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MADAME DE STAËL'S LITERARY CAREER IN ENGLAND THROUGH THE LENS OF PERIODICAL EDITING : STAËL'S POLITICS OF AFFECT

Résumé: *M^{me} de Staël arrive à Londres en 1813 avec une aura de figure mondaine, politique et littéraire sur laquelle elle compte s'appuyer pour faire de la capitale anglaise le fer de lance du renouveau de sa carrière. Cet article analyse cette évolution au travers: (1) de ses relations amicales et professionnelles avec trois éditeurs et rédacteurs en chef de périodiques (John Murray, éditeur de De l'Allemagne (1813) et propriétaire du Quarterly Review, Jean-Gabriel Peltier, éditeur de Corinne (1807), ainsi que propriétaire et rédacteur en chef de L'Ambigu et Henry Colburn, éditeur de plusieurs œuvres de M^{me} de Staël et propriétaire du New Monthly Review); (2) des critiques littéraires et notices publiées à son propos dans ces périodiques. L'article s'appuie ainsi sur la correspondance de M^{me} de Staël, sur les biographies des rédacteurs en chef ainsi que leurs stratégies éditoriales, afin de mieux comprendre la façon dont ils influent sur l'évolution de la carrière de M^{me} de Staël et l'intégration de cette dernière dans l'inconscient collectif britannique. D'un point de vue théorique, cet article s'inspire de travaux récents sur les formes d'affect en rapport avec les aptitudes sociales et relationnelles qui font partie intégrante de la personnalité de Germaine de Staël.*

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On the strength of the international success of her second novel *Corinne*, and the fame she attracted through her political conflict with Napoleon and European tour, Germaine de Staël made an anticipated *entrée* in London in 1813-1814, which both fascinated and challenged the English literary and social elites. Scottish historian James Mackintosh expressed the tension with which Staël contemplated England: «she admires the English, among whom she could not endure to live¹». This article looks into the English response to Staël's presence and literary output in England, through the lens of periodical editing. More particularly, it focuses on how Staël's literary fame and networking affected in multiple ways three London-based periodical owners and editors, whose collective voice contributed to the construction of her literary career in England.

Staël chose John Murray for the publication of *De l'Allemagne*, after it had been rejected in France by Napoleon's censorship in 1810. Jean-Gabriel Peltier was the first to publish *Corinne* in London. Henry Colburn began his independent career in 1812 with, among other publications, an edition of Staël's *De la littérature*. Unlike Murray, who refrained from logrolling his books in his periodical *The Quarterly Review*² (1809-1967), both Peltier and Colburn puffed their books in theirs, respectively *L'Ambigu* (1802-1818), and *The New Monthly Magazine*³ (1814-1884). Staël's relationship with Murray has been discussed⁴, from the perspective of their correspondence and social interaction. Yet Murray's periodical remains an overlooked source of information. The dearth of letters mentioning Peltier and Colburn's name in Staël's correspondence, and the lack of archival material from their side, has generated little research that elucidates their relationship with her. This study maps out these connections more precisely.

¹ James Mackintosh, *Memoirs of the life of the Right Honourable Sir James Mackintosh*, London, ed. Robert James Mackintosh, 1835, I, p. 406.

² With the notable exception of Walter Scott's article on Jane Austen's *Emma* (March 1816).

³ Among others for Colburn, see Veronica Melnyk, «*Half fashion and half passion*»: *the life of publisher Henry Colburn*, Ph.D. thesis, University of Birmingham, 2002.

⁴ Research on Murray's archives was presented at the conference *Reputations, Legacies, Futures: Jane Austen, Germaine de Staël and their contemporaries, 1817-2017* at Chawton House Library, Chawton: 13-15 July 2017, organised by Catriona Seth, Gillian Dow and Nicola Watson.

