



Journal of European Periodical Studies

an online journal by ESPRit, European Society for Periodical Research

From Pen to Feather: The Transformation of *La Plume* into a Limited Company

Philipp Leu

Journal of European Periodical Studies, 1.2 (Winter 2016)

ISSN 2506-6587

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.21825/jeps.v1i2.2651>

Content is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 Licence

The *Journal of European Periodical Studies* is hosted by Ghent University

Website: ojs.ugent.be/jeps

To cite this article: Philipp Leu, 'From Pen to Feather: The Transformation of *La Plume* into a Limited Company', *Journal of European Periodical Studies*, 1.2 (Winter 2016), 45–64

From Pen to Feather: The Transformation of *La Plume* into a Limited Company

PHILIPP LEU

University of Versailles-Saint-Quentin (UVSQ)

ABSTRACT

The Parisian literature and art magazine *La Plume* (1889–1914) has been traditionally considered a ‘petite revue’. This article shows its transformation from a specialized magazine made by writers for writers into a key actor of late-nineteenth-century culture, particularly under the entrepreneurial leadership of Léon Deschamps (1863–99), its first editor. At its beginnings, *La Plume* made the most of a productive formula that used subscriptions to sustain publication, like other literary reviews of the time. But it also integrated isolated practices into a larger system, able to produce synergetic effects that would prove profitable. As the magazine turned its back to the literary underground, became a limited company, introduced some of its collaborators into the dailies’ editorship, and promoted art and artists, exhibitions and social events, it addressed a broader, more fashionable bourgeois readership, particularly women. This step marks an interesting turn in periodical history and throws up unforeseen issues, examined on the basis of unpublished documents from the magazine’s archives. The study sheds light on the importance of financial factors in the creation of literature and art periodicals, and links changes in form and content with concrete commercial strategies. *La Plume* represents an interesting case study of business transformation. Not only did it succeed, it also guaranteed a sustainable and expandable economic model rooted in communication strategies.

KEYWORDS

petite revue, *La Plume*, Léon Deschamps, magazine financing, literature and art reviews, nineteenth-century France, commercial strategies, communicational strategies

A literature and art review, *La Plume* (1889–1914) dominated the Parisian cultural scene between 1894 and 1899. Evidence of this emerges, for instance, in an article by the critic André Billy, on the passing away of its former director Karl Boès in 1940. Put side by side, Billy saw ‘the violet cover of the *Mercur* [*de France*], the green cover of *La Plume* [as] forming the coat of arms of a whole younger generation’.¹ In fact, the 1895 *Annuaire de la presse française et étrangère* only briefly mentioned the *Mercur de France*, but informed its readers that *La Plume* was ‘the most important independent literary publication, through its print run (3,500 copies) and its editorial board’.²

In 1920, Ernest Raynaud wrote his book *La Mêlée symboliste* as a monument to the literary movement of 1870 to 1910. The former collaborator of *La Plume*, a policeman who doubled as a decadent poet, considered the review to be the ‘missing link between all those dispersed avant-garde journals’.³ Indeed, at the end of the 1880s, a large number of reviews with very specific aesthetic programmes, such as *La Revue indépendante*, *Le Décadent*, *La Vogue*, and *Écrits pour l’art*, had appeared. To grasp the contemporary state of literature, it was thus necessary to flip through the pages of a dozen periodicals. In 1889, when no other review could or would integrate the ever-revamped literary movements of the time, *La Plume* opened up its pages to all aspects of literary life.

Today, the solemn *Mercur de France* (1890–1965) overshadows *La Plume*, whose afterlife in historical annals orbits around the Salon des Cent.⁴ This gallery and exhibition space promoted by the periodical was indeed a catalyst in the career of many outstanding artists like Alphonse Mucha, Eugène Grasset, and James Ensor. However, on the literary side, no writers glorified nowadays, except for Paul Verlaine, had found a permanent home in the review’s dense pages.

