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Sailors, Book Hawkers, and Bricklayer's Laborers: Social Types and the Production of Social Knowledge in Nineteenth-Century Periodical Literature

CHRISTIANE SCHWAB

THROUGHOUT the first half of the nineteenth century, the growth of a literary market and the rise of periodical publishing coincided with an increasing interest in examining modernizing societies. The revolutions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and concomitant dissolutions of feudal orders, migration from the land to the city, and the social consequences of technological and economic innovation led to increased sensitivity about societal structures and cultural forms.[1] In addition, the

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[1] On the awakening of a sociological consciousness at the beginning of the nineteenth century, see Jürgen Osterhammel, *The Transformation of the World: A Global History of the Nineteenth Century*, trans. Patrick Camiller (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2014), pp. 17–44.

relaxation of censorship and new technologies of paper production and printing promoted the explosion of a vast variety of print products. In this context, thousands of newly founded journals, newspapers, and magazines provided a forum to discuss the radical changes of the social world.[2]

The epistemic and medial developments of the time are in a unique way revealed in unnumbered periodical contributions, which above all in the 1830s and 1840s depicted new and long-established professions, social types, institutions, and cultural routines for a growing readership from Lisbon to St. Petersburg.[3] These "sociographic sketches," shaped as a prose form by renowned literary observers such as Charles Dickens and Honoré de Balzac, and subsumed by Walter Benjamin under the concept of "panoramic literature," would soon be commercialized in volumes and serials.[4] In contrast to acknowledged works of early sociology, which were largely concerned with macro-level approaches to social transformations, the sociographic sketches, as well as other forms of realistic prose, approached social structurings and conditions through

[2] See, e.g., John Boening, "The Unending Conversation: The Role of Periodicals in England and on the Continent during the Romantic Age," in *Nonfictional Romantic Prose: Expanding Borders*, ed. Steven P. Sondrup and Virgil Nemoianu (Amsterdam / Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2004), pp. 285–301; and Patricia Mainardi, "The Invention of the Illustrated Press in France," *French Politics, Culture & Society*, 35, no. 1 (2017), 34–48.

[3] On the proliferation of "sociographic sketches" in England, France, and Germany in these decades, see Martina Lauster, *Sketches of the Nineteenth Century: European Journalism and its Physiologies, 1830–50* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007). It is no coincidence that the French *physiologies*, another sociographic genre that evolved in the context of the commercialization of print, had its peak around 1841–42 (see Nathalie Preiss, *Les Physiologies en France au XIXe siècle: étude historique, littéraire et stylistique* [Mont-de-Marsan: Éditions InterUniversitaires, 1999]). Furthermore, the Spanish form of the *artículo de costumbres* was most popular in the 1830s and 1840s (see José Manuel Losada, "Costumbrismo in Spanish Literature and its European Analogues," in *Nonfictional Romantic Prose*, pp. 333–45).

[4] Since the term "ethnographic" is widely associated with the description of distant cultures and ethnic groups, I prefer the terms "sociographic" or "sociography" to refer to the descriptive examination of sociocultural phenomena and subcultures in one's own society. On the uses of the term sociography as descriptive sociology, see Lodewijk Brunt, "Into the Community," in *Handbook of Ethnography*, ed. Paul Atkinson, et al. (London: Sage Publications, 2002), pp. 80–91. On "panoramic literature," see Walter Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 5/2 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1982), p. 1008.

detailed descriptions of everyday life and individual experiences.[5] Accordingly, the minute depictions of social and material surfaces in texts titled "The Steam Excursion," "The Ladies' Societies," and "L'Épicier" served "as the key to the less visible social relations structuring the present."[6] This epistemic-narrative strategy of oscillating between empirical observation and semiotic analysis reminds us of twentieth-century ethnographic writing schemes.[7]

Many sketch authors directed their attention to human types to point to larger social dynamics, portraying them as representatives of professional, generational, class-related, or situational groups. While the concept of "types," be it allegorical types or psychological types, has served as a long-established scheme in literature and the arts,[8] the idea of perceiving human nature "in combination with the novel and particular forms of society" established itself thoroughly only at the beginning of the nineteenth century.[9] The sketch serial *Heads of the People; or, Portraits of the English* (1840–41) provides a clear example of how

[5] See, e.g., the conceptual works of Henri de Saint-Simon (1760–1825), Auguste Comte (1798–1857), or Herbert Spencer (1820–1903). The term "sociology" was coined by Auguste Comte in the 1840s.

[6] Margaret Cohen, "Panoramic Literature and the Invention of Everyday Genres," in *Cinema and the Invention of Modern Life*, ed. Leo Charney and Vanessa R. Schwartz (Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1995), p. 231. Dickens's "The Steam Excursion" was first published in *The Monthly Magazine* in 1834; Dickens's "The Ladies' Societies" was first published in *The Evening Chronicle* in 1835; Balzac's "L'Épicier" appeared in the first volume of the serial *Les français peints par eux-mêmes* in 1840.

[7] See Annie-Marie Hall, "Ethnography," in *Encyclopedia of Rhetoric and Composition: Communication from Ancient Times to the Information Age*, ed. Theresa Enos (New York and London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 241–43.

[8] Early examples of "types" include the satirical plays of Molière (1622–1673), John Earle's *Microcosmography* (1628), and Louis-Sébastien Mercier's *Tableau de Paris* (1781–88).

[9] Mariano José de Larra, "'Panorama matritense': Cuadros de costumbres de la capital observados y descritos por un Curioso Parlante. Artículo primero: Consideraciones generales acerca del origen y condiciones de los artículos de costumbres. Escritores franceses modernos que más se distinguen en este ramo de literatura," *El Español: Diario de las Doctrinas y los Intereses Sociales*, 232 [1836] (2002), n.p. (my translation); available online at <http://www.cervantesvirtual.com/obra-visor/panorama-matritense-cuadros-de-costumbres-de-la-capital-observados-y-descritos-por-un-curioso-parlante-articulo-primero—0/html/ff813796–82b1–11df-acc7–002185ce6064_2.html#I_0_> (accessed 21 December 2021).