Staël's personality has baffled and captivated her biographers, who tend to quantify her chaotic emotional reactions and cast Staël as an open enigma: « qui êtes vous Madame de Staël ? », concludes Michel Winock, « femme de tête et cœur ardent, elle ne se laisse pas résumer d'un mot⁵ ». Emotions are slippery, irrational, and notoriously difficult to channel, yet they underlie the structure of the text, and especially, as Julia Kristeva points out, Staël's writing⁶. The discursive, open space of the periodical, its affective potentiality, is fertile ground for their expression.

From a first gleaning of English periodicals⁷ to recent in-depth analyses of Staël's posterity⁸, Staël's literary reception in the press has not been neglected. However, this scholarship essentially focuses on the text, as opposed to the emotional networks that lay behind it. This article looks into Staël's politics of affect. By looking into Staël's private and public dialogues with Murray (1), Peltier (2), and Colburn (3), it builds on an expanding body of work in the field of periodical studies that considers relations of affect⁹, and the charisma of the periodical editor¹⁰. Staël's position as a woman, pushing herself and her ideas forward in relation to others in a male environment, was political. For this reason I prefer the expression « politics of affect » over weaker notions of networks or relations in the specific case of Staël. I argue that periodical editing is the pivotal point between Staël's agency and the development of her literary career, from which I draw the scope of her literary and editorial influence on the English cultural imagination.

⁵ Michel Winock, *Madame de Staël*, Paris, Fayard/Pluriel, 2012, p. 579.

⁶ See Julia Kristeva, « Gloire, deuil et écriture. Lettre à un "romantique" sur M^{me} de Staël », *Romantisme*, n° 62, 1988, p. 14.

⁷ Robert Calvin Whitford, *Madame de Staël's literary reputation in England*, Urbana, University of Illinois, 1918.

⁸ Stéphanie Tribouillard, *Le Tombeau de Madame de Staël: Les discours de la postérité staëlienne en France (1817-1850)*, Paris, Slatkine, 2007.

⁹ Fionulla Dillane, « Forms of Affect, Relationality, and Periodical Encounters, or "Pine-Apple for the Million" », *Journal of European Periodical Studies*, n° 1, 2016, p. 5-24.

¹⁰ Matthew Philpotts, « The Role of the Periodical Editor: Literary Journals and Editorial Habitus », *The Modern Language Review*, n° 107, 2012, p. 39-64.

Staël treated Murray as a friend, as show the numerous invitations and notes she sent him. She found her place among the men of letters who crowded Murray's drawing room, and found her tone in letters of polite yet firm negotiation towards the publication of her books. Murray did not, however, promote Staël's work in *The Quarterly Review*. Her literary career suffered, rather, from the extent of her social success.

On 12 October 1813, Staël wrote to Murray: «vous êtes parfaitement *gentleman like* en tout¹¹». As Kathryn Sutherland remarks, John Murray (1778-1843), second publisher in a line of seven from father to son, «was in the vanguard of a new breed of publishers¹²». Sutherland refers to Murray's social networking, and to his reputation as a «gentleman» publisher. Murray entertained during literary afternoons, as opposed to the traditional literary *soirées*, in his house on Albemarle Street, where he moved in 1812. Murray also strove for respectability, and he treated his authors well¹³. Staël quoted Murray as «her» publisher to her close friend Benjamin Constant: «votre livre n'est point arrivé à mon libraire Murray¹⁴». The possessive article marks both Staël's social interacting in England through her close connection with Murray, and her wishful participation in the development of her English career.

An agreement over a sum of 1500 guineas for *De l'Allemagne* was settled on 11 July 1813, and couched in a contract witnessed by their mutual friend, the lawyer Henry Crabb Robinson. The price was high¹⁵. Murray published *De l'Allemagne* on 3 November 1813. Staël wrote (at least) seventeen letters to him, from the signature of her contract to the publication of this first edition. This correspondence reveals the care Staël took in the edition, translation, and promotion of her work in the periodical press. She begs Murray to

¹¹ Germaine de Staël, *Correspondance générale*, VIII «Le Grand Voyage», ed. Jean-Daniel Candaux and Stéphanie Genand, Genève, Slatkine, 2017, p. 390.

