserve the best of drawings. His new art embraced the aesthetics of print as new media.

This chapter has considered the little magazines, which primarily expressed their ideas through the medium of text. Yet, though Sickert’s motivation for working with these magazines was to promote and propagandise for his art, he thereby developed a meta-language of his practice as he gained insight into the ontological qualities of the graphic medium, as demonstrated by print. Sickert considered the page as visual presentation, with drawing and text but marks on paper. This awareness contributed to modernist artists’ defence of the autonomy of their media and the salvation of painting along an alternative path. The independence of the image not only lies in its relationship with literature, but also in how visual media speaks of itself.

Sickert’s experience with the little magazines reflects the various twists and turns in his art career, as well as the changing world of art. It is possible that his increasingly difficult magazine experiences caused him to stop providing illustrations for them. However, his observations of the printerly qualities of these magazines continued to transpire in his painting, and it allows Sickert to gradually develop a sensitivity to the culture of reproduction, which emerged more prominently in his art during the 1930s. In the next chapter, I argue that the language of periodicals prompted Sickert to experiment with the possibilities of drawing and line in a variety of ways.

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<sup>275</sup> Robins, *op. cit.*, 113.

## Chapter Two: The Printerly Painting

This chapter broadens my discussion beyond the little magazines to consider a range of print materials and related cultural issues, encompassing both artistic and mass-produced prints. Rather than impose a perspective on different types of prints, I focus on the visual attributes of diverse print products and the perceptual modes that they engender. I argue that Sickert's language of painting was fundamentally influenced by the qualities he produced and observed in his engagement with a wide range of print materials, prompting him to contemplate the relationship between different artistic media, and imbuing his painting with a "printerly" look.

Sickert's artistic training commenced with printmaking—he copied Whistler's paintings and etchings, and learnt the master's unconventional printing techniques. This foundation prepared him to traverse between printing and painting, allowing him to explore the same pictorial elements—for example, line—simultaneously in etching, engraving, drawing, and painting. Accordingly, my study of his printerly language will consider, in turn, three significant aspects of painting that are integral to the medium: the linear elements, colour, and composition (which, for reasons I shall shortly explain, I mainly refer to as "montage"). I will draw on examples from across Sickert's career, as needed, rather than from a particular period.

Sickert's focus on line may be traced back to his well-documented emphasis on drawing.<sup>276</sup> For him, printing and drawing were often interchangeable. He held drawing to be the foundation of a good picture, and a general examination of his print oeuvre reveals that, among the various approaches to print, Sickert experimented the most with etching. This preference stems from the fact that drawing with a sharp point on a soft ground (wax or acrylic) resembles drawing with a pen on paper, and thus aligns with his artistic sensibilities. By contrast, the process of drawing for drypoint, though similar to etching, is less smooth, since it requires drawing with a sharp point on metal and creates more friction. Sickert worked less with aquatint, mezzotint, and

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<sup>276</sup> See Robins, *Walter Sickert: Drawings*; Smith and Baron, *Drawing is the Thing*.

other printing techniques.<sup>277</sup> His emphasis on the connection between drawing and printing implies his keen observation in printmaking, while his meticulous selection of working materials and instruments further suggests his preference for a certain type of mark on the plate and his awareness of how the different qualities of line affect tone. I will here trace how his preference for line travelled between printing and painting, and how he endowed different forms of line with meaning, especially in the context of urban culture, where order and disorder meet.

I discuss Sickert's use of line ahead of colour since this sequencing reflects his own belief that "colour becomes significant only when it has been made subservient to form."<sup>278</sup> Certainly, this notion derives from the old polarity between line and colour, dramatised by the Ingres-Delacroix rivalry, which later artists, including Sickert, had to reckon with. However, the age-old painterly idea of colour was forced to adapt when printing, especially photographic printing, became widely practised, and prints widely encountered. The colour aspects of print culture are not only hues and pigments, but also the varied practices of colouring and the pursuit of heightened "realism" through colour application. Conditioned by technology, colours in print have their own characteristics, texture, and materiality; the separation of colour in the printing process also means that colour in print is endowed with a special relation to reality, often forming an indexical relation to the objects it represents. In addition, printing often involves errors and may lead to unexpected results. The manifold aspects of colour in printing created a diverse visual culture in Sickert's time. I will investigate how Sickert discerned these phenomena within the realm of print culture and skilfully integrated them into his painting to develop a unique artistic language. He employed these insights to manipulate the spatial and temporal aspects of his compositions, facilitating a reflection on the development of various media.

I discuss composition at the end of this chapter mainly because the exploration of the linear and colour aspects of Sickert's work already attends to it, since

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<sup>277</sup> Again, my overview of Sickert's printmaking is indebted to Bromberg's catalogue. See Bromberg, *Walter Sickert, Prints: A Catalogue Raisonné*.

<sup>278</sup> Sickert, "Mesopotamia-Cézanne", *The New Age*, March 5, 1914, reprinted in Robins, *op. cit.*, 339.

composition is fundamentally shaped by these elements. Thus, in this section, I first review Sickert's considerations of composition, revealing that his approach to it was akin to montage, a technique that entails the deliberate dislocation of time and space. This distinctive characteristic of his work may be linked to the more abstract qualities commonly found in print culture, such as its division of labour, the fragmented and ephemeral nature of printed materials, and the subsequent rise of cut-and-paste practices. Such qualities had already found a reception in art through collage practices. Nonetheless, Sickert's practice manifests a different form of montage from both the Surrealists of his time and the orthodox Pop artists that would emerge later.

## 2.1 Line, hatching, and grid

### 2.1.1 Line in the tradition of printmaking and Sickert's views on the linear aspects of pictures

Sickert's unique approach to line is evident in his 1928 etching *That Old-Fashioned Mother of Mine* (1928, fig. 2.1), exhibited that year at the Royal Society of Painter-Etchers and Engravers (RSPEE). This etching depicts the singer Talbot O'Farrell singing the song "That Old-Fashioned Mother o' Mine."<sup>279</sup> What catches the eye is how Sickert made the picture: the whole image is woven with ordered straight lines, as in a loom, and is divided into geometric shapes suggesting light and shadow. The tonal contrast is strong, but no solid black is seen in the picture, as the darkest area is executed in spaced cross-hatchings. The overall effect is one of almost mechanical orderliness, marked by Sickert's use of a ruler for line work, which distinguishes it from the more spontaneous and sketch-like etchings of his early career. Bromberg notes that the use of a ruled line is a typical feature of Sickert's late printing.<sup>280</sup> But the unexplored question is: Why, within the context of printmaking in the 1920s, did

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<sup>279</sup> Bromberg, *Walter Sickert, Prints: A Catalogue Raisonné*, 277.

<sup>280</sup> *Ibid.*, 37–38.

Sickert use the ruled line in this etching and present it at the RSPEE exhibition?

The ruled line in etching is noteworthy in itself, since the nature of the line was a matter of constant debate in theories and practices of etching. Writing in 1879, Seymour Haden argued that etching is the art of line, declaring that “in no branch of art does a touch go for so much.”<sup>281</sup> This debate reached its peak on the question of the difference between the etched line and the engraved line, created with an etching needle and a burin, respectively, in the so-called etching revival of the 1850s, and centred on the distinction between etchings as originals and engravings as reproductions. The chief proponent of etching as an original art, Haden, argued that etched lines may demonstrate creativity by being “free, expressive, full of vivacity,” and bearing the “mental properties of ... originality and personality.”<sup>282</sup> Examples of such lines may be found in the etchings of artists such as Rembrandt, Claude, and Whistler, whom Haden championed. The engraved line, by contrast, is made with a burin, driven by elbow against the plate. For Haden, the result is “cold, constrained, and uninteresting.”<sup>283</sup> A contrary view was held by Ruskin, who preferred the “resolutely slow” line of engraving over the “loose swift line” of etching, the former speaking of clarity and precision and the latter evincing a feminine uncertainty and emotionality.<sup>284</sup>

Nevertheless, amidst these opposing viewpoints, the etching revival provided a pivotal starting point for Sickert’s master, Whistler, in his quest to formulate a fresh paradigm for etching and printmaking. Whistler engaged in a series of diverse and capricious experiments with etching, showcasing a remarkable dexterity in capturing the atmospheric nuances of a scene and the tactile qualities of various objects.<sup>285</sup> The contentious discourse of the 1850s also left an enduring imprint on subsequent

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<sup>281</sup> Seymour Haden, *About Etching*, 3rd ed. (London: The Fine Art Society, 1879), 18.

<sup>282</sup> Haden, *About Etching*, 13–14.

<sup>283</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>284</sup> Chambers, *An Indolent and Blundering Art?*, 25.

<sup>285</sup> For Whistler’s etching, see Jesusa Vega, “Whistler and the New Concept of the Print,” in Wendy Baron et al., *James McNeill Whistler, Walter Richard Sickert* (Madrid: Fundación “la Caixa,” 1998), 227–43.

critiques of etching. In 1914, Malcolm C. Salaman, while appraising Durer's etchings, meticulously scrutinised their "quality of line," emphasising their role as "statements rather than mere suggestions."<sup>286</sup> Salaman also noted the special beauty of the etched line, which is different from the graven or drawn line, as it is from lines produced by any other graphic medium. Even Fry's view on the role of line resonated with its function as an expressive form, signifying a painter's feelings for surfaces and their personal selection from nature.<sup>287</sup>

All these historical and contemporary views on line render Sickert's ruled line somewhat quaint. However, his choice may yet be understood. *That Old Fashioned Mother of Mine* was exhibited at the RSPEE, which was originally called the Society of Painter-Etchers (SPE), when it was founded in 1880 by Seymour Haden, James Tissot, Alphonse Legros, Heywood Hardy, Hubert von Herkomer, and Robert Macbeth. Sickert exhibited at SPE early in 1885, and was a fellow there between 1887 and 1892. In 1888, the SPE gained the Royal Charter and added the last "E," for "Engravers," to its title, underscoring the importance of engraving in the art world.<sup>288</sup> Sickert was again elected an associate of the RSPEE in 1925, after a long period of alienation from the Society, and he exhibited there every year until 1928. The ruled lines that he exhibited in 1928 were a way to recognise the work of engravers in the reproduction of works. *That Old Fashioned Mother of Mine* was indeed a reproduction of his earlier drawing of this music hall subject. Nonetheless, his creativity was not stifled by the mechanical lines, since the art world had an ambiguous view of creativity, as articulated in Haden's statement that "when it [engraving] fell into the hands of the painter, it came to be merged into Etching."<sup>289</sup> Sickert the painter surely enjoyed the privilege to practise the laborious technique of

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<sup>286</sup> Charles Holmes, ed., *The Great Painter-Etchers from Rembrandt to Whistler* (London: The Studio Ltd, 1914), 5.

<sup>287</sup> Roger Fry, "Line as a Means of Expression in Modern Art," *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 33, no. 189 (1918): 201–8.

<sup>288</sup> The Society of Painter-Etchers (SPE) acquired the royal charter and changed its name to RSPEE in 1888, and now exists as the Royal Society of Painter-Printmakers.

<sup>289</sup> Haden, *About Etching*, 10.

engraving as a creative tool.

Another reason for Sickert's use of the ruled line may have been its resonance with Ruskin's view that pictures should be thoughtfully made, although Sickert and Ruskin ascribed different meanings to it. Sickert normally painted in the studio from drawings made on the spot, since he strongly opposed the mere expression of fleeting moments. Yet, as he argued, an artist needs "to get adequate studies to etch from since the loss of freshness in copying must be compensated for by fulness of study."<sup>290</sup> This view suggests an emphasis on the accumulation of time and labour in the creative process, and the thoughtfully considered and designed image as the reflection of this.

What the ruled line more importantly embodies is Sickert's reverence for the tradition and nature of etching. Sickert was aware of the legacy of the etching revival. In his 1915 article for the *Burlington Magazine*, he expressed his view that the 1850s revival was pure amateurism, and, furthermore, that there had been no such thing as an "etching revival," because the tradition was unbroken and had been passed down through generations of artists. For example, "Whistler ... like Swinburne ... was Dickens-mad," and had absorbed something of Cruikshank, Phiz, and Charles Jacque, "who had been influenced by ... Rossetti, by Albert Moore," who in turn was influenced by "Latin of Rico and Favretto."<sup>291</sup> What Sickert proposed was an appreciation of the inherent features of etching and its genealogical connection with engraving:

Let him keep in mind, first of all, that etching is a branch of engraving, no more and no less. That just as the best painters in oils were those who had either practised the more austere and exacting medium of tempera, or were near enough to the practice of tempera painting to retain, directly or indirectly, the

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<sup>290</sup> Walter Sickert to Ethel Sands, 1915, quoted in Bromberg, *Walter Sickert, Prints: A Catalogue Raisonné*, 42.

<sup>291</sup> Giacomo Favretto (1849–1887) was an Italian painter, known for depictions of his native city, Venice. Walter Sickert, "The Future of Engraving," *Burlington Magazine* 27, no. 150 (1915): 224–25, 228–31, reprinted in Robins, *op. cit.*, 393.

traces of its salutary discipline, so the best etchers were those who were either themselves engravers or were near enough to the traditions of engraving to proceed from an engraver's conception of the art of etching. That there were bad as well as good engravers is no refutation of this truth. All engraving, as Wedmore has reminded us, is not lozenge and dot."<sup>292</sup>

Sickert wrote this article about engraving in 1915, when he had just closed his printing school (The Rowlandson House School), and had begun making a series of etchings for the Carfax Gallery.<sup>293</sup> These words reveal Sickert's view on engraving as the origin of etching, and an awareness of the specificity of the medium of engraving. As such, his use of the ruled line, which is generally practised in engraving, reflects his commitment to the tradition and thereby to this specificity.

Sickert's adherence to the tradition is further evidenced by his views on the Italian artist Canaletto (1697–1768), whose prints he collected.<sup>294</sup> When instructing his students, Sickert often referred to a list of exemplary printmakers, among whom he counted Canaletto for his mastery in portraying “limpid water and tranquil sky.”<sup>295</sup> Indeed, in Canaletto's prints, one can find ruled lines similar to Sickert's own. In *Imaginary View of Venice* (1741, fig. 2.2), Canaletto used horizontal lines to suggest the lightly toned sky. Shadows are expressed by orderly hatchings that comply with the natural texture of the objects, just as squares are used to suggest brickwork. The whole etching demonstrates clarity and is devoid of emotional lines. This use of line and shading was typical of Canaletto, Wedmore noting that he “never made excessive use of black. He did not exaggerate his shadows: no super-abundance of mere

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<sup>292</sup> Robins, *op. cit.*, 393. The critic Frederick Wedmore (1844–1921) is known for his reviews of impressionist exhibitions in London in 1882 and 1883, and for his writings on etching and engraving. Wedmore also wrote many articles about Sickert in the 1890s, published in the *Art Journal* and the *Academy*. This suggests that Sickert had studied both the techniques of, and critical writings on, printmaking.

<sup>293</sup> Bromberg, *Walter Sickert, Prints: A Catalogue Raisonné*, 26–27.

<sup>294</sup> Sutton, *Walter Sickert: A Biography*, 122.

<sup>295</sup> *Ibid.*, 394.

printer's ink was invited to furnish him with mystery and weirdness, 'while you wait'."<sup>296</sup> In *That Old Fashioned Mother of Mine*, the darkest areas (the bottom and the upper left) are heavily woven with crossing lines while the lit face is left unetched. The ruled lines, slightly spaced, allow Sickert to create dark areas without solid black, just as Canaletto had done. Sickert had long expressed an aversion to the "rich velvety black" that was favoured by many young etchers who were satisfied with the "effect of black caterpillar or of a shed of chenille laid on the proof," created by the burr of the drypoint.<sup>297</sup> He even instructed Beardsley not to use solid black. This etching is in some ways reminiscent of Beardsley's illustration, but is more porous. Apart from *That Old Fashioned Mother of Mine* and the etchings made in the same period, Sickert had begun using ruled lines in his earlier practice, such as in *Venice, the Rialto and the Palazzo dei Camerlenghi* (c. 1902, fig. 2.3), which echoes Canaletto's *Imaginary View of Venice* print both in its use of ruled lines and in its similar choice of subject. Sickert made repeat reference to Canaletto's name in his writings, but no scholarly attention has previously been paid to his debt to Canaletto's print, as here demonstrated.

The ruled lines are also reminiscent of the earlier drawings reproduced in the *Whirlwind*. In *That Old Fashioned Mother of Mine* (fig. 2.1), ruled lines are used essentially to create tone and shading, and they connect each figure and object in the picture, while the contours of each object are only suggested. The interwoven lines convey an impression of the effects of light, which can be seen in the reproduction (fig. 1.16) of Whistler's painting that Starr made in 1890 for the *Whirlwind* Gallery. In both *Mother* and the *Whirlwind* reproduction, the solid contour melts. Instead, Sickert and Starr explore the potential of hatching to create a sense of space and pattern. These notions of line, hatching, lighting, and spacing are likely influenced by Fry's theory of artistic vision. For Fry, as Sam Rose has explained, "with this 'creative' vision the artist is able to view the world as purely visual," so that, as Fry puts it, "the

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<sup>296</sup> Frederick Wedmore, "Etching," *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts* 59, no. 3067 (1911): 917.

<sup>297</sup> Robins, *op. cit.*, 394.

objects as such tend to disappear, to lose their separate unities, and to take their bits in the whole mosaic of vision.”<sup>298</sup> Fry’s notion of the artistic vision emphasises the non-narrative dimension of art and the unimportance of subject matter, and Fry indeed praised Sickert’s use of line as expressive, likening him to Matisse.<sup>299</sup> However, while Fry interprets Sickert’s line according to his notion of aesthetic experience, Sickert developed his language of line, and its non-narrative dimension, from an established tradition of printing and drawing.

Moreover, engraved lines appear mechanical, and, as with other reproductive printing technologies, such as halftone, the appearance of the print defies an intuitive sense of the appearance of the depicted object. After all, how could human figures be composed of dots or straight lines? This indirect correspondence to reality within the visual language of printing may have encouraged artists to creatively exploit the non-representational nature of the medium. And this accounts for the appearance of non-representational hatching in oil paintings, as employed by Sickert.

In the oil painting *Don Juan and Haidee* (1934, fig. 2.4), Sickert applies a row of vertical brushstrokes in bluish green on top of an underlayer of light green. This imitates the tonal relations in the source illustration (fig. 2.5), in which the circular cave that shelters Don Juan and Haidee is cast in shadow. In the painting, the green hatching darkens the shaded area without stifling the work with thick and heavy colour. At the same time, the vertical lines break the roundness of the composition; as a compositional device, they echo the square frame borders, adding further balance and unity to the image. The bright green lines also counterbalance the orange-red sun, which otherwise throws the picture off balance. The lines are neither abstract nor realistic; they are at the same time colour, shadow, and elements adding to the pictorial interest of the work. Wilenski held Sickert’s late paintings to be

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<sup>298</sup> Rose, “With an almost pathetic fatality,” 130; Roger Fry, “The Artist’s Vision,” in *Vision and Design* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1920), 34–35.

<sup>299</sup> Anna Gruetzner Robins, “Fathers and Sons: Walter Sickert and Roger Fry,” in *Art Made Modern: Roger Fry’s Vision of Art*, ed. Christopher Green (London: Merrell Holberton, 1999), 54.

“decorative”;<sup>300</sup> yet, again, what he ignores is the source of this decorativeness, namely, the language of print.

Sickert also paid attention to linear elements when looking at paintings. Reviewing Fry’s Post-Impressionist exhibition in 1911, he praises Van Gogh’s use, in *Rain Effect Behind the Hospital* (1889), of “strips of metallic paint” that “follow the form of ploughed furrows,” and the “blonde dashes of water at an angle of 45 from right to left.”<sup>301</sup> What Sickert sees is not only the represented object—the rain—but, essentially, arrangements of lines, and the physical action of carving that creates these lines in print. Van Gogh’s representation of rain as lines at an angle was informed by Japanese woodblock prints, which would also inform Whistler and then Sickert. Fry had long recognised Sickert’s drawing of “more elastic and discreet rhythm” as imported from Japanese art via Whistler.<sup>302</sup> Indeed, clarity is important in woodcut, and this is largely achieved by the use of well-defined lines and the spaces between them. In particular, the use of lines in woodcuts led to the development of a unique language for representing atmospheric phenomena such as rain and cloud, of which the most skilled practitioner was Hiroshige. Sickert most likely became aware of this language by way of Whistler, who admired Hiroshige very much. In Sickert’s painting *Miss Earhart’s Arrival* (1932, fig. 2.6), the dashes of rain form impressive streaks across the picture surface, in a manner reminiscent of Hiroshige’s depictions of rain, such as in *Hōki Province: Ōno, Distant View of Mount Daisen* (1853, fig. 2.7). Rain appears as dark lines connecting the sky and the ground in *Hōki Province*, and Sickert similarly covers the picture with fragmented lines, albeit in white. The white streaks with rough edges also resemble the spaces carved out of woodblocks. In woodblock printing, unlike in etching, carved lines do not receive ink and thus leave blank spaces when pressed. As such, they offer a reversed way to suggest light and shadow through hatching. Sickert, in *Miss Earhart*, explores reverse hatching in this way in order to

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<sup>300</sup> Wilenski, “Sickert’s Art,” in Browse, *Sickert*, 31.

<sup>301</sup> Sickert, “Post-Impressionists,” *Fortnightly Review*, January 1911, reprinted in Robins, *op. cit.*, 280, 282.

<sup>302</sup> Fry, “Line as a Means of Expression,” 206.

brighten the painting. The horizontal scroll-like format of the work further reinforces the sense of the raindrops' lateral movement, adding to the formal balance of the painting. The juxtaposition of these two pictures shows how Sickert absorbed the unique use of line in Japanese woodblocks into his own printerly language. Furthermore, we can also see how lines were given a concrete referent, as rain. In the following section I pursue this connection between line and the material world.

### 2.1.2 The grid

The spaced hatching with ruled lines in *That Old Fashioned Mother of Mine* itself creates a fenestrated structure, spreading itself in the picture. This structure, the grid, was omnipresent in Sickert's oeuvre, whether overtly or subtly expressed. In addition to its origins in the language of hatching, the grid structure in Sickert's pictures also evolved from his use of the transferring grid with which he commonly transcribed drawings onto canvas. While employing a squaring-up grid for transferring was a common technique for many artists in Sickert's era and before, what set Sickert apart was his deliberate decision to either leave the grids visible or even to accentuate them on the finished canvas.<sup>303</sup> *Gatti's Hungerford Palace of Varieties. Second Turn of Katie Lawrence* (c.1888, fig. 2.8) is an example. At the lower part of the canvas (on the faces of the music hall audience) and on the crimson stage curtains, red grids, which ought to rest in the underlayer, show through the surface. The presence of these grids has both interested and disturbed scholars. What might this layering of grids mean for a painter who was critical of his medium? Corbett, writing in 1998, observes that the grids mark the surface of the picture and draw attention to the character of paint as a medium.<sup>304</sup> He argues that the painted grids reveal the fictionality of the

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<sup>303</sup> For Sickert's use of a squaring-up grid, see "Pictures by Mr Sickert's Pupils: A Manchester Exhibition," *Manchester Guardian*, October 18, 1930, quoted in Alistair Smith, "Walter Sickert's Drawing Practice and the Camden Town Ethos," in Bonett, Holt, and Mundy, *The Camden Town Group in Context*, <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/research-publications/camden-town-group/alistair-smith-walter-sickerts-drawing-practice-and-the-camden-town-ethos-r1104369>, accessed September 29, 2023.

<sup>304</sup> Corbett, "Seeing into Modernity," 299.

painting, since the “blatant skin of paint reduces itself to only materiality, ... failing to be the world it is assumed to describe.”<sup>305</sup> Corbett further relates the grid to the modern condition, as a mark of the ambivalent knowability of the modern world.

Corbett acknowledges the unsettling presence of grids, but only with reference to these accentuated red transferring grids. As I wish to point out, *Gatti's Hungerford Palace of Varieties. Second Turn of Katie Lawrence* is built upon an overarching grid-like framework. The pillars and beams in the music hall interior, the horizontal stage rails represented by the floating paint in the foreground, and the looming transferring grid, are all interwoven into a comprehensive grid-like structure that traverses the entire painting. Rather than the transferring grid alone, it is this grid-like structure, occupying the whole painting, that is the focus of my analysis. I regard this structure as an important element in Sickert's aesthetics. Proceeding from my previous analysis on the development of the language of line, I turn now to the formation of the grids, categorising them according to three types, in order to see how they bridge aesthetic and real worlds.

Firstly, to continue Corbett's discussion, *Gatti's Hungerford Palace of Varieties. Second Turn of Katie Lawrence* employs strict perspective, as shown by the receding structure on the stage. The whole picture appears as if seen through a window. The grids formed by the architectural features that span the painting coincide with and accentuate this perspective. They evoke the Renaissance-era grid device that, placed between observer and object, served as a measuring system and created a planar surface that transformed objects into easily reproducible outlines. Therefore, Sickert's grid, mirroring the interior space's structure, functions as a hint of the perspective to which he adhered.

The music hall as a subject for Sickert's paintings is often compared to Degas's ballet dancer theme, suggesting that both artists shared an interest in popular entertainment. What has not been noticed, I would suggest, is that Sickert's fascination with architectural structures sets him apart from Degas. Sickert frequently

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<sup>305</sup> Ibid., 299.

emphasised the importance of perspective in his writings, highlighting that it is to be expressed through lines.<sup>306</sup> This reflects his profound respect for classical tradition, which, as the French critic Robert Rey (1888-1964) suggests, conveys a sense of fundamental rational order in its construction of the perceptible world.<sup>307</sup> In this respect, Sickert is a technical classicist, but his commitment to technical classicism intersects with an ever-changing contemporary context, and with his immediate working situation.

Indeed, as mentioned earlier, the grid structure of the architectural interior is here interwoven with the transferring grid. This interwoven system acts as a marker that falls between the world constructed by perspective and the flatness of the pictorial surface. In turn, this suggestion of the picture plane is reminiscent of Rosalind Krauss's understanding of the grid. Krauss sees the grid as the emblem of high modernism, its function within modern art being to resist narrative, language, and discourse.<sup>308</sup> This resistance, for Krauss, is the centripetal power of the grid—its ability to urge artists to focus on the framed area. Krauss's view indeed applies to Sickert's practice, since the red grid is most likely inspired by the ledger book that he used for sketching in the music hall.<sup>309</sup> The pre-printed lines of the ledger book guided him in making accurate measurements and transcriptions of the motifs before him. They also serve as a reminder of the paper's surface, Sickert's awareness of which is then transposed onto the canvas, where it is manifested in the addition of the red grid. In essence, Sickert places a strong focus on the very materials he works with,

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<sup>306</sup> See, for example, Walter Sickert, "Mural Decoration," *English Review*, July 1912, reprinted in Robins, *op. cit.*, 327.

<sup>307</sup> I use "classicism" here not in its strict sense, referring to the deployment of ancient Greek or Roman themes, but to denote an emphasis on orderliness, proportion, and clarity. For Rey's discussion of Impressionism and classicism, see Neil McWilliam, "Past and Present: Competing Ideologies of Impressionism in France, c. 1930–1950," *Oxford Art Journal* 46, no. 2 (2023): 261–76.

<sup>308</sup> Rosalind Krauss, "Grids," in *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985), 8.

<sup>309</sup> Keith Oliver believes that the gridded lines of the ledger books guided Sickert's choice of proportion, scale, and size. See Keith Oliver, "Sickert's Paper," in *Sickert: A Life in Art*, ed. Charlotte Keenan McDonald (Liverpool: Walker Art Gallery, 2021), 52.

accentuating them within the painting. Throughout this process, he foregrounds the pictorial plane along with the act of applying paint.

The overlapping of the architectural structure of the music hall and Sickert's emphasis on perspectival structure suggests a way to consider the historical origins of the modernist grid. Indeed, though Krauss does not trace the history of the modern grid, she does suggest its ability to encourage artists to ponder the reality of this visual pattern, allowing them to bring the grid to bear on objects with the same structure, as in Jasper Johns's letterpress works.<sup>310</sup> This suggests a centrifugal dimension of grids as potential signs, in a semiotic sense—what I understand to be the second category of grid.

Alistair Smith's interpretation of grids attempts to show how they may be understood within a particular historical context. He expands the study of the grid to the Camden Town Group artists, who were influenced by Sickert, and argues that it is a "conscious modern style" that not only has an aesthetic dimension, adding to the rigorous geometry of the composition, but also expresses the theory of Unanimism, and its emphasis on collective rather than individual interests.<sup>311</sup>

This suggestion of a link between the grid as a conceptual structure and grids in the material world is further traced by Hannah Higgins in her exploration of the practical function of grids in the real world.<sup>312</sup> Higgins highlights the organising principle of the grid by examining its wide-ranging history as bricks, ledgers, maps, and so on, arguing for the modernist grid as the emblem of industry.<sup>313</sup> Krauss and Higgins respectively explore the grid as aesthetic-conceptual and as physical, and this suggests the grid as a point of connection between the categories of art and technology. Francesca Orestano also acknowledges the power of grids, arguing that they may be traced back to the Victorian era, when grids became a way to order

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<sup>310</sup> Krauss uses the word "centripetal" to describe this aspect of grids, and "centrifugal" to refer to their extensive dimension. Krauss, "Grids," 18.

<sup>311</sup> Smith, "Walter Sickert's Drawing Practice and the Camden Town Ethos."

<sup>312</sup> See Hannah Higgins, *The Grid Book* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009).

<sup>313</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

unlimited numbers of objects—as, for example, in the form of the Crystal Palace—and to organise the periodic table, and for avant-garde artists in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to draw a wide range of analogies between objects and concepts.<sup>314</sup>

These theories suggest that grids have the potential to be a “significant form.” In turn, it may be possible to understand Sickert’s use of the grid as a mediation of old and modern (or conceptual and physical) grids, and to view him as representing the modern world by way of the “significant form” of the grid. It is reasonable to make this assumption because Sickert’s line and grid become more complex during the course of his career, and as his work continues to probe the condition of the modern world. His preoccupation with the accuracy of the transferred image is in a sense related to Gilman’s awareness of grids and urban views as composed of vertical and horizontal lines. Each is a reaction to the ordering and measurement of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The use of grids in urban planning and the ordering of space in the Victorian and Edwardian eras is indeed relevant. In Edwardian urban planning, the grid emerged as a new but important device to define spaces of everyday life and to create an urban spectacle of order. The anthropologist James Scott argues that by imposing a “standard grid” plan, the objects of government could become more legible and manipulable “from above and from the centre,” and that such a pattern is therefore vital to “the modern forms of statecraft.”<sup>315</sup> The orthogonal structure here is not only a visual device, but equates clarity, rationality, and modernity. A preference for grids indeed prevailed in the early twentieth century, as suggested by the architect and archaeologist Francis J. Haverfield’s 1913 comment that the ancient Roman city, in contrast to the “barbarian” city, was “civilised” on account of its use of the “the

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<sup>314</sup> Francesca Orestano, “Victorian Arts and the Challenge of Modernity: Analogy, the Grid, and Chemical Transformations,” *Cahiers Victoriens & Édouardiens* 89, no. 89 (2019): 1–18.

<sup>315</sup> Sofia Greaves and Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, *Rome and the Colonial City: Rethinking the Grid* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2022), 156.

square and the straight line.”<sup>316</sup>

Corbett suggests, however, that the emergence at this time of the mappable and thus conceptually ordered city resulted in a mismatch between people’s apparent knowledge of the city and their actual experience of it as opaque and unknowable.<sup>317</sup> The conflict, I would argue, stems from the development of competing perspectives upon city space. The grid town plan envisages the city as horizontally ordered, viewed from above, and easily comprehended as blocks and orthogonal lines. The unknowability that Corbett identifies pertains to the way in which people normally view cities, that is, at eye level, where they appear in their verticality. Indeed, the everyday view of the city is one of matchbox-like buildings with multiple storeys and windows. It is the standardised forms of the prefabricated slabs and window frames—covering the surface of the city like woodcut blocks or jigsaw pieces, calculable and legible—that constitute the real spectacle of the city, from which the “grid principle,” both vertical and horizontal, emerged.

Reinforcing the idea of an orderly modern city, all these squares would easily catch the eye of wandering artists. Accordingly, this awareness of the shapes of the city coincides with the formal experiments of the modernists in their pictures. In the 1880s and 1890s, Whistler etched a series of street scenes featuring frontal views of doors and windows. The squares echo the canvas, providing a suitable vehicle for his explorations of formal arrangement. In many cases, squares become the main subject matter of the picture, as in *The Dance House: Nocturne* (1889, fig. 2.9). This etching belongs to the unpublished Amsterdam Set, made during his sojourn in Amsterdam in 1889. Whistler worked on a boat on the canal, and his vision would sway with the waves.<sup>318</sup> Gombrich points out that, when immersed in chaos, the human brain will tend to direct the eyes towards recognising the most familiar shapes and structures,

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<sup>316</sup> Francis J. Haverfield, quoted in Greaves and Wallace-Hadrill, *Rome and the Colonial City*, 8.

<sup>317</sup> Corbett, “‘Gross Material Facts’,” 45.

<sup>318</sup> Elizabeth Robins Pennell and Joseph Pennell, *The Life of James McNeill Whistler*, vol. 2 (London and Philadelphia: W. Heinemann, 1908), 83–84.

such as straight lines or other simple forms.<sup>319</sup> Thus, what remains in the picture are the windows looming from the shadow of cross-hatching, an impression of the crumbling houses on canal banks. Even though the body is in motion, Whistler's scene retains an orthogonal structure.

The ubiquitous grid, both conceptual and as seen in real space, cultivates people's sensitivity to, and interest in, this structure. Sickert, in his early career, was heavily influenced by Whistler's preoccupation with the form, and in *The Ghetto* (fig. 2.10) he evinces a similar treatment of the picture surface, marked by densely woven lines. The black windows of the building traverse the painting, leaving only a sliver of sky visible at the upper right. The square windows and hatched lines intersect to form a layered surface, creating a suffocating effect. Crowded buildings and windows of this kind were typical of the Venetian ghetto, where Jews lived. "Back-to-back" buildings were often built here because their density and regularity, and shared party walls, meant that they were cheap and easy to construct, enabling extraordinarily high densities will also allowing for private space for occupants.<sup>320</sup> However, this construction pattern was also susceptible to poor ventilation and hygiene. Sickert captures this unique view by creating a dense gridded surface, in the centre of which a building wedges itself into the complex, its windows darkly painted, resisting any view into the interior.

Yet, despite depicting a densely populated site, there are no figures in the painting; instead, the place looks deserted, with the grids and squares adding to a sense of alienation. Sickert's use of the grid here is reminiscent of its deployment in ethnographic documentary photographs, beginning in the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>321</sup> A typical example is the set of photographs recording people's actions, made by

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<sup>319</sup> E. H. Gombrich, *The Sense of Order: A Study in the Psychology of Decorative Art* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1979), 4.

<sup>320</sup> Anne Power, *Jigsaw Cities* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2007), 15–16.

<sup>321</sup> For the use of the grid in anthropometry in Britain, see Frank Spencer, "Some Notes on the Attempt to Apply Photography to Anthropometry during the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century," in *Anthropology and Photography, 1860–1920*, ed. Elizabeth Edwards (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992), 99–107.

Eadweard Muybridge and commissioned by the University of Pennsylvania in the 1880s. In these photos, models appear before a measuring grid background (fig. 2.11), having been asked to perform various poses naked, for the purposes of accurate measurement. In a sense, as depicted objects, the models have no ontological identity, but rather are incorporated into a discursive system that entails an imbalance of power between those photographed and the one behind the camera. The photographed subjects are dehumanised.<sup>322</sup> The measuring grid in this sense is caught in the “grid of meaning imposed by culture and history.”<sup>323</sup> Similarly, the ghetto is a restricted space for a once stigmatised group, who were here organised but also segregated by grids. Sickert thus reveals the grid as a visual device that serves the Venetian authorities’ maintenance of order and power.

*The Ghetto* was painted between 1897 and 1898. However, Sickert was in London during these years, so the painting is likely to have been based on notes and sketches made during his Venice trip in 1895. His practice of matching a pictorial form with things he had observed may have been inherited from his master, Whistler. In 1880s, Sickert praised Whistler’s paintings and etchings of the shops in Chelsea, then a poor area of London, not only for their pictorial formula, but for what lay hidden behind these architectural structures.<sup>324</sup> As to Sickert’s interest in the ghetto, this may have been inspired by the discussion of Jewish issues in England at the time, and the increased visibility of the urban poor in literature and art in the 1890s. For instance, in 1894, Theodore Herzl wrote a play, *The New Ghetto*, which was circulated to theatre companies in 1897 under the pseudonym of “Arthur Schnabel.” Also, Israel Zangwill, the Jewish writer and journalist, and a friend of Herzl and Sickert, published the novel *Children of the Ghetto* in 1892, arousing discussion of the arrival of many Jews in London during the last two decades of the nineteenth century.

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<sup>322</sup> It is worth noting, in this regard, that Muybridge’s photographs depict non-European people. Elspeth H. Brown, “Racialising the Virile Body: Eadweard Muybridge’s Locomotion Studies 1883–1887,” *Gender and History* 17, no. 3 (2005): 637.

<sup>323</sup> *Ibid.*, 631.

<sup>324</sup> Robins, *Fragile Modernism*, 126–28.

London Jews lived in the East End, where they formed a close-knit community, developing small businesses and practising Judaism freely. Zangwill's novel gives a sketch of Jewish life in the London ghetto, paying detailed attention to its spatial environment. In the novel's proem, he describes it thus:

amid uncleanness and squalor, the rose of romance blows yet a little longer in the raw air of English reality; a world which hides beneath its stony and unlovely surface an inner world of dreams, fantastic and poetic as the mirage of the Orient where they were woven, of superstitions grotesque as the cathedral gargoyles of the Dark Ages in which they had birth.<sup>325</sup>

Sickert manages to depict the tightly woven appearance of Zangwill's ghetto, as a place where "poetic dreams hide." He weaves the language of the grid into the visual appearance and history of the Venetian ghetto, providing an illustration for Zangwill's novel. The grid, which is developed from hatching, also serves to add shadows to the image, which are here both visual and cultural. If Sickert's expression of rain through lines demonstrates his awareness of the homogeneity of pictorial and material worlds, in *The Ghetto* grids are metaphorically related to this place of segregation. The grid of *The Ghetto* also refers to an earlier painting, *L'Hotel Royal, Dieppe* (1894, fig. 2.12), in which the modern hotel's windows catch the eye. These windows are lit and can be seen through, whereas the windows in *The Ghetto* are mere holes. In addition, passersby are shown in front of the hotel, in contrast with the dehumanised ghetto. In the two paintings, Sickert uses grids and windows differently in order to explore two sides of modernity.

In addition to serving as a scientific means of capturing reality and materiality, grids also hold a place in the realm of aesthetics, which is what I think of the third dimension of grid. As we have previously mentioned, it is a structure connecting science and art. Indeed, the grid can function as a pattern, or a form of abstraction,

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<sup>325</sup> Israel Zangwill, *Children of the Ghetto* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1892), 8.

possessing its own sense of rhythm and aesthetic appeal. Sickert demonstrates an awareness of this in *The Ghetto*, and maintains a persistent appreciation of this aesthetic into his later career, developing its potential as purely pictorial rather than narrative. He was sensitive to grid-like structures and capable of articulating their aesthetic qualities. Notably, in the preface written for a 1927 exhibition of the works of fellow painter Antonio Mancini (1852–1930), Sickert observes the “marks of the grille” which “gaufre many of his paintings,” suggesting that these structures mediate between the sitter’s mobility and the vivacity of the painting.<sup>326</sup> Sickert’s sensitivity was acute, since Mancini’s touch is vivid and tactile, while the grid embedded in the paintwork balances this movement (fig. 2.13).

This fusion of aesthetic praxis with the grid’s function of rigorous and rational measurement may be observed in the works of Albert Moore, who may have had an even more profound impact on Sickert’s aesthetics of the grid.

Moore uses two systems of grids. One is the system of perpendicular lines that are used to scale up small studies.<sup>327</sup> Like many other artists, he uses transferring grids for measurement and accuracy, and sometimes these are left visible in finished paintings.<sup>328</sup> The other system, meticulously recorded by Moore’s pupil Alfred Baldry, is unique to Moore. He uses curved and diagonal lines, as in the study of *Birds of the Air* (1878, fig. 2.14), for “fixing the positions of all details and accessories.”<sup>329</sup> These lines echo the orientation of the figure’s gesture. For example, the line connecting the upper left and bottom right parallels the outline of the upper left arm of the figure, and its intersecting line parallels the contour of the face. For Moore, as Baldry states, “nature’s chief rules seemed to be parallelism and optical rather than actual

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<sup>326</sup> Sickert, “Mancini”, preface to an “Exhibition of Paintings and Pastels by Antonio Mancini,” The Claridge Gallery, London, October 1927, reprinted in Robins, *op. cit.*, 561.

<sup>327</sup> Ruby Awburn, Sophie Lynford, and Georgina Rayner, “Process to Product: A Technical Investigation into the Working Practices of Albert Moore,” *Materia: Journal of Technical Art History*, no. 2 (2022), <https://issue-2.materiajournal.com/>, accessed September 18, 2022.

<sup>328</sup> Elizabeth Prettejohn, *Art for Art’s Sake: Aestheticism in Victorian Painting* (London: Yale University Press, 2007), 103.

<sup>329</sup> Alfred Lys Baldry, *Albert Moore: His Life and Works* (London: George Bell & Sons, 1894), 81.

balance.”<sup>330</sup> In this sense, these intersecting parallel lines are a means to abstract the infinity of the world into balanced, harmonious, and understandable shapes and patterns. As Robyn Asleson notes, these grids, serving an aesthetic purpose but based on calculation, relate to Moore’s experience as an architectural draughtsman, the influence of architecture by way of his family, and also to Ruskin’s theories of natural form, such as parallelism and radiation.<sup>331</sup> This reflects the mediating role of grids between the two domains of nature and art.

Sickert praised the results of Moore’s aesthetic grid as “decorative and aesthetically satisfying.” In his review of Moore’s *A Summer Night* (fig. 2.15, 1885–90), he writes that:

The Summer Night is a consummate instance of his deliberate patterning of rhythmical line and colour, borrowed from nature for a purely decorative purpose, and wilfully stripped of all literary or adventitious intention or association.<sup>332</sup>

Indeed, the rhythm and decorativeness of *A Summer Night* are achieved through its iconic diagonal grid structure, created by the direction of the arms in their echo of the edges and contours of the interior decorations. Moore’s grid system was well known within artistic circles, and Sickert, who kept a keen eye on contemporary theories of drawing and line at that time, would have been aware of Moore’s approach by way of Baldry’s writing and Whistler’s friendship with Moore. In practice, Sickert followed Moore, although this connection has not been noticed. In Sickert’s *Portrait of a Lady—Mrs David Margesson* (1931–32, fig. 2.19), a diagonal pattern emerges that is similar to Moore’s. Mrs David Margesson, wife of the first Viscount

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<sup>330</sup> Ibid., 80.

<sup>331</sup> Robyn Asleson, “Nature and Abstraction in Albert Moore,” in *After the Pre-Raphaelites: Art and Aestheticism in Victorian England*, ed. Elizabeth Prettejohn (New York: Rutgers University Press, 1999), 118.

<sup>332</sup> Walter Sickert, “The Royal Academy Exhibition,” *Art Weekly*, May 17, 1890, reprinted in Robins, *op. cit.*, 65.

Margesson, commissioned this painting. As suggested by the relatively “realistic” treatment of the face, and a 1932 newspaper article, Mrs Margesson found her way to the canvas “through the intermediary of the camera.”<sup>333</sup> The photo on which this portrait was based has not been traced, but it is reasonable to suppose that Sickert rearranged the elements of the photo to compose the diagonal pattern, because the spatiality and perspective of the background do not cohere. The blade-like red plant leaves in the lower-left corner of the painting, the green leaves at the right-hand edge, and the lavender plant strip at the boundary between the lawn and the bush, collectively create a diagonal line that extends from the lower-left corner to the upper-right corner of the canvas. This line parallels with the line formed by the long edge of the stool at the left side of the painting, and with what may be tree branches at the upper right. These groups of parallel lines are, in turn, crossed by the line formed by the edge of the wall at the top left and the plant at the bottom right. That is to say, besides making a likeness, Sickert creates a pattern guided by an invisible grid, revealing his continuation of the old tradition of his Victorian predecessor.

Another example is Sickert’s *Gardener’s Daughter* (1932, fig. 2.20). In this painting, the diagonal pattern is more obvious, as indicated by the direction of colour patches. The girl’s right-hand silhouette parallels the strips on the back of her wheelchair, as well as the purple shadow beside her, the plants lit by the sunlight, and the smoke or cloud at the centre top edge of the painting. Another group of parallel lines is formed by the cloud at the left top edge, the roof and shadow of the building in the background, the tree trunk at the left edge, and the boy’s leg. These parallel lines exist in the Victorian periodical illustration by John Gilbert (fig. 2.21) from which Sickert derived his composition, but Sickert appears to have accentuated them.<sup>334</sup> The evidence for this lies in the cloud at the top of the painting, which does

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<sup>333</sup> T. W. Earp, “New Portrait by Sickert,” *The Times*, 1932, quoted in “Walter Richard Sickert A.R.A. (British, 1860–1942), *Portrait of a Lady, Mrs David Margesson*,” Bonhams (website), <https://www.bonhams.com/auction/23574/lot/85/walter-richard-sickert-ara-british-1860-1942-portrait-of-a-lady-mrs-david-margesson>, accessed October 18, 2023.

<sup>334</sup> I analyse the *Gardener’s Daughter* in the next section and Gilbert’s illustration in the final chapter

not exist in Gilbert's illustration. The cloud may have been added deliberately to break up the blank expanse of the sky and to complete the parallel grid. While the painting shows figurative imagery, its focus is the search for a stable aesthetic structure in the pictures of the past.

In conclusion, the grid, as a tool derived from print and a precursor to technologies of reproduction, is integral to Sickert's painting language. This language underscores precision and order, for both realistic and aesthetic purposes, as well as being a contemplative exploration of the grid's own role as a tool of reason. Three types of grids are shown in Sickert's works, as a subtle cue for reality and illusion, as a meeting point between aesthetics and social context, and, ultimately, as a celebration of pure formal beauty. These choices reflect his emphasis on the nature of his medium, a focus that evolved from his initial development of a linear language.

## 2.2 Colour

Previous studies on colour in Sickert's painting can be categorised as belonging to either of two main approaches. The first approach involves technical analysis, and is typified by Baron's and Stephen Hackney's studies. Baron has shown that Sickert applied colour through the technique of *camaieu*, which denotes a grisaille underpainting in two arbitrary colours, and further shows that this "pre-impressionist" technique was borrowed from old masters including Rubens, Hogarth, and El Greco.<sup>335</sup> She regards the *camaieu* technique as Sickert's way of addressing the problem of the quality of paint, since it entails the application of paint layer by layer, allowing it to be solid and luminous without being too thick.<sup>336</sup> Meanwhile, Hackney argues that Sickert's use of *camaieu* mitigates his difficulty in observing colour in shadows.<sup>337</sup> The second approach is evaluative in nature, with scholars such as

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of this thesis.

<sup>335</sup> Baron, *Sickert*, 136.

<sup>336</sup> *Ibid.*, 136.

<sup>337</sup> Stephen Hackney, "The Evolution of Painting Technique among Camden Town Group Artists," in Bonett, Holt, and Mundy, *The Camden Town Group in Context*, <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/research->

Wilenski who while acknowledging Sickert's colour as borrowed from Tintoretto, characterising this colour scheme as "decorative," and Morphet regarding Sickert's use of colour as reminiscent of posters, and his paintings a precursor to Pop Art.<sup>338</sup> My analysis begins with a critique of each of these viewpoints.

In essence, I propose that Sickert's camaieu technique has its roots in a fundamental aspect of plastic art, namely, the use of light for modelling. As such, I will show that Sickert's camaieu technique can be divided into two kinds: monochrome and polychrome. This distinction sets my perspective apart from previous interpretations.

Furthermore, Morphet's argument, which is somewhat cursory, does not address the fact that posters in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries often features vibrant and bold colour, while Sickert's palette tends to be more subdued and faded. Therefore, it is essential to explore where the connection between Sickert's colour and posters' truly lies. My analysis will go beyond the simple juxtaposition of Sickert's painting and popular poster art, to investigate the characteristics of colour in prints and the narrative potential that they might suggest. I argue that Sickert's use of colour was both intelligent and purposeful.

### 2.2.1 From the play of white and black to camaieu

Discussion of Sickert's colour in relation to print necessitates a review of his use of the spaced ruled line, because this reveals another visual aspect of prints: the play of black and white. Indeed, prints, in monochrome, effect a play between the colour of the support and that of the printed trace upon it. Sickert explained his awareness of the physics of printing in the lecture he gave at Margate School of Art in 1934, where he describes how

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publications/camden-town-group/stephen-hackney-the-evolution-of-painting-technique-among-camden-town-group-artists-r1104377, accessed November 21, 2023.

<sup>338</sup> Wilenski, "Sickert's Art," in Browse, *Sickert*, 31; see Morphet, "The Modernity of Late Sickert," 35–38.

the black line touches the tops of the minute hills on the paper and that it is through the different degrees of that black and the different degree in which the hollows in the paper are to a certain extent filled up that you get your effect.<sup>339</sup>

By saying this, Sickert considered all kinds of factors his “instruments,”<sup>340</sup> including the luminosity of the supporting material as well as the ink or paint. Whistler was likely a direct influence upon this play of white and black, since he tirelessly tested the differing effects of printing ink on different kinds of paper.<sup>341</sup> This awareness of the play of ink and paper also resonates with other Victorian printmakers, such as Samuel Palmer, Sickert’s senior and a posthumous fellow at the Society of Painter-Etchers and Engravers, for whom, as Emma Chambers notes, “the relationship between paper and line was to be used to provide brilliance,” with what Palmer describes as “the glimmering through of the white paper even in the shadows, so that almost everything either sparkles or suggests sparkle.”<sup>342</sup> Sickert agreed with Palmer, the “totus, teres atque rotundus” artist, and particularly praised Palmer’s view that a fine print is one in which “the glitter of the white paper was never lost, even in the densest shadows.”<sup>343</sup> He considered Palmer’s theory to be correct because it is founded on the “impregnable rock of the best tradition.”<sup>344</sup>

Palmer’s preference for a vaporous shadow in printmaking also resonated with the French Impressionists, who made use of the white support of the canvas as an

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<sup>339</sup> Walter Sickert, “Colour Study: Importance of Scale,” in Robins, *op. cit.*, 665.

<sup>340</sup> Sickert further claims that “it is your instrument and you cannot afford to insult it.” *Ibid.*, 665.

<sup>341</sup> Vega, “Whistler and the New Concept of the Print,” in Baron et al., *James McNeill Whistler, Walter Richard Sickert*, 230.

<sup>342</sup> Chambers, *An Indolent and Blundering Art?*, 34–35; Samuel Palmer to A. H. Palmer, in A. H. Palmer, *The Life and Letters of Samuel Palmer* (London: Seeley & Co. Ltd, 1892), 98, quoted in Chambers, *An Indolent and Blundering Art?*, 34–35.

<sup>343</sup> Walter Sickert, “The Future of Engraving,” in Robins, *op. cit.*, 391. The Latin phrase translates as “full, polished, complete.”

<sup>344</sup> *Ibid.*, 391.

immediate source of brightness to express light.<sup>345</sup> The French Impressionists typically interwove unworked and worked space to create a unified lighting effect. For example, the cream hue of the typical commercial canvas served conveniently as a warmer tone to contrast with lead white, and to integrate into the overall colour scheme to create an optical realism.<sup>346</sup> In this way, canvas tone was a further hue to express lighting, a detail that already suggests a point of aesthetic correspondence between print and painting.

In Sickert's paintings, especially the late works, a similar approach to the use of the canvas tone is evident; however, it exhibits some variations from the practices of his Impressionist predecessors. For example, the presence of the bare canvas is increasingly used as Sickert thins down the paint and allows more canvas to show through. *The Invalid* (1939–40, fig. 2.16) is typical in this regard. In the painting, the weft and warp of the canvas are clearly visible around the centre of the painting, adding to the brightness of the overall tone. In paintings on canvas made of coarser fibre, this effect becomes stronger. The paint's support becomes a colour element as well, and the omission of paint on canvas an intentional choice. In a sense, he regards the canvas fibre as providing an airy feeling and a luminosity, adopting an economic way to create tonal variation in the manner of an etcher.

However, the bare canvas is still more pronounced in Sickert's paintings, since the whiteness of the canvas is used as a literal white colour, as opposed to merely functioning as a hue contributing to an overall tonal composition. In *The Invalid*, the white of the canvas is used to represent the figure sitting on the stone ledge, and itself creates a stone-like solidity. The whiteness appears as whiteness itself. This approach departs from using colour to achieve optical naturalism, instead disconnecting light and colour in a manner reminiscent of the old tradition of monochrome painting, where light is expressed in a different way and for a different purpose (as in

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<sup>345</sup> See Anthea Callen, "Ground Colours and the Paint Layer," in *The Art of Impressionism: Painting Techniques & the Making of Modernity* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), 74–78.

<sup>346</sup> See Anthea Callen, "Alfred Sisley," in *Techniques of the Impressionists* (London: Tiger Books International, 1990), 83.

monochrome painting's imitation of sculpture amid the old rivalry between the two art forms).

Indeed, the “best tradition” inherited by Palmer, as Sickert recognised, may have been *clair-obscur*, more often called “chiaroscuro,” the traditional modelling of the Renaissance, and the system of light to which Sickert adhered. The use of white in chiaroscuro helps to create form rather than being part of the system of colour. This way of creating illusion gave rise to the chiaroscuro woodcut as a way to imitate the effect of brush drawing, and, certainly, to reproduce and disseminate drawing. Vasari mentions that the Italian artist Ugo da Carpi (1480–1532) invented the chiaroscuro woodcut with only two wood blocks and created three tones.<sup>347</sup> Indeed, Carpi called his “true chiaroscuro” print “stampe di legno a 3 colori.”<sup>348</sup> Carpi's *David Slaying Goliath [after Raphael]* (c.1518, fig. 2.17) demonstrates the use of three tonal blocks. This woodcut looks like a wash drawing, without any meticulous hatching with fine points. Though Carpi was thought to have invented this technique, it may in fact be traced back to Germany, where it was already practised in the fifteenth century under the name “camaïeu.”<sup>349</sup> Camaïeu and chiaroscuro were used interchangeably to make multi-tonal prints, both there and in France.<sup>350</sup> In 1645, the French printmaker Abraham Bosse, in his influential treatise *Traité*, used the term “camaïeux” to indicate prints with tonal effects imitating those of carved gems or cameos.<sup>351</sup> Sickert was likely well versed in these practices, as he himself developed his own camaïeu

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<sup>347</sup> Hilliard T. Goldfarb, “Chiaroscuro Woodcut Technique and Andrea Andreani,” *The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art* 68, no. 9 (1981): 307–8. For more on chiaroscuro woodcuts, see the introduction to *Chiaroscuro Woodcuts, Sixteenth to Eighteenth Century* (London and New York: Colnaghi, 1988).

<sup>348</sup> John Shearman, “Leonardo's Color and Chiaroscuro,” in *Sixteenth-Century Italian Art*, ed. Michael Wayne Cole (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 408.

<sup>349</sup> Goldfarb, “Chiaroscuro Woodcut Technique,” 308–9.

<sup>350</sup> See Alexander Dencher, “The ‘Camaïeu’ Print in Seventeenth-Century Paris: On the Origins of Multi-tonal Printmaking in France,” in *Printing Colour 1400-1700: History, Techniques, Functions and Receptions*, ed. Ad Stijnman and Elizabeth Savage (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 180–186.

<sup>351</sup> *Ibid.*, 180–81. For the influence of Bosse's treatise on later English writings on etching, see the first chapter of Chambers, *An Indolent and Blundering Art?*.

technique in 1915, whereafter it featured heavily in his work.<sup>352</sup> As mentioned earlier, for Baron and Hackney, Sickert's camaieu technique was a "pre-impressionist" use of colour and the texture of paint. While I agree with their linkage of Sickert to this tradition, I would point out that this "pre-impressionist" strategy amounts to a reinterpretation of the tradition of chiaroscuro, the fundamental tradition for modelling in plastic art. As such, Sickert's choice may be understood as pursuing a different approach to modern painting, departing from his French predecessors, whose own modernity was attributed to their dispensing with the tradition of chiaroscuro and their belief in natural light created by bright hues.<sup>353</sup>

A relief effect, achieved through the use of camaieu, is evident in Sickert's *Emigrants at Melbourne* (1932, fig. 2.18). He uses a cinnamon tone in three different values to give objects a basic form by denoting light and shadow. *Emigrants at Melbourne* is considered a strange work in Sickert's oeuvre, defying interpretation, as it is in an unfinished state. But if Sickert's intention was to create a cameo, then the work fulfils its aim.

This painting also shows a remediation of a series of media, as an oil painting imitating the cameo woodcut, which was in turn invented as an imitation of chiaroscuro drawing. As I argue in what follows, Sickert shows a clear interest in such remediations of old and new media, and explores it via both the newer medium of photography and the obsolete medium of engraving, by playing with monochrome camaieu.

In the previously discussed *Portrait of A Lady—Mrs David Margesson* (fig. 2.19), it was Sickert's use of the snapshot that caught the attention of his critics. Earp commented that "behind the portrait one can sense a remarkably happy snapshot."<sup>354</sup> Earp's feeling makes sense if we consider the long history of hand-coloured

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<sup>352</sup> Baron, *Sickert*, 131–48; Hackney, "The Evolution of Painting Technique."

<sup>353</sup> For French Impressionists' views on chiaroscuro, see Callen, "Light of Reason, Shades of Meaning," in *The Art of Impressionism*, 86–87.

<sup>354</sup> Earp, "New Portrait by Sickert."

photography and contemporary mass colour prints.<sup>355</sup> In these practices, people would leave facial areas uncoloured to preserve the realistic effect of the photographic original (as fig. 2.25 shows). For Earp, the monochrome effect of the face of Mrs Margesson is reminiscent of such hand-coloured photographs. However, it is hard to tell whether the face is indeed at the deepest layer of the painting, or at the top layer, above the paint. While the face might be the photographic base, it protrudes from the painting and looks like a cameo that has been inset in the surface. Sickert creates a space, on the flat surface of the painting, where viewers' vision can move back and forth, as led by the photographic/relief-like face of Mrs Margesson. This play of vision also reflects the deployment of different media and artistic means, from age-old chiaroscuro to the artist's new friend or foe, photography.

The use of black and white to express the process of remediation can be seen in *The Gardener's Daughter* (1932, fig. 2.20), which reveals another set of media: black-and-white engraving and painting. In this painting, the girl seated on a wheelchair is prominent. Her treatment in black and white is inspired, firstly, by the work's black-and-white source image, John Gilbert's illustration for a novelette serialised in the *Leisure Hour* in 1856. It is possible that Sickert rendered the girl uncoloured because she is invalid, as the illustration is titled "Siegbert Climbing the Fence to Help the Invalid Girl" (fig. 2.21). The girl, Johanna, the daughter of a rich schoolmaster according to the novelette itself, suffers a contraction of the muscle and has to rely on a wheelchair.<sup>356</sup> The boy, Siegbert, is Johanna's neighbour and has always been envious of her intelligence and abundant life—the paradise-like garden of her father's house, for example. Gilbert's illustration depicts the moment when Johanna's wheelchair has stopped moving, and has failed to restart, no matter how hard she pulls the stick, whereupon Siegbert climbs over the fence, having heard the

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<sup>355</sup> For the history of hand-coloured photography, see Heinz K. Henisch, *The Painted Photograph, 1839–1914: Origins, Techniques, Aspirations* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 1996).

<sup>356</sup> "The Weaver of Naumburg," *The Leisure Hour*, July 24, 1856, 466.

poor girl's sigh.<sup>357</sup> Gilbert's illustration, though black and white, contrasts the girl and the boy in tone. The girl is rendered with few hatchings, showing that she is in a brightly coloured dress, while the boy is in dark clothing. This tonal distinction might be a visual platitude, since ideals of femininity defined the female as the lighter—and even weightless—gender.<sup>358</sup> For Johanna, the little girl, white also symbolises purity and innocence. Sickert was well aware of these gender-based colour stereotypes and criticised them, particularly in 1910 when he voiced his disapproval of George Frederic Watts's practice of distinguishing between male and female figures solely by using mahogany for the former and the “colour of a candle” for the latter.<sup>359</sup> Therefore, Sickert's colour choices in *The Gardener's Daughter* may allude to the colour theories of the mid-nineteenth century.

However, by painting from a print illustration and giving it a new title, Sickert perceived and added more layers of meaning to the painting, and to its colours. *The Gardener's Daughter* is also the title of a portrait of a girl made by Frank Miles (1852-1891). The sitter of this Miles's portrait is probably Lillie Langtry, and the portrait has been reproduced widely as postcard (fig. 2. 22) by W.A. Mansell & Co., the photographic studio known for photographing art works.<sup>360</sup> Sickert knew Miles and this portrait, as he in 1917 mentioned Degas's admiration on Miles's painting.<sup>361</sup> Sickert is likely to have been familiar with this painting, as the girl in his own rendition is rendered in black and white, a characteristic also observed in the coloured sketch by Miles (fig. 2.23). The girl in Miles' sketch is depicted pushing aside the thorny stem with her hand, indicating a strong possibility of drawing inspiration from

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<sup>357</sup> Ibid., 467.

<sup>358</sup> Bram Dijkstra, *Idols of Perversity: Fantasies of Feminine Evil in Fin-de-Siècle Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 89.

<sup>359</sup> Sickert, “Idealism,” *Art News*, May 12, 1910, reprinted in Robins, *op. cit.*, 229.

<sup>360</sup> V&A (website), <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O1223385/print-miles-francis/>, accessed December 12, 2023.

<sup>361</sup> Sickert wrote, “it was for years a matter of amazed awe to us... that Degas had insisted on qualities in the painting of a waterfall by Frank Miles. The reader may not, I think, conclude from this that he had any tenderness for *The Gardener's Daughter*, or for I've been roaming, by the same hand.” Sickert, “Degas,” *Burlington Magazine*, November 1917, reprinted in Robins, *op. cit.*, 416.

Tennyson's poem of the same title, published in 1842.<sup>362</sup> The protagonist of Tennyson's poem is an artist, and he is encouraged by his artist friend, Eustace, to look for the beloved things, for he will only paint well when he falls in love: "Love, unperceived, / A more ideal Artist he than all."<sup>363</sup> Juliet, the lover and muse of Eustace, suggests that the protagonist visit the gardener's daughter, Rose, who lives a cloistered life in the garden. The pivotal moment of the poem is his first sight of Rose in the garden, which is described in much detail. The encounter with Rose impresses and haunts the artist, and would inspire many nineteenth-century artists to make pictures of "A Rose in roses, mingled with fragrant toil," while at the same time envisaging themselves as the poem's artist-protagonist. In 1857, J. C. Horsley designed an illustration for the poem, featuring Rose picking the climbing roses with "one arm aloft," and this upward-looking posture is retained in many subsequent works, such as Edward Henry Wehnert's version (1860, fig. 2.24), which also portrays the girl "Gown'd in pure white, that fitted to the shape."

Sickert's painting depicts a moment at which the girl looks up, but this time for help. Sickert may have cast himself as the artist in the poem, as his predecessors did, but while he similarly looks for his muse, the muse—the girl—is not an objectified female beauty. The monochrome girl exposes the immediate source of Sickert's painting, the paper print, and thus reveals the process of making itself: layering colours upon black-and-white drawing. In a sense, this painting is self-reflexive, and thus the actual muse is the black-and-white illustration, in the form of the girl rendered in monochrome, to be filled with colour and thus completed. Sickert himself might then be the boy, Siegbert, who, though pricked by thorns of rose, comes to save the beloved art of illustration.

In this sense, Sickert reveals his love for the primary art of drawing by appropriating an ekphrastic poem and a print illustration. He was then seventy-three years old, and the heyday of engravings as periodical illustrations had long gone. The

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<sup>362</sup> Merlin Seller also notes the connection between Sickert and Tennyson, though he associates the theme of the poem with death. Seller, "Material Memory," 181.

<sup>363</sup> Alfred Tennyson, *The Gardener's Daughter and Other Poems* (Edinburgh: Nimmo, 1900), 8.

last lines of the poem speak of his voice:

As I beheld her ere she knew my heart,  
My first, last love; the idol of my youth,  
The darling of my manhood, and, alas!  
Now the most blessed memory of mine age.<sup>364</sup>

Sickert's remediation of the tradition is obvious in light of my discussion in the previous section, concerning the implicitly expressed principle of parallel grids formed by colour patches in *Portrait of a Lady—Mrs David Margesson* and *The Gardener's Daughter*. From the aesthetics of the play between paper and ink in printing, to its integration with the camaieu technique, these printerly qualities are keenly observed. They appear as the monochrome elements in Sickert's paintings, standing for vacancy, the past, tradition, as well as the new medium of photography. By using black and white in different narratives, and juxtaposed with colours, Sickert expresses a power relation between old and new media, and an evocation of tradition.

### 2.2.2 Separation of colour

I have thus far shown that Sickert's approach to colour in his paintings is to add colours onto a monochromatic foundation, a colouring process that is akin to the contemporary commercial colour printing that I briefly mentioned earlier. This section begins by explaining this very connection. However, I also posit the further argument that Sickert's juxtaposition of monochrome and colour constituted a printerly quality—the separation of colour—that engendered a distinct conception of reality during his time. Concurrently, the fusion of the camaieu technique with this application of colour created a timeless light in his paintings. Colour in Sickert's artworks emerges as a compositional element prompting viewers to contemplate the

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<sup>364</sup> Ibid., 20.

dimension of time. His use of colour, besides aligning with the appropriation of ready-made objects within the Pop Art tradition, also warrants examination in the context of coloured photography, and in relation to issues of visual realism.

An early twentieth-century postcard of *Battersea Park* (fig. 2.25) clearly demonstrates how colouring is based on separate processes. It is conspicuous that the group of people at the bottom left corner is left uncoloured, showing as black-and-white, while the rest of the postcard is coloured. This relates to the process by which the colour print was made. In the 1880s, printmakers adopted the technique of photochrom, which combines photography and lithography. A colour postcard would be created from a black-and-white photo negative that is directly transferred to the lithographic plate. In this way, the creation of a black-and-white image as a first layer means that black and white are treated as separate tonal elements from the other colours. Colours are then added by separate stones that bear the appropriate image colour. Each stone bears only one colour, so a colour postcard would typically involve between six and fifteen colour layers. In order to save a separate stone, the white colour of the paper on which a postcard is to be printed is regarded as a layer of white in itself.

This method leads to two connected results. Firstly, rather than colouring the whole picture, colours would be omitted in order to save labour. This partly explains why the figures are uncoloured, as to achieve the correct complexion for their skin would involve several more layers of yellow, red, and blue. Secondly, the black-and-white ground is in many cases retained (especially in images of figures), in order to retain the realistic effect of the photographic base. Complexion is an important part of the Western pictorial tradition, but is, at the same time, the most difficult to recreate.<sup>365</sup> In order to avoid an unrealistic rendering of the human complexion, figures were left as they were. Even in the popular practice of hand-colouring photographs, transparent colours were preferred because these would allow the image

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<sup>365</sup> Ann-Sophie Lehmann, "The Transparency of Color: Aesthetics, Materials, and Practices of Hand Coloring Photographs between Rochester and Yokohama," *Getty Research Journal* 7, no. 1 (2015): 91.

beneath to show through, retaining its details and a sense of reality.<sup>366</sup>

Yet the realistic effect created by colouring the photograph is special. In the *Battersea Park* postcard, the sky is coloured blue and the trees green in order to increase a sense of realism; these colours add to the image's "perceptual realism" since they accord with people's common sense.<sup>367</sup> The black-and-white figures also evince realism because they are traces of the realistic photograph, and, as John Berger notes, black-and-white can be even more realistic than colour since it is more evocative of memory.<sup>368</sup> In this sense, what the postcard shows is real, but this reality does not lie in any seamless unity of atmosphere and details. Instead, it is a patched-together reality, or, in other words, a reality felt in the gaps between different dimensions—a separated realism. Visual perception and the understanding of reality have been shaped by the technology of photography, allowing people to recognise the most "real" parts in different images. In other words, realism is recognised through experience (in this case, the experience of photography as realism), as Descartes claimed, rather than through resemblance.<sup>369</sup> Yet such realism is not stable, as the added colour on the photographic base appeals simultaneously to different aspects of aesthetic perception, requiring constant processing by viewers.<sup>370</sup>

Such images, marrying a separation of colour with realism, had appeared since the advent of photography, but were particularly popular as a way to mass-produce coloured postcards. Picture postcards reached their golden age between 1894 and 1914, and the combined effect of colour and photographic base would have been recognisable to Sickert's contemporaries.<sup>371</sup> It is conceivable that Sickert's

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<sup>366</sup> Ibid., 83, 94, and passim.

<sup>367</sup> Kim Timby, "Photograph, Cinema, and Perceptual Realism in the Nineteenth Century," in *Photography and Other Media in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Nicoletta Leonardi and Simone Natale (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2018), 177.

<sup>368</sup> John Berger, *Keeping a Rendezvous* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1991), 192–93.

<sup>369</sup> John Hyman, *The Objective Eye: Color, Form, and Reality in the Theory of Art* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006), 2.

<sup>370</sup> Henisch, *The Painted Photograph*, 17.

<sup>371</sup> For more on the picture postcard and examples of colour application, see Richard Carline, *Picture in the Post: The Story of the Picture Postcard and its Place in the History of Popular Art* (London:

unorthodox approach, colouring only part of his paintings, was a reaction to this print culture. Indeed, the portrait of Mrs Margesson already demonstrates this. *The Rectory* (c. 1939, fig. 2.26) provides a further example of the effect of monochrome in colour pictures, as in the *Battersea Park* postcard. The three figures in *The Rectory* in the centre are painted black and white, while the other figures are coloured, or at least tinted with a warm tone. The rest of the painting is coloured in the typical faded tone of his late works. This work employs a similar mechanism to generate a sense of unstable realism: the black-and-white figures seem to enhance the painting's realism insofar as they are reminiscent of a photographic base, especially since they face the viewer (or the camera) as in a snapshot. This adds to a sense of communication with the beholder and, in turn, the suggestion that the figures are real. The coloured parts, while adding to the description of the setting for the three figures, also bring a sense of the picturesque to the fore, creating a tension between photographic realism and pictorial tradition. Sickert further adds to the unstable realism of this painting by bringing the past into the present. From their silhouettes, the three black-and-white figures look like Victorians, the bustle of their dresses and cloaks contrasting with the more concise attire of the 1930s.<sup>372</sup> These are figures of the past brought into the present by way of the black-and-white snapshot effect. In this sense, moving between black-and-white and colour, the viewer moves back and forth between past and present, fictional and realistic. It is not only colour but time that is dislocated.

In this sense, colour's separation results in its losing its role as messenger of natural light and, consequently, its ability to express the present moment. This cultivates a different mode of representing reality. For example, the black-and-white becomes closer to the "present" than the coloured, as Earp's comment reveals that people already related monochrome rendering to photography rather than to sketching, despite the face of Mrs Margesson appearing closer to a sanguine drawing.

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Gordon Fraser, 1971).

<sup>372</sup> This painting was grouped as an "Echo" in the Arts Council's exhibition of late Sickert in 1981, though the source image is yet to be found. See *Late Sickert: Paintings 1927 to 1942* (London: Arts Council of Great Britain, 1981), 107.

The coloured painting presents an unstable realism, or a trembling realism, which is composed of different layers of materials, appealing to different senses.

### 2.2.3 Coloured camaieu: Anachronism

The *Irish Emigrants* and *Portrait of a Lady—Mrs David Margesson* show a clear cameo effect. However, as scholars have noted, the expression of light by camaieu in Sickert's painting is overshadowed by his choice of colours—the gaily contrasting and “curiously off-hand” colours that typify his many late works.<sup>373</sup> Sickert developed a distinct difference between his camaieu effect and his earlier impressionist portrayal of light by simplifying its expression to just two or three colours or tones and avoiding details. Thus, in Sickert's technique, the dramatic effects of chiaroscuro, employed in painting since the Renaissance, are replaced by the sensual pleasures of colour, inspired by modern print materials such as posters and film print, far from any naturalistic impressionism. This combination of commercial print colours and camaieu technique—the coloured camaieu—is the focus of this section. I argue that this colour strategy enables Sickert to tell stories that are more than mere formal experiments, or that are merely “decorative.” These mark a rupture with the realistic representational modes in the early twentieth century.

*The Brighton Pierrots* (1915, fig. 2.27), for example, displays colour camaieu. Two colours, pink and earth red, are used to form the figures on the stage. There is no detail in the earth-red shadowed areas of the Pierrots' attire. The camaieu technique may have been the result of his years of intensive etching, around 1914, that bequeathed him a clear sense of light and shade.<sup>374</sup> It creates an image that is between naturalism and decoration. On one hand, it allows the Pierrots to stand out, the two blocks of colour with neat borders giving them a sense of three-dimensionality, in contrast to the distant buildings and seats, which, although more densely worked,

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<sup>373</sup> Richard Shone, “Beaverbrook—Sickert's ‘Political Portrait’,” *History Today* 44, no. 9 (1994): 41.

<sup>374</sup> Sickert ran the Rowlandson House School from 1910 to 1914, where he taught and practised etching. See Bromberg, *Walter Sickert, Prints: A Catalogue Raisonné*, 22–26.

have no apparent light or shadow and therefore appear flat. On the other hand, representing the figures in two blocks of colour at the front of the picture space creates a boldness whose lack of detailing adds to the decorative character of the work. This simplicity, together with the uncanny atmosphere of the weather, creates an unrealistic effect.

This sense of mood, technique, and narrative recur in Sickert's works, as in *The Wheatsheaf* (c. 1928–29, fig. 2.28). *The Wheatsheaf* has a lighter tone than *The Brighton Pierrots*, but the technique and subjects are similar. Both paintings depict problematic performances. The wheatsheaves are in fact the costumes of the ballet dancers who perform in a square between a barn with red and blue flags, on the right-hand side of the painting, and a house with a signboard of a goat on the left-hand side. The wheatsheaves, faces, and dresses of the figures are all rendered in two colours to suggest volume, though in a relatively shallow sense. This painting is a transposition of an 1846 etching titled *CAPRICORNUS—A Caper o' corns* (fig. 2.29), created by George Cruikshank for *The Comic Almanack for 1846*, published by David Bogue.<sup>375</sup> “Capricornus” tells us that this is the December issue of the book, a time for rest and enjoyment, and the zodiac sign is further indicated by the goat on the signboard beside the house. The word is humorously transformed into “caper o' corns” to indicate the celebration of harvest. Yet December is not a time for harvesting crops and indeed this illustration accompanies a poem, “Corn Capers: The Pas des Moissonneurs,” on the following page (fig. 2.30), which itself refers to the performance of a Viennese dance troupe (the “*Viennoise* so famed”). The troupe in question was a team of young girl dancers led by Josephine Weiss (1805–1852), who travelled in Britain and performed for Queen Victoria several times in the 1840s. The “Pas des Moissonneurs” is one of their dances, for which the young performers would dress in sheaf costumes. Cruikshank's illustration thus depicts a popular performance

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<sup>375</sup> Wendy Baron, “Walter Richard Sickert A.R.A. (British, 1860–1942), *The Wheatsheaf*,” Bonhams (website), <https://www.bonhams.com/auction/23963/lot/24/walter-richard-sickert-ara-british-1860-1942-the-wheatsheaf>, accessed October 10, 2023.

of his time.

Sickert's appropriation of Cruikshank's illustration of the performance of a harvest scene may be a continuation of his interest in popular performances, as in *The Brighton Pierrots*. However, *The Wheatsheaf* was further connected to that work insofar as the narrative dimension of each relates to the Great War. Pierrots, as Nicola Moorby argues, came to symbolise hope and sacrifice during World War I, to "inspire laughter and recall happier, more carefree days."<sup>376</sup> *The Brighton Pierrots* was indeed made during wartime.

While *The Wheatsheaf* does not directly point to the war, another painting, based on the same etching by Cruickshank and titled *Entente Anglo-Russe* (c. 1928–29), makes the connection clear. According to Baron, *Entente Anglo-Russe* is a vertically oriented version of *The Wheatsheaf*, measuring nearly two metres in height and one and a half metres in width.<sup>377</sup> A photograph of a black-and-white transferring cartoon (fig. 2.31), held in Islington Council's Sickert family archive, reveals the composition and proportion. The title, *Entente Anglo-Russe*, refers to the convention between the United Kingdom and Russia that was signed in 1907 as a way to resolve their territorial dispute over Persia, Afghanistan, and Tibet. The convention was significant in shaping diplomatic alignments prior to the Great War, leading to the alliance between the UK, the French Third Republic, and the Russia Empire, that is considered one of the war's important triggers.<sup>378</sup> The titling of this painting has puzzled scholars; however, considering Sickert's penchant for metaphor and contrast, it is clear that these depictions of the harvest scene in *Entente Anglo-Russe* and *The Wheatsheaf*, as expressed through performance, were created with the war in mind, as troubled happy moments similar to that shown in *The Brighton Pierrots*.

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<sup>376</sup> Nicola Moorby, "'Poor Abraded Butterflies of the Stage': Sickert and the Brighton Pierrots," *Tate Papers*, no. 5 (Spring 2006), <https://www.tate.org.uk/research/tate-papers/05/poor-abraded-butterflies-of-the-stage-sickert-and-the-brighton-pierrots>, accessed November 21, 2023.

<sup>377</sup> This painting is in a private collection, and I have been unable to source a photographic reproduction.