In the long run, *La Plumé*’s ‘audacious, but erudite eclecticism’ seems to have damaged its posthumous fame.⁵ By comparison, other contemporary reviews such as *La Vogue* (1886–1900, with long interruptions) or *La Revue blanche* (1889–1903) receive far more attention today, despite their restrained print runs and their narrower orientation. *La Revue blanche* certainly claimed to be eclectic and open, but its editorial profile was far more elitist than *La Plumé*’s. The latter promoted peripheral literary forms such as songs (often in dialect) and even pornographic or censored poems. Paradoxically, the fin-de-siècle underdogs are the champions of today’s research. An editorial configuration ensuring immediate success is thus not a guarantee for attaining literary immortality.

If Ernest Raynaud was highly complimentary of *La Plume* in 1920, calling it ‘the most faithful mirror of our entire aesthetic life’, in 1941 William Cornell questioned the validity of the review’s approach, which tended, according to him, to focus only

1 André Billy, ‘Sur la mort de Karl Boès’, *Le Figaro* (2 March 1940), p. 4: ‘La couverture mauve du *Mercur* [*de France*], la couverture verte de la *Plume* ont formé le blason de toute une jeunesse.’

2 Henri Avenel, *Annuaire de la presse française et étrangère* (Paris: Ancienne Maison Quantin, 1895), p. 181: the *Mercur de France* is described as a ‘literature and art compendium’ [‘Recueil de littérature et d’art’]. [‘*La Plume* est] la revue la plus importante des publications littéraires indépendantes, de par son tirage (3500) et sa rédaction.’ Avenel, p. 182.

3 ‘Elle fut comme le trait d’union de toutes ces feuilles d’avant-garde dispersées.’ Ernest Raynaud, *La Mêlée symboliste (1870–1890): Portraits et souvenirs*, 3 vols (Paris: La Renaissance du Livre, 1920–22), I (1920), p. 135.

4 See Philip Dennis Cate, ‘*La Plume* and its Salon des Cent: Promoters of Posters and Prints in the 1890s’, *Print Review*, no. 8 (1978), 61–68; Helen Bieri Thomson, Patricia Eckert Boyer, and Jocelyne Van Deputte, *Les Affiches du Salon des Cent: Bonnard, Ensor, Grasset, Ibels, Mucha, Toulouse-Lautrec* (Gingins: Fondation Neumann, 1999); Nicholas-Henri Zmely, Jean-Michel Nectoux, and Grégoire Tonnet, ‘*La Plume*’ (1889–1899): *Une revue ‘Pour l’art!’* (Paris: INHA, 2007); Jocelyne Van Deputte, *Le Salon des Cent (1894–1900): Affiches d’artistes* (Paris: Paris-Musées, 1994); Yolanda Edith Batres de Estrada, ‘The Salon de *La Plume* (1892–1895)’ (doctoral thesis, University of Kansas, 1991).

5 ‘un éclectisme audacieux mais savant.’ Paul Adam, ‘Influence des élites’, *Le Journal* (2 January 1900), p. 1.

on second-rate authors.⁶ Furthermore, Cornell asserted that *La Plume's* eclecticism, vulgarity, and frivolity damaged its claim to the status of serious literary review, and that its domains of interest (social, artistic, and literary) were too dispersed.⁷ However, this tropism of *La Plume* towards certain subjects of definite mass appeal did not emerge before 1892, when the review changed its editorial strategy to captivate a bourgeois readership. Thus, whereas most literature and art reviews disappeared after a few years, *La Plume's* flexibility and adaptability assured its extraordinary longevity. In 1891, Léon Deschamps, *La Plume's* editor-in-chief, faced a dilemma. Should his review remain within a narrow literary field and slowly vanish, or should it reinvent its profile and attract a new audience?⁸

This article offers a closer look behind the scenes and present the transformation of the literature and art review *La Plume* into a limited company. This occurred when the review turned its back on the literary underground, addressed a broader, more fashionable readership, and focused on women. These steps represent an interesting turn in periodical history and throws up unforeseen issues.

Current research in France hardly examines how many journals reconfigured their editorial profile to escape the narrow literary field and enter the sphere of mainstream culture. However, even if *La Plume* was not the only journal that reinvented itself in order to gain access to a larger readership, it still represents a unique case study of transformation that resulted in a sustainable and expandable business model.