¹² Kathryn Sutherland, «Austen's dealings with Murray and his firm», *The Review of English Studies*, n° 263, 2013, p. 110.

¹³ See Humphrey Carpenter, *The Seven Lives of John Murray: The Story of a Publishing Dynasty*, London, Murray, 2008, p. 93.

¹⁴ 18 January 1814, CG-VIII, p. 457.

¹⁵ Though less than the sums she later demanded for *Considérations sur la Révolution française* (see correspondence with Murray).

exert his influence on her behalf with other newspapers¹⁶, she enquires regularly about the advertising of her book¹⁷, and even suggests the production of a second edition¹⁸.

While his book publishing business flourished, Murray launched *The Quarterly Review* to counter the influence of the widely read *Edinburgh Review*. *The Quarterly* appeared four times a year. Following the advice of the novelist and poet Walter Scott, Murray paid his first editor William Gifford handsomely¹⁹. 4200 copies of the first 240 page issue of *The Quarterly* were sold after two reprints. Circulation gradually rose to 6000 in 1814. Gifford worked with a team of politically influential contributors, while he specialized in literary editing. These contributors were part of Murray's circle of friends and business associates of Albemarle Street, among whom were Scott, George Canning, John Wilson Croker, John Barrow and Robert Southey²⁰. The journal addressed a mostly middle-class readership. It was political, but it also delivered literary criticism, and was known, together with *The Edinburgh Review*, to forge literary fortunes.

The rivalry between *The Quarterly Review* and *The Edinburgh Review* affected the reception of Staël's work during her lifetime and early posterity. Staël's intimate friend Mackintosh produced a highly complimentary review of *De l'Allemagne* for *The Edinburgh Review* in October 1813²¹, before Murray had published the book. Reginald Heber's²² review in *The Quarterly* appeared in January 1814²³. Its length is a tribute to Staël's fame and its tone echoes social deference. Yet, as opposed to *The Edinburgh Review*, it subtly, and

¹⁶ CG-VIII, p. 302 and p. 479.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 404.

¹⁸ Germaine de Staël, *Correspondance générale*, IX « Derniers combats », ed. Jean-Daniel Candaux and Stéphanie Genand, Genève, Slatkine, 2017, p. 126.

¹⁹ Gifford received 160 guineas per publication which he distributed among contributors at his own discretion, and an annual salary of 200 pounds.

²⁰ Letter to his son Archibald, August 1813, in *The Seven Lives of John Murray*, p. 80.

²¹ James Mackintosh, *The Edinburgh Review*, n° 43, 1813, p. 198-238.

²² English clergyman and man of letters, whose travels through the North of Europe may have influenced Murray's choice.

²³ Reginald Heber, *The Quarterly Review*, n° 20, 1814, p. 355-409.

repeatedly, undermines Staël's work. Heber develops Staël's arguments against his own culturally influenced reflections. He dwells on the historical context of Staël's first attempt to publish the work, which he swathes in mild patriotism by referring to her « gratifying preface²⁴ ». *De l'Allemagne* adopts a cross-cultural perspective which culminates in Staël's transnational definition of « enthusiasm », etymologically inspired from the Greek word, which signifies « God in us ». Staël's notion of enthusiasm is an expansion of the spirit and the mind to the understanding and appreciation of different cultures, paving the way to happiness²⁵. Heber's concluding paragraphs build on Staël's allusion to divinity, which he reduces to mysticism, and from thence to madness, before countering Staël's universality with multiplicity, and undermining her intent by invoking national vocabularies and interpretations. Heber ascribes *De l'Allemagne*'s pan-Europeanism to the author's frustrated patriotism, and her long-suffering exile: « it is the melody of a bird who sings, in its lonely prison, of love and liberty²⁶ ». He confines Staël's literary talent to her femininity, as he praises her « taste²⁷ » and « *ardentia verba*²⁸ ». *De l'Allemagne*'s reception in Murray's periodical contributed to the decline of Staël's posthumous career by fixing it to the social and political prejudice of the day.