classifying and historicizing perspectives on the individual as a social being became an essential feature of sociographic sketch writing. The multiauthored collection of type portraits was published (and partly written) by Dickens's friend, and Henry Mayhew's soon-to-be father-in-law, Douglas Jerrold.[10] *Heads of the People* appeared in two volumes in 1840 and 1841; since 1838, however, many of the texts had already been published in various journals and magazines.[11] Each of the eighty-three contributions of around ten pages each is preceded by an illustration of the type in question, drawn by caricaturist Kenny Meadows.[12] In the prologue to the first volume, Jerrold explains: "All these sketches, 'miscellaneous and multifaced,' with the pencil and with the pen, have been intended as Popular Portraits; the aim, in each instance, being to concentrate in individual peculiarity the characteristics of a class."[13] Accordingly, the sketches' representations of "popular portraits" are subordinate to typified schemes of social groups, from "The Chimney Sweep" to "The Commercial Traveller" and "The Farmer's Daughter." There were numerous earlier examples of social type representations in sketch writing, for example in Dickens's collection *Sketches by Boz* (1836), in Balzac's and other writers' contributions to the Parisian satirical magazines *La Caricature* (1830–35) and *Le Charivari* (1832–1937), and in the internationally celebrated serial *Paris; ou le livre des cent-et-un* (1831–1834).[14] However, *Heads of the*

[10] In 1842, Henry Mayhew married Jerrold's daughter, Jane Jerrold.

[11] See Ana Peñas Ruiz, "Aproximación a la literatura panorámica española (1830–1850)," *Interférences littéraires / Literaire interferenties*, 8 (2012), 77–108.

[12] See Richard D. Altick, *Punch: The Lively Youth of a British Institution, 1841–1851* (Columbus: Ohio State Univ. Press, 1997). The illustrations of the various sketch series still await a detailed examination. See, as an introductory overview, Dorde Cuvardic-García, "Programa de ilustraciones y plan iconográfico de las colecciones costumbristas de tipos sociales en los españoles, los cubanos y los mexicanos . . . pintados por sí mismos," *Káñina, Revista de Artes y Letras*, 38, no. 2 (2014), 241–62.

[13] [Douglas Jerrold], "Preface," in Heads of the People; or, Portraits of the English, ed. Douglas Jerrold, 2 vols. (London: Robert Tyas, 1840–41), II, iii.

[14] On *La Caricature* and *Le Charivari*, see Lauster, *Sketches of the Nineteenth Century*, p. 32; and Roland Chollet, *Balzac Journaliste: Le Tournant de 1830* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1983), pp. 454–57. *Paris; ou le livre des cent-et-un* was published in fifteen volumes, which comprise around twenty satirical-descriptive articles dealing with places, fashions, types, and institutions of the French metropolis. It quickly became an international bestseller. Already from 1831, it was reprinted by the Brussels-based editorial Méline and translated into English and German. See Martina Lauster, *Paris; ou le Livre des Cent-et-un,*

People must be considered the first commercial print production focused solely on this social category, and it greatly promoted social typecasting as a heuristic tool for exploring the dynamics of urban and national configurations. The serial's influence is reflected in numerous international imitations, the most important being Léon Curmer's ambitious project *Les Français peints par eux-mêmes*, on which the most renowned authors and illustrators collaborated and which appeared in more than four hundred installments before being collected in eight volumes between 1840 and 1842.[15] *Les Français peints par eux-mêmes* was followed by similar collections of social type portraits in Europe and beyond, such as *Los españoles pintados por sí mismos* (1843–44), *Wien und die Wiener, in Bildern aus dem Leben* (1842–44), *Los cubanos pintados por sí mismos* (1852), and *Los mexicanos pintados por sí mismos* (1855).[16]

In this essay, I explore how the modern obsession with systems of human classification, which determined nineteenth-century debates about political control, national identity politics, and the history of social research, manifested and spread through periodical literature.[17] Drawing upon a corpus of more than two

Fortsetzungswerk (1831–34) in der Tradition des Pariser Stadtporträts, das die Topographie, Bevölkerung und Habitusformen der Metropole in amüsanten, oft satirisch-kritischen Einzelbeobachtungen skizziert; available online at <http://projects.exeter.ac.uk/gutzkow/GuLex/livrece.htm> (accessed 1 December 2021).

[15] This collection of French types appeared nearly simultaneously with Curmer's edition of the series *Heads of the People*. See Léon Curmer, *Les Anglais peints par eux-mêmes. Par les sommités littéraires de l'Angleterre*, trans. Émile de Labédollierre, 2 vols. (Paris: Curmer, 1840–41). On the production context of *Les Français peints par eux-mêmes*, see Ségolène Le Men, "Peints par eux-mêmes," in *Les Français peints par eux-mêmes: Panorama social du XIXe siècle*, ed. Ségolène Le Men, et al. (Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, 1993), pp. 4–46.

[16] On the cross-cultural connections between editors, writers, and illustrators of these serial projects, see Lauster, *Sketches of the Nineteenth Century*, pp. 39–43; Ana Peñas Ruiz, "Aproximación a la literatura panorámica española"; and José David Cortés Guerrero, "Las costumbres y los tipos como interpretaciones de la historia: Los mexicanos pintados por sí mismos y el Museo de cuadros de costumbres," *Estudios de Literatura Colombiana*, 33 (2013), 13–36.

[17] On the transformation and effects of classifications of human groups, bodies, and behaviors, above all within the context of scientific reasoning, see Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1970), especially pp. 344–87. My essay results from a research project that casts cross-genre perspectives on nineteenth-century sociocultural thought. The project *Dissecting Society: Nineteenth-Century Sociographic Journalism and the Formation of Ethnographic and*

hundred texts from the sketch serials *Heads of the People; or, Portraits of the English* and *Les Français peints par eux-mêmes*, I examine how the authors used the concept of social type, on the one hand, to classify and conceive of social complexity and change, and, on the other hand, to provide tangible and individualizing narratives for a growing (and paying) middle-class audience fascinated with the art of social observation.[18] The selection of the two serials is based upon their considerable influence as models for similar literary projects in Europe and beyond.[19] Rather than proposing a comparative study on French and English "types," I treat the material as a cross-cultural body of sociographic literature, envisioning the cultural axis between Paris and London as one transregional space of cultural production.[20]

Sociological Knowledge is funded by the European Research Council (Starting Grant, 2020–2025) and carried out by an interdisciplinary research group at the department of European Ethnology and Cultural Analysis at Ludwig Maximilian University, Munich. It is in line with other individual studies on the evolution of predisciplinary social knowledge: see especially Johan Heilbron, *The Rise of Social Theory*, trans. Sheila Gogol (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995); Wolf Lepenies, *Between Literature and Science: The Rise of Sociology*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1988); and Justin Stagl, *A History of Curiosity: The Theory of Travel 1550–1800* (London: Taylor and Francis, 1995). It moves beyond the phase of academic institutionalization in sociology and sociocultural anthropology, and embraces artistic-literary expressions as formats of social knowledge production. Its major premise is that documentary journalism texts, along with contemporary statistical and governmental surveys, travel reports, moralistic essays, and scholarly treatises, are to be considered among the founding genres of modern (disciplinary, academic) social science.