<sup>378</sup> Andreas Rose, "At the Cost of Stability: The Anglo-Russian Convention and Its European Implications," in *Between Empire and Continent: British Foreign Policy before the First World War* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2019), 345.

The choice of the harvest scene is important, and ironic in the context of the war. Because of the 1915 embargo on the export of wheat from India, and the closure of the Dardanelles, which cut off the supply of crops from the Black Sea to Europe, the price of wheat and other foods in the UK had soared.<sup>379</sup> Food was rationed, and rations queued for, and Sickert's family certainly experienced this.<sup>380</sup> In this sense, the portrayal of a harvest scene seems temporally misplaced.

This anachronism relates to Sickert's choice of colour and lighting. The overall contrast between light and shadow in *The Wheatsheaf* is notably subdued. Sickert preserves the source of light from the illustration, which issues from in front of the picture as in Cruikshank's image, while he also attenuates the darkness of the shadows. The rendering of volume in the dancers and their sheaf costumes is expressed in his camaïeu technique, characterised by the use of two subtly contrasting colours. The entire painting appears to be composed of fragmented colour blocks, imparting a decorative quality. This decorative colour scheme conveys an unreal quality of light that disrupts the immediacy of the scene, and it becomes difficult to discern the specific time of day shown by the painting. As such, Sickert's use of light prompts consideration of the work's temporality, in such a way that accords with the works of other modernists whose paintings have been labelled "decorative," such as Monet, Gauguin, and especially the Nabis, where camaïeu techniques create "dream-like visions" that are not mere recreations of nature.<sup>381</sup> Furthermore, the colours expressed through Sickert's camaïeu technique exhibit a faded pastel-like quality that, applied to the coarse canvas, evokes a mural. In fact, the colossal scale of *Entente Anglo-Russe* suggests that it could serve as a memorial mural, as a celebratory scene offering social commentary. In this sense, Sickert's "decorative" style suggests a potential to become public art.

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<sup>379</sup> Caroline Scott, *Holding the Home Front: The Women's Land Army in the First World War* (Barnsley: Pen and Sword, 2007), 45.

<sup>380</sup> Sutton, *Walter Sickert: A Biography*, 195.

<sup>381</sup> Maurice Denis's painting, for example, demonstrates a typical use of *camaïeu* for decorative purposes. See Katherine M. Kuenzli, *The Nabis and Intimate Modernism: Painting and the Decorative at the Fin-de-Siècle* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 2–4.

Indeed, the harvest scene and distinctive camaieu use of colour in *The Wheatsheaf* is reminiscent of the works of a group of artists active in the 1920s and 1930s, including Frank Brangwyn (1867–1956), Stanley Spencer (1891–1959), and Thomas Saunders Nash (1891–1968). In 1924, Brangwyn was commissioned by Edward Guinness, Earl of Iveagh, to paint for the Royal Gallery at the House of Lords, to commemorate those peers who had been killed in the Great War.<sup>382</sup> The first two pieces were rejected for their depiction of disturbing battle scenes. Thereafter, in the 1930s, Brangwyn created another sixteen *British Empire Panels*, which now decorate the Guild Hall in Swansea. The new panels reveal the abundance of the British Empire, both in the homeland and in its colonies. For example, in *British Empire Panel (12) India* (c. 1930, fig. 2.32), various tropical plants and creatures fill the picture, while bare-skinned Indian people are busy carrying a variety of foodstuffs. This image of prosperity is reinforced by the children helping with the harvest. Sickert was familiar with Brangwyn’s mural panels in decorative camaieu, as he mentioned them in 1930 and held them in high regard.<sup>383</sup> Thomas Bromwell notes that the Empire is depicted as an Edenic cornucopia in this paradisaical and celebratory scene, in order to conceal the loss of the Great War.<sup>384</sup> The panel is painted in a quasi-camaieu style, as revealed in the turbans executed in two colours.<sup>385</sup> While it is common for murals to adopt a camaieu style limited to rendering major tonal relationships rather than minute details, the visual impact of the colour and artificial

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<sup>382</sup> For the creation and history of the *British Empire Panels*, see, Alan Power, “The Murals of Frank Brangwyn,” in *Frank Brangwyn 1867-1956*, ed. Libby Horner and Gillian Naylor (Leeds: Leeds Museum and Galleries, 2006), 70-97; and Clare Willson, “Celebrating the Empire,” in *Mural Painting in Britain 1840-1940: Image and Meaning* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 143-164.

<sup>383</sup> Sickert, “Mr Brangwyn’s Panels,” *The Times*, March 12, 1930, reprinted in Robins, *op. cit.*, 604.

<sup>384</sup> Thomas Bromwell, “Visions of the End in Interwar British Art,” (PhD Diss., University of York, 2019), 192.

<sup>385</sup> Libby Horner notices that Brangwyn’s decorative works, especially prints of all kinds which has been neglected in previous literature, should account for an important role in Brangwyn’s career, as he usually works with a same design in different media. See Libby Horner, *Frank Brangwyn: A Mission to Decorate Life* (London: Fine Art Society, 2006), particularly 113-141. A general examination of Brangwyn’s print-making will reveal his preference of chiaroscuro, and I would suggest that the intermedial working method of camaieu in print and painting in Sickert’s case, would also apply to Brangwyn’s works.

light in this mural creates a world that does not belong to the present.

Nash presents a similarly colourful camaieu utopia in *The Apple Pickers* (1927, fig. 2.33).<sup>386</sup> Here, each figure is expressed using only two tones, and there is no gradation between light and shadow. This makes the figures appear like paper cutouts, fragile and ephemeral. This unrealistic feel is reinforced by the action of the figures—though they are picking apples, they do not seem busy, but are enjoying the mild sun and the happiness of harvest. In a sense, the place seems Edenic and utopian. This accords with Nash's other biblical paintings that express a similarly unrealistic, nostalgic, and timeless mood. As Bromwell notes, Nash borrowed narratives of earthly paradise from early Italian paintings, though he does not mention that it is the camaieu technique that creates the requisite effect.<sup>387</sup> The chiaroscuro in *The Apple Pickers* creates a charged, theatrical atmosphere, while the simplified line, form, and shallow pictorial space recall early Italian Renaissance painting. The light tone and matte surface are also reminiscent of frescoes. In contrast to other paintings, in which Nash explicitly depicted pain, *The Apple Pickers* offers an escape from the present.

The harvest scenes in Brangwyn's murals and Nash's and Sickert's paintings are metaphoric, denying their present moment and concealing its agony. By a synthesis of lighting, colour, and surface texture, all borrowed from the tradition of camaieu in order to play with fiction and reality, Sickert conveyed the light, but disabled time.

## 2.2.4 Moving colour

Sickert's camaieu style varied in its use of colour during his career. He gradually transitioned from more natural contrasts of warm and cold—in most cases, green-blue and orange-pink—to extremely unrealistic colours, far removed from the local colours

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<sup>386</sup> Thomas Saunders Nash is less written about and studied; for an introduction of the artist, see "Thomas Saunders Nash," *Art UK*, accessed March 26, 2024, <https://artuk.org/discover/artists/nash-thomas-saunders-18911968>.

<sup>387</sup> Bromwell, "Visions of the End in Interwar British Art," 206.

of objects in natural lighting. I propose that these colour schemes are borrowed from the new print material of film in the 1920s, and that, while Sickert maintained a keen interest in tradition, he also followed contemporary trends.

*The Rt Hon Winston Churchill* (fig. 2.34) demonstrates his usual colour choice, and is rendered in a contrast between salmon and greenish blue, balanced with brown. However, the pink and greenish-blue are reminiscent of early colour film. As the “sixth art,” film had not developed its unique identity by the 1920s, but had emerged as the combination of multiple media (such as photography and lithography). In 1906, George Albert Smith invented kinemacolor, by which “coloured” films, such as *A Visit to the Seaside* (1908, fig. 2.35), were produced by projecting a black-and-white film behind alternate red and green filters. Later came Technicolor, which was both a technique to produce colour film and the name of a company founded by Herbert Kalmus, Daniel Frost Comstock, and W. Burton Wescott in 1915.<sup>388</sup> There were several stages to this technique, the first being a two-tone system using red and green colour. The process involves a camera shooting the picture through a prism that splits the light into red and green negatives, before the two films are combined to produce a colour image. This two-tone method has its shortcomings, however: it cannot produce the full colour spectrum, and when red and green films are photographed together, they will appear a muddy brown. But even with these limitations, the system worked well in representing green trees and Caucasian flesh tones, and Sickert’s portrait of Churchill shows clearly how the combination of red and green tones can satisfactorily represent such tones. The way Sickert applies colour here also recalls the process of making colour prints, namely, by adding or layering colour on a support (canvas), rather than applying pre-mixed colours to the palette. Every patch of colour has a fixed location in this painting. For example, green-blue, pink, and brown appear side by side around Churchill’s mouth, with only occasional overlapping edges. The painting also clearly reflects the deficiencies of the two-tone method as well: Sickert

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<sup>388</sup> Scott Higgins, “Demonstrating Three-Colour Technicolor: Early Three-Colour Aesthetics and Design,” *Film History* 12, no. 4 (2000): 358–83.

does not distinguish the clothing and the background; instead they are all rendered brown by the addition of a thin layer of earthy-red on the blue underpainting.

In *The Wave* (1931, fig. 2.36), the use of red and green is more audacious and even more filmic in its atmosphere. The whole painting is roughly divided into three colour strips of red, green, and blue. Sickert dilutes the red in the foreground with oil to reveal the texture of the canvas and the green underpainting of the figures. The transparency of the oil paint appears like colour painted on film, while the contouring of the figures with black lines is reminiscent of the use of black-and-white film beneath colour film in order to increase sharpness and definition (called the “key image” in cinematic jargon). The figures in the green strip run away from the wave; this gives the painting a kinetic feel, like a motion picture.

In this painting, theatricality is created not by the traditional chiaroscuro but by combining plot and colour. *The Wave* indeed depicts a dramatic moment. Its source, an 1859 Gilbert illustration from *The Leisure Hour*, is titled “The Famishing Weed and Shell Gatherers Surprised by a Heavy Wave” (fig. 2.37), and accompanies the serialised fictional tale *Golden Hills, A Single Influence—A Tale of Ribandism and Irish Famine*. The illustration depicts the moment when the boy, Harry, is consumed by a wave while picking shells for food: “At that moment, a tremendous wave rushed twenty feet over the rocks, and upon the poor weed gatherers. The mother was dashed down—blinded, stunned; but little Harry was gone.”<sup>389</sup> This tragedy is not explicitly shown in Gilbert’s illustration, but the suffering and struggle of the famine are captured by the unrealistic colour of *The Wave*. Temporality also plays a part in the picture: the figures running away from the waves are racing against time, and, in the viewer’s mind, they appear not as still images but rather as caught in a dramatic moment, their action arrested as we wonder whether they will escape the wave or not. In Sickert’s painting, the juxtaposition of red and green stripes enhances this temporality since, in early film, red and green images would appear alternately. Red and green film strips are in a perpetually unstable state, as if about to be replaced in

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<sup>389</sup> “Golden Hills, A Single Influence,” *The Leisure Hour*, April 7, 1859, 214.

the next moment, and in apprehension of an uncertain future. The overlapping of red and green at the head of the figures in *The Wave* also signifies an overlapping of time.

In this sense, Sickert expresses the narrative through filmic colour, that is, by optical means, rather than using popular colour to no particular end. Red and green were also preferred colours in the theatre industry (for costumes and the interior design of theatres), and Sickert similarly reflected this preference in many of his theatrical paintings.

Interestingly, *The Wave* recalls the novel poem *The Waves* (1931), by Virginia Woolf. *The Waves* was published by Hogarth Press in October 1931 and *The Wave* was made between June 1931 and April 1932.<sup>390</sup> Sickert is likely either to have read or at least to have known about the book, and this may have inspired his adaptation of the title of Gilbert's illustration. Woolf's novel, written in a poetic form, features six protagonists, and its story is propelled by the monologues of each person as they tell their life stories from childhood to old age. The structure of the novel is composed of an interlude at the beginning of each chapter with monologues then following alternately, and this wave-like movement of the text is the source for the book's title. Flowing is characteristic of both time and water, and each chapter's interlude depicts the rise and fall of the sun and the waves, which seem to relate to the rise and fall of the six characters.

The interludes are particularly notable for their depictions of landscapes, as they are full of sensory and visual representations, focusing on light, shade, colour, and impression. For example, the interlude of the second chapter focuses on green and blue:

The sun rose higher. Blue waves, green waves swept a quick fan over the beach, circling the spike of sea-holly and leaving shallow pools of light here and there on the sand. A faint black rim was left behind them. The rocks which had been

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<sup>390</sup> *The Wave* was not exhibited at the Leicester Gallery in May 1931, but appeared at the Beaux-Art Gallery in April 1932.

misty and soft hardened and were marked with red clefts.<sup>391</sup>

Woolf uses painterly images to represent visual impressions, and colours play a key role in this. In fact, Woolf has a special feeling for colour in writing, and remarks elsewhere that “all great writers are great colourists.”<sup>392</sup> Woolf’s emphasis on colour, according to Amanda Dackombe, allows her to make apparent the invisible and unspeakable.<sup>393</sup> The unspeakable is the impasse between representation and thought. In other words, colour is a proxy of the authorial idea, more potent than the “impure word.” Indeed, Woolf was impressed by Sickert’s ability to tell a story in the “silent kingdom of paint.”<sup>394</sup> Sickert, for his part, “has no need of explanation; green is enough.”<sup>395</sup>

Sickert was himself concerned about the impasse between reality and representation, as well as the relation between literature and painting. The use of colour in *The Wave* mediates these spheres. Besides modelling and creating light in order to make tangible a fleeting moment, red and green in *The Wave* also represent different spaces and times, and thus allow Sickert to tell a story of continuing temporality. Sickert may have been struck by the visual aesthetic and wave-like narrative of Woolf’s prose, but whether inspired by Woolf’s novel or not, the two works are consistent in their narrative temporality and their evocation of the senses. In both the painting and the novel, colours have the power to narrate, to make thought visible. Sickert once wrote that “all the greater draughtsmen tell a story,”<sup>396</sup> and in 1931 he told a story with colour.

A further note on colour and reality is necessary here. Woolf remarks on the

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<sup>391</sup> Virginia Woolf, *The Waves* (Orlando: Harvest, 1978), 19.

<sup>392</sup> Virginia Woolf, *Walter Sickert: A Conversation* (England: Hogarth Press, 1934), 23.

<sup>393</sup> Amanda Marie Dackombe, “Making Thought Visible: Colour in the Writing of Virginia Woolf, Dorothy Richardson, Samuel Beckett and T. S. Eliot,” (PhD Diss., Queen Mary University of London, 2003), 9, 26, and passim.

<sup>394</sup> Woolf, *A Conversation*, 13.

<sup>395</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>396</sup> Walter Sickert, “A Critical Calendar,” *English Review*, March 1912, reprinted in Robins, *op. cit.*, 300.

impact of modern conditions upon the senses, and especially upon perceptions of colour. For example, a motorist will see red not as a colour but simply as a danger signal.<sup>397</sup> These modern conditions include the wave of colour's impact upon the film industry, which would also influence the way people perceive and understand the world. The early 1920s saw a surge in colour production across media and national cinemas.<sup>398</sup> As Michelle Henning argues, colour technology created a new common sense of reality by "delimiting what is visible, how it is perceived and what meanings are attributed to it."<sup>399</sup> Thus, even if a skin tone was inauthentic due to technological constraints, or if red and green destroyed the naturalism of early film, audiences grew accustomed to these colours, and submitted to these as "realistic" expressions. Rather than being a way to create reality through modelling and lighting, the colour of early film became an indicator or marker of the real. In a sense, Sickert used colour in a similar way: he did not represent a solid reality but created a theatrical effect with colour in order to express the experience of time and space.

## 2.3 Montage

In the paintings discussed so far, such as the portrait of Mrs Margesson, we have observed the presentation of different materials on the picture plane, notably the interplay between cameo/photograph and paint. This assemblage of different materials (though they are all expressed by paint) plays with our understanding of time, and requires viewers to approach the paintings from different dimensions. As such, this pictorial strategy naturally leads, in a broad sense, to the theme of montage. Typically understood as a film editing strategy in which disparate shots are assembled together, "montage" has become an umbrella term encompassing the use of similar stylistic means across various art forms, and is employed and theorised in different cultural

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<sup>397</sup> Woolf, *A Conversation*, 5.

<sup>398</sup> Michelle Henning, "The Worlding of Light and Air: Dufaycolor and Selochrome in the 1930s," *Visual Culture in Britain* 21, no. 2 (2020): 177–98.

<sup>399</sup> *Ibid.*, 189.

fields.<sup>400</sup>

In this section, I continue to study the montage aesthetic in Sickert's paintings, but from a more basic perspective—montage as a compositional consideration—and in portraiture. My discussion will also show that, although Sickert himself did not employ the term “montage” to describe his works, his approach was still daring in his time, as his works provide a new vision to see the relation between the sitter and the background. Many of his paintings impart a sense of collage with a stark, unblended arrangement of compositional elements. I explore this aesthetic by way of two sets of examples, showing two different styles, examining how Sickert's montage style originated in the realm of printmaking, and how he developed it into a method of manipulating and interpreting time and space within his work for different purposes.

Sickert's *Portrait of Sir Hugh Walpole* (1928, fig. 2.38) typifies his montage aesthetic. In this painting, a headshot of Walpole is shown against a backdrop of children playing by the water. The spatial relations of this portrait are curious. The children and the sitter are all lit from the left, giving the impression that they are all captured at the same location and moment, during the same sitting, as in a typical impressionist painting. The children are also *behind* the sitter, since parts of their bodies are blocked by Walpole's face. We can also see the lake *through* Walpole's glass—as expressed by a strip of blue at the left of Walpole's face (from viewer's perspective); and this seems to speak that Walpole *is* in this depicted space. However, the rendering of this spatial dynamic gives the sense that the painting is not entirely illusionistic, since the background does not recede but protrudes: it is painted in similar colours to the sitter (for example, the earthen red that both the boy and Walpole wear), while the girl's bright beige dress is painted in impasto and thus appears more prominent than the sitter's face, which is executed in a quasi-monochrome style. This treatment does not suggest the kind of atmosphere that Sickert advanced in his earlier portraiture, as in *Lou! Lou! I Love You*. (fig. 2.39), in

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<sup>400</sup> Christian Suhr and Rane Willerslev, eds., *Transcultural Montage* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2013), 2–6.

which he scratches short curved lines to suggest the air shared by the sitters.

It is a portrait, and the sitter Hugh Walpole is a writer, Sickert's friend and patron. Conventionally, the figure depicted (especially in when the sitter is the commissioner) is the primary focus of a painting, and the background is secondary, or, as Vasari considers it, a "filling in" to complete the painting.<sup>401</sup> Yet, "there is no figure without ground,"<sup>402</sup> as both are symbiotic, as David Young Kim puts. Then, what does the Walpole portrait tell about the figure and the background?

Richard Shone notes that the background of *Portrait of Sir Hugh Walpole* might be the painting *Victoria Park—'Let's go Home Sis!'* (1929, fig. 2.40) by Sickert's wife, Thérèse Lessore.<sup>403</sup> Shone thinks that the bending girl looks similar to the girl on the right-hand side of Lessore's painting, and he assumes that *Victoria Park* was in Sickert's studio and so happened to be in the background as Walpole sat for him.<sup>404</sup> This assumption could be possible, since it aligns with the tradition of studio photographic portraiture where sitters were set in front of a hand-painted backdrop of landscape, in the age before the snapshot camera became popular. But Sickert's portrait of Walpole was completed in 1928, and Lessore's is dated 1929. If indeed Lessore's painting served as the background of Sickert's portraiture, as Shone suggests, it would still appear to be in an unfinished state.

Yet, if this is the case, Sickert did not treat Lessore's painting as merely a receding background. As noted above, in Sickert's portrait of Walpole, the head appears as if engraved into the background, which itself does not diminish in definition or sharpness. Furthermore, there is no clear boundary between sitter and background: the earthen red of Walpole's shoulder, at the lower left of the picture, "grows" upwards to the river, melding Walpole with the rest of the picture. In this way, the background and the sitter exist on the same plane like pieces of a jigsaw.

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<sup>401</sup> David Young Kim, *Groundwork: A History of the Renaissance Picture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2022), 49-50.

<sup>402</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>403</sup> Wendy Baron and Richard Shone, eds., *Sickert: Paintings* (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 1992), 302.

<sup>404</sup> *Ibid.*, 302.

This emphasis on the background may have stemmed from Sickert's dissatisfaction with the thin backgrounds of his master Whistler, and a preference for backgrounds of "sumptuous character."<sup>405</sup> In a 1922 writing, he took the "lincrusta Walton of a good design" as an ideal background, praising that it can last long and catch light and shade.<sup>406</sup> Lincrusta was a patented wallpaper designed in 1877 by Frederick Walton; it features deep emboss of exquisite pattern and enduring strength, achieved through the slow drying process of linseed oil that covers the surface of the wallpaper. It is thus notable that Sickert borrowed commercial and practical product as the example for proper background, and, the eye-catching, distinctly designed background of Walpole's portrait is intentional for lasting and practical purposes.

In fact, Sickert's earlier works give a clue. His *Self-Portrait* (1897, fig. 2.41) presents him in front of the Ponte della Paglia bridge in Venice. This is a drawing in pen and ink, but the choice of a profile perspective in closed contours and hatching resembles a woodcut. Indeed, the inscription at the bottom left, "Sickert inv. et del" ("Sickert designed and drew"), is a mark typical of printmakers. It suggests that this drawing was made as a print, and expresses his understanding of the work as something that could be versioned.

Sickert was in Venice during 1895 and 1896, where he made many paintings and experimented with the different effects of printing. It is reasonable to suggest that by depicting himself in the style of a woodcut—an inherently reproductive art—Sickert extends his interest in printmaking at this time to the drawing. Simultaneously, this drawing is like a name card to promote his trade, as from this montage of figure and landscape, we read the message of "Sickert, the painter of Venetian scenes."

Similar montage strategies may be observed in woodcut portraiture by Sickert's contemporaries. The French writer Octave Uzanne (1851–1931) commissioned the Swiss artist Félix Vallotton (1858–1925) to produce twelve portraits for his periodical *L'Art et l'Idée*, published in 1892. Vallotton's sitters include Baudelaire, Schumann,

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<sup>405</sup> "Background for Pictures," *The Times*, April 2, 1935, reprinted in Robins, *op. cit.*, 674.

<sup>406</sup> *Ibid.*

and the writer Paul Verlaine. Notably, there is also a self-portrait by Vallotton (1891, fig. 2.42), which appears as the frontispiece of Uzanne's article on the artist, published in the journal. This woodcut self-portrait shows Vallotton against a landscape, with the background showing a clear flattening effect. Since this is a woodcut, the background and the figure are treated similarly, and the clouds and sunlight seem to be on the surface of the image rather than receding into the distance. Vallotton's self-portrait was created by appropriating different images: the source of the head is from a photograph (fig. 2.43), while the background is possibly an imagined view of Lausanne in Vallotton's native Switzerland.<sup>407</sup> The portrait employing montage thus introduces the most salient features of Vallotton himself, creating a summary portrait with straightforward messages, suitable for the casual glances of the periodical's readers. and demonstrates the suitability of woodcut portraiture as a means to produce images for mass reproduction.

The situation of the sitter against a background in Sickert's and Vallotton's woodcuts is in two ways reminiscent of the positioning of sitter and background in the portrait of Walpole. Firstly, they share a pictorial language. The woodcut aesthetic is inherently flat since, generally speaking, the process of carving woodcuts mainly distinguishes between parts to be left in relief and parts to be carved out. Since this process applies equally to both figure and ground, the result is an absence of pictorial depth, and thus an absence of a sense of hierarchy between a central focus (usually figures) and a background. This differs from painting, where there is typically a hierarchical relationship of depth between the background and the more important elements of a work. However, in the portrait of Walpole, there is little attempt to create an illusionistic unity. As such, this work demonstrates the application of a woodcut-inspired approach to painting.

Secondly, the painting and the woodcuts share an approach to situating the sitter against a backdrop that relates to their work and hometown, using fragments of the

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<sup>407</sup> Mary Anne Stevens and Ashley St. James, *The Graphic Work of Félix Vallotton, 1865–1925* (London: Arts Council, 1976), 20–21.

sitter's life to build up an understanding of them. Given Sickert's habit of placing his sitters in environments that have a connection to them, it is questionable whether the background in Walpole's portrait is merely the immediate surroundings of the artist's studio. Indeed, if the background were a painting by Lessore, Sickert would not have needed to unify the lighting sources of the sitter and backdrop—the original contre-jour effect of the girl in Lessore's painting has been altered so as to light her from in front of the picture, just as Walpole himself is lit. Moreover, Sickert adds two imagined children to the right of Walpole—figures who are not shown in Lessore's painting. In fact, the background of children playing recalls the subject of a trilogy of novels that had been newly completed by Walpole himself at this time. In 1928, Walpole had just finished the series of books comprising *Jeremy* (1919), *Jeremy and Hamlet* (1923), and *Jeremy at Crale* (1927), a trilogy, based on Walpole's childhood, that concerns the life of a boy brought up in an English town in the 1890s. The novels' protagonist, Jeremy, shares Walpole's year of birth, and, in the first book, Walpole constantly shifts between first-person descriptions of his own childhood and that of the young Jeremy. There are also plots concerning Jeremy's sister, which may recall the relationship between Walpole and his own sister. In this sense, then, Sickert's portrait of Walpole is at the same time about Walpole and his works, as it is about Walpole and his own memories.

It is not known whether Sickert read Walpole's books, and yet, considering his interest in literature and his personal friendship with Walpole, he is highly likely to have done. This portrait was made in return for Walpole's having written the preface for Sickert's exhibition at the Savile Gallery earlier in 1928, within which he praised the illustrative quality of Sickert's painting, as the “novelist's drawing.”<sup>408</sup> The biographical character of this portrait may have been a response to these comments, and the portrait also serves a promotional purpose for the writer's works, and has commercial potential.

Placing the subject within a context relevant to their life is an effective means of

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<sup>408</sup> Sturgis, *Walter Sickert: A Life*, 565.

conveying the sitter's personal story, and a further example illustrates how this aspect of Sickert's painting was seized upon by publishers. In the same period that he made the *Self-Portrait*, Sickert made a portrait of his friend Israel Zangwill (1898–99, fig. 2.44), in which, again, he abruptly places the sitter against a background, in this case the Venetian ghetto. As discussed earlier in this chapter, Zangwill was a Jewish writer who rose to prominence in the 1890s with his novel *The Child of the Ghetto*. In this sense, the choice of the ghetto background becomes a reminder of both Zangwill's novel and his personal history as a Jewish writer. Notably, the *Portrait of Zangwill* was later selected as the cover image (fig. 2.45) for a 1957 biography of the author, written by Joseph Leftwich. The biography's editor astutely selected this image to suggest the writer's cultural background and his renowned works about the ghetto, underscoring the function of biographies as explorations of an individual's identity and history. The biography would have been destined for libraries, bookstores, households, and various other institutions, suggesting that the *Portrait of Zangwill* transcends its status as a mere painting and holds potential within the sphere of public history. In this context, the amalgamation of the subject and the ghetto background transforms the portrait into an illustration of history.

Together, these examples of portraits montaged against particular places, and the circulation of the *Portrait of Zangwill* on the book cover, evoke the literary montage technique elucidated by Walter Benjamin. Indeed, it is Benjamin's method that has prompted my own categorisation of Sickert's technique as montage, not least since, particularly in his autobiographical works, Benjamin released the potential of montage to construct identity and to elicit narratives. In his *Berlin Childhood* (1938), Benjamin uses montage-like, abrupt, and fragmentary techniques, and by writing in this way, he shows that the flow of memories is never ordered. Benjamin begins with his experience in Berlin from the age of three, describing the residential area, square, parks, schools, theatres, and cafes that he visited with his friends. Rather than being narratively constant, his memories are marked topographically.<sup>409</sup> In *A Berlin*

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<sup>409</sup> See Carol Jacobs, "Walter Benjamin: Topographically Speaking," *Studies in Romanticism* 31, no. 4

*Chronicle*, he claims that “I have long, indeed for years, played with the idea of setting out the sphere of life—bios—graphically on a map.”<sup>410</sup> Places and spaces matter in his writing, and he designs his memoir as “a matter of space, moments, the discontinuous.”<sup>411</sup>

Benjamin’s literary montage suggests that history itself is fragmented, and that history and geography are closely knit, or even synonymous. Biography, as personal history, also relates to geography, suggesting a unique relationship between figure and space. Sickert creates a visual biography in the manner of Benjamin: the components are montaged together without transition, just as fragments of memories are pieced together. Indeed, when looks at a portrait, apart from wonder “who” it is, there also are the questions of “Whence, where, under what circumstances, and by what means,” which are all about the ‘backgrounds’ of the sitter, biographically, situationally, and pictorially.<sup>412</sup> The traditional concept of pictorial unity, or the idea of a background as being pictorially beneath a figure, is replaced by the search for a wholeness within fragments and discontinuities.

To the extent that it cannot be verified, the above interpretation of the relation between sitter and background in the Walpole portrait must remain speculative. However, it is the sense of uncertainty that is so characteristic of the painting, and which is itself brought about by the montage technique, that in my view prompts such unanswerable questions. The pictorial unity of the painting as an illusion disappears, and the stark edges of each component pester viewers to consider the relation between the parts and the whole. These characteristics, for Willerslev and Suhr, constitute a “crack”—an instability of meaning, generated from the juxtapositions of the montage, that ensure that the work can never be the simple sum of its individual components.<sup>413</sup> These are also the aesthetic that Sickert’s painting shows, which separates his

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(1992): 501–24.

<sup>410</sup> Walter Benjamin, “A Berlin Chronicle,” in *One-Way Street and Other Writings* (London: Verso, 1979), 295.

<sup>411</sup> *Ibid.*, 316.

<sup>412</sup> Kim, *Groundwork*, 7.

<sup>413</sup> Suhr and Willerslev, *Transcultural Montage*, 13.

understanding of “background” in portraiture from traditional discussion. Yet, Sickert’s montage is still different from the more familiar collage painting. The examples of Walpole’s and Zangwill’s portraits still have a concrete narrative and a relatively stable meaning by adding components to the portrait. The work to which I shall now turn better illustrates Sickert’s use of montage to reflect and view in a deconstructive and disruptive way, and that this technique is a parody and satire of the montage techniques of his peers.

In 1932, Sickert created *La Favorita [After Kenny Meadows]* (c. 1932, fig. 2.46), based on the composition of an illustration by Kenny Meadows (1856, fig. 2.47) from *The Illustrated Byron* (1856).<sup>414</sup> Viewed in comparison with Meadows’s illustration, Sickert’s pictorial strategies become easier to discern. Similar to the portrait of Walpole, *La Favorita* adds a background with horizon line to the figure, suggesting that both paintings were created on the basis that the figure is ‘grounded’ in the background. Yet what is more striking is the disruption of the continuity of composition, which jumbles the body of the woman with the background. Her feather headdresses are painted with the same greyish blue as the architecture in the background; a similar patch of colour is visible in her bosom, and yet there is no shaded area in the equivalent part of Meadows’s illustration, so the colour in the painting is not there to create volume. Rather, she seems pressed into the background. The triangular shape, possibly “representing” the sails of a boat, rests on the arms at the lower left, reinforcing the confusion of space. The whole painting seems loosely knitted and out of focus. The beauty mark, which draws attention to the face in Meadows’s illustration, is removed by Sickert. All of these alterations suggest a change in the focus and interest of the painting, away from the representation of the figure according to a coherent visual logic, and towards a deconstruction of mimetic pictorial space.

This manner of composition is different from the earlier form of montage in the

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<sup>414</sup> This illustration by Meadows is one of the “source” illustrations I have located for the *Echoes* series. I consider the production of the series in the fourth chapter of this thesis.

Walpole portrait, where Sickert mainly adds components together. In *La Favorita*, Sickert first makes connections between different components, setting the woman in a landscape, and then denies them, by allowing each component to blend and intersect with every other. The destructive feel of the composition is reinforced by the rendering of the woman as a misfit, since her attire appears out of place amid the foggy, possibly industrial, setting. Meadows's illustration was printed in the pages of canto XIV of *Don Juan*, and the woman's side curls and corseted waistline, both popular in the early nineteenth century, suggest her to be a contemporary of Byron and Meadows of the 1820s. Her dress further indicates that she is a person who does not need to work, and, indeed, in canto XIV of *Don Juan*, the primary female character is Lady Adeline Amundeville, a high-society figure who is idle and lacks a purpose in life. Such a character appearing in front of a busy industrial backdrop appears ironic as well as incongruous.

Therefore, montage here becomes another means for Sickert to represent dislocated elements. Moreover, Sickert also employs a hidden pun in this painting to express his artistic ideas. The painting's technique is reminiscent of the Italian Futurist version of montage, of "interpenetration and synthesis."<sup>415</sup> Sickert had expressed his views on Futurism extensively in the 1910s, while working for the *New Age*, decrying it as merely "cutting up and shuffling"<sup>416</sup> the design. However, the composition of *La Favorita* involves just this kind of patching and interpenetration. Therefore, this painting may be seen as a response to the new Italian art. Additionally, this woman of the 1820s appears to be on the verge of disappearing, a further effect created by the montage technique. This speaks to Sickert's understanding of Futurism's representation of motion, not as the depiction of its effects, but the creation of an anachronistic context in order to generate an unstable feeling. This sense of anachronism also comes from the ambiguity of the category in which the painting is situated. Strictly speaking, this is not a portrait of a specific real person,

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<sup>415</sup> William Chapin Seitz, *The Art of Assemblage* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1961), 26.

<sup>416</sup> Walter Sickert, "A Monthly Chronicle," *Burlington Magazine*, January 1916, reprinted in Robins, *op. cit.*, 401.

but rather a ‘found sitter,’ and Sickert challenges the genre of portraiture through the technique of montage. The viewer can disregard the sitter’s identity and come to see the painting as a pure pictorial experimentation with space.

Evidence for this can be found in Sickert’s title for the painting. The painting’s source is an illustration for *Don Juan*, but Sickert titles it *La Favorita*, which is the title of a grand opera that premiered in 1840.<sup>417</sup> Among the many versions of this opera, Sickert deliberately used the Italian version for his title. Furthermore, Byron’s *Don Juan* was written in Italy. Considering his interest in puns, Sickert may have intentionally referenced Italy in order to emphasise his role as an English author in the country, as Byron did.

In both cases it can be seen that Sickert is aware of the technique of montage, and is perhaps more inclined to use the first kind of literary montage to establish meaning; however, both cases exemplify a kind of uncertainties of meaning that Sickert deliberately sought to instil in his paintings, which sustains my view that, Sickert’s art, and particularly his later work, epitomises the notion of montage. The “crack” that occurs in the montage technique can, I believe, also be interpreted as the irreconcilable differences that occur during the process of transformation from one medium to another (from print to paint), which Sickert exploits and as a result creates effects such as the juxtaposition of colour and monochrome, or the discontinuous space, and thus leads to something that is ineffable and lost in the process of translation. This form of montage connects with the framework of print culture that I have introduced, primarily through its deliberate challenge to the notions of continuity and wholeness. It is especially notable how printed materials, amenable to dissection and rearrangement, and considering the relationship between background and figure differently from conventional portraiture, facilitate these experimental endeavours. The concept of painterliness in traditional painting is juxtaposed here with the pervasive influence of print culture.

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<sup>417</sup> The grand opera *La Favorita* was composed by Gaetano Donizetti, based on the story of the King of Castile, Alfonso XI, and his mistress Leonora, against the background of the political turmoil of Moorish Spain and the life of the Catholic Church.

## Chapter Three: Painting the News—Topicality, Motifs, and Audiences

In 1906, the French satirical newspaper *L'Assiette au Beurre* published a caricature (fig. 3.1) by Max Radiguet (1816–1899), showing a crowd composed of a woman, three men (including a police officer), and four children, gathering in front of a kiosk and reading an advertisement poster: “The Crime of Rue Chose in Today’s Journal.”<sup>418</sup> The advertisement depicts a woman lying with her upper body naked on the muddy ground. The streetlight beside her and the silhouette of buildings in the distance reveal the setting as a city. Her legs are splayed before the viewers’ gaze in an inappropriate manner. Drawn to the image, the two male viewers nearest the poster—a well-off man wearing a top hat and a working-class man wearing a cap—are shown grinning. The woman and children seem a little surprised but maintain their composure. The policeman on the left, while keeping his duty in maintaining order, also grins at the poster. At the bottom of the illustration is inscribed “la presse est le grand éducateur de la masse,”<sup>419</sup> while under the newspaper title are the hand-painted words “Faits Divers,” which, abstracting the news of the crime, refer to a category of brief, lurid news story that fills the columns of newspapers, often concerning trivial and tragic things happening to ordinary people.

Radiguet’s illustration provides several pieces of information. Firstly, *faits divers*—a journalistic category that is hard to classify but is usually printed under the rubric of “Photonews” or “miscellaneous”—had become a prominent feature of French newspapers by the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>420</sup> The content of a *fait divers* is usually sensational, so it is to an extent a counterpart of the English press’s

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<sup>418</sup> My reference to this image is indebted to Gregory Shaya’s study of the mass public in France in the nineteenth century, in which it serves to illustrate the figure of the *badaud*, or bystander, in French mass culture. Gregory Shaya, “The *Flâneur*, the *Badaud*, and the Making of a Mass Public in France, circa 1860–1910,” *The American Historical Review* 109, no. 1 (2004): 41–77.

<sup>419</sup> “The press is the great educator of the masses.”

<sup>420</sup> For more on *fait divers*, see Roland Barthes, “Structure of the Fait-Divers,” in *Critical Essays* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1972), 185–94.

sensationalistic interest in news of murders, shipwrecks, seduction, and fraud, concomitant with the rise of the “New Journalism.”<sup>421</sup> Secondly, Radiguet not only mocks the rise of the *fait divers*, but also confirms that the mass reading of audiences is crucial in the making of the phenomenon, by showing the bodies of the onlookers—belonging to different groups and classes—all physically drawn to the sensational headline and image. They are struck with excitement, embarrassment, or fear, revealing that the audience’s participation and reaction are integral to its construction. These two aspects of the phenomenon of the *fait divers*—showing a reciprocity of fugitive sensation news and their audience, and the phenomenon’s relation to Sickert’s news-related paintings, are the focus of this chapter.

Sickert is known for his appropriations of news stories into his paintings, particularly sensational stories such as the Camden Town murder, the Tichborne Claimant case, and the many illustrated news of the 1930s. Baron, writing in 2007, was the first to provide a good description of this aspect of Sickert’s art: “he milked topicality” and “appreciated the reward for publicity.”<sup>422</sup> More recently, Daniels has further developed our understanding of topicality in Sickert’s “press art”—the paintings “copied” directly from news photos—by considering Sickert’s desire to see how newspapers would respond to his paintings and the subjects they depicted. Baron and Daniels see the attention Sickert gained from painting news events, and imply that his preoccupation of ‘subject matter’ is better understood as ‘topicality.’ Indeed, topicality bears a temporal aspect, as Gombrich defining it as “specific reference or allusion to events of the time, to things in the news, as it were.”<sup>423</sup> Thomas Woodhouse defines the presence of current or near-current events in painting as

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<sup>421</sup> For more on Victorian sensationalism in newspapers and popular culture, see L. Perry Curtis, “Sensation News,” in *Jack the Ripper and the London Press* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001), 65–82.

<sup>422</sup> Wendy Baron, “The Process of Invention. Interrelated or Interdependent: Sickert’s Drawings and Paintings of Intimate Figure Subjects,” in *Walter Sickert: The Camden Town Nudes*, ed. Barnaby Wright (London: Courtauld Gallery, 2007), 42.

<sup>423</sup> E. H. Gombrich, “Topos and Topicality,” Annual Lecture of the Society for Renaissance Studies (University College London, January 10, 1975). Transcript held at the Gombrich Archive (website), <https://gombrich.co.uk/papers-and-articles/>, accessed December 4, 2023.

“topicalities” in art.<sup>424</sup> He argues that topics presented in paintings will be interpreted in various ways by different viewers of the time, and that there can be no one true interpretation of a painting.<sup>425</sup> It is essential here to note that the discussion and formation of topicality is facilitated by print. Indeed, readers, organised by a specific text and its circulation, form “a public,” or an “interpretative community”—a group of individuals who share a knowledge of the text when discussing the topic in question.<sup>426</sup> My discussion of Sickert’s news paintings will borrow the concept of topicality as employed by these scholars. My immediate aim in this chapter is to explore how topicality is generated in Sickert’s paintings, and how the wider print culture, in different ways, but particularly through the visual appearance and haptic quality of print images, facilitates this topicality.

I will examine topicality in Sickert’s art by way of three topics derived from news sources of the early twentieth century. These include the Camden Town Murder, the portrayal of Black actors in Shakespeare plays, and the miner’s strike of the 1930s. All three of these events were sensational, receiving extensive coverage in newspapers, and are among a broader array of social themes of the time that sparked much discussion. I propose that Sickert’s paintings, created in response to these news events, reflect varying relationships with their respective “sources.” The evolution of this relationship is contingent on the specific circumstances of each case and is influenced by the development of the news media itself (such as the shift from engraving to photography).

One of the broader questions aroused by the issue of topicality involve the transience of topic and the eternity of art. This issue is based on the fact that the topicalities in Sickert’s paintings were normally added after the paintings were made. An example of topicality as something additional is *The Prussians in Belgium* (c.

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<sup>424</sup> Woodhouse Thomas, “Viewing Abraham Solomon (1823–62): Topicalities in the Paintings of a London Jewish Artist” (PhD. Diss, University of York, 2019), 19.

<sup>425</sup> *Ibid.*, 18–19.

<sup>426</sup> For more on the organisation of a “public” by text, see Michael Warner, “Publics and Counterpublics,” *Public Culture* 14, no.1 (2002): 49–90; for a discussion of the “interpretative community,” see Beegan, *The Mass Image*, 2–3.

1912, fig. 3.2), a painting of figures in an interior. Baron believes that the title was added after the outbreak of the Great War.<sup>427</sup> One review, in the *Daily Telegraph* in 1915, commented that “with his usual dexterity Mr Walter Sickert presents in a sordid interior a half-nude, weary-eyed girl seated on a bed, and with her a bald-headed elderly German of more or less Bismarckian type, sitting at ease as he smokes a cigarette. To this ravishing love-idyll he gives the title ‘The Prussians in Belgium’!!”<sup>428</sup> I believe that this comment aptly illustrates the relationship between the mutable and the immutable in the painting: the confrontation of the figures within the image is its preexisting, unchanging aspect, while topicality remains subject to change. Sickert’s paintings frequently feature such visual and psychological confrontations between figures (as the three cases in this chapter will show), a pictorial interest that previous scholars have considered to be primarily formal in nature, and often as contrasting or sitting uneasily with the works’ narrative elements.<sup>429</sup> However, instead of viewing the relationship between formal interest and narrative as irreconcilable, I propose that this pictorial interest—or, in other words, the works’ formal aspect—serves as a foundational element in Sickert’s art, a timeless *motif*. In this sense, the subject matter is not a specific, verbally expressible story, but rather a motif with narrative potential, and that this motif therefore possesses a shared significance in both visual and narrative dimensions, reminiscent of the literary concept of “topos,” which prompts my own use of “motif.” In ancient Greek, “topos” means “place.” As philologist Ernst Robert Curtis suggests, topos, in rhetoric, is “something anonymous,” which “flows into the author’s quill as a literary reminiscence...and has a temporal and spatial omnipresence, like a visual *motif*.”<sup>430</sup> Curtis’s view echoes Susan Sidlauskas’s comment on Sickert’s art, that “a figure had virtually no interest for Sickert as a subject for painting until he could situate it

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<sup>427</sup> Baron, *Sickert: Paintings and Drawings*, 396.

<sup>428</sup> Quoted in Baron, *Sickert: Paintings and Drawings*, 396.

<sup>429</sup> For a summative discussion of the narrative/formal binary, see Rough, “Walter Sickert and the Theatre,” 4–5.

<sup>430</sup> Andrew Piper, “Topoi (Dispersion),” in *Enumerations: Data and Literary Study* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018), 66.

properly.”<sup>431</sup> In other words, the topos, or motif, functions as a constant and timeless container, or location, to encapsulate various topicalities. This chapter’s study is based on such juxtaposition of these two characteristics in his paintings, the enduring motif and the changing topicality borrowed from the news. I introduce “motif” here for two reasons: firstly, to clarify that the topicality of news, as I will discuss, cannot be reduced to stories; and, secondly, as a prelude to a different set of topoi, such as the “idyll,” as shown in Sickert’s later works, which I discuss in the final chapter.

In studying audiences and their relation to news and paintings, another broader but inevitable issue is about the discussion of the different audiences for popular and high culture. Radiguet’s illustration seems to imagine that the *faits divers* are attractive to a specific group, one that appears to be different to the kind of public organised by another cultural material, for example, modern art, as visualised in Spencer Gore’s painting *Gauguin and Connoisseurs* (1911, fig. 3.3). Gore’s painting shows a specific modern art audience: the visitors to Gauguin’s exhibition at the Stafford Gallery in 1911. Well-dressed gentlemen and gentlewomen prowl around the gallery to view Gauguin’s paintings, with brochures in hand. Most of them keep their distance from the paintings hanging on the wall, as if they are deep in thought or lost in the atmosphere of art. One viewer is close to a painting, poking their head to examine its details.

This audience seems to be a different group from the audience of *faits divers*. They are called “connoisseurs,” meaning that they not only look at the paintings, but also try to understand and interpret them using their own knowledge and taste, rather than being a “mass” to be educated. They don’t communicate with each other, but appear as if lost in aesthetic experience, as per Fry’s ideal modern art audience. The space for their “viewing” is also an undisturbed one, compared to the haphazard street where the newspaper advertisement poster is read.

In this light, what is the effect of Sickert’s depictions of low culture upon his

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<sup>431</sup> Susan Sidlauskas, “Walter Sickert’s *Ennui*,” in *Body, Place, and Self in Nineteenth-Century Painting* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 130.

audiences? Radiguet's illustration and Gore's painting each also imply a different type of content producer: newspaper reporters and artists. Where did Sickert position himself in relation to these polemics? To consider these questions is to explore the realities of modern art. Scholars have focused on the appropriation of different forms of popular culture by modern art,<sup>432</sup> but why does such appropriation necessarily equate to art's modernisation (and suggest a temporal lag in modern art)? And what kinds of appropriation are made? How did Sickert consider appropriation throughout his career? Moreover, besides appropriation, how did print culture in general inform the artist's choices in other respects? Can we discern a general attitude on Sickert's part towards "high" and "low," and on what basis? Low culture has usually been a contingent strategy for advanced art practice (such as in French Impressionism), to be abandoned once the art accomplishes its purpose—the independence of its medium, as Thomas Crow has argued.<sup>433</sup> Was Sickert in the same situation as the French Impressionists? How did he position his own works in the art world at the turn of the twentieth century? The story is often told of popular culture's incursion upon fine art, borrowing its content. However, taking questions of readership into consideration, the relationship becomes much more complicated. Is "avant-garde" a self-sustaining concept, or is it dependent on external conditions, such as audience?

Exploring the topicalities and audiences of Sickert's news paintings will help illuminate these questions. At the same time, this chapter contributes to the thesis as a whole by exploring Sickert's use of different visual strategies drawn from print culture (especially newspapers and postcards), to show how they affect our understanding of his art. There is an intertextuality at play in Sickert's appropriation of topicalities. Therefore, my focus in discussing these topics is on their appearance in print media, and how their mediation and mediatisation by print culture affects people's perceptions of them. I examine different print materials to show the visual options available to artists as well as the context of interpretation for viewers.

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<sup>432</sup> Daniels, "Walter Sickert and Popular Culture," abstract and *passim*.

<sup>433</sup> Crow, *Modern Art in the Common Culture*, 3–6.

### 3.1 The Camden Town case: drawing for an audience to see and touch

Sickert's most well-known appropriation of a topical news story is the Camden Town murder paintings, generally held to comprise three paintings: *Summer Afternoon* or *What Shall We Do for the Rent?* (c. 1907–9, fig. 3.4), *The Camden Town Murder* or *What Shall We Do about the Rent?* (1908, fig. 3.5), and *L’Affaire de Camden Town* (1909, fig. 3.6). The relation between the series and the murder case has been heavily researched and discussed, so I will only briefly summarise the case here. It concerns the murder of a young lady, Emily Dimmock, on the morning of September 16, 1907, in the working-class district of Camden Town in north London. The case is curious because it was unsolved—the murderer was never caught. This led to much speculation as to the motive and details of the murder. A generally held view is that Dimmock was a prostitute who was killed in her lodging either by a client or a boyfriend. The case was heavily reported in newspapers for a long time, especially in the first few months after the murder occurred. Besides borrowing the news story, the Camden Town murder paintings also suggest an important relation between print culture and modern painting, described by Lisa Tickner as a “newspaper aesthetic.”<sup>434</sup> This refers to the way that neither newspaper reportage nor Sickert's paintings illuminate the details and facts of the murder, but instead just report it nonchalantly.<sup>435</sup> Indeed, there is an ambiguity in Sickert's murder paintings. Though the titles and the inclusion of a man and a naked woman in a room help to associate the paintings with murder, and possibly lust murder, there are no clear signs of brutality or violence to confirm the meaning of these paintings. For Tickner, this ambiguity echoes the “ultimate unknowability” of the news.<sup>436</sup> Tickner's “newspaper aesthetics” is

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<sup>434</sup> Tickner, *Modern Life & Modern Subjects*, 41. Rebecca Daniels also relates the murder case to the popular detective novels of the turn of the twentieth century. See chapter two of Daniels, “Walter Sickert and Popular Culture.”

<sup>435</sup> Tickner, *Modern Life & Modern Subjects*, 41–42.

<sup>436</sup> *Ibid.*

enlightening, and suggests a way to understand modern painting in its relation to mass media.<sup>437</sup> However, her newspaper aesthetic presents a generic perspective on newspapers as a whole, and does not attend to crime news as a particular genre. For one thing, crime news is inherently retrospective because crime cannot be predicted. As Hills and Schwartz have argued, crime reports are characterised by fragmentation, with visual representations relying on existing illustrations and thus tending to be repetitive.<sup>438</sup> Furthermore, crime news images are often constructed from the assemblage of images from various sources and spanning extended periods of time, thus showing a concocted nature.<sup>439</sup> Building on this perspective, I propose that crime news images—in this case, the reports of the Camden Town murder—possess the capacity to provoke viewers’ associations in multiple ways. It is this inherent uncertainty that provides the context for understanding Sickert’s paintings.

To set the scene for the production and reception of Sickert’s paintings, I begin by analysing how reports of the Camden Town murder reflect this inherent uncertainty and how they link to specific artistic traditions. I will draw on newspapers specialising in crime reporting, such as the *Illustrated Police News (IPN)*. Concurrently, though I agree with the view that Sickert intentionally leveraged “murder” to enhance his fame and publicity, I argue that his reference to the “murder” goes beyond mere appropriation of the title. Rather, it involves the gradual development of visual strategies to captivate his audience in a similar way to the demands of sensational news itself, culminating in what I refer to as “topicality.” I will demonstrate that Sickert precisely captures the audience’s attention in a manner akin to newspapers’ coverage of murder, according to the premise that a murder and a murder in print are different phenomena. Additionally, I draw on the tactile qualities

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<sup>437</sup> For example, it could be related to the narcotising dysfunction of the mass media, which, as media scholars Robert Merton and Paul Lazarsfeld have argued, causes mass political apathy by offering a plethora of products that pay superficial attention to social problems. See Tamar Liebes, Elihu Katz, Avri Orloff, and John Durham Peters, eds., *Canonic Texts in Media Research: Are There Any? Should There Be? How About These?* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003), 27–28.

<sup>438</sup> Hill and Schwartz, *Getting the Picture*, 142.

<sup>439</sup> *Ibid.*, 142.

of the paintings, a prominent aspect of Sickert's artworks in general, to examine their relation to broader visual culture, and, specifically, to illegal nude prints. Finally, the audience is worth discussing in this context. Given Sickert's desire to increase his publicity, among which groups was he concerned to spread his name? This question arises because Sickert mostly depicted working-class people, a demographic not conventionally associated with the audience for modern art. Therefore, the relationship between sensational news and modern art's audiences merits further exploration.

### 3.1.1 Newspaper reportage of the murder

Not every press outlet reported the Camden Town murder case in the same way, or covered the story to the same extent. The Camden Town murder was popular in mid-market titles such as the *Daily Mail*, the *Daily Mirror*, the *Illustrated Police News*, and some provincial newspapers such as *Hull Daily*, while high-quality newspapers such as the *Times* and the *Illustrated London News* showed less interest in it.

The manner in which newspapers reported the murder is noteworthy. Though newspapers claim to be impartial and truthful, they typically fail to keep their promise. The *Daily Mail* followed the case nearly every day, but narrated it in a subjective tone rather than an affirmative and objective one. Each day's article began by reiterating Dimmock's death, repeating the fact of the murder as stable content, which readers would be accustomed to finding in its fixed place in the newspaper. This makes the Dimmock case appear less like a single crime and more similar to a serialised novel. Notably, a generalisation of the case is evident insofar as the *Daily Mail* relates it to another sensational and unsolved crime, the Great Coram Street murder of the ballerina Harriet Buswell in 1872.<sup>440</sup> By mentioning another murder story, *Daily Mail* mystifies the Camden Town murder, approaching it in a

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<sup>440</sup> "Camden Town Murder Mystery," *Daily Mail*, September 18, 1907, 5. *The Observer* also mentions the Great Coram Street murder in its report of the Camden Town murder. See "Camden Town Murder," *The Observer*, September 15, 1907, 5.

predetermined tone. The murder is no longer a fact, but a typified sensational novel whose circumstances can be transplanted to any crime.

The newspaper illustrations of the murder, on the other hand, are hybrid expressions of both factual and conventional representation (especially in their representation of women). The *Illustrated Police News (IPN)* and the *Illustrated Police Budget (IPB)* use montaged illustrations (fig. 3.7 and fig. 3.8) to tell the story. Both illustrations are composed of a central image depicting the discovery of the victim, and some vignettes that attempt to demonstrate her identity.<sup>441</sup> It is the incorporation of these vignettes that increases the factual character of the report because they are either realistic drawings or reproduced photographs. The vignettes thus aim to be objective and trustworthy, acting as labels to relate the elements of the murder, its characters and setting. Both newspaper illustrations are composed to tell the facts, as if in writing.

The central scene also accords with the description of the crime in the *IPB*: “The poor girl lying naked across the bed ... The bed was in disorder and the clothes were flung back ... A congealing pool of it [blood] lay on the floor.”<sup>442</sup> However, this description is not merely truthful reportage. In Victorian news of crimes, it is common to encounter clinical details of the victims, in a manner that is sometimes called “gorenography”; and, as Curtis argues, for prurient readers this gorenography was “the chocolate coating on old morality.”<sup>443</sup> In this sense, the textual and visual details of the murder report appear for the sake of display.

Indeed, due to the retrospective nature of crime news, the overall effect of the visual representation of the murder is conventional and literary, reinforcing the nature of the murder news image as an attraction in itself. Stylistically, the central picture is

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<sup>441</sup> Lisa Tickner discusses these two illustrations as ways for Sickert to reconstitute the pictorial context and choices available for his creation of the Camden Town murder painting. See Tickner, *Modern Life & Modern Subjects*, 25–26.

<sup>442</sup> “The Camden Town Horror,” *Illustrated Police Budget*, September 21, 1907, British Newspaper Library, Colindale, London.

<sup>443</sup> Curtis, *Jack the Ripper*, 77.

different from the vignettes, and provides a generic image of domestic murder.<sup>444</sup> For contemporary audiences, the image of the victim in the *IPN* illustration would recall the archetype of the fallen/dead woman, a very common subject in the art of the *fin de siècle*, and in which the purity of women is the central interest. Ignoring the blood on her body, the woman appears less like the victim of a murder than the kind of pale, well-off, slim, and fragile woman that has many precursors in art of the period. Lucy Hermann's *Albine* (fig. 3.9) is one example.<sup>445</sup> "Albine" is the name of the female protagonist in Zola's novel *The Sinful Priest* (1875). Having fallen in love with a priest who abandons her, Albine decides to die in a deathbed made of flowers. Hermann's painting represents Albine in the flower bed, her feminine characteristics emphasised: her skin is smooth and fair; her body twists in an elegant pose; and her legs dangle from the bed, with thin fabric partly covering her body while also revealing its curves and flexibility.

Pictorially, the slim and pale lady in the *IPN* just looks like Albine, as the lower half of the body is covered by sheets and the legs dangle from the bed, while her small face contrasts with the headdress to accentuate her femininity. These representations of Dimmock and Albine accord with the ideals for women in the late nineteenth century: pale, skinny, afflicted by consumption, and always sleeping or on the verge of death.<sup>446</sup> According to Dijkstra, audiences in the late nineteenth century would equate death and sleeping when viewing such depictions of women,<sup>447</sup> and the weakness or dying state of women is related to women's purity. This could be because death was an option for a woman who lost her innocence before marriage,<sup>448</sup> or

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<sup>444</sup> For modes of depiction of murder scenes in newspapers, see Alice Smalley, "Representations of Crime, Justice, and Punishment in the Popular Press: A Study of the Illustrated Police News, 1864–1938" (PhD. Diss, Open University, 2017).

<sup>445</sup> This painting was exhibited at the salon of the Société des Beaux-Arts in 1899.

<sup>446</sup> Discussing types of the iconography of misogyny, Bram Dijkstra suggests the invalid female as a Christ-like martyr who consumes herself for the benefit of her male partner. See Dijkstra, *Idols of Perversity*, 25–63.

<sup>447</sup> Dijkstra, *Idols of Perversity*, 63. Also, the popular practice of photographing the dead as sleeping may have contributed to the equation of sleeping with death.

<sup>448</sup> Gretchen Braun, "'Untarnished Purity': Ethics, Agency, and the Victorian Fallen Woman." *Women's*

because the physical weakness meant spiritual and moral virtues. A woman's purity and innocence were determined by her physical condition, and would bring substantial benefit for her male partner or family members. In 1854, Coventry Patmore coined the term "Angel in the House," in his poem of that title, as a model of the domestic goddess,<sup>449</sup> while John Ruskin interpreted the purity of women as their capacity to sanctify the home as a refuge for their menfolk.<sup>450</sup> In a word, women were valued in terms of their spiritual benefits for men. This notion of purity developed in practice into the purification campaign in society in the 1880s, aiming to making society cleaner and healthier, which included the regulation of sexual morality.<sup>451</sup> This purity campaign was reflected in an emphasis on physical hygiene, as well, as demonstrated in contemporary newspaper soap advertisements. The *Daily Mail* printed the news of the Camden Town murder on 17th September alongside advertisements for soap and other domestic wares, while higher-profile newspapers featured advertisements with images (fig. 3.10).<sup>452</sup> The newspaper imagery of women as physically clean and pure reinforces the interpretation of the *IPN* illustration as representing an idealised woman—weak but clean, pure, and devoted.

Such representations of idealised females were made for displaying. As Elisabeth Bronfen argues, Snow White is a typical model of this type.<sup>453</sup> In an 1886 illustration by Walter Crane (fig. 3.11), Snow White, having fallen unconscious after eating the poisoned apple, is subjected to the gaze of the seven dwarfs and the viewer in a narrow frieze-like space. She is then placed in a transparent glass coffin (fig. 3.12) rather than an opaque wooden one, for the purpose of display. Thus, she becomes goods to be transported as well. The black frame in the *IPN* illustration is

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*Studies* 44, no. 3 (2015): 342–67. 351.

<sup>449</sup> Coventry Patmore, *The Angel in the House* (London: John W. Parker and Son, 1858).

<sup>450</sup> John Ruskin, "Of Queens' Gardens," in *Sesame and Lilies, Three Lectures by John Ruskin* (New York: John W. Lovell Company, 1884), 82–83.

<sup>451</sup> For more on the purity campaign in the 1880s, see Lucy Bland, "'Purifying' the Public World: Feminist Vigilantes in Late Victorian England," *Women's History Review* 1, no. 3 (1992): 397–412.

<sup>452</sup> For more on Lantry and the Pear's advertisement, see Meaghan Clarke, *Fashionability, Exhibition Culture, Gender Politics: Fair Women* (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2020), 64–71.

<sup>453</sup> Elisabeth Bronfen, *Over Her Dead Body* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), 99–106.

just such a “coffin”: it acts as a way to confine the woman; the vignettes are her labels, and she is the idealised woman of virtue. She is dead, and the intruding frames of the vignettes cut the scene at will to reinforce the fact, subjecting the event to the viewers’ aesthetic gaze.

The materialisation of women is followed by consumption. Indeed, the *IPN* illustrations printed as double-page spreads, were intended to be collected and placed upon walls by the contemporary readers, as a work of ‘art’.<sup>454</sup> In this sense, the *IPN* illustration is an emulation of high art, or a kind of what Greenberg called “kitsch”, a stereotyped version of the academic art. And its audiences were emulating their better-off men who hang paintings on walls. The newspaper illustrations go far from being journalistic, as they lack direct contact with the event.

Sickert’s representation of the murder is certainly not of this kind, as he paints from real model. Nonetheless, his paintings, appropriating the murder news, express a ‘journalistic vision’ to reveal the reality of modern life, and show similar desire as the news illustrations to solicit the viewer’s gaze—which accounts for his construction of topicality, as argued in the following.

### 3.1.2 Sickert’s appropriation: from motif to topic, and drawing for viewers

Sickert’s trio of murder paintings were created in the three years from 1907 to 1909, developing from a pictorial interest in the motif to an interest in the sensational topics of the mass media.

The earlier two paintings were made mainly for their pictorial interest. In *Summer Afternoon* (fig. 3.4), the man’s legs form a triangular shape at the lower

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<sup>454</sup> Smalley, “Representations of Crime, Justice, and Punishment in the Popular Press,” 114. For more on the illustration in *IPN*, see Linda Stratmann, *Cruel Deeds and Dreadful Calamities: The Illustrated Police News, 1864–1938* (London: British Library, 2011). Clarke also observed the materialisation of woman in both the collection of fashion plates and the exhibition of fair women. See, Clarke, *Fashionability, Exhibition Culture and Gender Politics*, 66-67.

centre of the painting, with each leg parallel to the seam of the wooden floorboards. This structure fortifies the solid composition. The nude and the bed that she lies on cut across the vertical line formed by the man and the receding floor and thus give the picture an orthogonal structure. The whole picture is carefully designed, showing a geometric balance that is reminiscent of Sickert's interior paintings of Venice. In *The Camden Town Murder* (fig. 3.5), a similar pictorial intention is evident. The left and right edges of the picture are just parallel to the edge of the bed and the man's arm, leaving only a very narrow space in between. It can be said that both *Summer Afternoon* and *The Camden Town Murder* were originally made for the sake of the paintings themselves.

By comparison, in *L'Affaire de Camden Town* (fig. 3.6), though there reflects Sickert's formal design (as shown by a parallelism similar to Albert Moore's), what catches the eye is that the narrative is created by props and for an audience, in a similar way to the *IPN* illustration. The most obvious evidence for this is that the main compositional elements are identical in both *L'Affaire de Camden Town* and the *IPN* illustration: a woman lying on an iron bed and a man standing in the room. The chamber pot in *L'Affaire de Camden Town* is an additional detail. This was common in Victorian households, and so its presence creates a realistic setting for the painting. However, its placement in these surroundings, rendered in an unflattering tone, suggests an association of the room with filth. Furthermore, chamber pots may have been associated with prostitutes, as an eighteenth-century cartoon (fig. 3.13) of a prostitute washing her garments in such a pot suggests. What is more noticeable, however, is the chair that is cropped at the right edge of the canvas. In Sickert's studies (fig. 3.14) for *L'Affaire de Camden Town*, the chair does not appear, while it is also absent in his other murder paintings. But in both the *IPN* and *IPB* illustrations, there are the cropped chair with clothes placed upon them. That is to say, in *L'Affaire*, Sickert adopted a similar visual strategy as these newspapers did. The cropped chair is added to extend the pictorial space, so as to create a realistic space. But besides its pictorial function, the chair does not signify anything as the chamber pot does. It does

not hold any semantic associations and thus seems meaningless and unimportant. However, it is precisely such useless detail that creates what Roland Barthes calls the “reality effect.”<sup>455</sup> As Barthes argues, modern realism is constituted by the absence of the signified, which becomes the very signifier of realism.<sup>456</sup> Whether or not the chair was in the real crime scene, and whether or not it has referential meaning as the chamber pot does, its having-been-there as a concrete detail is sufficient to cause this reality effect.<sup>457</sup> In this case, the narrative that Sickert insists upon in a painting does not lie in a concrete story, but in the way the picture is constructed. Both the *IPN* and Sickert create realism by playing with signs, and Sickert’s use of these signs invests his painting with its topic.

The similarity of the Camden Town murder paintings and the *IPN* illustration also lies in their shared need for audiences. In *L’Affaire*, Sickert adopts a similar perspective to the newspaper, and reveals a similar aspiration. (Sickert was in France when the murder happened, so he would have heard about it from newspapers or other media.)<sup>458</sup> *L’Affaire* views the scene from slightly overhead, thus setting it at a distance from the viewer and subjecting the naked woman to the viewer’s gaze, her genitals exactly meeting the viewer’s line of vision.

What is more revealing is the stage-like effect in both *L’Affaire* and the *IPN* illustration. The lighting in *L’Affaire* is prominent, not as the natural *contre-jour* light of *Summer Afternoon*, but as stage lighting issuing from the left-hand side of the canvas and shining on the body of the woman, who glitters with a strong metallic gloss. Furthermore, the viewer’s attention is directed upon the naked woman because,

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<sup>455</sup> Roland Barthes, “The Reality Effect,” in *The Rustle of Language*, 141-8.

<sup>456</sup> Ibid.

<sup>457</sup> Chris Forster notes the reality effect suggested by Sickert’s inclusion of the shoes in another interior nude painting, *The Rose Shoe* (1904–5), by which he argues that Sickert’s nude is different from the academic nude in the idealised setting. Here I further relate such effect as also shown in press report and to show how Sickert deployed them to create a narrative. See Chris Forster, “The Pornometric Gospel: Wyndham Lewis, Walter Sickert, and the Collapse of the Ideology of the Nude,” in *Filthy Material: Modernism and the Media of Obscenity*, ed. Chris Forster (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 47.

<sup>458</sup> Sturgis, *Walter Sickert: A Life*, 389.

apart from her, the other components of *L’Affaire* are all fragmented and executed in a loose style. The man is cramped into the narrow space on the left side, and the chair, the bed, and the chamber pot are all truncated—each element thus directs the viewer’s attention to the intact body which is painted in finer and comparatively orderly brush strokes, making the body appear more solid and amenable to the viewer’s gaze and close examination. The spatial depth of the painting further reinforces this visual focus. Though the shadow of the bedrail suggests the presence of a narrow space between the bed and the wall, two of the wallpaper’s eye-catching beige diamonds intrude upon the bedrail, with the effect that the wallpaper does not retreat into the background, and very little space is created between the wall and the bed. The patterns also appear to move slightly radially from the bedside to the edge of the canvas, which is perspectively incorrect. Such visual tricks give the impression that there is no other space to retreat to, and that the entire space is given over to the bed and the body resting on it. The bed is slightly angled to the picture plane, providing a contingent perspective that allows viewers to enter the painting easily. Indeed, the whole painting is bluntly presented to the viewer, who is encouraged to comment on the scene at will. In addition, there is more emphasis on the space that these protagonists live in. The distance between the bed and the viewer is similar in both *L’Affaire* and the *IPN* illustration, creating a stage-like space for viewing. Such a space, as Korda argues, creates an immediacy for viewers to readily understand the image.<sup>459</sup> Korda holds that by providing a space that potentially unites that of the picture with the space outside the frame, viewers are offered “a heightened sense of immediacy by suggesting where and how the scene unfolds in relation to his or her embodied presence.”<sup>460</sup> The presence of the reader is emphasised; images are drawn for an audience.

Therefore, the Camden Town murder paintings, especially *L’affaire de Camden Town*, not only appropriates the murder case itself as the apparent narrative content

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<sup>459</sup> Korda, *Printing and Painting the News in Victorian London*, 100 and passim.

<sup>460</sup> *Ibid.*, 100.

but also embodies similar narrative methods and visual strategies, presenting women as an attraction. These paintings can be seen as a response to popular news imagery. However, evidently, Sickert's portrayal of women differs from news illustrations. What makes the murder paintings controversial is not only their allusion to the murder but also Sickert's materialistic presentation of the female body, as noted by many scholars. They have associated this characteristic with later London artists, including Lucian Freud and Francis Bacon, suggesting that their nude paintings were influenced by the haptic quality of skin in Sickert's works.<sup>461</sup> This rough materiality, linked to the material world, creates an authentic sensation.

However, this heightened realism was likely experienced by audiences around the turn of the twentieth century through its association with photography. Widespread circulation of female imagery, especially illicit nude photography, influenced the interpretation of this series of paintings. In the following section, I will further develop my argument regarding the impact of popular imagery on Sickert's paintings, focusing particularly on nude photography, which constitutes a significant aspect of this visual milieu and profoundly affects the understanding of nude painting, especially in its tactile dimension.

### 3.1.3 Tactile reality effect: nude photography

Unlike most academy nudes, in which flesh is minutely executed in smooth paint, the brushstrokes are visible in the murder painting. In fact, most paintings of interior figures made around this time show such tactile effect. One of the controversial nude paintings, *La Hollandaise* (c. 1906, fig. 3.15), created almost contemporaneously with the murder series, is an example. Here, the female body emerges from darkness under a sharp light. The woman and the bed are foreshortened, making the body appear bunched and heavy. The haptic quality of the flesh is also arresting. Veins and muscles in the lit thigh and breast are clearly touched by Sickert's

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<sup>461</sup> Baron and Shone, *Sickert: Paintings*, 6.

brush. The bedsheet is executed in similar expressive strokes, and both the body and the bed emerge from darkness, thereby appearing extremely real and touchable, as in a painting by Rembrandt. Also, it is possible that the identity of the woman irritated critics. As Richard Shone has suggested, the title may refer to the prostitute known as “la belle hollandaise” in Balzac’s novel *Gobseck* (1830).<sup>462</sup> Rebecca Daniels also argues that the black smut on the woman’s face is the mark of syphilis, a contagion common to prostitutes in the nineteenth century.<sup>463</sup>

Indeed, Sickert’s contemporary did not see this nude as a Rembrandt, but rather as obscene. Wyndham Lewis, in the *New Age*, opined that Sickert’s “bedroom realism, cynical and boyish playfulness with Mrs. Grundy, his French ‘legerté’ (as he would say), all marked him out as the Bohemian plague-spot on clean English life.”<sup>464</sup> A critic in the *Daily Telegraph* praised Sickert’s technique, but was unable to understand the topic: “Is Mr Sickert cynical, is he flouting conventional properties, or is he really content with these musty, flabby realities?”<sup>465</sup> These comments suggest that, when confronted with the nude in paintings, their thoughts turn to the real scene in which a prostitute might live. As argued in the previous section, the murder paintings are heavily mediated by the mass media of other murder images. Annette Kuhn reminds us that “meanings do not reside in images ... they are circulated between representation, spectator and social formation.”<sup>466</sup> Therefore, might it also be the case that this *Hollandaise* is a thread that ties together a series of similar nude images that prevailed in the Victorian and Edwardian eras, and which come to the mind of the viewer faced with a nude image?

This inquiry leads us to the profusion of visual representations of the nude that circulated in Victorian and Edwardian Europe. The aforementioned news illustration of Emily Dimmock, exposing her naked body, would be one category of nude images.

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<sup>462</sup> Baron and Shone, *Sickert: Paintings*, 49.

<sup>463</sup> Daniels, “Walter Sickert and Urban Realism,” 60.

<sup>464</sup> Lewis, “Modern Art,” 703.

<sup>465</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, December 17, 1912, quoted in Baron and Shone, *Sickert: Paintings*, 214.

<sup>466</sup> Annette Kuhn, *The Power of the Image: Essays on Representation and Sexuality* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1985), 6.

There were, however, other niche markets of nude prints that reproduced academic nude paintings, in the form of postcards and posters, or in magazines. Sickert himself complained that Europe was flooded with the production and multiplication of nudes, “culminating in the publication and export of such catalogues as ‘Le nu au Salon,’ owing their stimulus to purely artistic grounds.”<sup>467</sup> Indeed, during the 1890s postcard craze, popular academic nudes were printed as postcards and traded and collected, especially in France.

France’s monopoly on the production of nude prints was challenged by other nations in the early 1870s,<sup>468</sup> while the new century saw the rise of further varieties and a broader range of subject matter of nudes.<sup>469</sup> Studios dedicated to nude photography were established; studios specialised in photographing celebrities were also popular, such as the Hana Studio Ltd which printed some photographs of the music hall singer Marie Lloyd that Sickert also painted. Among these photos, many are not devoid of sexual interest. Indeed, the lines between the erotic, pornographic, and artistic nudes were not very clear. Sickert also noticed that some petty dealers of nude prints were on the verge of breaking the law.<sup>470</sup> In London, the headquarters of the nude photo market was in Holywell Street (which no longer exists), parallel to the Strand. It was reported by the *Times* that police raids sometimes happened there.<sup>471</sup> While it was difficult to measure the extent of the obscene photo industry, the market for nude photos was considerable: magazines bought them; advertisers adopted semi-nude images; and people collected them.<sup>472</sup> The Victoria and Albert Museum, for

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<sup>467</sup> Walter Sickert, “The Naked and the Nude,” *The New Age*, July 21, 1910, reprinted in Robins, *op. cit.*, 261.

<sup>468</sup> Jorge Lewinski, *The Naked and the Nude: A History of Nude Photography* (London: Guild, 1987), 43.

<sup>469</sup> *Ibid.*, 76. Holywell Street in Victorian London was associated with obscene, impurity and dirty book and prints. See Linda Nead, *Victorian Babylon: People, Streets and Images in Nineteenth-Century London* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press), particularly 165-6, 178-9.

<sup>470</sup> Sickert, “The Naked and the Nude.”

<sup>471</sup> Lewinski, *The Naked and the Nude*, 43.

<sup>472</sup> For more on the history of the illegal trade in nude photos, see Raisa Rexer, “Nana in the Nude: Zola and Early Nude Photography,” *Dix-Neuf: Journal of the Society of Dix-Neuviémistes* 22, no. 1–2 (2018): 73–97.

example, has a collection from a member of the Milford Haven family of 442 postcards dedicated solely to erotic themes.<sup>473</sup> It is hard to say whether this collection was for intellectual contemplation or for individual delectation.

Photographs are often commodities, and nude subject matter increased the appetite for their trading and circulation. This made the printed nude image akin to prostitution, or even a substitute for the prostitute, as both were subject to consumerism and disreputable fetishes. By the 1880s and 1890s, nude photographs had developed into a primary means of solicitation for places of prostitution, and a secondary stream of revenue.<sup>474</sup>

From the above discussion, we can see which kinds of images were circulated and consumed, and what people's views were on these images. The apperception of female figures in art and literature was shaped amid this material and visual culture. Zola's *Nana*, as Raisa argues, was designed with nude photography in mind.<sup>475</sup> Gerald Needham also mentions that the scandals around Manet's *Olympia* (1863) may have arisen on account of its invocation of the visual language of illegal nude photos.<sup>476</sup> This would suggest that viewers could identify paintings that drew on erotic prints. Upon seeing such a painting, they would think of images from everyday life. Indeed, the democratic tool of photographic prints enabled the production of images en masse, rendering it impossible to maintain the societal distinction between the acceptable nude in the public sphere and the obscene nude to be kept in private.

Besides commercial nude prints, we need to recall that artists themselves were producers of nude photographs, and, in their practices, they challenged the distinction between printed or realistic nudes and painted or artistic nudes. This was especially

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<sup>473</sup> "Catalogue to Milford Haven Collection," V&A (website), <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O1301376/catalogue-to-milford-haven-collection-postcard/>, accessed November 7, 2023.

<sup>474</sup> Raisa Rexer, "Stockings and Mirrors," in *Degas: A Strange New Beauty*, ed. Jodi Hauptman (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2016), 138.

<sup>475</sup> See Rexer, "Nana in the Nude."

<sup>476</sup> Gerald Needham, "Manet, 'Olympia,' and Pornographic Photography," in *Woman as Sex Object: Studies in Erotic Art, 1730–1970*, ed. Thomas B. Hess and Linda Nochlin (London: Allen Lane, 1973), 81–89.

the case in the work of the Pictorialists. Rene Le Bègue's nude photograph *Académie* (1902, fig. 3.16) is an example of the painterly nude. The title *Académie* reveals an intention to imitate the idealised and aesthetic nude, and to mitigate the realistic indexical function of a photograph. Bègue sketched the photograph's background with crayon and charcoal to imitate a drawing, aiming to create a fusion of photograph and painting. Yet the handwork also increases the image's haptic quality as if the body is touched by the nib, rendering the female body more realistic, and recalling the practice of hand-colouring photographs, undertaken by print studios as well as amateurs. Bègue's experimental combination of print and painting/drawing is based on the fact that the indexical function of photography would affect how people viewed the image, and this points to the important sensual quality of photographs in the early photographic era.<sup>477</sup> It also shows that the distinction between the popular and academic nude was receding. Indeed, as Barnaby Wright observes, this was a contentious period for the treatment of nude subjects in art.<sup>478</sup> Debates took place in the press about the appropriateness of allowing the public to view nude paintings. This concern largely stemmed from the perception that the content of art had begun to resemble that of postcards and photography.