Only one letter from Albertine de Staël to Murray asks the latter to send Staël the periodical in which Heber's article appeared²⁹. The fact that there is hardly any mention of *The Quarterly Review* is not so remarkable, as the business agreement between Staël and Murray reflected the understanding they shared in her literary fame and her social aura: neither Murray nor his editor had previously read the book; the price was pledged on the advantage of publishing Staël rather than on its content³⁰. By signing their contract, Staël had placed herself in an emotional position *vis-à-vis* Murray that respected these

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 355.

²⁵ See Staël's three last chapters on enthusiasm and happiness, *De l'Allemagne*, OCS-III/1, ed. Axel Blaeschke, Paris, Champion, 2017.

²⁶ Reginald Heber, *The Quarterly Review*, n° 20, 1814, p. 408.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 409.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ CG-VIII, p. 478.

³⁰ See letter from Gifford to Murray in Samuel Smiles, *in A Publisher and his Friends*, London, Murray, 1891, p. 314.

terms. The extent of Staël's social efforts is reflected in *The Quarterly's* respectful tone, yet the indifference of her critical reception highlights the distinction Murray kept between his social demeanour and his professional choices. If Murray, the publisher, encouraged Staël's literary fame through his genial social interaction, Murray, the periodical owner, hindered the promotion and posterity of her career in England.

Staël's literary promotion in *L'Ambigu* shows how her literary fame strengthened in the periodical press however callously periodicals treated her. The relationship between Staël and Jean-Gabriel Peltier (1760-1825) is articulated around the tensions between a polemical editor and an author, whose professional and social success freed them from mutual obligation, but compelled them, especially on Peltier's side, to acknowledgement and nagging collaboration.

Peltier was primarily a periodical editor, who published books on the side³¹. During the French Revolution he edited *Les Actes des Apôtres*, which lead violent attacks against members of the French government. *L'Ambigu*, edited in London between 1802 and 1818, was heir to the aggressive royalist hack-writings of Peltier's revolutionary prose. The title of the periodical refers to Napoleon, towards whom Peltier directed most of his bellicosity. *L'Ambigu* was also the crowning of his career, and the most important development of the French oppositional press during the French Empire. It came out three times a month and was sold at five guineas a year. Chateaubriand describes how Peltier circulated his periodical lucratively around the world³²: it was sent secretly to France, to America, to the colonies, to Saint Petersburg and even Bombay. Peltier had developed an international network of information, via his many contacts abroad, who sent him reports, or crates full of foreign newspapers. True to the motto « Diversité sera notre devise³³ », *L'Ambigu*

³¹ Hélène Maspéro-Clerc, *Un Journaliste contre-révolutionnaire, Jean-Gabriel Peltier (1760-1825)*, Paris, Société d'Études Robespierristes, 1973, p. 267.

³² « Pelletier [sic] [...] venait de placer cent exemplaires de son journal aux colonies; il en avait reçu le payement et faisait sonner ses guinées dans sa poche », François-René de Chateaubriand, *Mémoires d'outre-tombe*, Bruxelles, Meline, Cans et Cie, 1849, II, p. 90.

³³ *L'Ambigu*, n° 1, 1802, p. 2.

contained a motley assortment of information: political acts from foreign countries, the correspondence of political emigrants, proclamations and war reports, some society gossip, literary reviews, and political analyses.