[18] According to Valérie Stiénon's research on French *physiologies*, a genre closely linked to works such as *Les Français peints par eux-mêmes* and *Heads of the People; or, Portraits of the English* (with regard to conditions and actors of production and distribution), the readership of the sketch series was mainly formed by the educated middle classes and the petty bourgeoisie (see Valérie Stiénon, *La Littérature des Physiologies: Sociopoétique d'un genre panoramique, 1830–1845* [Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2012], p. 111). For more on the expanding audience(s) of nineteenth-century periodical literature in France and England, see Martyn Lyons, *Readers and Society in Nineteenth-Century France: Workers, Women, Peasants* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001); and Richard D. Altick, *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public, 1800–1900* (Columbus: Ohio State Univ. Press, 1957).

[19] In addition to numerous international imitations, this influence is shown in multiple translations and international reviews. See Lauster, *Sketches of the Nineteenth Century*; Ruiz, "Aproximación a la literatura panorámica española"; and Guerrero, "Las costumbres y los tipos como interpretaciones de la historia."

[20] This conception of British-French-connections is outlined in Lauster, *Sketches of the Nineteenth Century*, pp. 39–43; see also Elisabeth Jay, *British Writers and Paris 1830–1875* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2016).

In the section following this introduction, I analyze how social type representations in nineteenth-century sketch writing merged multiple narrative forms and rhetoric registers, such as anecdotes, realistic descriptions, political commentaries, and economic or sociohistorical considerations, to combine marketable literary entertainment with social observation and thought. Subsequently, I examine three techniques of social typecasting commonly used in sketch writing and literary realism: abstract exemplifications of "species," depictions of "flesh-and-blood" types, and serializations of "flesh-and-blood" types. In the fourth section, I explore the impact of realistic literature schemes on professionalizing social research. More specifically, I discuss how the literary fashion of social typecasting in the sketches of the 1830s and 1840s, through the work of investigative reporters such as Henry Mayhew (1812–1887) and Angus Bethune Reach (1821–1856), relates to type-focused studies developed in early urban sociology and the uses of social type schemes in ethnographic writing. In the essay's conclusion, I aim to stimulate an understanding of literary typecasting as a form of "popular sociology," and to suggest further perspectives for the evaluation of sociographic sketches as predisciplinary texts of social research and cultural representation.

In a thriving market of periodical literature in European metropolises, the display of social types promised to provide multifaceted and true-to-life perspectives on society and to comply with the demands for both education and entertainment by a growing and diversifying reading public.[21] The depiction of typified figures and their interpretation with regard to social dynamics enabled authors to employ diverse rhetorical registers, such as anecdotes, biographical stories, dialogues, scenic descriptions, commentary, and evaluation. Moreover, the portrayal of human types as a manifestation of

[21] See Stiénon, *La Littérature des Physiologies*; Lyons, *Readers and Society in Nineteenth-Century France*; and Altick, *The English Common Reader*.

social circumstances encouraged the middle-class readership to recognize snapshots of their own reality that they could biographically identify with. In addition, authors operating with social type models frequently embraced the opportunity to approach their subject from a variety of knowledge areas (statistics, political theory, medicine, natural history, critique of religion, economics, etc.), which satisfied the interest of contemporary readers in the evolution of different branches of the sciences and humanities.[22]

To illustrate the versatility of the social type scheme as a literary tool of "popular sociology" that enabled writers to put a variety of macro- and micro-considerations in an entertaining narrative, I will first introduce the text "L'Éditeur" ("The Editor"), which appeared in the fourth volume of *Les Français peints par eux-mêmes* and exposes the history and imagery associated with editing and book-trading in France.[23] The author, Élias Regnault, begins by discussing the role of the editor as a mediator between writer and public and goes on to critically examine the asymmetrical relations between editors and authors.[24] Subsequently, Regnault classifies and vividly depicts different types of book distributors with and without publishing functions.[25] For instance, with regard to flying traders, he describes the mobile book vendors on the banks of the River Seine ("L'Éditeur," p. 324). In focusing on their physical appearance and psychological features, Regnault refers to the

[22] On the nineteenth-century conception of science as entertainment, see, for instance, Susan Sheets-Pyenson, *Low Scientific Culture in London and Paris 1820–1875* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania, Ph.D. Thesis, 1976).

[23] Élias Regnault, "L'Éditeur," in *Les Français peints par eux-mêmes: Encyclopédie Morale du dix-neuvième siècle*, ed. Léon Curmer, vol. 4 (Paris: L. Curmer, 1841), pp. 322–34. Page numbers for subsequent quotations are given parenthetically in the text. All translations are mine.

[24] See Regnault, "L'Éditeur," pp. 320–23. Élias Regnault was at the time known as a legal historian and writer of works such as *Histoire criminelle du gouvernement Anglais, depuis les premiers massacres de l'Irlande jusqu'à l'empoisonnement des Chinois* (1841) and *Histoire des Antilles et des colonies Françaises, Espagnoles, Anglaises, Danoises et Suédoises* (1846).