Beginnings

In April 1889, in the context of the Universal Exhibition and its newly erected Eiffel Tower, an unsuccessful writer but clever businessman, Deschamps, added *La Plume* (Fig. 1) to the already considerable number of 1048 Parisian periodicals, of which fifty-six were literary.⁹ 'LA PLUME', as its programme underlined, 'is the review of YOUNG LITERATURE, it is only that, and this role is fine enough for the review to fulfil it with character, without attempting to become anything else.'¹⁰

Deschamps ostentatiously praised the Chat Noir cabaret and tumultuous groups such as the Hydropathes ('that water makes sick'), formed by an illustrious bohemian, founder, and collaborator of numerous reviews, Émile Goudeau (1849–1906). From 1878 to 1880 (with a short revival in 1884) the Hydropathes and Hirsutes ('the shaggy heads') organized their meetings at the café Soleil d'Or in Place Saint-Michel. The Saturday gatherings on literature and art that Deschamps inaugurated in September 1889 were held at the same café, and this was no accident.¹¹ In doing so, Deschamps legitimized his gatherings and asserted that his review was a spiritual successor of these bohemian groups.¹² A rather critical portrait of Deschamps by Henri Mazel, the former

6 'Elle fut, pendant quinze ans, le miroir le plus fidèle de toute notre vie esthétique.' Raynaud, *La Mêlée symboliste*, 1 (1920), p. 130.

7 William K. Cornell, 'La Plume and French Poetry of the Nineties', in *Yale Romanic Studies*, xviii. *Studies by Members of the French Department of Yale University*, ed. by Albert Feuillerat (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1941), 331–53 (p. 331).

8 Léon Deschamps, 'Notre souscription', *La Plume* (15 July 1891), p. 232.

9 Deschamps had by then published three books without any success: *À la gueule du monstre* (Paris: Dupret, 1886); *Contes à Sylvie* (Paris: Lévy, 1887); *Le Village* (Paris: Lévy, 1888). La Direction, 'Notre programme', *La Plume* (15 April 1889), p. 1.

10 'LA PLUME est la Revue de la JEUNE LITTÉRATURE, elle n'est que cela, et ce rôle est assez beau pour qu'elle s'applique à le remplir avec honneur, sans chercher à devenir autre chose.' *La Plume* (15 July 1889), no page.

11 Sainte-Claire [pseud. of Léon Deschamps], 'Nos soirées littéraires', *La Plume* (15 November 1889), no page.

12 The first issue of *La Plume* contains a biography of Goudeau, chief Hydropathe; the third, an article on the Hirsutes; the fifth is a special issue in honour of the Chat Noir cabaret.

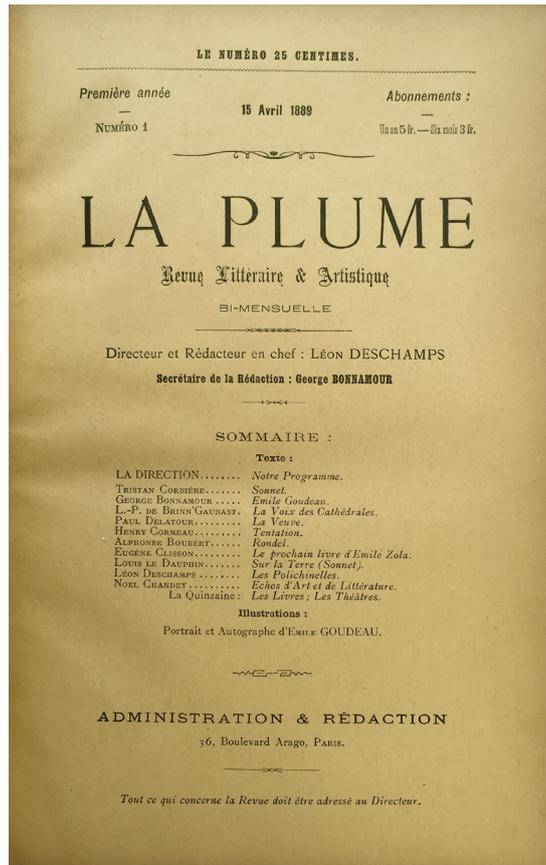


Fig. 1 *La Plume* (15 April 1889), front cover.

director of the review *L'Ermitage*, insisted he was aiming to build his own 'Montmartre' in the Quartier Latin, downhill, on the other bank of the Seine:

He was a fine sturdy chap, a cheerful drinker, casually cordial, and being thus at the centre of a group of pub aesthetes and of tobacco-impregnated basement poets, he conceived the idea of founding a review to publish their works without having any other personal ambitions than that of being the Rodolphe Salis of the left riverbank, because the success of the Chat Noir had impressed him, and its gentleman innkeeper [i.e. Salis] was one of the seventeen great men his review ostentatiously praised in 1889.¹³

Cultural life on the left riverbank had indeed experienced a decline between Goudeau's departure for Montmartre in 1882 and the arrival of *La Plume*. Only a few literary reviews such as *La Nouvelle Rive gauche* (*Lutèce*), edited by Leo Trézenik and George Rall, were still based in the Quartier Latin. Conversely, attracted by the Chat Noir cabaret and a new bohemian lifestyle encouraged by low rents and a thriving nightlife, the literary bohemian scene gradually consolidated itself around the notorious mount

13 'C'était un bon gros garçon, joyeux buveur, familièrement cordial, et se trouvant ainsi le centre d'un groupe d'esthètes un peu de brasserie, et de poètes un peu de sous-sols tabagiques, il eut l'idée de fonder une revue pour publier leurs œuvres, sans avoir d'autres ambitions personnelles que d'être le Rodolphe Salis de la Rive gauche, car le succès du Chat Noir l'avait impressionné, et le gentilhomme cabaretier avait été l'un des dix-sept grands hommes dont sa revue avait clamé le los [sic] en 1889.' Henri Mazel, *Aux beaux temps du symbolisme, 1890-1895* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1943), p. 16.

once the venture of the Hirsutes and the Hydropathes came to an end. Goudeau himself had taken on the editorship of the satirical journal *Le Chat noir* in 1882.¹⁴ From then on, Montmartre with its cabarets and show, would become legendary and the basis for many stereotypical images of Paris in present-day mass tourism. If the iconography of Paris is undoubtedly dominated by the Eiffel Tower, the next best-known image is certainly Théophile Alexandre Steinlen's poster of the Chat Noir cabaret.

Additionally, in the late nineteenth century public transport was not as fast as it is today. A ride from Montmartre to the boulevard Saint-Germain could take up to an hour and a half. The two poles of young literary and artistic life, Montmartre and the Quartier Latin, were sufficiently isolated from each other. In view of these circumstances, the review *Le Livre et l'image* praised Léon Deschamps's success in rekindling the Quartier Latin's literary and artistic scene and underlined the difficulty of such an endeavour.¹⁵

In the literary and artistic topography of the French capital in 1889, *La Plume* positioned itself, metaphorically speaking, off the fashionable Parisian scene. Similarly, in 1894, while all art galleries were situated on the right riverbank, the Salon des Cent settled near the Quartier Latin. Deschamps's bold refusal to go with the flow reconnected the nostalgic longings of the Parisian cultural milieu with the audacious cultural heritage that had given life to the left riverbank, as depicted in Henri Murger's *Scènes de la vie bohème* [*Scenes of Bohemian Life*] in 1851. The success of *La Plume* produced a reconfiguration of the cultural city: the marginal became central again.

At the time of his sudden death in 1899, Deschamps was such a prominent figure that even the American press devoted an obituary to him. The *Boston Evening Transcript* portrayed him as 'the young writers' good genius' and confirmed his considerable influence abroad, since his methods and practices were imitated in England and America.¹⁶

Deschamps invented or developed many strategies for promoting literary and artistic matters. Yvanhoé Rambosson certified his innovative approach in a 1940 article:

It was he who created those special issues of *La Plume*, some of which reach sensational prices at public auctions. It was he who founded the Salon des Cent, where so many artists who are famous today exhibited their work, he who started the vogue — intense and profitable for *La Plume* for several years — of illustrated poster collections, he who had the idea, at the time innovative, to add a publishing house to his review, ultimately he who organized those unforgettable 'Soirées de *La Plume*'.¹⁷

Deschamps's special issues (a total of seventy-one) were indeed an innovation in journalism. Until then, nobody had given complete artistic and literary responsibility to an interim editor-in-chief to come up with thematic issues either exploring literary and political movements, historical matters, or fully dedicated to specific artists and writers.