Simone Balayé asserts that Peltier disliked Staël³⁴, yet Peltier's treatment of Staël may also be ascribed to his marketing strategy. The evolution of Peltier's editorial choices follows an emotional pattern that went hand in hand with Staël's growing literary fame. He produced regular slander on Staël³⁵ until shortly after the publication of *Corinne* in France, on 1 May 1807. *L'Ambigu* hailed the novel on 10 May 1807 with a poem by a misogynist French poet known as Lebrun Pindare³⁶. In the following issue, Peltier reprinted an article that Charles-Marie de Feletz, an enemy of Staël, had written for *Le Journal de l'Empire*³⁷. However, the Parisian triumph of *Corinne* convinced Peltier to revise his strategy. On 10 June 1807, he published a letter by Staël's friend Sismondi, footnoted by the editor as follows: « *Corinne ou l'Italie* paraîtra le 20 de ce mois, chez M. Peltier³⁸ ».

Peltier published an edition of the novel bound in red leather with gold lettering. His three volumes of *Corinne* would have appealed to the upper-class population of French speakers in London. The edition encloses a dedication page (absent in the Parisian edition of 1807 by Nicolle), on which appears the manuscript name « Olivia³⁹ » probably in reference to Maria Edgeworth's

³⁴ Simone Balayé, *Madame de Staël. Écrire, Lutter, Vivre*, Genève, Droz, 1994, p. 262.

³⁵ Peltier often played on her rivalry with Madame de Genlis: see, for instance, *L'Ambigu*, n° 4, 1802, p. 93.

³⁶ *L'Ambigu*, n° 148, 1807, p. 270.

³⁷ Reprinted in *La Gazette de France, Le Journal du Commerce, Le Courier des spectacles* and *Le Courier français*. See « *Corinne et la presse parisienne de 1807* », in *Écrire, Lutter, Vivre*, p. 245-263.

³⁸ Staël had asked Jean-Baptiste Suard to encourage the promotion of *Corinne* by publishing a letter written by Sismondi in *Le Publiciste*. It appeared on 27 May 1807, disguised as anonymous praise. See Robert de Luppé, *Madame de Staël et J.-B.-A. Suard: correspondance inédite (1786-1817)*, Genève, Droz, 1970, p. 88-89.

³⁹ See copy at the BNF, Paris: Germaine de Staël-Holstein, *Corinne ou l'Italie*, London, Peltier, 1807.

popular epistolary novel *Leonora*⁴⁰ (1806). *Leonora* was known to celebrate English manners over French ones, caricatured in the behaviour of one of its main characters, the extravagantly emotional and narcissistic Lady Olivia. If this conjecture is correct, Peltier thus evoked the English reception of Staël's first novel *Delphine*⁴¹ (1802), and encouraged a similar polemic around *Corinne*. This dedication shows how Peltier sought to reach out to the English public opinion.

When *Réflexions sur le Suicide* appeared in Sweden in April 1813, Peltier prepared a similar publication plan to the one he had devised for *Corinne*. On 10 June, *L'Ambigu* advertised Staël's new work by reprinting its dedication pages, upon which Peltier announced the publication of the book: «cet ouvrage est sous presse, et sera publié dans quelques jours par M. Peltier⁴²». On 20 June, however, Peltier published another excerpt of *Réflexions sur le Suicide*, with the following notice:

Madame la baronne de Staël Holstein étant arrivée à Londres, va publier sans doute elle-même les belles *Réflexions sur le suicide* [...] ainsi le Rédacteur de ce Journal retire l'annonce qu'il avait faite de leur réimpression. Il se contente d'annoncer aujourd'hui qu'on retrouvera à chaque page de ce nouvel ouvrage l'imagination brillante, les pensées profondes et le style enchanteur de l'auteur de *Corinne*⁴³.

Réflexions sur le Suicide was published by Louis Laurent Deconchy, admittedly a colleague of Peltier's as they shared the same printer (Schulze and Dean), and Peltier advertised Deconchy's publications in *L'Ambigu*⁴⁴. Whether Peltier was paving his way towards gaining Staël's trust or simply made an arrangement with Deconchy is

⁴⁰ On *Corinne* and intertextuality, and more specifically about Edgeworth's *Leonora*, see Xx in the present issue, p. Xx.