The medium or process of mediating nude images also affects the understanding of nude paintings. As realistic as they could be, oil paintings came to be regarded as insufficiently illusionistic in the age of photography. In the nineteenth century, photographic images may have seemed more authentic and profound, providing viewers with unprecedented detail and verisimilitude, far outweighing that of painted portraits. The photographed body has a naturalism and an inexorable materiality—the image resembles the indexed body, which viewers feel they can touch. Because of this impertinent ability of photography, critics in the mid-nineteenth century viewed photos as scandalous, especially when the subject was the female body. As Kenneth

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<sup>477</sup> For how photography participated in the discourse of nude in the nineteenth century, particularly on viewers' perception of the nude image, see Alison Smith, *The Victorian Nude: Sexuality, Morality and Art* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), 55-62.

<sup>478</sup> Wright, *The Camden Town Nudes*, 16.

Clark remarks: “no nude, however abstract, should fail to arouse in the spectator some vestige of erotic feelings..., and if it does not, it is bad art and false morals.”<sup>479</sup> Also, as Barthes notes, discussing his relation to photographs, “a sort of umbilical cord links the body of the photographed thing to my gaze: light, though impalpable, is here a carnal medium, a skin I share with anyone who has been photographed.”<sup>480</sup> In this respect, the photographed body *is* touched by the light, or the camera and the gaze. Barthes’s view of the photograph’s potential as an embodiment of the index, rather than a two-dimensional image of it, suggests clearer grounds for the criticism of Manet’s *Olympia* as a shameless photograph, ontologically, since the ontology of the erotic object depends on the viewer and the desire that they feel when viewing the body.

Sensuality and the viewer’s touch can be seen in a French postcard (fig. 3.17) of the 1910s. This object is a real photographic postcard (rather than a printed card), and its warm coppery tone reflects the intimacy of the nude subject. The flesh of the depicted woman is delicately illuminated, and the contours of her body are very subtle, giving it solidity and a sense of how it feels to touch it. The background is dark, allowing the fair skin to stand out. The presence of cloth beddings strengthens the texture and sense of reality of the objects in the picture, which is, as a whole, very realistic. The figure’s streamlined posture is tailored to the groping eyes of the viewer, whose different senses are aroused. And the woman is indeed “touchable,” for the postcard can be easily held in the hand. Thus inviting the viewer to touch it, the flat print is by its nature a form of eroticism.

Sickert’s viewer, criticising his execution of the nude as obscene, would likely have interpreted his painting in the context of the proliferation of nude prints, which encouraged people to view them in an almost fetishistic way. The reality of *L’Affaire de Camden Town* or *La Hollandaise* is not only that of the murder, but also the

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<sup>479</sup> Kenneth Clark, *The Nude: A Study in Ideal Form* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), 8.

<sup>480</sup> Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), 80.

physical reality of the nude. Both paintings are dark in tone, with the body emerging from the darkness, as in early photographs where light struggles to emerge from the shadows, even after a long exposure. Sickert's expressive brushstrokes seem to touch the body and the bed, and this tactile representation again suggests an immediacy, transforming the painting into a fetish. The pleasure of looking at it is similar to the pleasure of looking at, or touching, photos and magazines. The characters' faces have been erased, leading to an ambiguity and arbitrariness of identity that increases the scope for imagination. The woman could be anyone, including the woman that exists in the viewer's mind. The three Camden Town murder paintings are also modest in size, similar to the pages of an open magazine. This adds to the intimacy between the viewer and that which is represented, because it demands viewing the painting at close proximity.

*L'Affaire de Camden Town* contains many details that evoke a haptic sensation. The chamber pot emits a foul smell, stimulating viewers beyond the frame. This contrasts with the fragrant flowers depicted in the postcard, engaging olfactory memories associated with summer nights. Similarly, the contrast between the clothed man and naked woman suggests a difference in temperature, with the redness of the woman's skin implying warmth and further activating the viewer's senses.

The wall paper is worth noticing. The pattern of the wallpaper is irregular, as if broken and misplaced pieces would fall off with the slightest tug. The grid-like pattern with its incorrect perspective reinforces a sense of confinement, as if the woman is forced into the claustrophobic space. In fact, wallpaper has served as sensual and tactile imagery in literature. Charlotte Gilman, in her novel *The Yellow Wallpaper* (1892), uses wallpaper as a symbol of the confinement of an unnamed woman.<sup>481</sup> Since the woman cannot leave the room, the presence of the yellow wallpaper becomes increasingly prominent, since it is the only thing she can see and focus on. The colour yellow foregrounds a sensory tension between the woman and the wallpaper, and the suffocating atmosphere of the room is accentuated by means of

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<sup>481</sup> Charlotte Gilman, *The Yellow Wallpaper* (New Brunswick, [N.J.]: Rutgers University Press, 1993).

the material senses. We might recall Sickert's attention on wallpaper as a proper background for a painting, as mentioned in chapter two. Here, in the Camden Town paintings, the wallpaper is not only a proper formal device, but a sensual presence that cannot be ignored.

Returning to the reality effect that Sickert contrived in the Camden Town painting, this discussion shows that reality is constructed not only by narrative props but also by the activation of the senses through different media. He creates a sense of reality that triggers different responses, including anger, shame, and so on. These reactions closely relate to the fact that photos of women circulated as commodities. In other words, sensationalism is indeed mediated through sensation. Thus, paint is not an unmediated medium, and it is necessary to consider the context in which paintings are understood. The painted surface of Sickert's painting is precisely the result of a combination of media. Topicality and the materiality of print are aptly combined by Sickert.

This reading of the effects of the three paintings shows how the formal interest has been turned to that of topicality. In the first two, *Summer Afternoon* and *The Camden Town Murder*, I have argued that Sickert was primarily concerned with formal arrangement and contre-jour effect, before he added the title reference to the murder. However, by adopting similar visual strategies to newspaper illustrations to attract the viewer's attention, *L'Affaire de Camden Town* demonstrates a closer relation to the murder case, and to the visual representations and public discussions that accompanied it. In this case, the impetus to create the painting manifests a shift from the artistic formal experiment to an awareness of the audience, or from the motif to the topical. This shift, I will argue, tacitly points to an intermedial perspective and invites us to reconsider the meaning of "media" in the context of modern painting, expanding the discussion of Sickert's news painting beyond realism to encompass broader aspects of visual culture.

The usual sense of "media" refers to paint as an artistic medium in the context of modernism. This dimension has been discussed by many scholars, including

Corbett, who argues that paint in Sickert's works is a translator between reality and the painting surface, providing unmediated access to reality. On this view, painting is a process of mediation, where what is mediated is reality and the perceiving subject (human beings). However, by exploring the varied imagery related to the murder case and nude painting, the second sense of "media" comes into play. The Latin root of "media," as the plural of "medium," has been replaced by the more active meaning of "media" as mass communication, as the Oxford English Dictionary delineates.<sup>482</sup> "A new singular" form of "media" arises.<sup>483</sup> This second sense of "media" relates to how paintings and other visual materials intertwine, evolve, and circulate. In this sense, the question not only concerns the relation between reality and the subject (human beings), but what is at stake in the understanding of an image, or in the mediatisation of images. Indeed, when conceiving his paintings, Sickert had in mind other images, visual representations, or textual expressions of given topics. His considerations of the murder case, the tradition of the nude, realistic literature, stage-like effects, the use of signs, and the viewer's space all already confirm that reality (or, at least, the event) is not merely mediated through paint, but multimedially. *L'Affaire de Camden Town* is already mediatised.

When reading the painting, viewers are apt to regard the murder as its referent. One newspaper review confirms this: "If we cannot but wonder at his choice of subjects more worthy of the 'Police News' than of a picture gallery of high rank, such as this is, we may not refuse him the admiration due to work bold and masterly of its kind."<sup>484</sup> This suggests that, for viewers, the referent outweighs the treatment. This conflation of art and reality is, in Fry's view, a common vision.<sup>485</sup> What Fry objects to

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<sup>482</sup> Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. "medium,"

[https://www.oed.com/dictionary/medium\\_n?tab=etymology](https://www.oed.com/dictionary/medium_n?tab=etymology), accessed November 6, 2023.

<sup>483</sup> Ibid.

<sup>484</sup> "The Camden Town Group. Interesting Pictures," *Daily Telegraph*, June 22, 1911, republished in Bonett, Holt, and Mundy, eds., *The Camden Town Group in Context*,

<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/research-publications/camden-town-group/author-unknown-the-camden-town-group-interesting-pictures-r1104310>, accessed March 1, 2023.

<sup>485</sup> "An Essay in Aesthetics," in Fry, *Vision and Design*, 12–18.

is the aptness of unsophisticated viewers to relate paintings and narratives. Yet his view is not applicable to an era in which the print materials of everyday life have become influential. When the murder case came within view of the newspapers, it entered the realm of communication and gradually became a simulacrum, since the report of a murder is always a composite of previous murders and imaginative description. This means that image becomes structurally embedded within reality, thus making it harder for viewers to distinguish reality and fiction. Korda notes that the conflation of reality and image is the result of our immersion in news and its representation.<sup>486</sup> Benjamin also hints at this, arguing that the loss of the ritual function of images in the age of their mass reproduction creates a different context within which to understand them, compared to before.<sup>487</sup> In fact, the medium inevitably becomes media, while the news painting also turns its discussion to itself. Perhaps from this context we can rethink the modernity in modern painting.

### 3.1.4 Clients between the “stalls and pit”

By sticking to stage-like depictions of the sensational topic, as well as to visual immediacy and tactility, Sickert certainly wished to draw a distinction between his painting and academic high art. This extends to how he envisaged his public, the group that would appreciate and buy his works. He expressed this in his writings for the *New Age* around 1910, when he advocated painting small paintings and selling them to middle-class clients.<sup>488</sup> This idea carried through to his later career, and in 1918, he wrote:

Art is not properly a production for the “arty,” for critics, for the editors of art

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<sup>486</sup> Korda, *Printing and Painting the News in Victorian London*, 107.

<sup>487</sup> Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” IV–VII.

<sup>488</sup> Walter Sickert, “The New English and After,” *The New Age*, June 2, 1910, reprinted in Robins, *op. cit.*, 242.

magazines or for the brewers of the monthly neo-stints that amuse and vary the “fatigue of the toilet and the languors of digestion.” Art is produced for the plain man, the philistine, for the man in front of the counter, for him who is called in Montmartre *le client*—in short, for the customer.<sup>489</sup>

This point was made in response to the exhibition culture of the time, when the works in the Academy exhibitions were big but set a bad example for students to work from. While it may not be that Sickert’s murder themes were intended to appeal to a clientele that read second-rate newspapers (tabloids and cheaper newspapers), the modest size of these paintings nevertheless proves that they were indeed made for clients who could buy at a proper price. Painting the murder case may have been an attempt “at least to interest and to inspire [his audience] with something approaching respect.”<sup>490</sup>

Sickert’s respect for his audience is reflected in his belief that viewers were capable of reading paintings without the artist’s words. Reviewing the works of Ford Madox Brown, he proclaimed:

“Make no error,” as the proletariat, ever more prone to Latin than to English, say. The man in the street is no fool. He knows as much as you or I. If it be fatal for a general to underrate his foe, so is it fatal for an artist to underrate his audience. It leads, on the stage, to over-emphasis, and making points, and “taking the corner.” Actors think that unless there is a noise they are not appreciated. It leads painters to preach at their patrons, instead of “waiting on” them, as was the very proper expression of the good days before interviews, before photographers were encouraged to blab, in print, of their amazement at being considerately treated by their royal customers.<sup>491</sup>

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<sup>489</sup> Sickert, “Walter Bays” (1918), in Robins, *op. cit.*, 422.

<sup>490</sup> Sickert, “Modern French Painting,” *Burlington Magazine*, December 1924, reprinted in Robins, *op. cit.*, 500.

<sup>491</sup> Sickert, “Ford Madox Brown,” *The Speaker*, February 13, 1897, reprinted in Robins, *op. cit.*, 138.

Thus, he saw the potential of not only the well-educated persons who commissioned paintings exhibited at the Academy, but also the “diverse” audience who “have been able to enjoy the exhibition for what they liked, and to take the serious ossature of the shows on trust as ‘very clever,’ and not sufficiently overwhelming to be embarrassing.”<sup>492</sup> Reviewing the 1912 exhibition of the International Society, he noted the increase in audiences who were delighted by commercial art, and who were the visitors of music halls and theatres between the “stalls and pits.”<sup>493</sup> Here, he saw the audiences of mass entertainment as exhibition-goers.

In a sense, Sickert believed that his potential clients might be found amid the audiences he depicted, as in *Gatti’s Hungerford Palace of Varieties. Second Turn of Katie Lawrence* (1888, fig. 3.18). In this painting, as exemplified by the man in the crowd looking out of the picture, he attends to the audience not just because they are present at the performance, but also with a view to their taste and consumption habits. This is different from Degas’s *The Ballet Scene from Meyerbeer’s Opera, “Robert le Diable”* (1876, fig. 3.19), which is often compared to *Gatti’s* on account of its similar subject matter and composition. In Degas’s painting, the people in the foreground are musicians, and some of them Degas’s friends, rather than an audience of strangers to the artist. Indeed, according to Shackelford, Degas’s *The Ballet Scene from Meyerbeer’s Opera* is a hybrid image of genre painting and portraiture.<sup>494</sup> Thus, Degas considers the people below the stage differently to Sickert. Sickert pays attention to the audiences at the performances and their relationship with the popular culture they enjoy, envisioning them as consumers of mass culture in general. He expresses a willingness to be intimate with the culture he paints and with the mass consumers of that culture. In 1925, in the article lamenting the death of Whistler,

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<sup>492</sup> Sickert, “The International Society,” *English Review*, May 1912, reprinted in Robins, *op. cit.*, 310–11.

<sup>493</sup> *Ibid.*, 310.

<sup>494</sup> In other paintings, such as *The Ballet from “Robert le Diable”* (1872), Degas includes spectators in the foreground who are also his friends. George T. M. Shackelford, *Degas: The Dancers* (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 1984), 22–24.

Sickert recalls the financial aspect of his master's career, and considers that both Whistler and Manet had "misjudged their public," as they both "hoped to make their fortunes by portraits for which the models themselves were to pay."<sup>495</sup>

Nonetheless, Sickert maintained a prudent outlook on his artistic media and subject matter. His paintings appropriating mass culture, including the Camden Town series and the music hall paintings, are not easily appreciable to a broad public in terms of their pictorial language and the way he presents the subject matter (as shown in the difference between his paintings and the illustrations of the murder in newspapers). As such, we might sense that Sickert implicitly regarded the medium of painting as occupying an autonomous and higher place in the cultural hierarchy, even though he claimed to reject a patronising tone over his audience.

Indeed, there is a difference between the public that Sickert envisaged and his actual buyers, and it is crucial not to confuse these two groups.<sup>496</sup> But this does at least show that Sickert harboured expectations that print culture would prompt a change in his audience. The influence of popular culture on art not only concerns subject matter, but also affects the artist's perceptions and expectations of his own public. Moreover, it is precisely this disparity between Sickert's actual buyers and his idealised public that suggests the possibility that the modern art audience may be a mere construct. His public exists to satisfy his creative motives. In other words, the ideal ecology of modern art as envisaged by Sickert was not realised, but this idea for an overlapping public of modern art and mass culture (print and other popular entertainments) informs the content of paintings and shaped the landscape of modern art.

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<sup>495</sup> Sickert, "With Wisest Sorrow," *Daily Telegraph*, April 1, 1925, reprinted in Robins, *op. cit.*, 511.

<sup>496</sup> Before he returned to London from France in 1905, his clients were mostly members of the literary and artistic circle to which he was introduced by his friend Jacques-Emile Blanche, including André Gide, Paul Robert, and George Hoentschel. His *L'affaire de Camden Town* was bought by Paul Signac in 1909. For more on Sickert's dealers and clients, see Bernheim, *Peintures, Dessins et Pastels de Walter Sickert* (s.n., 1909), Gallica (website), <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k12465255/f12.item>, accessed December 4, 2023. For Sickert and French circles, see Delphine Lévy, "Sickert and France," in Chambers, *Walter Sickert*, 126–31; and Wendy Baron, "Sickert's Links with French Painting," *Apollo* 91, no. 97 (1970): 186–97.

### 3.2 “Coloured” as topic

The previous section has demonstrated the quality of uncertainty that surrounded the representation of the Camden Town murder in the public sphere, and which was the driving force behind its topicality. In this section, I will delve further into the process of the emergence of topics from the reproduction and dissemination of production photos in newspapers, in order to show how Sickert’s painting captures this topicality. In 1935, Sickert made the painting *Peggy Ashcroft and Paul Robeson in “Othello”* (1935–36, fig. 3.20), based on a news photograph. Rather than merely being a copy of the photo, I argue that this painting reflects the contemporaneous discourse on the topic of race. In this context, various media outlets contributed distinct content to generate and represent the multifaceted topicality of race, typically focusing discussion on skin colour.

According to Baron, *Peggy Ashcroft and Paul Robeson in “Othello”* is based on a press photo (fig. 3.21) titled “Coloured Othello.”<sup>497</sup> The complete newspaper has not been traced. However, according to the caption beneath the press photo—“Paul Robeson, the coloured actor, made his debut as Othello last night at the Savoy Theatre”—the newspaper would have been issued on March 20, 1930, just after the first performance of the play *Othello* on March 19. Paul Robeson (1898–1976) and Peggy Ashcroft (1907–1991) played the principal roles, respectively, of Othello and his wife Desdemona. In a sense, Sickert’s painting is not a timely report of the theatre news, but a retrospective take, just as the Camden Town paintings were titled as such years after the murder was committed. Sickert’s longstanding interest in theatre may have been behind his decision to paint “*Othello*”, and Peggy Ashcroft was one of his favourite actresses. By 1935, the young Ashcroft had become well known for productions of Shakespeare; her profile is identifiable in Sickert’s painting, and depicting her would have been likely to arouse discussion and interest.

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<sup>497</sup> This illustration was discovered by Baron and reproduced in Baron and Shone, *Sickert: Paintings*, 328.

Sickert's oil rendition meticulously "copies" the press photograph, including its composition, albeit with a reduced level of detail. Nevertheless, the visual impression engendered by the contrasting physical shape of the protagonists in the press photograph is retained. Robeson, attired in a prominent outfit with puff sleeves, occupies most of the image space, while the kneeling Ashcroft is positioned at his feet. The colour scheme employed by Sickert further reinforces the theatricality of this painting. Besides the contrast of red and green, he intensifies the tonal contrasts on the skin of both protagonists. In the press photograph, Robeson's face appears relatively less dark due to the lighting conditions, but Sickert adopts a dark palette for his face, similar to the backcloth, and the brightness of Robeson's collar and cuffs is accentuated. The entire painting is rendered in dark tones, making Ashcroft's face and neck glare, and bringing the contrast in skin tones to prominence. On the one hand, this is consistent with Sickert's enduring visual concern to juxtapose black and white, as observed in the second chapter. On the other hand, it is reasonable to assume that Sickert deliberately engages here with the topical issue of skin colour, as suggested by the press photograph's caption: "Coloured Othello, played by the son of a Negro clergyman."<sup>498</sup> The theatre critic George Rylands also remarked at the time that "the 'colour question' in *Othello* is of the first importance."<sup>499</sup> The word "coloured," in painting, is normally used in opposition to "monochrome"; yet, in British society in the 1930s, it was considered an acceptable term to denote people with dark skin, or people of African origin.<sup>500</sup> In a sense, black and white for Sickert are not just monochromatic but are colours in themselves, and, in the case of *Othello*, this understanding links intrinsically to the broader societal discourse on "coloured" identity.

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<sup>498</sup> Baron and Shone, *Sickert: Paintings*, 328.

<sup>499</sup> George Rylands, "The Drama—Savoy Theatre: *Othello*," *Nation and Athenaeum*, May 31, 1930, 288.

<sup>500</sup> It was in the 1960s in Britain that the term "coloured" was replaced by "black." Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. "coloured/colored,"

[https://www.oed.com/dictionary/coloured\\_adj?tab=meaning\\_and\\_use&tl=true](https://www.oed.com/dictionary/coloured_adj?tab=meaning_and_use&tl=true), accessed December 4, 2023.

Skin colour has been a point of discussion for hundreds of years, and yet the reason why the issue became prominent after the Great War is partly due to the increase in the Black population in Britain at this time, when workers from British colonies were hired to satisfy the needs of the shipping industry, especially in port areas.<sup>501</sup> The increase in Black people amid the postwar competition for jobs is among the reasons why the British developed a strong awareness of the presence of Black people in Britain, and the tendency to view Black people as the “other” culminated in riots in Liverpool in 1919, and a series of riots elsewhere.<sup>502</sup> Along with these riots, there were growing discussions about the settlement of the Black population in Britain, as well as debates about biological differences, racial mixing (miscegenation), and the economic and political implications of multiracial societies.<sup>503</sup> Scientific studies, some politically motivated, attempted to establish racial disparities. In response, the government introduced policies to restrict Black settlement, and to separate black and white communities, also launching enquiries with the aim of making practical improvements to government and administration.<sup>504</sup> These seemingly rational and orderly enquiries, as Leslie James and Daniel Whittall argue, reflect that British racial prejudice in the 1930s was often indiscernible and covert.<sup>505</sup> Unlike in the US, racism in Britain did not “carry a sign,” but it did exist.<sup>506</sup>

The marginalisation of Black people is demonstrated by the difficulties faced by Black actors seeking to break into the limelight. When Robeson, an American-born Black singer and actor, began his theatre career in London, fame and criticism went

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<sup>501</sup> Peter Fryer, *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain* (London: Pluto Press, 1984), 299. Though it was normal to use “coloured” to refer to Black people in the 1930s, in this thesis I use “Black,” following contemporary conventions.

<sup>502</sup> For a detailed account of the riot, see Gavin Schaffer, “Rethinking Interwar Racial Reform: The 1930s,” in *Racial Science and British Society* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008), 21; and Fryer, *Staying Power*.

<sup>503</sup> Schaffer, “Rethinking Interwar Racial Reform,” 24.

<sup>504</sup> *Ibid.*, 21, 24, 38.

<sup>505</sup> Leslie James and Daniel Whittall, “Ambiguity and Imprint: British Racial Logics, Colonial Commissions of Enquiry, and the Creolization of Britain in the 1930s and 1940s,” *Callaloo* 39, no. 1 (2016): 166.

<sup>506</sup> *Ibid.*

hand in hand, and his skin colour was always the target. While playing Othello in 1930, he admitted in an interview that:

“To me it is extraordinary how Shakespeare, at that time was able to get to the root of the racial question. I felt it here,” said Mr Robeson, striking his breast, “when as Othello I walk into the Senate, among all those people who in their hearts hate me, but fear me and know they must use me. I have known instances of the same sort of thing to-day; when, for example, the only skilful physician in a town has been a Negro, and the people, during an epidemic have had to go to him to be saved from death. Shakespeare grasped this principle perfectly apt today than when it was first written.”<sup>507</sup>

We can also discern how different aspects of the racial question were concretely portrayed and discussed within the visual materials that accompanied the press coverage of *Othello*. The emphasis on biological difference can be seen in caricatures of Black figures, as in an illustration for the *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News (ISDN)*. On June 7, 1930, the *ISDN* published two pages about the *Othello* production. One page features four well-printed production photos (fig. 3.23), while on the previous page is a caricature that betrays a particular form of racial stereotyping (fig. 3.22). This caricature disproportionately accentuates Robeson’s facial features, notably the full lips and gleaming white teeth. His skin colour is unambiguously rendered in full black, in contrast to the blank faces of Desdemona and Iago at the top of the page, underscoring the images’ focus on and mockery of Robeson’s physiological traits.

Furthermore, newspapers also perceived Black people as a physical threat. In the same *ISDN* caricature, Othello is portrayed as a peculiar creature dominated by jealousy—characterised as the “green-eyed monster”—and imbued with an enigmatic and primal power. The “Coloured Othello” press photo that Sickert appropriated also

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<sup>507</sup> “Paul Robeson’s Shakespeare Debut: Talk with the Negro Actor,” *The Era*, May 21, 1930, 9.

accentuates the size disparity of Robeson and Ashcroft, thereby reinforcing the perception of Othello's physique as potentially menacing, as encapsulated by the audience's reaction: "when in the last act he entered Desdemona's bedroom, how hard it was to feel that she could be in danger?"<sup>508</sup> These representations of Othello crystallise the contemporary belief that "Blackness" was inherently associated with danger and evil, these ominous qualities having often been embodied in images of Black men, linking them to demons and monsters.<sup>509</sup> The "Black Moor," even before the character of Othello, was typically depicted in folklore as a fallen, wicked figure.

The distinct treatment of Black actors can also be discerned in the way that their professionalism was addressed. Notably, many reviews of *Othello* emphasised Robeson's vocal performance, mentioning in particular his famous song "Ol' Man River," which depicts the lives of African American labourers.<sup>510</sup> This emphasis on the vocal rather than visual aspect of his performance may have stemmed from a reluctance to confront the presence of Black faces.<sup>511</sup> His skin colour also became a target for further criticism of his performance, with some critics suggesting that he possessed a "real" skin colour but failed to leverage it to his advantage.<sup>512</sup> These comments indicate that people could not separate his performance from his skin colour; the artistic issue was inevitably also a political one.

In comparison to critics' reluctance to admit Robeson's professionalism, a certain attention was paid to the apparent economic advantages that Black actors

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<sup>508</sup> Desmond MacCarthy, "Hairy Ape or Bronze Ajax?," *New Statesman and Nation*, May 23, 1931, 461.

<sup>509</sup> For more on the connotations of "black" in English, see Peter Fryer, "The Rise of English Racism," in *Staying Power*, 137–42.

<sup>510</sup> See "Paul Robeson, Savoy Theatre," *The Nation and Athenaeum*, September 6, 1930, 705; and "The Theatres—Ol' Man Othello," *Truth*, May 28, 1930, 932.

<sup>511</sup> Robert Sawyer also discusses the critical attention paid to Robeson's voice over other aspects of his performance, further suggesting that Robeson's vocal performance, unconstrained by space, became a potent tool in his stand against racism later in his career. Robert Sawyer, "Performing Protest in Cross-Cultural Spaces: Paul Robeson and *Othello*," *Multicultural Shakespeare: Translation, Appropriation and Performance* 15, no. 31 (2017): 77–90.

<sup>512</sup> See "A Black Outlook at the Savoy," *The Bystander*, May 28, 1930, 432; "Ol' Man Othello," *Truth*, May 28, 1930, 932; and "Criticisms in Cameo," *The Sketch*, May 28, 1930, xxiv.

enjoyed. The *Daily News and Westminster Gazette* noted that Robeson would be paid before the play opened,<sup>513</sup> further commenting that “the contract provides for a three-figure weekly salary said to equal the largest ever paid in London to an actor in a ‘straight’ part—though it is well below the £1000 a week understood to be commanded by a musical comedy star like Jack Buchanan.”<sup>514</sup> This suggests that not only was colour significant for the audience, but that the economic benefits accrued by Robeson were also thought impressive, revealing the embedded problem of economic fairness and equality in a multiethnic society.

However, the most prominent focus of discussion in relation to the story of *Othello* was the issue of interracial marriage. This is reflected in the publicity photographs of the play, such as the one featured in the *Daily Herald* (fig. 3.24). Typically, production photos would be taken after dress rehearsals, and would often depict actors individually, portraying typical scenes or actions from the play, and often emphasising dramatic moments of conflict.<sup>515</sup> The production photo reproduced in the *Daily Herald* (fig. 3.24) portrays a representative scene involving four of the play’s key characters. Desdemona kneels on the ground and addresses her father, Brabantio, expressing her affection for Othello in the presence of the Duke and defending her choice. This scene is a climactic moment in the play and suggests the challenges of the union between the two characters, both within the narrative and in the eyes of the audience. Some audiences were upset by the fact that a black man was allowed to kiss a white woman and envisioned the unhappiness of a marriage between people of different colours.<sup>516</sup> These reactions suggest that audiences took the play as real and

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<sup>513</sup> “Paul Robeson as Othello,” *Daily News and Westminster Gazette*, September 4, 1929, 9.

<sup>514</sup> Ibid.

<sup>515</sup> Natalie Crohn Schmitt, “Recording the Theatre in Photographs,” *Educational Theatre Journal* 28, no. 3 (1976): 379.

<sup>516</sup> As one audience member remarked, “We all know that if a white woman marries a coloured man she renounces her God and country, and is held in contempt by all her husband’s relatives.” “Black and White Problem,” *Daily Express*, May 21, 1930. For the media’s concerns regarding the inter-racial marriage, see the reviews of *Othello* collected in “Paul Robeson and the Press, 1930,” *British Black and Asian Shakespeare*, University of Warwick (website),

<https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/english/research/currentprojects/multiculturalshakespeare/resources/histo>

projected its depiction of miscegenation onto reality. The news press accelerated this concern by demonstrating the racial and gender differences in the characters' appearance. Furthermore, the widely circulated production photos of *Othello*, which candidly reflect Robeson's physical dignity and masculine demeanour, compel viewers to confront the narrative of a romance between a Black man and a white woman. After all, in traditional depictions of Black people, such as in literature or engravings, the sexuality of Black men has often been downplayed (as exemplified by *ISDN*'s caricature).<sup>517</sup>

In other words, beneath the pretence of the play, what is actually under discussion is the issue of race. This encompasses the status of individuals from different racial backgrounds, their relationships, and their physiological attributes, all of which are manifested through the prism of skin colour, which serves as both the medium of expression and the target of this racial discourse.

In actuality, the discussion of racial issues in the context of theatrical reviews is not without reason, and I would argue that it precisely mirrors the performative nature inherent to both Black identity and theatre. Racial issues, to a certain extent, constitute an interrogation of identity, and so does performance. In other words, race is a performed identity. As I have elucidated in the preceding discussion of the press reviews of *Othello*, it is within these dialogues that the very concept of race is shaped and constructed. This notion has been acknowledged in sociological studies of performance, with scholars such as John Clammer arguing for an inherent characteristic of performance which fundamentally involves "the creation, presentation or affirmation of an identity (real or assumed) through action."<sup>518</sup> Brandi Wilkins Catanese succinctly concludes that race derives significance and value from actively performing the realities it portrays, "meeting the most elemental standards of

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ry/robeson1930/robeson\_othello\_1930001.pdf, accessed November 7, 2023.

<sup>517</sup> On the representation of Black males before the advent of photography, see Mary L. Bellhouse, "Candide Shoots the Monkey Lovers: Representing Black Men in Eighteenth-Century French Visual Culture," *Political Theory* 34, no. 6 (2006): 741–84.

<sup>518</sup> John Clammer, "Performing Ethnicity: Performance, Gender, Body and Belief in the Construction and Signalling of Identity," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 38, no. 13 (2015): 2160.

performativity.”<sup>519</sup>

Both on and off the stage, Robeson continuously embodies his “coloured” role; as David Wiles describes, black actors must “live in the world of play while perform in the world of race.”<sup>520</sup> However, the intertwining of these two worlds leaves Robeson’s identity unresolved. As demonstrated by reviews of the play in the 1930s, his skin colour is, on the one hand, seen as enhancing the realism of the performance, giving a sense of authenticity to the role, while, on the other hand, the use of Black actors for Black roles is criticised as unnecessary realism. This repetitive interweaving of affirmation and negation further exacerbates his unplaceable identity.

To a certain extent, production photographs, as photography, capture the performative nature of actors from an external perspective rather than an internal one involving actors’ feelings. They represent a blend of theatricality and reality. As previously mentioned, production photos of the 1930s were normally taken following dress rehearsals or formal performances, rather than during the action. At the moment of being photographed, the actors, to some extent, detach themselves from the performance; they are aware of being photographed and consciously pose for the camera, rather than for the audience in the theatre. As Roland Barthes remarks, “I transform myself in advance into an image.”<sup>521</sup> In this sense, production photos, such as the “Coloured Othello” that Sickert copied, serve a dual purpose: they document the theatrical performance while also offering an independent portrayal of the individuals being photographed. On the one hand, the actors in “Coloured Othello” are engaged in actions within the world of the play, and are attired in costumes, yet the black-and-white (rather than full-colour) appearance attests to the photographs’ documentary role, pointing to the reality of the captured moment. On the other hand, the “Coloured Othello,” as a record of performativity, blends a sense of being staged

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<sup>519</sup> Brandi Wilkins Catanese, *The Problem of the Color[blind]: Racial Transgression and the Politics of Black Performance* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2011), 18.

<sup>520</sup> David Wiles, “Burdens of Representation: The Method and the Audience,” in *Method Acting Reconsidered: Theory, Practice, Future*, ed. David Krasner (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000), 170, quoted in Catanese, *The Problem of the Color[blind]*, 10.

<sup>521</sup> Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 10.

with a sense of reality, concurrently conveying the idea that the mere existence and daily life of a “coloured” man, in and of itself, constitutes a form of performance.

Furthermore, the production photo as printed, that is, reproduced in monochrome in a newspaper under the title of “Coloured Othello,” makes the issue of race yet more intriguing. The widely circulated images are predominantly black and white, with different skin tones in these reproductions primarily appearing only as variations in brightness, and differences in hue being indiscernible (as in fig. 3.25). These black-and-white representations of skin tones reinforce a simplistic tendency to essentialise the relationship between (literally) white and Black individuals, prompting readers to imagine an authentic coloured scene.<sup>522</sup> In other words, at the very least, the production photos published by the press manage to capture the essence of the actors themselves, with their identity heavily centred on their skin colour. In addition, these production photographs were reproduced countless times in newspapers, and disseminated far and wide, and so, in a sense, they also reinforced the identities imposed on the actors.

Sickert’s paintings (fig. 3.20) appear to capture the blend of theatricality and reality that is suggested in the production photographs. His title, *Peggy Ashcroft and Paul Robeson in “Othello”*, uses the actors’ real names instead of their character names, supporting this allusion to reality. However, his mode of depicting the characters shows an ambiguity, or even a fictionality. Notably, the use of Prussian-blue underpainting is striking. Parts of Robeson’s forehead and neck are represented with this ghostly blue, which, if used according to the style of the Impressionists, would be functioning as shadow. Yet, this blue is also employed to separate the figure from the curtain backdrop, as Sickert particularly emphasises the darkness of the curtain around Robeson’s head in his painting. This deliberate deepening of the background hue around Robeson’s head places the entire head in an ambiguous state, “emerging” from the picture through a mere few bold strokes of warm local colour

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<sup>522</sup> Kirsty Sinclair Dootson also brings out that the black-and-white media literalised the racial binary of Blackness and Whiteness. Kirsty Sinclair Dootson, *The Rainbow's Gravity: Colour, Materiality and British Modernity* (London: Yale University Press, 2023), 15-16, 47-50.

that capture the light.

This technique serves a dual purpose. On the one hand, it provides a clue as to the process employed in the making of the painting: the application of colour onto a photographic base—though in this case, the base is more like negative film.<sup>523</sup> On the other hand, it imparts a ghostly quality to the figures in the painting. The visage of Robeson, in particular, appears fragmented and pieced together. It thereby conveys an element of instability, evoking a sense of doubt, or perhaps a suggestion of performativity. The skin colour becomes a fabricated event, much as the performance itself is.

It is precisely this performativity that offers an opportunity for critical reflection, as it reveals skin colour biases as constructs. As exemplified by an eighteenth-century pastel by John Raphael Smith (fig. 3.26), white people would sometimes wear Black masks at masquerade balls in this period. Angela Rosenthal has argued that, in this pastel, racial identity becomes “a removable mask,” and “a second skin.”<sup>524</sup> The Black face, indeed, literally becomes a mask to be toyed with—a detachable facade.

To be more specific, the Black face held in the hand of the woman in Smith’s pastel implies the treatment of Black skin as a prop. This is evident in the performance history of *Othello*, and of plays in general, where Black characters were normally played by white actors, with their skin “coloured” to support the performance. As early in 1912, the *Daily Mirror* reviewed the colours of *Othello* as played by white actors: Phelps—a walnut tinge; Fechter—a light mulattol; Salvini—a warthy Italian; Edwin Booth and Henry Irving—a yellowish shade; Oscar Asche—rosewood hue; Forbes Robertson—American birch tinge; Charles Dillon—Creswick;

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<sup>523</sup> It is worth noting that the use of a blue underpainting is part of the camaieu technique that Sickert developed in the 1910s. Introducing the method in 1918, he stated: “Let the ground of Prussian-blue of the dead colour “grin through,” ... to interact with the painting.” Sickert, “Thérèse Lessore,” *Arts and Letters*, November 1918, reprinted in Robins, *op. cit.*, 428.

<sup>524</sup> Angela Rosenthal, “Visceral Culture: Blushing and the Legibility of Whiteness in Eighteenth-Century British Portraiture,” *Art History* 27, no. 4 (2004): 586.

Barry Sullivan—darksome colour; and Lewis Waller—nearly pink.<sup>525</sup> Some audiences for the play would even demonstrate a colour-blindness, and even a self-deception, as they “refuse the illusion and protect themselves subconsciously with the knowledge that it is only Mr.—, with his face blacked.”<sup>526</sup>

Thus, the colour of *Othello* is subjective rather than objective, performative rather than an anterior fact. This subjectivity regarding colour can be observed in Sickert’s earlier works on the same theme, where it is combined with his favoured technique of temporal montage, discussed in chapter two. In 1934, Sickert made a *Variation on Othello* (1933–34, fig. 3.27). According to Baron, the full title given to this painting when it was exhibited at the Leicester Galleries, in 1934, was *Ira Aldridge as Othello, Valerie Tudor as Desdemona and Gastrolle as Cassio*.<sup>527</sup> Baron suggests that, since Ira Aldridge and Valerie Tudor did not feature in the 1930 production of *Othello* at the Savoy, Sickert’s “concoction” may be a response to the “racist criticism of Robeson.”<sup>528</sup> This suggestion indeed makes sense, as Aldridge (1807–1867), the first Black actor to play *Othello* in Britain, in the 1850s, himself suffered criticism on account of his African heritage, as Robeson did. In addition, some of the press coverage of Robeson as *Othello* made mention of Aldridge, praising him as the “African Roscius.”<sup>529</sup> This coverage may well have inspired Sickert to replace Robeson with Aldridge in his *Variation*, as a reminder of the marginalised actor.

However, the anachronism, or temporal montage, offers more than role play and general criticism; the painting bears some oddities, which, I would suggest, render the

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<sup>525</sup> “Was *Othello* Black?,” *Daily Mirror*, April 10, 1912, 5.

<sup>526</sup> Rylands, “The Drama—Savoy Theatre: *Othello*,” 288.

<sup>527</sup> Baron, *Sickert: Paintings and Drawings*, 549.

<sup>528</sup> *Ibid.*, 549. Baron notes that Valerie Tudor was a contemporary actress, but that *Desdemona* is not among the many Shakespearean roles she is known to have played. *Gastrolle* is the German word for an actor making a guest appearance. William Rough suggests that this painting may have been inspired by a programme for the play at the Savoy, now in the collection of the V&A. The programme includes a photo of Aldridge. See Rough, “Walter Sickert and the Theatre,” 156.

<sup>529</sup> Aldridge is compared here to the eminent Roman actor Quintus Roscius Gallus. See “Real Negro as *Othello*,” *Ireland’s Saturday Night*, December 9, 1933, 8; and “Was *Othello* Black?”

whole picture a fiction. Firstly, the three characters of Othello, Desdemona, and Cassio do not appear together in the play, and Othello never steps on Cassio. Secondly, the skin colour of Desdemona is rendered in an earthy colour, with her dark brown arms similar in hue to Othello's left arm. Might they be gloves, or are they purposefully darkened, and, if so, why? All these oddities—the manipulations of roles and the timeline—may have reminded audiences of the controversy over the employment of a Black actor in the play. As mentioned, Othello was usually played by white actors in make-up. The alteration of Desdemona's skin colour echoes the manipulation of the colour of Othello in the play's production history. Sickert, in a performative manner, renders interchangeable "black" as a colour and "Black" as an identity, documenting the play and exposing the racial issue at the same time.

The practice, shown in *Variation on Othello*, of regarding black as a skin tone and having white individuals wear it challenges the purported stability and immutability traditionally ascribed to whiteness in racial colour theories. As Rosenthal observes, "the white body as a constructed norm insistently refuses analysis."<sup>530</sup> Therefore, with "whiteness" considered the norm, everything else is categorised as "race," as the "other," as Ian Smith argues.<sup>531</sup> This means that whiteness is always stable and fixed, while Blackness exists in a state of flux and movement, or in manipulation.

The abstract shifts and relative stability of "Black" and "white," respectively, are exemplified by British policy on "coloured" people in the 1920s and 1930s, and in the personal experiences of Aldridge and Robeson. Like the working class, "coloured" people were considered as the "other" in British society, and were excluded from the centre both culturally and geographically.<sup>532</sup> Black Britons were considered a racial menace and some scholars of the period advocated their removal, seeking to persuade

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<sup>530</sup> Rosenthal, "Visceral Culture," 567.

<sup>531</sup> Ian Smith, "Antonio's 'Fair Flesh' and the Property of Whiteness," in *Black Shakespeare: Reading and Misreading Race* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), 84.

<sup>532</sup> Schaffer, "Rethinking Interwar Racial Reform," 26.

Black people to return to their homelands in order to preserve the nation's stock.<sup>533</sup> These attitudes impacted upon Aldridge's drifting career. Aldridge was born in America and, having boarded a ship to Liverpool, pursued his theatre career in Britain, where his performances in the provinces earned him recognition. However, in 1833, he suffered severe criticism from the press, having returned to London, which was, as Fryer describes, the "centre of the pro-slavery lobby, then fighting its final rearguard action against the abolition of slavery in the British colonies."<sup>534</sup> Thus, Aldridge was excluded from the centre and had to make do with provincial and continental tours. In 1858, the West End finally accepted him, albeit reluctantly and only for a short period. Even Robeson, who achieved fame a hundred years after Aldridge, at times encountered objections and calls for "removal." His statue in black bronze, by the famous New York sculptor Antonio Salemme, was banned in Philadelphia in May 1930, just after he had performed in *Othello*, on account of the racial problems there.<sup>535</sup> Whilst preparing for the play in London, Robeson and his wife were rejected by the Savoy Hotel Grill Room restaurant.<sup>536</sup> In 1986, following his death, he was not mentioned in John Kobal's book *Portraits of The British Cinema*.<sup>537</sup> This marginalisation, neglect, and removal is reflected in *Variation on Othello*, in the nervous mood of the figures, the substitution of actors, and the fabricated setting.

However, in the fictional space of *Variation on Othello*, Sickert dissolves white subjectivity, or, rather, grafts Black history onto the white body. Traditionally, the stage allows white people to move through its space without issue, while the presence of Black people is often questioned. However, Sickert's painting subverts this

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<sup>533</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>534</sup> Fryer, *Staying Power*, 254.

<sup>535</sup> "Paul Robeson's Statue Ban. Colour Problem. Fear," *Daily News and Westminster Gazette*, May 23, 1930, 5.

<sup>536</sup> Virginia Hamilton, *Paul Robeson: The Life and Times of a Free Black Man* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), 40.

<sup>537</sup> Stephen Bourne, *Black in the British Frame: The Black Experience in British Film and Television* (London and New York: Continuum, 2001), 10.

expectation; the space is no longer one for Black people to “invade,” but instead, it is the white people who change. The history of the *Othello* actors tells us that Blackness is not a fact, but a perception that can be changed at will, depending on who is watching. By painting Desdemona dark brown, Sickert reflects the notion that Blackness and whiteness are relative, and that the Black man is not just Black, but is defined in relation to the white man.

Sickert’s manipulation of Black and white in his artwork also reconfigures the traditional dynamics of black and white in painting. His interest in Black skin colour is not driven solely by the need for colour balance in painting, as is the case for many artists. As one critic in the *Art Journal* revealed in 1867, “a black man, if not a subject of Phidias, is eminently picturesque; his colour can be turned to good account in picture making; witness the effect gained by Venetian painters out of the swarthy Ethiopian king in ‘the worship of the magi’.”<sup>538</sup> And this aesthetic gaze upon Black skin may also be employed as a contrast, as shown in the tradition of the “Black page” in painting.<sup>539</sup> An example can be seen in Rossetti’s *The Beloved* (1865–66, fig. 3.28). The bride in the centre is surrounded by people of different ethnicities, and, as Tim Barringer points out, all four women and the boy of African descent have darker skin than the bride.<sup>540</sup> Indeed, the Black boy’s presence accentuates this tonal contrast with the bride’s skin. His upper body is bare, with only a crocheted shawl and a neck decoration, and he provides a darker and warmer tone to the picture to contrast with the pale skin of the central figure. The boy’s face is rendered with patches of cold, purplish grey to express the highlights and veins on his face, but this makes his face appear somewhat smeared. While he might not have been purposefully painted as

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<sup>538</sup> “Pictures from America,” *Art Journal* 6, no. 71 (1867), 248, quoted in Jan Marsh, *Black Victorians: Black People in British Art, 1800-1900* (Aldershot: Lund Humphries, 2005), 20.

<sup>539</sup> For the motif of the “Black page,” see Jane Fair Bestor, “Titian’s Portrait of Laura Eustochia: The Decorum of Female Beauty and the Motif of the Black Page,” *Renaissance Studies* 17, no. 4 (2003): 628–73.

<sup>540</sup> T. J. Barringer, *The Pre-Raphaelites: Reading the Image* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1998), 152; see also D. M. R. Bentley, “‘Curiosity and the Desire of Beauty’: Dante Gabriel Rossetti’s *The Beloved* and Some Contingent Aesthetic Considerations,” *University of Toronto Quarterly* 88, no. 4 (2019): 347.

such, this nevertheless effectively sets off the flawless whiteness of the bride. Moreover, the contrast of Black and white not only serves as an ethnic contrast, but accentuates the overall visual intensity of the picture. Rossetti uses lavish green and red, positioning them rhythmically in the painting. This colour scheme is reminiscent of a theatrical setting, and echoes the action of the bride as she reveals her face to the viewer. In this sense, one important function of the inclusion of figures of African descent within a painting such as this is to exploit the aesthetic quality of Blackness to reveal or confirm an ethnographic and power relationship.

However, by borrowing from newspaper production photos, Sickert's depictions of skin colours in his paintings become not merely reflections of power dynamics, nor affirmations of the subordinate relationship of Black to white. In both *Variation on Othello* and *Peggy Ashcroft and Paul Robeson in "Othello"*, the skin tones of the two protagonists are not simple contrasts of black and white, but are coloured, drawing viewers' attention to skin tone by way of different visual strategies.

Simultaneously, we can observe that the issue of colour became a topic that was discussed and shaped across different mediums. Production photos documented the duality of theatre by capturing the performance and reflecting the actors and their characters. As illustrations in newspapers, they facilitated discussions of Black identity, and the choices made by the press in selecting specific production photos revealed their underlying racism. Performance, the theme of these photos, also fundamentally provided an opportunity for "coloured" actors to "restyle" their bodies, thereby engaging with their bodies and identities in a broader cultural context. Different aspects of this issue, presented across various mediums, offer various ways to understand this topic. Sickert's appropriation, on the one hand, represents a transformation of visual interests into topical expressions, while, on the other hand, it provides a reflective record of racial dynamics. His montage in *Variation on Othello* represents a form of rediscovery, a way to revisit this theme. By replacing or adding elements, it prompts the audience to reconsider the appearance of the original image.

### 3.3 To be closer

The Othello paintings show how Sickert used colour to engage with the topic of race, which was generated by diverse representations and discussions in the press. It should be noted that this practice must be seen in the context of the enormous rise in the use of photography in journalism as a way to attract more readers in the early twentieth century. In this section, I will continue to address how topicality is reflected in Sickert's art, but with a focus on how his images of specific topics become the topics themselves. I argue that this is achieved through the visual technique of enlargement, or the close-up, as a strategy to attract attention. This version of topicality is prominent in what Daniels terms "press art," that is, paintings derived from the replication of newspaper photographs, especially those based on celebrity portraits. I will draw on two paintings as examples, as well as reproductions of the paintings that complicated the issue of topicality.

Although the "close-up" may appear to be a technical matter, seemingly unrelated to topicality and the public, I argue that topicality fundamentally involves a "need for the audience," signifying that the audience requires physical proximity to an image or event. The caricature by Radiguet (fig. 3.1), discussed at the beginning of this chapter, already demonstrates this desire on the part of the public, as they seek to get close to the poster's sensational announcement. The close-up, then, is rooted in the satisfaction of this desire, stemming from the public's wish to occupy a more significant portion of the image; it signifies a particular relationship between people and images.

The use of the close-up technique in Sickert's oeuvre is not unfamiliar. As early as in *La Hollandaise* (1906, fig. 3.15), we encounter a form of close-up, wherein Sickert brings us in close proximity to the woman on the iron bed, allowing us to experience the blurred violence on her face and the unsettling bruise-like skin on her legs. The woman confronts us: her legs are extremely foreshortened, implying that the viewer is compelled to enter her world. This closeness becomes even more plain in subsequent works, such as *Horses of St Mark's, Venice* (1905–6, fig. 3.29), which

presents an unusual view of St Mark's Basilica. The composition does not appear to show the perspective of someone standing at ground level, but rather resembles an enlargement of a particular detail of a picture of the Basilica. The features of the painting—the lunettes, the arch, and the horses—are in such proximity to the picture plane that it lacks a sense of perspective. In a sense, this is a close-up, and suggests a commercial aspect similar to postcards featuring close-up tourist attractions, which serve as souvenirs for visitors. *Peggy Ashcroft and Paul Robeson in "Othello"* (1935, fig. 3.20), is a close-up in a more literal sense, since the painting is a slight enlargement of the original "Coloured Othello" press photo. Compared to the photo, the figures in the painting fill the space, bringing us physically closer to the depicted event, and creating a sensational visual impact. Sickert's "press art" frequently employs this visual strategy. As the focus of this section, this last kind of close-up will serve as both a technical and conceptual summation of Sickert's painting amid print culture.

The term "close-up," then, here encompasses a broad and generalised expression of desire. This desire was ignited by the invention of the daguerreotype in 1839, which was also then called "exactitude," because photographs offered a magnifying glass, presenting precise and comprehensive reproductions of light and shadow.<sup>541</sup> This reflects a sense of wonderment towards details, and, in essence, constitutes a form of close-up—an act of enlargement. In fact, a demand for enlargement has existed from the birth of photography. In photographic journals, experts frequently shared techniques for enlarging photographs onto canvas,<sup>542</sup> while photographic studios also advertised their ability to enlarge photos.<sup>543</sup> As discussed earlier, Sickert's own transfer technique, using a grid, primarily served the purpose of

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<sup>541</sup> Timby, "Photography, Cinema, and Perceptual Realism," in Leonardi and Natale, eds., *Photography and Other Media*, 177–78.

<sup>542</sup> See, for example, "Enlargement of Small Photos," *Scientific American* LXV, no. 20 (1891): 305. For more on the sharing of photographic technologies, see Lynn Berger, "Peer Production in the Age of Collodion," in Leonardi and Natale, eds., *Photography and Other Media*, 91–100.

<sup>543</sup> Deepali Dewan, ed., *Embellished Reality: Indian Painted Photographs* (Toronto: Royal Ontario Museum Press, 2012), 27.

enlargement. However, it is as a cinematic technique that the many possibilities of the close-up, as a form of enlargement, have been most thoroughly explored. Indeed, Sickert himself associated enlargement with cinema, writing in 1927 that “the cinema has enlightened us on the capacities of enlargement.”<sup>544</sup>

Numerous scholars have written on the cinematic close-up. For my purposes, I wish to single out the audience-related aspects of the device to illuminate its potential as a form of topicality in itself. The early film director and theorist Béla Balázs was among the first to write on the close-up, and while he focused on the faces and expressions of characters at close range, it is worth noting his emphasis on the close-up’s reflection in the eyes of the audience. Balázs claims that close-ups “show the faces of things and those expressions on them which are significant because they are reflected expressions of our own subconscious feeling.”<sup>545</sup> In other words, a reciprocal interaction transpires between the camera and the audience by way of the amplified image.

Addressing the role of the close-up in his writings on early cinema, Tom Gunning characterises the latter as a form of exhibitionistic imagery, or what he calls “the cinema of attractions.”<sup>546</sup> Gunning holds that early cinema’s qualities of “presentation” and “exhibition” predominate over those of “representation” and “narration.” Central to the keyword “attraction,” he underscores the diverse forms of “presentation” that early cinema employs to underscore its significance as a form of visual modernity, imbued with the essence of “shocking entertainment.” In this sense, close-up shots become an effective means of capturing the audience’s gaze. The close-up boasts an inherently stage-like quality, serving as an attraction in its own right, thereby enhancing the exhibitionistic nature of cinema. These theories collectively underscore the idea that the close-up, or the visual itself, assumes the role

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<sup>544</sup> Walter Sickert, “Children’s Taste in Art. Cotton Prints of Classics,” *Morning Post*, December 23, 1927, reprinted in Robins, *op. cit.*, 563.

<sup>545</sup> Béla Balázs, *Theory of the Film* (London: Dennis Dobson, 1952), 56.

<sup>546</sup> Tom Gunning, “The Cinema of Attraction[s]: Early Film, Its Spectator and the Avant-Garde,” in *The Cinema of Attractions Reloaded*, ed. Wanda Strauven (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), 382.

of a topical construct, encapsulating a sense of sensation. I would argue, in addition, that the close-up technique in Sickert's works is a deliberate strategy that is adopted for similarly presentational reasons, running in parallel to the prevailing visual culture of the time, rather than merely being appropriated for the purposes of narrative.

My interpretation of the close-up also draws upon Mary Ann Doane's view that there is a duality inherent in the close-up. Examining previous theories and considering the semantic nuances of the term "close-up" in different languages, Doane points out that an inseparable duality resides within it, with the close-up "simultaneously posing as both microcosm and macrocosm, detail and whole."<sup>547</sup> I would suggest that this tension is discernible in Sickert's works.

In 1935, Sickert painted *The Miner* (1935, fig. 3.30), which exemplifies his approach to the close-up and, moreover, encapsulates his conflation of formal interest and topical content, as with the Othello painting. *The Miner* shows a man and his wife engaged in an intimate kiss. They occupy the entirety of the canvas, compelling the audience to witness this private moment directly. This painting was originally titled *Black and White* when it was exhibited at the Leicester Gallery in 1936. The old title introduces Sickert's witty pun: on the one hand, it suggests the source of the painting, a black-and-white photo of the miners' strike published in October 1935 in the *Daily Express* (fig. 3.31). Sickert indeed retains the monochrome tone of the news photo in his painting, with only the woman's vest, the man's face, and the background tinted pink. On the other hand, black and white denotes the trade, coal mining, that is reported in the news story. The male figure is painted with coal-like strokes on the face, in contrast to the "clean" white woman he is kissing.

The news story was of interest to Sickert. When the writer Denton Welch visited Sickert at St Peter's-in-Thamet, he couldn't take eyes from this painting, and Sickert said to him: "That picture gives you the right feeling doesn't it? You'd kiss your wife like that if you'd just come up from the pit, wouldn't you?"<sup>548</sup> Sickert's words suggest

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<sup>547</sup> Mary Ann Doane, "The Close-Up: Scale and Detail in the Cinema," *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 14, no. 3 (2003): 93.

<sup>548</sup> Baron, *Sickert: Paintings and Drawings*, 538–39.

that he had at least read the brief text that accompanied the news illustration, which states:

In the pit of the Risca mine since Tuesday, 200 striking miners came to the surface yesterday. On the left, one is given a reward. Trelewis has been the centre of serious fighting, and windows in the home of Mr. T. Hughes, colliery manager, were broken. The house is in the middle, with the police on guard. (Right) The post office, scene of one of the mêlées.<sup>549</sup>

Risca colliery was an important mine in South Wales with a history dating back to 1862. However, its presence in the media was mostly associated with fatalities, and regular newspaper readers would have known the name “Risca” for this reason. There had been several explosions in the colliery’s history: thirty-five men died in 1846; twenty in 1853; 141 in 1860; and 115 in 1880. The dangerous nature of the industry and the failure of miners’ payment and rewards to match the level of risk accounts for the frequency of strikes at the colliery. The 1935 strike, reported by the *Daily Express*, was a stay-down strike lasting seventy-two hours, in protest over the use of non-union workers.

However, the *Daily Express* report does not attend to the strike’s origins or the history of the Risca mine, and nor does it address the conflict between labour and capital. Instead, the report turns hard news into soft news by comprising just three photos and the above short text. The “Photonews” column, where news of the strike is printed, was reserved specifically to tell news with pictures, as a popular way to attract readers. The Risca miners’ strike was presented as a tale of emotion, violence, and sensational scenes, with three photos of varied appeal. The central and right-hand photos respectively show a distant view and a middle view, showcasing the aftermath of violence—the broken windows of the colliery manager’s office and the post office. In a sense, these two images provide the context for, and serve as a prelude to, the

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<sup>549</sup> “Scenes at the Mine-Strike ‘Front’,” *Daily Express*, October 18, 1935, 24.

left-hand picture, where the kissing scene is prominently enlarged, making it a close-up, in contrast to the other two. The violence in the kissing scene is immediate: the kiss was captured on the spot by the camera, not after the event. After sitting in the dark, food-and-water-deprived mine for three days, with concerns about whether their demands would be met, the miners' grievances erupted upon seeing daylight. The miner's wife might not have been prepared for the kiss, as she does not embrace her husband. The *Daily Express's* illustration shows passionate male strength and dominance, suggesting a heroic masculinity. In short, it captures the moment of a release of emotion—another form of violence and conflict, which gives readers a hit. At the same time, the act of kissing itself conveys a sensation to beholders. This explains the response to the question posed by Sickert to his visitor (“You’d kiss your wife like that if you’d just come up from the pit, wouldn’t you?”): “I was appalled by the dreadful heartiness of the question. I found myself blushing, and hated him for making me do so.”<sup>550</sup>

Welch's reaction demonstrates that he felt the subject of kissing to be somewhat embarrassing, especially as shown and viewed in company. In this sense, the close-up creates a sensation, making viewers like Welch ripple inside. It is the passion and sensation of the news photo, in addition to the strike itself, that catches Sickert's eye.

Indeed, Sickert's painting amplifies the act of kissing just as the *Daily Express* itself did. In effect, he makes a close-up out of a close-up, drawing the lens even closer to the figures, cropping the upper and right-hand edge of the press photo, and squeezing the couple into a narrow space. The figures' profiles are delineated with short, black lines, with the monochrome of the press photo mostly retained in the painting, whose tone is confined to tawny with occasional pink flourishes on the woman's vest and the man's face. The metal lunch pail and light skin each contrast with the charcoal smeared on the miner's face, while the enlarged size also makes the faces colossal, turning them into gigantic and monstrous presences. The brief outline of the miner's face is executed in a cartoon-like manner, making the figure appear

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<sup>550</sup> Baron, *Sickert: Paintings and Drawings*, 538–39.

somewhat distorted and absurd. In this sense, the sensational event becomes visually sensational, as Sickert deliberately plays with his medium and with the subject matter.

Nonetheless, as a close-up, *The Miner* possesses the contradictory qualities discussed by Doane, because while it is large in scale, it also lacks detail. We cannot even see the protagonists' expressions, and the physiognomic information cannot compete with its source photo in the *Daily Express*.

This kind of enigmatic close-up can be observed in another painting. In 1930, Sickert created *King George V and his Racing Manager: A Conversation Piece at Aintree* (1929–30, fig. 3.32), also based on a press photo (fig. 3.33).<sup>551</sup> The photo itself is a close-up: its foreground is blurred as it focuses on the King's face, suggesting that it is a candid photograph. However, Sickert brings the viewer even closer by cropping the blurred foreground of the press photo. In his version, the heads of the two figures dominate the entire frame. Interestingly, Sickert also plays with the focus in his close-up, but this time the manager is more prominent than the King. In the original photo, the sharp outline created by the black suit and white collar of the King makes him stand out, but this feature is diminished by Sickert. In his painting, the suit is rendered in a bluish-grey tone, with less contrast than the two hats. The king thereby becomes a less prominent foreground figure, while the manager, clearly separated from the background and with his face rendered in strongly contrasting tones, takes the lead.

The King's profile is simplified into several straight lines, with even his nose lacking a fleshy tip. His profile is as starkly outlined as the miner's, expressed in just a few harsh strokes. Facial details such as wrinkles and muscles are delineated by

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<sup>551</sup> According to Baron, we know that *King George V and His Racing Manager* is based on a press photo printed in the *News Chronicle* on March 25, 1927, after that year's Grand National, because the source is inscribed in the painting. Baron, *Sickert: Paintings and Drawings*, 527. However, the title "News Chronicle" did not exist in 1927, since it was born from the merging of the *Daily News* and *Daily Chronicle* in 1930. I have not been able to trace the source photo in either of these two titles; therefore, I present *The Graphic*'s reproduction of the painting and source photo here for reference. Laurel Brake and Marysa Demoor, eds., *Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Journalism in Great Britain and Ireland* (Ghent: Academia Press, 2009), 128.

small touches in different shades of pink, without adding any convincing realism to the image. Therefore, the painting exhibits what Doane considers to be the paradox of the close-up, namely enlargement without clarity. This contradiction is evident in *The Graphic*'s comparison (fig. 3.33) of the painting with its source photo. As reproduced there, Sickert's painting is shown unmistakably to be a close-up of the source photo to its right, but it appears even less clear than the photograph due to the printing technique. The colour painting becomes black-and-white again, homogenising with the source photo. The brushwork in the facial areas all turns a nebulous grey, while the original photograph, as reproduced here, also becomes coarse.

In this instance, the paradoxical close-up is an effect of the work's reproduction in print, as the mass printing process diminishes the quality to the extent that it fundamentally lacks detail. Press photos roughly align with our visual experience but lack fine-grained detail, reflecting an aesthetic that prioritises magnification, and quantity rather than quality. Viewing Sickert's press art as a close-up in this way suggests a new perspective upon it. Daniels considers the appropriation of press photos as part of modern art's assimilation of popular culture as a way to widen its scope.<sup>552</sup> Yet Daniels's sense of "modern art" here is not clear. Do Sickert's news paintings reveal an identical modernity to his earlier works? It is undeniable that Sickert's work does have a strong social relevance, but these paintings of news stories are different from his earlier scenes depicting crowds. In his music hall paintings, for example, different classes mingled, immersed in entertaining consumption, and forming a particular spectacle, which is close to the modernity usually associated with the Impressionists.<sup>553</sup> Being able to recognise oneself in the media was indicative of this modernity, and was amplified through the use of photomechanical techniques and popular prints. Popular periodicals had provided a space where everyday life could be projected, for the urban dweller to see themselves and their surroundings.<sup>554</sup> However,

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<sup>552</sup> Daniels, "Walter Sickert and Popular Culture."

<sup>553</sup> See, for example, T. J. Clark's discussion of Manet in *The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and his Followers* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1985).

<sup>554</sup> Beegan, *The Mass Image*, 4.

in his news paintings, Sickert singles out specific moments in the lives of individuals, turning these into serious images. The strategy of the close-up, and the visual intensity of these paintings, creates the effect of the image (the news photo) becoming an image once again, rather than a threshold of illusionism. The news event in question comes to a halt and becomes merely an image. The context of the strike is excluded from the painting, and a linear narrative is denied. The focus on a moment and an individual is prominent only in Sickert's news paintings, which turn reality into spectacle by means of the close-up. In this sense, we can discern a lineage of modern representation moving from the panorama to the fragmentary moment of the camera, and on to the close-up view. The enlarged close-up, then, is Sickert's contribution to modern art. The sensation it delivers compensates for the loss of totality, and also augurs people's desire to be surrounded by images. Close-ups transform from being a strategy to becoming a desire for materiality in consumer culture. The relation between scale and desire has been described by Benjamin, as

the desire of contemporary masses to bring things "closer" spatially and humanly, which is just as ardent as their bent toward overcoming the uniqueness of every reality by accepting its reproduction. Every day the urge grows stronger to get hold of an object at very close range by way of its likeness, its reproduction.<sup>555</sup>

Benjamin also suggests another aspect of Sickert's news paintings, insofar as they multiply images of an event to cater for people's desire for reproduction. Indeed, Sickert's paintings about news topics, from the Camden Town murder to the miners' strike, are "reproductions" of these events, and the press's further reproduction of his paintings in print in turn demonstrates this desire for multiplication. Hillel Schwartz has elaborated on the fascination for copying, arguing that since time flows faster in industrial society, people feel more anxious, and

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<sup>555</sup> Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," III.

therefore need a constant flow of images to consolidate their sense of being.<sup>556</sup> To imitate has become a second nature to human beings, whom Schwartz likens to parrots, tracing the etymology of *para* as “by the side of,” or “simulated.”<sup>557</sup> Our second nature, as parrots, is contained in the words “paraphrasis, parallelism, paralipomena, parabasis, paraclete, and parallax.”<sup>558</sup>

Alongside the “para” is the plurality of things, which has become accepted aesthetically. The tremendous growth of industrialisation, with its standardisation, has allowed the plural to seep into human consciousness as a distinct compulsion. Standardised buildings, utensils, packaging, newspapers, and so on, all promote repetition, which becomes a highly modern aesthetic. Sickert’s journalistic canvases, which are in a way a plural form of the original, are a continuation of the plural nature of print culture. Indeed, Sickert’s works were said to be *parodies* or copies, a comment that was not necessarily intended to be pejorative.<sup>559</sup> *The Graphic*’s reproduction of Sickert’s painting of George V alongside the source photo also enacts a kind of parallel. At the same time, this example tells us even more about the attenuation of the concept of the copy versus the original, since the page in *The Graphic* shows only one link in the chain of the process of reproduction. As mentioned earlier, the source photo was published in the *News Chronicle* on March 25, 1927, as inscribed at the upper right in Sickert’s painting. Yet the title of that newspaper did not exist in 1927. In this sense, when Sickert used this photograph as a basis for his painting, three years later, the photograph had already become an ambiguous source. In December 1930, after Sickert’s painting was completed, the *Daily Express* juxtaposed the painting and the source before *The Graphic* followed suit in 1931. In this sequence of production and reproduction, the distinction between source and reproduction is effaced. Sickert’s painting is first photographed and then

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<sup>556</sup> Hillel Schwartz, *The Culture of the Copy: Striking Likenesses, Unreasonable Facsimiles*, rev. ed. (New York: Zone Books, 2014), 77.

<sup>557</sup> *Ibid.*, 117.

<sup>558</sup> *Ibid.*, 126.

<sup>559</sup> See, for example, the contemporary review “Sickert’s ‘English Echoes’—His Wit and Genius,” *Scotsman*, May 11, 1931, 12.

printed in newspapers, with each newspaper printing it slightly differently, whether larger, or darker, or with a more fine-grained or coarse texture. The source photo on the right seems more original than Sickert's painting, reproduced at the left, since it has sharper edges and a stronger tonal contrast. Yet, the question as to which is the original does not matter much in this case. What matters is that the King, and the man staying close to him, are fixed, becoming iconic.

## Chapter Four: The *English Echoes*: Archiving and the Circulation of Images

In 1927, in his Noel Street studio, Sickert began making the *English Echoes*, a series that eventually amounted to more than one hundred paintings.<sup>560</sup> These works were made by copying the designs of Victorian illustrations that he had collected over the years, and the appropriation of this neglected print ephemera brings a visible change to his work at this time. Many critics, writing in the 1930s and subsequently, have criticised what they have regarded as Sickert's overreliance on print ephemera, as a mechanical product, in Sickert's late career, raising questions concerning his creativity and originality.<sup>561</sup> For one thing, Sickert's insistence on using his own on-the-spot drawings as the source of his paintings, is now replaced by the use of found designs. In addition, the sharp social commentary that had previously been a feature of his paintings is replaced by seemingly ambiguous and obsolete subjects based on what he could find in the old prints. The outdatedness of the source illustrations also discouraged critics from interpreting the "modernity" of his art in terms of contemporaneity.<sup>562</sup> In previous chapters, I have intermittently discussed the techniques and narratives of some of the *English Echoes*. This chapter aims to provide a focused discussion of their production (and reproduction), and to respond to the question of their modernity and originality by arguing that the series is situated in the print and social culture of the 1930s. Rather than representing a rupture in Sickert's career, they mark a new phase of his connection with print culture, and provide alternative ways for him to engage with artistic originality. My approach to the

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<sup>560</sup> There may be more *Echoes* than those currently known. For more on the series, see Baron, *Sickert: Paintings and Drawings*, 122–24.

<sup>561</sup> Numerous critics and scholars view the *English Echoes* as marking a decline in Sickert's career. These include Baron (in her 1973 monograph), Lillian Browse, and many critics writing in the 1930s.

<sup>562</sup> This understanding of modernity is seen in Thomas Crow's discussion of the complex relationship between the materials of modern life and modern art's formal qualities, according to which modern art takes urban experience as its subject matter and enacts a formal autonomy. See Crow, *Modern Art in The Common Culture*; and Clement Greenberg, *Art and Culture: Critical Essays* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989).

*English Echoes* is to set them within a longer flow and circulation of images, and to explore ideas of media as well as the process of mediation.

My approach builds on the emphasis of scholars such as Daniels and Seller on the concept of media and its relation to modernity in the *English Echoes*. Daniels, having discovered a number of source images from the mid-Victorian *London Journal* and other newspapers of the 1930s, attends to the transposition from print to painting and argues that the making of the *English Echoes* is part of a 1930s vogue for Victoriana, and that this explains the paintings' contemporaneity.<sup>563</sup> Seller reinterprets the modernity of the *Echoes* by introducing the idea of remediation, which goes further in exploring the role of the medium in modern art. He sees the paintings as remediations of their sources, and sets this remediation within the context of the collective practice of interwar remembrance as the key to their contemporaneity.<sup>564</sup>

However, while Daniels and Seller each claims to attend to the “transmission” between media, their focus remains on the interpretation of the iconography or subject matter of each Echo, and they refer to the mediated images—the sources—only as background information. These source images are normally referred to as “found images” in theirs and many others' writings. However, as Tina M. Campt notes, the term “found images” suggests their loss of context; thus, to “find” images involves an act of discovery and recovery.<sup>565</sup> That is, found images are not originally anonymous, and what is found is subject to the finder. Based on this notion, I focus here on what images were found, how they were found, and how we might understand the process of “finding.” This perspective echoes the requirements of current media studies, wherein “copies and transformations remain one of the great tasks of the history of images.”<sup>566</sup> Régis Debray compares the concept of transmission, which refers to a

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<sup>563</sup> See Daniels, “Walter Sickert and Popular Culture”; and Rebecca Daniels, “Walter Richard Sickert's ‘Echoes’ from the ‘London Journal,’” *Burlington Magazine* 150, no. 1261 (2018): 256–59.

<sup>564</sup> See Seller, “Material Memory.”

<sup>565</sup> Tina M. Campt, *Image Matters: Archive, Photography, and the African Diaspora in Europe* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), 80–82.

<sup>566</sup> David Freedberg, *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 121.

long-term cultural process extending from the past to the present, with the concept of communication, referring to a short-lived passage of information.<sup>567</sup> Campt and Debray each bring the circulation of images to the fore. Indeed, the *English Echoes* transmit and communicate through various materials, and this also relates to the process of finding. For this reason, I will make use of a wide range of visual materials that are related to the making and viewing of the works in the series.

Firstly, I shall explore some of the basic but unexplored questions concerning the making of the *English Echoes* by returning to the actual process of their production. Where did Sickert find his sources and in what form and physical condition were they found? How should we understand his decision to make the names of his sources known? Was it common to “echo” the work of an illustrator in the London art world of the 1930s? Why did Sickert choose certain illustrators to echo? An important consideration in studying the *Echoes* is to discover how Sickert’s paintings transformed their sources. By searching a number of Victorian journals, I have found more than twenty previously unknown illustrations that Sickert used as sources for his paintings. With these materials, the details of how the *English Echoes* were made, and the narratives in each work, become clearer. In addition, understanding the making of the *English Echoes* as a process of finding suggests Sickert’s role as an archivist. Accordingly, I set his practice within the context of a late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century trend for archiving art, in order to shed new light on the significance of the *Echoes*.

Secondly, I shall explore what is transmitted by the *English Echoes* by studying several pairs from the series. This will help to reveal the individuality of each of these *Echoes*, besides their belonging to the series, and to understand the criteria according to which Sickert chose his sources. Sickert looked to these sources for both narrative and aesthetic potential. By doing this he violated the dichotomy of history painting and modern art, as well as the tension between engraving and modern

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<sup>567</sup> Régis Debray, *Transmitting Culture*, trans. Eric Rauth (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 1–5.

photojournalism. This discussion will provide an alternative account of the *Echoes*' creativity and modernity.

In order to elaborate the historical conditions under which the *Echoes* were made, I also consider other spaces where they appeared in the public sphere, including reviews of the paintings and their reproduction in newspapers and other printed matter. Of particular note is an issue of the *Illustrated London News*, from April 9, 1932, that contains a full-page reproduction of six *Echoes*, as black-and-white photos, opposite three engravings by John Gilbert on the facing page (figs 4.1 and 4.2).<sup>568</sup> This is an especially useful resource for examining the late work of Sickert, as well as the complexity of modern art and the debates on originality and reproduction, because it shows an interesting print circle: The Sickert paintings were made after printed Victorian periodical illustrations, which are reprinted by the *ILN* together with the paintings. The pages, composed of text and images, provide a new interpretation of both the sources and the paintings, which differs from the author's intention, and the physical reproduction of each further complicates the question of art's production and reproduction, which is Sickert's interest. The interaction, on the same page, between source, artwork, and reproduction, thus reveals the key topics of modern art: subject matter, art's sources, art's language, and reproduction. This material also provides an opportunity to consider Sickert's position in the modern art world, and whether this is his personal choice, or an alternative way to take part in this trend of the 1930s.

## 4.1 The sources for the *English Echoes* and the illustrators of the 1860s

The *English Echoes* first came to the eye of the public in 1928, though they were not yet known under the series' title. *Suisque Praesidium* (c. 1927, fig. 4.3) and *La Traviata* (c. 1927, fig. 4.5) were exhibited among other works by Sickert in February

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<sup>568</sup> The reproduction of the six *Echoes* in the *ILN* is first mentioned in Baron, *Sickert: Paintings and Drawings*, 508.

of that year at the Savile Gallery, one of Sickert's main dealers in the 1920s.<sup>569</sup> *Suisque Praesidium* depicts a soldier holding a child in his arms, with other relatives at their side. Behind this group is a phalanx of soldiers and another group of people hailing them. The Latin title *Suisque Praesidium*, meaning "and a protection to his own people," is boldly inscribed in capital letters around the lower perimeter. The whole picture is executed in a grey-blue monochrome, with a circular white strip surrounding the main design.<sup>570</sup> As I have discovered, the source image on the pot lid is entitled "Embarking for the East" (fig. 4.4), as inscribed on its lower edge, and is a transferware produced by F. & R. Pratt & Co., the leading producer of ceramics in the mid-Victorian age.<sup>571</sup> With the colour and finer contours of the pot lid, the narrative becomes clearer: The soldier frowns, his wife wipes away tears, and one of their children (on the left) clasps her hands as if in prayer. The soldier is probably taking tearful leave of his family before going to the front. The date of production of the pot lid is unknown. However, the allusion to "the East" suggests that it is probably from the time of the Crimean War of 1853–55, which provided the subject matter for many paintings and periodical illustrations in the Victorian era, as well as for patterned homewares such as pot lids. Of particular note is Sickert's replacement of the original title, "Embarking for the East," by the capitalised Latin *Suisque Praesidium*, which seems to elevate the ordinary original into an official commemorative work. Also, the use of "suisque"—comprising "suis" and "que," with the suffix meaning "and" in archaic and official use—suggests that the new title is an annotation to the original phrase, "Embarking for the East," and that Sickert's work is therefore in conversation

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<sup>569</sup> According to Robert Emmons, one of Sickert's biographers, the first English Echo is *Suisque Praesidium*, a circular design on a square canvas.

<sup>570</sup> *Suisque Praesidium* is now in a private collection, and no colour reproduction is available, but from the description of its first owner, Mark Oliver, Sickert's pupil and the owner of the Savile Gallery, it is a monochrome painting in grey blue, painted after a more colourful version. See Baron, *Sickert: Paintings and Drawings*, 502.

<sup>571</sup> Mark Oliver observes that *Suisque Praesidium* was made after a pomade pot, depicting a highlander's farewell to his family. See Baron, *Sickert: Paintings and Drawings*, 502. Following this clue, I have been able to locate the pot's lid. There are several existing lids entitled "Embarking for the East," each slightly different in colour and quality, but all of the same design.

with the pot lid image.<sup>572</sup>

From the source picture, we can see that Sickert transferred the composition quite faithfully, though closer up, and that he retained the story from the original. Sickert adopted a similar pictorial approach to *La Traviata*—which was titled *La Traviata, Echo of Sir John Gilbert. R. A.* in the 1928 exhibition—but he added colour and altered the narrative.<sup>573</sup> *La Traviata* is based on the composition of one of Sir John Gilbert’s illustrations, titled *Count de Joyeux, M. de Verboix, and Politia de Champvans* (fig. 4.6), published in the *London Journal* in 1856.<sup>574</sup> The title of Gilbert’s illustration refers to three protagonists in the serialised novel *Blythe Hall*, but Sickert’s own, *La Traviata*, meaning “the fallen woman,” gives the picture a new narrative that would have been more familiar to viewers. The title also connects to Sickert’s interests in theatre and naturalist literature, since *La Traviata* was the title of a popular opera based on a novel by Alexandre Dumas *filis*, whose main character Violetta, a courtesan, is in turn reminiscent of Zola’s *Nana*, a figure that also interested Sickert in his earlier paintings.

My purpose in introducing these earliest pieces, *Suisque Praesidium* and *La Traviata*, is to show that, from their inception, the *English Echoes* were conceived with layered narratives and references, as evidenced by the titles and use of diverse sources in these works, which bridge the boundary between fine art and mass product.