[25] The publishing-related activities of editing, printing, and distributing became increasingly specialized throughout the first half of the nineteenth century (see, e.g., James Smith Allen, *Popular French Romanticism: Authors, Readers, and Books in the Nineteenth Century* [Syracuse: Syracuse Univ. Press, 1981], pp. 125–50).

art of physiognomy, which was concerned with interpreting bodily surfaces and became popular around 1800 in the context of the emergence of empiricist (and visual) approaches to social phenomena.[26] Regnault complements his survey with a historical perspective on the print trade, tracing its development from the Roman Empire onward and specifying the different functions that particular cities fulfilled with regard to this industry. Regnault then continues to analyze the increased liberty of expression in the decades following the French Revolution and its impact on the advancement of the editor/book distributor as a modern type: "with the rise of its new freedom, the Parisian library took a sudden development and the editor became a social figure" ("L'Éditeur," p. 328).[27]

In the next section, Regnault presents three historical librarians who have strongly profited from the liberalization of the book trade after the Ancien Régime. He mentions their names, depicts their outward appearance (physical traits, clothes), and describes the thematic orientation of the books they distributed. M. Dumolard's book shop, for instance, is characterized as "the laboratory of liberalism. . . . The books which he had accumulated the most were, after Voltaire and Jean-Jaques, those written by M. de Jouy, Llorente's *History of the Inquisition* and the short version of M. Dupuis' *Origin of All Religious Worship*" ("L'Éditeur," p. 328; title italics added).[28] In the course of liberalization, Regnault explains, bookstores have proliferated in all neighborhoods of the city, and the type of the editor has differentiated into various subcategories (p. 329). There is, he mockingly writes, "the romantic editor," who poses as an artist, and the "medical editor," who surrounds himself with physiologists and phrenologists (p. 329).[29] One

[26] See Mary Cowling, *The Artist as Anthropologist: The Representation of Type and Character in Victorian Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1989); and Graeme Tytler, *Physiognomy in the European Novel: Faces and Fortunes* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1982).

[27] "Alors que la pensée . . . s'abandonnait à l'essor de sa liberté nouvelle, la librairie parisienne prit un développement soudain, et l'éditeur devint un personnage social."

[28] "Le laboratoire du libéralisme. . . . Les livres qui se débitaient le plus chez lui, après Voltaire et Jean-Jacques, étaient les œuvres de M. de Jouy, l'histoire de l'Inquisition de Llorente, et l'Abrégé de l'origine de tous les cultes, par M. Dupuis."

[29] "L'éditeur romantique"; "La librairie médicale."

further specialization of the type is the "political editor," who "according to the tone of the books he stores, only talks about overturning the thrones or undoing the absurdities of the revolutions" (p. 329).[30] Regnault then turns to the public image of the editor, suggesting that, although the editor presents himself as "a protector of the arts," he has become a profit-oriented mediator between author and public (p. 329).[31] The sketch ends with critical considerations on the increasing role of the advertising industry in securing the subsistence of journals and magazines, which is why editors are now more interested in announcing new literary products and pursuing "studies to know the tastes of the public" than in publishing intellectually stimulating texts (p. 333).[32] According to Regnault, the influence of the advertising business has affected the quality of periodicals significantly: "the journals have been subjected to the requirements of the book trade, and it is clear that for the past ten years, the periodical press has been maintained solely by the book trade through its announcements and advertisements" (p. 334).[33]

Regnault's entertaining and didactic sketch covers the genesis of the French literary market on both a local and a translocal level, the development of new ways of distribution and advertisement, and the rise of market-oriented authors and book distributors. Thereby, "L'Éditeur" connects representations of daily forms of work and the application of new business strategies in the context of a commercializing literature market with larger social, economic, and political transformations. Regnault's sketch provides one example of how the social type scheme allowed the combination of a variety of epistemic perspectives and rhetorical registers to explore a transforming realm of society. Using the editor-bookseller as a focal point, Regnault switches between lively anecdotes, ethnographic

[30] "Le politique, selon la couleur de ses livres de fonds, ne parle que de renverser les trônes ou de combler l'abîme des révolutions."

[31] "Un protecteur des arts."

[32] "Études pour connaître les goûts du public."

[33] "Les journaux se sont mis sous la dépendance de la librairie; et il est constant que depuis dix ans la librairie seule a soutenu la presse périodique, par ses annonces et ses réclames."

descriptions of places, physiognomic depictions, and political comments, as well as economic, historical, and socioanalytical considerations. In short, the sketch "L'Éditeur" illustrates how a variety of knowledge forms and representational devices, grouped around the model of a social type, are brought together to provide an entertaining analysis of societal transformations.

Type-focused sociographic sketches, and realistic writing in general, operate with two principal techniques to specify and illustrate social structurings and classifications: they either describe a social group (and subcategories of this group) through typified models of the "species" in question ("the editor," "the second-hand book-seller") or they display unique "flesh-and-blood" figures to illustrate the shared characteristics of a group ("the liberal book trader Dumolard"). As in the case of Regnault's sketch on the editor, these two perspectives are necessarily combined and cognitively imply each other. On the one hand, to conceptualize a typified "species" model and to represent its typical features requires to conceive of a combination of characteristics that belong to a sum of "flesh-and-blood" individuals; on the other hand, the perception and display of "flesh-and-blood" types are always subsequent to the cognitive process of social classification.

The species mode can be considered the most recurrent form that sketch writers applied to explore general traits of socially emblematic groups. Regnault, for instance, uses this technique to depict characteristic features of the professional type of the editor and to specify the economic and social circumstances of this profession. Moreover, he characterizes different subdivisions of this type, for which he occasionally creates fictitious models ("*the* stationary book-seller" with "*his* embittered traits" ["L'Éditeur," p. 324; emphasis added]). While Regnault constantly jumps from subtype to subtype and restricts his exemplifications of species to single sentences, the sketch "The Farmer," which was published in the second volume of *Heads of the People; or, Portraits of the English* and deals with the changing

conditions of farmership in England, represents a more elaborate example of this form of typification.[34] At the beginning of the text, the author, Alice, declares "the English Farmer" to be "one of the principal sources of our national wealth" and reflects on the development of farmership in the country's history ("The Farmer," p. 57). Subsequently, Alice approaches the type of the farmer from different perspectives (historical, political, religious, sociocultural) and repeatedly constructs exemplifying crystallizations of that "species" (p. 58), which are specified through anecdotes, dialogues, and descriptions of scenes and objects. "The Farmers of England, in the present day, may be divided into three classes," Alice contends, and then inserts multiple anecdotal narratives to portray characteristic appearances and behaviors of these subtypes (classified by financial status, education, and political education): "we will take a sketch from each, as we see them hastening towards their place of general rendezvous, the weekly market" (p. 58).