⁴¹ «[*Delphine*] seemed to English readers to furnish corroborative evidence for the popular estimate of Madame de Staël as a clever advocate of revolutionary doctrines and free love», *Madame de Staël's literary reputation in England*, p. 14.

⁴² *L'Ambigu*, n° 367, 1813, p. 529.

⁴³ *L'Ambigu*, n° 368, 1813, p. 632. As from the triumph of *Corinne*, Peltier resorted to simpering praise in reference to Staël.

⁴⁴ See *L'Ambigu*, n° 367, 1813, p. 506 and p. 600.

unclear. When *De l'Allemagne* appeared a few months later, Peltier published an excerpt and praised the book while admitting he had only read the preface⁴⁵. Eventually, on 30 May 1818, Peltier made a statement of truth in a posthumous tribute to Staël's fame: «La célébrité attachée à son nom nous impose la loi de rendre compte de toutes les particularités relatives à la dernière production de sa plume⁴⁶».

Staël refrained from getting involved with Peltier. On 16 May 1807 she wrote to her friend Étienne Dumont, a Swiss pastor who had spent several years in London, pressing him to find a good English translator for *Corinne*⁴⁷. According to Béatrice Jasinski, Staël's request aborted⁴⁸. Staël only mentions Peltier once, in *Dix années d'exil*. She omits his title and belittles his status when she cites him in reference to her acquaintance with Mackintosh: «Peltier eut l'honneur d'être défendu par M. Mackintosh⁴⁹». Staël's lack of public consideration for the editor of *L'Ambigu* may be explained in an opinion she expressed to Vincenzo Monti on 10 July 1807: «vous savez qu'ils [les journaux] m'ont souvent attaquée [...] mais je n'ai jamais remarqué que cela fit aucun mal à ma réputation: au contraire⁵⁰».

Henry Colburn's (1784-1855) fascination with both fame and aristocracy⁵¹ drew him to Staël. Although we have evidence of her attempt to communicate with Colburn, the latter's editorial strategies, or puffery, escaped Staël's control. Colburn used Staël's literary fame to his professional advantage, and by the same stratagem he transformed her career in the English cultural imagination.

⁴⁵ *L'Ambigu*, n° 382, 1813, p. 344.

⁴⁶ *L'Ambigu*, n° 510, 1818, p. 404.

⁴⁷ Germaine de Staël, *Correspondance générale*, VI «De *Corinne* vers *De l'Allemagne*», ed. Béatrice W. Jasinski, Paris, Klincksieck, 1993, p. 255.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* Two translations of the novel appeared in 1807, without Staël's approval: Staël's works that were published abroad were not bound to copyright law in England.

⁴⁹ Germaine de Staël, *Dix années d'exil*, ed. Simone Balayé and Maria Vianello Bonifacio, Paris, Fayard, 1996, p. 143.

⁵⁰ CG-VI, p. 276.

⁵¹ Colburn developed a literary genre known as «silver-fork», or fashionable novels, written by titled authors, who dwelled with nostalgia on past elegance.

Colburn was generally known to handle his collaborators with tact and generosity⁵², while he cultivated the virtues of visibility. In 1806 he started to work in Morgan's Library of Conduit Street in the fashionable district of Mayfair, only a few hundred meters away from Murray's future headquarters. From this early period he already printed «Colburn's Library» in his books, ousting the name of the gentleman to whom he was apprenticed⁵³. He eventually became the sole proprietor of the establishment in 1812. Between 1812 and 1814, Colburn reprinted, without Staël's consent, *De la littérature* (1812), *De l'influence des Passions* (1813), *Zulma* (1813) and *Lettres sur Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (1814). He claims to have published *Delphine* and *Corinne*⁵⁴. As Staël comments to Murray: «Dulau [Staël's London editor for *Delphine*] prétend que Colburn nuira à l'effet de mon livre en réimprimant tout ce que j'ai publié. Il le fait peut-être par humeur de n'avoir pas été préféré⁵⁵». In another letter to Murray, Staël refers to Colburn's publications: «Répondez-moi un de ces jours sur mes diverses propositions: *Wallstein* de M. Constant, *Lettres sur Rousseau*, *Delphine*, etc. Parlez à Colburne [sic], mais quand vous voudrez, je ne suis pas pressée⁵⁶». Instead of lamenting Colburn's misappropriation of her work, and while the sales of *De l'Allemagne* were not as profitable as Murray expected⁵⁷, Staël induces competition between both publishers to boost her literary output.