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<sup>572</sup> This use of “que” is reminiscent of “Et in Arcadia Ego,” which is also half a sentence. I have not found the phrase “Suisque praesidium” in any Classical texts, though it may be in some later Latin prose, or else could be Sickert’s invention. I am indebted to Professor Liz Pettejohn and Jiawen Wang for noticing the use of “que” here, and for helping to search for the phrase’s source. It is worth noting Sickert’s late nineteenth-century classical education, as evident in the familiarity with Latin literature that he reveals in his criticism and occasional incorporation of mythological subjects in his art. On the Victorian classical education, see Christopher Wood, *Olympian Dreamers: Victorian Classical Painters, 1860–1914* (London: Constable, 1983), 15–20.

<sup>573</sup> Unfortunately, I have been unable to trace a colour reproduction of *La Traviata*.

<sup>574</sup> The source image of *La Traviata* has been identified by Rebecca Daniels. The Gilbert illustration was made for the novel *Blythe Hall* by Percy St. John. See Daniels, “Sickert’s ‘Echoes’.”

### 4.1.1 Discovering lost names—Sickert the archivist

These two paintings did not receive much public consideration when they were exhibited at the Savile Gallery in 1928. I have traced no reviews that make particular reference to them, and Sickert did not explain his intention to make them in anywhere else. It was in 1931, when Sickert had an abundance of such works ready to be collectively exhibited, that he explicitly introduced his project, and the name *English Echoes* thereby came to be known.<sup>575</sup> He did so with an exhibition at the Leicester Galleries in May 1931, titled *An Exhibition of “English Echoes”: A Series of New Paintings by Richard Sickert, A. R. A.* Twenty-two *English Echoes* were on display, and in the accompanying catalogue, rather than writing about his own paintings, Sickert wrote an appendix introducing the “sources” that the works echoed (figs. 4.7, 4.8, 4.9). He wrote a short paragraph for each of the six names in the appendix: Georgie Bowers (1836–1912), Alfred Bryan (1852–1899), Adelaide Claxton (1841–1927), John Gilbert (1817–1897), Joseph Kenny Meadows (1790–1874), and Francesco Sargent (1811–1864), listed in alphabetical order. His tone here is very objective, recalling the art reviews he had written as a newspaper critic.<sup>576</sup> This appendix is frequently referenced in discussions of the origins of the *Echoes* in current Sickert studies.<sup>577</sup> However, scholars have not yet explored why Sickert chose these six illustrators over others, how he became aware of these six individuals, and what were the specific qualities that attracted him to them. In what follows, I will explore these questions with reference to their reputations during the Victorian era and in the 1930s, and their connections with Sickert.

The six illustrators were born in the first half of the nineteenth century (except for Meadows, who was born in 1790), and were active from the 1860s to the 1880s,

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<sup>575</sup> Scholars have varied in their treatment of the title *English Echoes*, with some enclosing it in inverted marks and others italicizing it. In the main text of this thesis, *English Echoes* is italicized to signify its designation as a complete set of works.

<sup>576</sup> Sickert’s full text may be read in figures 4.7 to 4.9.

<sup>577</sup> The text was first reprinted by Baron in 1981 for the Arts Council’s Sickert exhibition. See *Late Sickert: Paintings 1927 to 1942*, 102–3.

belonging to a generation of artists that was later called the “illustrators of the sixties.”<sup>578</sup> In Gleeson White’s book on this generation of illustrators, published in 1897, he notes that while the draughtsmen of that era may not have been as renowned as their painter counterparts, they were fairly well known among educated people, and their artworks enjoyed significant sales.<sup>579</sup> Sickert was among those “educated” people who read, wrote, and showed a particular interest in print culture, and though he may have had a copy of White’s book as a reference when he wrote his newspaper articles, this book does not feature most of the illustrators that Sickert discusses in the appendix. There are other books, however, that Sickert may have consulted in order to write proper notes about his source illustrators. In *English Female Artists* (1876), Ellen Creathorne Clayton introduces Bowers’s family background, her method of working on horseback, and her debt to Swain the engraver—details that Sickert copied almost word for word.<sup>580</sup> In Marion Spielmann’s *History of Punch* (1895), there is a halftone image of Bowers in three-quarter back view, which Sickert observed, referring to her “exquisite figure” in his text.<sup>581</sup> That is to say, Sickert took his introductions to his source authors seriously, calling upon these references in order to write potently. The *English Echoes* made after Bowers and shown at the 1931 Leicester Galleries exhibition were *A Private View of the RA* (1932) and *On Her Majesty’s Service* (1932), which were published in the *Leisure Hour* and *Once a Week*, respectively. These two periodicals were terminated in 1880 and 1905. As for Claxton, though Sickert wrote about her, there are in total three known *Echoes* made after her illustrations, and one of these was exhibited at the Leicester Galleries in 1931.<sup>582</sup>

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<sup>578</sup> Several writers, including Gleeson White and Forrest Reid, refer to “the sixties” as a period during which the output of quality illustrations was at its highest. See Gleeson White, *English Illustration: “The Sixties” 1857–70* (London: Archibald Constable and Co., Ltd, 1897); and Forrest Reid, *Illustrators of the Eighteen Sixties: An Illustrated Survey of the Work of 58 British Artists* (repr., London: Faber & Gwyer, 1975).

<sup>579</sup> White, *English Illustration*, 4.

<sup>580</sup> Ellen Creathorne Clayton, *English Female Artists* (London: Tinsley Brothers, 1876), 320–23.

<sup>581</sup> M. H. Spielmann, *The History of “Punch”* (New York: The Cassell Publishing Co., 1895), 529.

<sup>582</sup> There are other illustrators that Sickert echoed, but about whom he did not write, including Thomas

Sickert's texts on the other illustrators are more spontaneous, but reflect the artistic taste that he had developed from his early career. Alfred Bryan, a contributor to many satirical periodicals, was almost a contemporary of Sickert's, and Sickert likely knew Bryan from his theatrical subjects, since he wrote:

To the translator it seems impossible that Alfred Bryan should need biographical note. Was not the window in Wellington Street of the *Entr'acte* Office the paradise of the art-lover in London for more years than can be counted? And the pages of the *Era* that illustrated "The Captious Critic"? And the little paper called *Moonshine*? Who but Alfred Bryan had the proper formula for Irving, for Ellen Terry, for Randolph Churchill, for Salisbury, for Parnell or for Spencer?

"The translator" refers to Sickert himself. His passionate words show that he was well informed of Bryan's work and followed it across different periodicals. Indeed, Sickert at least followed Bryan's work during the 1890s, and his Leicester appendix is reminiscent of the paragraph he had written about Bryan for the *Speaker* in 1896. There, Sickert praised Bryan's "mastery of line, perfect style, elegance and wit," that stood out in the illustrated paper, otherwise "soiled by the grimy gauze of the processed monochromes."<sup>583</sup> Sickert followed the wide range of periodicals that Bryan worked for, including those dedicated to the theatre, such as the *Era* (1838–1939), the *Entr'acte* (1872–1907), the *Moonshine* (1879–1902), and the book *Music-Hall Land*, mentioned in my first chapter, as well as the more general-interest *Judy*

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Morten (1836–1866) and Robert Barnes (1840–1895). The inclusion of two female illustrators is noteworthy, and points to the fact that a number of nineteenth-century periodical illustrators were female. McDonald observes that Sickert actively raised the profile of female artists over contemporary male artists. See Charlotte Keenan McDonald, "Sickert's Circle," in *Sickert: A Life in Art*, 78; and Walter Sickert, "The Word 'Poetess'," *Morning Post*, May 23, 1925, reprinted in Robins, *op. cit.*, 519. This raises the question: Was Sickert arguing that the arts of drawing and printing could be mastered by women, and was he providing a model for his many female friends and pupils, including Thérèse Lessore and Sylvia Gosse?

<sup>583</sup> Walter Sickert, "The Art of Caricature," *The Speaker*, October 31, 1896, reprinted in Robins, *op. cit.*, 107.

(1867–1907), and the *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News* (1874–1970). These periodicals cost between one penny and sixpence, thus appealing to different readerships.<sup>584</sup>

Most of Bryan’s illustrations are caricatures of celebrities, including Irving, Dickens, and Wilde. These portraits captured the essence of these characters, with the comic actor J. L. Toole (1830–1906) remembering that “Mr. Alfred Bryan, knows every nerve and muscle of his Irving by heart.”<sup>585</sup> Though he did not receive a real art training, Bryan was indeed gifted; he could work for four magazines a week, not from photographs but from memory.<sup>586</sup> This talent for capturing character and his working methods interested Sickert, as Sickert, influenced by Tonks, also advocated the importance of memory.<sup>587</sup> Bryan’s work also impressed his fellow caricaturist, Max Beerbohm. In 1899, Beerbohm dedicated an essay to Bryan, expressing admiration for his “absolute knowledge of his craft, and the surest of hands.”<sup>588</sup> Yet the main aim of Beerbohm’s text is to reprimand critics’ underestimation of Bryan’s talent and the art of illustration in general. Beerbohm thought that “there is more talent in his [Bryan’s] little finger than in half the emblazoned hierarchy of ‘pen-and-ink’ draughtsmen.... His profusion has blinded the eyes of art-critics to his great merit.... How comes it that Mr Bryan still waits for his discovery?”<sup>589</sup> Indeed, the writer George Moore is among the critics who did not consider Bryan a proper artist, writing that “I can forgive him [Sickert] all his articles about Poynter, but I can’t forgive him for his article in praise of the man [Alfred Bryan] who does the portraits in *Entr’acte*.”<sup>590</sup>

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<sup>584</sup> For example, *The Era*’s price was 6d, which was more expensive than the penny magazines. *Judy*’s exact price is unknown, but its rival *Punch* cost threepence, and *July’s Annual* cost one shilling in 1880.

<sup>585</sup> Joseph Hatton, and John Lawrence Toole, *Reminiscences of J. L. Toole* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1889), 350.

<sup>586</sup> See Frank Forbes, “Our Leading Cartoonists I.—A Chat with Mr. Alfred Bryan,” *The Temple Magazine* 3 (1898), 53–57.

<sup>587</sup> Walter Sickert, “The Polish Rider,” *New Age*, June 23, 1910, reprinted in Robins, *op. cit.*, 251.

<sup>588</sup> Max Beerbohm, ‘A.B.’ in *More* (London: John Lane The Bodley Head, 1899), 163.

<sup>589</sup> *Ibid.*, 162–64.

<sup>590</sup> George Moore, *Conversations in Ebury Street* (Surrey: The Windmill Press, 1924), 116.

Moore's words may have reflected a general view of illustrators as inferior to painters; yet, for artists like Beerbohm and Sickert, Bryan's talent deserved notice. In a sense, it was not until the making of the *English Echoes* that Sickert could speak for Bryan, whom he had favoured for decades. The *English Echoes* was a project brewing for years.

John Gilbert was much better known, both among Victorians and people in the 1930s. A contemporary of Millais, Leighton, and other well-known artists, Gilbert became president of the Old Watercolour Society in 1871, and an RA in 1876. In 1893, the *Pall Mall Budget* interviewed him, commissioning a portrait of Gilbert by Sickert to accompany the article. This personal experience with Gilbert marked the beginning of the two artists' acquaintance, and, according to Daniels, Gilbert was the inspiration for the *English Echoes* to be a "collaboration" between Sickert and old illustrators.<sup>591</sup> This is indeed true, as I will show in the next section that Gilbert's historical themes piqued Sickert's interest and clarified the overall purpose of the *Echoes*, namely, to serve as a form of documentation.

Kenny Meadows was the eldest among the six illustrators. While noted, for his Shakespearean illustrations, in Graham Everitt's *English Caricaturists and Graphic Humourists of the Nineteenth Century*, published in 1893, he received less notice elsewhere.<sup>592</sup> Sickert's interest in Meadows stemmed from the theatrical subjects for which Meadows was renowned. I have identified five illustrations that Sickert took from *Don Juan* that were included in *The Illustrated Byron* (1855), including *La Favorita* (1930–31) and *Don Juan and Haidee* (c. 1934), discussed in earlier chapters. Notably, though there were four other illustrators for *The Illustrated Byron*, Sickert only followed Meadows.<sup>593</sup> Compared with the work of the other four illustrators,

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<sup>591</sup> Daniels, "Sickert's 'Echoes'," 256.

<sup>592</sup> Graham Everitt, *English Caricaturists and Graphic Humourists of the Nineteenth Century: How They Illustrated and Interpreted Their Times* (London: S. Sonnenschein, Le Bas & Lowrey, 1893), 355–63.

<sup>593</sup> The others are Birket Foster, Hablot K. Brown, Gustave Janet, and Edward Morin. Besides recognising his style, Sickert was able to tell Meadows's work apart from the others' by his initial "KM."

Meadows's illustrations are indeed characteristic. He specialised in portraits and there is a strong sense of space in his works, achieved by the tonal contrast between foreground and background (fig. 4.10; Sickert's 'echo' of this illustration is shown in fig. 4.11). From his early career, Sickert had developed a unique vision of space, as shown by his many works contrasting figures against a background—and as I will later explore in *The Idyll* (1932, fig. 4.19)—so he may have been interested in Meadows's own treatment of space. Another salient feature is the “puffy face and straight arms” of Meadows's figures.<sup>594</sup> The source illustration (fig.4.12) for Sickert's *Her Serene Highness* (fig. 4.13), for instance, shows a female figure whose body is rendered in highly summative, acute, and cursive contours, which give an affectionate, mechanical, and ironic feel to the work. Some of Sickert's late theatrical paintings, I would argue, also bear the influence of Meadows, as seen in the puffy faces and concise contours of the figures in such works as *Gwen Ffrangcon-Davies in Lady with A Lamp* (1932, fig. 4.14) and *La Louve* (1932, fig. 4.15). In this way, Sickert was not only keen on theatrical subjects in old prints, but also on using his understanding of theatre and celebrity culture to select his source authors, imitating their methods to reveal character. Sickert mentions Meadows in the appendix as “probably ... best known by his illustrations of Byron, with ... [a] delightful brand of flippant and inspired vulgarity he was fitted with precision to identify his pencil.” It is possibly this flippancy and vulgarity that Sickert was looking for, which shows that he viewed the old illustrations with aesthetic potential.

Sickert may also have wished to suggest to the younger generation that their “new” ideas were to be found in the work of old unnoticed masters. Back in 1912, Sickert had publicly criticised the Futurists, arguing that their simultaneous representations of successive impressions had already been practised by “primitives” (Sickert's term for old artists), who would represent the birth, marriage and death of a person in the same canvas.<sup>595</sup> The “primitives” he mentioned included Turner and

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<sup>594</sup> Simon Houfe, *The Dictionary of 19th Century British Book Illustrators* (Suffolk: The Antique Collectors Club, 1998), 226.

<sup>595</sup> Walter Sickert, “The Futurist ‘Devil-Among-The-Tailors’,” *English Review*, April 1912, reprinted in

even his own grandfather, a printmaker.<sup>596</sup> Meadows's mechanical rendering of the female figure is reminiscent of the much later works of the English Cubists (or Vorticists), as in William Roberts's work *The Ballet* (c. 1932, fig. 4.16). Roberts's distortion of the figures makes them sculpture-like and mechanical, and there is a shared exaggeration and lively attitude in both Roberts's and Meadows's works. In addition, in the second chapter, I have shown the connection between Italian Futurism and *La Favorita*, the painting made after Meadows's work for *The Illustrated Byron*. In this case, by writing about Meadows, Sickert also shows that, in addition to rescuing illustrators from obscurity, he wished to combat the new trends of the 1930s.<sup>597</sup>

As for Francesco Sargent, this is the most enigmatic figure of the six, and I have found no record of him in extant dictionaries of Victorian artists. There was, however, a George Frederick Sargent (1811–1864), a graphic artist who worked for the *London Journal* from 1848 and the *Illustrated London News* from 1860.<sup>598</sup> G. F. Sargent married Rosa Francesca Narcissa Alferes, a widow from Barcelona who was ten years his senior, and their son George Frederick Francisco Sargent was born in May 1837.<sup>599</sup> The son, usually called "Frederick Sargent," was also a portraitist and figure-group painter, and worked for his father in the early years of his career. An advertisement in the April 15, 1857 edition of the *Publishers' Circular*, a publishing

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Robins, *op. cit.*, 305.

<sup>596</sup> *Ibid.*, 305–7.

<sup>597</sup> It is worth considering Sickert's practice in light of the Bloomsbury Group's copying of the old master's works, as exemplified by their exhibition in 1917 at the Omega Workshops. According to Richard Howells, Roger Fry and other members copied and translated old master paintings to demonstrate that their formalist principles could be found across various periods and genres. Richard Howells, "Copies and translations: Roger Fry, Old Masters and the Omega Workshops," *The British Art Journal* 16, no. 1 (2015): 47–57. Sickert may have been aware of this approach and inspired to similarly derive nourishment from *his* old masters.

<sup>598</sup> Rodney K. Engen, *Dictionary of Victorian Wood Engravers* (Cambridge: Chadwyck-Healey, 1985), 229. See also Andrew King, "Periodical Places: The London Journal 1845–1883," (PhD Diss., University of London, 2000), 144.

<sup>599</sup> "Frederick Sargent," *Art UK*, <https://artuk.org/discover/artists/sargent-frederick-18371899>, accessed November 15, 2023.

trade periodical, reveals the Sargent family's trade:

G. F. SARGENT [the father], Designer and Draughtsman on Wood, begs to inform his Patrons and Publishers that he has REMOVED his STUDIO from 14, Beaufort Buildings, Strand, to 4, Brydges Street, Covent Garden, where he will be happy to receive orders for all kinds of Book or Periodical Illustrations. Portraits taken and drawn on the wood by Francisco Sargent [the son].<sup>600</sup>

Sickert may well have confused George Fredrick Sargent and his son Francisco Sargent.<sup>601</sup> According to Andrew King, G. F. Sargent was employed as an illustrator by George Stiff, then editor of the *London Journal*, in 1848.<sup>602</sup> From that year, G. F. Sargent produced a great number of signed illustrations for the *London Journal* and collaborated with John Gilbert.<sup>603</sup> In his appendix, Sickert introduces Sargent as the collaborator of Gorway (the pseudonym John Gilbert used in the *London Journal*), so it is possible that Sickert indeed followed G. F. Sargent from the *London Journal*, but confused his name with that of his son. This confusion shows exactly how obscure periodical illustrators could be, since they did not always sign their names.

It is evident that Sickert echoed these illustrators for the theatrical subjects they portrayed, as well as for the stylistic qualities that he admired in each. Sickert did not randomly select his source materials; rather, the reason he echoed their work is obvious: to promote these unknown artists. His intention to speak for the six illustrators is revealed in a letter of 1931, occasioned by the purchase from the Leicester Galleries of another Echo, *Barts and the Bums* (1930), by the Leicester Art

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<sup>600</sup> *The Publishers' Circular* XX, no. 470 (1857): 182.

<sup>601</sup> This assumption is made in the "Art Detective" discussion, in the debate over the attribution of the Echo *Margate in the Time of Turner* (1930). See "Is This One of Sickert's Echoes? Is It 'Margate in the Time of Turner'?", *Art UK*, February 7, 2017, <https://www.artuk.org/artdetective/discussions/discussions/is-this-one-of-sickerts-echos-is-it-margate-in-the-time-of-turner>, accessed April 13, 2023.

<sup>602</sup> King, "Periodical Places," 146.

<sup>603</sup> *Ibid.*

Gallery (in Leicestershire). Sickert wrote to the buyer:

The design would have remained buried for ever if I had not felt inspired to translate it into a painting.... I confess also a desire to do a little propaganda by sending the younger painters to rifle the wealth of English sources of inspiration.<sup>604</sup>

These names were indeed buried. The 1890s was the golden era of little magazines and all kinds of prints, a boom in print culture that was accompanied by the review and documentation of its precursors. Gleeson White's book introduces the illustrators of the sixties, including Frederick Walker, Leighton, Gilbert, Pinwell, and Herkomer. There are also the social realists—Hubert von Herkomer, Luke Fildes, and Frank Holl—who were famous for their illustrations for the *Illustrated London News* and the *Graphic*. Their works sold in large numbers and their names were well known to educated people. All of them were artist-illustrators, and, besides illustration, their main focus was painting. There were also signs of interest in illustrators who worked more exclusively with graphic media, as White notes that there were people collecting works from the sixties by Bewick, Cruikshank, Leech, and Blake.<sup>605</sup> Joseph Pennell's 1895 book *Modern Illustration* also comments on the illustrations in books issued during the 1860 and 1870s, suggesting that these forgotten works would one day be striven for by collectors, much like Rembrandt's etchings.<sup>606</sup> However, while writings on the graphic art of the sixties emerged in the nineties, the records of these authors also reflect a hierarchy. Fine art collectors regularly defaced periodicals with Pre-Raphaelite illustrations, cutting out the pictures to mount and frame them separately.<sup>607</sup> The five illustrators that Sickert echoed (excluding Gilbert) were

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<sup>604</sup> Walter Sickert, quoted in Baron, *Sickert: Paintings and Drawings*, 122. Baron acquired the letter from the Leicestershire Museums, Art Galleries and Records Service, in 1981.

<sup>605</sup> White, *English Illustration*, 4.

<sup>606</sup> Joseph Pennell, *Modern Illustration* (London: George Bell & Sons, 1895), 88.

<sup>607</sup> Paul Goldman, *Beyond Decoration: The Illustrations of John Everett Millais* (New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press, 2005), 27–28.

overshadowed by these “superior” artists. In this sense, Sickert may have wished to propose another group of artists, selected according to his own standard, to compete with the well-documented social realists, Idyllic school artists, and others of the sixties, as well as to show how the development of English modern art could be traced back to the old illustrators. Furthermore, this practice can be seen as a continuation of his work for the little magazines in the 1890s, where he had begun selecting and replicating art according to his own criteria, to reach a broader audience.

It is thus essential to admit that the *English Echoes* are, in essence, “copies.” As in the 1890s, Sickert was concerned with the language and means of reproduction. Although there had been print exhibitions in the 1920s that promoted black-and-white art, Sickert had been dissatisfied with their approach. In 1923, in his review of the Tate’s exhibition of woodcuts from the sixties, he rejected the display of black-and-white illustrations as “mounted, framed, glazed and hung up on the walls of a large gallery, with a catalogue. This is a modern error.”<sup>608</sup> He thought that this mode of display isolated the illustrations from the letterpress, making it hard for readers to comprehend the images.<sup>609</sup> Sickert also criticised the inadequate evaluation of the illustrations, writing that

text-books, galleries and libraries must of necessity classify into kinds and periods. It is the affair of criticism to bring out excellencies. A curator may rightly use such phrases as “wood-cuts of the ’sixties.” But when a critic speaks of the illustrations of the ’sixties, as if they formed a unit, he ceases to speak critically. Certainly nine-tenths or more of these illustrations will remain in the obscurity of the often-obscure editions they illustrate.<sup>610</sup>

Sickert reveals that despite the move to discover the work of these illustrators in

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<sup>608</sup> Walter Sickert, “Wood-cuts of the ’Sixties at the Tate,” *Burlington Magazine*, March 1923, reprinted in Robins, *op. cit.*, 458.

<sup>609</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>610</sup> *Ibid.*, 458–59.

the 1920s, these criticisms were not constructive, and missed the essential character of the illustrations. His opinion suggests that, if he were to promote periodical prints, he would not simply display them as single images, but would provide them with a new context—if the original context could not be restored—so as to emphasise the individual character of each work within a setting more congenial to their understanding. This raises the question of the artwork’s authenticity—what Benjamin refers to as “all that is transmissible from its beginning.”<sup>611</sup> Many scholars, including Daniels, regard the periodical illustrations merely as mass images without authenticity or aura. But in fact, at least in a single print run of an issue, it is pointless and impossible to tell an original image from a reproduction because each image is printed from the same block. In this sense, Sickert’s critical discovery of these forgotten illustrations reflects an understanding of “aura” as pertaining to different media. His preservation of the source illustrations’ designs, and his addition of layered narratives to them, as in the case of *La Traviata*, reflect his way of discovering these buried names, giving them a renewed context.

In addition, for Sickert to copy old illustrations manually and industriously, rather than to use machines, comes close to what Lawrence Liang calls the “work of love in the age of mechanical reproduction.”<sup>612</sup> Sickert’s love, in this instance, is for the English tradition. Indeed, his intention to rifle the “English Resource” has been overlooked, and should be considered part of a strategy to distinguish English art from its French counterpart, especially given the artistic context of Sickert’s time. Writing in 1971, Denys Sutton claimed that young British artists’ discovery, in the 1890s, of the power of French art, inaugurated a period of self-doubt and a lack of confidence in the native tradition.<sup>613</sup> Founded in 1885, the NEAC bore witness to this mood, as its members were highly influenced by French art. Sickert was among these young English artists. However, while he absorbed continental nutrients, Sickert insisted that

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<sup>611</sup> Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” II.

<sup>612</sup> Lawrence Liang, “Copies Without Originals: The Work of Love in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” *Marg: A Magazine of Art* 69, no. 3 (2018), 434.

<sup>613</sup> Denys Sutton, *British Art 1890–1928* (Columbus: The Columbus Gallery of Fine Arts, 1971), 3.

his art grew from English culture. As Robins has argued, Sickert's national identity (or identities) should be considered a "floating signifier, a holding space for diverse and conflicting expressions of Englishness and 'un-Englishness'" (or cosmopolitanism).<sup>614</sup> Yet the Englishness he insisted on was not purely geographical, but was related to his views on the nature of art. In particular, his view that draughtsmen were the real artists was not new. Thus for him the Victorian draughtsman represented the origin of painting, which could bear something new to compete with the "new" art that he did not appreciate, such as Futurism. In a sense, the *English Echoes* series is Sickert's attempt to establish a cultural originality in combination with his acknowledged artistic originality.

Notably, the almost entirely faithful preservation of the design of the old illustrations by Sickert, with only a slight enlargement, suggests a process that could be likened to photography. To this extent, the *English Echoes* are not images of reality, but images of images. In this way, they also recall trends in art's documentation that had been ongoing since the mid-nineteenth century, in response to the invention of photography. For example, in 1853, Prince Albert organised the photographic documentation of all works by Raphael in the Royal Collection.<sup>615</sup> The photographic collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum also includes a large number of in-house photographs dating from its time as the South Kensington Museum, produced in accordance with the museum's policy of documenting its permanent collection and temporary exhibitions.<sup>616</sup> Indeed, the documentary value of photographs, their ability to preserve the memory of the past and record the moment of an event, and their role as evocative visual reminders, are the reasons for the formation of these photographic archives.

Systematic visual documentation also provided new ways to see and study

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<sup>614</sup> Robins, "Walter Sickert and the Language of Art," 47.

<sup>615</sup> Carly Collier, "Collecting Raphael in Reproduction in the Nineteenth Century: The Formation of Prince Albert's Raphael Collection and Its Early Impact on Raphael Studies," *Journal of the History of Collections* 35, no. 3 (2023): 525–36.

<sup>616</sup> Anthony Hamber, "Building Nineteenth-Century Photographic Resources: The South Kensington Museum and William Blackmore," *Visual Resources* 26, no. 3 (2010), 254–73.

images, and photographic reproductions of artworks were also adopted in the study of art history. In 1913, the art historian Richard Hamann (1879–1961) established the art-historical resource Foto Marburg, while Aby Warburg’s Mnemosyne Atlas is another example of such a resource, Warburg and his colleagues having begun to group photographs of historical artworks in around 1926 (fig. 4.17). In this light, might we understand the *English Echoes* as a painterly archive in the spirit of print? Photographic documentation of art indeed catalysed both art-historical study and artmaking alike. The *English Echoes* represent narratives of Victorian Britain, weaving social and historical references into their interrelation of media. As managers of archives, artists began to assume the privilege of historians or archaeologists, and could participate directly in the writing of history. Even better, by bringing lost ephemera into galleries, they bestowed exhibition value upon it.

#### 4.1.2 Sources for illustrations: art as popular wares

Having considered the identity of the six illustrators, it remains to be shown how Sickert found and acquired his source images. In my searches through several periodical archives, I have found twenty-three previously unknown illustrations from which Sickert painted, published in different periodicals. These are mainly illustrated literary magazines and theatrical anthologies, including the *Leisure Hour*, the *London Journal*, *London Society*, *The Illustrated Byron*, *Once A Week*, and the *Illustrated London News*.<sup>617</sup> Five of the illustrators mentioned by Sickert contributed to these publications, Alfred Bryan being the exception.

Sickert himself may have been a regular subscriber to many periodicals, but he

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<sup>617</sup> The *Leisure Hour* was the main publication within which Sickert appropriated John Gilbert’s illustrations. The magazine was published by the Religious Tract Society from 1852 to 1905, and aimed to provide instruction and recreation for families. Gilbert was one of the main graphic artists for the *Leisure Hour*, contributing to the frontispiece illustrations for fictional stories. Sickert was particularly interested in the illustrations showing theatrical relations between the figures, as shown in *Summer Lightning*, made after “An Unexpected Rencontre,” *The Idyll*, made after “An Embarrassing Moment,” and *Housekeeper’s Niece*, made after “The Introduction.”

likely acquired second hand the very early issues, of 1845 to 1860, from which he took his source images.<sup>618</sup> Forrest Reid mentions that it was difficult to collect sets of the *Leisure Hour*, *London Society*, *Once a Week*, or the *Quiver* in the 1920s.<sup>619</sup> Nevertheless, these publications were collected piecemeal, as a popular pastime amongst Victorian women, for example, who would cut out and keep articles and illustrations. Gleeson White describes the particular way in which periodical illustrations were collected, with prints scraped and pasted onto board.<sup>620</sup> This manner of collecting matches a collection of prints held by Aberystwyth University (formerly the University College of Wales). In 1924, Sidney Greenslade, then curator of the University College of Wales's Arts and Crafts Museum, purchased fifty boxes of wood-engraved illustrations from Victorian periodicals at Puttick and Simpson Auctioneers, Leicester Square. These amounted to 4,957 prints, all of which had been systematically removed from the leading illustrated magazines of the "Eighteen Sixties."<sup>621</sup> Each print is mounted on cardboard, on which the title, author, and source periodical are printed manually. Among these prints, I have identified the sources for several *Echoes*, including illustrations by John Gilbert, Adelaide Claxton, and Georgina Bowers.<sup>622</sup> This collection shows that the old illustrations Sickert echoed were seen and loved by people, and that these ill-documented illustrators were nonetheless followed by enthusiasts. It was not an inexplicable decision, then, for Sickert to make the *Echoes*. Such a collection would also explain how Sickert came to know the names of his source illustrators despite them not signing their works.

Scholars attending to the sources of the *English Echoes* have emphasised the distinct imagery and narratives of the periodical illustrations; however, I believe that it

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<sup>618</sup> He at one point mentions having acquired a print book by Karl Robert from a colourman. Sickert, "The Future of Engraving," in Robins, *op. cit.*, 393.

<sup>619</sup> Reid, *Illustrators of the Eighteen Sixties*, 8.

<sup>620</sup> White, *English Illustration*, 7.

<sup>621</sup> "'Illustrators of the 1860s'," *Aberystwyth University*, <http://museum.aber.ac.uk/collections-illustrators1860s.php>, accessed October 26, 2021.

<sup>622</sup> These include the source images for *On Her Majesty's Service [After Bowers]*, *A Private View [After Bowers]*, and 'Second course, Dein Freund' [after Adelaide Claxton].

is crucial to regard them as material commodities. This perspective is suggested by the source of the earliest Echo, *Suisque Praesidium*, the coloured pot lid print (figure 4.4) that may have inspired Sickert to reproduce these buried illustrations.<sup>623</sup> Unlike the black-and-white periodical illustrations, the pot lid print is coloured, befitting a mass-produced commodity with a worldwide reach. Is it possible that Sickert wished to promote the periodical images as coloured, following the example of the pot lid prints?

With the invention of transfer printing, it was not unusual to find colour ceramics in Victorian Britain. Transfer colour printing was invented by George Baxter in 1835 and then applied to ceramic printing between 1830 and 1860 by pottery companies such as Pratt, Minton, and Davenport.<sup>624</sup> The firm of F. & R. Pratt, which produced “Embarking for the East,” was founded in 1818 by Felix and Richard Pratt, who specialised in enamel-painted figures in moulded earthenware, and who initiated the application of transfer printing to pot lid production.<sup>625</sup> The Pratt brothers took out a patent on an improved process of manufacture for pot lids in 1847, which was largely the work of Jesse Austin, the artist and engraver they employed, who devised a method of high-quality underglaze printing of multiple vivid colours on pottery.<sup>626</sup> As “Embarking for the East” demonstrates, the result is nothing less than the effect of a painting reproduced in chromolithography. This technique allowed for a variety of imagery to be vividly printed in pottery and ceramics, including images related to commodities (such as toilet cream and bear’s grease), Shakespearean subjects, the Crimean War (“Embarking for the East” belongs to this theme), biblical stories,

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<sup>623</sup> For a description of the exact pot lid from which Sickert painted, see Abraham Ball, *The Price Guide to Pot Lids and Other Underglaze Multicolour Prints on Ware* (Woodbridge: Antique Collectors Club Ltd, 1991), 126.

<sup>624</sup> Paul Atterbury, ed., *The History of Porcelain* (London: Orbis, 1982), 175.

<sup>625</sup> See “F. & R. Pratt & Co. Ltd,” British Museum (website), <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/term/BIOG249471>, accessed April 13, 2023.

<sup>626</sup> Austin made watercolour designs on paper, which he etched onto copperplates before printing these onto “Pottery tissue” that would then be transferred to the ware. This process would be repeated four or five times to achieve multiple colours. For an introduction to Austin’s technique, see V&A (website), <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O8062/bread-plate-austen-jesse/>, accessed December 6, 2023.

British and European landmarks, and paintings by old masters. Popular paintings were also common sources for pot lid prints, and these colourful lids increased the sale of the products themselves, becoming the earliest form of visual advertisement.

Transfer ceramics had served both utilitarian and collectible purposes since their inception, with everyday pot lids and artistic exhibition pieces coexisting. Notably, Felix Pratt received a medal for the printed Prattware exhibited at the 1851 Great Exhibition.<sup>627</sup> The popularity of Prattwares endured, with factory products exhibited in 1897 and specialist auctions of related items held in 1924.<sup>628</sup> During the Victorian collectibles craze of the 1930s, printed pot lids became highly sought after, akin to *Punch* illustrations. Collectors particularly prized pieces bearing Jesse Austin's signature, for his exceptional skill in creating vivid, accurate colours and shapes.<sup>629</sup> Sickert likely had such a pot lid to hand while painting *Suisque Praesidium*, and was aware of the prevalence of colour prints and the burgeoning trend of collecting. The popularity of colour images and their accompanying economic benefits inspired Sickert to colour the black-and-white ones. The catalogue of the 1931 Leicester Galleries exhibition, reproducing several *English Echoes* in colour (figs. 4.7, 4.8, and 4.9), suggests that the highlight of these works was their colour. Appropriating a pot lid design also reveals that Sickert was interested in print regardless of its status as art or kitsch, as he bridged the printed mass object and the more traditional field of printmaking. This eclecticism undermined conventional notions of taste and expressed his democratic view of the role of art.

Indeed, Roger Fry noted Sickert's use of everyday objects, writing of him in 1919, in the *Athenaeum*, as an example of an artist who observed the formal qualities of otherwise unnoticed items. He writes:

Objects of the most despised periods, or objects saturated for the ordinary man

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<sup>627</sup> Stanley W. Fisher, "The Story of Pratt Ware," *Country Life* 116, no. 3022 (1954): 2178–79.

<sup>628</sup> Ibid.

<sup>629</sup> See the entries on Prattware and Jesse Austin in Charles Platten Woodhouse, *The Victoriana Collector's Handbook* (London: George Bell and Sons, 1970), 5, 108.

with the most vulgar and repulsive associations, may be grist to his mill. And so it happened that while the man of culture and the connoisseur firmly believed that art ended with the brothers Adam, Mr. Walter Sickert was already busy getting hold of stuffed birds and wax flowers just for his own queer game of tones and colours. And now the collector and the art-dealer will be knocking at Mr. Sickert's door to buy the treasures at twenty times the price the artist paid for them.<sup>630</sup>

Fry's main aim here is to portray Sickert as a formalist, as he acknowledges Sickert's creative vision of turning the practical into the aesthetic. But Fry also reveals that Sickert had paid attention to practical objects, and not just artworks, in the years before he made the *English Echoes*. However, Sickert's attention to everyday wares focused not only on their aesthetic value, but on how these objects related to everyday life and to the artist's training. In 1922, in his *Burlington Magazine* review,<sup>631</sup> Sickert praised Renoir as a sketcher, attributing his mastery to his apprenticeship as a "biscuit painter," an experience that allowed him to achieve the "maximum expression with the minimum of means," since, unlike the "gran commodita" of oil painting, every touch and decision was here irrevocable, and the painter needed to carefully consider the order of his operation.<sup>632</sup> Sickert mentions that he has two little square white tiles, "painted in a violetish monochrome of tone and line, representing, one, an entombment and the other, Jacob wrestling with the Angel," which "no painter of easel-pictures can look at without dying of envy."<sup>633</sup> Degas and Pissarro also once painted ceramic tiles, and Sickert's attention to practical wares may have been due to the presence of these images on them. Notably, the first of the *English Echoes*, *Suisque Praesidium*, is a blue-grey monochrome work taken from a ceramic design.

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<sup>630</sup> Fry, "The Artist's Vision," *The Athenaeum*, July 11, 1919, 594–95.

<sup>631</sup> Walter Sickert, "French Art of the Nineteenth Century," *Burlington Magazine*, June 1922, reprinted in Robins, *op. cit.*, 436–41.

<sup>632</sup> *Ibid.*, 436.

<sup>633</sup> *Ibid.*, 436.

Was Sickert paying tribute to these masters who worked as craft artists, and expressing the view that an accomplished master did not have to work with the superior medium of paint? In the same year that Sickert made the first *Echo*, he mentioned his possession of a handkerchief with an 1832 map of London printed on it, and considered that with its romantic and historical elements, this cotton print, “on which people have blown their noses for a hundred years,” will appeal to the young as well as to the old.<sup>634</sup> In other words, the images on these everyday wares, as well as their nature as commodities, attracted Sickert. He aimed to transform painting along the lines of such objects.

## 4.2 Sickert’s appropriation: the past of the present, and the “present” of the past

The preceding discussion reveals how Sickert discovered his sources. But besides the names of the old illustrators, what was he looking for in these buried prints, and what was he seeking to transmit to the 1930s? In chapter two, I showed that Sickert consistently employs faded camaieu to create a nostalgic and utopian sense of time in the *Echoes*. Indeed, this aligns with his stated purpose, as expressed in the catalogue of his exhibition of the *Echoes* at the Beaux-Arts Gallery in 1932 (fig. 4.18), where he borrows a lyric from the opera *Les Cent Vierges*: “J’ai la tête romanesque, j’adore le pittoresque.”<sup>635</sup> In fact, both of the works exhibited in 1932, and the *Echoes* in general, revolve around romantic subjects, as contemporary reviewers noted.<sup>636</sup> I then in the following argue how Sickert creates nostalgia from multiple aspects, such as

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<sup>634</sup> Walter Sickert, “Children’s Taste in Art. Cotton Prints of Classics,” *Morning Post*, December 23, 1927, in Robins, *op. cit.*, 563–64.

<sup>635</sup> Sickert states that this line is from the opera *Giroflé-Girofla*, composed by Charles Lecocq, but it is in fact from the opera *Les Cent Vierges*, by the same composer. Here I speculatively propose that the adoption of *Giroflé-Girofla* may reflect Sickert’s conception of the *Echoes* as doubles, or twins, of the old illustrators’ works, and his fascination with doubling and simulation within the series. This is because *Giroflé-Girofla* is itself a story about pretence and identity play on the part of two twin sisters, who give their names to the opera’s title.

<sup>636</sup> “English Echoes—Victorian Artists Recalled,” *The Scotsman*, April 14, 1932, 12.

from the visual characteristics and the use of motif, and show that this nostalgia exists not only in a single “Echo,” but also in a series of paintings spanning years in his career. These serialised paintings discuss the relationship between the past and the present.

Exhibited at the Beaux-Art Gallery in 1932, *The Idyll* (1932, fig. 4.19) is a good example of Sickert’s picturesque and romantic subject matter, for its provocation of nostalgic sentiment. Based on the design of Gilbert’s 1859 engraving “An Embarrassing Moment” (fig. 4.20), from the *Leisure Hour*, *The Idyll*’s arresting colour scheme transports viewers to an idyllic and warm past. Indeed, nostalgia is an emotion with strong connotations of warmth, and, during the interwar period, the bygone Edwardian era was often depicted as a long and lost summer.<sup>637</sup> This meteorological illusion is seen in the glowing summer backdrop of *The Idyll*, with its horse-carriage passing by, and the sunburnt faces of the man and the woman add to this reality effect of the weather.

This colour scheme, characterised by subdued and bright tones, aligns with the chosen theme of a rural landscape, since it is reminiscent of the colour schemes and narratives of graphic-design depictions of landscapes during the 1920s and 1930s, such as the series of British landscape posters created by Brian Cook. As a remarkable graphic designer active from the 1930s to the 1950s, Cook’s poster designs and book jackets, printed by his family publishing firm B. T. Batsford Ltd, were popular and much collected. Cook’s works are distinctive for their bold use of colour to portray English landscapes. The book jacket that he designed for Humphrey Pakington’s novel *English Villages and Hamlets* (1934, fig. 4.21) shows his signature colour scheme, which creates a feeling of space and produces a sense of the idyllic. Trees in the foreground envelop the picture at each side, recalling the picturesque tradition of landscape paintings, where trees would frame pictures and provide a view into the

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<sup>637</sup> David James, ed., *The Legacies of Modernism: Historicising Postwar and Contemporary Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 25–28, 37–38, and passim, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/york-ebooks/reader.action?docID=807350>, accessed August 12, 2022.

distance. The dark trees contrast with the bright background, and their trunks are executed in dark tones, with black delineating shadow and warm colour (echoing the background) added to the lit parts. Though various colours are used, they are rendered in similar hues to achieve an overall harmony. The camaieu technique is used throughout, with each object presented in two tones in order to suggest volume. This treatment of colour and space is also seen in *The Idyll*, where the foreground, occupied by the two figures and their shadows, contrasts with the warm but lighter tones in the background.

Studies have shown that desaturated colour evokes a strong nostalgic mood.<sup>638</sup> This was already intuitively understood in the 1930s, when Fry's design theory was available to be understood and applied.<sup>639</sup> Sickert's faded colours may allude to the faded quality of old prints but may also be a response to contemporary graphic design, and the nostalgic effect of *The Idyll* might not be so strong had it been executed in his earlier, looser style of brushwork and dark palette. Seller argues that Sickert eliminates details of the original engravings in his *Echoes*, allowing more room for the imagination while conveying the feeling that the past can never be fully restored.<sup>640</sup> This is partially true, as iconographic features are not generally identifiable in the *Echoes*. However, it is not fair to compare black-and-white pen works with coloured paintings in terms of the information they provide, since each do so in different ways. Thus, rather than saying that Sickert removes details, it would be better to say that he extracts them into areas and patterns of flat colour, which give a sense of order and add to the joy of viewing the pictures, since they can be easily comprehended visually (with fewer descriptive details), and the idyll is usually related to naivety and the lucid microcosm. This ease of viewing enhances the feeling of nostalgia, since beautiful things (here, the past) always embrace rather than reject

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<sup>638</sup> Christoph Witzel, Tim Wildschut, and Constantine Sedikides, "The Colour of Nostalgia," *Journal of Vision* 21, no. 9 (2021): 2714.

<sup>639</sup> Fry's theory of the emotional elements of design, colour being among these, was well known by this time.

<sup>640</sup> Seller, "Material Memory," 89.

people, and the pleasingly intelligible visual impression of *The Idyll* is distinctive amid the overwhelming nature of urban experience. Sickert's late works are normally described as progressively abstract, thus fitting into the tidy story of modern art as a progression from realism to abstraction. Yet it is more accurate to say that this abstraction, or awareness of design (on Fry's definition), was developed by Sickert to aid in producing this nostalgic impression.

Nostalgia is the alter ego of modernity. Nostalgia, from the Greek *nostos* (return home) and *algia* (longing), means a "longing for a home that no longer exists or has never existed."<sup>641</sup> In both Cook's and Sickert's pictures, this place is the Edenic village, which, in industrial Britain, is a nostalgic and Arcadian escape from the hectic urban environment. In a sense, one may interpret the contemporaneity of *The Idyll* in terms of a general urban/rural binary.

However, the source engraving of *The Idyll* denotes a specific referent for its nostalgic narrative, and suggests *The Idyll* as a spur for Sickert's own memory. The engraving, Gilbert's "An Embarrassing Moment," illustrates Elizabeth Hely Walshe's fiction *Golden Hills; Or Single Influence: A Tale of Ribandism and the Irish Famine* (1859), which was published in the *Leisure Hour* on May 5, 1859.<sup>642</sup> Walshe wove the life story of her protagonists into the history of the Irish Famine, featuring data pertaining to population shifts and policies of the 1840s and 1850s. The fiction is thus rooted in real history. Gilbert's illustration, meanwhile, depicts a proposal: the male figure is from a well-off background, and the female figure, Lina, accepts his proposal as they go for a walk, since marrying would help her to survive the difficulties of life amid famine. This plot is echoed in the titles of the story's chapters, as published in the *Leisure Hour*: "The Shadow Passes" and "Dawn of Brighter Days."<sup>643</sup> The titles are metaphors for the promise of better times to come, Walsh writing that "all these

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<sup>641</sup> Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), 7.

<sup>642</sup> "Ribandism," also known as "Ribbonism," was a nineteenth-century movement of poor Catholics in Ireland, whose members sought to act against landlords and their agents. The movement arose amid the miserable living conditions of most farmers and rural workers.

<sup>643</sup> The issue of May 5, 1859, published two chapters of Walsh's fiction.

storms are but the heralds of clear weather for Ireland.”<sup>644</sup> Gilbert visualises the first of these metaphors by setting the figures in a strong light that creates a deep shadow. Sickert accordingly retains the shadow, and even designs a sunny day for the figures. The carriage in the background reinforces the sense of time passing. The idyllic setting contrasts with the traumatic history of the famine, and only when the suffering has been passed can one look back on this history with an aesthetic eye.

Sickert was indeed interested in the subject of the Irish Famine and the subsequent political and demographic shifts—the Irish emigration—that it provoked. He also made at least three other *Echoes* on the subject of migration to Australia. Exhibited with *The Idyll* at the 1932 Beaux-Arts Gallery exhibition was *Emigrants at Melbourne* (1932, fig. 4.22), an inexplicable painting as a cameo, whose source image is Gilbert’s illustration “Sketches of Emigrant Life:—I. The Voyage” (1852, fig. 4.23), printed in the *Leisure Hour* in August 1852. In the same year, Sickert painted a similar subject, *Irish Migrants Landing at Melbourne* (1932, fig. 4.24), which was based on another illustration in the *Leisure Hour*, titled “Emigrants Landing at Melbourne” (1854, fig. 4.25).<sup>645</sup> In 1935, *Health and Wealth. The First Australians* (1932–35, fig. 4.26) was exhibited at the Beaux-Arts Gallery, based on Gilbert’s illustration “Sketches of Emigrant Life:—II. The Arrival” (1852, fig. 4.27), printed in the *Leisure Hour* in 1852.

The source illustrations of these three migration paintings are from different issues and illustrate different fictions, but all the illustrated fictions are based on the Irish Famine and emigration of the 1850s, one of the major events in Irish history. It is not known whether Sickert knew the original context of these illustrations, since he may either have had the issues to hand, or else acquired them as single cut pieces from print shops. Nonetheless, Sickert may have chosen these sources specifically to narrate Irish history, not least since he added “Irish” to the original title of Gilbert’s

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<sup>644</sup> Elizabeth Hely Walshe, “Golden Hills; Or Single Influence: A Tale of Ribandism and the Irish Famine,” *The Leisure Hour*, May 5, 1859, 275.

<sup>645</sup> However, I have been unable to trace any exhibition history for *Irish Migrants Landing at Melbourne* (1932).

“Emigrants Landing at Melbourne.” The three sources feature different moments in the journey of emigration, including voyage and arrival, and express different attitudes towards the emigrants’ future prospects. *Irish Migrants Landing at Melbourne* (fig. 4.24) seems to be the least promising scene; of the female figures in the foreground, one covers her face with hands, seemingly crying, while the other looks up to the man at the centre, who seems to be contemplating his family’s future. This scene accords with the text of the fiction, which describes

men, women, and children sweltered together by the dozen, through the live-long night, to re-commence a vain search on the coming day for better accommodation. Crowds lay stretched on the wharves and under sheds: some wandered the streets the night through, in vain seeking admission from lodging-house to lodging-house. Females—ladies once in the land they had been tempted to leave behind them, in company with husbands, brothers, or sons, just landed from the emigrant ship—clung helplessly to their equally helpless protectors, or sunk exhausted on the piles of luggage which encumbered the bank of the river.<sup>646</sup>

Sickert emphasises the figures’ uncertainty about their exile, drawing the viewer’s attention to the female figure who looks up to the man for a solution by painting her with a carmine shawl. The posture of the women is reminiscent of the lamentation in biblical paintings, and the red contours of the other woman’s face and hands reinforces this mournful tone. The overall feel of this painting is subdued compared to *The Idyll*; the figures are contoured in muted colours, giving the sense that their future is not so clear.

However, from the other two paintings exhibited at the Beaux-Arts Gallery, we can see that Sickert also wished to show the emigrants’ optimism. In *Emigrants at Melbourne* (fig. 4.22), though the emigrants are still journeying, Sickert is interested

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<sup>646</sup> “Frank Layton: An Australian Story,” *The Leisure Hour*, May 25, 1854, 323.

in their peaceful state of mind; they do not seem disturbed, but rather full of anticipation, looking into the distance, while the man in the centre of the picture reads a book with his daughter in what amounts to a harmonious and happy scene. *Health and Wealth. The First Australians* (fig. 4.26), meanwhile, is Sickert's most promising depiction of Irish migration. He captures the jubilation of arrival: the man holds up the child, symbolising hope for the future; people disembark from the ship with their luggage, ready to start a new life. Compared to the flat treatment of the other two paintings, where no colour (or only tentative colour) is used, *Health and Wealth* is composed of more emphatic, contrasting tones of green and mahogany. The figures are more rounded: the man holding the baby is shaded with added white pigment to suggest volume, showing off his robust and healthy physique. Everywhere, the picture glitters with small strokes of white paint.

Indeed, most English artistic depictions of Irish hardship, of the 1850s and 1860s, point directly to the uncertainty of the future or to the poor living conditions of the present, as can be seen in Frederick Goodall's *An Irish Eviction* (1850, fig. 4.28) and George Frederic Watts's *Irish Famine* (1850, fig. 4.29). In comparison, even *Irish Migrants Landing at Melbourne* seems optimistic—at least these emigrants had landed and escaped from their previous lives, Sickert's title having adjusted Gilbert's "emigrants" to become "migrants," thus suggesting the protagonists' newfound sense of belonging.

Looking back on good times is indeed nostalgia, and it is a human instinct to recall positive experiences and to forget agonising ones. The historical narrative of Ireland also intersects with Sickert's personal memories, particularly concerning his grandmother, who, as an Irish dancer, migrated to Australia after giving birth to Sickert's mother.<sup>647</sup> The scattered illustrations thus form a mosaic of collective and personal memories.

However, my perspective on the nostalgic dimension of the *Echoes* differs from Baron's suggestion that it merely indicates the diminished creativity of old age.

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<sup>647</sup> See Sutton, *Walter Sickert: A Biography*, 14; and Robins, *op. cit.*, 642.

Rather, I wish to emphasise that the theme of nostalgia becomes possible by way of Sickert's recovery of old images. The source illustrations by Gilbert in the *Leisure Hour* are themselves generalised images, made from pre-existing formulae. Gilbert is known as a "disciple of Rembrandt and Rubens" in terms of manner and temperament.<sup>648</sup> He was also influenced by Reynolds's academic theory, according to which art should portray a generalised concept of form, one way to achieve this being to study the art of the old masters.<sup>649</sup> Gilbert is considered to have maintained these principles, and, for Victorian audiences, his works were literally "old-fashioned" and "seen for many times."<sup>650</sup> Indeed, this quality of self-repetition is attributable to his job as a periodical illustrator who worked against the clock by making slight alterations to existing imagery. For example, the women in the foreground of both Sickert's *Emigrants at Melbourne* (fig. 4.22) and *Irish Migrants Landing at Melbourne* (fig. 4.24) are similar in terms of posture and the organisation of the groups. They are also reminiscent of biblical images in which figures convey strong emotions through bodily gestures. Thus, the illustrations in these popular periodicals served as a "spur of memory," as noted by contemporary critics, with Sickert extracting from this generalised imagery that itself already evokes memories.<sup>651</sup> Indeed, in 1927, he proclaimed: "Let the painter be taught to paint subject pictures of universal and moving interest."<sup>652</sup> Thus the *Echoes* themselves are not images of reality, but rather images of the image of memory.

However, the contrast between the serious subject of Irish history and the pale treatment of the pictures creates a sense of digression that seems absurd, as if something has been forgotten. These three paintings also present different prospects for the lives of Irish emigrants following the Irish Famine, which makes it impossible

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<sup>648</sup> Spike Bucklow and Sally Woodcock, ed., *Sir John Gilbert: Art and Imagination in the Victorian Age* (London: Lund Humphries, 2011), 157.

<sup>649</sup> *Ibid.*, 160.

<sup>650</sup> "Society of Painters in Water Colours," *Judy*, May 17, 1876, 42.

<sup>651</sup> "English Echoes," *Truth*, May 20, 1931, 822.

<sup>652</sup> Walter Sickert, "Films and the Bible," *The Times*, December 28, 1927, reprinted in Robins, *op. cit.*, 564.

to determine Sickert's attitude to one of the most decisive periods in Irish history. Was Sickert sympathetic to the poor, and what was his attitude towards Irish-English relations? His paintings do not provide a clear answer, leaving the viewer frustrated. Critics from the 1930s down to our own time, while realising the importance of this subject, have been unable to comment on Sickert's political stance, other than to remark on his use of colour.

One reason for this can be explained by the inherent loss in the process of translation, as in the "crack" in the montage, as discussed in chapter two. Another reason could be that viewers cannot decide whether to view these paintings as history paintings or as modern paintings. Their faded and broken surfaces clearly exude a sense of whimsy, suggesting an art of decay. In the nineteenth century, history painting, developed from biblical stories or Greek mythology and championed by the French academy as the highest form of painting, looked for themes from literature and theatre to convey moral values didactically. While, in the 1930s, the theme of Irish emigration could align with the conventions of history painting, Sickert approaches his art as a mere historical reminder. His ambivalence precludes a moral interpretation, since he only confirms the past, and refrains from commenting on it.

Rather than possessing a specific meaning, then, should we regard these *English Echoes* merely as expressions of a general nostalgia as the alter ego of modernity (in the sense of urbanisation), or as reactions to the spiritual homelessness of the 1930s, or to the trauma of the Great War? I would contend that, simply because Sickert does not evaluate historical events, does not mean that he has no attitude towards the past. Writing in 1910, he asserts that "the best method of teaching history would perhaps be backwards, from things seen and remembered, up to preceding events."<sup>653</sup> From this perspective, the key to approaching the past would be its connection to the present. What Sickert chose to paint, or echo, is that which holds a reflexive mirror to the present day. Indeed, the Irish subject itself was of considerable relevance in 1932. In addition to the long history of Irish-British relations, the nineteenth century saw the

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<sup>653</sup> Walter Sickert, "Fathers and Sons," *Art News*, April 7, 1910, reprinted in Robins, *op. cit.*, 211.

rise of new tensions in the relationship between the two countries, one of these being the Irish independence movement. Sickert experienced the process of Ireland's striving for nationhood. Several proposals for Irish Home Rule, intended to grant self-governing powers to Ireland, were introduced in 1886, 1893, and the 1910s. In 1922 the Irish Free State was established, and on March 9, 1932, its first president was elected. Newspapers had closely followed the election and publicity campaigns, and when Sickert's Irish emigration paintings were on display, viewers would recall the news of the Irish election and the editorial discussions of Irish questions. The pale treatment of the picture surface would also remind viewers that in 1932 Ireland was still regarded as an unresolved question, as the future of Irish-British relations was not settled. In this sense, the illustrations of Irish migrants in the 1850s were tactfully transformed into paintings to suggest how current concerns related to the past.

By the 1930s, traditional history painting, previously a celebrated genre, had declined, having been eclipsed by modernist painting and photography.<sup>654</sup> History painting had itself provided a way to discuss contemporary problems at a certain distance, with the mythological or Classical subjects of history painting subtly suggesting the social problems of the present. The fall of history painting entailed the disappearance of these mirrors of the present. Yet by recovering scattered old popular prints, the *English Echoes* provided an alternative way to discuss current questions, drawing connections between the present and the past whilst still retaining a historical distance. Sickert was not the first artist to make use of popular images to create such distance. Cézanne, in the 1870s, copied magazine fashion illustrations into paintings, implicitly commenting on the political turmoil of that period at a distance.<sup>655</sup> However, Sickert emphasises the fragmented image itself as a tool for preserving memory, or as a locus of memory. As Malraux suggests, fragments possess fluidity,

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<sup>654</sup> Mark Salber Phillips and Jordan Bear, eds., *What Was History Painting and What Is It Now?* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2019), 16.

<sup>655</sup> André Dombrowski, "The Emperor's Last Clothes: Cézanne, Fashion and 'L'année Terrible,'" *Burlington Magazine* 148, no. 1242 (2006): 586–94.

and are capable of traversing the rivers of history, being linked, and reanimated.<sup>656</sup> Sickert's practice demonstrates this fluidity, indicating that, in the 1930s, the distinction between history painting and modern imagery (modernist painting and photography) may not have been so fixed.

It is crucial to note that the Great War changed the status of history painting. In another series of *Echoes*, as I will show in what follows, Sickert provided a clear reflection on the subject of war, during the interwar period, by appropriating images from a variety of sources.

*Suisque Praesidium* (fig. 4.3), derived from the pot lid image discussed earlier, is a painting about the Crimean War. There are two more paintings on this subject, taken from different sources: *Fireworks on Primrose Hill to Celebrate the Taking of Sebastopol [After Francesco Sargent]* (1931–32, fig. 4.30), and *Gwen Ffrangcon-Davies in Lady with A Lamp* (1932, fig. 4.14). Again, as with the topic of Irish emigration, the three Crimean War paintings focus on different moments in the conflict. *Suisque Praesidium* narrates the beginning of the war, as soldiers embarked for the east. *Fireworks* depicts a moment of celebration following victory in the war. It was painted after an illustration, "The Fireworks in Primrose Hill" (fig. 4.31), printed in the June 14, 1856 issue of the *London Journal*. The illustration accompanied a news article about the rejoicing in the park that followed the declaration of peace, alluding to the Treaty of Paris of 1856 that brought an end to the Crimean War between the Russian Empire and the alliance of the Ottoman Empire, Great Britain, the Second French Empire, and the Kingdom of Sardinia. The siege of Sebastopol was the major operation of the war. Half of Sebastopol, where the Russian navy was based, was taken by the alliance in 1855, and the treaty made it hard for Russia to take back the port. The news article begins with a brief description of the festivities, then comments on the war, and ends with a detailed description of the revelries in London and the use of fireworks as a traditional means of celebration.

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<sup>656</sup> André Malraux, *The Voices of Silence*, trans. Stuart Gilbert (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978), 13, quoted in Hal Foster, "Archives of Modern Art," *October* 99 (2002): 93.

Sickert must have at least skimmed the article, rather than merely having been inspired by the image of fireworks, otherwise he would not have referred to the “taking of Sebastopol” in the painting’s title.

*Gwen Ffrangcon-Davies in Lady with A Lamp* focuses on a specific figure in warfare. Strictly speaking, it is not an Echo, since it is based on a theatre photograph of the actress Davies, who played Elizabeth Herbert in the play *Lady with A Lamp* written by Reginald Berkeley in 1929.<sup>657</sup> The play tells the story of the nurse Florence Nightingale during the Crimean War, and was premiered at the Garrick Theatre in London in April 1929. Sickert highlights the narrative of the war by weaving this portrait of Davies into scenes of the battlefield. Herbert was the Governor of the Establishment for Gentlewomen During Illness during the war. In the play, she wears this green dress as she insists that her husband resign from the Government to protect himself.<sup>658</sup> Sickert captures Herbert’s anxiety by exaggerating her expression. Her puffy face is painted in pale green, except for the lips; she looks desperate and sad, the emerald dress contrasting dramatically with the background of flaming clouds. Some figures, painted in broken touches, crowd the narrow strip on the left-hand edge, and on the opposite side of the picture is a sketchy depiction of a torn field. Worrying about her husband, Herbert echoes the crying wife of the soldier in the departure scene of *Suisque Praesidium*. In many representations of warfare, women are often depicted waiting, so as to show the counterpart to the battlefield. Sickert similarly circumvents depicting brutal battlefields in representing the Crimean War.

Sickert regarded war as an important historical theme. He regarded Christopher Nevinson’s *La Mitrailleuse* (1915, fig. 4.32) as the “most authoritative and concentrated utterance on the war in the history of painting. This must be for the nation.”<sup>659</sup> As with many viewers of the Crimean War *Echoes*, Sickert did not

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<sup>657</sup> The production photo has been identified by William Rough. The photo shows Davies in costume in front of a curtain. See Rough, “Walter Sickert and Theatre,” 162, and figure 3.18.

<sup>658</sup> Baron, *Sickert: Paintings and Drawings*, 546.

<sup>659</sup> Walter Sickert, “A Monthly Chronicle,” *Burlington Magazine*, April 1916, reprinted in Robins, *op. cit.*, 409.

experience the war himself, but he and his viewers all lived through the Great War, at least. In a sense, the Crimean War of the 1850s is as significant as the Great War in history. Though nineteenth-century history painting has been criticised as merely a hybrid form of *genre historique*, or, even worse, as costume drama,<sup>660</sup> Sickert purposefully infused theatricality, in the form of contemporary theatre, into the narrative of war. He confuses temporality: the Great War is brought to mind by way of the unfamiliar and somewhat anecdotally represented Crimean War. The pyrotechnic effects might refer both to the smoke of the celestial events and the sputtering of gunfire. Herbert, in the play, never goes to Crimea, but Sickert fuses space and time so that the memory of the Great War could be broached in a less cruel scene, especially for those who had lost loved ones in the war. The past is deployed as a surrogate of the (difficult memory of the) present. It is worth noting that Sickert picked up fragments from different sources, revealing history through the fabric of everyday life.

In other words, in Sickert's paintings we can see that time is fluid. The past is not the "other," barred and barriered. It can be understood by way of the present, since the present has a past. Rather than choosing a historical moment at random and recreating that moment, Sickert stands at a specific place in his time and traces the history of that place. He sees time and space as a continuum.

This view of temporality and space is seen in another series of *English Echoes*, of the Parisian landmark Porte St Denis, in which he painted a "modern" view in an iconic "echo" style. There are five paintings of this place: '48 (c. 1930, fig. 4.33), *Ludovico Magno* (c. 1930–31, fig. 4.35), *Porte St Denis (Paris)* (c. 1930–31, fig. 4.36), *La Porte St Denis* (1930, fig. 4.37), and *The Third Republic* (1932, fig. 4.38). However, only '48 is known to have been painted after an old illustration, while the other four seem to have been based on snapshots. Excluding '48, these paintings are closer to Impressionist works, as records of the fragments of life. *Ludovico Magno*

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<sup>660</sup> David Green and Peter Seddon, ed., *History Painting Reassessed: The Representation of History in Contemporary Art* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 10.

(fig. 4.35) refers to the inscription on the frieze near the top of the arch (as can be seen in '48), meaning "To Louis the Great," in honour of the military victory of Louis XIV, who commissioned the gate. With this title, Sickert might have wished to remind the viewer of the cultural significance of the site. Yet the solemn subject contrasts with the contingent composition, as *Ludovico Magno* depicts the reverse of the arch in a random snapshot view. It represents the moment of twilight (as suggested by the sunlight issuing from the west); the arch is enveloped in a pink mist, and the tonal contrast between foreground and background creates a strong sense of space. The phrase "Ludovico Magno" is nonetheless not seen in the painting; instead, there are texts on signboards that catch the viewer's attention. The moving crowds and shop signs that rhythmically fill the space create a typical busy urban ambience, which, as a whole, contrasts with the full, monumental, and static representation of the arch in '48, and the lively street view of signboards and passengers overshadows the reference to the arch. Besides the subdued colour, this painting is a typical picture of modern urban life.

The perspective is important in making these paintings a contemporary record, as they show the viewpoint of a person in the crowd. In *Porte St Denis (Paris)* (fig. 4.36), Sickert adopts a sandy tone, as in '48, but shifts the focus to the foot of the arch amid a busy street view. This viewpoint is also seen in *The Third Republic* (fig. 4.38), but is here drawn even closer. He provides a jumbled view of different fragments around the archway: pedestrians and coster girls with blurred faces, the bottom of the arch, the street light, the vehicles, and the buildings at the far side. In *La Porte St Denis* (fig. 4.37), as mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, the focus is even shifted to an advertising column rather than the arch, showing how the historical site had become an everyday spectacle for ordinary people. In a word, excluding their faded tone, these three paintings are about the present. The title of *The Third Republic* reinforces this emphasis on the present moment: the Third Republic of France was founded in 1870 and survived until 1940; the adoption of such a title suggests that Sickert aimed to record the present moment in which he lived.

However, the subdued tones also relate these paintings to the event represented in '48, of a congregation or, possibly, a riot in front of an arch. The source illustration, entitled "Porte St. Denis" (fig. 4.34), drawn by G. F. Sargent for the *London Journal* and published on April 1, 1848,<sup>661</sup> refers to "one of the principal scenes of the terrible incidents" of revolutionary upheaval in France in 1848.<sup>662</sup> With his title, Sickert relates this place to a historical moment, the 1848 Revolution in France. In this sense, '48 works as a historical reference to Porte St Denis, and extends the story of the site to a bygone period. It is worth noting the ambiguity in Sickert's title, since, despite the context given by the riot and the accompanying text in the *London Journal*, '48 does not necessarily refer to 1848, but might be to any '48. It might even refer to other historical events of 1848, such as the founding of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, or it might be a general reference to the heyday of his favoured artists Courbet and Millet. In addition, the subject of the arch is reminiscent of Hogarth's 1748 print *The Gate of Calais, or The Roast Beef of Old England* (1748, fig. 4.39), which was copied and circulated widely. To some extent, then, the image of the gate is also a reoccurring one for Sickert and his contemporaries. '48 may have reminded his peers of Hogarth, thus extending the history of the Parisian gate to the longer history of relations between France and England.

The way that Sickert refers to past events in '48 is notable. He does not copy the whole composition but crops the buildings on the right, as well as the right edge of the arch, positioning the arch in the upper half of the painting. The lens is close and lowered to the viewer, as if they are watching on the spot at a near distance. This eye-witness perspective upon the scene is even more exaggerated in the other paintings of

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<sup>661</sup> Daniels identifies '48 as an Echo after Francesco Sargent, from a *London Journal* illustration. Daniels, "Sickert's 'Echoes'," 256, note 9. However, as can be seen from the inscription at the lower left, Sickert wrote "after Francisco Sargent," and, as I showed in the previous section, there is no record of Francesco Sargent. Sickert probably mistook Francisco Sargent, the son of G. F. Sargent—who illustrated for the *London Journal*—as the latter. Consequently, '48 should be considered made after G. F. Sargent. The illustration in the *London Journal* is indeed signed "FS," as a monogram at the lower left.

<sup>662</sup> "The Revolution in France," *London Journal*, April 1, 1848, 49.

the Porte.

The shared subject and tone of '48 and the other four paintings of the Porte St Denis thus provide a contrast between past and present, achieved by shifts of perspective, composition, and tone in their treatment of the same subject. Sickert's interest in illustrating narrative sequences has long been understood in the case of the Camden Town series, in which he depicts different episodes of a possible murder story.<sup>663</sup> Similarly, in the 1930s, Sickert had the ambition to tell a longer story of Porte St Denis by organising a series of paintings based on snapshot viewpoints and the appropriation of old illustrations of the site. This project embodies two aspects of Sickert's understanding of the relation between images and history. Firstly, Sickert here acknowledges the ability of images to historicise the past, and his Porte St Denis paintings thus carve out a space for historical genre painting, or narrative painting, in the midst of photojournalism and modernist art. He valued illustrations as documents, and, in 1925, two years before the making of the *English Echoes*, he wrote about their role as such: "If we imagine a writer who had set himself the task of a non-political history of the English people during the twenty past eventful years, to what more informing document could he turn than to Haselden's cartoons?"<sup>664</sup> By the 1930s, journalism had mostly replaced illustrations with photographs; history painting, one of the roles of which had been to record events, had lost its currency. The *English Echoes* thus intervene between photojournalism and history painting for their own documentary purposes.

Secondly, seeing images as historical documents also offers an alternative to modernist art and academic art. The critic and painter Adrian Bury took the view that the *English Echoes* failed to demonstrate the genius of Sickert as either an academic painter or a modernist, and that they did not contribute much to the history of painting.<sup>665</sup> Bury's view reflects the sharp distinction drawn between academicians

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<sup>663</sup> See Tillyard, "The End of Victorian Art," 189–205.

<sup>664</sup> William Kerridge Haselden (3 December 1872–25 December 1953), was an English cartoonist and caricaturist who worked for the *Daily Mirror* for more than thirty years.

<sup>665</sup> Adrian Bury, "Two London Shows," *The Saturday Review*, May 16, 1931, 714.

and modernists in his time, the former emphasising the original conception of the design of a painting, and the latter privileging formal qualities over narrative content. Yet, as the “juvenile lead” in the English modern art world, Sickert would not have been unaware of critical trends of the 1930s. It is more likely that he purposefully violated the criteria of both camps, intervening in the dichotomy of academic and modernist art by providing an alternative that drew on the defunct arts of engraving and history painting, which had been superseded, respectively, by modern photojournalism and modern painting.

From another perspective, the Porte St Denis suite reflects a deeper view of time and the image that Sickert had developed over years. He acknowledged that painting and drawing provide a kind of historicity, since a good painting is an embodiment of time. This is reminiscent of Impressionist notions of temporality, insofar as the key to Impressionism is not naturalism but temporality, Impressionist artists seeking to capture fleeting moments in a changing world, and to represent the changing conditions of things across time. Sickert had thus claimed that Impressionism is not realism.<sup>666</sup> In this regard, it is worth quoting at length Sickert’s description of the process of painting:

If it is an outdoor landscape that he is studying, the ray of sunlight that pierces the clerestory of the forest is on that bough, his bough, at that point in time only. Those beech leaves are a cold shower of new silver pieces, new francs, new shillings, perhaps for the last time this summer. He is anxious as the harvester. The weather may change to-morrow. A fortnight hence the inclination of the sun at this same hour will be different. That bough on which all depends, that bough, the protagonist in his ineffable little drama, will never be quite the same again. Miracles of concentration, made possible by an inherited aptitude, sedulously cultivated for years, must be done in twenty-five minutes.... For the

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<sup>666</sup> Walter Sickert, “Impressionism,” preface to “A Collection of Paintings by the London Impressionists,” Goupil Gallery, London, 1889, reprinted in Robins, *op. cit.*, 60.

moment his mood, his pose and the lighting conspire to make of his image the quintessential embodiment of life.... These things being things of the spirit, phantom sensations built of dust and sunbeams, of personal sympathy and a light play of mood, can we approach to an analysis of the instrument with which they shall be concentrated by the painter into a permanent record? ... The magic of that mood can be prolonged in the air, hung up, by an experienced magician for, say, twenty-five minutes.<sup>667</sup>

The process of painting that Sickert describes here reflects his attention to temporality, particularly the relationship between the momentary and the permanent. He emphasises that the artist's painting process is one that encompasses time. The Impressionists painted momentary images that contain the artist's perception of the scene during that period of time. The artist thus allows time to extend. This seems to reflect the fact that the flow of time is constituted through the mutual extension and permeation of different moments. Sickert's representation of the Porte St Denis in the flow of time, then, may be considered a development of his Impressionist view of time. Although it is not Impressionist in its approach (that is, not drawn from life), his concern is still with temporality. His paintings cover different time periods of the arch, and the use of old prints extends this potential for the pictorial representation of time. History may be composed of one moment after another, but each moment also contains a broader time, made up of the artist's experience. Thus, his view of the relationship between time and image was formed from the very beginning, while his view of time was not arbitrary, but in fact responded to the artistic trends of the early twentieth century. In the 1910s, Henri Bergson's theory of time, and particularly the idea of duration, had become popular by way of T. E. Hulme's translation. Sickert was aware of this, although he considered Bergson's philosophy of time to be full of difficult terminology. In response, Sickert asked:

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<sup>667</sup> Walter Sickert, "A Stone Ginger," *The New Age*, March 19, 1914, reprinted in Robins, *op. cit.*, 343–44.

What is it, Hulme and Bergson, and all incomprehensible bedevilments and obfuscations and convolutions and Rogerisms apart, that happens in the few minutes when the painter and his muse have “the time of”—Mr. Epstein’s pigeons?<sup>668</sup>

For Sickert, an artist’s work is an embodiment of time, not only as a moment but as a duration. This understanding of the image and time is apparent in the late works that represent the passage of time, as in the history embodied in *Porte St Denis*.

### 4.3 Images in circulation: *English Echoes*, Gilbert’s illustration, and the *ILN*

The previous sections have explored two aspects of Sickert’s appropriation of old illustrations. On the one hand, his photographic remediation of these illustrations highlights and even canonises them for their artistic merit. On the other hand, his salvaging of them enacts the transmission and reconstruction of memory. That is to say, images and paintings play a decisive role in historical veracity, and to confirm the presence of the present. In the era of photojournalism, the combined visual and textual format of publications provided audiences with a more vivid way to establish connections between the past and present. In this section, I further elaborate on Sickert’s extension and development of his affirmation of historicity and canonisation of past works in the sphere of mass print media. Subsequently, I examine the pages, and particularly the pragmatics, of a 1932 issue of the *Illustrated London News* that reproduced both *English Echoes* and their source illustrations. I argue that by reproducing different kinds of images—paintings and engravings and photographs—this newspaper was involved in the diverse relations between media that were typical of the time, and that Sickert was aware of, and that these various types of images were

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<sup>668</sup> Ibid., 345.

used as supporting evidence in constructing the nation's historical narrative.

On April 9, 1932, the *ILN* reproduced six paintings by Sickert as black-and-white photos, on a single page, with three engravings by John Gilbert shown on the facing page (fig. 4.1 and 4.2). The six paintings—including *Summer Lightning* (1932, fig. 4.40), *The Idyll* (1932, fig. 4.19), *Irish Emigrants Landing at Melbourne* (1932, fig. 4.24), *The House Keeper's Niece* (1932, fig. 4.43; its source from the *Leisure Hours* is shown in fig. 4.44), *Woman's Sphere* (1932, fig. 4.45; its source shown in fig. 4.46), and *Le Tapis Vert* (1932, fig. 4.47; its source shown in fig. 4.48)—were selected from the 1932 *Echoes* exhibition at the Beaux-Arts Gallery. The three illustrations by Gilbert, “The Unexpected Rencontre” (fig. 4.41), “An Embarrassing Moment” and “Emigrants Landing at Melbourne” are the respective sources for *Summer Lightning*, *The Idyll*, and *Irish Emigrants Landing at Melbourne*.<sup>669</sup>

By placing the source illustrations and paintings on opposing pages, the *ILN* aimed to spur comparisons between them. Equally, however, the *Echoes* and their source illustrations each belong to separate columns, on separate pages, and each provide different information within these distinct contexts. The three Gilbert illustrations are printed in the column “Books of the Day,” on page 556. This had been a regular column in the *ILN* since 1919 and featured reviews of newly published books. The column's lead author was Charles E. Byles, a journalist and poet, and in this issue Byles's article introduces a biography of the 28th American president, Woodrow Wilson, and newly published biographies of Sir Walter Scott, as well as other new books, introduced by Byles in the manner of Scott. It was customary for the *ILN* to adopt as illustrations images that were loosely connected to the text, and while Gilbert's engravings do not exactly correspond to the article, they are nonetheless related, since Gilbert had illustrated some of Scott's works, including *Ivanhoe*, in 1837.

However, the *ILN* had other reasons to use Gilbert's illustrations here. The

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<sup>669</sup> “The Unexpected Rencontre” and “An Embarrassing Moment” were selected from the *Leisure Hour* of November 22, 1855, and May 5, 1859, respectively.

biography of Scott was featured because the year 1932 marked the centenary of the author's death, as well as the ninetieth anniversary of the *ILN* itself. Gilbert had been the magazine's most prominent illustrator, having worked for the *ILN* for over thirty years. Under the heading of "The Unexpected Rencontre," a paragraph is printed in a slender size and font introducing Sir John Gilbert (fig. 4.42). In this tiny piece of text, Gilbert is described as the "mainstay of the *Illustrated London News*," and a brief note on Gilbert's working method is revealed. The *ILN* continued to narrate its own history in subsequent issues—as in the article "Three Generations of the Illustrated London News," of April 30, 1932—and Gilbert's name would appear often.<sup>670</sup> To some extent, then, the *ILN* celebrated its own history by highlighting its primary contribution to journalism, namely its illustrations, for which Gilbert's input was key.

The three illustrations by Gilbert were not contemporary images but, rather, had been made for the *Leisure Hour* in the 1850s. This raises the question of how the *ILN* acquired them. It is likely that the *ILN* photographed the illustrations and transferred them onto metal plates, which were then etched and finally printed alongside letterpress type.<sup>671</sup> This was a common way for newspapers to incorporate heterogeneous materials onto the flat page. As for how the original images or blocks were acquired from the *Leisure Hour*, it is possible that the *ILN* had a stock of Gilbert's original illustrations, given Gilbert's stable professional relationship with the magazine. However, the *ILN* may also have purchased the blocks from cut agencies that possessed stocks of clichés, including much material that had already appeared in periodicals, both in Britain and abroad.<sup>672</sup> Indeed, due to the high demand that had existed for illustrated journalism since its inception, by the 1890s a well-established industry was in place for the recycling of images, which had developed from the

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<sup>670</sup> Alan Bott, "Three Generations of the Illustrated London News," *Illustration London News*, April 30, 1932, 676–77.