The first subtype in question is "the respectable occupier of from fifty to a hundred acres of land, in addition to which he fills the office of bailiff to a neighbouring gentleman" ("The Farmer," p. 58). This farmer

> partakes rather of the characteristics of the old than the new school, inasmuch as he wears a shabby fustian coat, a hat browned by age, and bared by exposure; rides in an old-fashioned taxed cart, . . . and has by his side his portly and well-looking wife, her business at market being indicated by the presence of a large basket of fowls, and a smaller one of eggs, swinging beneath the cart. (p. 59)

The author then presents similar accounts of each of the "classes" of farmers, characterizing them with regard to their physical appearance, social practices, and the size of their lands. Subsequently, Alice returns to a more generalizing, but not less descriptive, view when portraying the farmer's intimate life: "We will now accompany the Farmer to his home, as the

[34] Alice, "The Farmer," in *Heads of the People; or, Portraits of the English*, ed. Douglas Jerrold, vol. 2 (London: *Robert Tyas*, 1841), pp. 57–64. Page numbers for subsequent quotations are given parenthetically in the text. I have no information on the author behind this name.

scene where his character may be studied to greater advantage" (p. 60). Again, the author relates generalizing statements on "the Farmer" to a typecast individual ("he is a busy and a bustling man" [p. 60]; "the Farmer boasts of enjoying considerable influence in his parish" [p. 61]), thus continuing the examination of the social group of farmers via (historical, geographical, economic, etc.) classification of subspecies and displaying detailed depictions of exemplifying models.

The second technique adopted by sketch writers to explore social dynamics through type representations is the introduction of personalized representatives (fictional or real) of social groups and their depictions concerning their physical appearance, biographical evolvement, and characteristic habits. In some cases, these representatives are given a concrete name.[35] While Regnault's text "L'Éditeur" draws on this technique of representation to specify the different branches of the Parisian book trade, the two sketches I will introduce in the following paragraphs illustrate this method more clearly. The sketch "L'Employé," which appeared in the first volume of *Les Français peints par eux-mêmes*, starts with a general view on the growing group of civil servants in a bureaucratizing state.[36] The author, Paul Duval, states that although there are "a thousand different types of employees," to the careful observer "all of them demonstrate many common features and surprising similarities" ("L'Employé," p. 301).[37] To specify different subdivisions of this professional class, Duval first uses the species form, both in singular and plural ("the functions of the employee" [p. 301]; "the unmarried employees" [p. 301]; "the employees of that category" [p. 303]).[38] He then explains that while plenty

[35] See, besides the examples taken from *Les Français peints par eux-mêmes* and *Heads of the People*, Dickens's sketches on "The Ladies' Societies" or "The Broker's Man," which were collected in the multiply-reedited volume *Sketches by Boz*.

[36] Paul Duval, "L'Employé," in *Les Français peints par eux-mêmes*, ed. Léon Curmer, vol. 1 (Paris: Curmer, 1840), pp. 301–8. Page numbers for subsequent quotations are given parenthetically in the text. All translations are mine. I have no further information on the author.

[37] "Mille nuances d'employés"; "toutes ont entre elles de nombreuses ressemblances, de frappantes analogies."

[38] "Les fonctions de l'employé"; "les employés célibataires"; "les employés de cette catégorie."

of young men aspire to become civil servants, most of them are discontent with their low salaries once they have acquired this position.

In the second half of the sketch, Duval introduces a personalized account of an individual example to help "better understand the disappointments suffered by the majority of employees" ("L'Employé," p. 304).[39] Before introducing thirty-two-year-old Felicien, Duval justifies his selection and method of representation, affirming that he was "chosen randomly from among a thousand" (p. 304).[40] Felicien entered public administration at the age of twenty, and since then has been serving in a rural town. Duval narrates a whole series of Felicien's desperate attempts to accelerate his career during the last years. In the end, he includes an anecdote that provides an account of Felicien's most daring action aimed at getting his promotion. After countless unsuccessful pledges, Felicien decides to travel to Paris to ask for his advancement—only to receive the message that "the minister vividly regrets, monsieur, not having been able to assign you the post you applied for" (p. 304).[41] By inserting Felicien's individual story, Duval turns the despairing situation of the large group of French civil servants, who put all their efforts "into advancing poorly within the structures of public service," into a personalized narration (p. 305).[42]

The sketch "The Bricklayer's Labourer," published in *Heads of the People; or, Portraits of the English*, poses a further example of flesh-and-blood typification.[43] The Irish-born novelist and sketch author Anna Maria Hall, under the pseudonym S. C. Hall, contributed sociographic writings to *The New Monthly Magazine* and *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal* in the 1830s and

[39] "Fera mieux apprécier encore quels désenchantements sont réservés à la majorité des employés."

[40] "Pris au hasard entre mille."

[41] "Le ministre éprouve un vif regret, monsieur, de n'avoir pu vous accorder la place que vous avez sollicitée."

[42] "Pour s'avancer médiocrement dans les fonctions publiques."

[43] S. C. Hall, "The Bricklayer's Labourer," in *Heads of the People; or, Portraits of the English*, ed. Douglas Jerrold, vol. 2 (London: Robert Tyas, 1841), pp. 101–8. Page numbers for subsequent quotations are given parenthetically in the text.

1840s.[44] She begins her sketch by raising her readers' awareness of how difficult it had been for her "to select [one example] out of an abundance, not a dearth, of subjects" ("The Bricklayer's Labourer," p. 102). Nevertheless, since she has been in close contact with the group in question for a long time, Hall deems herself particularly competent for this challenge: "At least, forty Bricklayers' Labourers pass our garden-gate every morning and evening" (p. 102). Hall first makes some generalizing (and ethnicizing) remarks about the placidity and reliability of the predominantly Irish bricklayers before she turns to characterize an individual example, which she asserts to have chosen with the good intention of providing a representative description: "I cannot select a better specimen than Larry. . . . Larry, in his calling, is a genuine Bricklayer's Labourer" (p. 103). Hall describes Larry's daily duties and routines, his physiognomy and clothes, his patient attitude, and his Sunday activities. She also inserts a dialogic scene in which Larry talks to her (respectively, the narrator) about his professional and personal concerns. The sketch ends with Hall calling on her audience to appreciate the merits of the Irish workers in the construction industry.