14 Further on this, see Émile Goudeau, *Dix ans de bohème: Suivi de Les Hirsutes de Léo Trézenik*, ed. by Michel Golfier and Jean-Didier Wagneur (Seyssel: Champ Vallon, 2000).

15 *Le Livre et l'image* (10 June 1894), p. 371.

16 Alvan F. Sanborn, 'Deschamps and Lamoureux', *Boston Evening Transcript* (17 January 1900), p. 16.

17 'C'est lui [Deschamps] qui créa ces numéros spéciaux de *La Plume* dont quelques-uns font dans les ventes publiques des prix sensationnels. C'est lui qui fonda le Salon des Cent où exposèrent tant d'artistes aujourd'hui célèbres, lui qui déclencha la vogue — intense et profitable pour *La Plume* durant quelques années — des collections d'affiches illustrées, lui qui eut l'idée, nouvelle alors, d'ajouter à sa revue une firme d'édition, lui enfin qui organisa ces inoubliables Soirées de *La Plume*.' Yvanhoé Rambosson, 'La mort de Karl Boès', *L'Ordre* (11 February 1940), p. 1.

In its role of independent art gallery, the Salon des Cent had been preceded by Les Arts Incohérents (1883–96) and the Salon de la Rose-Croix (1892–97). However, these two art exhibition venues were autonomous phenomena, whereas the Salon des Cent was a constitutive part of Deschamps's well-synchronized literary and artistic enterprise. Exhibitions were accompanied by special issues featuring the artists' work and critical essays on them. Reproductions were offered to visitors by Deschamps's thriving poster business, and the works themselves sold against a commissioner's fee of thirty-three per cent.¹⁸ The young entrepreneur thus perfected the economic infrastructure of the independent art gallery and made it profitable for him and his artist suppliers.

In the first three years of *La Plume's* existence, Deschamps had counted on the goodwill of cafés, printers, and a few celebrities, as well as the young writers, to bolster his programme. Thanks to a small budget, he consolidated a network through the spirit of literary sociability. This preliminary work — not much different from that of similar journals at the time, all with limited budgets — gave him the credibility of an editor and allowed him to go further. His innovation does not lie in inventing new forms of promotion and marketing of young artists and writers, but in integrating isolated practices into a larger system, capable of producing synergetic effects during *La Plume's* second period.

At its beginning, *La Plume* was conceived as a review by writers for writers, nourished by Deschamps's thwarted career as a writer. He shared with a generation of young writers the frustration of exclusion from the main literary reviews of his time that focused on popular novelists like Octave Feuillet, whose sales may have reached hundreds of thousands of copies at the time, but whose names are largely forgotten today.

La Plume's fight against the cultural establishment was summarized in a brief statement from its programme; the review was out 'To do on its own what all the others have neither the competence nor the inclination to do.'¹⁹ This meant opening its pages to young writers systematically rejected by conventional reviews, as evidenced by a short note mocking the reception of an aspiring writer at the editor's office of *Revue des deux mondes*:

Buloz, receiving an unknown youth:

— Young man, I am sorry, I am in such a hurry ... to help me along, would you yourself be so kind as to throw your verse in the wastepaper basket?²⁰

Deschamps was certainly not the first to come up with the idea of creating a review for fledgling writers, but the longevity and the success of his business strategy are worthy of a closer look. Sources permitting to gauge the financial aspects of literary and artistic reviews are hard to come by; our data, mainly based on the review itself and *La Plume's* unpublished correspondence, may well be less objective than if collected from an independent source. In order to promote their journal, editors are known to have exaggerated their print run or financial figures. With this in mind, our data was tested data for congruity through comparison of different sets in order to extract reasonably convincing numbers. Nonetheless, there remains a risk of unreliability in the statements made by the journal.

18 James Ensor, letter to Deschamps, 25 February 1899 (New York, Pierpont Morgan Library), cited in James Ensor, *Lettres*, ed. by Xavier Tricot (Brussels: Labor, 2004), p. 236.

19 'Faire à elle seule ce que tous les autres n'ont ni su ni voulu faire.' *La Direction*, p. 1.