<sup>671</sup> Beegan, *The Mass Image*, 8. Beegan explains that "process" was a collective term for photographic techniques involving the transfer of originals onto metal plates, etched to produce raised surfaces, that could be printed alongside letterpress type.

<sup>672</sup> *Ibid.*, 163. An early use of the word "cliché" was with reference to these texts and images printed from time to time in the press.

practice of printing firms and publishers lending their woodblocks to others.<sup>673</sup> Images were central to the *ILN*'s identity, so it likely had various ways to source images. Reproducing Gilbert's illustrations reflected the fact that Gilbert had indeed been important to the *ILN* as both a supplier of images and as a spokesperson for its success. The fact that they were thus reproduced also suggests that images were circulating and were recycled in the 1930s, and that all sorts of images were available for use not only by newspapers but also by artists and other institutions.

The importance of Gilbert's contribution to the *ILN* is reiterated on page 557 of the April 9 issue, where the six *Echoes* are reproduced under the title "Sickert 'Echoes' Engravings by One of Our First Contributors." The six *Echoes* are printed as black-and-white photos, with brief captions accompanying each of them that mention Gilbert as the artist being "echoed." However, the appearance of the reproduced *Echoes* lacks the clarity either of real photography or line engravings, and also fails to successfully capture the paintings' characteristic colours. In a way, although the six *Echoes* together occupy an entire page, they seem to have been printed to be read rather than looked at, as if they are the annotative illustrations of the previous page's contents.<sup>674</sup> On the one hand, the halftone *Echoes* are like commercial samples, with the accompanying text advertising the paintings' forthcoming exhibition in London. On the other hand, they become an element in the *ILN*'s narrative celebration of itself as a media institution, by way of a retrospective look at its own history, which is traced visually by images and texts relating to Sir John Gilbert, Sir Walter Scott, and Walter Richard Sickert ARA. This emphasis is evident in the text that accompanies the *Echoes*, which, squeezed into the limited available space, encourages comparison between Sickert's paintings and Gilbert's engravings by referring to "the opposite page."

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<sup>673</sup> Ibid.

<sup>674</sup> In newspapers such as the *ILN*, it was common for each side of the sheet to have a different role, with one mostly given over to text, and the other to images. This applies to the pages in question. Tom Gretton, "The Pragmatics of Page Design in Nineteenth-Century General-Interest Weekly Illustrated News Magazines in London and Paris," *Art History* 33, no. 4 (2010): 688.

This, then, is the specific context in which the *Echoes* and Gilbert's illustrations appear together in the newspaper. While the idea of the newspaper page as a form of montage may be well-worn, it remains a crucial way to understand the intertextuality of periodical journals, and is of particular significance for an understanding of the *Echoes* in their 1930s context. The context provided by the *ILN*, both in terms of its content and as a technological artefact of print culture, helps not only to realise Sickert's vision of images as historical evidence but, through this intertextuality, allows the *ILN* to reveal the nostalgic dimension of Sickert's imagery, as an embodiment of the national imagination.

Firstly, in addition to introducing Sickert's exhibition and the book on Scott, the layout of pages 556 and 557 suggests a nostalgic mood by juxtaposing Gilbert's and Sickert's works. Among the twenty-four *Echoes* exhibited at the Beaux-Arts Gallery, these six are singled out possibly because they show paradigmatic Victorian scenes (rather than the theatrical themes depicted in other *Echoes*) of a kind that suits the *ILN*'s editorial tone. The pastoral meetings in *Summer Lightning* and *The Idyll* are reminiscent of the idyllic ideals, while the backdrop and the protagonists' dress are recognisably Victorian. *Irish Emigrants Landing at Melbourne* represents the colonial history of the mid-nineteenth century, recalling the glorious days of both the Empire and the *ILN* itself. In the 1930s, with the partitioning of Ireland and the tension between Anglo-Irish landlords and their Catholic tenants, the imagery of Irish emigrants provides a space to think over questions related to English nationalism. The *ILN* notes that the separate-gender spaces depicted in *The Housekeeper's Niece* and *Women's Sphere* are "characteristic element[s] of life in the past century," with the former notably captioned as "a genteel Victorian rencontre." For the *ILN*, these *English Echoes* represent a microcosm of the nineteenth century.

The way that the *Echoes* are reproduced reinforces the *ILN*'s attempt to restore a vision of the past. The well-ordered layout is similar to that of the photographs recording contemporary events in the same issue. For example, the columns "Camera as Recorder: Recent Events by Photography," on page 545 (fig. 4.49), and "From the

World's Scrap-book: News Items of Topical Interest," on page 552 (fig. 4.50), each piece together a world in six halftone photographs. The suite of six *Echoes*, suitably proportioned for the page, are reproduced in the same way. Printed in halftone and framed by thin black squares, they are windows onto a world—that of the recent past. The lack of colour reinforces their sense of facticity.<sup>675</sup> Though the *Echoes* are no match for the naturalism and detail of photographs, they are here given a documentary function, since, unlike line engraving, the photographed *Echoes* lack linear syntax, and so can be viewed as objective. Sickert is seen as a photographer, pressing the shutter, and capturing moments of the past in 1932. That is to say, the *English Echoes* are not only a nostalgic artistic interpretation of the past, but by eliminating details and iconography they essentially attempt to restore the past. While art critics mostly viewed the *Echoes* for their formal qualities, the *ILN* consolidated Sickert's belief in the ability of images to historicise the past. They are printed here above all to provide information, rather than as works of art.

Indeed, Francis Haskell points out that, for many historians, images serve as a means to comprehend the past.<sup>676</sup> As he explains, historians make use of images from a variety of sources— from coins and cameos to etchings—to narrate history.<sup>677</sup> Some print collectors, such as the Frenchman Michel Hennin, collect for the historical value of images. Hennin believed that only images made during the same period as the events they represent can possess historical value, going so far as to claim that “en regardant les trois estampes de l'entrée de Henri IV à Paris, publiées par J. Le Clerx on croits être à cette entrée même.”<sup>678</sup> This claim resonates with Sickert's approach. While the historical functionality of the *English Echoes* has been overlooked by

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<sup>675</sup> In the same issue, on pages ii and iii, are two full-page reproductions of Jean H. Fragonard's paintings *Touch Wood* and *The Game of Horses and Riders*, which were printed in colour to show the colour harmonies that Fragonard achieved. This shows how artworks and news images were printed differently in the *ILN*.

<sup>676</sup> Francis Haskell, *History and Its Images: Art and the Interpretation of the Past* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993).

<sup>677</sup> Haskell, 'Museums, Illustrations and the Search for Authenticity,' in *History and Its Images*, 279–303.

<sup>678</sup> *Ibid.*, 303.

scholars, in Sickert's and the *ILN*'s remediation, the historical value of the old periodical engravings is briefly restored.

Secondly, the nostalgic sense of the *English Echoes* is integrated into their national narrative. While the *ILN* confirms the historicity of the *English Echoes*, and their sources, it also captures their English aspect. It singles out some of Gilbert's and Sickert's works, along with the introduction to Scott's literary accomplishments, and reproduces them as photographs, side by side, to create a minimal form of montage for the purposes of comparison. In doing so, the *ILN* employs a form of selective classification or archiving, which, as noted by James Clifford, functions as a means to classify thought, to comprehend and control knowledge and cultural property.<sup>679</sup> The *ILN* provides a continuous story of the cultural property of the nation, from Scott to Gilbert and Sickert, fixating them on the page.

An alternative understanding of the *Echoes*' construction of a national narrative centres on the images' juxtaposition with other images and texts. Collier observes that the *ILN* envisions its readers as urban dwellers, intimately acquainted with and interested in London.<sup>680</sup> As he argues, this perspective sets London, the imperial capital, as the centre, with readers developing a London-centric understanding of the world by engaging with and mapping out its montaged fragments as they physically scan the pages of the *ILN*.<sup>681</sup> Indeed, as shown above, the *Echoes* and the Gilbert illustrations appear in the issue with other fragments drawn from different geographies and times—such as the “World's Scrap-book” and “Recent events by Photography.” In this context, appearing amid this flow of content, the *Echoes* indeed became a further link in the construction of the national narrative.

In other words, the nostalgic character of the *Echoes* is magnified by their

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<sup>679</sup> James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 217, quoted in Valentina Lusini, “The Artist as *Chiffonnier*: Archival Impulse and Visual Narratives on Everyday Life in Georges Adéagbo,” *Visual Anthropology* 34, no. 1 (2021): 54–74.

<sup>680</sup> Patrick Collier, “Imperial/Modernist Forms in the Illustrated London News,” *Modernism/modernity* 19, no. 3 (2012): 488.

<sup>681</sup> *Ibid.*, 491–92.

reproduction in the *ILN*, where they are incorporated into the national narrative, in the manner identified by Benedict Anderson in his account of the role of print media in the formation of nations as “imagined communities.”<sup>682</sup> As Anderson contends, the nation, as an imagined community, is a cultural artefact, and it is print media that provides the technological means for this collective imagination. As printed language, constrained by grammar and syntax, replicated by machines, and disseminated by the market, print media serves as a foundational element of national consciousness.<sup>683</sup> The promotion of English literature by the *ILN* connects individuals who use and read the language, forming the basis for this.

Also noteworthy are the different types of images (engravings and paintings) reproduced as photographs in the *ILN*, insofar as they reflect the changing roles of image-makers—something with which Sickert was concerned. Photography, the medium regarded as the most objective and realistic for recording and archiving reality, may not so easily fulfil this role, since photography itself constructs narratives by obliterating or retrieving things, and by making things obsolete or modern. The *ILN*’s reproduction of Gilbert illustrations and the *Echoes* in photographic form demonstrates that, in the 1930s, the main role of newspaper illustrators had been usurped. Whereas the roles of painter and illustrator could once coexist in parallel—as in the case of Gilbert, who was at the same time an illustrator for periodicals as well as an RA—the prevalence of newspaper photography had since solidified the distinction between these two domains. Indeed, though illustrators had their market—as was the case for Norman Rockwell (1894–1978), who contributed greatly to the reputation of the *Saturday Evening Post* (1897–1963) in the first half of the twentieth century—their role had become more specialised. In Tom Gretton’s view, this reflects a disruption of the shared matrix that “maintained the homology of ambition between painters and illustrators,” with the effect that the circulation of images between the

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<sup>682</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2016), 29–31.

<sup>683</sup> *Ibid.*, 36–40.

worlds of illustration and salon painting began to disintegrate.<sup>684</sup> This phenomenon effectively contextualises Sickert's salvaging of Gilbert's illustrations through painting. The *Echoes* retain the names of the illustrators, but cannot restore the world in which the roles enjoyed parallel popularity.

The *Echoes* themselves embody the lost opportunity for such a parallel existence of roles. By "copying" existing designs, and thereby arousing controversy, the *Echoes* nonetheless attain artistic status, or, at least, enter the gallery on account of the artist's esteemed professional identity. That is, Sickert's apparent "de-professionalisation" is, in fact, highly professionalised. While his avowed intention in making the *Echoes* is to emphasise the commonality between painter and illustrator, his aspiration of a fluid role between the two may not finally be attainable.

#### 4.4 Problematised originality

By de-professionalisation, I refer to Sickert's intention to make painting a practice that everyone could undertake. Sickert's late works could themselves be seen as the efforts of a beginner, learning from copying—indeed, he introduced this method to his pupils, including Winston Churchill and a number of female artists.<sup>685</sup> This practice of "de-professionalisation" bears on the issue of originality that typically attends discussion of the *English Echoes*. In general, the concept of originality intertwines with various other issues, including the artist's relationship to tradition, the uniqueness of artworks, the interplay between personal and societal factors, including developments in visual technology, and more. From their origin in the 1930s, and down to the present, the *Echoes* have given rise to diverse opinions on their originality, ranging from denial to affirmation, ambivalence, or avoidance. As Richard Shiff asserts, the debate over originality is not about whether it exists but about its

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<sup>684</sup> Gretton, "The Pragmatics of Page Design," 707.

<sup>685</sup> For Sickert's tutelage of Churchill and his collaborations with his pupils and colleagues, see Baron, *Sickert: Paintings and Drawings*, 520; and McDonald, "Sickert's Circle," in *Sickert: A Life in Art*, 78–89.

contested standards, and a practical approach to the issue would be to explore the appearances and networks that influence our understanding of originality and its contemporary manifestations.<sup>686</sup> My intention here, therefore, is to revisit the context of the 1930s in order to observe how these various commentaries were generated. I would like to advance the preliminary conclusion that the originality of the *Echoes* is problematised by Sickert and by subsequent critics, meaning that their focus on the works' originality renders itself a question, and this problematisation is associated with the reproductive capacity of images.

An examination of Sickert's working methods throughout his entire career reveals that his artworks consistently demonstrate a reproductive nature. His camaieu technique, based on the chiaroscuro tradition, allows for the multiplication of images without a direct engagement with nature; his continuous overpainting with thin and dry paint, and his exploration and repetition of motifs and topoi in illustration—such as the *Echoes*' excavation of the “picturesque and romantic” from old illustrations—all exemplify this reproductive nature. As Krauss suggests, the pursuit of the picturesque is itself a practice of repeating something that already exists elsewhere.<sup>687</sup> Using Monet and Rodin as her examples, Krauss succinctly argues that this multiplicative approach is not engaged with the discourse of imitation, or mimesis, but rather with the discourse of originality.<sup>688</sup> In other words, this (Sickert's, Monet's, and Rodin's) working method itself problematises the question of originality by engaging with both singularity and multiplicity.

This problematisation reflects an ambiguous attitude towards originality on Sickert's part, and we cannot overlook his perplexity in the face of reproductive media such as photography. Scholars have become increasingly aware of the shift in Sickert's attitude towards graphic aids over the course of his career, from his early debate over the minute distinction between transfer lithography and true lithography,

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<sup>686</sup> Richard Shiff, “Originality,” in *Critical Terms for Art History*, ed. Robert S. Nelson and Richard Shiff (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), 186.

<sup>687</sup> Rosalind Krauss, “Originality of the Avant-Garde,” in *The Originality of the Avant-Garde*, 164.

<sup>688</sup> *Ibid.*, 167–68.

to his later extensive reliance on found designs. What has not been brought out in discussions of this shift is the change in his understanding of originality. Sickert's was an era in which the reproduction and repetition of images had led to a general situation of surrogate experience. Based on an acknowledgment of Sickert's changing attitude, it can be inferred that his understanding of originality aligns with the tradition of Romanticism, emphasising individual talent and spontaneity. As Herbert Read (1893–1968) summarises, this is a biological perspective, according to which “the source (of originality) is underground, in the unconscious, and the flow is released, not by the will, but by nature.”<sup>689</sup> This inexplicable inspiration and creativity, as an eruption of uncontrollable energy, is related to earlier narratives about prodigies, supernatural abilities, and youth.<sup>690</sup>

This notion results in Sickert's concessional attitude towards the making of the *Echoes*. While claiming to bring attention to these old illustrations, Sickert also exploited a legal loophole, as the copyright status of these images was ambiguous.<sup>691</sup> He was aware of the controversy surrounding his practice, and, as a result, his later style exhibits a consistent concessional tone, which is particularly evident in his use of subdued colour in the *Echoes*. His declaration of the source for each Echo is also a strategy to avoid accusations of copying. This unified approach reflects an attitude of compromise, which encompasses the medium of oil paint, the artist's subjectivity,

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<sup>689</sup> Herbert Read, *The Origins of Form in Art* (New York: Horizon Press, 1965), 13–14.

<sup>690</sup> Amir Cohen-Shalev, *Both Worlds at Once: Art in Old Age* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America), 5, 36, and chapter 1.

<sup>691</sup> It is not clear who owned the copyright for the illustrations published in the *Leisure Hour*, though most likely it was the periodical itself. If this is the case, then the illustrations published there in the 1860s would have still been copyright protected in the 1930s, since Gilbert died in 1897, and, as per the 1911 Copyright Act, copyright subsists during the life of an author and for a period of fifty years after their death. See Copyright Act 1911, c4, available at <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Geo5/1-2/46/part/I/enacted>, accessed December 6, 2023. Nonetheless, though copyright law protected contributions to periodical works, illustrations were still threatened by piracy and illegal copying. See Will Slauter, *Who Own the News?: A History of Copyright* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2019), 150–51. See also Thomas Smits, “Piracy, Copyright, and the Transnational Trade in Illustrations of News in the Mid-Nineteenth Century,” in *Circulation and Control: Artistic Culture and Intellectual Property in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Marie-Stéphanie Delamaire and Will Slauter (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2021); and Beegan, *The Mass Image*, 166.

concessions to originality, and the images' self-awareness as reproductions. The *Echoes* are picture-like, not merely picturesque.

Furthermore, it is crucial to consider the relationship between copying, colour, and gender, insofar as they relate to Sickert's understanding of his own originality and authority. Indeed, the term "copy," from the Latin "copia," also relates to copulation, and sex in general.<sup>692</sup> Traditional notions of originality are often tied to masculine qualities, where men are associated with production and women with the ability to reproduce. These ideas are reflected in conventional understandings of the relationship between design and colour, with drawing considered a primary skill and colour a secondary one. Indeed, there is a tradition, in the critical literature, to equate the painter's pigments with women's cosmetics, and thus with a feminine superficiality, and in the seventeenth-century, for instance, the colourists were blamed for the decadence of painting.<sup>693</sup> The superficiality of colour is also related to chemistry—Renoir, for one, believing that chemistry could only create false and unreliable surfaces.<sup>694</sup> In this sense, by archiving old illustrations and adding colour to the designs, Sickert also positions himself in the secondary role traditionally assigned to women.

Furthermore, as argued in the second chapter, his later colour scheme aligns with the aesthetics of mass print media, especially in its recurring use of red-green contrasts, which are reminiscent of an automated and standardised approach. This mass-media colour scheme signifies the works' decorative and commercial potential and is a gesture of submission to conventionally feminine qualities. All these gestures evincing an indeterminate masculine identity contradict the sexist views concerning art and artists that he demonstrated in his earlier career.<sup>695</sup> This might be indicative of

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<sup>692</sup> Lawrence Liang also notes the connection between copies and copulation. See Liang, "Copies without Originals," 435.

<sup>693</sup> Jacqueline Lichtenstein, "Making Up Representation: The Risks of Femininity," *Representations*, no. 20 (1987): 80.

<sup>694</sup> Kalba, *Colour in the Age of Impressionism*, 80.

<sup>695</sup> As demonstrated, for instance, by his exclusion of female artists from the Camden Town Group in the 1910s.

a sense that artists, working with commercial aesthetics, were now having to reinterpret and redefine their originality (defined as a traditionally masculine quality), or they were forging a different path towards a compromised originality.

These concessions, and Sickert's ambiguous attitude, foreshadow his reception by contemporaries working with similar traditions. Whether commenting in the 1930s or subsequently, critics have typically interpreted Sickert's originality as a reflection of his genius. In 1934, on the occasion of another exhibition of the *Echoes* at the Leicester Galleries, one critic suggested that originality seemed to be the privilege of a particular kind of person:

It is the best of fun, and it is a painting of high order, but I sincerely hope that it does not lead to a fashion for repainting lesser-known illustrators. What is delightful in one man (when he is Sickert) would become intolerable with Tom, Dick and Harry.<sup>696</sup>

Similarly, P. G. Konody defended the originality of the *Echoes*, in 1931, on the basis that he considered the real value of paintings to lie in the artist's ability to visualise a subject according to their personal style, and thus it did not matter for him whether artists were inspired by nature or by other works of art.<sup>697</sup>

There are reviews showing that individual originality is unstable since it is subject to personality. The critic and painter Adrian Bury thought that the English *Echoes* were the "frivolous exploit of a very facile and amusing personality," and that Sickert's wit had led him into the "labyrinthine paths of curious originality."<sup>698</sup> Baron, writing in 1973, dismissed the quality and subject matter of the *Echoes*, suggesting that Sickert's use of assistants to underpaint the compositions from existing images was responsible for the works' erratic stylistic variation.<sup>699</sup>

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<sup>696</sup> "Sickert's Work," *The Scotsman*, November 14, 1934, 13.

<sup>697</sup> P. G. Konody, "Art and Artists: Mr. R. Sickert's Echoes," *The Observer*, May 17, 1931, 14.

<sup>698</sup> Bury, "Two London Shows," 714.

<sup>699</sup> Baron, *Sickert*, 168.

These critiques reveal a certain scepticism concerning Sickert's originality. Indeed, for traditional theories of originality as individual in nature, the individual is typically cast as passive, with originality appearing unpredictably, almost like a revelation. In this sense, I believe that Sickert's art of appropriation, in the *English Echoes*, is perceived as questionable, because the sources that actually make this seemingly unpredictable originality appear are themselves visible. Readymade print materials seem to replace the notion of a unique gift, or an invisible talent.

Thus, prints transformed talent into an "explicit factor," open to learning and prediction, turning the discourse of imitation into one of pure originality. Artists no longer needed to imitate nature, yet not everyone could be a genius. Indeed, critics believed that only Sickert could accomplish this feat. They were less concerned with whom Sickert copied, than with the possibility that more people might engage in plagiarism, leading to weaker art. Alternatively, they believed that plagiarised art lacked regenerative ability. In essence, critics acknowledged Sickert's personal perspective on originality, that this apparent "de-professionalisation" actually requires a high level of professionalism, in an act of what Schwartz calls "copy rites."<sup>700</sup>

However, I would suggest that Sickert's problematisation of the issue of his own originality is indeed unique in his time. He created a distinctive category for his works by explicitly labelling them "echoes" of other existing works, thereby enabling his audience to appreciate them as reproductions. In this assessment, I am drawing upon Kendall Walton's consideration of the "categories of art." Writing in 1970, Walton argued that it is crucial to correctly categorise artworks in order to correctly interpret them.<sup>701</sup> For Walton, artworks reach their audiences by way of their perceptual properties, and the aesthetic impact of a work's perceptual properties will change if that work is considered under a different category.<sup>702</sup> In this sense, the audience's

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<sup>700</sup> Schwartz, *The Culture of the Copy*, 207. Schwartz gets straight to the point, stating that "the history of art is the history of copy rites, of transformations that take place during acts of copying. When artists do not copy others, they may copy their own work over and over to deepen 'the idea' of their original."

<sup>701</sup> Kendall L. Walton, "Categories of Art," *The Philosophical Review* 79, no. 3 (1970): 334–67.

<sup>702</sup> *Ibid.*, 335–42.

knowledge of Sickert's works as *Echoes* is crucial, since this determines how this series of oil paintings is perceived. With the titles he provides and the introductions to the source illustrators in the catalogue, Sickert informs his audience that the *Echoes* are the products of "copying." Consequently, the audience will categorise the paintings as "appropriations," "copies," or as "secondary" to the original illustrations, rather than viewing them as representations of objects, or of nature, based on standards such as resemblance. In this context, the audience's evaluation of the *Echoes* is different. Sickert elevates the act of "echoing" itself, as a quality of the artwork, turning it into a fundamentally unprecedented category, and this factor is what actually becomes active in the audience's contemplation of the works. As I have shown, the act of "echoing" is captured by the *ILN*, corroborating the *English Echoes*' belonging to the category of reproduction.

Additionally, Sickert's declaration makes colour the primary quality in the work, encouraging the audience to filter out qualities related to design. In the 1930s, his use of colour would indeed have reminded viewers of that of the Fauves, or of Post-Impressionism in general. Thus, it was easier for his audience to read colour as an original property. For example, writing in the 1940s, Osbert Sitwell praised Sickert's colour as "splendid and audacious," remarking that the canvases "blaze with a richness that indicates the ultimate fulfilment and fructification" of his genius.<sup>703</sup> By pre-emptively confirming the *Echoes* as reproductions, their seemingly clichéd elements—their borrowed designs—were more likely to be overlooked in favour of their use of colour.

Later scholars, including Baron, Morphet, and Daniels, have noted Sickert's emphasis on his sources, categorising the *English Echoes* accordingly as "a kind of Pop art," or as a predecessor to Pop Art, in terms of the works' brazen appropriation of found images.<sup>704</sup> But they hesitate to claim the series wholeheartedly as Pop Art. I understand and share this reticence, as historical concepts can become meaningless if

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<sup>703</sup> Sitwell, *A Free House!*, liv.

<sup>704</sup> See Baron, *Sickert*, 172; Morphet, "The Modernity of Late Sickert"; and Daniels, "Walter Sickert and Popular Culture."

they are too readily applied to works of another period. Nonetheless, relating the *English Echoes* to Pop Art does encourage consideration of the former in broader mediatic terms, as a test case to explore the different nuances of similar concepts like “copy,” “duplication,” “appropriation,” “translation,” “quotation,” and many more.<sup>705</sup> Testing these concepts in relation to the *English Echoes* will require further research and is not the aim of this thesis. My purpose in mentioning Pop Art (itself a contested term) in relation to the *Echoes* is to emphasise the similarity between the two insofar as they each create their own categories. Each separates itself from passively “being influenced” by tradition, instead highlighting subjective initiative. In addition, while Morphet and Daniels only relate the *Echoes* and Pop Art in terms of their commonality of facture, I wish to bring to attention the ambiguity of Sickert’s attitude towards originality, in order to understand the *Echoes* as a special kind of “copying.” Sickert had requirements for an originality of his own. The *English Echoes* can be seen as images made according to the principle of the synthesis of different vocabularies of art history and visual culture, just as *La Favorita* parodies Futurist style (as explored in chapter two), or with Sickert’s broader adaptation of the language of the printed mass media into painting. He demonstrates an eclecticism, emphasising the lineage and continuity of painting, and of image-making in general. This approach makes his art unique in two aspects. First, his appropriation of existing materials in the tradition of painting, makes his paintings seem to be part of an existing genre, such as portraiture (as in *La Favorita*), or landscape. But in each category, Sickert makes changes and challenges. This is his originality to create the new genre of *painting*. Secondly, he not only reproduces the imagery of existing designs, but also clarifies the lineage of media of different historical period. This practice suggests an awareness that changes in human history can invariably be traced back to the emergence of symbols and tools as media to be used for different purposes. Media relations are not determined, but are mobile, migratory, and

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<sup>705</sup> I am also indebted to Douglas Crimp’s analysis of the different kinds of appropriation and their wider implications for art history. See Douglas Crimp, “Appropriating Appropriation,” in *On the Museum’s Ruins* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993), 126–37.

productive, reconfiguring the distance between people and the world. Paint and print may both be obsolete, but each can be given the power to become new media. Original art comes from this dynamism. This awareness, on Sickert's part, emphasising a continuity, which differs from any art of merely anti-traditional, disruptive attitude, confirms the peculiarity and originality of his art.

## Conclusion

The focus of this thesis has been the interaction between Sickert's art and print culture, employing the concept of intermediality for the investigation. My aim has been to dilute Sickert from the discourse of paint, or, at least, to provide a more nuanced interpretation of this discourse. Through the analysis of various prints and their connection to his paintings, I have examined the aesthetic qualities and contexts of Sickert's works. Prints, whether etchings or posters, are conventionally understood to possess a plural and secondary nature; thus, this study can be seen as an exploration of how painting, considered a primary art form, undergoes changes in its own primacy through its interactions with prints, whether by being diluted or intensified.

Each chapter supports this overarching argument: print is a visual medium with diverse qualities, and these qualities contribute to the construction of the social narratives contained within, and the contexts for understanding, Sickert's work. Chapter one focuses on Sickert's public profile in the magazine culture of his early career, highlighting his sensitivity to the subtle distinctions between, and differing effects of, artworks and their reproductions. Chapter two delves into the specific visual languages of different prints that Sickert transforms into a printerly language in painting. Chapter three explores three themes shared by both print and painting, examining in detail the visual and perceived characteristics of topics in communication and how these are selectively appropriated into paintings and the contexts in which paintings are understood. Chapter four addresses concerns related to art reproduction and archiving, comparing paintings circulated as popular images and popular images reproduced as paintings, exploring the different meanings that images in different forms have. Together, these chapters demonstrate that mediation and remediation are just as crucial for art as its manifest content. The discussions clarify how artists develop their understanding of their own medium within a rich visual culture, as a way to extend the autonomy of that medium.

This research demonstrates a distinctive trajectory in the development of modern art. The case of Sickert is indicative of the way that, while artists held many views in

common (Sickert and Wyndham Lewis both arguing that painting is not literature but plastic art, for instance, and Sickert and Joseph Pennell both rejecting the institutional discrimination against illustrators), a diversity of artistic forms and viewpoints nonetheless emerged in this period, leading to considerable debate. This suggests that modernism is not a monolithic concept but must instead be understood from different perspectives. This thesis aims to convey the ways in which print culture contributes content, serves as a platform to foment discussion, and provides a nuanced context for the understanding of art.

Examining a variety of visual materials from different perspectives, I have introduced visual aspects not previously explored in Sickert studies. These include the deliberate compositional techniques of enlargement and the close-up, and their effects; the differing dimensions of the grid; printerly colour; as well as Sickert's specific connections with new media, such as film. Together, these re-establish and expand the significance of the formal analysis of painting, and make evident the richness of Sickert's creativity, if measured by his creation of "new" elements and the combination of existing elements.

In the course of this research, I have unearthed a plethora of print materials from Sickert's era, exploring relevant issues by delving into their meticulous printerly qualities. As a contribution to print studies, these findings may help to shed light on the reception of prints, preparing the ground for future research in this area. These materials merit in-depth research; moreover, they expand the corpus of Sickert studies and, by extension, the corpus of British modern art and visual culture. The printerly language of Sickert that I have discovered offers potential for further comparisons, especially with French art. The visual culture of the time, despite characteristic national differences, was universally influenced by print as a widespread technology. Comparison of Sickert's work with that of French artists such as, Degas, Vuillard (who adopted a similar colour scheme) and Vallotton will reveal the universality of this influence, and is a worthwhile avenue for future research.

The case of Sickert also provides an opportunity to rethink the methods of

interpreting artworks and the relationship between artists and their works. Sickert is an artist who employs literary metaphors and rhetorical techniques and is adept at using public opinion. He expresses a strong personality in the public sphere, especially through his writings, and his writing and painting are closely intertwined. Throughout this thesis, I have made a consistent effort to strike a balance between exploring the autonomous meaning of works and understanding the author's intentions. I have relied on traditional methods to interpret artworks, including formal analysis, the methods of production of each painting, the artist's avowed intentions, and consideration of the artist within his social milieu. This is evident in my assertion that Sickert's later works continue to pursue the concerns of his earlier ones. However, this does not imply a notion of Sickert's "authorship" as a way to limit the interpretation of his work. My objective has not been to forcibly categorise certain works as successful or unsuccessful, but rather to underscore the importance of not overlooking broader, ever-present social, visual, and technological factors. This is why I have simultaneously situated paintings within the broader visual culture of the period in order to examine potential alternative meanings. Nevertheless, this tension deserves further study, especial given the distinctiveness of his writing, which is not merely biographical but systematic and extensive, as well as featuring immediate reflections on his artistic environment.

The issue of Sickert's authorship is intricately linked to the broader concern of this thesis, namely the relationship between art and technology. A key aspect of modernity is the technological transformation of culture into industrial mass culture. Technological development, to whatever extent, may lead to the dissolution of concepts such as individuality, autonomy, and artistic authority because technology grants freedom to more people, rendering skills and privileges that were previously confined to specific groups more accessible to a broader population. Yet, while this freedom appears to confer increased individual agency and democracy, what happens to the idea of the individual when this freedom becomes universal and limitless? Technological modernity essentially erodes human agency. This contradiction is well

illustrated in Sickert's work.

Régis Debray posits that technological reproduction changes the conditions of production of original objects, as well as the dynamics of the market, and even the essence of art objects.<sup>706</sup> In Sickert's case, it is evident that aesthetics and technology are intrinsically connected. This connection is perpetual because aesthetics and technology co-evolve, with art serving as the archive of technology, and vice versa. Both are continually being rewritten.

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<sup>706</sup> Debray, *Media Manifestos*, 16–17.

Appendix: My discovery of 23 source illustrations for the *English Echoes*

Pair number	Source illustrations	<i>English Echoes</i>
1	Georgie Bowers, ‘December’, <i>Once A Week</i> , December 1, 1866, 616.	<i>December [After Geroge Bowers]</i> , 1935-6, oil on canvas, size unknown, Private collection.
2	Georgie Bowers, ‘On her majesty’s service’, <i>Once A Week</i> , April 24, 1869, 320; <i>London Society</i> , 1867; and in “Illustrators of the 1860s,” School of Art Collections, Aberystwyth University.	<i>On Her Majesty's Service</i> , 1930-1, oil on canvas, 63.2 x 68 cm, Private collection.
3	Georgie Bowers, ‘A Leisure Hour at the Royal Academy’, in and in “Illustrators of the 1860s,” School of Art Collections, Aberystwyth University.	<i>A Private View of the RA [after Georgie Bowers]</i> , c1930, oil on canvas, 51 x76 cm, Government Art Collection, London.
4	Adeleide Claxton, “Miss Price Takes Charles in Hand,” <i>London Society</i> , vol 10, 1866, 410; and in “Illustrators of the 1860s,” School of Art Collections, Aberystwyth University.	<i>Second Course, Dein Freund [after Adelaide Claxton]</i> , c1935, oil on canvas, 40 x 50cm, Piano Nobile, London.
5	Kenny Meadows, illustration for George Noël Gordon Byron, <i>The Illustrated Byron: With Upwards of Two Hundred Engravings</i> . (London: Henry Vizetelly), 1855, 179.	<i>Don Juan and Haidee</i> , dated 1930, oil on canvas, 59.5 x 49 cm, Government Art Collection, London.
6	Meadows, in <i>Illustrated Byron</i> , 342.	<i>Vicinique Pecus</i> , c1930-1, oil on canvas, 61 x 48.5 cm, F.H. Mayor.

7	Meadows, in <i>Illustrated Byron</i> , 187.	<i>Don Juan and Haidee (Idyll)</i> , 1934, oil on canvas, 33 x 49.5cm, The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent. [This painting was previously mistaken as one made after John Gilbert.]
8	Meadows, in <i>Illustrated Byron</i> , 573	<i>Her Serene Highness</i> , c1931-2, oil on canvas, 61 x 50.5cm, Private collection.
9	Meadows, in <i>Illustrated Byron</i> , 236	<i>La Favorita [After Kenny Meadows]</i> , c1932, oil on canvas, 49 x 44.9cm, Private Collection
10	“Embarking for the East”, print on ceramic pot lid, probably a product of the pottery manufacturer F. & R. Pratt & Co.	<i>Suisque Praesidium</i> , c1927, oil on canvas, diameter 35 inches, Private Collection, Scotland.
11	John Gilbert, “The Famishing Weed and Shell Gatherers Surprised by a Heavy Wave”, <i>The Leisure Hour</i> , April 7, 1859, 209.	<i>The Wave</i> , c1934, oil on canvas, 73 x 73cm, The Potteries Museum and Art Gallery.
12	John Gilbert, “Julia Reading the Newspaper to Captain Rushton”, <i>The Leisure Hour</i> , Oct 23, 1856, 673.	<i>Woman’s Sphere</i> , 1931-2, oil on canvas, 70 x 63.5cm, Government Art Collection, London.
13	John Gilbert, ‘The Way to Ruin’, <i>The Leisure Hour</i> , April 12, 1855, 225.	<i>Le Tapis Vert</i> , 1931-2, oil on canvas, 53.3 x 55.2cm, Private collection.
14	John Gilbert, ‘Emigrants Landing at Melbourne’, <i>The Leisure Hour</i> , May 25, 1854, 321.	<i>Irish Migrants Landing at Melbourne</i> , 1932, oil on canvas, 65 x 71.2cm, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne.
15	John Gilbert, ‘Siegbert Climbing the Fence to Assist the Invalid Girl’, <i>The Leisure Hour</i> , 24 July, 1856, 456.	<i>The Gardener’s Daughter</i> , 1932-3, oil on canvas, 78.7 x 63.5cm, Christie’s.

16	John Gilbert, "The Unexpected Rencontre", <i>The Leisure Hour</i> , November 22, 1855, 737.	<i>Summer Lightning</i> , 1931-2, oil on canvas, 62.9 x 72.5cm, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool.
17	John Gilbert, "An Embarrassing Moment", <i>The Leisure Hour</i> , May 5, 1859, 273.	<i>The Idyll</i> , 1932, Oil on canvas, 68.6 x 72.4cm, Ferens Art Gallery, Hull.
18	John Gilbert, "Sketches of Emigrant Life: --ii. The Arrival", <i>The Leisure Hour</i> , August 12, 1852, 513.	<i>Health and Wealth, The First Australians</i> , c1932-5, oil on canvas, 76 x 66cm, private collection.
19	John Gilbert, "Sketches of Emigrant Life:--1. The Voyage" , <i>The Leisure Hour</i> , August 5, 1852, 497.	<i>Emigrants at Melbourne</i> , 1932, oil on canvas, 69.2 x 64.8cm, Private Collection, UK.
20	John Gilbert, "The Introduction", <i>The Leisure Hour</i> , Oct 25, 1862, 673.	<i>The House Keeper's Niece</i> , c1931-2, oil on canvas, size and whereabouts unknown.
21	John Gilbert, "A Dangerous Search", <i>The Leisure Hour</i> , March 27, 1869, 193.	<i>An Expensive Half Sovereign</i> , 1930-1, oil on canvas, 56 x 61 cm, Private collection.
22	John Gilbert, "The Party on its Way to a Pic-nic," <i>The Leisure Hour</i> , December 6, 1855, 769.	<i>The River [After John Gilbert]</i> , c1930-1, oil on canvas, 63 x 57 cm, Piano Nobile.
23	T.S. Seccombe, "On the Stair," <i>The London Society</i> , vol 10, 1866, 79.	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> , c1934, oil on canvas, 117 x 69.5 cm, Private Collection.

The eight pairs of *Echoes* and their sources (number 1-5 and 21-23 in the table above)

that are not discussed in this thesis are illustrated below:

Pair 1



Walter Sickert, *December [After Geroge Bowers]*, 1935-6, oil on canvas, size unknown,

Private collection.



Georgie Bowers, 'December', *Once A Week*, December 1, 1866, 616.

Pair 2



Walter Sickert, *On Her Majesty's Service*, 1930-1, oil on canvas, 63.2 x 68 cm, Private collection. [colour reproduction not available]



Georgie Bowers, 'On her majesty's service', *Once A Week*, April 24, 1869, 320.

Pair 3

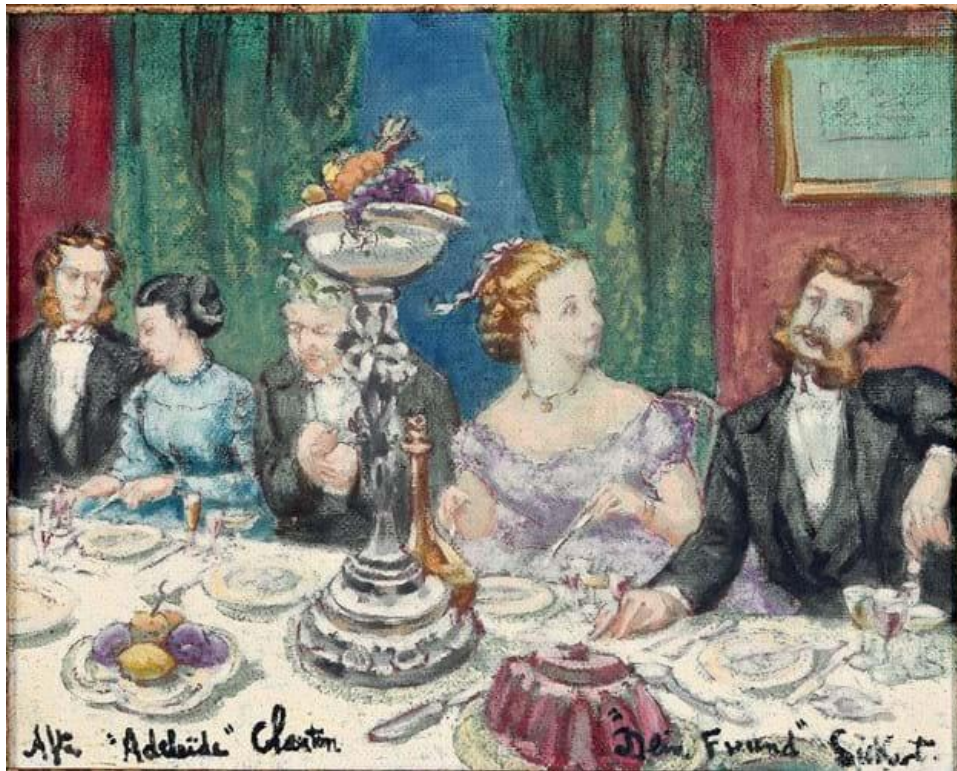


Walter Sickert, *A Private View of the RA [after Georgie Bowers]*, c1930, oil on canvas, 51 x76 cm, Government Art Collection, London.



Georgie Bowers, 'A Leisure Hour at the Royal Academy', in "Illustrators of the 1860s"  
School of Art Collections, Aberystwyth University.

Pair 4

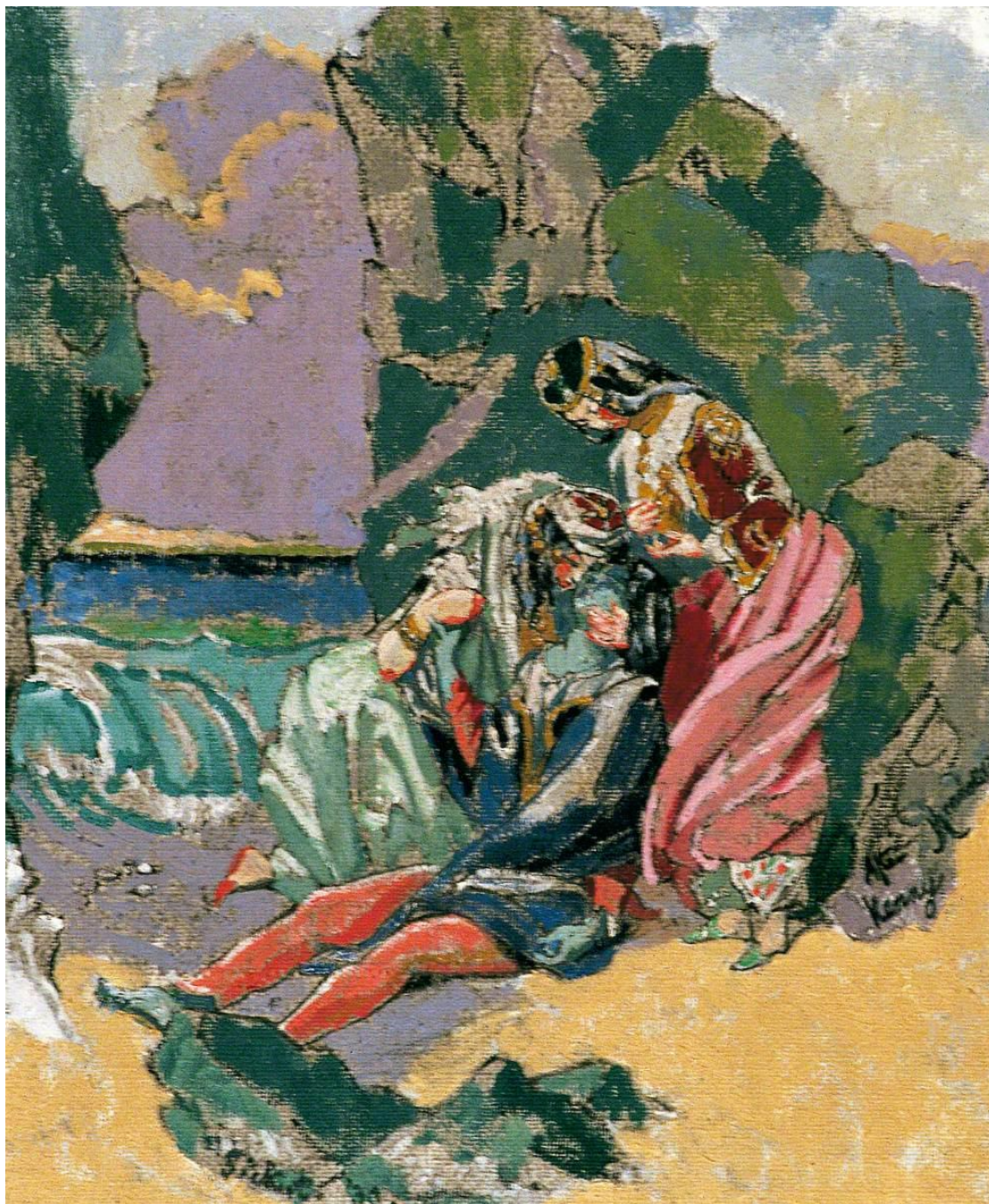


Walter Sickert, *Second Course, Dein Freund* [after Adelaide Claxton], c1935, oil on canvas, 40 x 50cm, Piano Nobile, London.



Adelaide Claxton, "Miss Price Takes Charles in Hand," *London Society*, vol 10, 1866, 410.

Pair 5



Walter Sickert, *Don Juan and Haidee*, dated 1930, oil on canvas, 59.5 x 49 cm, Government Art Collection, London.



Young, yet her elder, and of brow less grave,  
 And more robust of figure,—then begun  
 To kindle fire, and as the new flames gave

Light to the rocks that roof'd them, which the sun  
 Had never seen, the maid, or whatso'er  
 She was, appear'd distinct, and tall, and fair.

Kenny Meadows, illustration for George Noël Gordon Byron, *The Illustrated Byron:*

*With Upwards of Two Hundred Engravings.* (London: Henry Vizetelly), 1855, 179.

Pair 21



Walter Sickert, *An Expensive Half Sovereign*, 1930-1, oil on canvas, 56 x 61 cm, Private collection.

March 1, 1869.

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March 1, 1869.

# THE LEISURE HOUR

A FAMILY JOURNAL OF INSTRUCTION AND RECREATION.

"BEHOLD IN THESE WHAT LEISURE HOURS DEMAND,—AMUSEMENT AND TRUE KNOWLEDGE HAND IN HAND."—*Copper.*



A DANGEROUS SEARCH.

## DAVID LLOYD'S LAST WILL.

CHAPTER XXV.—TWO WITNESSES TO DAVID LLOYD'S WILL.

Clough considered it marvellous good fortune to be invited to become an inmate of Mr. Lloyd's house. His brain had been so touched by the sight of gold, that a morbid and an extravagant idea of its value had taken possession of him. Gold seemed to him the withheld good that would restore to him all that life had been in earlier and more prosperous days. It was a positive pleasure to him to dwell beneath

the same roof as that hidden bag of gold, with its fellow hoards, which were doubtless concealed up and down about the house. Mr. Lloyd's covetousness was contagious, and the poor, penniless Lancashire operative, driven by stress of famine from his native town, and from his accustomed work, was in just the unsound, tainted condition of mind to receive the virus. In this remote country district, with every source of interest closed to him, with none of the busy life of Manchester, and its changeful events to occupy him, his thoughts were constantly

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95.

John Gilbert, "A Dangerous Search", *The Leisure Hour*, March 27, 1869, 193.

Pair 22



Walter Sickert, *The River [After John Gilbert]*, c1930-1, oil on canvas, 63 x 57 cm, Piano Nobile.

E OF TRUTH,  
with his son,  
their labour done.  
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is mind had stored;  
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s'd them by,  
admiring eye.  
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g, indeed,  
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us, my son,  
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nce call.  
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ELLEN ROBERTS

# THE LEISURE HOUR

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THE PARTY ON ITS WAY TO A PIC-NIC.

**MARRIAGE;**  
OR,  
**THE BACHELOR IN SEARCH OF A WIFE.**

CHAPTER XIV.—WHAT CAME OF A PIC-NIC.

The position of an eligible bachelor, who is not an absolutely heartless puppy, disposed to find his

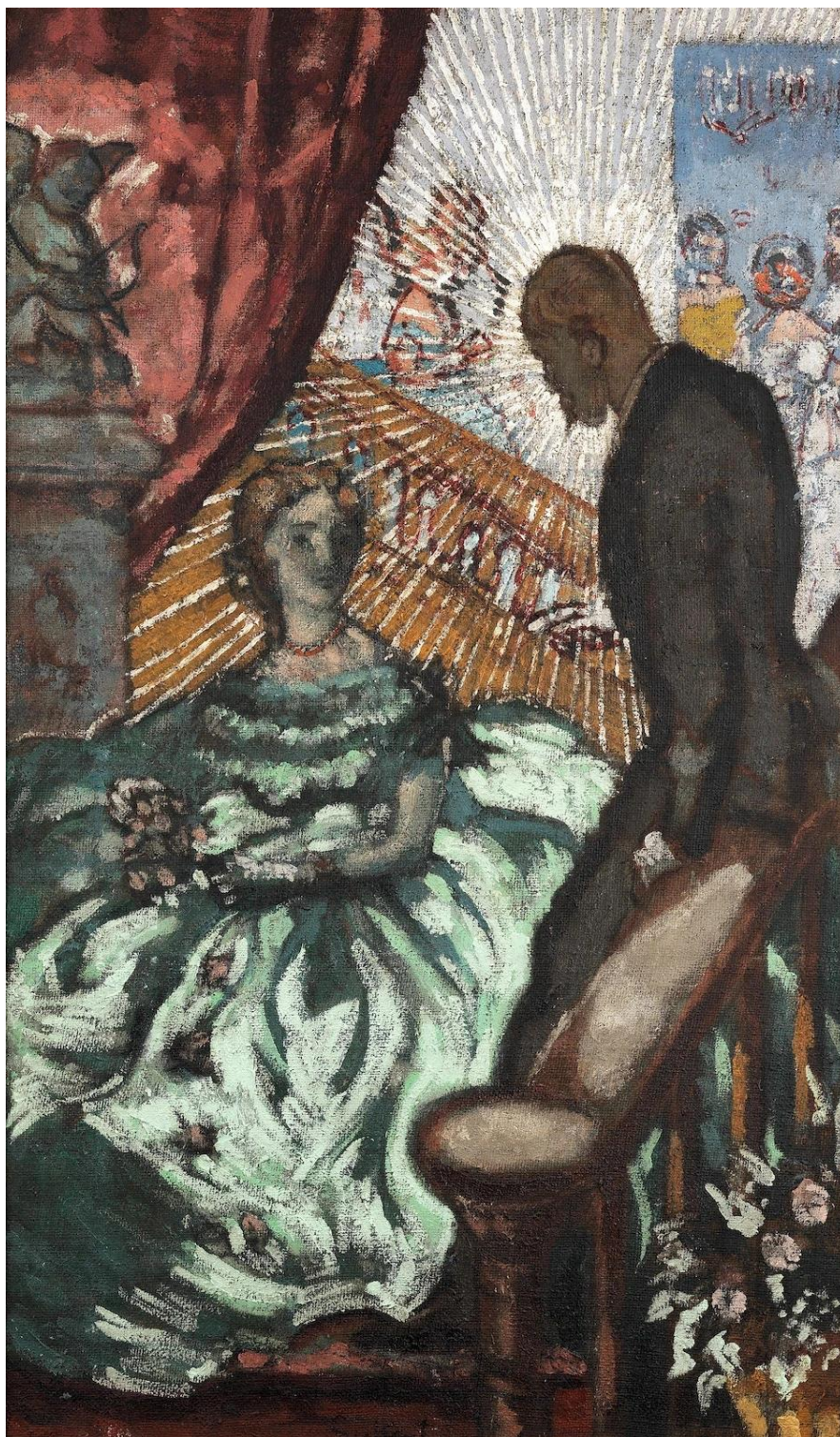
amusement in trifling with girls' affections, and playing on the too common credulity of early womanhood, is a difficult and unenviable one.

Surely never, in the annals of Highgate society, were there so many pic-nics in summer, or in winter so many *soirées*, as since the residence of

D D D

John Gilbert, "The Party on its Way to a Pic-nic," *The Leisure Hour*, December 6, 1855,

Pair 23



Walter Sickert, *Romeo and Juliet*, c1934, oil on canvas, 117 x 69.5 cm, Private Collection.



Drawn by T. S. Secombe,]

**ON THE STAIRS.**

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T.S. Secombe, "On the Stair," *The London Society*, vol 10, 1866, 79.

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## Illustrations



Fig. 0.1 Walter Sickert, *La Porte St Denis*, 1930, 76.2 x 45.7cm, Paisley Art Gallery, Renfrewshire, Scotland.



Fig. 0.2 Walter Sickert, *Gatti's Hungerford Palace of Varieties. Second Turn of Katie Lawrence*, c1888, oil on canvas, 38.7 x 47 cm, Yale University Art Gallery.

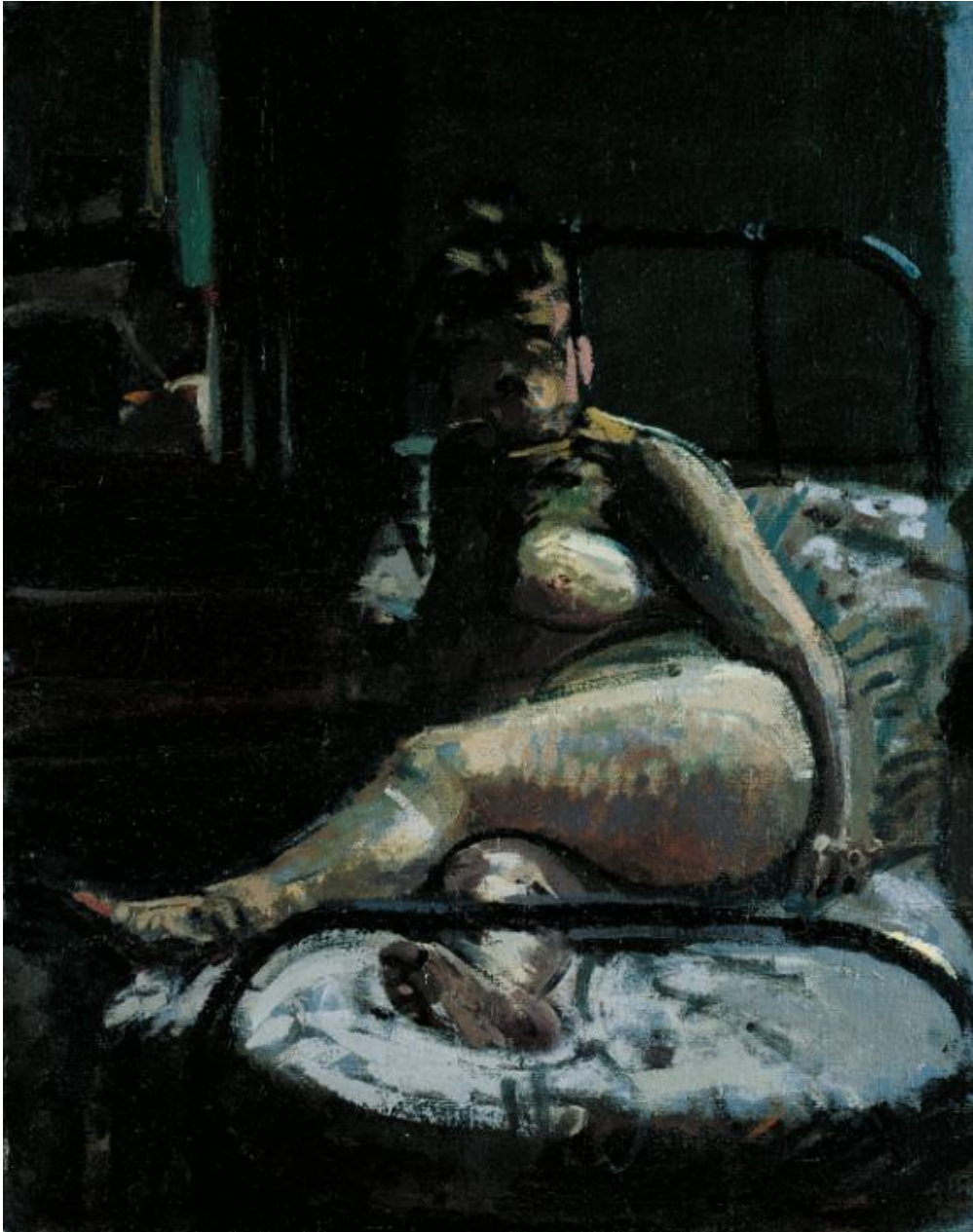


Fig. 0.3 Walter Sickert, *La Hollandaise*, c1906, oil on canvas, 51.1 x 40.6 cm, Tate.



Fig. 0.4 Walter Sickert, *HM King Edward VIII*, 1936, oil on canvas, 183.4 x 92.1cm, The Beaverbrook Art Gallery.



Fig. 0.5 Walter Sickert and Thérèse Lessore in his studio, c1938, photograph, reproduced from "William Roberts: He Knew Degas," An English Cubist (website), accessed 14 December, 2023, <http://www.englishcubist.co.uk/degas.html>.

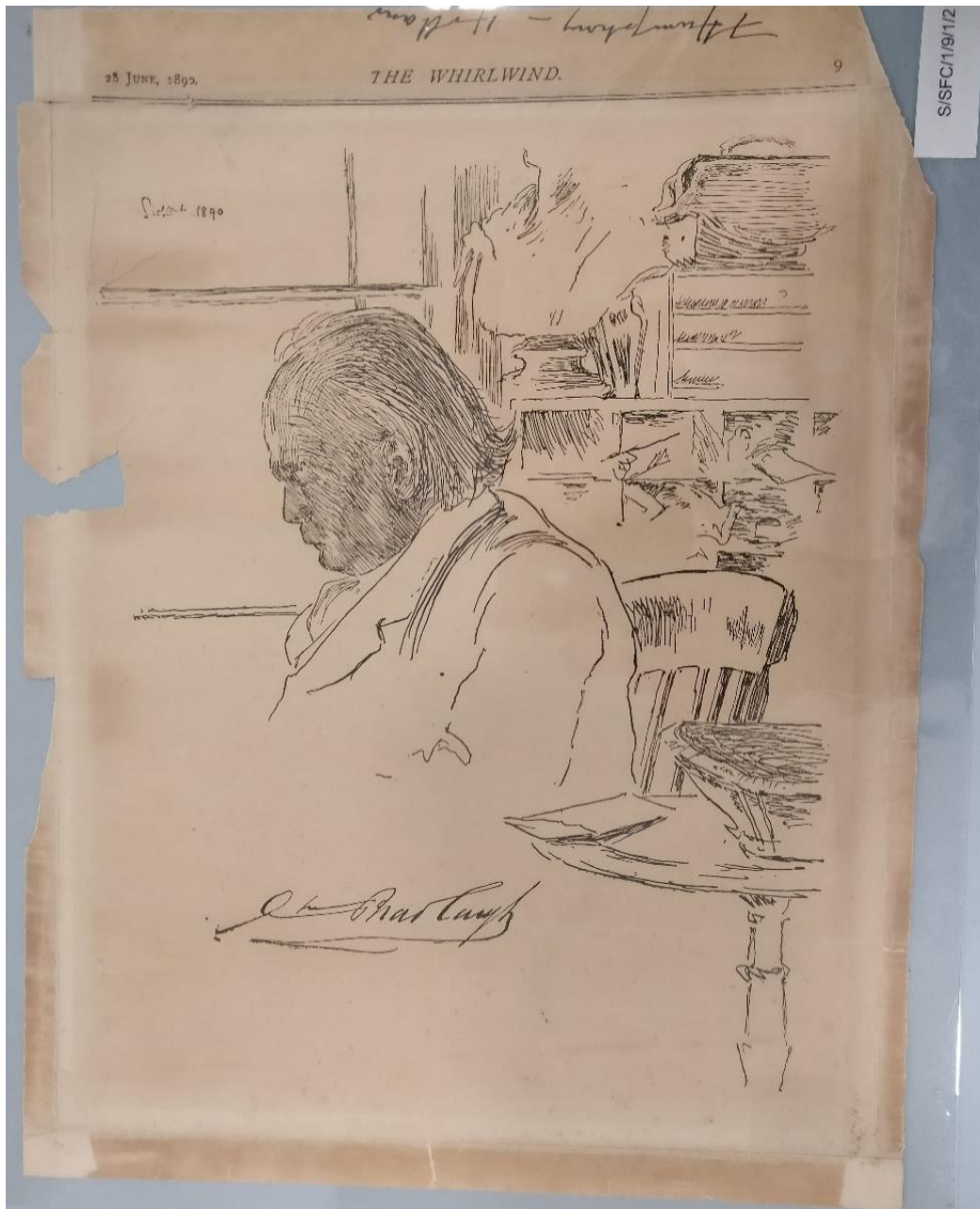


Fig. 1.1 Walter Sickert, "Charles Bradlaugh." *Whirlwind*, June 28, 1890, 9.



Fig. 1.2 George Cruikshank, illustration for Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin; or, Life among the Lowly: A Tale of Slave Life in America* (London: Nathaniel Cooke, 1853), 199.



Fig. 1.3 Walter Sickert, *Portrait of Charles Bradlaugh*, 1890, oil on canvas, 73.7 x 61 cm, National Liberal Club, London.



Fig. 1.4 Walter Sickert, *Study of Charles Bradlaugh*, c1890, chalk and pencil, 18.4 x 17.1 cm, National Portrait Gallery, London.



Fig. 1.5 Walter Sickert, *Mr Charles Bradlaugh at the Bar of the House of Commons*, 1891, oil on canvas, 226.7 x 120 cm, Manchester Art Gallery.

THE LATE CHARLES BRADLAUGH, M.P.

The death of Mr. Bradlaugh deprives the House of Commons of one of its most eloquent and picturesque figures. Thomas Bradlaugh, with all his faults, was a man of a certain stamp of character—rare in his day. He was not a man of letters, but a man of action. He was a man of a certain stamp of character—rare in his day. He was not a man of letters, but a man of action.

VERSES OF OCCASION

It is the great modern work of books, when volume editors choose carefully as follows to other titles at a University. There is something very pleasant in seeing across an old University which occupies the ground of a University, who returns and who means to stay, since it has secured the success of a University. No student who steps upon her main entrance to witness her right glove over made a more orderly slip as she

elegance of wit of the "tasteful modernism" of which Mr. Lockhart-Lampson speaks. To tell the truth, in the matter of wit, I suspect the desire to have an unimpaired the only half of the nineteenth century which has not been the other half into going as to many poetry lyrics that were properly being to

This striking objection to the scope of the volume seems to me more than to draw attention to the harmful difficulty which attends the making of such a period. No one can say where the will flows and where the words flow. It is the time of unimpaired verse which is entirely that which is properly called verse. Many efforts have been made to form a kind of dictionary of literature, but without great success. It compares, as I have, a majority of Mr. Lockhart-Lampson's poetry, but only a small part, and that not the best, of Mr. Lockhart-Lampson's poetry.

It is a pity that the volume is not more complete. It is a pity that the volume is not more complete. It is a pity that the volume is not more complete. It is a pity that the volume is not more complete. It is a pity that the volume is not more complete. It is a pity that the volume is not more complete.

And when we pass outside the narrow limits of the pure text of the volume we find ourselves greatly puzzled for a definition. There is the first of years and ending phrases, of which there is the least. There is Calverley, the connoisseur of language, with his extraordinary taste in the language of poetry. There is Thackeray, great and noble, laughing in the old houses at

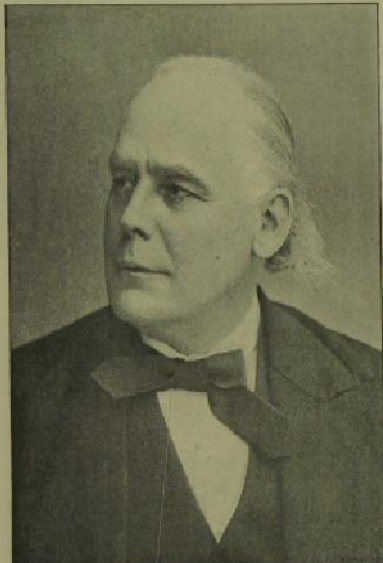
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THE LATE MR. CHARLES BRADLAUGH, M.P.

renewed, and with much that is new added. Mr. Lockhart-Lampson has been helped in this compilation by Mr. Charles Keruela, who has entered into the elegant spirit of the editor, and has accompanied his notes with a certain amount of judgment. The result is a volume more than ever in reading that the lighter

It is a pity that the volume is not more complete. It is a pity that the volume is not more complete. It is a pity that the volume is not more complete. It is a pity that the volume is not more complete. It is a pity that the volume is not more complete. It is a pity that the volume is not more complete.

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Mr. Bradlaugh rose from the ranks, and remained to the last more bold of speech which marked him out as a leader of the House of Commons. His father was a tailor's clerk, and he married the daughter of a plumber. He was born in 1833, near the town of Luton, in the county of Bedfordshire, and he spent his early years in the town of Luton, in the county of Bedfordshire, and he spent his early years in the town of Luton, in the county of Bedfordshire.

As a politician, he was active and successful, but he died in 1891, and he was buried at Woking on Feb. 9.

Major F. W. ... and he was buried at Woking on Feb. 9.

Fig. 1.6 "The Late Charles Bradlaugh, M.P.," Illustrated London News, February 7, 1891, 15.



Fig. 1.7 Walter Sickert, "Portrait of Thomas Bayley Potter," *Whirlwind*, July 5, 1890, 25.



Fig. 1.8 Walter Sickert, *George Moore*, 1890-1, oil on canvas, 60.3 x 50.2 cm, Tate.

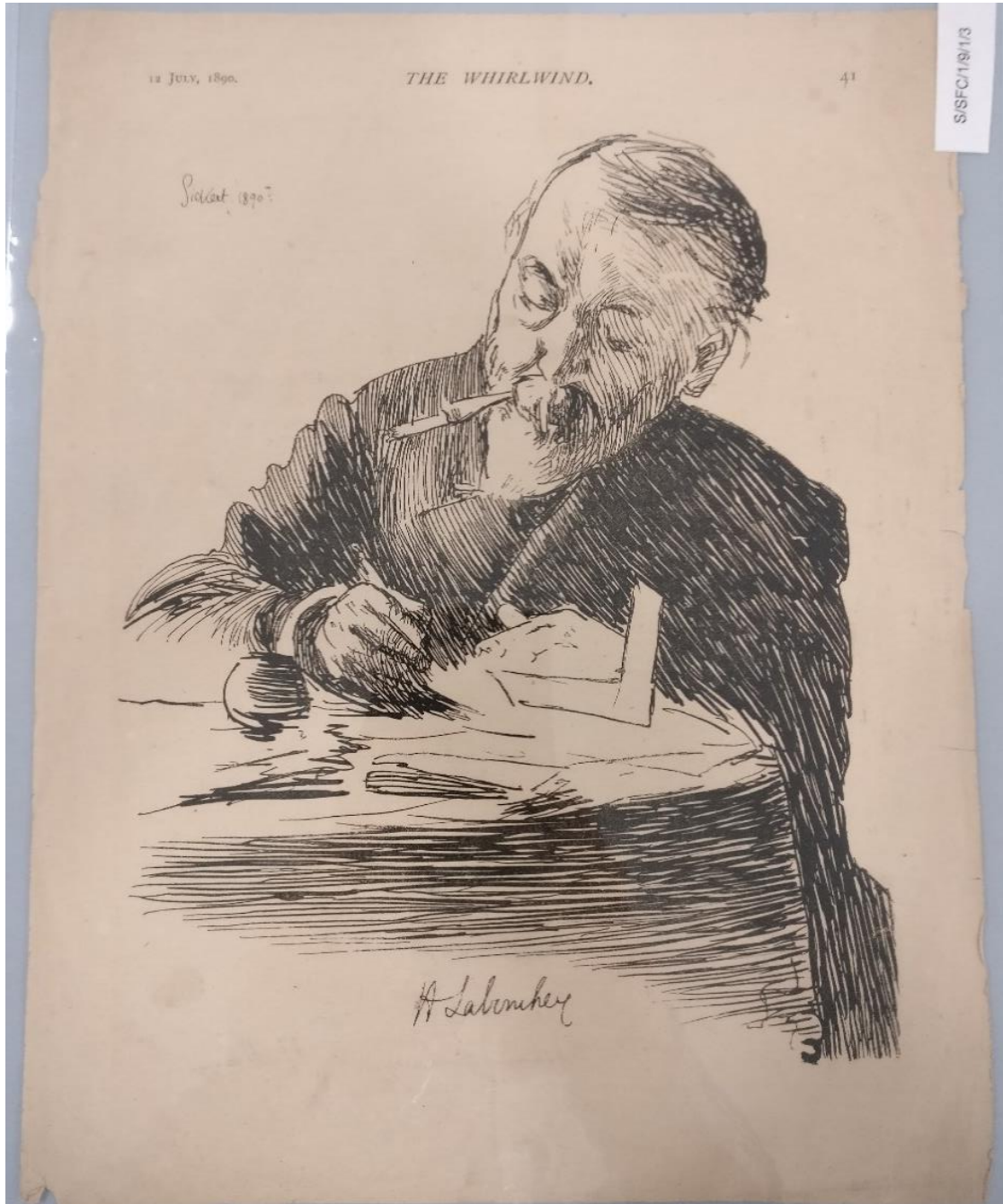
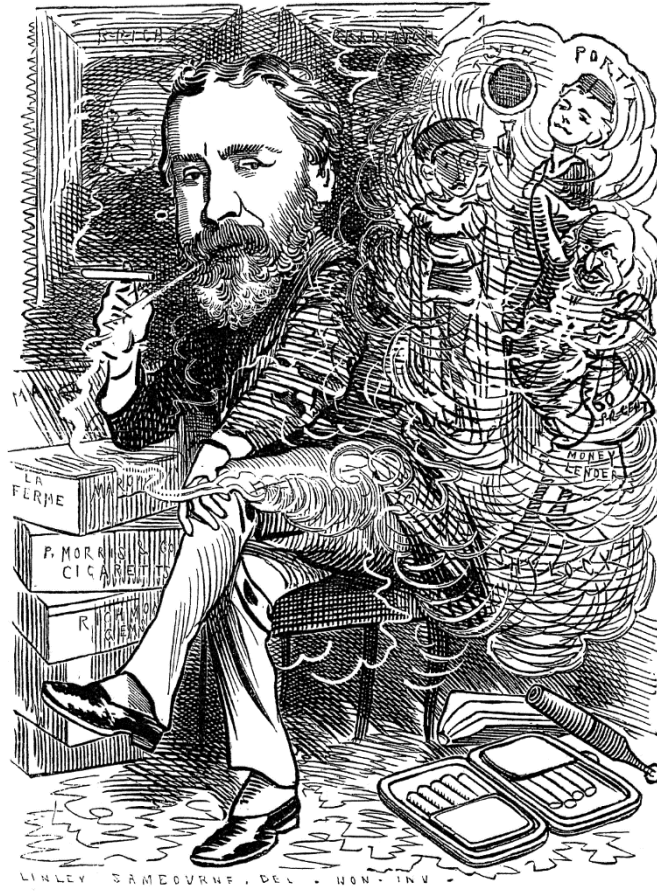


Fig. 1.9 Walter Sickert, "Portrait of Henry Labouchere," *Whirlwind*, July 12, 1890, 41.

PUNCH'S FANCY PORTRAITS.—No. 25.



H. LABOUCHERE, M.P.

“Il Cigaretto per esser felice.”

Fig. 1.10 “H. Labouchere, M.P.,” *Punch*, April 2, 1881, 154.

THE NEW HOUSE OF COMMONS SCHEME.

INTERVIEW WITH MR. LABOUCHERE, M.P.

MR. LABOUCHERE is contemplating the pulling down of the House of Commons as well as the demolition of the House of Lords. He wants a new House of Commons built, and it was in the hope of obtaining details of the elaborate scheme I presumed him to have formulated that I called upon Northampton's member. "But I have no scheme," he replied, with a smile.

"You are going to move for the appointment of a Select Committee to take the question in hand as a matter for inquiry, are you not?"—"Yes, if it be necessary to move. I have not spoken to Mr. Shaw Lefevre yet on the subject."

"Then you have some sort of alternative to propose to the present House?"—"My ideas on the subject are of the vaguest and most general description, but I think that by having a House of octagonal shape, say, much more accommodation could be provided without necessitating any unwieldy proportions. Let me draw it for you."

I picked up my ears, and imagined I was on the point of bagging specimens of the artistic achievements of a parliamentary artist whose skill has hitherto been undiscovered. But, although Mr. Labouchere may be able to draw a Minister at question time, he could not draw a plan or an elevation, or even the roughest of sketches. I feel no



hesitation in saying this, although criticisms in matters of art are becoming dangerous incentives to litigation (Melford v. Armstrong, Wallace v. Douglas, &c.); for Mr. Labouchere himself rendered assurance doubly sure by informing me that he could not draw. He could only get six sides into his octagon, and when he endeavoured to make his building perpendicular, it would persist in leaning over on its side. He made half a dozen attempts, each more hopeless than its predecessor, and then gave up with a burst of laughter at the ludicrous collection of intorted-looking geometrical figures he had created.

"What about the site? Would you pull down the present House?" I asked.—"Rather," he replied.

"And the House of Lords, too?"—"Oh, we shall sweep that away, although not yet. The fact is that architects are people who always want in their buildings to subordinate everything to beauty, in order to make them monuments of their own fame. Now, a practical House of Commons requires House of Commons architecture, in which utility is the main end to be achieved. My idea is that every member should have his own seat throughout the session. There would be nothing easier than to make a House like that, with the acoustic properties just as good as in the present chamber. Indeed, a new House of that sort would not need to be much larger than the present. If the pitch of the floor where the benches are were steeper, instead of five benches as at present, there could be many more. I will try again to draw it for you."

"Please don't, if I may say so. I am afraid your sketches are a little confusing, sir."—"Well, perhaps they are. I should have no gallery like the present Members' Gallery. The benches would reach up to about that level, and the doors of the upper lobby would open upon those benches. The House would clear for division much more easily. The old plans, which were submitted when this scheme for a new House was formerly mooted, either did not give every member his own seat, or else, where they did that, they allocated some of the seats in the galleries, separated from the floor. Members would not

accept seats in the galleries. They objected to the distinction thus made. There are 570 members, and there ought to be 670 seats on the floor of the House."

"But suppose, for the sake of argument, that the Irish members were not retained at Westminster?"—"Well, there would be so many seats to spare, until they came back. I take facts as they are. And as they are, we want a new House. In the present Chamber everything which should have been secured is sacrificed. It is the most unpractical place ever dreamed of by architect."

OF POPULAR PHOTOGRAPHS.

SINCE the days referred to by Mr. J. M. Barrie in his lurid story, "Hatter Dead," when Miss Maul Branstomb's countenance gazed tearfully—

Her looks commencing with the skies,  
And rapt soul sitting in her eyes—

from every stationer's window in the metropolis, the fashion of buying other people's photographs has somewhat diminished. Men—and the craze was ever a masculine one, mainly—spend more money at the theatrical box-office and less at the stationer's counter than of yore. They prefer laying out half a guinea for three hours' gazing on Miss Maude Millett herself, or Miss Neaville, or Miss St. John, to disbursing two shillings for a cold, silent, colourless photograph. Nor can we find it in our hearts to condemn their taste. For all its subsidence, however, the fashion is by no means dead. The fact that a single firm of photographers have already taken the Countess of Clancarty in no less than one hundred and eighty different poses, and that not one of the negatives has yet been out of print, are perhaps evidence that there is life in the old craze yet. Of scores upon scores of sittings Miss Marie Studholme can also tell a startling tale; while almost all the West-end photographers possess cards—prepared for circulation among the dealers—showing Miss Decima Moore, Miss Lily Hanbury, &c. in thirty or forty different aspects in a single toise.

Many of us know what sort of man the average actor is; how delightful his egotism, how utter his self-centralization. A few good press notices, and he conceives himself the most important person on earth, and the final cause of the universe. That the intelligent delivery of twenty or thirty lines by Mr. Piner or Mr. Jones should thus elate a man, and—as is very often the case—cause him to be instantaneously surrounded with an atmosphere of adulation, is one of the phenomena of present-day civilization. However, so it is. Well armed with his "notices," the young gentleman proceeds to the studio of some fashionable photographer, and demands his portrait, free of charge, saying, "Look what a grand advertisement it will be for you!" and, generally speaking, the photographer gives a sitting and takes the risk. Possibly some of these gentlemen will be surprised to hear that the photographs of even the most popular actors are almost a drug in the market. Actresses still sell, especially when they are pretty; but the portraits of actors are the unprofitablest of merchandise.

We need scarcely mention that the Queen is invariably waited on at her own palace or castle. Possibly Cardinal Vaughan had heard of this when he declined once upon a time to visit a well-known photographer, with the result that his Eminence's handsome features had to be taken in the bad light of a room in the Cardinal's house at Westminster. Neither politicians nor divines, however, sell much better than the actors. His recent licensing scheme has brought the singular aspect of the Bishop of Chester, with his thin lips, and neck as broad as his forehead, into the shop-windows; but, even for him, the sale outside his diocese is scanty enough. Viscount Cross, on the other hand—in spite of Mr. Harry Furniss's merciless attentions—sells rather well, as also does the counterfeit: presentation of Dr. Joachim's fine head; while Sir Charles and Lady Hilda, especially as taken together playing their respective instruments, find quite a respectable number of purchasers. The prima donnas, however, share the indifference extended to the politician; while the lady doctors are, from the photographer's point of view, no good at all. Some of our lady novelists are popular. There appears to be a steady sale for Miss Yooga's portrait, and Mrs. Humphry Ward's eminently lady-like presentation enjoyed considerable vogue two years ago. The great Laureate whom we all mourned last October had long been a favourite with the photograph-buying world, and Mr. Swinburne, Matthew Arnold, and Robert Browning still command wide popularity. Not so, however, the minor bards. Mr. George R. Sims's portrait, for example, simply hangs in the shop-windows until it becomes fly-stained; while Mr. Robert Buchanan hardly gets into the windows at all. (It is darkly rumoured that the plate-glass insurance companies object.) Nor—to return for a moment to the politicians—is there any particularly marked demand for Mr. Jesse Collins's portrait. A popular photograph, should, in fact, generally speaking, be either greatly beautiful or greatly plain.