The sketches "L'Employé" and "The Bricklayer's Labourer" follow the same narrative scheme: both works introduce personalized characters to provide true-to-life approaches to social configurations in entertaining and marketable literary accounts. Regardless of whether they are fictional or real characters, Felicien and Larry are chosen against the background of a "species," which they shall endow with an individualized and identifiable image. Interestingly, the authors of both sketches reflect on the selection of their individuals and justify the technique of inserting flesh-and-blood examples with their intention to create a more complete and realistic representation of the social group in question. Such considerations of social representation put them in close proximity to investigative reporters like Henry Mayhew and Angus Bethune Reach, who

[44] On Hall's writings, see, for instance, her series of sketches and stories of Irish life in *The New Monthly Magazine*, which were republished by Henry Colburn in three volumes under the title *Lights and Shadows of Irish Life* in 1838.

published in the very same context of commercial periodical literature but situated their sociographic texts in the field of professional social inquiry (as I discuss below).

Despite their depiction as personalized figures, flesh-and-blood types presented in sociographic sketches have largely static traits and evolve only to the extent that their transformation may indicate how individuals become part of and develop within the social group in question. Notwithstanding, as sociographic sketches typically appeared in journals, magazines, or independent serials, some of the authors came back to characters that they had introduced before to provide their types with more dynamic features and thereby to be connected with typical schemes of the serial novel. One example of serialization of a social type is the character of John Boltrope in the serial *Heads of the People; or, Portraits of the English*, who is first introduced as a professional type in the sketch "The British Sailor" and then as a generational type in "The Greenwich Pensioner." The creator of John Boltrope, Edward Howard, who after his time in the British Navy published books and articles mainly on maritime topics, starts the sketch "The British Sailor" by reminding his readers of the difficulties of typecasting: "No undertaking can be more difficult than that of attempting to give the generic character of the Sailor."[45] Despite these obstacles, Howard attempts "to individualise our idea of him" ("The British Sailor," p. 342). To "single out one of the species," Howard chooses to portray a "man-o'-war's-man" and justifies his choice with the fact that all sailors aspire to be part of the Royal Navy: "There are good men and true in the merchant service, yet they always want the chivalry of character and the lofty bearing of the king's men" (p. 342). Howard then introduces the character of John Boltrope, a young sailor "just pressed from a Newcastle collier. . . . a sturdy youth of eighteen . . . with a slouching manner and a rolling gait" (p. 342).

[45] Edward Howard, "The British Sailor," in *Heads of the People; or, Portraits of the English*, ed. Douglas Jerrold, vol. 2 (London: Robert Tyas, 1841), p. 341. Page numbers for subsequent quotations are given parenthetically in the text. On Howard, see Jessica Hinings, "Howard, Edward (*bap.* 1793, *d.* 1841)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2004); available online at <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/13894>; (accessed 1 December 2021).

The author describes features of John's character, delineates his professional development within the Navy, and finishes the sketch stating that "we have given the head of a regular man-o'-war's-man" (p. 347). In the last paragraph, Howard anticipates the sad continuation of John's story: "But we must say one more word. . . . In spite of flannels and double clothing, hot grog and no night-watches, the rheumatism has stiffened his limbs at last, and the brave old tar has, at length, ripened into the GREENWICH PENSIONER" (p. 347).

In a subsequent delivery of *Heads of the People*, Howard characterizes "The Greenwich Pensioner" as a typification of the group of "in-Pensioners" who live in the Royal Hospital Greenwich (which hosted an institution that was responsible for the pensions of former Royal Navy personnel).[46] Howard starts with thoughts about the fate of the majority of war veterans who suffer from physical and mental problems. Following an extensive description of the impressive architecture of Greenwich Hospital, he comes back to his figure John Boltrope. Once more, Howard reflects on the difficulty of typecasting and announces a shift from the species mode to the flesh-and-blood mode: "Hitherto we have given only the abstract, not the personal character of the Greenwich Pensioner; and even our attempt at personification must be an abstraction, for the peculiarities of each individual of the class are most strongly marked, and each Pensioner is as much unlike every other" ("The Greenwich Pensioner," p. 350). Howard then describes John's daily life at the hospital and approaches the emotional state of "the Pensioner" through the representation of a dialogue between John and the sketch narrator, who is supposed to have visited the hospital in person. In the course of this dialogic scene, the veteran recalls particular situations of his sailor's experience and expresses his reluctance against the recent rise of steamships (pp. 351–52). This dialogic technique is often applied in flesh-and-blood type descriptions.[47] It not only bestows the

[46] Edward Howard, "The Greenwich Pensioner," in *Heads of the People; or, Portraits of the English*, ed. Douglas Jerrold, vol. 2 (London: Robert Tyas, 1841), pp. 348–53. Page numbers for subsequent quotations are given parenthetically in the text.

[47] These dialogues frequently appear in dialectal forms that are associated with the social group in question. For example, see the following quotation: "I never hears one

representation with liveliness, but also equips the figure with an "emic voice," biographical memory, and psychological depth (what Georg Lukács has defined as characteristics of the literary mode of "experiencing").[48] Thus, the example of John Boltrope shows how the serialization of flesh-and-blood figures enabled sketch authors to portray a character's individual experience in a web of diverse and changing social structures, which provides this approach with a specific sociological value.

The display of typified representations of a species or flesh-and-blood types, as it was promoted in nineteenth-century periodical literature, is not very far removed from scholarly approaches to society. In the 1830s and 1840s, thousands of writers, flâneurs, and caricaturists strove to grasp the dynamics of urban life in social type representations.[49] Yet it was not until around 1900 when Robert E. Park and his mentor Georg Simmel devised epistemic concepts such as "the metropolitan type," "the marginal man," and "the stranger" to illuminate the characteristics of social relationships in large cities like Chicago and Berlin. While the creation of abstract types became a common approach in type-focused studies of twentieth-century sociological research influenced by Park and other members of the Chicago School of Sociology,

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of those varmint steamers a-sputtering, fizzing, and hissing, but I thinks I hears the devil a saying, 'Ah, Jack, you willain, I've done ye at last!'" ("The Greenwich Pensioner," p. 352).

[48] According to Lukács, individualized type representations complement the literary mode of distanced "observation" with that of "experiencing," which is indispensable to an understanding and critique of the hidden structures and dynamics of capitalist society (see Georg Lukács, "Narrate or Describe?," in his *Writer and Critic: and Other Essays*, ed. and trans. Arthur D. Kahn [New York: Merlin Press, 1970], pp. 110–48, especially p. 116).