20 'De Buloz, recevant un inconnu : | — Jeune homme, je vous demande pardon, je suis très pressé ... pour m'avancer, voulez-vous être assez aimable pour jeter vous-même vos vers au panier?' *La Plume* (15 July 1890), no page.

In its first period, *La Plume* attracted its readership by a double strategy. Not only did the journal open its pages to aspiring writers, it also promoted their work and their names amongst confirmed authors and Parisian celebrities, the latter receiving free copies of the review.²¹ Hence, Deschamps positioned himself not only as *La Plume's* editor, but also as the literary agent of its contributors. This strategy can be associated with certain commercial practices of the time. Young poets and writers were certainly encouraged to adhere to literary societies promising them privileged access to their publications. Another common practice was to ask beginners to pay a fee per line, a publication model that often went hand in hand with an award attributed by a jury of celebrated writers.

In comparison, Deschamps proposed a more honest solution without speculating on the vanity of young writers. Although publishing in *La Plume* was free of charge, it was still necessary to take out an annual subscription to the review and to pass a quality check by Deschamps, who reserved the right to refuse poor work. However, the annual subscription was never openly mentioned as a condition for being published in *La Plume*. Even if the review repeatedly stated its aim to serve as an open forum for all movements, where only talent would count, this opportunity was almost exclusively limited to subscribers of *La Plume*.²² In a letter to Deschamps, Eugène Thébault quoted previous correspondence in which *La Plume's* editor confirmed that 'apart from known names in young literature, [he had] *firmly* decided to accept nothing from non-subscribers'. In this earlier letter, Deschamps had written: "That doesn't mean that a subscription is sufficient, one must also be talented. As you belong to the talented, help us, and we will help you."²³

Consequently, although its programme stated otherwise, *La Plume* also made its contributors pay, without guaranteeing that their work would ever be published. As mentioned, paid insertions were a common financial strategy: *La Jeune France*, for example, made young writers pay ten centimes per line (prose or verse) in the first year of its publication and was often criticized for this practice.²⁴ A comparison between *La Plume's* and *La Jeune France's* 'publishing fees' reveals though that a fledgling writer would get more lines published for their money in the latter, as a five franc annual subscription to *La Plume* corresponded to fifty lines in *La Jeune France*. Because the predominant form of contributions from unknown writers in *La Plume* (between 1889 and 1891) was the sonnet (fourteen lines), publication of a poem in *La Plume* would be up to three times more expensive than in *La Jeune France*. It must also be noted that an analysis of *La Plume's* tables of contents reveals that the vast majority of young collaborators published only a single poem in the review annually, and verses were counted as lines. This raises the question whether Deschamps had in fact limited the contributions of young writers, since, once their subscription fee had been paid, a second or third publication would not result in new revenue. Young authors, on the other hand, willingly paid their annual subscription fees, believing it would give them the right to

21 Eugène Thébault, letter to Deschamps, August 1889, Paris, Bibliothèque Jacques Doucet (BJD), MNR bêta 1908/1–2. All documents referenced BJD are in *La Plume's* archive at the Bibliothèque Jacques Doucet.

22 See Léon Maillard, 'Les Hydropathes – Les Hirsutes et les Soirées de *La Plume*', *Le Soir* (7 September 1928), p.1. Maillard claims that writers who had subscribed to *La Plume* were prioritized.

23 'Vous me répondez, à la date du 17 août "qu'en dehors des noms connus dans la jeune littérature, vous étiez *fermement* décidé à n'accepter rien de non-abonnés." | Vous ajoutiez : "Ce n'est pas qu'il suffit d'être abonné, il faut avoir du talent. Comme vous êtes de ceux-là, aidez-nous, nous vous aiderons." Thébault, letter to Deschamps, 5 December 1890, Paris, BJD, MNR bêta 1908/4.