But when all is said, we are driven back to our original statement that it is the pretty ladies who alone recoup the photographer's invested capital and labour. Our pre-Raphaelite Ellen Terry, our vivacious Ada Rehan, and our subtle Sarah Bernhardt—these bring gait to the artist's mill and adorn our drawing-rooms through all the quarters of the land. Miss Winifred Emery is far more popular than the Duke of Devonshire; Miss Mary Ansell easily distances the Right Hon. Sir William Vernon Harcourt; even the Grand Old Man himself might take points and a beating from Miss Lily Harold. And although it is rumoured that Mr. G. Bernard Shaw's photograph is likely to appear shortly in the windows, we seriously doubt if even that apparition will do much to lower the ascendancy of the "eternal feminine." W.

Fig. 1.11 "The New House of Common Scheme," *Pall Mall Budget*, February 9, 1893, 213.


  
**LA VIE MODERNE**

ART

SOMMAIRE

LITTÉRATURE

*Gustave Flaubert*, par E. DE LIPHART. — *Lettre ornée*, par L. DE BELLES. — *Salon de 1880*: Vénus par LANSBELLÉ. — *Jour...* comme devant, deux compositions de G. ROCHERON. — *MODÈLE DE CORRICOLO* (École française, XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle). — *SALON DE 1880*: LA FONTAINE, par MENNÉCH. — *Une Nuit turque*, trois études de G. CLAIRS. — *Six Cœurs de femme fantaisique*, par L.-C. DELASSON. — *Le Sport*, composition d'ÉL. MORIN. — *Ensemble* de G. ROCHERON.

*Gustave Flaubert*, par ROSE DELONNE. — **LE MONDE DES ARTS**: le Salon de 1880: *Gravées compositions et figures nues*, par ARMAND SILVESTRE. — *Jour...* comme devant, par RIGOLD JOLIX. — *Une Nuit turque*, par XAVIER T. S. — *Le Musée des Arts décoratifs* (suite), par FUSCADE. — *Le Sport hippique*, par PIER-YVES. — *Notes diverses*, par LOUIS DEBAST. — *Actualités*, par NAHO. — *Chronique financière*, par J. CARRÉL.



GUSTAVE FLAUBERT, par E. DE LIPHART.

Fig. 1.12 Ernst Friedrich von Liphart, "Portrait of Flaubert," *La Vie Moderne*, May 15, 1879, cover.



EXPOSITION DES INDEPENDANTS, N° 1

Cafe de l'opéra. (Dessin inédit de Miss Cassatt, d'après son tableau.)

## CRITIQUE LITTÉRAIRE

## Les Frères Zenganno, par Edmond de Goncourt.

M. Edmond de Goncourt vient de publier un nouveau livre, *les Frères Zenganno*, le second, depuis que la mort de son frère Jules a brisé prématurément cette collaboration glorieuse, à laquelle on doit : *Germinie Lacerteux*, *Madame Gervaisais*, *Renée Mauperin*, *Sœur Philomène* et *Charles Demailly*, sans compter la remarquable série des *Études* sur le XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle. Le premier était cette *Fille Elisa*, qui souleva tant de polémiques passionnées et dont le succès ne pâlit point devant la vogue énorme de *l'Assommoir*.

Mais cette fois, la critique à vol de plume ne pourra pas accuser l'auteur d'avoir recherché le succès par le scandale d'un sujet scabreux entre tous; et cette accusation ridicule, qu'ont seuls combattue les amis de M. Edmond de Goncourt et ceux qui, sans être admis dans son intimité, connaissent la nature loyale et l'esprit élevé de ce gentilhomme de lettres, n'aura pas même lieu de se produire, car les *Frères Zenganno* sont certainement le roman le plus chaste qui ait été écrit depuis longtemps.

Avant d'aborder l'analyse de ce livre, dont le sujet tiendrait en quelques lignes, j'éprouve le besoin de citer un passage de la Préface qui, par ce temps de *conseils littéraires*. — c'est une expression de M. de Goncourt, — a toute la portée d'un manifeste, en égard au nom qui l'a signée.

« On peut publier des *Assommoir* et des *Germinie Lacerteux*, et agiter, et remuer, et passionner une partie du public. Oui! mais, pour moi, les succès de ces livres ne sont que de brillants combats d'avant-garde, et la grande bataille qui décidera de la victoire du réalisme, du naturalisme, de *l'étude d'après nature* en littérature, ne se décidera pas sur le terrain que les auteurs de ces deux romans ont choisi. Le jour où l'analyse cruelle que mon ami, M. Zola, et peut-être moi-même, avons apportée dans la reproduction du bas de la société, sera reprise par un écrivain de talent, et employée à la peinture des hommes et des femmes du monde, dans des milieux d'éducation et de distinction, ce jour-là seulement, le classicisme et sa queue seront tués.

« Ce roman réaliste, ça avait été notre ambition à mon frère et à moi de le faire, car le réalisme, pour user du mot bête, du mot drapeau, n'a pas l'unique mission de décrire ce qui est bas, ce qui est répugnant, ce qui pue; il est venu au monde aussi, lui, pour exprimer *dans de l'écriture artiste*, ce qui est élevé, ce qui est joli, ce qui sent bon, et pour donner les aspects et les profils des êtres élégants et des choses riches; mais cela, dans une étude appliquée, rigoureuse, et non conventionnelle et non imaginative de la beauté, une étude pareille à celle que la nouvelle école vient de faire, en ces dernières années, de la laideur. »

On ne peut mieux dire et plus justement. Et l'auteur s'excuse de n'avoir

pas fait ce roman. Il a commencé par la canaille, parce que la femme et l'homme du peuple sont des créatures simples et pas compliquées qu'il est facile d'attraper; tandis que les Parisiens et les Parisiennes, ces civilisés excessifs, demandent des années d'observations et d'études. Et M. de Goncourt ajoute :

« Ce projet de roman qui devait se passer dans le grand monde, dans le monde le plus quintessencié, et dont nous rassemblions lentement et minutieusement les éléments, je l'abandonnais après la mort de mon frère, convaincu de l'impossibilité de le réussir tout seul, puis je le repris, et ce sera le premier livre que je veux publier. Mais le ferai-je maintenant à mon âge? C'est peu probable!... Et cette préface a pour but de dire aux jeunes gens que le succès du réalisme est là, seulement là, et puis encore que le *canaille littéraire* est épuisé à l'heure qu'il est. »

Cette flèche lancée par la main qui a écrit *Germinie Lacerteux* atteint en plein visage les jeunes naturalistes et réalistes qui essayent d'entretenir l'agitation produite dans l'air par le coup de canon de *l'Assommoir*, en tirant à leur tour de petits pétards mouillés et qui foirent, comme on dit en langage d'artilleur.

*Les Frères Zenganno* sont deux clowns, fils d'un signor Tommaso Bescapè, directeur d'une troupe d'acrobates, et d'une danseuse, Stépanida Rondik, dont le quinquagénaire Italien était tombé amoureux et qu'il avait achetée à sa vieille entremetteuse de mère, au prix d'une somme énorme et d'un légitime mariage. Gianni et Nello, nés à douze ans d'intervalle, de la mêlée intermittente des chairs du *Giorgio* et de la *Rommy*. — adoration sans bornes du vieillard, horreur non cachée et froideur persistante de la jeune femme, — menèrent, dès l'enfance, la vie nomade des saltimbanques. Bientôt Stépanida, glacée sous le ciel pâle des climats du Nord, usée par le souvenir et le regret de son beau pays où quelque ardent amour étouffé rappelait sans cesse sa pensée, mourait un jour en prenant la main de Nello, qu'elle mettait dans la main de son aîné; et ses doigts déjà froids serraient les mains des deux frères dans une étreinte que la mort ne desserra pas.

Les deux frères s'adoraient. Il y avait de la paternité dans l'affection de Gianni pour Nello et de la tendresse filiale dans celle du cadet pour l'aîné. Tommaso Bescapè étant devenu gâteux et imbécile après la perte de son adorée danseuse, Gianni prit la direction de l'Amphithéâtre. Des années se passèrent, pendant lesquelles mourait à son tour le vieux Tommaso, et dans lesquelles les affaires des acrobates périclitaient. Nello et Gianni grandissaient. Gianni avait associé Nello tout petit à quelques-uns de ses tours, pour développer en lui le goût du métier. Peu à peu, il avait perdu l'habitude de travailler seul et il se serait trouvé tout dépassé s'il n'avait pas eu le travail de son frère noué au sien. Il y avait une telle compréhension physique et morale entre ces deux êtres, que l'accord de la volonté et des muscles, si nécessaire aux gymnastes, semblait unique pour leurs deux corps.

Fig. 1.13 "Exposition Des Independant," *La Vie Moderne*, May 1, 1879, 54.

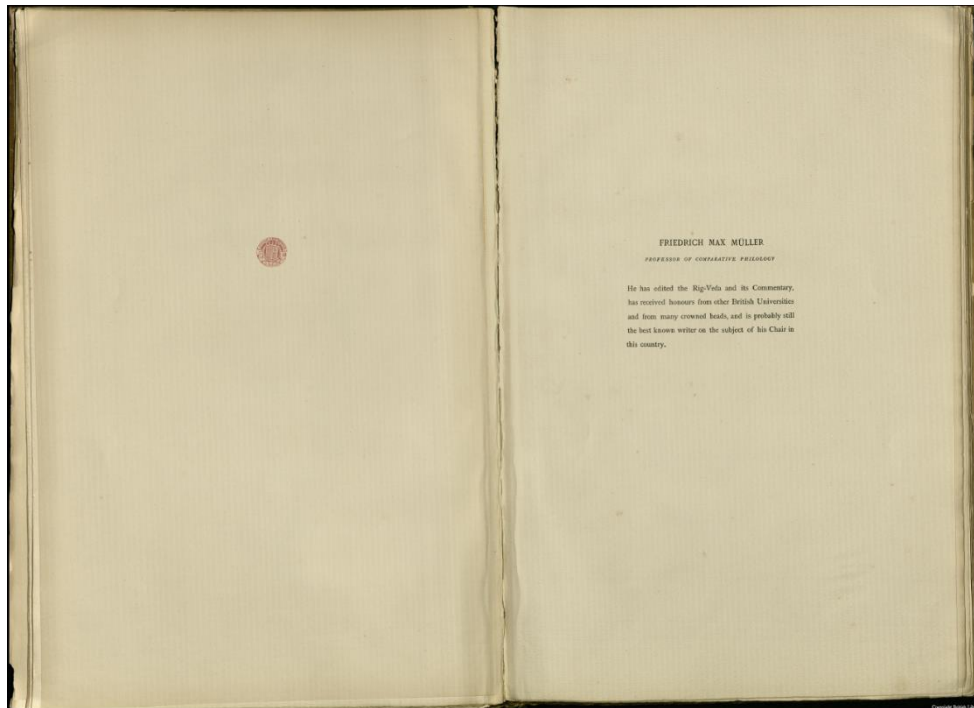


Fig. 1.14 “Friedrich Max Muller,” in William Rothenstein, *Oxford Characters* (London: John Lane, 1896), np.

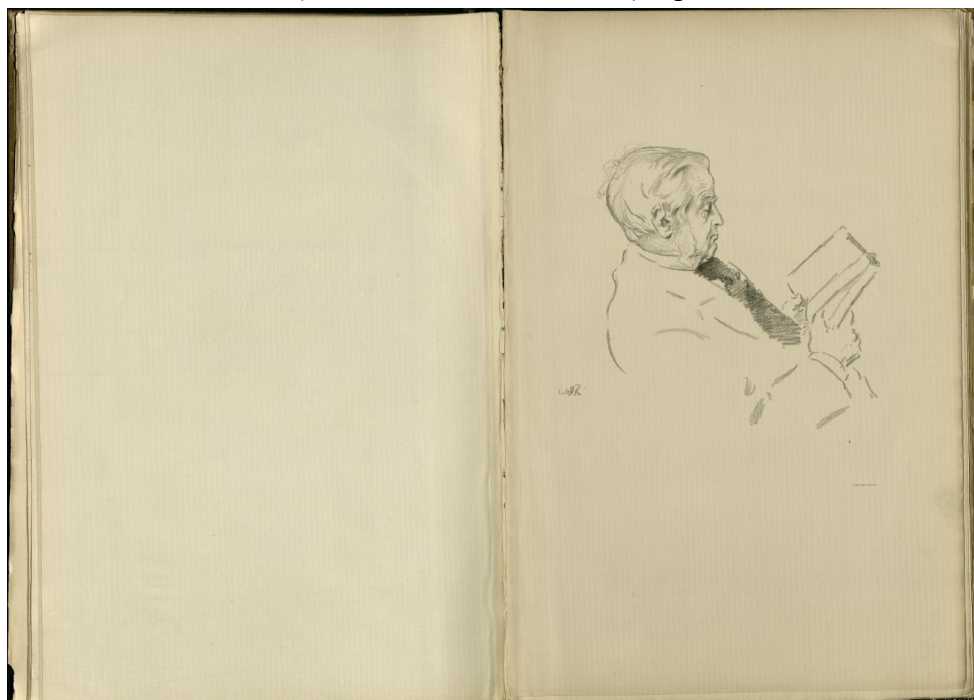


Fig. 1.15 Portrait of Friedrich Max Muller, in William Rothenstein, *Oxford Characters* (London: John Lane, 1896), np.



Fig. 1.16 Sidney Starr, “The Whirlwind Diploma Gallery of Modern Pictures—No.5: At the Piano” [drawing after Whistler], *Whirlwind*, August 9, 1890, 104.



Fig. 1.17 James Abbot McNeill Whistler, *At the Piano*, 1858-9, oil on canvas, 67 x 91.6 cm, The Taft Museum, Cincinnati, Ohio.



Fig. 1.18 Walter Sickert, “The Whirlwind Diploma Gallery of Modern Pictures—  
No.1,” *Whirlwind*, July 12, 1890, 40.



Fig. 1.19 Wilson Steer, *Knucklebone, Walberswick*, 1888-9, oil on canvas, 61 x 76.2  
cm, Ipswich Museum, Ipswich, UK



Fig. 1.20 Degas, *Beach Scene*, c1869-70, oil on paper on canvas, 47.5 x 82.9 cm, The National Gallery, London

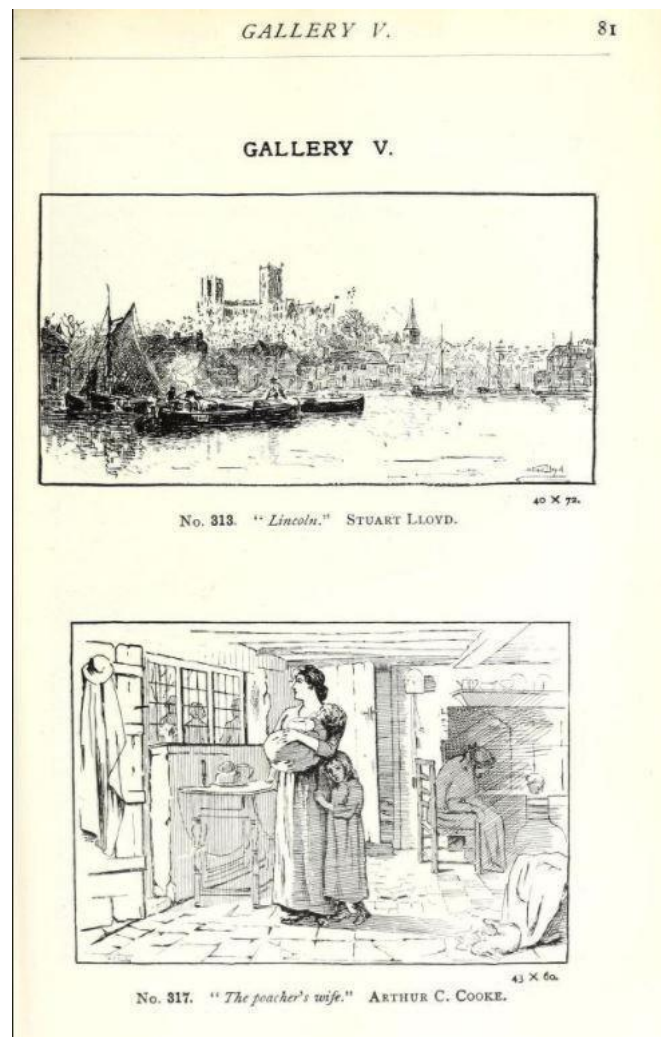


Fig. 1.21 Henry Blackburn ed., *Academy Notes* (London: Burlington House, 1893), 81.



Fig.1.22 Walter Sickert, *Café des Tribunaux, Dieppe*, c1890, oil on canvas, 60.3 x 73 cm, Tate.

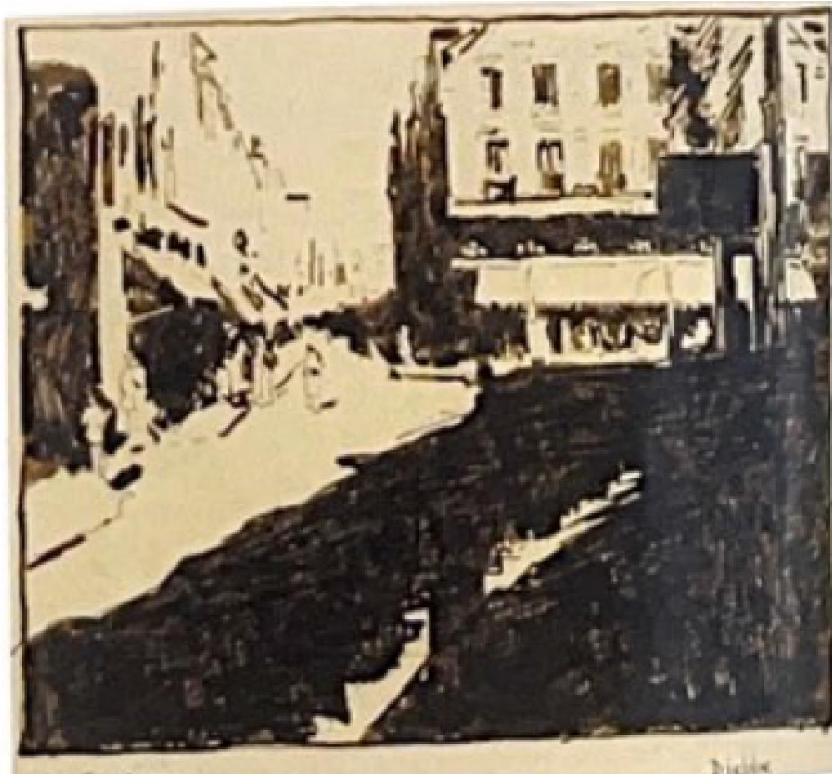


Fig. 1.23 Walter Sickert, untitled, inscribed lower right: Dieppe, c1893, pen, brush, and ink; image reproduced from Wendy Baron, *Sickert: Paintings and Drawings* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 202.

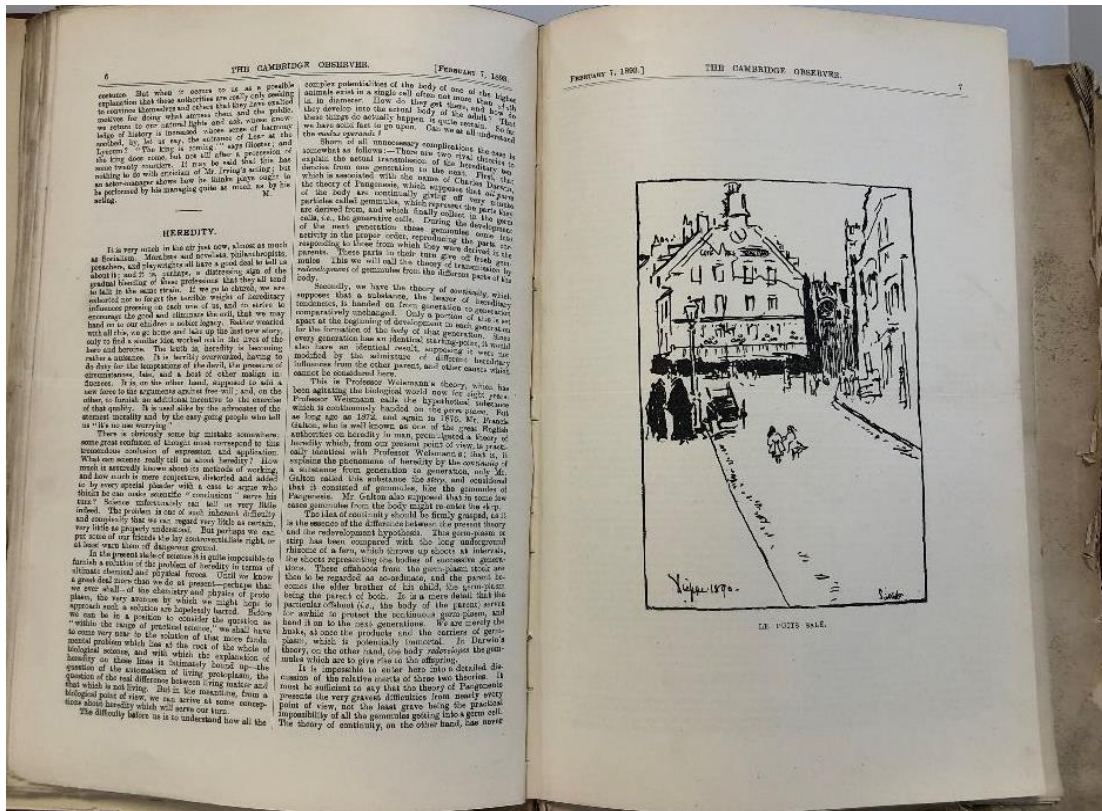


Fig.1.24 Walter Sickert, “Le Puits Salé,” *Cambridge Observer*, February 7, 1893, 7.

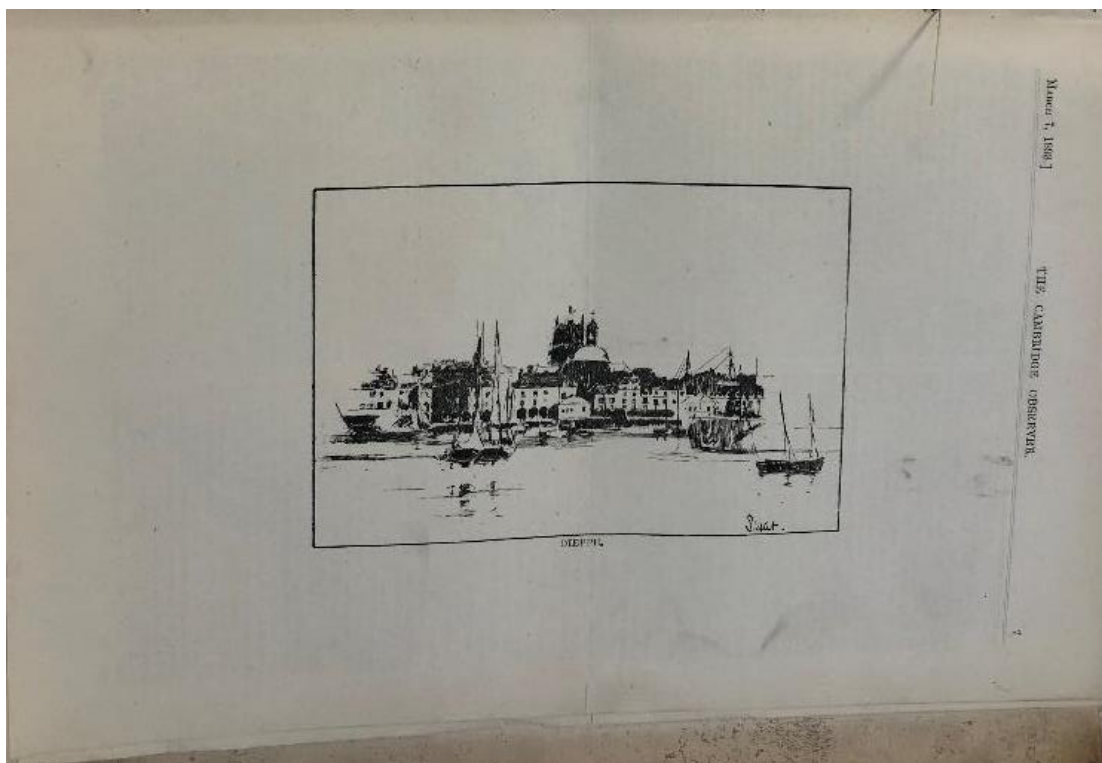


Fig.1.25 Walter Sickert, “Dieppe,” *Cambridge Observer*, March 7, 1893, 7.

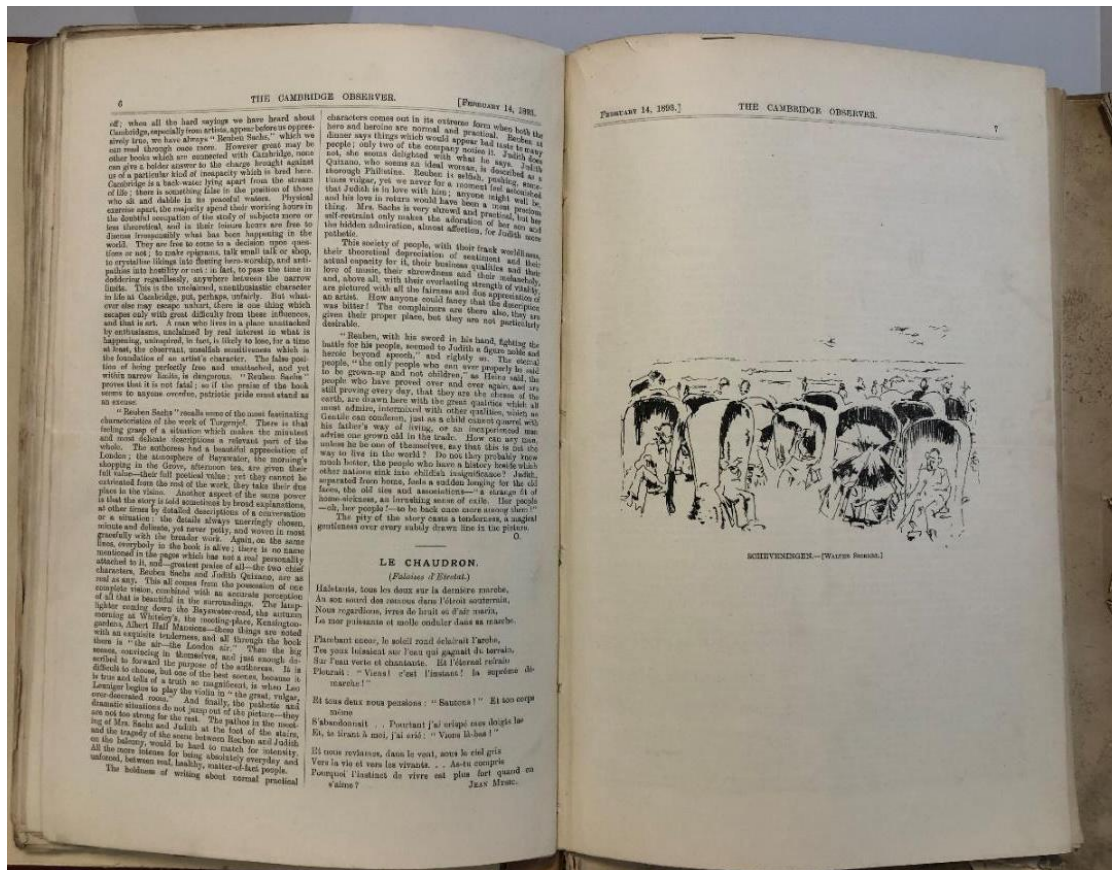


Fig. 1.26 Walter Sickert, "Schevevingen," *Cambridge Observer*, February 14, 1893, 7.

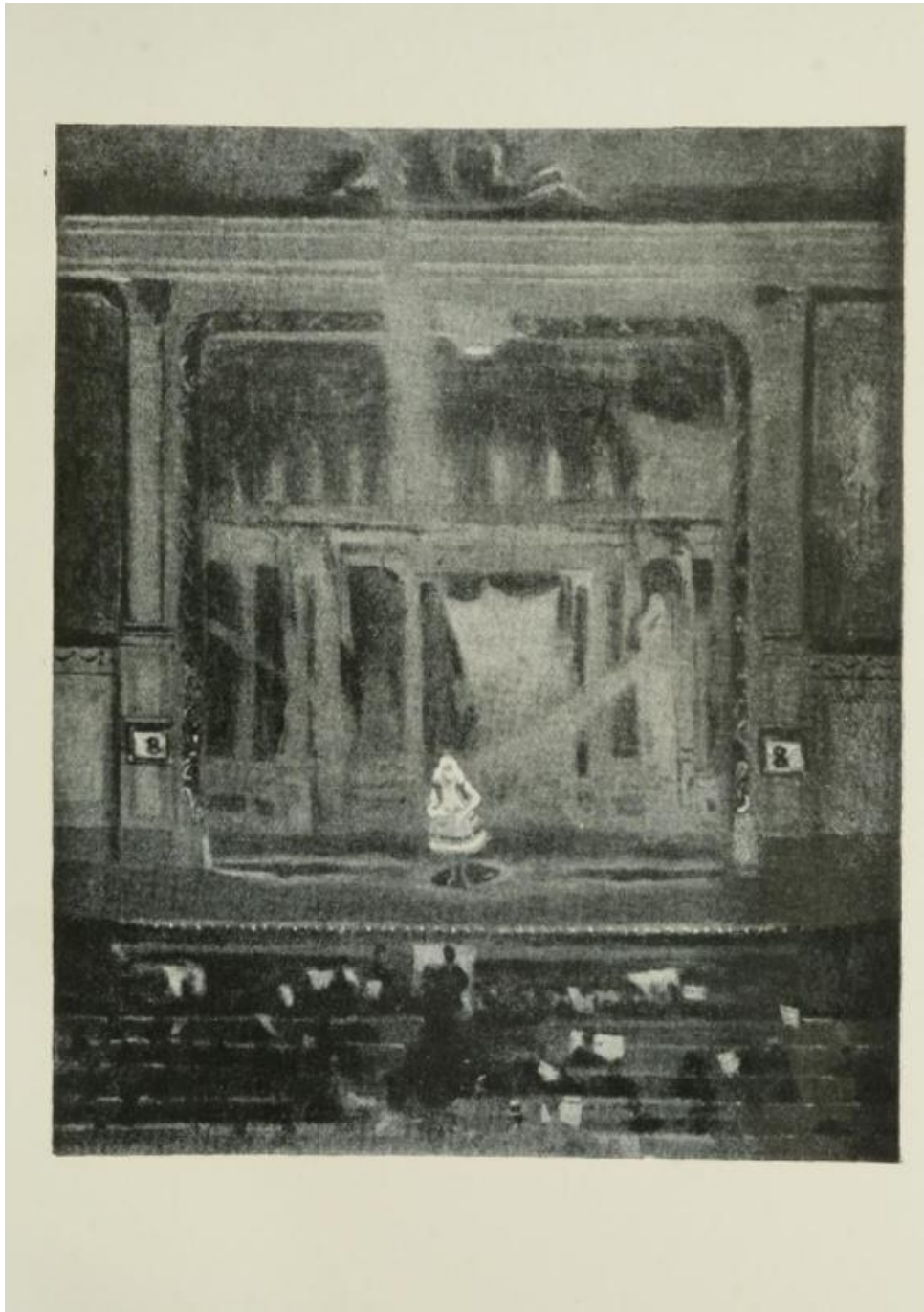


Fig. 1.27 Walter Sickert, "The Old Oxford Music Hall," *Yellow Book*, April 1, 1894, 85.

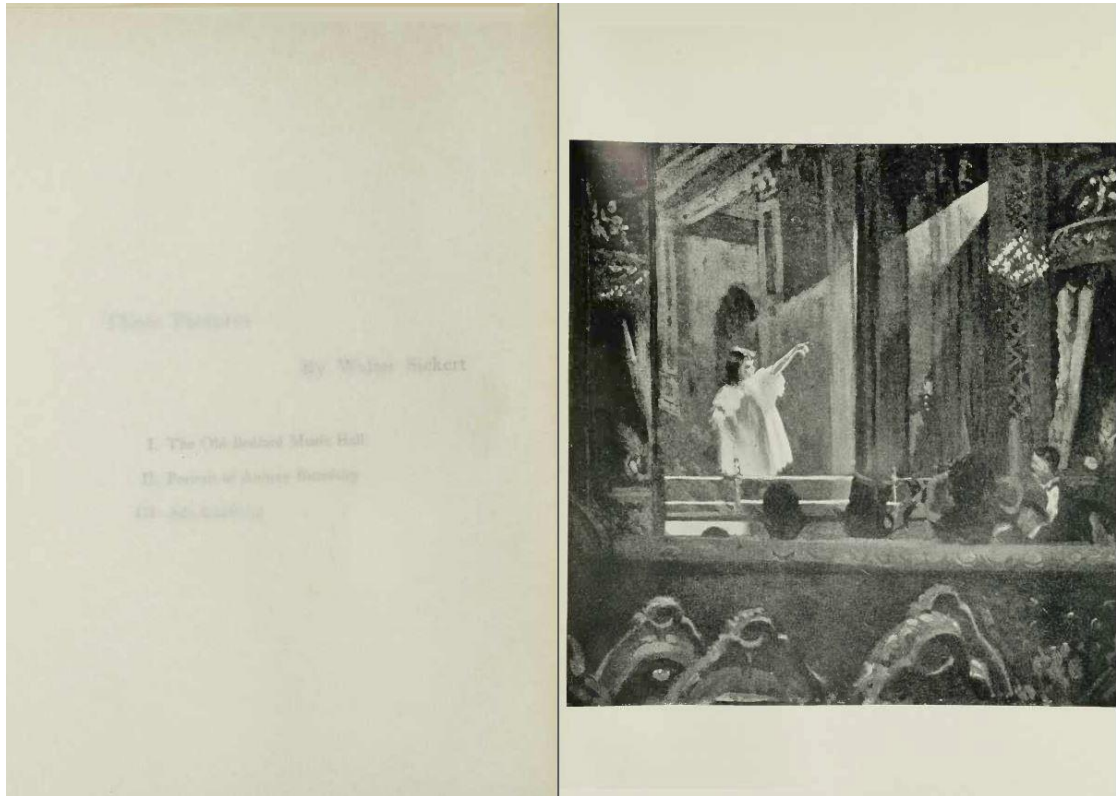


Fig. 1.28 Walter Sickert, "The Old Bedford Music Hall," *Yellow Book*, July 1894, 221.

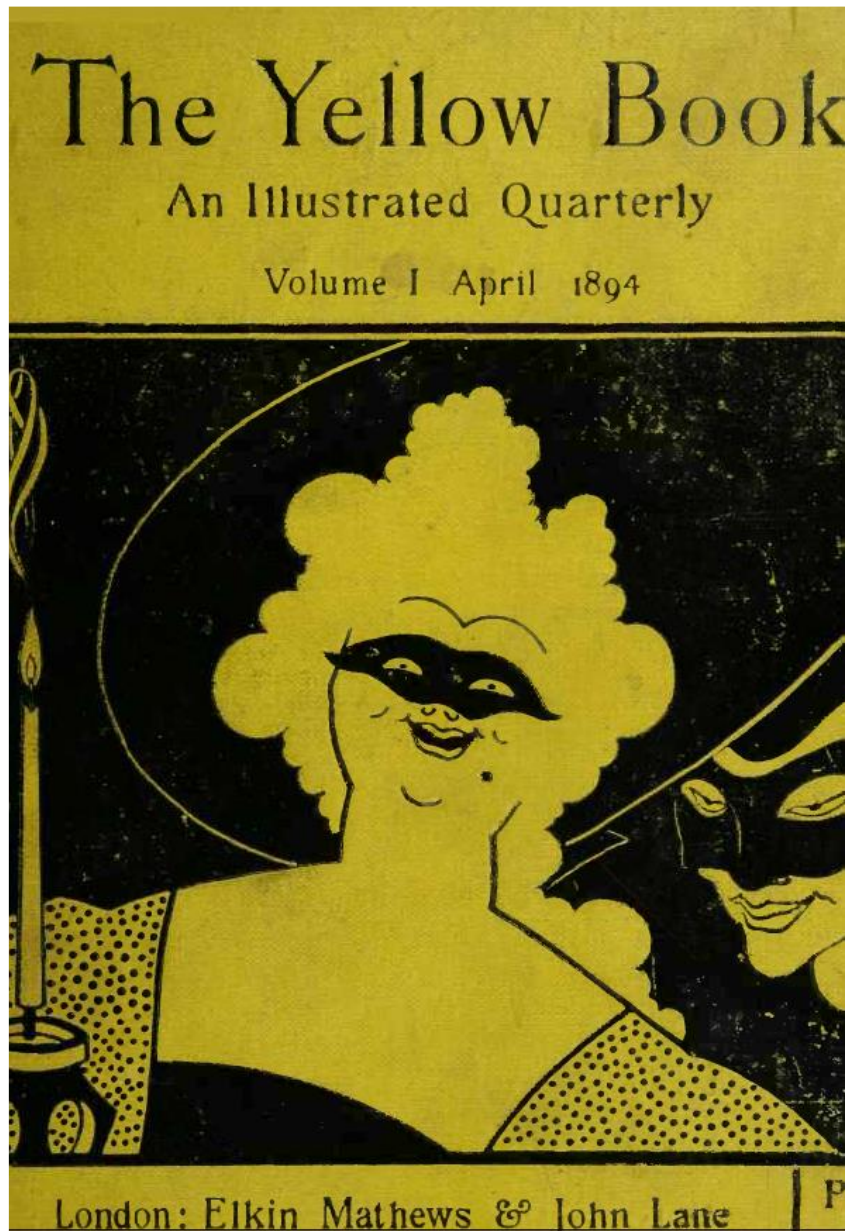


Fig. 1.29 Aubrey Beardsley, *Yellow Book*, April 1894, cover.



Fig. 1.30 Walter Sickert, "Hotel Royal, Dieppe," *Yellow Book*, January 1895, 80.

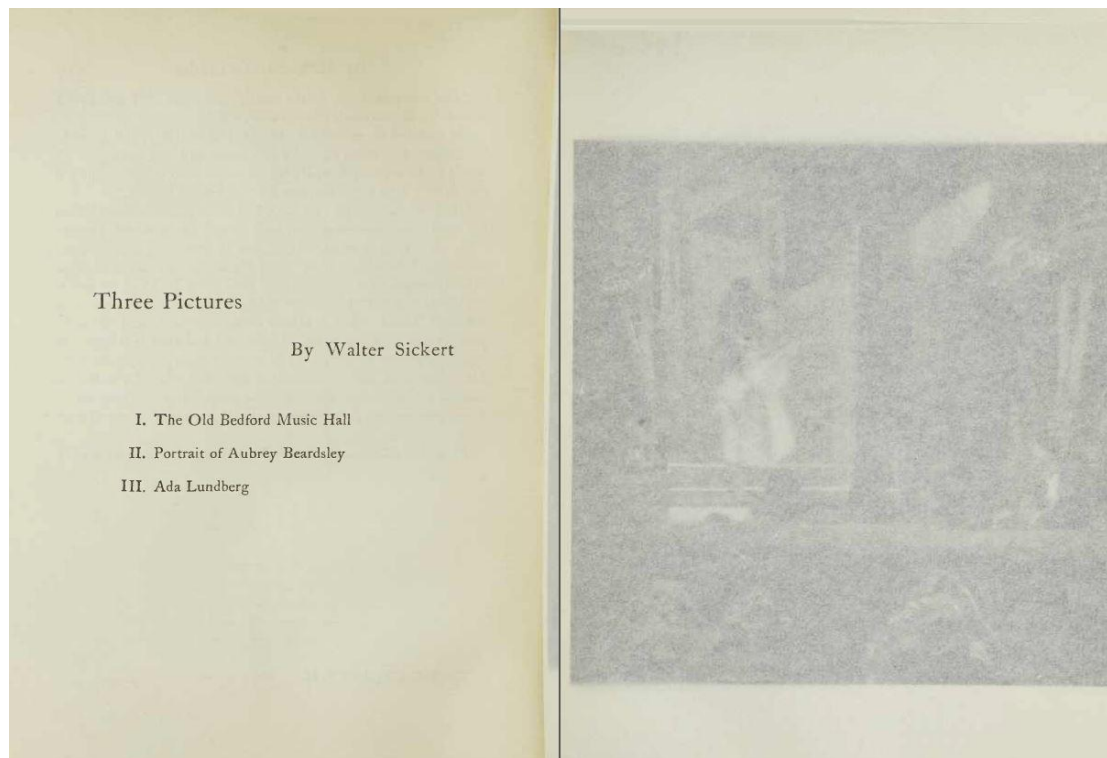


Fig.1.31 "Three Pictures," *Yellow Book*, July 1894, 220.

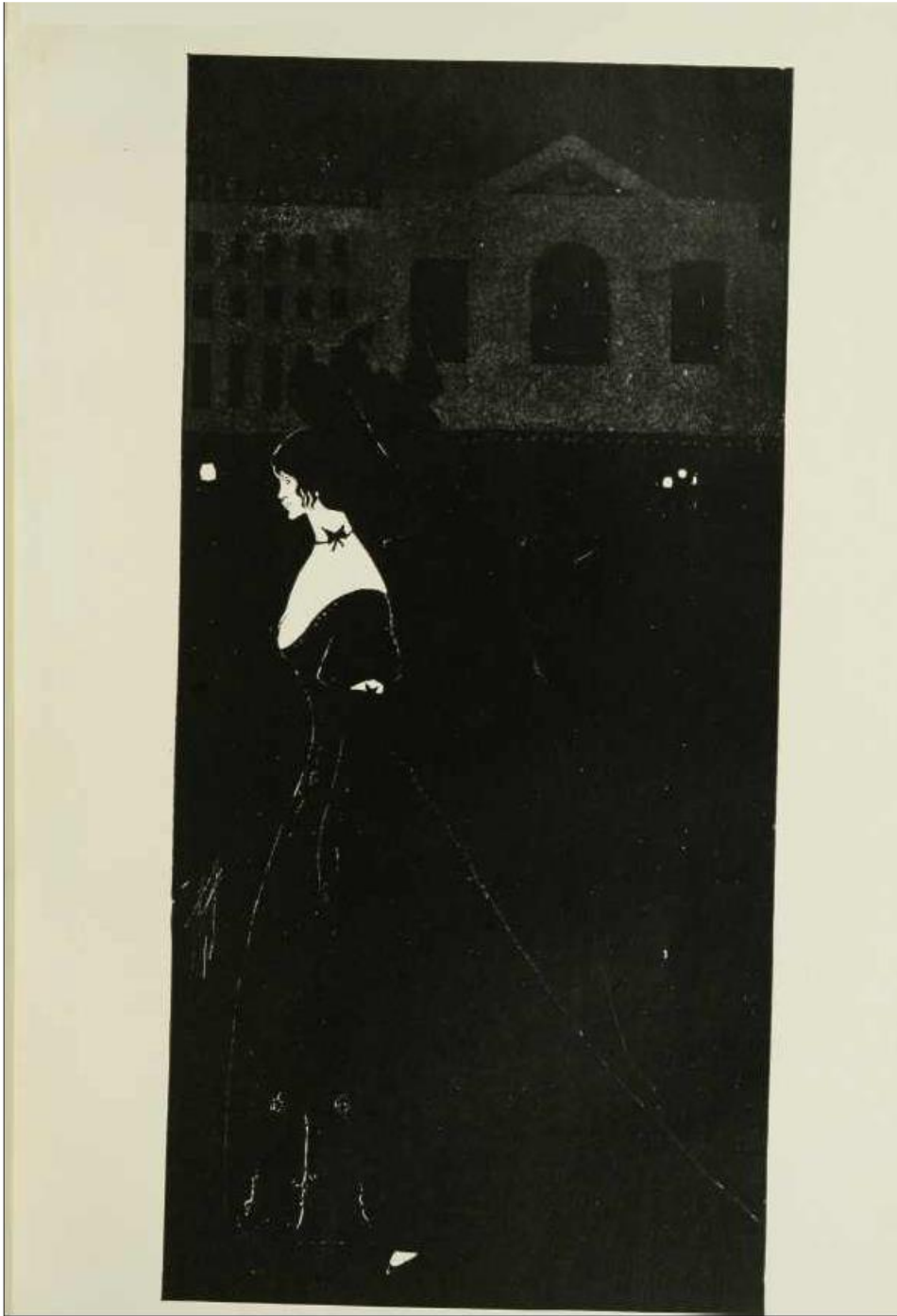
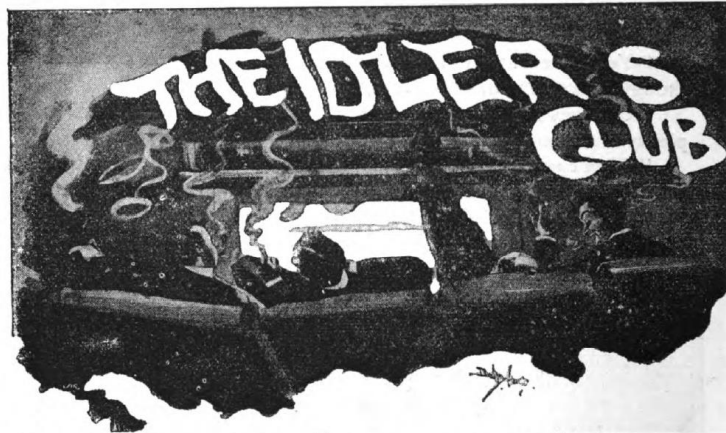


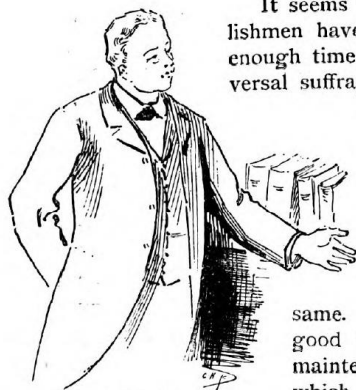
Fig. 1.32 Aubrey Beardsley, "Night Piece," *Yellow Book*, April 1894, 127.



*Is a Corrupt Government better  
than an Honest One?*

BY SPENCER JEROME, ISRAEL ZANGWILL, AND FRANK SMITH.  
ILLUSTRATIONS BY W. P. HOOPER, PENRYN STANLEY, AND  
LOUIS GUNNIS.

BY SPENCER JEROME.



A REPRESENTATIVE SENATOR.

It seems to me that you Englishmen have not yet for a long enough time tried practically universal suffrage to understand its necessary concomitants, as well as do Americans. This is shown, in one respect, by your insisting upon purity of elections and freedom from bribery of electors and of public officials, and the earnestness with which you pursue and punish violations of the same. No institution is necessarily good in itself, and to accomplish the maintenance of civilised society in which brains may secure its rewards, is the true end, the *summum bonum* of government. Now the Americans, from their long experience in

Spencer Jerome thinks Englishmen do not understand universal suffrage.

Fig. 1.33. "The Idler's Club," *Idler*, April 1895, 266.

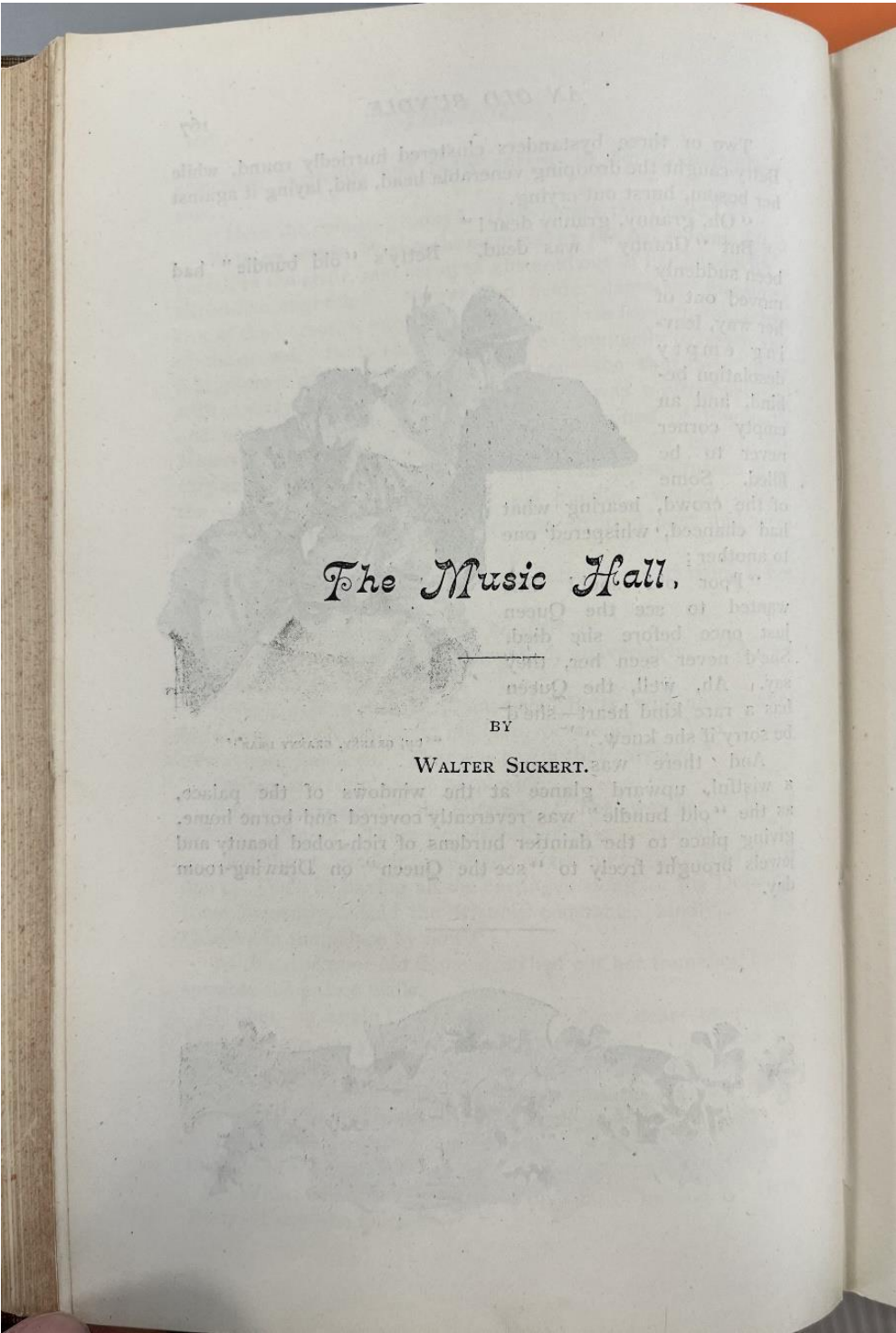


Fig.1.34 Title page of Sickert's music hall drawings, *Idler*, April 1895, 168.



“The boy I love is up in the Gallery.”

Fig. 1.35 Walter Sickert, “The boy I love is up in the gallery,” *Idler*, April 1895, 169.



“Kate O’Grady,  
You’re a lady.”

Fig. 1.36 Walter Sickert, “Kate o’grady, you’re a lady,” *Idler*, April 1895, 170.



TOPICAL AND EXTEMPORE.

Fig. 1.37 Walter Sickert, "Topical and extempore," *Idler*, April 1895, 171.



"A very nobby suit,  
A shiny hat and boot,  
That's man, that is the cause of all our woes!"

Fig. 1.38 Walter Sickert, "A very nobby suit, A shiny hat and boot, That's man, that is the cause of all our woes!" *Idler*, April 1895, 172.



MINNIE CUNNINGHAM.

Fig. 1.39 Walter Sickert, "Minnie Cunningham." *Idler*, April 1895, 173.

story in horny tones, like a tune played on a comb. Strange to say, she is described, or more probably describes herself, as

“BONNIE KATE KEANE!”



“The Belle of the Street.”

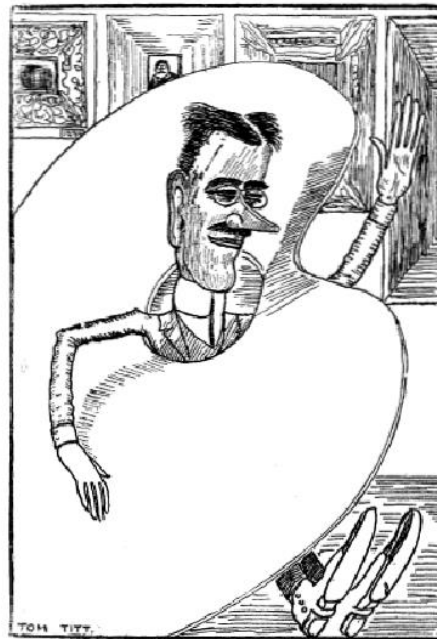
This seems the extreme of self-compliment! Her tones have a curious *squeal* almost, but are set off with extraordinary vigour and animation; and, incredible to say, she boasts that—

Fig. 1.40 Illustration in Percy Fitzgerald, *Music-Hall Land* (London: Ward and Downey, 1890), 31.



THE IDEAL CITIZEN. By G. K. Chesterton.

Fig. 1.41 G. K. Chesterton, "The Ideal Citizen." *New Age*, August 10, 1911, 340.



MR. ANTHONY M. LUDOVICI.

Published by the Proprietors, THE NEW AGE PRESS, LTD., 38, CURSITOR STREET, CHANCERY LANE, and Printed for them by BONNER & CO., THE CHANCERY LANE PRESS, 1, 2, and 3, ROLLS PASSAGE, E.C. Agents for South Africa: Central News Agency, Ltd.

Fig. 1.42 Tom Titt, "Mr. Anthony M. Ludovici," *New Age*, February 3, 1914, 448.



A PAIL OF SLOPS.

Fig 1.43 Walter Sickert, "A Pail of Slops." *New Age*, July 13, 1911, 252.

# RISKS RUN BY SERVANTS

## Domestic Servants' Compensation.

Now that domestic servants are included in the Workmen's Compensation Bill, householders, both rich and poor, have begun to ponder over the extent of their new liabilities, their fresh burdens. Through the many years that there has been a servant class complaints of ill-treatment, or of want of proper treatment of domestics in the case of illness or accident, have been few and far between. The employer has until now recognized a moral responsibility for the safety of the servants in his employ, and they, apparently, have been quite content to leave matters on that footing. All that has changed, the law talks of the "responsibility of the employer," the papers are full of the advertisements of insurance companies—who alone seem certain to benefit by the new order of things—and the householder, more especially the one of limited means, feels that his safety lies in taking all risks unto himself, while the domestic must not be allowed to be a heaver of wood or a drawer of water. The chopper might slip, the water might acid, and the consequences would be—compensation. Thus, no one is going to worry about the risks run by the householder himself, and the people responsible for the inclusion of domestic servants in the Bill would say that the householder has exactly the same attitude—the insurance company. What, too, will be the gains of the insurance companies? That they will do enormous business there can be no doubt, but it is a question whether it will pay them at the present low rates. Will the premiums be raised when the business has been captured? All this appears to be very true, and it would seem that the householder is making a great deal of fuss over a very trivial matter. But is he? Unconsciously, perhaps, domestic servants have hitherto been careful to avoid accident, but with the coming of this new order of things, and in the knowledge that they are fully protected by law, they may, just as unconsciously, lose that caution which has meant the safeguarding of both parties concerned, the servant and the householder. Already the latter is growing tired of what is commonly known as the "servant problem," and it will not be surprising if this new law leaves many more houses empty, while the hold in a flat, leaving all responsibility to be born by the owners of the flats. It may be argued that even in these flats servants must be employed, but this is true only to a limited extent. In a large building, if it be fitted with every modern convenience, the work is reduced to a perfect system, and the staff of servants is in consequence reduced to the smallest possible proportions. This would inevitably mean an increase of the unemployed directly traceable to the new order of things. All these matters, however, would be of little account, provided only that they were fully explained by the Bill. Unhappily, this is not the case, and as even lawyers are differing in their estimates of the liabilities incurred by the householder, it seems probable that the tangle will not be straightened out until a good deal of money has been expended in the Law Courts. Who will that benefit? Certainly not the mystified and alarmed householder, only possibly the servant.

The idea of protecting any class, should they need it, is to be applauded, but has not the protection of the householder, the man who pays, been forgotten?



## EVERY-DAY WORK AND RISKS.

The carrying of coals, chopping of wood, cleaning of knives, cleaning of windows, and the handling of boiling water, are all forms of domestic work that may lead to more or less serious accident. It is to protect domestic servants against contingencies of this nature that they have been included in the Workmen's Compensation Bill.

## The Druce Portland Claim.

Circumstances have conspired to re-visit interest in what is commonly called "The Druce Case." Readers of the *Penny Illustrated Paper* are aware, it is a claim brought by Mr. George H. Druce that he is the real descendant of the fifth Duke of Portland, and therefore entitled to succeed to the title as well as to the estate of the famous peer, who, during the last Government, was the King's Master of the Horse, and is a personal friend of His Majesty. Nothing could be more dramatically opposed than the career of the present holder of the title, with his vast estates and all that appertains to them, great wealth, the possession of magnificent works of art, a life lived in luxury and without care or anxiety through financial stress, and the man who claims that all these things should belong to him and has come all this way from Australia in order to test the validity of that claim, and to prove whether the estates, position, wealth, and the prestige which the Dukedom of Portland carries with it should not be transferred to him.

The main facts of the case have long been well known, but the exact incidence of the litigation now pending may be by no means clear in the minds of the public which, in the multiplicity of the events constantly thrust upon its notice, may, and probably had, forgotten the precise nature of the claim, the trial of which may attract as much notice and excite as much controversy as the historic Tichborne trial, in which, it will be remembered, the claimant also came from our great Australian colony.

The present claimant, whose portrait we reproduce, George Hamilton Druce, is the grandson of one Thomas Druce, who in 1816 married a Miss Elizabeth Critcher at Bury St. Edmunds. This is common ground between the parties, and is not so come forward for contention at all.

Mr. G. H. Druce alleges that the Thomas Druce, who is his grandfather, is the same person as Thomas Charles Druce, who, from 1838 to 1864, carried on the business in Portland Square known as the Baker Street Bazaar. On this ground he will, we understand, be challenged to bring formal proof. The important allegation of fact, however, which the claimant makes, and which he will be called on to prove conclusively, is that the Thomas Druce who married in 1816 was not a Druce at all, but was Lord John Bentinck (afterwards Marquis of Titchfield, and later on the fifth Duke of Portland).

The date of this marriage, which took place twenty years ago, manifestly precludes the production at this late hour of the direct evidence of eye witnesses to the marriage, and the claimant will have to rely on a number of independent facts and a set of circumstantial evidence pointing to his desired conclusion. One of his propositions is that Thomas Charles Druce, the bazaar proprietor, was a character assumed by the late fifth Duke of Portland, and that there never was any such person in reality. If that be established, then he will have gone so far to prove his case that it would be a matter of little difficulty to get the other step of establishing the identity of his grandfather with the bazaar proprietor.

The principal question of fact, however, is one that is going to rest a bit to prove, and will involve the presentation of a host of witnesses to spell out the separately-lived, existences of Duke and tradesman. To cope with this a company has been

Fig. 1.44 "Risks Run by Servants." *Penny Illustrated Paper*, February 23, 1907, 116.



Fig. 1.45 A maid carrying a bucket of coal, *Penny Illustrated Paper*, February 23, 1907, 116.



Fig. 1.46 Walter Sickert, "And I Drive the Bus that Mary Rides on." *New Age*, July 20, 1911, 276.

### SOME DRAWINGS BY W. WROBLEWSKI.

[NOTE.—These drawings are selected, rather at haphazard, from one of the artist's latest note-books, and some of them have been slightly reduced for the purpose of publication. The originals were drawn directly with the pen, without any pencil outline. The artist's object has not been to portray any particular scene, real or imaginary, but rather, starting from fundamentals, to decide by experiment what lines and forms are necessary to the expression of the various facts in nature and the various feelings and ideas in the mind.]

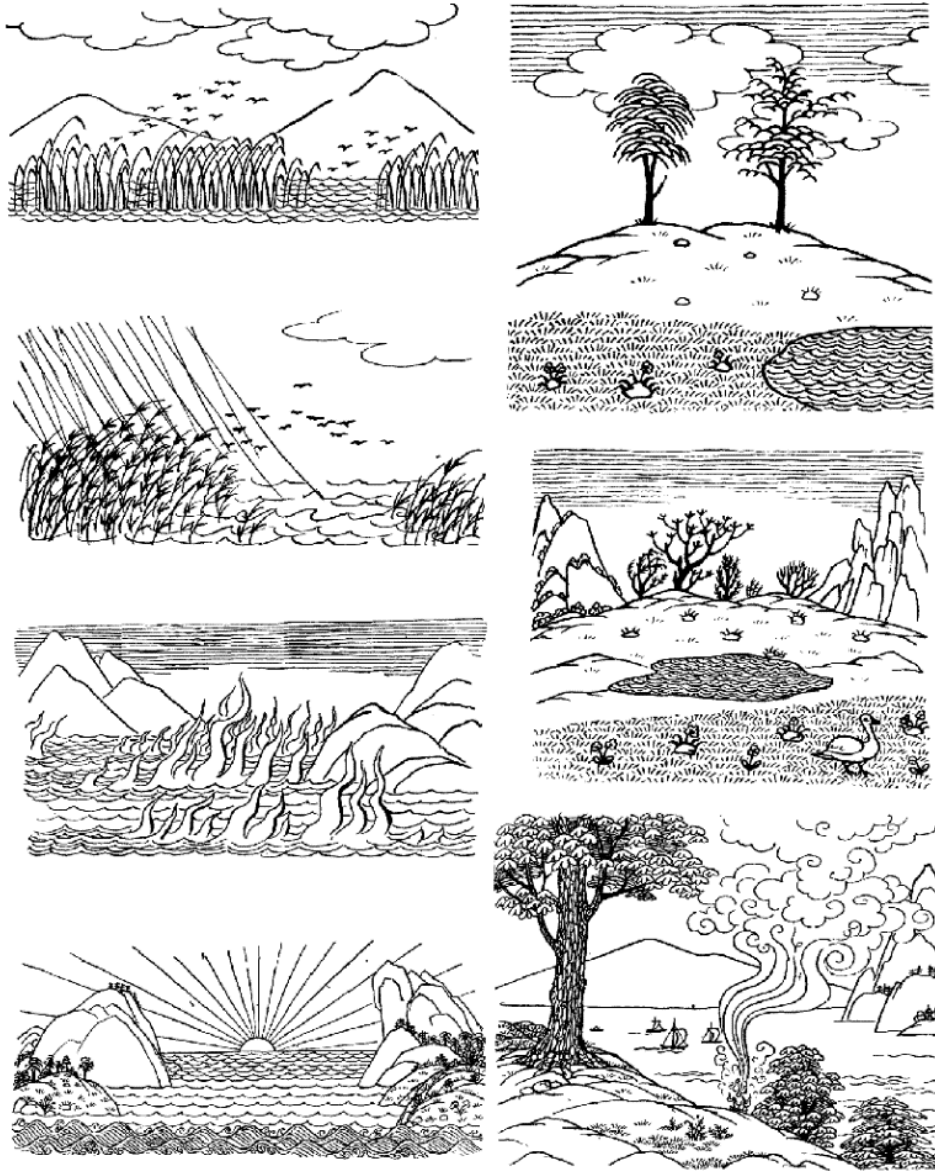


Fig. 1.47 "Some Drawing by W. Wroblewski," Supplement to *New Age*, September 7, 1911.



TIVOLI: "TEMPLE OF THE SIBYL" - FROM THE PAVING

TEMPLE OF THE SIBYL. BY FRED RICHARDS.

MODERN DRAWINGS—E  
EDITED BY WALTER DICKERT

Fig. 1.48 Fred Richards, "Temple of the Sibyl," *New Age*, February 19, 1914, 497.

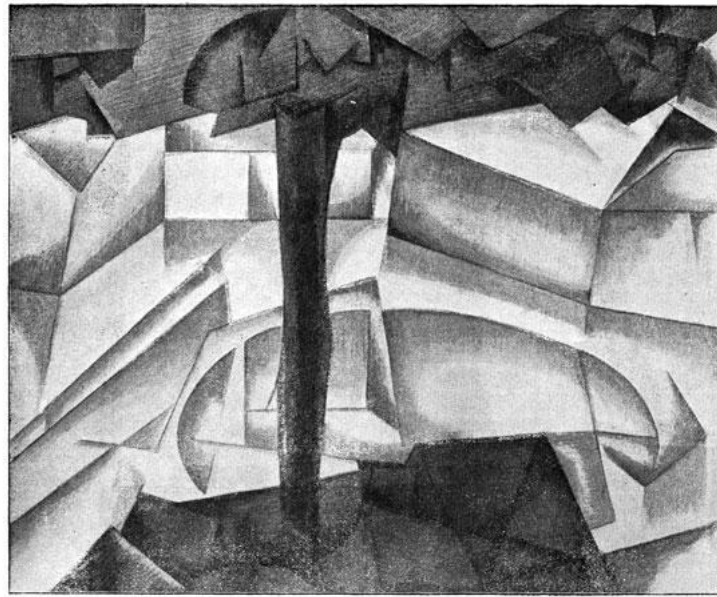


THE COMB.

Fig. 1.49 Walter Sickert, "The Comb." *New Age*, January 18, 1912, 276.



Fig. 1.50 Walter Sickert, "Where Can it Be?" *New Age*, April 4, 1912, 540.



CONTEMPORARY DRAWINGS—NO. 5.  
EDITED BY T. S. HULME.

THE FARMYARD. By EDWARD WADSWORTH.

APRIL 30, 1914

THE NEW AGE

815

Fig. 1.51 Edward Wadsworth, "The Farmyard," *New Age*, April 30, 1914, 815.



Fig. 2.1 Walter Sickert, *That Old Fashioned Mother of Mine*, c.1928, etching and engraving, 20.9 x 14.4 cm, Victoria & Albert Museum, London.



Fig.2.2 Canaletto, *Imaginary View of Venice*, houses at left with figures on terraces, a domed church at center in the background, boats and boat-sheds below, and a seated man observing from a wall at right in the foreground, from 'Views' (Vedute altre prese da i luoghi altre ideate da Antonio Canal), 1741, Etching; undivided plate, only state, Sheet (Trimmed), 30 × 43.7 cm, The Met.



Fig. 2.3 Walter Sickert, *Venice, the Rialto and the Palazzo dei Carmerlengi*, c1902, etching and engraving, 16.6 x 26.7 cm, private collection.



Fig. 2.4 Walter Sickert, *Don Juan and Haidee (Idyll)*, 1934, oil on canvas, 33 x 49.5cm, The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent.



CXIII.

Alas! for Juan and Haidée! they were  
 So loving and so lovely—till then never,  
 Excepting our first parents, such a pair  
 Had run the risk of being damned for ever:  
 And Haidée, being devout as well as fair,  
 Had, doubtless, heard about the Stygian river,  
 And hell and purgatory—but forgot  
 Just in the very crisis she should not.

CXIV.

They look upon each other, and their eyes  
 Gleam in the moonlight; and her white arm clasps  
 Round Juan's head, and his around her lies  
 Half buried in the tresses which it grasps;  
 She sits upon his knee, and drinks his sighs,  
 He hers, until they end in broken gasps;  
 And thus they form a group that's quite antique,  
 Half naked, loving, natural, and Greek.

Fig. 2.5 Kenny Meadows, illustration for George Noël Gordon Byron, *Illustrated Byron with Upwards of Two Hundred Engravings from Original Drawings*, (London: Henry Vizetelly, 1855), 187.



Fig.2.6 Walter Sickert, *Miss Earhart's Arrival*, 1932, Oil paint on canvas, 71.7 x 183.2 cm, Tate, London



Fig. 2.7 Utagawa Hiroshige, *Hōki Province: Ōno, Distant View of Mount Daisen*, 1853, Color woodblock print, York Art Gallery.



Fig.2.8 Walter Sickert, *Gatti's Hungerford Palace of Varieties. Second Turn of Katie Lawrence*, c1888, oil on canvas, 38.7 x 47 cm, Yale University Art Gallery.



Fig. 2.9 James McNeill Whistler, *The Dance House: Nocturne*, 1889, first state, etching and drypoint, 26.7 x 16.6 cm, Hunterian Art Gallery, Glasgow.



Fig. 2.10 Walter Sickert, *The Ghetto*, c1897-8, oil on canvas, 14 x 22.9 cm, Private Collection.



Fig. 2.11 Eadweard Muybridge, “Various acts of motion,” from *The Human Figure in Motion* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1907), 241.



Fig. 2.12 Walter Sickert, *L'Hotel Royal, Dieppe*, 1894, oil on canvas, 66.8 x 78.8 cm, Museums Sheffield.



Fig. 2.13 Antonio Mancini, *Portrait of John Lowell Gardner II*, 1895, Oil on canvas, 104 x 74 cm, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston.



Fig. 2.14 Albert Moore, Nude Figure Study for *Birds of the Air*, c. 1878, Charcoal on grey paper, 88.2 x 38.9 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, D.226-1905.



Fig. 2.15 Albert Moore, *A Summer Night*, 1885-90, Oil on canvas, 132 cm x 228.5 cm, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool.

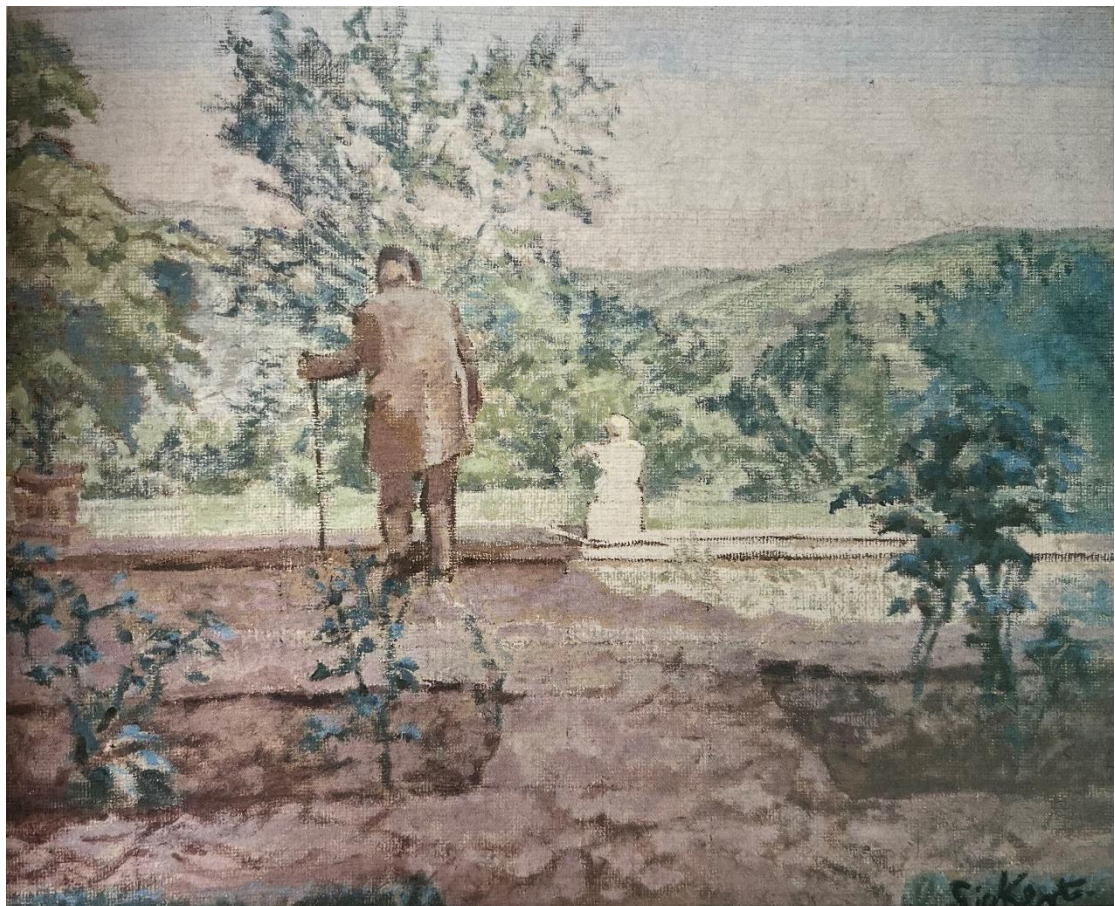


Fig. 2.16 Walter Sickert, *The Invalid*, c1939-40, oil on canvas, 63.5 x 76.2cm, private collection.



Fig. 2.17 Ugo da Carpi, *David Slaying Goliath* [After Raphael], c1518, Chiaroscuro woodcut printed from three blocks in tan, light brown, and black, 26.51 x 39.21 cm (sheet), Minneapolis Institute of Art, USA.



Fig. 2.18 Walter Sickert, *Emigrants at Melbourne*, 1932, 71 x 67cm, Private collection, Scotland.



Fig. 2.19 Walter Sickert, *Portrait of A Lady-Mrs David Margesson*, 1931-2, oil on canvas, 181.6 x 120.8 cm, private collection.



Fig. 2.20 Walter Sickert, *The Gardener's Daughter*, 1932-3, oil on canvas, 78.7 x 63.5, Christie's.

# THE LEISURE HOUR

A FAMILY JOURNAL OF INSTRUCTION AND RECREATION.

No. 239.]

THURSDAY, JULY 24, 1856.

[Price 1d.]



SIEGBERT CLIMBING THE FENCE TO ASSIST THE INVALID GIRL.

## THE WEAVER OF NAUMBURG ;

OR, THE TRIUMPHS OF MEEKNESS.

CHAPTER IV.

THERE was never a rose without a thorn, as Siegbert found, when, by his mother's directions,  
No. 239. 1856.

he set to work to root up the rank and tangled weeds which overran the long-neglected garden, whilst his elder brothers and sisters were at school, and the little ones with their mother in the house. The poor boy's back ached with the constant stooping; his fingers smarted with tug-

H H

Fig. 2.21 John Gilbert, "Siegbert Climbing the Fence to Assist the Invalid Girl," *The Leisure Hour*, 24 July, 1856, 456.



Fig. 2.22 Frank Miles, *The Gardener's Daughter*, late 19<sup>th</sup> century (published), postcard published by W. A. Mansell & Co., 16.5 x 10.6 cm, V&A.



Fig. 2.23 Frank Miles, *I've been Roaming; The Gardener's Daughter*, 1872, pencil, watercolour and gouache, 26 x 21 cm, Private Collection.



Fig. 2.24 Edward Henry Wehnert, *Gardener's Daughter*, 1860, watercolour, 37.5 x 32.3 cm, provenance unknown.



Fig. 2.25 *Battersea Park*, early twentieth century postcard, 13.3 x 8.5 cm, possessed by the author.



Fig. 2.26 Walter Sickert, *The Rectory*, c1939, oil on canvas, 61.5 x 74.5cm, private collection.



Fig. 2.27 Walter Sickert, *The Brighton Pierrots*, 1915, Oil paint on canvas, 63.6 × 76.8cm, Tate.



Fig. 2.28 Walter Sickert, *The Wheatsheaf*, c1928-9, oil on canvas, 70 x 120cm, Private collection.

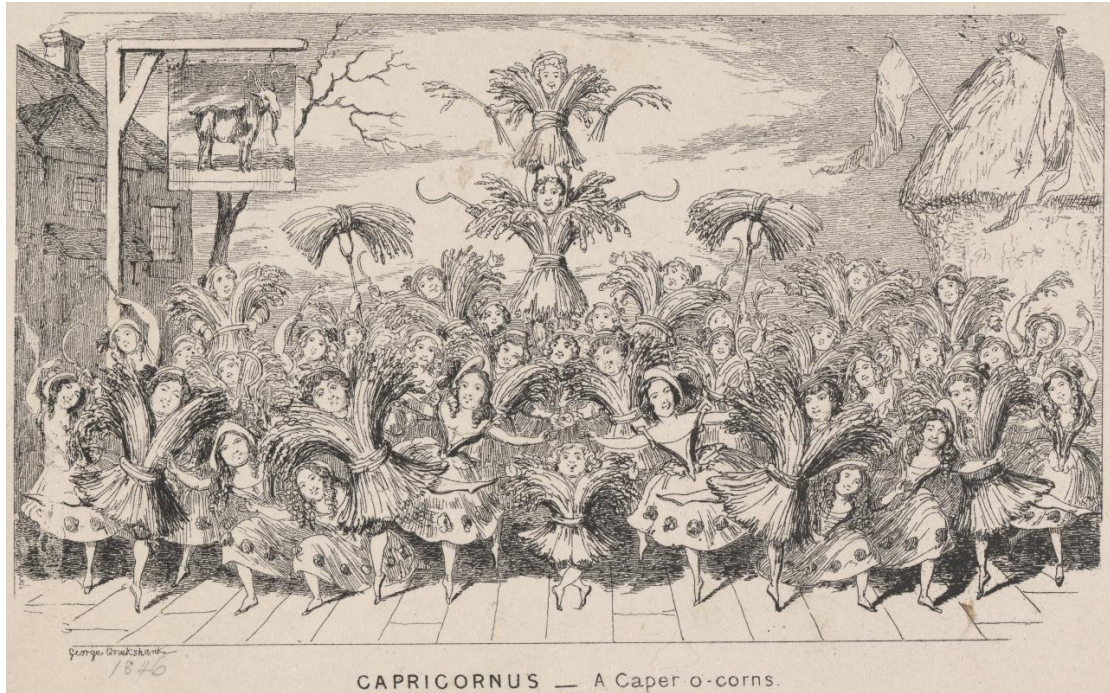


Fig. 2.29 George Cruikshank, “CAPRICORNUS\_\_A Caper-o'-corns”, *The Comic Almanack for 1846*, published by David Bogue, December 1846, Etching, 10 x 16.7 cm (sheet, trimmed inside plate), Yale Center for British Art.