The New Monthly Magazine was the first periodical owned by Colburn. Several editors saw the magazine through its first few years, during which Colburn was testing this new branch of his enterprise by getting deeply involved in its running. In the address to the public

⁵² Colburn would be generous to authors in whom he detected potential. There was, however, some trouble with Darwin: see Guido Braem, *Darwin, une biographie*, Voreppe, Tropicalia, 2009.

⁵³ *The life of publisher Henry Colburn*, p. 34. See also Veronica Melnyk and John Sutherland, *Rogue Publisher: The "Prince of Puffers": The Life and Works of the Publisher Henry Colburn*, Brighton, Edward Everett Root, 2018.

⁵⁴ On the title page of *Letters on the writings and character of J.J. Rousseau*, London, Colburn, 1814.

⁵⁵ 31 July 1813, CG-VIII, p. 348.

⁵⁶ 20 January 1814, CG-VIII, p. 460.

⁵⁷ Letter A. de Staël to Murray, in *A Publisher and his Friends*, p. 317.

of the first issue, Colburn positions *The New Monthly Magazine* in competition with *The Monthly Magazine*. He advertises the same miscellany of topics but uses the fall of Napoleon of 1814 to outdate so-called « political poison[ing]⁵⁸ » and pave the way for unbound international intellectual exchange. Moreover, he sets the price of *The New Monthly* slightly under that of *The Monthly*⁵⁹. Colburn succeeded in making his magazine one of the most popular of its age. He emulated Murray in his collection of illustrious contributors, which included Edward Bulwer-Lytton, Benjamin Disraeli and William Hazlitt, whom he paid well to ensure the quality of the writing.

The New Monthly Magazine bestows on Staël the authority of a periodical editor, a role she had never officially undertaken :

It has been reported that [Madame de Staël] was to undertake the conduct of the *Mercure de France* in association with Benjamin Constant and other experienced writers⁶⁰.

In 1817, Constant decided to take over the management of *The Mercure de France* with several others. The copy of the prospectus from the BNF (January 1817) is signed with the names of several collaborators. The introductory title excludes Staël: « par MM. Constant, Dufresne St Léon, Esménard, Jay, Jouy, Lacretelle aîné, etc.⁶¹ ». However much Constant might have wished Staël to join the editorial team of the *Mercure de France*, she only contributed a poem in March. Constant's note inserted after the article points to the extent of Staël's influence and reputation in Europe at the end of her life :

Notre empressement à recueillir tout ce qui sort de la plume de la femme la plus célèbre et la plus spirituelle de l'Europe, et le désir de mériter qu'elle enrichisse ce recueil de quelques morceaux où elle paraîtrait encore plus elle-même, nous a déterminé à l'insérer

⁵⁸ *The New Monthly Magazine*, n° 1, 1814, p. i-ii.

⁵⁹ A bound volume of *The Monthly Magazine* cost sixteen shillings while that of *The New Monthly* cost fourteen shillings.

⁶⁰ *The New Monthly Magazine*, n° 41, 1817, p. 422.

⁶¹ See copy at the BNF, Paris: *Mercure de France*, prospectus, 1 January 1817.

[the article], certains que tout ce qu'écrit madame de St[aë]l sera lu avec avidité par nos lecteurs⁶².