[49] The literary theme of flânerie as a form of urban observation was already developed in the 1830s, which can be best shown referring to an anonymous sketch on the social type, "Le flâneur à Paris," in the sixth volume of the serial *Paris; ou le livre des cent-et-un* (1832). See also Dana Brand, *The Spectator and the City in Nineteenth-Century American Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1991). On the relationships between flânerie and social study, see David Frisby, *Cityscapes of Modernity: Critical Explorations* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001).

the representation of "flesh-and-blood-types" has come to serve as a primary device in ethnographic writing.[50] Informed by the fieldwork-paradigm, anthropological studies typically revolve around "flesh-and-blood" individuals that had played a major role during the research process (e.g., as "gatekeepers" providing access to particular social environments) as well as personalized types that are staged to illustrate specific features of the sociocultural group in question.[51]

A little-noticed link between the usage of social type schemes in twentieth-century social research and the sketch literature of the 1830s and 1840s is the work of investigative reporters such as Henry Mayhew and Angus Bethune Reach. The trajectories of both figures illuminate the intersections between periodical sketch literature and the professionalizing field of social observation: the Scotsman Reach, besides working as a parliamentary reporter for *The Morning Chronicle* (which around ten years earlier filled that position with Charles Dickens and published parts of his *Sketches by Boz*), wrote humoristic literary pieces for diverse periodicals, "pioneering a first-person 'picturesque' style of reporting that was widely imitated."[52] Mayhew, like other notable sketch writers such as Douglas Jerrold and William Makepeace Thackeray, had spent several years in

[50] Robert E. Park, in particular, who persistently drew on his previous experience as a local journalist for his micro-approaches to social configurations, inspired numerous sociologists to systematically work with social types (see Jonathan R. Wynn, "The Hobo to Doormen: The characters of qualitative analysis, past and present," Ethnography, 12 [2011], 518–42). Similarly as the nineteenth-century sketch authors, these social researchers used the technique of typecasting both for conceptualizing social structures and dynamics as well as arranging their representation, addressing typical sets of practices, social networks, socialization patterns, type-related rites of passage, institutional connections, and social hierarchies. For instance, Frances Donovan, in her book *The Saleslady* (1929), used the type category as the basic scheme for her study of a large group of women employed as retail sales workers. In her chapters on "Training In," "Customers," "Quitting the Job," and "The Saleslady at Home," Donovan depicts the group of saleswomen as a distinct population in the early-twentieth-century American city, investigating biographical developments, gender hierarchies, housing conditions, and social networks (see Frances R. Donovan, *The Saleslady* [Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1929]).

[51] See Annie-Marie Hall, "Ethnography," pp. 241–43.

[52] Patrick Leary, "Reach, Angus Bethune (1821–1856)," in *Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Journalism in Great Britain and Ireland,* ed. Laurel Brake and Marysa Demoor (Gent: Academia Press, 2009), p. 529.

Paris in the 1830s, where he learned to appreciate the satirical periodicals *La Caricature* and *Le Charivari*, which featured humoristic-critical depictions of urban types and manners (written by, e.g., Honoré de Balzac, who a decade later wrote a sketch on the professional figure of "L'Épicier" for the first volume of *Les Français*).[53] On their return to London, Mayhew, Jerrold, and Thackeray published satirical and serious descriptions of urban types, environments, and institutions in a variety of venues, including *Figaro in London*, which from 1835 to 1836 was edited and partly written by Mayhew, and the more durable *Punch* (which holds the subtitle "The London Charivari").[54] Especially *Punch*, which Richard Altick acknowledged as a collective enterprise that achieved to capture "the panorama of everyday life in early Victorian England," acted as a major laboratory and outlet for social sketch writing (*Punch: The Lively Youth of a British Institution*, p. xix). While Mayhew acted as one of its founding editors, Jerrold, the editor of *Heads of the People* and mentor to both Mayhew and Reach, was *Punch*'s "first star writer,"[55] and Kenny Meadows, the sole illustrator of *Heads of the People*, acted among the main caricaturists during the magazine's first years. In 1849, Reach joined the *Punch* crew, the same year he and Mayhew were hired by *The Morning Chronicle* to collaborate in a national survey on working and living conditions of the poor sections of society. The resulting series "Labour and the Poor," for which Mayhew was assigned to report on the underprivileged population of London, and Reach reported on the textile manufacturing areas of Lancashire and Yorkshire, was published between October 1849 and December 1850.[56]

[53] See Roland Chollet, *Balzac Journaliste*, pp. 454–57.

[54] On Mayhew and *Figaro in London*, see Anne Humpherys, *Henry Mayhew* (Boston: Twayne, 1984), pp. 25–29.

[55] See Michael Slater, "Douglas Jerroldd: *Punch*'s First Star Writer," *Journal of Newspaper and Periodical History*, 7, no. 2 (1991), 25–32.

[56] Mayhew reused his articles written for *The Morning Chronicle* as a base for the three-volume publication of *London Labour and the London Poor* (1851). A new edition followed in 1861, which included a fourth volume. Mayhew's work as an investigative journalist received increased attention after Edward Palmer Thomson and Eileen Yeo's publication in 1971 of a selection of Mayhew's texts written for *The Morning Chronicle*

While many sociologists and anthropologists have acknowledged the series "Labour and the Poor" as a document of early social research, the involvement of Mayhew, Reach, and other social writers in the periodical sketch industry has been largely ignored.[57] This is despite the significant influence of narrative and epistemic strategies of audience-oriented sketch writing on Mayhew's accounts of London's underprivileged classes and Reach's correspondence on the working and housing conditions of families in small industrial English towns: the shifting perspective between the particular and the general; the visual-descriptive technique of inspecting the surfaces of the social world; the combination of a variety of rhetoric registers (anecdotes, biographical stories, scenic descriptions, commentaries); and the uses of dialogue to reflect inside views. The fact that Mayhew and Reach have passed through the "nursery" of sketch-affine journals and newspapers is particularly evident in their urge to classify and categorize the social world in typified representations of social groups. Their reports for "Labour and the Poor" are frequently organized by professional categories, such as "The Costermonger," "The Needlewoman," "Shoemakers," "The Coalminer," and "Domestic Weavers," while at the same time they persistently display flesh-and-blood-types to illustrate the living conditions of particular social groups in tangible accounts. The existence of such parallels between sketch literature and investigative journalism around the mid nineteenth century suggests that the literary technique of typecasting, through the works of investigative reporters such as Henry Mayhew and Angus

(see Henry Mayhew, *The Unknown Mayhew: Selections From the Morning Chronicle 1849–1850*, ed. E. P. Thompson and Eileen Yeo [London: Merlin Press, 1971]).