## CORN CAPERS.

## THE PAS DES MOISSONNEURS.

We sing the *Vienneses* so famed,  
And those who at their laurels aimed,  
And were the *danseuses Anglaises* named.

Who made the other opera elves  
Begin to look about themselves,  
Dreading to be put on their shelves.

Who raised a doubt, in costume wild,  
When in the final *tableau* piled,  
Which was the sheaf, and which the child.

They heard the loud approving cheers,  
From stalls, and pit, and all the tiers;  
For little wheatsheaves have long ears.

And knew, whilst they pursued that track,  
Nor showed of energy a lack,  
Their wheat would never get the sack.

No league about them did declaim;  
The only league, linked with their name,  
Was that which oft their audience came.

We hope to see them back again,  
Fresh flowers and *bonbons* to obtain,  
Those charming little rogues in grain.

And all the world will be there too,  
The stage with fresh bouquets to strew,  
And their "corn-rigs so bonnie" view.

## THINGS TO BE BORNE IN MIND IN DECEMBER.

That you should this month keep "in the house," by which, unlike the Andover paupers, you will escape *dripping*.

That managers rely upon boxing night for making a hit; and that orders are always to be procured for the dress-circle in any quantity on that evening; "Christmas boxes" being seldom given, and as seldom taken in the theatres.

That Christmas comes but once a year, which, looking to the bills that generally accompany it, must be a great comfort to fathers of families.

That the Christmas log is now disused, but the wood of it is found in large quantities in the wine used in negus at Christmas parties.

Hares will now stand on end with terror at the approach of the shooter, and may be knocked on the head without expense of ammunition.

That if you go out to a party, and, to save cab-hire, walk in shiny boots, you will probably bring your "light catarrh" with you, as you will find out if asked to sing.

Fig. 2.30 "Corn Capers." *The Comic Almanack* (London: John Camden Hotten, 1846),



Fig. 2.31 Walter Sickert, study for *Entente Anglo-Russe* (c.1928-9), paper, Sickert Family Archive, Islington, London.



Fig. 2.32 Frank Brangwyn, *British Empire Panel (12) India*, c.1930, oil on canvas, 609 x 396 cm, Brangwyn Hall/Glynn Vivian Art Gallery, Swansea.



Fig. 2.33 Thomas Saunders Nash (1891–1968), *The Apple Pickers*, 1927, oil on paper, mounted on cardboard, 77 x 56 cm, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.



Fig. 2.34 Walter Sickert, *The Rt Hon Winston Churchill*, c1927, 45.5 x 30.5cm, National Portrait Gallery, London.



Fig.2.35 George Albert Smith, *A Visit to The Seaside*, 1908. Reproduced from “A Visit to the Seaside,” Themoviedb (website), accessed December 14, 2023, <https://www.themoviedb.org/movie/398534-a-visit-to-the-seaside>



Fig. 2.36 Walter Sickert, *The Wave*, c1931-2, oil on canvas, 73 x 73cm, The Potteries Museum and Art Gallery.

# THE LEISURE HOUR

A FAMILY JOURNAL OF INSTRUCTION AND RECREATION.

No. 380.]

THURSDAY, APRIL 7, 1859.

[PRICE 1d.]



THE FAMISHING WEED AND SHELL GATHERERS SURPRISED BY A HEAVY WAVE.

## GOLDEN HILLS; OR, SINGLE INFLUENCE:

A TALE OF RIBANDISM AND THE IRISH FAMINE.

CHAPTER XXVII.—ALEK THE UNSTABLE.

SLOWLY under that bright moonlight spread the mysterious plague. On the low-lying lands might be perceived a dark mist creeping along, clinging to the earth in shadowed places. Gradually grew the death-spots on the abundant foliage, burning

No. 380. 1859.

deeper as they increased, withering away the vitality of the plant.

While the people quietly slept through all the cabins dotting the country, the scourge was abroad. Morning light dawned, and the vapour of the pestilence fled before it; but the green fields were as if a burning blast had passed over them. Black patches lay where the day previously had been verdure, and the keen odour of decay escaped from

Fig. 2.37 John Gilbert, "The Famishing Weed and Shell Gatherers Surprised by a Heavy Wave," *The Leisure Hour*, April 7, 1859, 209.

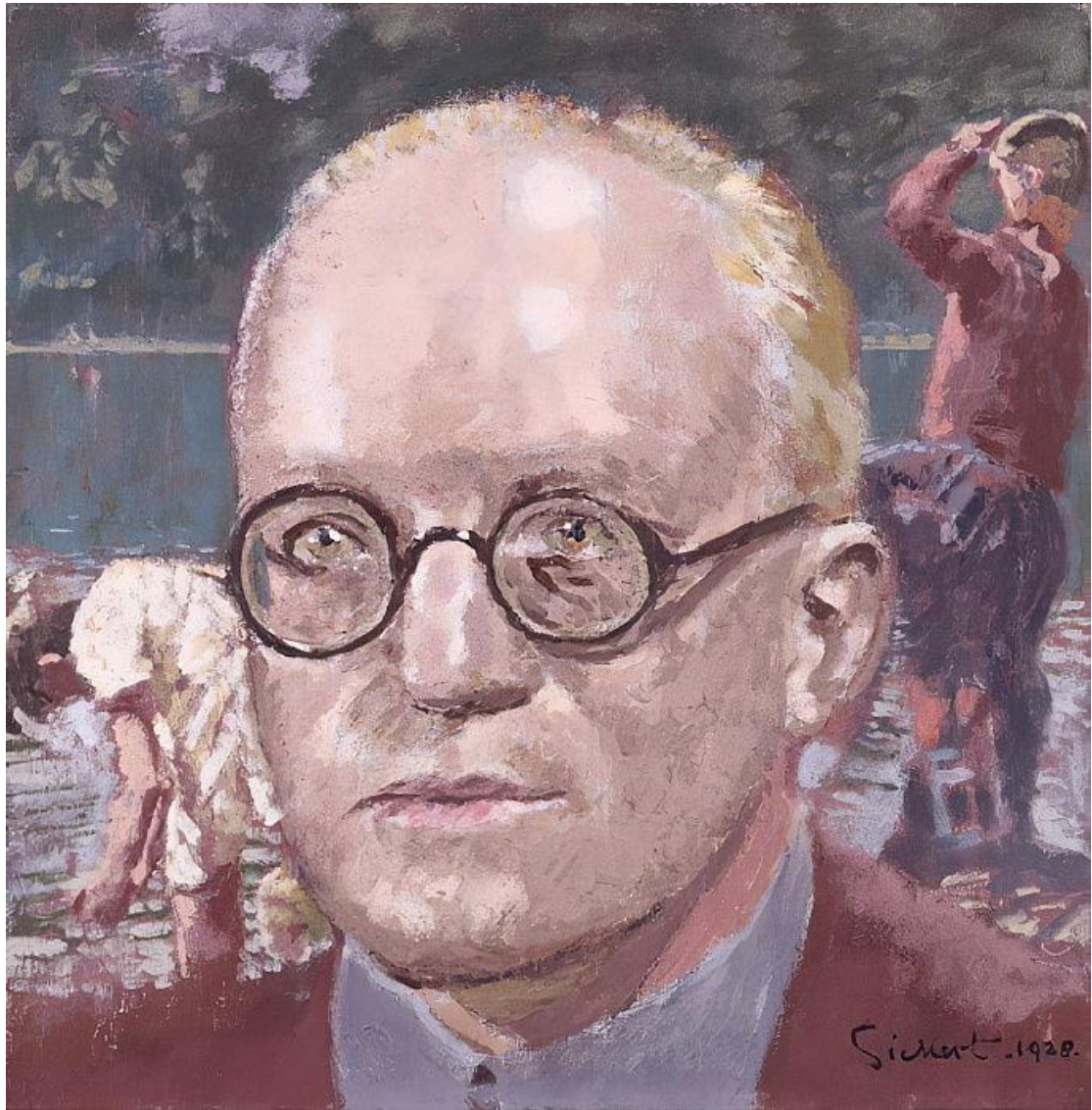


Fig. 2.38 Walter Sickert, *Portrait of Sir Hugh Walpole*, 1928, oil on canvas, 42.9 x 41.9 cm, The Fitzwilliam Museum, UK.



"LOU! LOU! I LOVE YOU."

Fig. 2.39 Walter Sickert, "Lou! Lou! I Love You." *The New Age*, July 6, 1911, 228.



Fig. 2.40 Therese Lessore, *Victoria Park – 'Let's go Home Sis!'*, 1929, oil on canvas, 91.4 x 70.9 cm, Manchester Art Gallery.

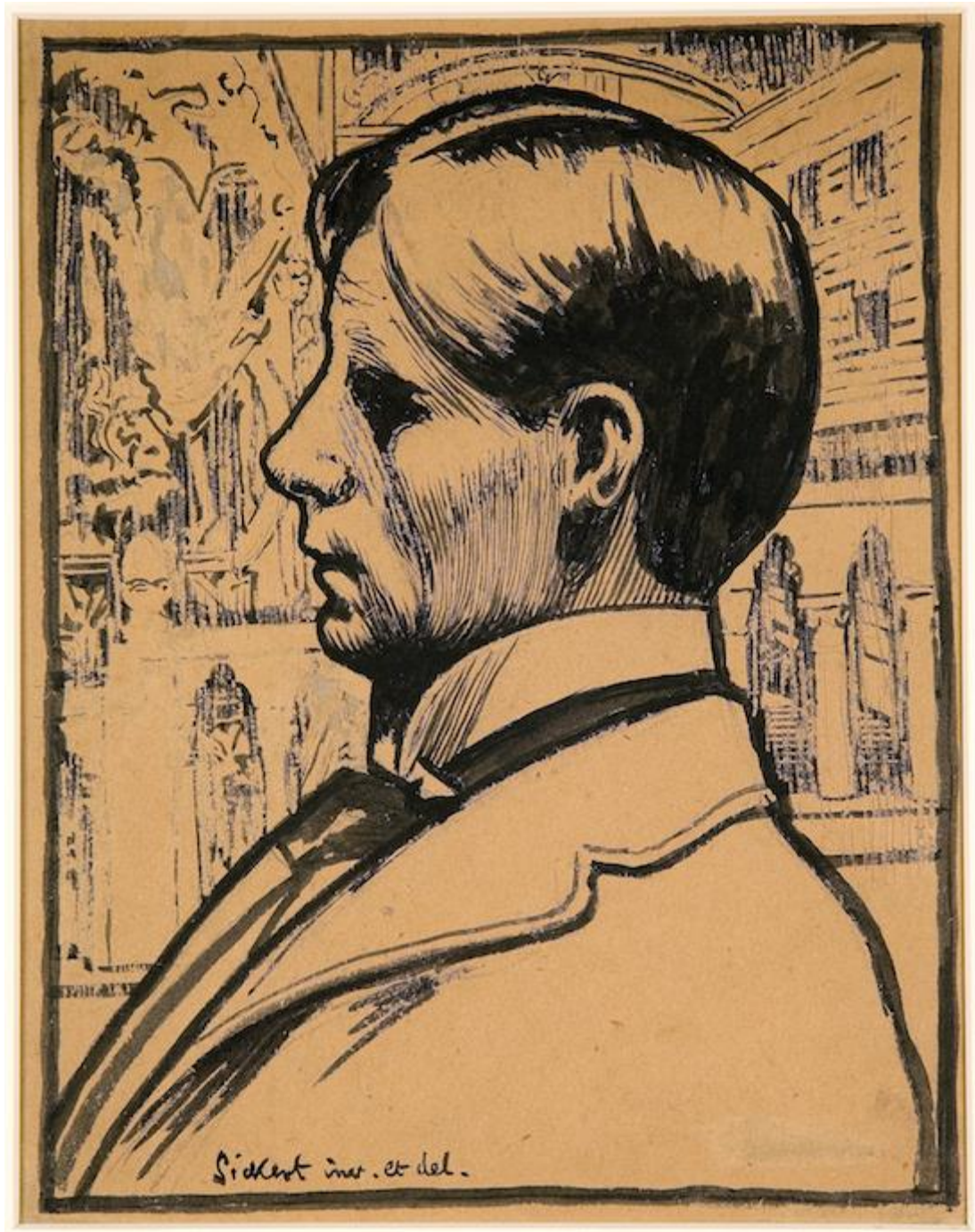


Fig. 2.41 Walter Sickert, *Self-Portrait*, 1897, ink, watercolour, and wash on paper.  
23.9 x 18.4 cm, Mark Samuels Lasner Collection.



PORTRAIT DU GRAVEUR FÉLIX VALLOTTON

Par lui-même.

Fig. 2.42 Félix Vallotton. *Portrait du Graveur Félix Vallotton*, Woodcut, 1891, illustration for Octave Uzanne, ed., *L'Art et L'Idée* (Paris :Maison Quantin), 112.



Fig. 2.43 Francis de Jongh, *Félix Vallotton*, date unknown, photograph, size unknown, reproduced from Wordpress (website), accessed October 3, 2022, <https://jjmlsm.wordpress.com/2018/12/29/felix-vallotton-vida-y-obra>.

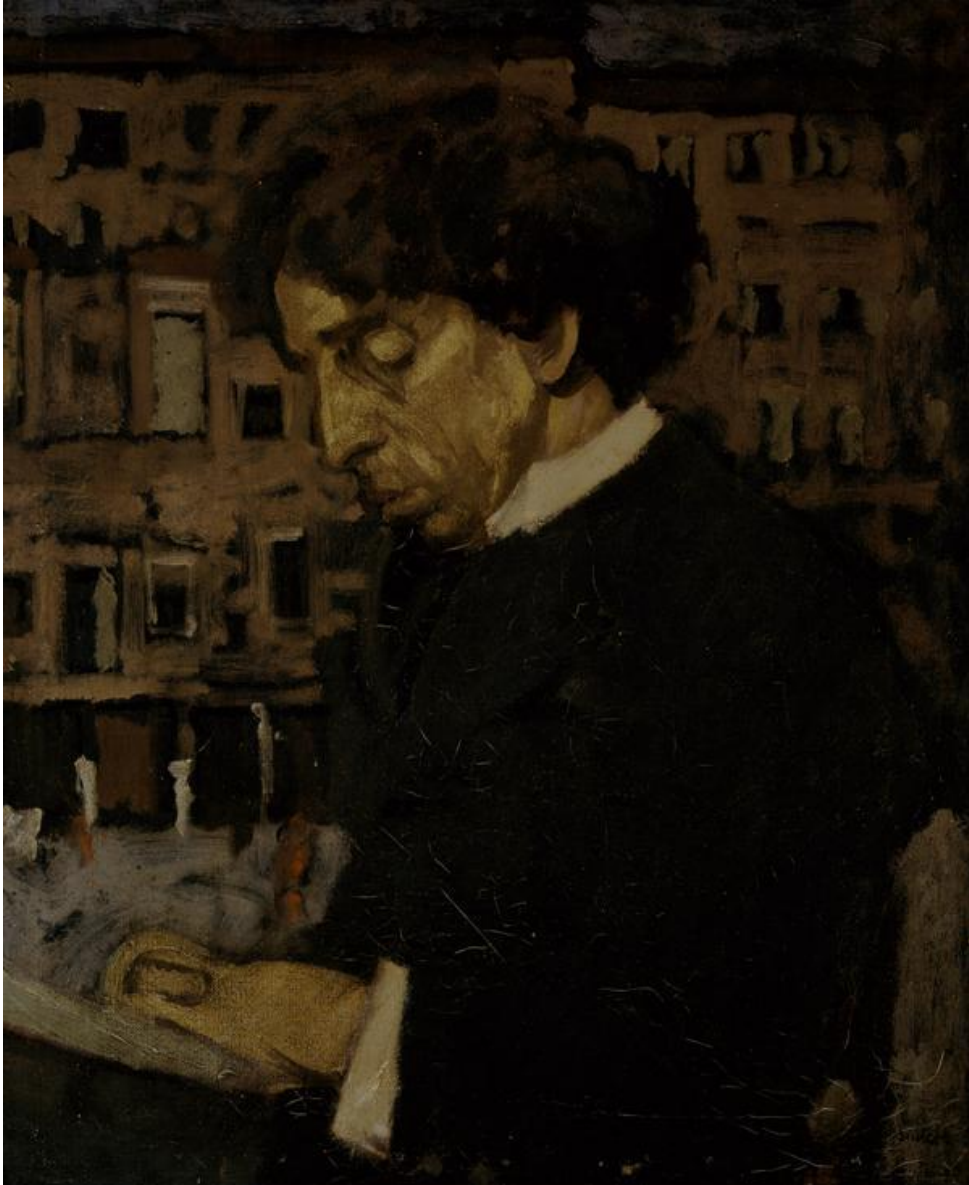


Fig. 2.44 Walter Sickert, *Portrait of Israel Zangwill*, 1897, oil on canvas, 61.0 x 50.8 cm, National Gallery Scotland.

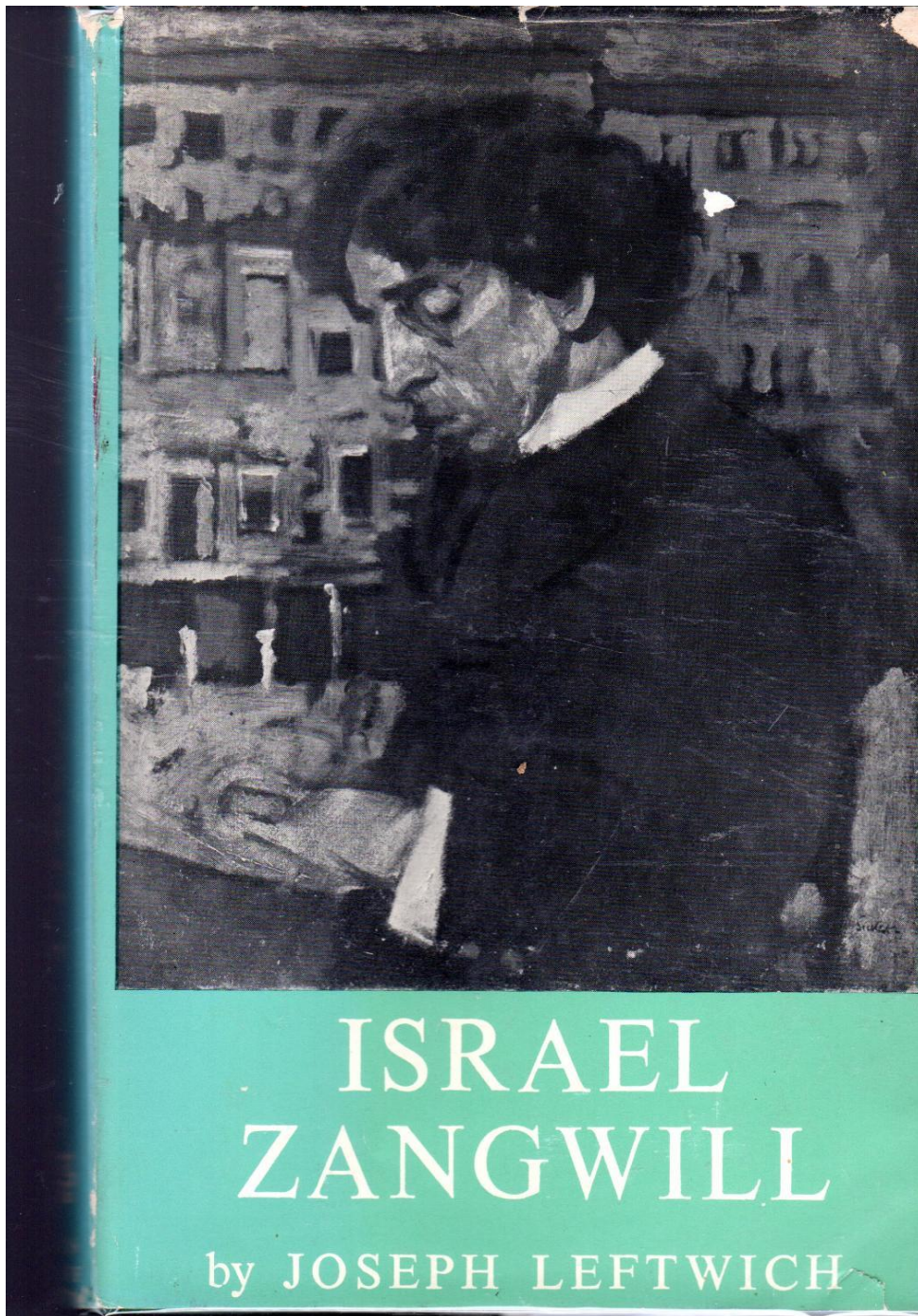


Fig. 2.45 Cover of Joseph Leftwich, *Israel Zangwill* (New York: T. Yoseloff, 1957).



Fig. 2.46 Walter Sickert, *La Favorita* [After Kenny Meadows], c1932, oil on canvas, 49 x 44.9cm, Private Collection.



CANTO THE FOURTEENTH.

If from great nature's or our own abyss  
Of thought we could but snatch a certainty,  
Perhaps mankind might find the path they miss—  
But then 't would spoil much good philosophy.

I.

One system eats another up, and this  
Much as old Saturn ate his progeny;  
For when his pious consort gave him stones  
In lieu of sons, of these he made no bones.

Fig. 2.47 Kenny Meadows, untitled illustration for George Noël Gordon Byron, *The Illustrated Byron: With Upwards of Two Hundred Engravings* (London: Henry Vizetelly, 1855), 236.

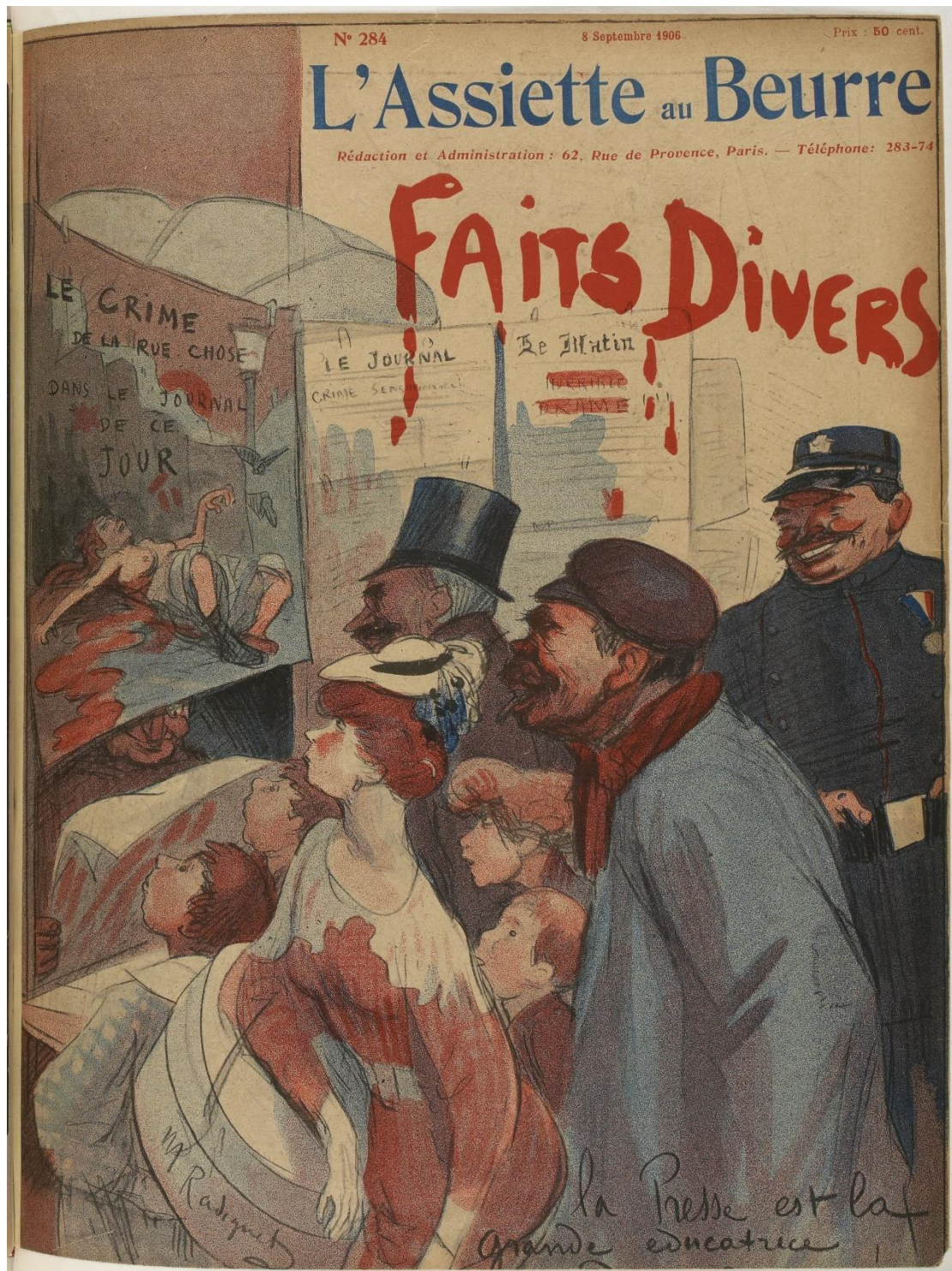


Fig. 3.1 Max Radiguet, "Faits Divers," cover for *L'assiette au beurre*, September 8, 1906, 1209. Gallica.



Fig. 3.2 Walter Sickert, *The Prussians in Belgium*, c1912, oil on canvas, 50.5 x 40.5 cm, private collection.

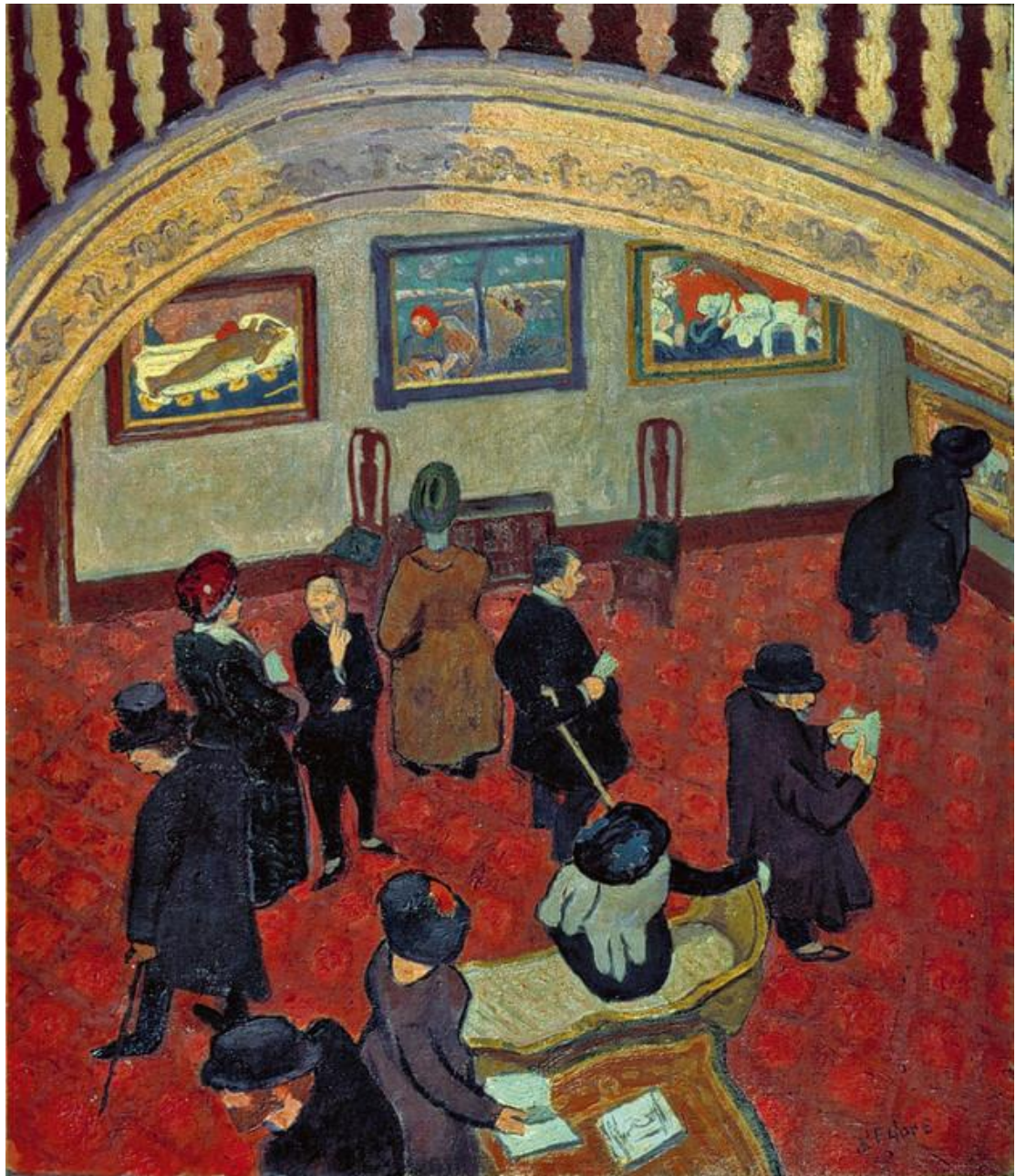


Fig. 3.3 Spencer Gore, *Gauguins and Connoisseurs*, 1911, oil on canvas, 83.8 x 71.7 cm, Private collection.



Fig. 3.4 Walter Sickert, *Summer Afternoon or What Shall We Do for the Rent?* c.1907–9, oil on canvas, 48.2 x 38.1cm, Kirkcaldy Museum & Art Gallery.



Fig. 3.5 Walter Sickert, *The Camden Town Murder or What Shall We Do about the Rent?* c.1908, oil on canvas, 25.6 x 35.3cm, Yale Centre for British Art, Paul Mellon Fund.

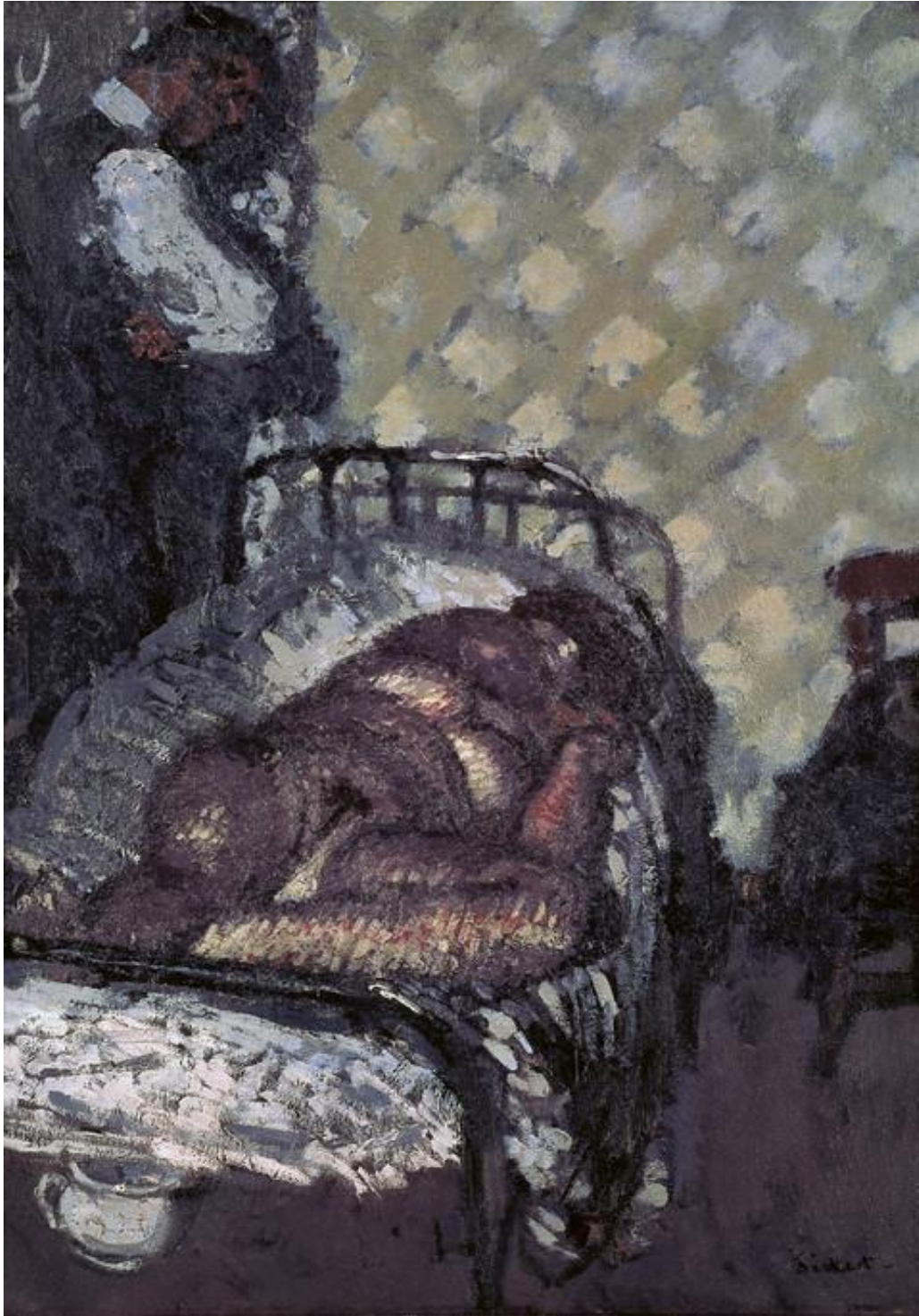


Fig. 3.6 Walter Sickert, *L'Affaire de Camden Town*, 1909, oil on canvas, 61 x 40.6cm, private collection.

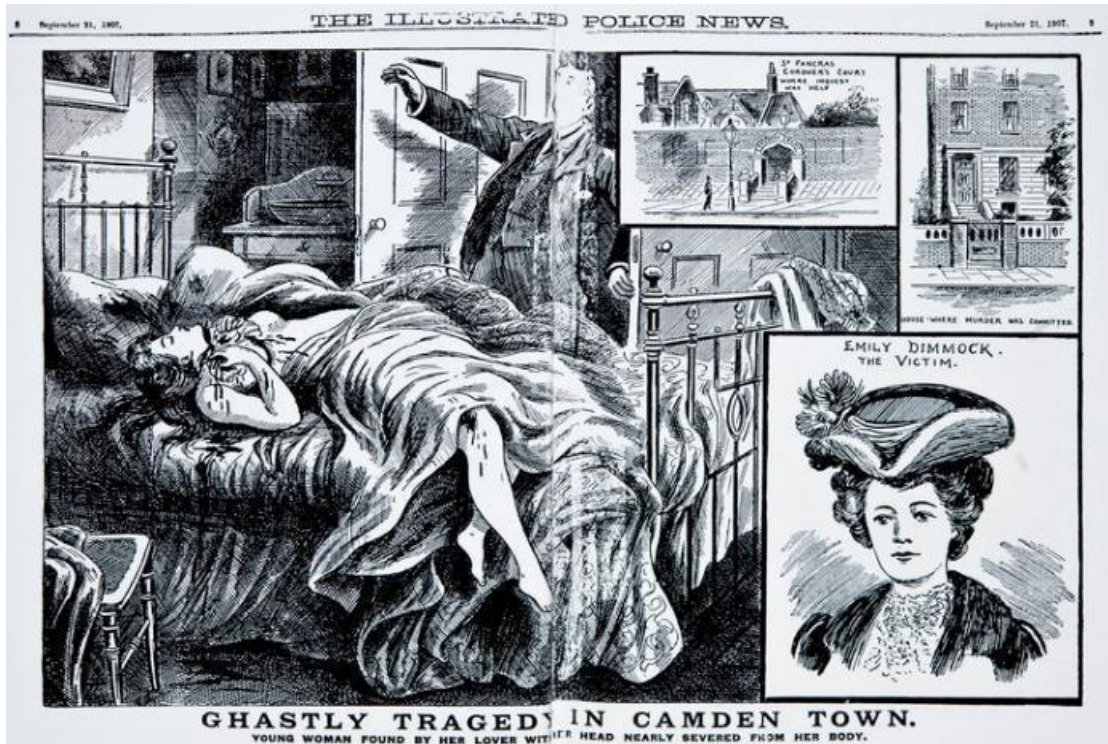


Fig. 3.7 “Ghastly Tragedy in Camden Town,” 21 September, 1907, *Illustrated Police News*, British Newspaper Library, Colindale, London.



Fig. 3.8 “Discovery of the Camden Town Horror!,” 21 September 1907, *Illustrated Police Budget*, British Newspaper Library, Colindale, London.



Fig. 3.9 Lucy Hartmann, *Albine*, pastel, size unknown, reproduced in *Catalogue Illustré du Salon de 1899* (Paris : Société nationale des beaux-arts, 1899), 50.



Fig. 3.10 "Pears Soap", *The Graphic*, June 21, 1890, 711, image reproduced from Ebay (website), accessed 1 March, 2023, [https://www.ebay.co.uk/itm/255055879374?var=0&mkevt=1&mkcid=1&mkrid=710-53481-19255-0&campid=5338268676&toolid=10044&customid=CjwKCAiAs8acBhA1EiwAgRFdw40gPuRyZD1fovYIUih6Psi93xuDcONnFxMn6aWhwJrQzR2IO12ShoCen0QAvD\\_BwE](https://www.ebay.co.uk/itm/255055879374?var=0&mkevt=1&mkcid=1&mkrid=710-53481-19255-0&campid=5338268676&toolid=10044&customid=CjwKCAiAs8acBhA1EiwAgRFdw40gPuRyZD1fovYIUih6Psi93xuDcONnFxMn6aWhwJrQzR2IO12ShoCen0QAvD_BwE)

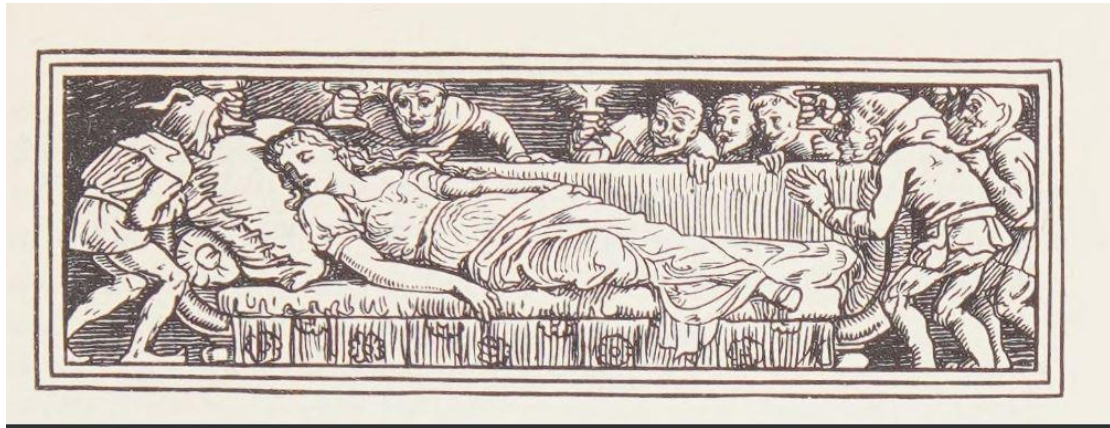


Fig. 3.11 Walter Crane, 'Snow White', illustration for *Households Stories by Brothers Grimm* (New York: Dover Publications 1963), 213. [an unabridged republication of the work first published by MacMillian and Company in 1886]

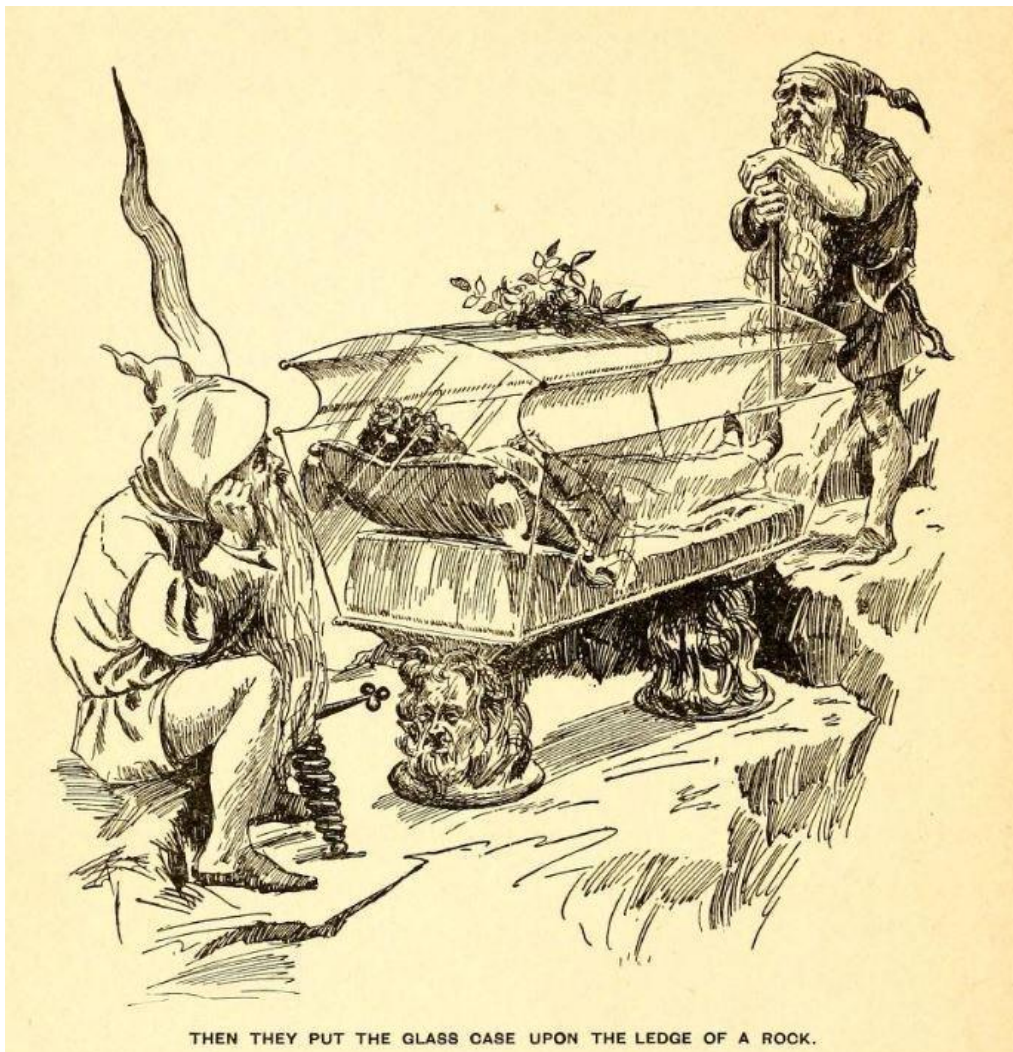


Fig. 3.12 Richard Andre, "Snow White in Coffin," illustration in *Grimm's Fairy Tales, Retold in One-Syllable Words* (New York: Mc Loughlin Brothers, 1899), 74.

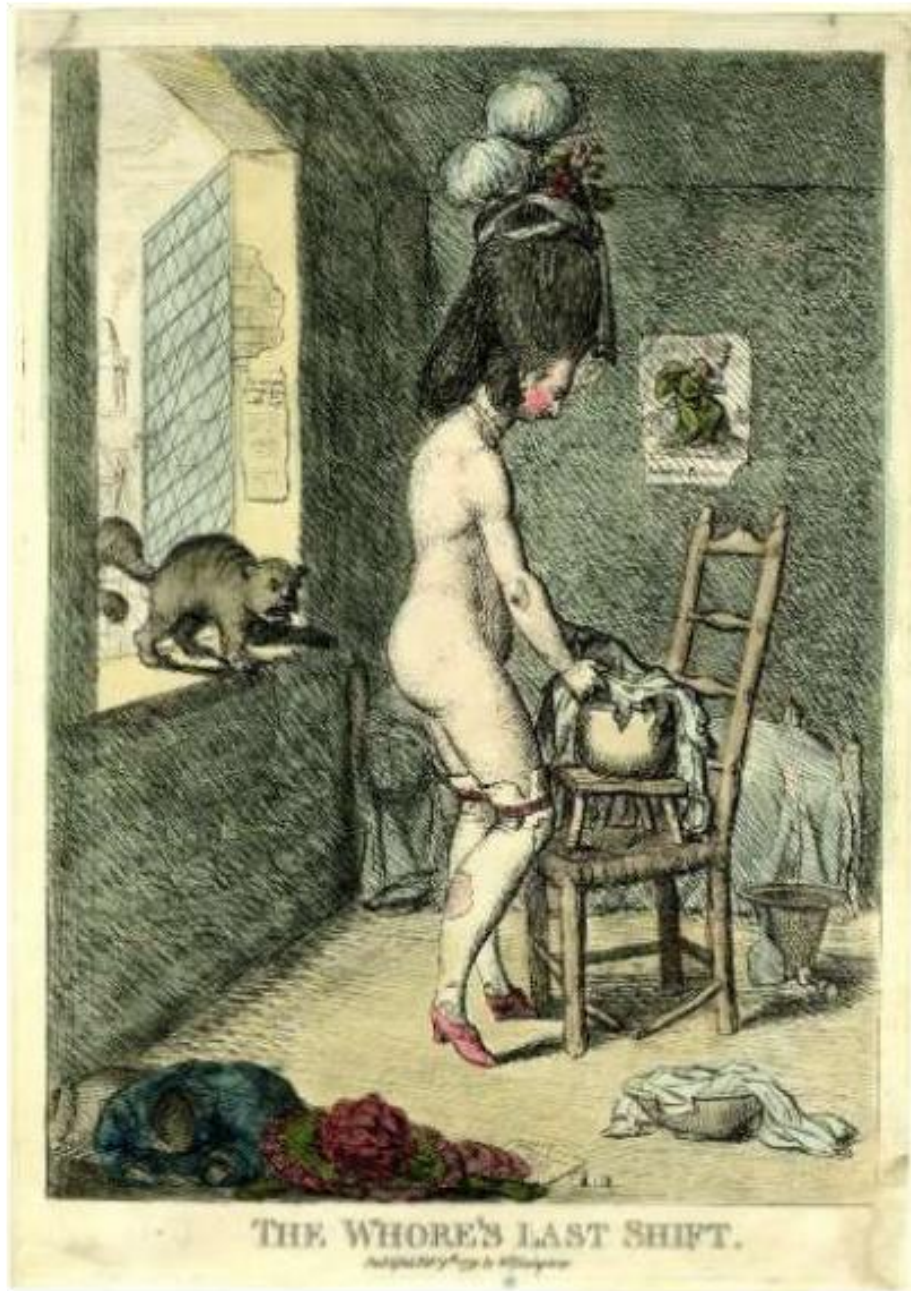


Fig 3.13. James Gillray, *A Whore's Last Shift*, 1779, etching, hand-coloured, 36 x 25.5cm, British Museum.



Fig. 3.14 Walter Richard Sickert, Study for *L’Affaire de Camden Town*, c1909, black chalk on hot pink toned paper, 35.5 x 22.9cm, Private collection, Paris.

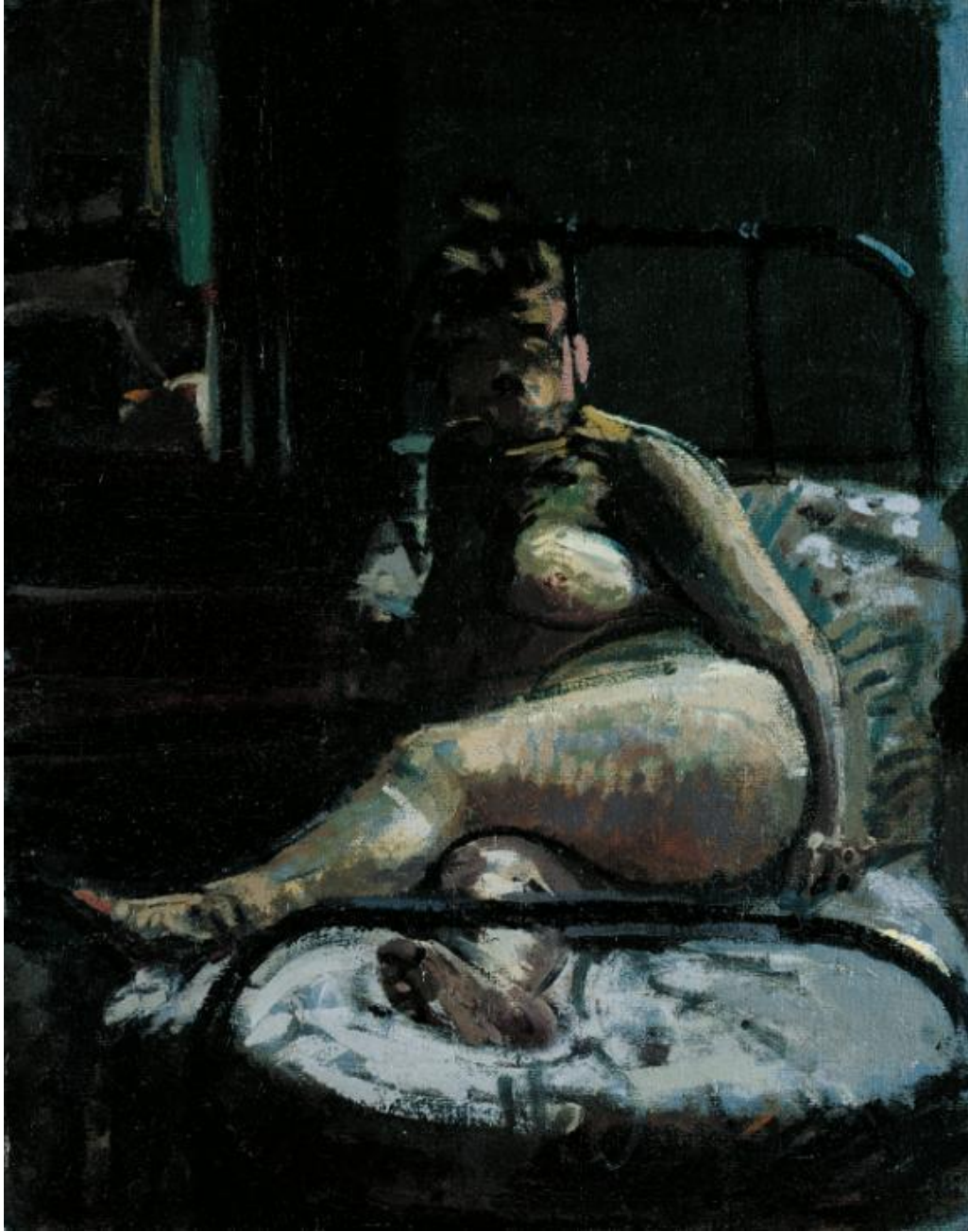


Fig. 3.15 Walter Sickert, *La Hollandaise*, c1906, oil on canvas, 51.1 x 40.6 cm, Tate.



Fig. 3.16 René Le Bègue, *Académie*, 1902, gum bichromate print, 24.1 x 18.0 cm, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Alfred Stieglitz Collection.



Fig. 3.17 Reclining nude with flower display, c1910s, postcard. Image reproduced from Ebay (website), Accessed 1 March, 2023, <https://www.ebay.co.uk/itm/254211075186>.

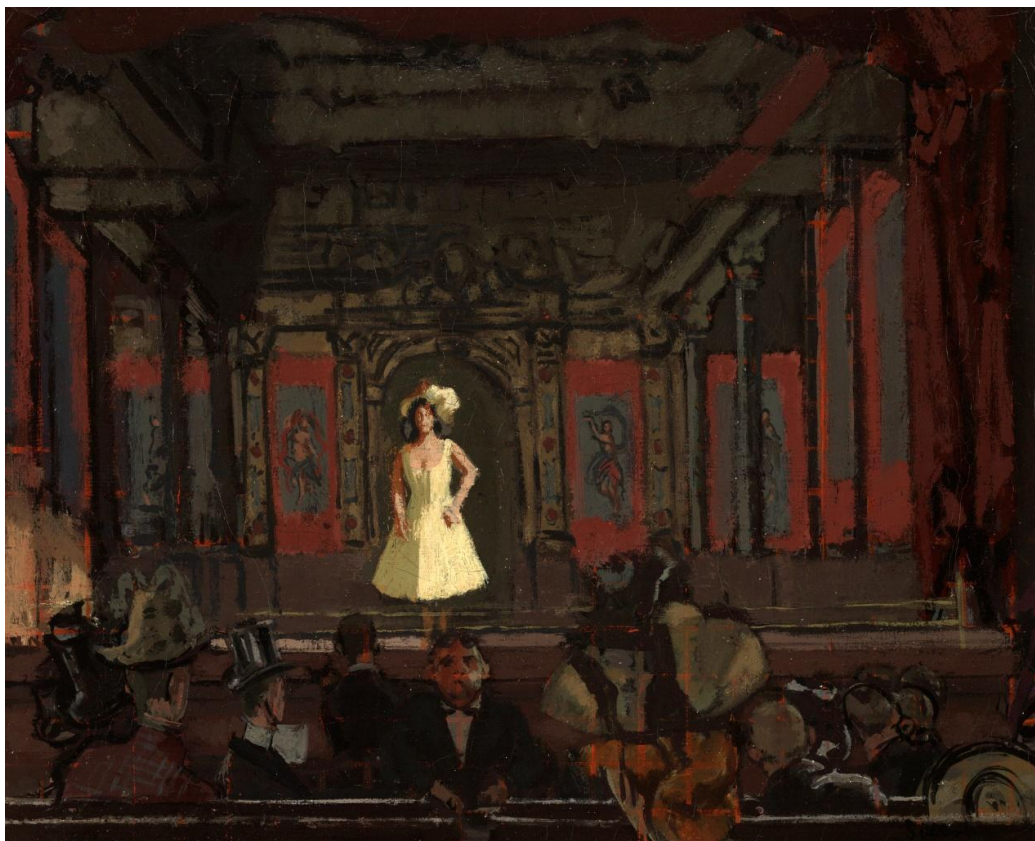


Fig. 3.18 Walter Sickert, *Gatti's Hungerford Palace of Varieties. Second Turn of Katie Lawrence*, c1888, oil on canvas, 38.7 x 47 cm, Yale University Art Gallery.



Fig. 3.19 Edgar Degas, *The Ballet Scene from Meyerbeer's Opera, "Robert le Diable,"* 1876, oil on canvas, 76.6 x 81.3cm, V&A.



Fig. 3.20 Walter Sickert, *Peggy Ashcroft and Paul Robeson in Othello*, c1935-6, oil on canvas, 96.5 x 51cm, Private Collection, Scotland.

## COLOURED OTHELLO



Paul Robeson, the coloured actor, made his debut as Othello last night at the Savoy Theatre. Son of a negro clergyman, Mr. Robeson abandoned the law for the stage only six years ago. Here he is with Peggy Ashcroft as Desdemona.

Fig. 3.21 “Coloured Othello,” newspaper illustration, 1930, image reproduced from Wendy Baron, and Richard Shone, eds. *Sickert, Paintings* (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 1992), 328.

# Our Captious Critic

on "OTHELLO" (The Savoy Theatre).



The "honest" Ancient, who "hates the slime that sticks on filthy deeds". Maurice Browne as Iago.

I ADVISE all people who think Shakespeare no longer interesting on the stage to go to the Savoy Theatre to see "Othello." There you will see an ineffective Iago, a caricature of Cassio and a Desdemona who is, though pleasant, lacking the needed poise for this lofty stage. Yet go to this theatre none the less, because there you will see such an Othello as may never be found again, an Othello whose passion rises and falls with the ease of the wave, whose voice is rich music allied to language the wonder of the modern world; an Othello who, as no white man in this country has ever done in living memory, convinces you of the reality of his illusion concerning his wife, of his belief in the absolute necessity of killing her, of the shattering of his being through the dreadful thought. Your pity for Othello is as profound as his own grief ("The pity of it, Iago!") and overpowers your fears for Desdemona. You leave the theatre lamenting that you could not help the Moor to know the truth, not in order that he might refrain from the murder of innocence, but that he might retain the happy peace of his soul. You find yourself wondering if the actors of the past really could create those immense effects which loom gigantic on the historic sky and which you have always derided as fiction, when suddenly you encounter a man named Paul Robeson who justifies that tradition and himself looms majestic, "larger than human," before you on this modern stage.

Technically, this negro's Othello has defects, yet not since Irving has so tremendous a general effect been created by any acting. At the risk of seeming childish I will explain my meaning. On leaving the Lyceum after seeing Irving in "Faust," I had to compel myself to walk on sole and heel, so intensely had that tip-toeing Mephistopheles obtained possession of me. On leaving the Savoy Theatre the other day the "pity of it" hung like a cloud over all the city.

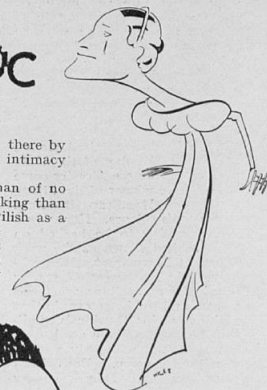
You may say that Robeson might fail with western and northern characters, that his triumph is merely because the simple nature of Othello is that of his own race, the race which boasts "the shadow'd livery of the burnished sun," that his "farewell" and "handkerchief" speeches are not delivered with full understanding and that, in general, where anything but emotion is wanted he falls below the best. Granted. But what is the theatre but a temple of emotion and who troubles himself about accuracy of impersonation, of obtuseness or intelligence of rendering, so long as the joy or fear or pity of the scene being acted enters the watcher's soul? This is the crown of Paul Robeson's effort, that you rejoice and grieve with his Othello.

Let us, lest great praise be thought blind praise, admit that there are times when this Othello seems to be repeating words he does not understand, like a school-boy reading from a book, that he puts absurd emphasis on the word "Venetian" in his last speech of all, that he often stands awkwardly for so well built a man and often makes you too conscious of his hands. Yet the very head and front of his offending hath this extent, no more, and we succumb, as Desdemona did, to the simple nobility of his nature.

The play is acted, for some unexplained reason, on a series of steps and mostly on their upper and more distant parts. Beyond giving certain Venetian gentlemen a chance to strike attitudes with one foot on one step and one on another, these stairs seem a nuisance. The stage is built out over

the orchestra space, but is little used there by the actors for establishing a greater intimacy with the audience.

Mr. Maurice Browne's Iago is a man of no importance, who has more gift for talking than persuading. He is just about as devilish as a chartered accountant and seems to be planning his murders because that happened to be his job and a man must live, anyway. His voice is equally



Desdemona drops a tear: Peggy Ashcroft as the great captain's captain

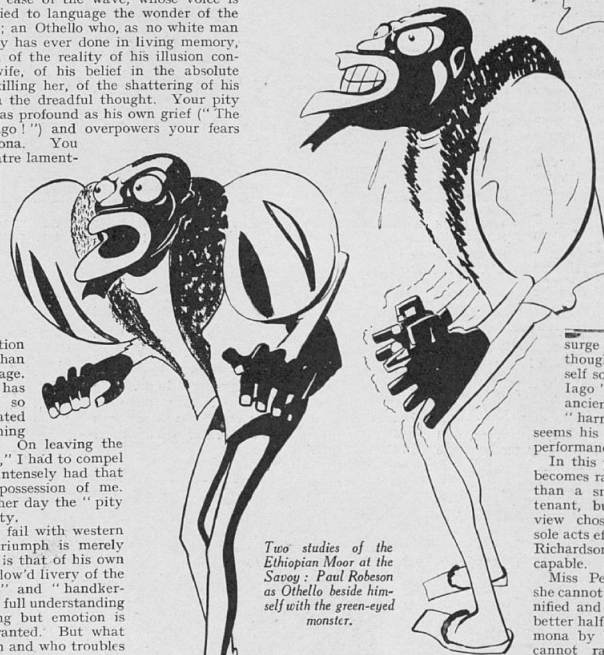
colourless whether he wishes to influence his victim by reason, affected passion or by maddening allusions to Desdemona's lechery. How great must be this Othello then, when his emotion can surge up so naturally, although its inspirer is himself so uninspired. "Honest Iago" almost suits this ancient of the Moor's, and "harmless" too, so puny seems his guile. It is a careful performance, lacking strength.

In this production poor Cassio becomes rather a brainless dandy than a smart and honest lieutenant, but from the point of view chosen Mr. Max Monteleone acts efficiently and Mr. Ralph Richardson's Roderigo is also capable.

Miss Peggy Ashcroft, though she cannot contrive to be both dignified and natural, achieves the better half of the complete Desdemona by being the latter. She cannot raise her scenes with Othello to their full height, because that slightly mannish note which is to be found in Shakespeare's heroines and which, though not admirable in itself, harmonises with his plays, is not within her compass. She is like light chamber music to the full orchestra of the Moor, but she wins our affections to the full, for, in Cassio's words, "indeed, she's a most fresh and delicate creature."

As Emilia, Miss Sybil Thorndike's quality is needed, and is forthcoming, for her outburst in the last scene, where the coarse-minded materialist discovers a death-defying devotion to the pale ghost who was once her mistress, and dies for that virtue in her.

It is to be presumed that if Shakespeare had known that his works would so long outlive their author he would have been as careful about his plots as he was about his characters and their poetry. Here we have a cool old soldier-like Iago and who, for motives which even he explains half-heartedly, plots a revenge which can only be kept secret by killing off most of the characters in the play. It was long odds, too, on Othello's strangling him on his first daring to hint at Desdemona's frailty—a consummation devoutly to be wished, as another illogical Shakespearean character remarked.

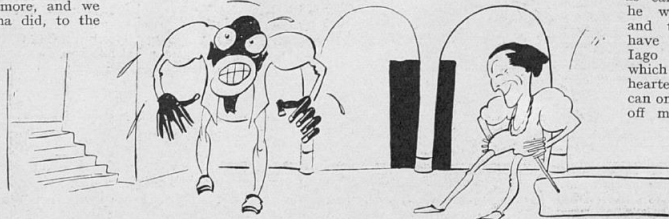


Two studies of the Ethiopian Moor at the Savoy - Paul Robeson as Othello beside himself with the green-eyed monster.

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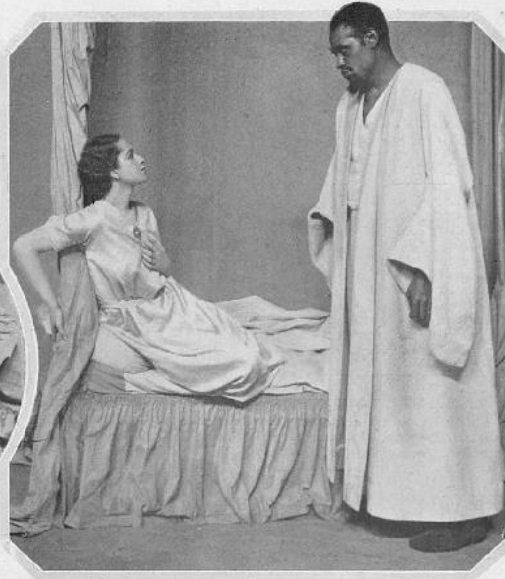
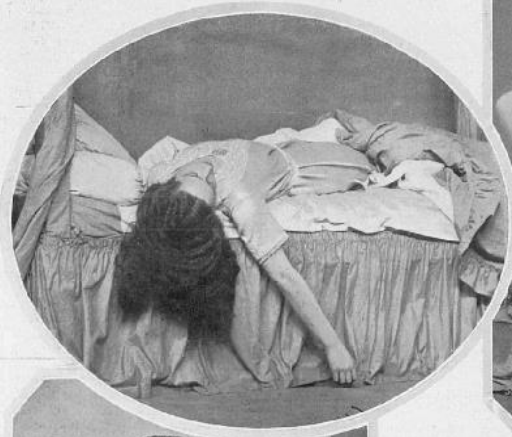


"Trifles, light as air, are to the jealous confirmation strong, as proof of Holy Writ." Iago puts Othello on the rack: Paul Robeson and Maurice Browne.

Fig. 3.22 "Our Captious Critic," The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News, June 7, 1930, 640.

# The Negro Othello.

Paul Robeson as Shakespeare's mighty man of colour.



THE SCENE IN THE BEDCHAMBER WHEN THE NEGRO OTHELLO STIFLES DESDEMONA: PAUL ROBESON AS THE MOOR AND PEGGY ASHCROFT AS HIS LADY.



THE TRAGIC COLOURED MAN OF ACTION: PAUL ROBESON, THE NEGRO ACTOR, AS OTHELLO.



IAGO PLAYS UPON THE SIMPLE PASSIONS OF THE MOOR: MAURICE BROWNE AS OTHELLO'S ANCIENT AROUSING THE JEALOUSY OF HIS MASTER (PAUL ROBESON).

Great interest attaches to the production of "Othello" at the Savoy Theatre from the fact that the Moor is played by the great coloured actor, Paul Robeson. Although not an Othello that enlists the sympathy of everyone, Paul Robeson's emotional power has probably never been exceeded, or even equalled, in the part before. His glorious voice intoning some of Shakespeare's most wonderful poetic flights, fills the theatre thrillingly and his physical presence dwarfs everyone else on the stage. This remarkably interesting production, in which, moreover, Peggy Ashcroft, as Desdemona, has greatly enhanced her reputation, is the subject of Our Captious Critic's article on the opposite page.

Image by Illustration London, Great Britain. Image created courtesy of THE BRITISH LIBRARY

Fig. 3.23 "The Negro Othello. Paul Robeson as Shakespeare's mighty man of colour," *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, June 7, 1930, 641.



Fig. 3.24 "Paul Robeson's Triumph," *The Daily Herald*, May 30, 1930, 9.





Fig. 3.26 John Raphael Smith, *A Woman Holding a Black-Face Mask*, c. 1794–1800. Pastel on woven paper, laid down on canvas on a stretcher and framed, 33.7 x 26.7 cm. Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection.



Fig. 3.27 Walter Sickert, *Variation on Othello*, 1933-4, oil on canvas, 110 x 73 cm, Bristol Art Gallery and Museum.



Fig. 3.28 Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *The Beloved*, 1865-6, oil on canvas, 82.6 x 76.2cm, Tate.

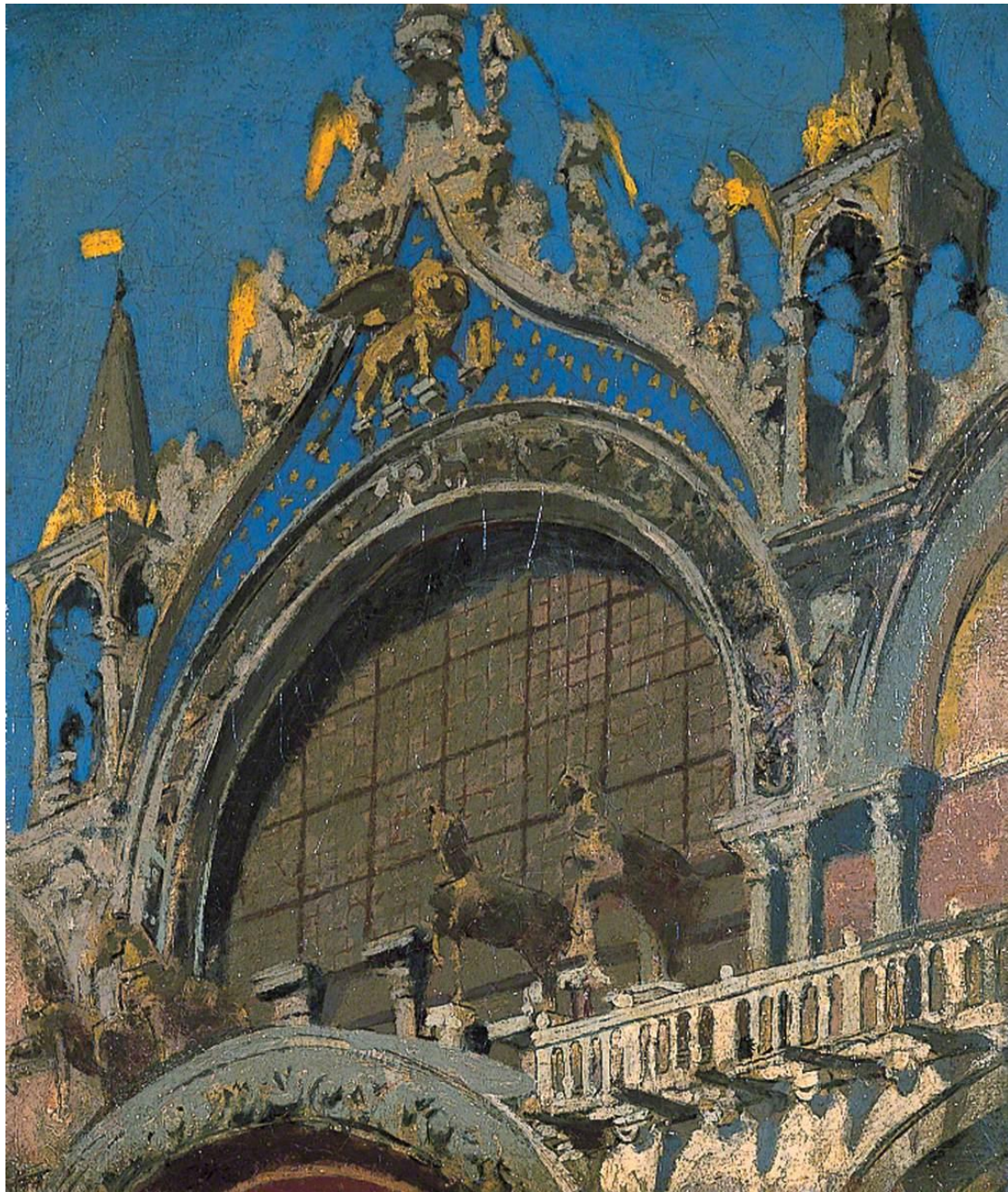


Fig. 3.29 Walter Sickert, *Horses of St. Mark's, Venice*, 1905-6, oil on canvas, 50.2 x 42.2 cm, Birmingham Museums Trust.



Fig. 3.30 Walter Sickert, *The Miner*, c1935-6, oil on canvas, 127.6 x 76.8 cm, Birmingham Museums Trust.





Fig.3.32 Walter Sickert, *King George V and his Racing Manager: A Conversation*  
*Piece at Aintree*, 1929-30, Oil on Canvas, 47 x 47 cm, Royal Trust.

# A LOOK AROUND THE NEWS

A novel new portrait of the King:  
Events in London, Berlin and New York



**A SICKERT PORTRAIT OF THE KING AND THE PHOTOGRAPH FROM WHICH IT WAS PAINTED**  
Mr. Richard Sickert's finely impressionist study in oils of the King (on left) to be shown privately at the Lefevre Galleries, King Street, St. James's, and, on right, the newspaper photograph from which the portrait was painted. The King was photographed talking to Major Fetherstonhaugh, his racing manager, during a Grand National at Aintree



**THE PASSING OF A GREAT LEADER**

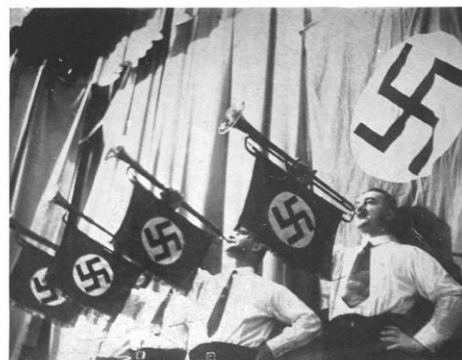
Lord Melchett, one of the master minds in post-war industry, whose death occurred last week. He was also one of the outstanding figures in the world of finance and affairs. He had vision to see the big thing and ability to carry it through, as he proved by the formation of the gigantic £95,000,000 combine, Imperial Chemical Industries, the control of which was but one of his many activities. Even before the war he outdistanced his contemporaries in foresight and preparedness, and he early saw the possibilities of what has been called rationalisation



**AN ECHO OF THE U.S. BANKS SCARE**  
New York police had to control a long queue of panic-stricken investors outside a branch of the Bank of the United States when a rush followed news that the bank was in difficulties



**THE ONLY SPECTATOR AT THE "CIRCUS"**  
What the hive of activity called Fleet Street looked like in the dismal weather London had for Christmas—a scene at Ludgate Circus with the policeman in his traffic control box actually looking for something to do where, usually, he has more than sufficient



**WISHING YOU A MARTIAL NEW YEAR**  
A greeting from some spruce trumpeters of Adolf Hitler's active company of National Socialists at a big concert at the Clou, Berlin, in aid of the city's unemployed. Note the Nazis' badge, the swastika, and the white shirts which have displaced the khaki

Image © Illustrated London News Group. Image created courtesy of THE BRITISH LIBRARY BOARD

Fig. 3.33 "A Look Around the News", *The Graphic*, January 3, 1931, 3, image reproduced from the British Library Board.

# BOOKS OF THE DAY.

**B**Iography often leads to history, especially when the subject is an eminent statesman. The biographer must therefore strive, as best he may, to blend the personal with the universal. That has been done, with conspicuous ability, in two fresh instalments of a monumental work, which forms an indispensable contribution to the annals of our time—namely, "WILSON'S WILSON," Life and Letters, Vol. 3, (Grove, 1931-32); and Vol. 4, President, 1913-21. By Ray Stannard Baker. Illustrated (Holt; 12s. 6d. each). The first two volumes were sub-titled respectively "Youth, 1856-1896," and "Princeton, 1896-1913." In the third, we see the college professor entering the political stage, and trace his progress through his election as Governor of New

Jersey, and his already evoked more than one literary tribute. Standard rank will at once be accorded to "Six WILSON SCOTT." By John Buchan. With Portrait Frontispiece from a Sketch by Sir Edwin Landseer (Cassell; 9s. 6d.), a comprehensive and scholarly work by the ideal biographer of Scott among living writers, one who is not only a connoisseur, but a distinguished disciple in historical romance. Besides the life-story, Mr. Buchan gives a critical account of each poem and novel, and of the circumstances in which it was written. Every page bears evidence of intimate knowledge and sympathetic insight. Nowadays, Lockhart's multiple volumes are too much for the ordinary reader, and, moreover, the son-in-law's hero-worship has inevitably been succeeded by a period of disparagement, and Scott, like many another Gibbon, has suffered from the iconoclasts always willing to pull down heroes from their pedestals. It was necessary to distance him from mountains of adulation and at the same time to remove the mud of detraction. Mr. Buchan has performed both tasks with equal felicity: Scott emerges more human and lovable, but still a grand figure, both as man and writer.

Discussing his political ideas, in his early twenties, Mr. Buchan writes: "These were the years of the Revolution in France, but to Scott it was an almost alien world, as it appeared to the young Woodworth, but a carnival of disorder distasteful to the lawyer, and a menace to his country hateful to the young patriot. . . . In practice, he regarded all men as his brothers, but he would have nothing to do with whimsies about the Brotherhood of Man." Nevertheless, he maintained a lifelong friendship with Woodworth, who visited him during his last illness (in 1832), and there wrote his farewell sonnet to "the old friend whom he widely differed from and deeply loved." A few weeks later Scott set out on a Continental tour, from which he came back a dying man, and just missed seeing another famous contemporary and co-contemporary—Goethe. The lives of the German sage and the Becher laurel had touched at several points. A translation from Goethe was "the first publication to which Scott put his name" (in 1793). In 1818 Scott met, at an Edinburgh dinner, "a young man who entertained him with an account of a recent visit to Goethe at Weimar, and was promptly hidden to Abbotsford. The young man was one John Gibson Lockhart, a brilliant advocate who dabbled in literature." Elsewhere we are told that "Goethe placed Howley alongside the best things that have ever been written in the world."

Comparisons need not be odious, and it is interesting to read concurrently "THE LAXES OF ABERDEEN." By Una Pope-Hennessy. An Informal Presentation of Sir Walter Scott (Penguin; 7s. 6d.). This is a lively, outspoken book that grips the reader's attention throughout. The author has read Lockhart, she tells us many times, but considers that "his summatious omissions and mis-statements conduce to make it but a fallible guide." Her "condensed bibliography" shows that Dame Una has turned on her literary lion the full light of modern opinion. It was well that Scott should be portrayed also by a woman biographer, and in some particulars the feminine touch is discernible, to pleasing effect. The furniture of Abbotsford, for instance, is described in detail, while much space is given to Scott's marriage, and to his earlier love affair. Dame Una differs noticeably from Mr. Buchan in her view as to the relative depth of Scott's feelings towards "Green Man" and the French girl who became his wife, and discusses more fully the latter's rather involved

composing "Kokoby," and published it at first "as a piece of mystification," wanting it to be attributed to Esquire.

Here follow some books which might interest the Wizard of the North if he could, by some magic spell, come among us to-day. The lawyer in him, as well as the chivalrous Scot, would appreciate "THE PASCALLOUS OF MASS SOCIETY." The Queen's Cause: A Study in Criminology. By His Honor Sir Edward Fry. With eight Plates (Cassell; 21s.). A delightfully original approach to an immortal name elides. "Although this is not a biography of Mary," writes the learned author, "yet you cannot state the case against the criminals who conspired against her without describing the life and circumstances of these victims."

Next come biographical studies of two of Scott's literary contemporaries. One of them, whom he once invited unavailingly to Abbotsford, is presented in a new light in "LARA HERON ELLIS." By F. V. Mosley. Illustrated (Cape; 10s. 6d.). The author sees in Charles Lamb a dual personality—the real man, and the mask of "Elia." Here, by the way, Woodworth figures in convoluted mood, chafed by Lamb, at a dinner party that included Keats. We meet Lamb again, this time as an admirer of the art of Elia, in "THE LIFE OF WILLIAM BLAKE." By Moss Wilson. With Frontispiece (Peter Davies; 20s. 6d.). This able study of a difficult subject reappears here in a cheaper reprint (with certain accessories omitted) of a limited edition issued by the Nonessch Press in 1927.