These words were echoed and transformed by Colburn in the English press. Colburn posthumously advertised Staël's fame⁶³ while he reprinted in 1818 in Paris and London *Mémoires sur la vie privée de mon père* with a section of Constant's obituary article in lieu of a preface⁶⁴. Colburn's gossip circulated in several English periodicals from July to November 1817. *The Literary Gazette*, which Colburn launched in 1817, claims the authorship of one of Staël's widely reprinted obituaries: «we take up our pen this week to trace as correct a biography as our present means of information and our haste will allow⁶⁵», and concludes: «the *Mercure*, we have reason to believe, recorded the latest of her opinions and the last tracings of her prolific pen⁶⁶». While this equivocal statement does not confirm Staël's editorial functions, it does not debunk Colburn's previous assertion in the *New Monthly*. *The Gentleman's Magazine* reprinted the article with no alteration to the sentence, while other periodicals such as *The European Magazine and London Review*, or *The Edinburgh Observer*, circulated a version which changed the modality of the sentence from near certainty to probability, by replacing «we have reason to believe» with the adverb «probably⁶⁷». These kinds of transfers feed the collective cultural imagination. Following her death, Staël's fame fostered the circulation of false rumours concerning her life and works that were discredited in the English press⁶⁸.

⁶² *Mercure de France*, 1 March 1817.

⁶³ See, for instance, the portrait of Madame de Staël on the seventh volume of *The New Monthly Magazine*, «engraved by H. Meyer» (November 1817).

⁶⁴ *Mercure de France*, 26 July 1817.

⁶⁵ *The Literary Gazette, Journal of Belles Lettres, Politics and Fashion*, n° 27, 1817, p. 60.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ See *The Gentleman's Magazine* (reprint of *The Day and New Times*), n° 87, 1817, p. 181, *The European Magazine and London Review*, n° 22, 1817, p. 144 and *The Edinburgh Observer or, Town and country magazine*, n° 3, 1817, p. 72.

⁶⁸ See *The Monthly Repository of theology and general literature* (reprint of *The Morning Chronicle*), n° 141, 1817, p. 556.

The reports concerning her editorial influence, however, remain unchallenged.

When Staël entered the English publishing market she had already made a name for herself, as a society lady, as a political refugee, and as an intellectual. *De l'Allemagne* was famous before its publication. Staël had thus at her disposal a considerable amount of social capital on which she traded to promote her literary career with publishers and periodical editors. She favoured her official publisher Murray, whom she treated as a friend, while she begged him through an assiduous correspondence to advertise *De l'Allemagne*. She ignored Peltier as he grappled with her rising literary fame in the pages of *L'Ambigu*, and reached out to Colburn, who reprinted many of her works while he spread rumours about her literary activities in his periodicals.

This article has treated the text of the periodical as a kind of public correspondence between Staël and her publishers, by confronting it with private correspondences and personal ambitions. While Staël plays out her politics of affect, Murray, Peltier, and Colburn's periodicals collectively map out their «affective experiences⁶⁹» of Staël's reputation and networking. Looking behind the text of the periodical has highlighted the crucial role of the editor, and the necessity of incorporating the relations of affect that play a role in their decision making. This method has enabled us to understand how Staël negotiated her presence in the English literary sphere as well as other elements that influenced periodical editors. *The Quarterly Review's* rivalry with *The Edinburgh Review* for instance came into play in the particular case of Staël. Murray and Peltier's case studies have shown how the very extent of Staël's social fame and influence set limits to her literary career and posterity, yet contributed to the construction of a persona, whose imagined influence, inflated in Colburn's periodicals, belied reality. The English would not claim Staël as their own, but they did admire her.

⁶⁹ In «Forms of Affect, Relationality, and Periodical Encounters» (p. 8), Dillane pluralizes a phrase used by Rachel Ablow as she adapts Affect theory to the periodical format.