[57] See Bryan S. Green, "Learning from Henry Mayhew: The Role of the Impartial Spectator in Mayhew's *London Labour and the London Poor*," *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 31 (2002), 99–134; and Christopher Herbert, *Culture and Anomie: Ethnographic Imagination in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1991), pp. 205–52. The sociologist Heinz Maus suggested that Mayhew was among the first researchers to conduct non-directive interviews (see Heinz Maus, "Zur Vorgeschichte der empirischen Sozialforschung. Mit einer Einleitung von Oliver Römer," in *Handbuch Geschichte der deutschsprachigen Soziologie, Band 1: Geschichte der Soziologie im deutschsprachigen Raum*, ed. Stephan Moebius and Andrea Ploder [Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2018], pp. 698–720).

Bethune Reach, was able to infiltrate and live on as an epistemic and narrative scheme in the professionalizing social sciences.

In this essay I have analyzed the narratives of social classification in the serial publications of *Heads of the People; or, Portraits of the English* and *Les Français peints par eux-mêmes*. More specifically, I have looked at how the individual sketches of these serials featured social types as medialized representations of a "popular sociology" that connected literary entertainment with didactic aims. Although the category of social type had always been a constitutive instrument in literature and the arts, it was in the context of nineteenth-century periodical publishing that it became widely used as a structuring device. The success of this representational scheme is to be interpreted in the context of an increased interest in social issues and systems of classification at the brink of modernity, which manifested itself in literature as well as in social thought. In this medial and epistemic context, the works of investigative reporters like Henry Mayhew and Angus Bethune Reach acted as interfaces between journalistic-literary and "scientific" ways of social study, contributing to establishing and legitimizing typecasting schemes in the professionalizing social sciences.

Certainly, fixing social types in popular media formats promotes simplistic and essentializing arguments (which presumably is one of the reasons why the use of the concept has decreased in professional social research in the second half of the twentieth century).[58] Social type portraits in early-nineteenth-century serial literature are no beau ideals of epistemological self-critique, scholarly scrutiny, or political correctness. However, if we evaluate these writings as what they were—profit-oriented manifestations of a "popular sociology"—we have to acknowledge that they contain considerable reflections on systems of classification and forms of representation, and that they anticipated microsociological techniques

[58] See Jonathan R. Wynn, "The Hobo to Doormen," 518–42.

used in social research until today. I have shown, for instance, how sketch authors discussed the difficulties of typecasting and selecting flesh-and-blood examples. Moreover, I have demonstrated through various examples how sociographic sketches approach their type constructions with recourse to a variety of (sociological, psychological, philosophical, economic, political) regimes and create plenty of subclassifications concerning different historical periods or regions to systematize their approach. Concerning such epistemological and methodological reflections and classifying strategies, some sketches are close to the criteria of the early type-focused studies in sociological research. The sociographic quality of these works is further enhanced by the perspicacity of illustrations, which accompany a large amount of sociographic sketches and frequently complement verbal narratives or challenge them through satirical exaggeration or sharp social critique.[59] Moreover, and similar to methods of twentieth-century ethnography, the sketches often include biographical narratives, dialogues, and descriptions of scenes or situations (based on either the species mode or the flesh-and-blood mode), which contest the apparent fixity of type models and relate them to everyday realities.

Nineteenth-century sociographic sketches represent literary processings of sociocultural transformations, and their enormous commercial success reflects an increased public concern for social self-inspection. The human types that they catalog, sometimes in a quite serious manner and at other times in entertaining or satirical ways, certainly do not constitute "realistic" representations of society. They are, however, meaningful elements of collective self-observation and classification, and their commercial success shows us that they corresponded with their audience's social imaginaries.[60] As for manifestations

[59] On the critical contents of Paul Gavarni's illustrations accompanying sociographic sketches, see Aaron Sheon, "Parisian Social Statistics: Gavarni, 'Le Diable à Paris,' and Early Realism," *Art Journal*, 44 (1984), 139–48.

[60] The fact that sociographic sketches largely met their audience's criteria is demonstrated by the international success of this literary form and by approving letters from readers to sketch authors. See Judith Lyon-Caen, *La lecture et la vie: Les usages du roman au temps de Balzac* (Paris: Tallandier, 2006).

of a "popular sociology," social type constructions tell us a lot about the images and practices through which social change, urbanization processes, and the diversification of professional forms were collectively assimilated and made plausible. In this sense of illuminating sociocultural circumstances and providing orientation, both nineteenth-century sketches and the type-focused studies of twentieth-century social research represent crystallizations of contemporary assessments of sociocultural configurations. Portraying types such as "The Irish Peasant," "The Factory Child," and "The Stranger," all of these writings were symptoms of social transformations and indicators of how these changes were experienced and theorized through epistemic models and types, which moved between different regimes and media of knowledge.

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ABSTRACT

Christiane Schwab, "Sailors, Book Hawkers, and Bricklayer's Laborers: Social Types and the Production of Social Knowledge in Nineteenth-Century Periodical Literature" (pp. 403–426)

This essay explores how the modern obsession with systems of human classification manifested and spread in an increasing market of periodical literature in nineteenth-century Europe. It examines the various epistemic and rhetorical techniques of social typification developed in "sociographic" sketch writing, focusing on examples from the multiauthored serials *Heads of the People; or, Portraits of the English* (1840–41) and *Les Français peints par eux-mêmes* (1840–42). The essay claims that, by combining depictions of social types with political commentary, economic and sociohistorical considerations, and satirical allusions, the epistemic-narrative strategy of typecasting met the educational and entertainment needs of a growing reading public. It furthermore evaluates the works of investigative reporters such as Henry Mayhew and Angus Bethune Reach as interfaces between journalistic-literary and "scientific" ways of social study. The essay aims to stimulate an understanding of literary typecasting as a sort of "popular sociology" by interpreting the popularity of typecasting in the context of an increased interest in social structures on the verge of modernity, expressed in prose and arts as well as social thought.