Both so past and antiquary, I think, Scott would have been intrigued by "EMILIA POSTER AND POSTER ROMUS."



A WOOD-ENGRAVING WHICH HAS BEEN "ERODED" BY MR. RICHARD SECKETT IN ONE OF THE PAINTINGS REPRODUCED ON THE OPPOSITE PAGE. "THE UNEXPECTED ENCOUNTER"—BY SIR JOHN GILBERT, WHO DID MUCH WORK FOR THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS.

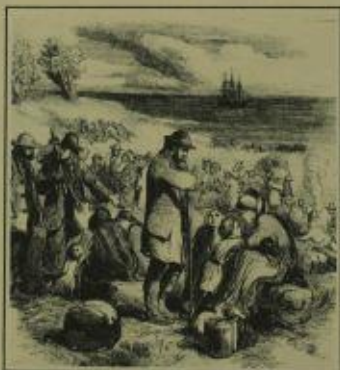
Mr. John Gilbert has been described as "the master" of "The Illustrated London News" for many years from its foundation. A note as his methods may be of interest to some of the many interested in technical development which will be included in our forthcoming "Nineteenth Century Dictionary." "It was quite usual," we are told in the "Dictionary of National Biography," "by the Editor to send a messenger to Gilbert's house at Blackheath with a wood-block and a request by drawing of a given subject; Gilbert would inspect and approve it at once or so, a drawing ready for the engraver to cut in lead."

Jersey, his activities in that office, and subsequently the greater campaign against Roosevelt and Taff, which placed him at the head of the nation. The fourth volume covers his first year as President, and ends with the death of his wife and the outbreak of war in Europe, leaving him on the threshold of world politics.

These two substantial volumes, between them, practically amount to a political history of the United States during a period of six or seven years. I can only say, as a general impression, that the author has succeeded in making the story singularly human and vivid, by telling it largely in the form of letters or records of personal meetings and conversation. Incidentally, he gives an revealing sidelight on many of Wilson's contemporaries, including, besides his two competitors for the Presidency, such men as George Harvey, Walter Hines Page, W. J. Bryan, and Colonel E. M. House. For most English readers, no doubt, and for Europeans in general, the deepest interest of this biography will belong to the still unworked portion concerning President Wilson's reactions to the war and his emergence as a world figure at the Peace Conference. That is only natural, seeing also that his visit to Europe made him known in person to thousands of people on this side of the Atlantic. I remember myself, for instance, catching a glimpse of him smiling graciously on the crowd, but in hand, from an open carriage in Fleet Street. To any serious student of international affairs, however, all these volumes will make a powerful appeal, as a picture of academic and political life in the States, full of colour and movement, apart from its primary purpose as a memoir of America's greatest idealist.

One thing that strikes me forcibly is the depth of his devotion to literature, and especially to poetry. We are constantly reminded that he was essentially a man of letters, and both he and his wife regretted the odd little privacy which they had to forsake for the glare and glare of publicity. Take, for example, Professor Harper's reminiscence of an evening at the White House. "Mr. Wilson stretched himself out on the hearth and recited poetry, as we had often heard him do. His no more considerate that Woodworth should have been the favourite poet of Wilson and Sir Edward Grey. He is the poet for statesmen."

Woodworth's political doctrine did not accord with that of another poet, whose centenary falls next September,



THE WOOD-ENGRAVING BY SIR JOHN GILBERT WHICH MR. SECKETT "ERODED" IN HIS PAINTING "EMIGRANTS AT MELBOURNE," REPRODUCED ON THE OPPOSITE PAGE.

antecedents. The romance which ended in their union, she declares, is expressed in "The Bond of Triumphant," "the poem of all others in which he reveals himself." Mr. Scott merely says that Scott "assisted himself by scribbling this curious production" while engaged in



THE WOOD-ENGRAVING BY SIR JOHN GILBERT WHICH MR. SECKETT "ERODED" IN HIS PAINTING ENTITLED "LIVELY," WHICH IS REPRODUCED ON THE OPPOSITE PAGE. "AN EMBARRASSING MOMENT."

A Catalogue with an Introduction by John Evans, D.Litt.Oxon., D.Litt.Lond. (Oxford University Press and Hargrave & Mifflin; 20s. 5d.). Needless to say, the word "poesy" is here used not, as now, in its popular but secondary sense of a bunch of flowers, but in its original meaning of a "poesy," or verse suite, described on fragments from very early times. Thus Hamlet asks Ophelia—

In this a perhaps, of the gay of a may!  
Much erudition in curious lore has been gathered into these pages—available to collectors—by the agency of that great archaeologist, Sir Arthur Evans, of Knossos fame. While on the subject of "poesy," I must also mention a fresh half-dozen added to Messrs. Benn's Augustan Books of Poetry (paper covers; 6d. each), that popular series which recently celebrated a numerical centenary. The six new poets represented are George Crabbe (b. 1732 "centenary"), John Galsworthy, Arthur L. Salmon, Evelyn Underhill, Robert Nichols, and Robert Frost.

As a man of letters, Scott would make new friends in two notable volumes of criticism—"VIEWS AND REVIEWS." A Selection of Uncollected Articles, 1884-1922. By Havelock Ellis. First Series 1884-1919. With Portrait Frontispiece (Doddard Harcourt; 16s. 5d.); and "PERSONALITY IN LITERATURE." By R. A. Scott-James (Secker; 7s. 6d.). Mr. Havelock Ellis's Open Letter to Biographers, written about 1896, has perhaps had something to do with the modern revolt against Scottishity.

Finally, as a practical bookman, with experience alike of success and disaster on a large scale, Scott would doubtless be eager to study our modern conditions, as set forth, by one who knows them intimately both as writer and publisher, in "AUTHORS AND THE BOOK TRADE." By Frank Swinerton (Seymour; 3s.). Mr. Swinerton's chattering chapter on reviewers has touched me nearly, especially the detum that "it is more than one man's job to read all that is published." His strictures on Lewis, Coleridge, and "grog warblers," however, do not trouble my conscience. From that sort of thing I remain happily immune. To whichever of his categories I may be relegated, I am not a literary "gaugster." C. E. B.

Fig 4.1. "Books of the Day", *Illustrated London News*, April 9, 1932, 557.

SICKERT "ECHOES" ENGRAVINGS BY ONE OF OUR FIRST CONTRIBUTORS.



THE SICKERT "ECHO" OF SIR JOHN GILBERT'S "THE UNEXPECTED ENCOUNTER . . .", A WOOD-ENGRAVING REPRODUCED ON THE OPPOSITE PAGE: "SUMMER LIGHTNING."

"THE HOUSE-KEEPER'S NOISE"; A CHARMING EVOCATION OF A GENUINE VICTORIAN RENOVATION; BY SICKERT, AFTER SIR JOHN GILBERT.



"WOMAN'S SPEAKER"; A PAINTING BY SICKERT, AFTER SIR JOHN GILBERT, WHOSE "ECHOES" A VERY CHARACTERISTIC ELEMENT OF LIFE IN ENGLAND IN THE LAST CENTURY.



THE SICKERT "ECHO" OF GILBERT'S "AN EMBARRASSING MOMENT," A WOOD-ENGRAVING REPRODUCED ON THE OPPOSITE PAGE: "SEE HEVIL."



THE SICKERT "ECHO" OF A GILBERT WOOD-ENGRAVING REPRODUCED ON THE OPPOSITE PAGE: "EMIGRANTS AT BELBOURNE."

"ENGLISH Echoes," by that distinguished artist, Mr. Richard Sickert, A.R.A., must be familiar to many of our readers: for various examples of them have been shown in London within the last two years. Particular interest attaches to those here represented. In the first place, we are able to reproduce — on the opposite page — the wood-engravings from which three of them derive; in the second, all are after Sir John Gilbert, one of the earliest contributors to "The Illustrated London News," and certainly one of the most famous; in the third, they will be on view, with other works by Mr. Sickert, at a



"TAPS VERY"; A SICKERT PASTICHE ON A NINETEENTH-CENTURY WOOD-ENGRAVING BY SIR JOHN GILBERT.

special exhibition which is due to open at the Beaux Arts Gallery, in Beaton Place, W., on Monday, April 11. As to Sir John Gilbert, it should be added that — as an artist drawing for this paper, the pioneer of illustrated newspapers — he was among the first contributors to pictorial journalism. Mr. Campbell Dodgson wrote of him in the "Dictionary of National Biography": "When Herbert

Ingram founded the Illustrated London News in 1842, he at once secured Gilbert's services, and from the first number . . . for a period of about thirty years, Gilbert was the mainstay of the paper. . . His fertility and quickness were amazing, and it is estimated that his contributions to the paper, all drawn by himself upon the wood-block, amount to about thirty thousand. . ."

Fig 4.2. "Sickert "Echoes" Engravings by One of Our First Contributors", *Illustrated London News*, April 9, 1932, 557.



Fig. 4.3 Walter Sickert, *Suisque Praesidium*, c1927, oil on canvas, diameter 35 inches, Private Collection, Scotland.



Fig.4.4 'Embarking for the East', print on ceramic pot lid, probably a product of the pottery manufacturer F. & R. Pratt & Co; image reproduced from Bonham (website), accessed 14 December, 2023,

<https://www.bonhams.com/auction/18106/lot/156/a-prattware-pot-lid-alas-poor-bruin-framed-together-with-two-other-framed-pot-lids-shakespeares-house-and-transplanting-rice-and-another-pot-lid-embarking-for-the-east4>.



Fig. 4.5 Walter Sickert, *La Traviata. Echo of Sir John Gilbert*, 1927, Oil on canvas, 42 x 61cm, Private Collection.



Fig. 4.6 John Gilbert, 'Count de Joyeux, M. de Verboix, and Politia de Champvans', *London Journal*, July 19, 1856, Cover.

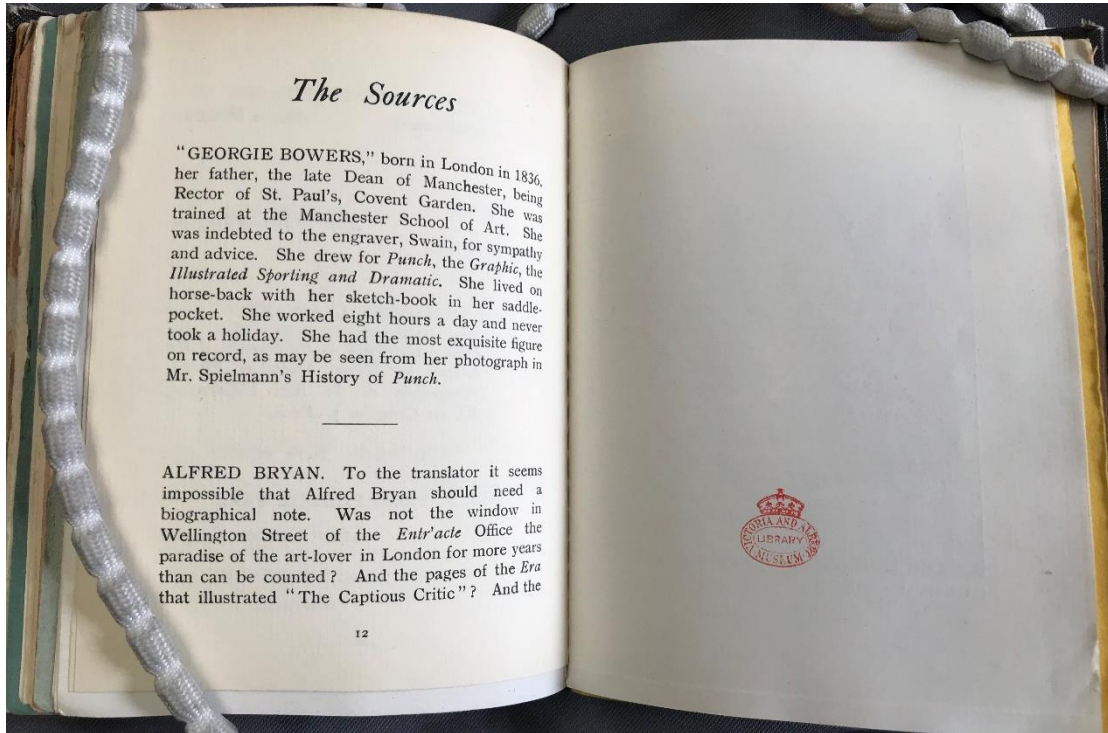


Fig. 4.7 *Catalogue of An Exhibition of "English Echoes": A Series of New Paintings by Richard Sickert, A.R.A.* (London: Leicester Galleries, 1931), 12. [Held at the National Art Library, UK.]

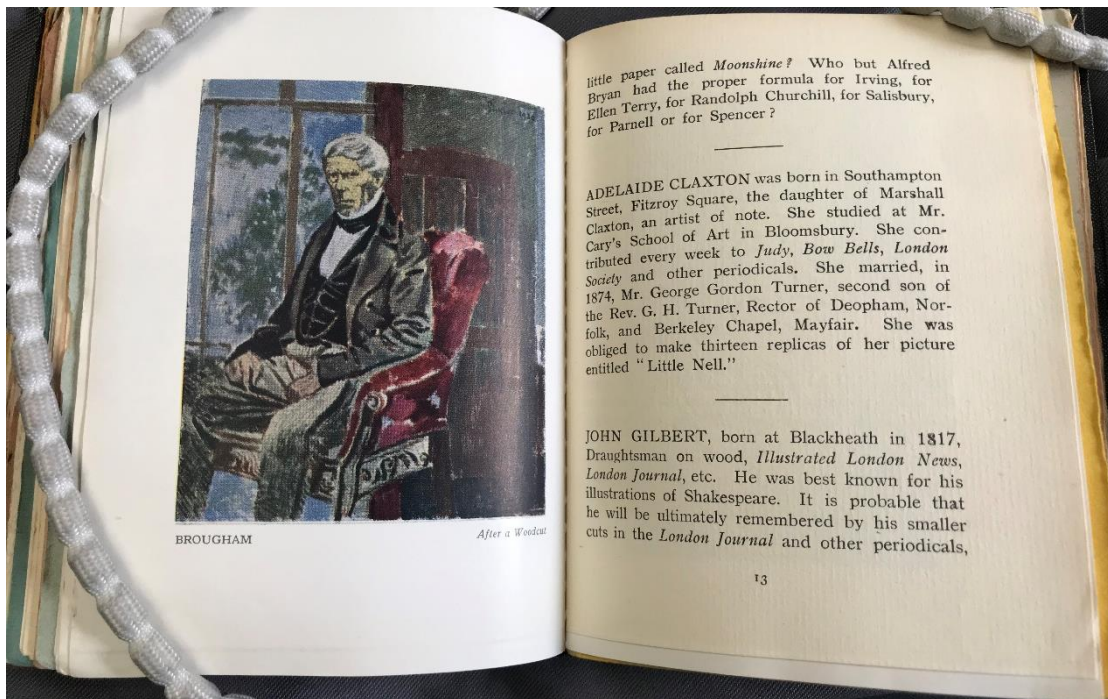


Fig. 4.8 *Catalogue of An Exhibition of "English Echoes": A Series of New Paintings by Richard Sickert, A.R.A.* (London: Leicester Galleries, 1931), 13. [Held at the National Art Library, UK.]

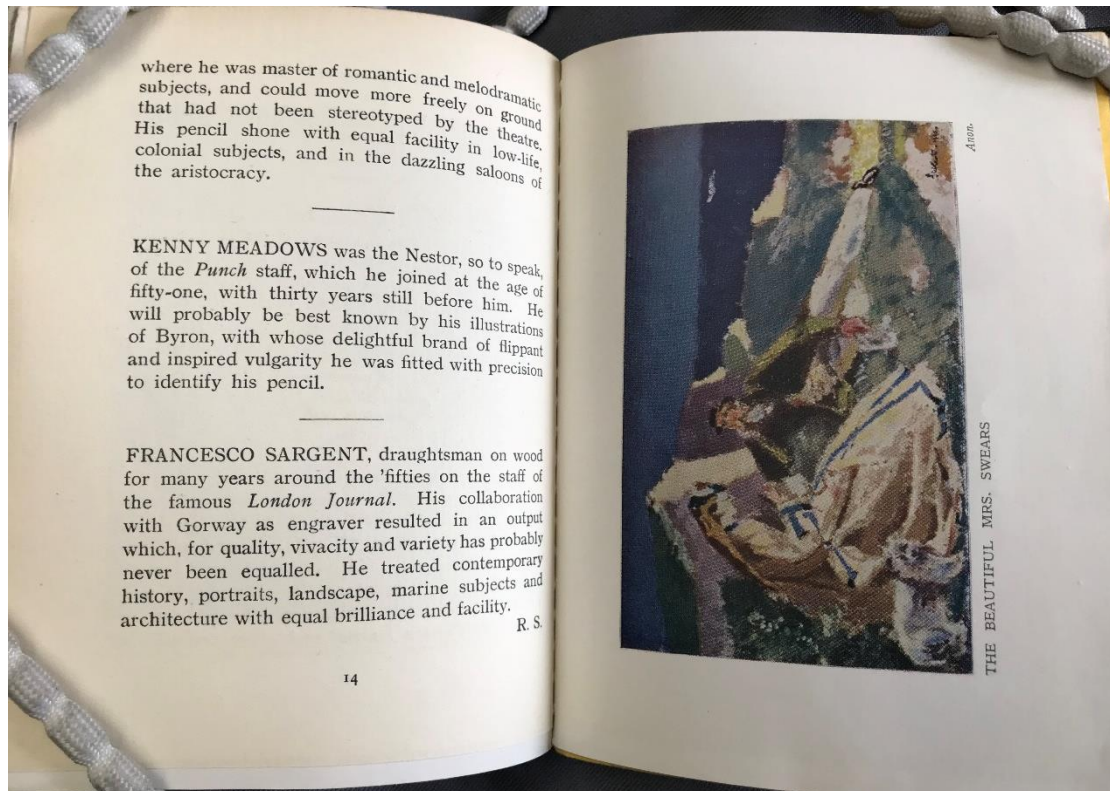


Fig. 4.9 *Catalogue of An Exhibition of "English Echoes": A Series of New Paintings by Richard Sickert, A.R.A.* (London: Leicester Galleries, 1931), 14. [Held at the National Art Library, UK.]



There's nought in this bad world like sympathy:  
 'Tis so becoming to the soul and face,  
 Sets to soft music the harmonious sigh,  
 And robes sweet friendship in a Brussels lace.

XLVII.

Without a friend, what were humanity,  
 To hunt our errors up with a good grace?  
 Consoling us with—"Would you had thought twice!  
 Ah! if you had but followed my advice!"

Fig. 4.10 Kenny Meadows, illustration for George Noël Gordon, *The Illustrated Byron: With Upwards of Two Hundred Engravings*, (United Kingdom: Henry Vizetelly, 1855), 342.

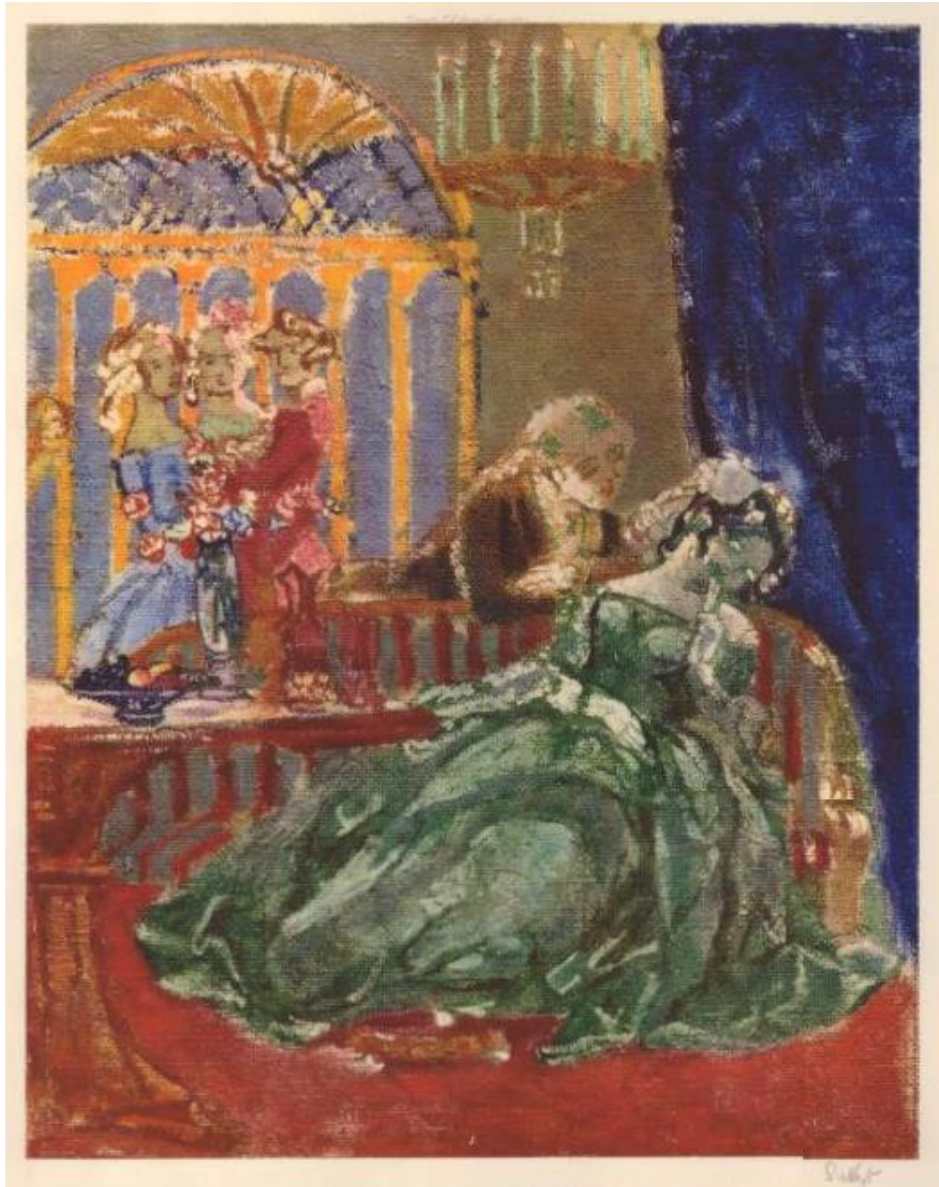


Fig. 4.11 Walter Sickert, *Viciniue Pecus*, c 1930-1, oil on canvas, 61 x 48.5cm, F. H. Mayor



## REMEMBER THEE! REMEMBER THEE!

REMEMBER thee! remember thee!  
Till Lethe quench life's burning stream  
Remorse and shame shall cling to thee,  
And haunt thee like a feverish dream!

Remember thee! Ay, doubt it not.  
Thy husband too shall think of thee:  
By neither shalt thou be forgot,  
Thou *false* to him, thou *fend* to me!

## ON A CORNELIAN HEART WHICH WAS BROKEN.

ILL-FATED Heart! and can it be,  
That thou shouldst thus be rent in twain?  
Have years of care for thine and thee  
Alike been all employ'd in vain?

Yet precious seems each shatter'd part,  
And every fragment dearer grown,  
Since he who wears thee feels thou art  
A fitter emblem of *his own*.

Fig. 4.12 Kenny Meadows, illustration for George Noël Gordon. *The Illustrated Byron: With Upwards of Two Hundred Engravings*, (United Kingdom: Henry Vizetelly, 1855), 573.

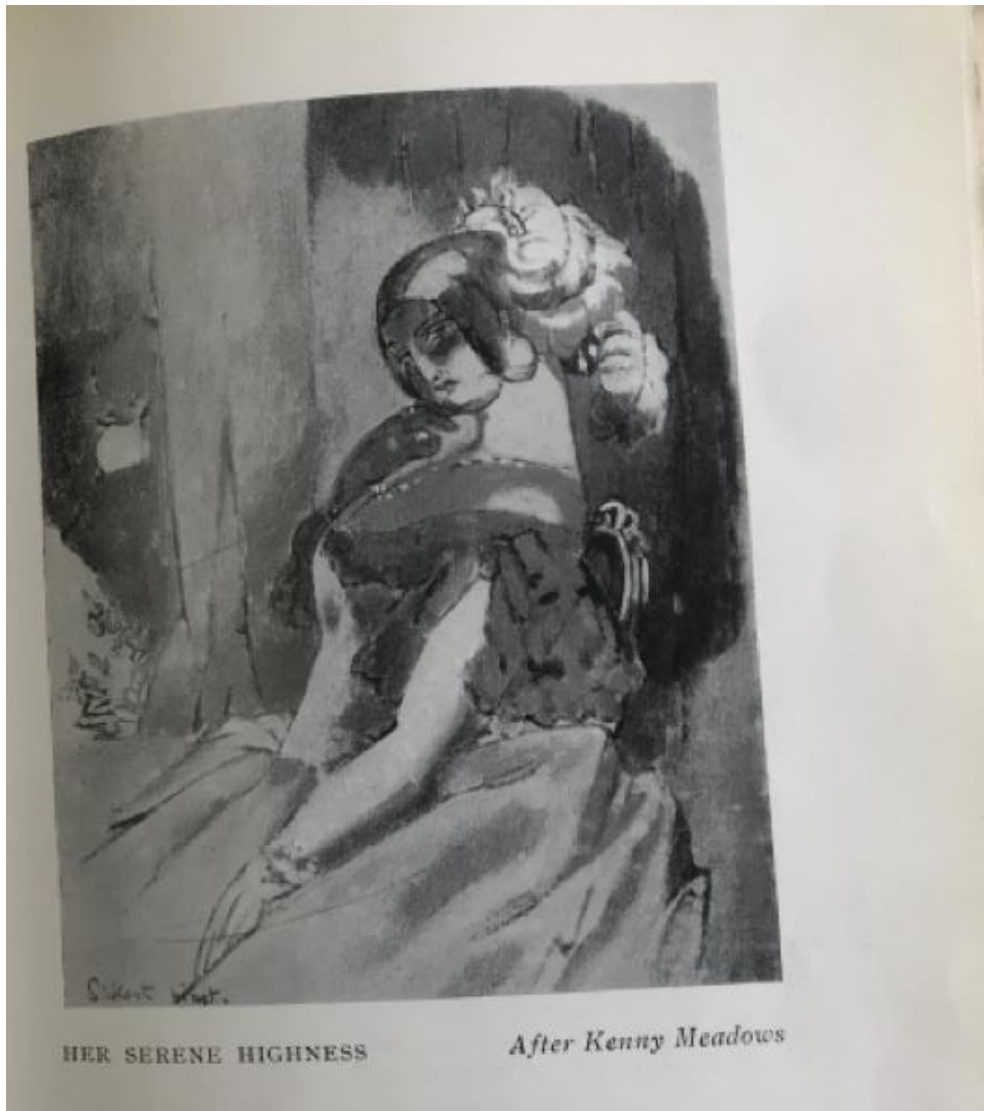


Fig. 4.13 Walter Sickert, *Her Serene Highness*, c1931-2, oil on canvas, 61 x 50.5cm, Private collection. reproduced from the *Catalogue of the Exhibition Paintings by Richard Sickert, A.R.A* (London: Beaux-Arts Gallery, 1932). [Held at the National Art Library, UK.]



Fig. 4.14 Walter Sickert, *Gwen Ffrangcon-Davies in Lady with A Lamp*, 1932, oil on canvas, 122 x 68.6cm, Pallant House Gallery, Chichester.



Fig. 4.15 Walter Sickert, *La Louve*, 1932, Oil on canvas, 245.1 x 92.1 cm, Tate.



Fig. 4.16 William Roberts, *The Ballet*, c1932, oil on canvas, 40.8 x 45.6 cm, National Gallery of Scotland.



Fig. 4.17 Aby Warburg, *Picture Atlas Mnemosyne*, Panel 47, 1928-29, The Warburg Institute, London.



LUDOVICO MAGNO

*Original painting by Richard Sickert*

CATALOGUE  
OF AN  
EXHIBITION OF  
RECENT PAINTINGS  
BY  
RICHARD SICKERT, A.R.A.

Open from April 11th to May 14th, 1932

*J'ai la tête romanesque,  
Et j'adore le pittoresque.*

*Giroflé-Girofla.*



Fig. 4.18 *Catalogue of an Exhibition of Recent Paintings by Richard Sickert, A.R.A.* (London: Beaux-Arts Gallery, 1932). [Held at National Art library, London].



Fig. 4.19 Walter Sickert, *The Idyll*, 1932, Oil on canvas, 68.6 x 72.4cm, Ferens Art Gallery, Hull.

# THE LEISURE HOUR

A FAMILY JOURNAL OF INSTRUCTION AND RECREATION.

No. 384.]

THURSDAY, MAY 5, 1859.

[PRICE 1d.]



AN EMBARRASSING MOMENT.

## GOLDEN HILLS; OR, SINGLE INFLUENCE:

A TALE OF RIBANDISM AND THE IRISH FAMINE.

CHAPTER XXXV.—THE SHADOW PASSES.

The physician in attendance had deemed it prudent to remove Mr. Kingston to private lodgings. It was indeed the famine fever, in an aggravated form, that preyed upon him. Night after night did his wife and daughter listen to the incoherent

No. 384. 1859.

ravings of his delirium, till Lina doubted whether the once calm and clear mind could ever again be unclouded. And it dawned upon her that, perhaps, she had loved him with a devotion too absorbing. Perhaps she had almost made an idol of this cherished father, and thus was it dethroned.

But ah! how close was she to God in these days of trial. How humbly she walked in the fear of Him who held that precious life in his hand!

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easant brethren  
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Fig. 4.20 John Gilbert, "An Embarrassing Moment," *The Leisure Hour*, May 5, 1859, 273.



Fig. 4.21 Brian Cook, book Jacket designed for Humphrey Pakington, *English Village and Hamlets* (London: Batsford Ltd., 1934).

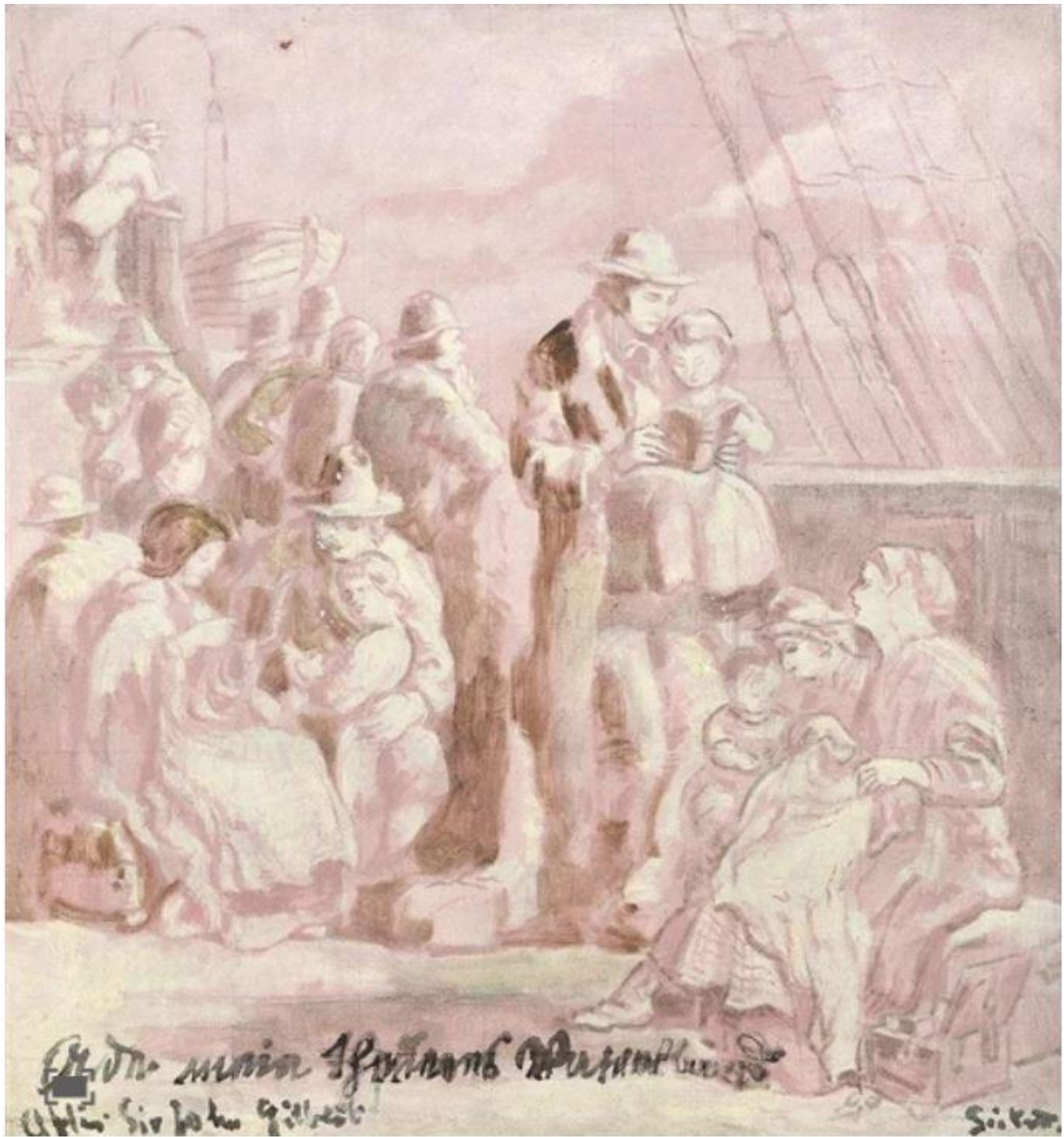


Fig.4.22 Walter Sickert, *Emigrants at Melbourne*, 1932, oil on canvas, 69.2 x 64.8cm, Private Collection, UK.

# THE LEISURE HOUR

A FAMILY JOURNAL OF INSTRUCTION AND RECREATION

No. 32.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 5, 1852.

{ PRICE 1d.  
STAMPED 2d.



SKETCHES OF EMIGRANT LIFE:—I. THE VOYAGE.

## AUSTRALIA.

I.—ITS GENERAL FEATURES AND RESOURCES.  
PERSONS of mature age can well remember the time when Australia, the "great south land," was invested with no pleasing associations, and would VOL. I.—NO. 32.

have been regarded as the last spot on the surface of the globe to be voluntarily selected as a home. Thought recoiled from it as a vast natural jail, expressly adapted by its position at the antipodes, as well as by irreclaimable sterility and physical

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Fig. 4.23 John Gilbert, "Sketches of Emigrant Life: —1. The Voyage," *The Leisure Hour*, August 5, 1852, 497.



Fig. 4.24 Walter Sickert, *Irish Migrants Landing at Melbourne*, 1932, oil on canvas, 65 x 71.2cm, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne.

...ING IN 1824.—  
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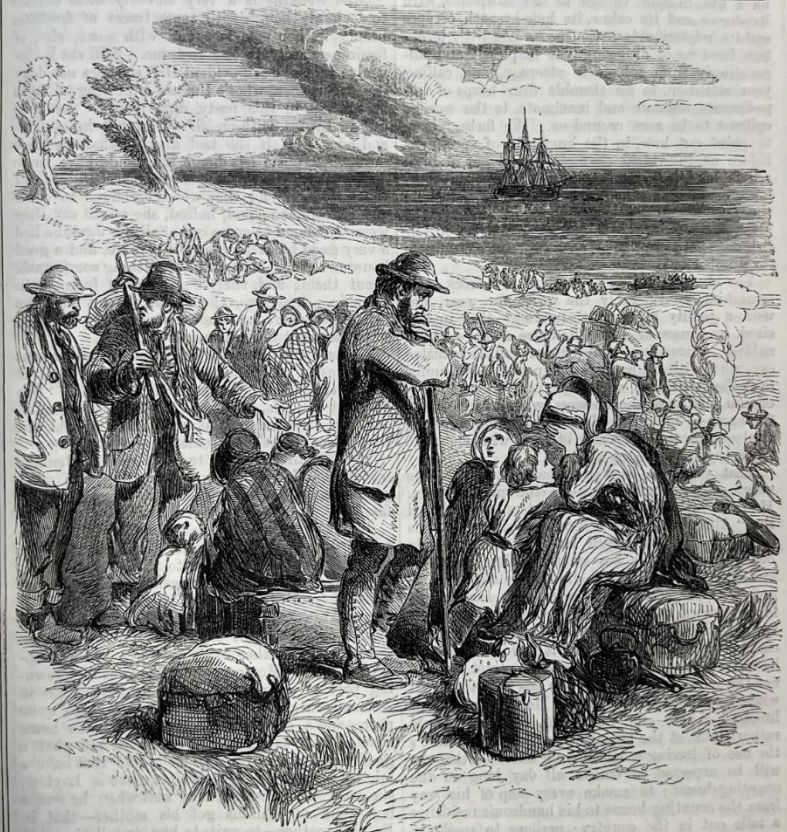
# THE LEISURE HOUR

A FAMILY JOURNAL OF INSTRUCTION AND RECREATION.

No. 126.

THURSDAY, MAY 25, 1854.

PRICE 1d.  
 STAMPED 2d.



EMIGRANTS LANDING AT MELBOURNE.

FRANK LAYTON: AN AUSTRALIAN STORY.  
 CHAPTER XLVIII.  
 ON BOARD AN EMIGRANT SHIP.  
 FRANK'S journey had a twofold object. The first,  
 which had reference to the profitable consignment  
 No. 126, 1854.

of the cattle under his charge, was attended with  
 no difficulty. Beef was at a premium; and at  
 half a day's journey from Melbourne the whole  
 drove of bullocks had changed owners, and were  
 depasturing on a rich flat of inclosed meadow land,  
 Y

Fig. 4.25 John Gilbert, 'Emigrants Landing at Melbourne,' *The Leisure Hour*, May 25, 1854, 321.



Fig. 4.26 Walter Sickert, *Health and Wealth, The First Australians*, c1932-5, oil on canvas, 76 x 66cm, private collection.

# THE LEISURE HOUR

A FAMILY JOURNAL OF INSTRUCTION AND RECREATION.

No. 33.

THURSDAY, AUGUST, 12, 1852.

PRICE 1d.  
STAMPED 2d.



SKETCHES OF EMIGRANT LIFE:—II. THE ARRIVAL.

## AUSTRALIA.

### II.—ITS GOLD-FIELDS.

THE entire eastern coast of Australia is girdled by a belt of highlands, known in the neighbourhood of Sydney as the Blue mountains, and further

VOL. I.—NO. 33.

south as the Australian Alps, some western spurs and offshoots of the latter taking the names of the Pyrenees and Grampians. The range is the water-parting of streams which flow immediately to the ocean, from those which have a landward direction,

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Fig. 4.27 John Gilbert, "Sketches of Emigrant Life:—ii. The Arrival," *The Leisure Hour*, August 12, 1852, 513.



Fig. 4.28 Frederick Goodall, *An Irish Eviction*, 1850, oil on panel, 22.7 x 30.3cm, Leicester Museum & Art Gallery.



Fig. 4.29 George Frederic Watts, *Irish Famine*, 1850, 180.3 x 198.1cm, Watts Gallery.



Fig. 4.30 Walter Sickert, *Fireworks on Primrose Hill to Celebrate the Taking of Sebastopol* [After Francesco Sargent], 1931-2, 76.2 x 45.5cm, Private Collection.



[THE FIREWORKS ON PRIMROSE HILL.]

THE PEACE REJOICINGS IN THE PARKS.

PEACE has been established, but the wisest of our discontent has not yet been turned into the glorious summer of satisfaction and rejoicing. The fireworks and illuminations, and a blaze of Olympic valour on the field of review, with some assistance from banquets and merry-making, graced by the presence of the fair—of the fair, and, in numerous instances, as in the good and wise city of Norwich, by thousands upon thousands of the spring faces of gleeful children, may serve to dissipate the general indifference, or, at all events, assuage the irritability at present rankling in the national mind.

But whatever effect the multitude of excitements offered may produce, there is no denying the grave circumstance that peace with Russia has not only been accepted without enthusiasm, but almost with positive

dislike. Peace, to a commercial and manufacturing country like England, seems as essential as light to health; but England is a country which has not yet nearly attained its maturity; it has a warlike population, and a courage and a determination which, when once roused, it is extremely difficult to soften, much more divert from the pursuit of any given object.

England was humiliated by the commencement of the war; she was ashamed of her Government, disappointed in her generals—the war only introduced to notice one officer fit for high command, General Williams—and rather scandalized at the inactivity of her tremendous navy. The fall of half of Sebastopol, in which the French acquired the largest share of credit, did not by any means tend to heal the wounded vanity of the nation, the more especially as nothing of moment had been performed in the Baltic, and the brilliant defence of Kors showed what might have been accomplished

had there been more sagacity and enterprise at head quarters at home, and able officers at the head of our matchless troops. Prodigious preparations were therefore made to retrieve previous disasters and mismanagement, incapacity was to be shelved, and England on land and sea was to assume an attitude worthy of her ancient renown and foremost place in the rank of nations. Russia saw the coming of the storm and wisely bowed her head; France was tired of the war; and Austria, quivering with discontent in her bosom, feverishly desired peace. No doubt the Court of England, looking to the matrimonial alliance with Prussia and its relations with Germany, also wished the war at an end, and the British Government, taking everything into calm consideration, yielded to the outward pressure. All were glad to escape from the embroilment but the people of this country; they wished to fight the quarrel out, to try their gun boats and floating batteries on the fortresses of the Baltic. Some of the more impulsive, who saw in St. Petersburg a more serious menace to England than Sebastopol was to the East, wished the war to be carried into the very streets of that capital, and because they were disappointed, and the strength of the nation, although grandly developed, only put forth for parade, received the peace coldly—nay, even with dislike and suspicion.

There are, consequently, no spontaneous effusions of joy, no voluntary illuminations, no roasting of sheep and oxen, no bonfires on our hills—not a solitary half-penny candle has flickered at midnight in the window of a free Briton of his free will. The peace rejoicings had, therefore, to be commanded to be prepared with official deliberation. The high chivalry of the people was appealed to, and noble, unexampled, was the response. And to be disappointed by a few scratches of a pen was galling to their martial pride; it appeared like a deprecatory refusal to recognize the greatest exertions ever made by a nation within the same compass of time. No wonder the peace treaty elicited no enthusiasm, but rather a general impression that it was only a kind of truce, patched up for an indefinite number of years, to enable Russia to recover from the terrible check she has received—Austria to crush disaffection—and France to be detached by unscrupulous politicians from the English alliance. Another circumstance tended to strengthen the sullen sentiment of the country. The state of the Continent is very insecure, the fires of 1848 are not extinguished, and Englishmen know full well that when two hundred millions of human beings are in commotion for social and political ameliorations, they cannot long remain passive spectators. So that the peace, especially as it came so unexpectedly, came to be regarded but as a sort of breathing time for preparation for fresh and more dangerous complications.

Putting aside all these explanations and their provoking causes, as well as allowing some indulgence to a paucity slow to be aroused, but infinitely slower to submit to expediency or reason when roused, it must be admitted that the peace is one of which England ought rather to be proud than ashamed. It is an embodiment of more than was stipulated for at the commencement of the war. It has enabled trade to return to its usual channels, relieved the money market of an exhausting drain, opened up new territories for commercial enterprise, and presented to every department of civilization splendid opportunities for making magnificent progress. Turkey now belongs to the confederacy of Europe, and she must march to a higher development, or be overwhelmed in the flood of thought that will be poured across her frontier in restless volume. Russia must obey the same destiny, for in these days, when war has once battered in the gates of either bigotry, seclusion, or ignorance, advancing knowledge will step over the debris and scatter broadcast the seed of a new life that will sprout at the necessity of being protected by locks, chains, and bolts, and find more safety and happiness in a free and enlightened intercourse with the rest of the world.

A busy and exciting time was last week for mighty London. The programme of entertainments was of rather startling magnitude for the more staid portion of the community. It was the Derby week, and there were crowded lists at the celebration of her Majesty's birthday, extensive illuminations, fireworks on a scale of unparalleled splendour, public balls, crowds of public dimes, musical entertainments, and those of *fresco* enjoyment, culminated by the song and the dance of millions of men, women, and children, of which the English people are so passionately fond. And all this, besides the attraction of the celebrated races on Epsom Downs. It was certainly a week of hard work to the most indefatigable pleasure seekers. The outdoor rejoicings in the metropolis were confined to the illuminations and a display of fireworks. Woolwich Arsenal had put forth all its available strength for the occasion. Upwards of 3,000 men and boys had been engaged in the week night and day, and twenty five ambulance waggon and eighty pair of cart horses were employed for upwards of a month in conveying the material to the different localities.

There were Hyde Park, the Green Park, the summit of Primrose Hill, of which we give a representa-

Fig. 4.31 Francisco Sargent, "Firework on Primrose Hill," *The London Journal*, June 14, 1856, 201.



Fig. 4.32 Christopher Nevinson, *La Mitrailleuse*, 1916, oil on canvas, 61.0 x 50.8 cm, Tate.



Fig. 4.33 Walter Sickert, '48, c1930, oil on canvas, size unknown, whereabouts unknown, reproduced from *Catalogue of An Exhibition of "English Echoes": A Series of New Paintings by Richard Sickert, A.R.A.* (London: Leicester Galleries, 1931).

THE  
**LONDON JOURNAL;**  
 And Weekly Record of Literature, Science, and Art.

No. 122 Vol. VII.]

FOR THE WEEK ENDING APRIL 1, 1848.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



PORTE ST. DENIS.]

**THE REVOLUTION IN FRANCE.**  
 We resume our account of the French Revolution, and commence with more detailed accounts of the proceedings of Wednesday, February 23. At the same time, we present our readers with an engraving of the Porte St. Denis, which was one of the principal scenes of the terrible incidents of that eventful day.  
 By about nine o'clock in the morning, people assembled in considerable numbers in the quarters of St. Denis and St. Martin, and at ten o'clock they had succeeded in erecting barricades at the Porte St. Denis, in the Rue de Cleri, the Rue Neuve St. Estache, the Rue de Caizran, and the Rue du Petit-Carreau. A fusillade took place at some of these barricades between the populace and the Municipal Guards. Two young men were killed, and a Municipal Guard was disarmed. Several Municipal Guards were pursued to the Place du Caire, by young men armed with sticks. The guards fired, and wounded several persons. A woman, the relative of a tradesman, was killed on the spot. According to the *Paris*, the officer of a platoon of the National Guard, who was on the place, was so indignant that he cried "To arms!" whereupon the Municipal Guard beat

a retreat. Two hours later, the Place du Caire was perfectly calm; in fact, not a soul was to be seen except three National Guards in the Passage du Caire.  
 At the Porte St. Denis the troops charged the people; and the barricade in the Rue Caizran, at the entrance to the Rue Montmartre, was attacked by the Municipal Guard, who fired on the mob, whereby a child was killed, and two workmen and three women were seriously wounded.  
 At eleven o'clock the crowd was dense in the vicinity of the Porte St. Martin, and there were cries of "Down with Guizot!" "Long live Reform!" A detachment of troops fired on the mob, compelling it to retreat.  
 At twelve, all the quarters of the markets were fully occupied. There was a battalion of the 21st regiment of the Marche des Innocens, besides detachments of the Municipal Guard, horse and foot, and two detachments of Carabiers. Two pieces of cannon were on the spot, one of which was directed towards the Rue Montmartre, the other towards the Rue de la Perrenette. They were ready to be employed at a moment's notice. The Fishmarket, was occupied by a battalion of the 1st regiment.

On the Place du Carrousel, the horse Municipal Guard charged the groups who were assembled there; but the people, after depending on one spot, immediately re-assembled on another.  
 At the barricade in the Rue de Cleri, which was half destroyed, the Municipal Guard fired, and several persons were wounded.  
 Between one and two o'clock in the different quarters in which disturbances prevailed—on the Boulevards, in the Rue St. Denis, the Rue St. Martin, the Rue Montmartre, the Rue St. Honoré, and, in fact, all the principal streets—the crowds were very dense. On the Boulevards, especially near the Portes St. Denis and St. Martin, there was a large assemblage of military, infantry, dragoons, light dragoons, and Municipal Guards, both horse and foot. In the Rue St. Martin frequent charges were executed.  
 An attempt to erect barricades in the Rue St. Antoine was prevented, as were also other attempts in the Rue St. Laurent and St. Lazare.  
 In the Rue de la Cité and Rue de Constantin, the troops had to disperse the mob. On the Place du Chatelet and the Pont au Change a fusillade was kept up for some time. In the Rue des Filles de

Fig. 4.34 G.F. Sargent, "Porte de St Denis," *The London Journal*, April 1, 1848, 49.



Fig. 4.35 Walter Sickert, *Ludovico Magno*, c1930-1, oil on canvas, 57 x 76cm, Philips Collection, Washington DC.

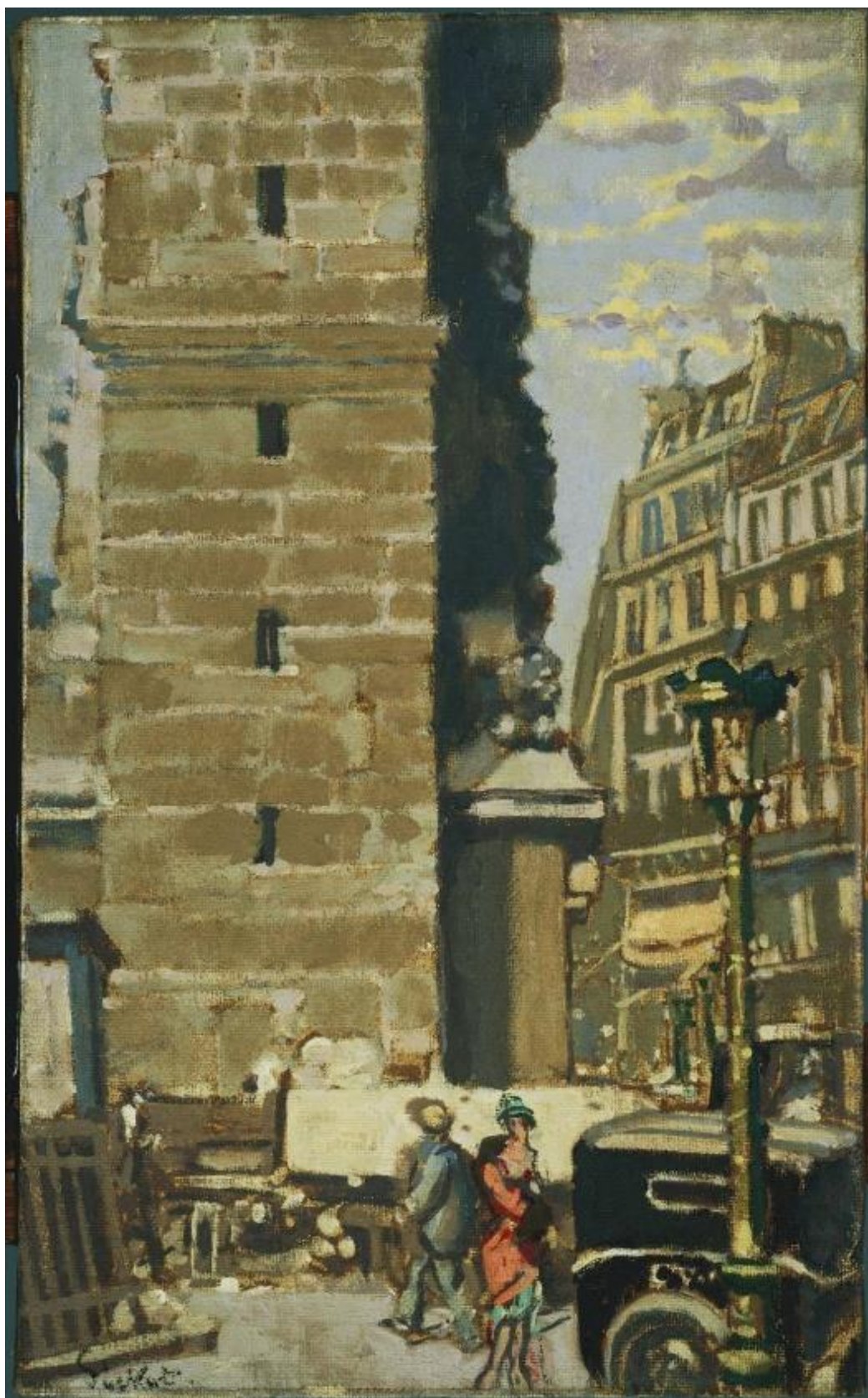


Fig. 4.36 Walter Sickert, *Porte St Denis (Paris)*, c1930-1, oil on canvas, 77 x 47cm, Philips Collection, Washington DC.



Fig. 4.37 Walter Sickert, *La Porte St Denis*, 1930, 76.2 x 45.7cm, Paisley Art Gallery, Renfrewshire, Scotland.



fig. 4.38 Walter Sickert, *The Third Republic*, 1932, oil on canvas, 76.2 x 54.6cm, Peterborough Art Gallery.



Fig. 4.39 William Hogarth, *The Gate of Calais, or The Roast Beef of Old England*, 1748-9, Etching and engraving on laid paper, 38.2 x 45.6 cm, Davison Art Center, Wesleyan University, Middletown, USA.

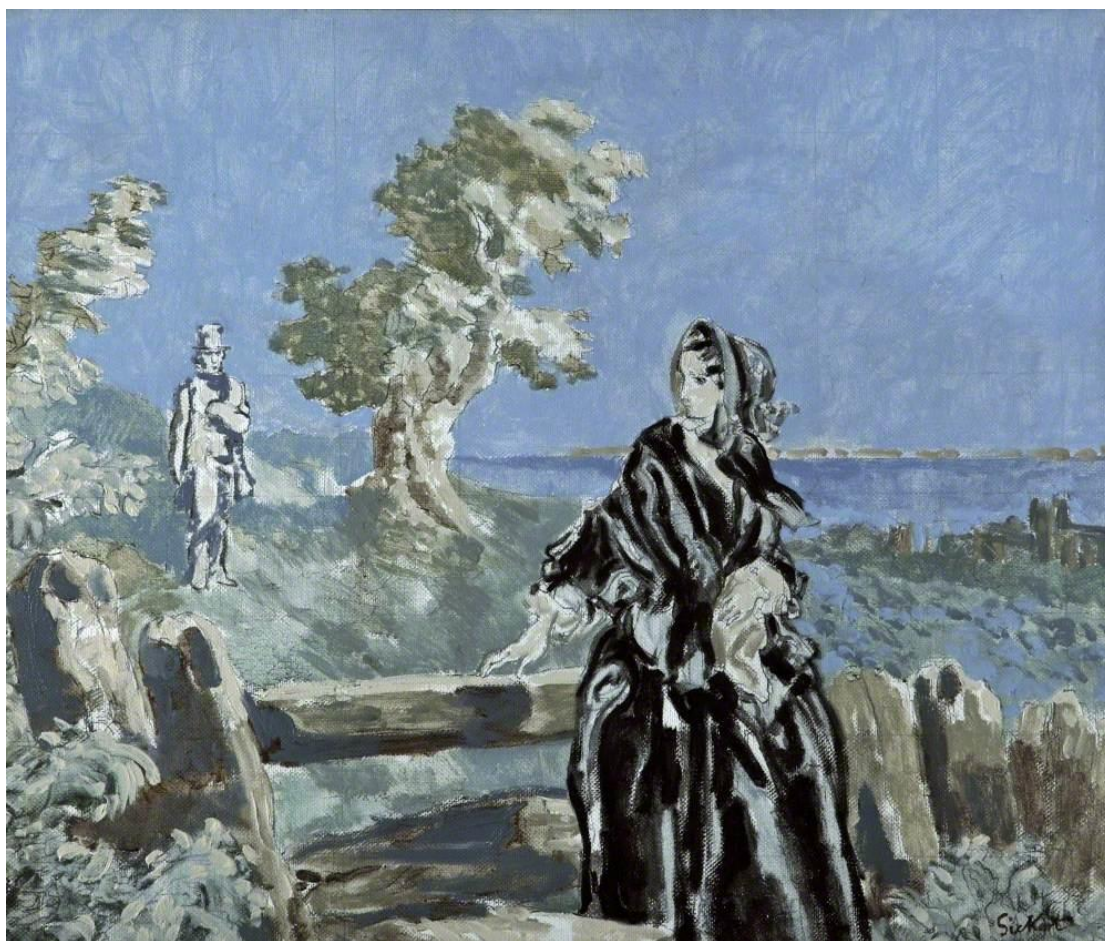


Fig. 4.40 Walter Sickert, *Summer Lightning*, 1931-2, oil on canvas, 62.9 x 72.5cm, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool.

# THE LEISURE HOUR

A FAMILY JOURNAL OF INSTRUCTION AND RECREATION.

No. 204.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 1855.

{ PRICE 1d.  
{ STAMPED 2d.



THE UNEXPECTED RENCONTRE BETWEEN EDITH AND ALLAN GRANT.

## MARRIAGE;

OR,

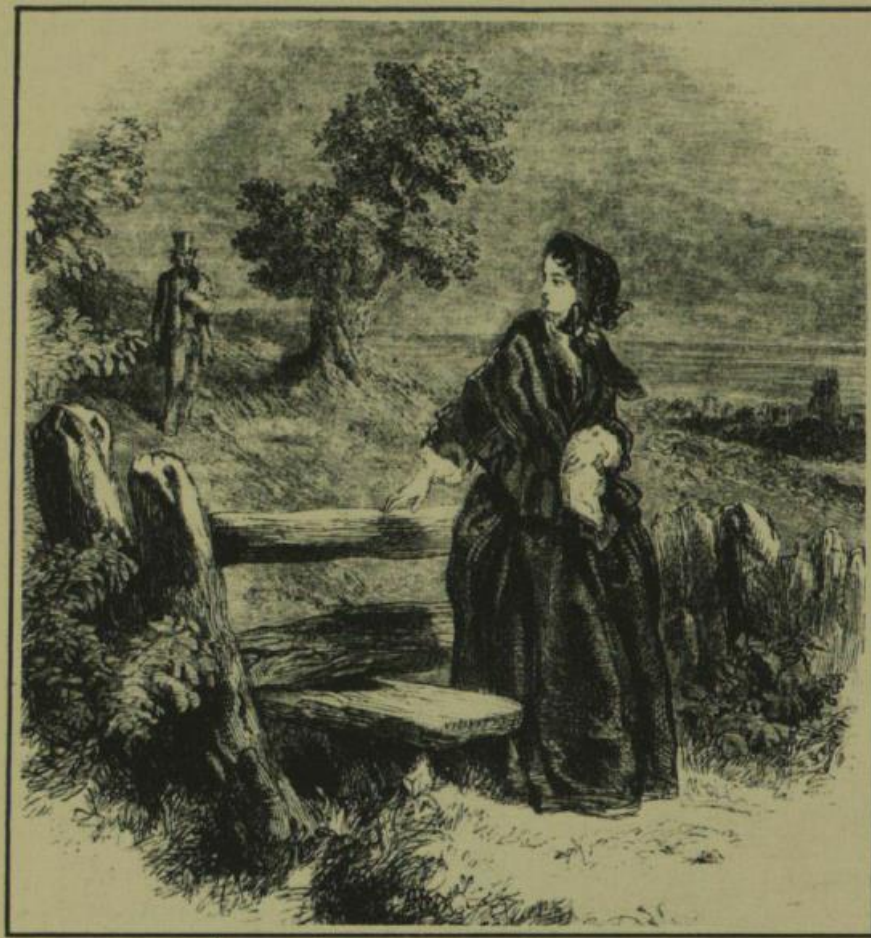
### THE BACHELOR IN SEARCH OF A WIFE. CHAPTER XII.—STORM AND CALM.

"When some beloved voice, that was to you  
Both sound and sweetness, falleth suddenly,  
And silence, against which you dare not cry,  
Aches round you—what hope, what help, what music, will undo  
That silence to your sense? Speak thou, availing Christ,  
and fill this pause."  
No. 204, 1855.

"LETTERS! letters! Why, Allan, what a packet  
—not interesting letters either, on that blue bank  
paper," said Margaret, gaily throwing her brother  
the postman's budget.

"Nor very pleasant in their contents," said  
Allan, looking very grave. "The fact is, Margaret,  
I have been idling here too long, and my partner  
B B B

Fig. 4.41 John Gilbert, "The Unexpected Rencontre," *The Leisure Hour*, November 22, 1855, 737.



A WOOD-ENGRAVING WHICH HAS BEEN "ECHOED" BY MR. RICHARD SICKERT IN ONE OF THE PAINTINGS REPRODUCED ON THE OPPOSITE PAGE: "THE UNEXPECTED RENCONTRE——" BY SIR JOHN GILBERT, WHO DID MUCH WORK FOR "THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS."

Sir John Gilbert has been described as "the mainstay" of "The Illustrated London News" for thirty years from its foundation. A note on his methods may be of interest in view of the many retrospects on technical developments which will be embodied in our forthcoming "Ninetieth Birthday Number." "It was quite usual," we are told in the "Dictionary of National Biography," "for the Editor to send a messenger to Gilbert's house at Blackheath with a wood-block and a request for a drawing of a given subject; Gilbert would improvise and complete, in an hour or so, a drawing ready for the engraver to cut in facsimile."

Fig. 4.42 Detail of the text introducing Gilbert's relation to the *ILN*, in "Books of the Day," *Illustrated London News*, April 9, 1932, 557.



Fig. 4.43 Walter Sickert, *The House Keeper's Niece*, c1931-2, oil on canvas, size and whereabouts unknown.

# THE LEISURE HOUR.

A FAMILY JOURNAL OF INSTRUCTION AND RECREATION.

"BEHOLD IN THESE WHAT LEISURE HOURS DEMAND,—AMUSEMENT AND TRUE KNOWLEDGE HAND IN HAND."—*Couryer.*



THE INTRODUCTION.

## THE RIVAL HEIRS.

CHAPTER II.

THE vanity of vanities written on most of this world's winnings was clearly illustrated in the case of George Maywood. The object for which he had toiled, saved, and, some said, married, was attained; he was lord of his family mansion and estate, free of mortgage or incumbrance, with a right to bequeath it to whom he would, after his brother, for there were no heirs at law. But he had come from the sultry climate of Bengal with broken health and a wearied spirit, eastern habits and

testy humours, which made the tenantry call him the queer old squire, and the country families vote him very odd. He had redeemed the Maywood inheritance, but his time of possession was not long. The man's fortunes were singular, and he made a singular will. Having kept the quarrel against all his unhelpful relations and their posterity, he fixed on the relations of his long deceased wife, amongst whom to find heirs and successors. In spite of the social critics and the common probabilities, there had been love as well as money in his match-making, seldom as they go together. "She was the daughter of a supreme judge, and had her choice of

PRICE ONE PENNY.

No. 565.—OCTOBER 25, 1862.

X X

Fig. 4.44 John Gilbert, "The Introduction," *The Leisure Hour*, March 27, 1869, 193.



Fig. 4.45 Walter Sickert, *Woman's Sphere*, 1931-2, oil on canvas, 70 x 63.5cm, Government Art Collection, London.

# THE LEISURE HOUR

A FAMILY JOURNAL OF INSTRUCTION AND RECREATION.

No. 252.]

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 23, 1856.

[PAGE 16.]



JULIA READING THE NEWSPAPER TO CAPTAIN RUSHTON.

JULIA CUNNINGHAME;

OR, THE DAUGHTER AT HOME.

CHAPTER VII.—EMILY GREY.

"Oh! ask not, hope not thou too much

Of sympathy below;

Few are the hearts whence one same touch

Bids the sweet fountains flow."—HEMANS.

No. 252, 1856.

In a handsome house, situated in one of the many squares of London, Emily Grey lay sick and weak in her own room. She had been ill for some weeks (of a nervous fever, the doctor said), and was very much reduced and very feeble both in

x x

to be patient, and more you require to after the first two is easy.—Burton's table gives the Highland clans in

Brown Head. Druid.

One.

Rev. Dr. Spring application to books to him personally a rive the public of r. Goodrich (Peter, more than twenty rformed the duties rian, is also blind, a curious machine n see but very in- for the press. Mr. r, whose eloquence of the land, is rnk- and Saddle-lags." Town, New York, cement of his mri- paring "Recollec- Christian Intelle-

of this ethereal own insect, destitute s legs; the male is uently to lights in k of such creatures; and the honey of; they are voraci-; The subject has the act. It is too heir history; let us h some examples of imate lustre, with- igin and support.—

s.—In a box fixed e Hall, letters and enience of the foot, between Drilling- house at Thwing- k and key, and al- s a day, except on r, a pair of lily- a nest in the box, gh the slit for the female laid some e of these novel ten- e Hall, was inclined opensity to peck and ay letters, but, at the asidered such a pro- sidence placed in ana ffered to remain.—



Fig. 4.47 Walter Sickert, *Le Tapis Vert*, 1931-2, oil on canvas, 53.3 x 55.2cm, Private collection.

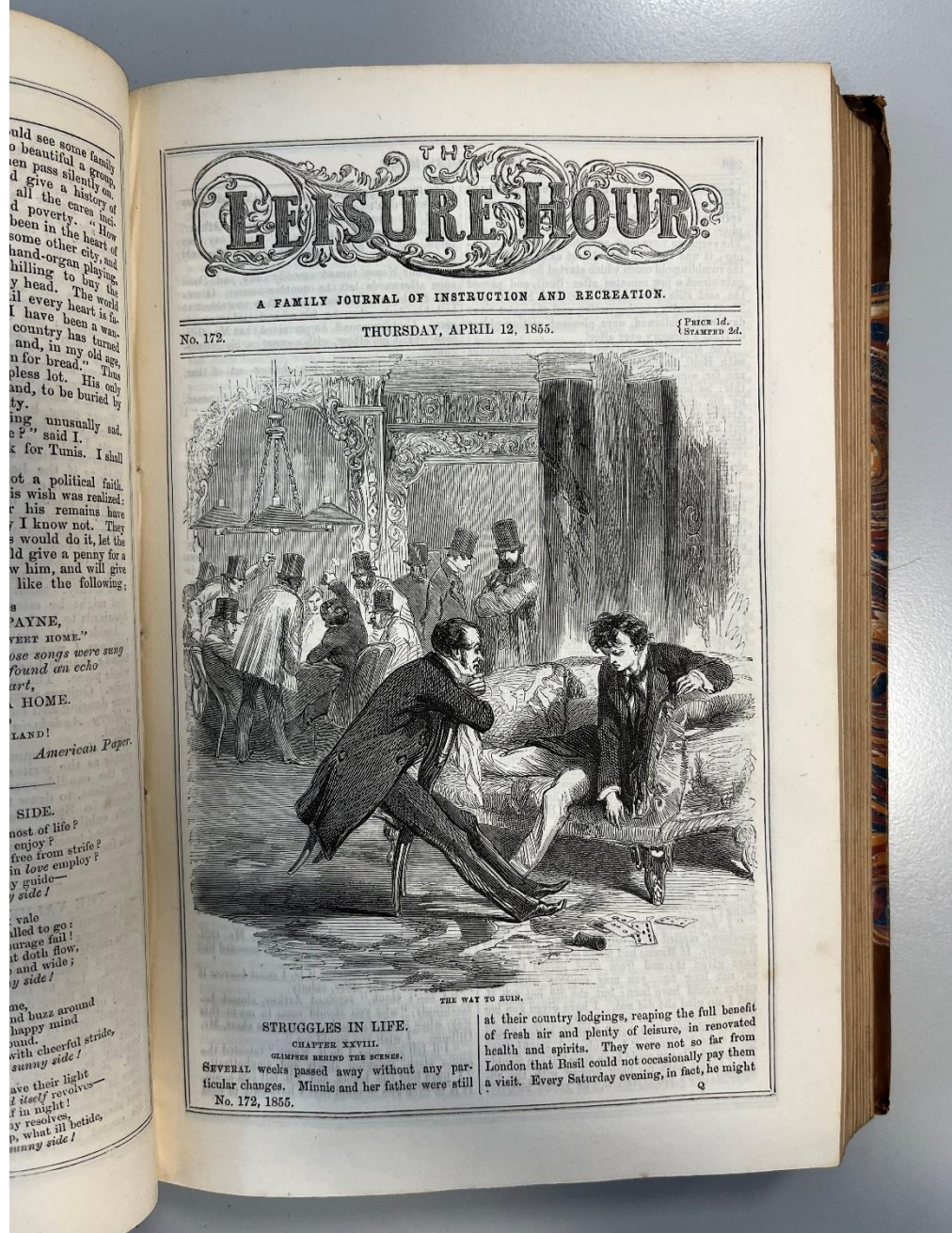


Fig. 4.48 John Gilbert, "The Way to Ruin," *The Leisure Hour*, April 12, 1855, 225.

### THE CAMERA AS RECORDER: RECENT EVENTS BY PHOTOGRAPHY.



WHERE MANY BUILDINGS HAVE BURIED INTO A CAVERN: VILLA SAN STEFANO, BETWEEN ROME AND NAPLES, ONE OF THE OLDEST VILLAGES IN ITALY.

A part of Villa San Stefano, one of the oldest villages in Italy, which lies close to the road between Rome and Naples, recently began to sink into a cavern which had opened beneath it. Earthquakes had been heard for many years before but it was thought at first that these were of volcanic origin. An examination by engineers proved, however, that under a section of the village which had always been thought to have been built upon a solid lava rock foundation there was a cavern some 40 yards long by 25 yards wide. This cavern, it is supposed, had been caused by infiltrations of water during the centuries. On March 31 the walls of one of the softest showed large cracks, and the population was promptly evacuated. A few hours afterwards a roof was heard and, one by one, the cottages over the threatened area collapsed and disappeared into a large gushing fissure in the ground.



RUINS AT VILLA SAN STEFANO: A PHOTOGRAPH SHOWING THE LEF OF THE CAVERN, WHICH IS BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN FORMED BY INFILTRATION OF WATER.



PROMINENT FIGURES IN THE HAWAIIAN MURDER TRIAL: (L. TO R.) F. LORD AND A. JONES, THE TWO GUILTY ACCUSED; MR. ROBERT BELL, BROTHER OF MRS. GRANVILLE FORTESCUE; MRS. GRANVILLE FORTESCUE; MRS. MASSIE, THE ALLEGED VICTIM OF AN ASSAULT BY THE DEAR KAHANAWAI; AND LIEUT. MASSIE, HER HUSBAND.

The trial of Mrs. Granville Fortescue for the murder of her son-in-law, Lieut. Thomas Massie, and two other officers, Robert Jones and Albert Jones, on a charge of having abetted and murdered Joe Kahanawai, a young native, began at Honolulu on April 4. The selection of the jury was expected to last a week, as each side is allowed twenty-four challenges. The trial itself is likely to continue for two or three weeks. Mr. Clarence Darrow (who is 72) is counsel for the defense. He is the most famous criminal lawyer in the United States. Mr. John Kelly, newly appointed to the post of Public Prosecutor, represents the State. It was stated that Mrs. Fortescue would tell the jury what took place in her home on the day Kahanawai was killed. It was anticipated that Lieut. Massie would outline a defence of accidental homicide, and that Mrs. Massie would tell of a series of events, including an attack upon her, which preceded the death of Kahanawai.



COUNSEL FOR THE DEFENSE IN THE HAWAIIAN MURDER TRIAL: MR. CLARENCE DARROW, WHO CELEBRATED HIS CENTENARY BIRTHDAY.



THE PARTHENON FLOOD-LIT ON GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY: A VIEW FROM THE INSIDE OF THE TEMPLE, SHOWING THE LOVELY EFFECT ACHIEVED BY THE ILLUMINATION OF THE MARBLE.



THE WORLD-FAMOUS PARTHENON FLOOD-LIT FOR THE FIRST TIME: ONE OF GREECE'S MOST PRECIOUS ANCIENT BUILDINGS, AND THE FINEST GEM OF THE ACROPOLIS, EMBELLISHED BY THE MODERN INVENTION.

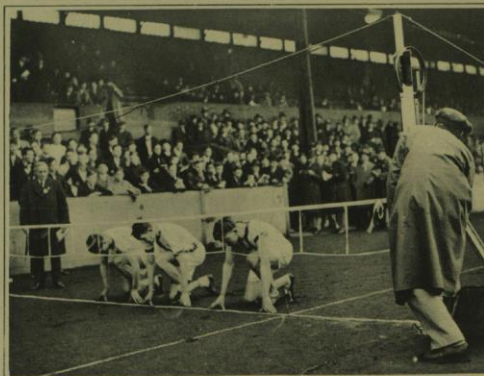
On March 25, the anniversary of the national struggle against the Turks, in 1821, Independence Day was celebrated in Greece. On this occasion the buildings on the Acropolis at Athens were flood-lit. The prominent position of the Acropolis, and the fine proportions and bold outlines of the ruins, made this a spectacle of sublime beauty. We have illustrated two views of the world-famous Parthenon, flood-lit for the first time. An illustration of the Memorial to the Greek Lighthouse Soldier (erected on Independence Day) will be found on page 532. Some of the reasons may be imagined to justify that Mr. H. A. L. Fisher, President of the Hellenic Travelers' Club, accompanied by Lord Cowley and Lord Trenchard, laid a wreath before the Memorial on Sunday, March 27.

Fig.4.49 "The Camera as Recorder: Recent Events by Photography," *Illustrated London News*, April 9, 1932, 545.

FROM THE WORLD'S SCRAP-BOOK:  
NEWS ITEMS OF TOPICAL INTEREST.



THE ENGINE OF THE FIRST TRAIN TO ENTER THE VATICAN CITY: AN INCIDENT OF THE INAUGURATION OF THE NEW RAILWAY INTO PAPAL TERRITORY IN ROME. The new railway into the Vatican City was recently completed, and a few days ago the service was inaugurated by the entry of the first ordinary train into the Vatican station. Our illustration shows the locomotive which drew it standing alongside the platform, with the dome of St. Peter's in the background. The train started from the Roman station of St. Peter's and crossed a bridge into the Papal territory—a memorable innovation in the annals of the Vatican.



THE FIRST "STARTING-GATE" USED IN ATHLETICS: THE START OF A HEAT IN THE QUARTER-MILE AT THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS SPORTS—THE GATE BEFORE THE RUNNERS. In the Public Schools Sports, held at Stamford Bridge on April 1 and 2, a starting-gate, designed by Mr. Rottenburg, was used for the first time at any athletic meeting. Though it had proved effective in preliminary tests, a mishap occurred in the first heat of the quarter-mile, when one runner broke and became entangled in the webbing before it was released automatically by the starter's gun. Lancing and St. Lawrence tied for the Cup.



A MONUMENT TO THE GREEK UNKNOWN SOLDIER AT ATHENS: THE SCENE JUST AFTER ITS UNVEILING BY M. MICHALAPOULOS (THIRD FROM LEFT IN RIGHT-HAND GROUP). On the Greek Day of Independence (March 25) the monument to the Greek Unknown Soldier was unveiled by the Vice-President, A. Michalopoulos. The monument is set in front of the former Royal Palace, and consists of a marble tomb (on which rests a silver lamp) and a bas-relief on the stone wall above. The relief represents a fallen Greek warrior. Photographs of the Parthenon, which was flooded on the same occasion, will be found on page 545.

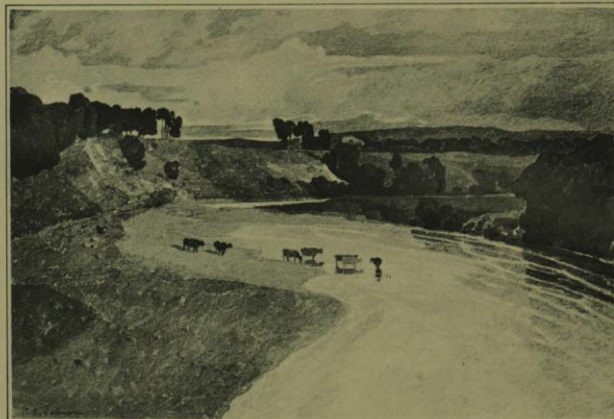


A GIGANTIC COOKERY COMPETITION IN PROGRESS: A REMARKABLE FEATURE OF THE TENTH INNKEEPERS' FAIR AT BERLIN.

The tenth Innkeepers' Fair opened at Berlin on April 2. A noteworthy feature was a model week-end hotel. We here illustrate one of the several cooking tournaments which were organised under the auspices of the Berlin Gas Company and the Berlin Municipal Offices. These competitions included one for wives of restaurant proprietors, another for housewives expert at the gas-stove, and even one for actors! The prizes totalled some 10,000 marks.



FOR SALE WITH OTHER CONTENTS OF CHESTERFIELD HOUSE: ONE OF A MAGNIFICENT SET OF CHIPPENDALE ARMCHAIRS. Arrangements were made for the contents of Chesterfield House, which belongs to the Earl of Harwood, to be sold by Messrs. Sotheby on April 7. The lots include a very fine set of four Chippendale mahogany armchairs. They are beautiful examples of Chippendale's French style, and the backs and seats are covered with the original Sobò tapestry.



THE TREASURE OF THE WEEK AT THE VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM: "LANDSCAPE WITH RIVER AND CATTLE"; A WATER COLOUR BY COTMAN.

John Sell Cotman (1782-1842) ranks with J. R. Cozens, Turner, De Wint, and Constable as one of the greatest of English water-colour painters. His genius lay mainly in his sense of design, combined with simplification and harmony of colour. "Landscape with River and Cattle," which was given to the Museum in 1894 by Mr. J. E. Taylor, admirably shows the distinctive character of Cotman's work—his power of manipulating broad flat washes of pure colour and of leaving light spaces where the tint of his first wash shows through the superimposed second wash.

Fig.4.50 "From the World's Scrap-Book: News Items of Topical Interest," *Illustrated London News*, April 9, 1932, 552.