24 *La Jeune France* (1878–1888), founded by Albert Allenet, was named after a subversive literary journal published in 1861 by Henri Raison Du Cleuziou and Eugène Carré that lasted but a year (eight issues). See 'La Jeune France', *La Jeune France* (May 1878), 1–3. See also 'Boîte aux lettres', *La Jeune France* (May 1878), 40.

publish regularly in *La Plume*. It is in the light of these revelations that one can read Paul Souchon's statement in a 1951 interview that 'Deschamps was a fine man [...] but a businessman. He was not a man of letters but a man of action'.²⁵

Although the review's publication policy underlines the distance between editorial reality and the public image *La Plume* liked to promote, such rules must have been a crucial source of income at its very beginning. They allowed Deschamps to run his review, but somewhat mitigate its initial statements of an open and free platform for all young talents. In January 1890, Deschamps added a publishing house to *La Plume*, named Bibliothèque Artistique et Littéraire, mainly interested in young and promising poets, though turning to well-known authors for its launch. Paul Verlaine's *Dédicaces*,²⁶ its very first volume, was tellingly published by subscription and sold out immediately. After deduction of expenses, all profits went to the needy Verlaine.²⁷

The first years of *La Plume* were thus marked by Deschamps's efforts to entice young writers to contribute and subscribe to his review. Many contributions being singular events may hint to the fact that discovery and promotion of new talent was only a secondary concern. An analysis of *La Plume*'s table of contents emphasizes this. Of the 212 poets who contributed in 1889 only forty-one published more than one poem. Most of the latter were either established poets who certainly did not have to (or could no longer) subscribe to the review (Barbey d'Aurévilly, Charles Baudelaire, Léon Cladel, Paul Verlaine, etc.) or close friends of Deschamps (Fernand Clerget, Stuart Merrill, André Veidaux, etc.)

While there is no questioning Deschamps's unequivocal admiration of Verlaine's poetry, the poet's voluntary publication of his collection *Dédicaces* under *La Plume*'s patronage certainly helped Deschamps to position himself as a patron of the arts while securing a valuable and regular contributor for his review. However, Verlaine seems to have experienced moments of doubt concerning Deschamps's character and motivations, as put to paper in a poem published only posthumously:

Let no-one believe
That Deschamps by name
Léon like another Léon Bloy

Is the Benefactor he claims
To be all over the place.
In town as in 'The Village'.²⁸

Nonetheless, through weekly literary gatherings, Deschamps firmly integrated the sociability of the literary scene into *La Plume*'s editorial practices. In a short time, *La Plume* recruited numerous young literary claimants, since it came to represent the first stepping-stone towards literary stardom.

25 'Deschamps était un brave homme [...], mais un homme d'affaires. Il n'était pas un littérateur, mais un homme d'action.' Quoted by David Feldman, 'La Revue symboliste *La Plume* (1889 à 1899)' (doctoral thesis, Université de Paris, 1954), pp. 14–15.

26 Paul Verlaine, *Dédicaces* (Paris: Bibliothèque Artistique et Littéraire, 1890).

27 Léon Deschamps, 'Comptes', *La Plume* (1 May 1890), no page.

28 Paul Verlaine, 'Les Muses et le poète', *Invectives* (Paris: Vanier, 1896), 37–39, (p. 38): 'Ne laissez croire à quiconque | Que Deschamps prénommé donc | Léon comme Léon Bloy || Soit le Bienfaiteur qu'il pré- | Tend être par mont et pré. | En ville comme au "Village"'. Verlaine alludes to Deschamps's first novel *Le Village*.

Crisis

Although *La Plume* started out as a periodical by writers for writers, this was not the kind of long-term venture Deschamps was aiming for.²⁹ The restricted number and spending capacity of young writers were indeed limiting factors for the prosperous business model he appears to have picked up from practices of the time.

Thus, in July 1891, only two years after its inception, Deschamps asserted that the development of his review in its present form had reached its peak, given that every writer and poet in Paris had subscribed to it.³⁰ Although we doubt this to be true, the financial figures of the review confirm that the circulation had not increased in the previous eighteen months.³¹ It must be noted that the financial data come from the review itself and are only available for certain years, as *La Plume* did not reveal its finances on a regular basis. We have set these in context against the material aspects of the publication (number of pages, price rises) and invoices from *La Plume*'s archive to test them for coherence. Our conclusions stem from a comparison of these sources and appear not to be contradictory. The figures published in *La Plume* in 1893 show that while the journal had more than doubled its average sales per issue, growing from 160 copies in 1889 to 355 copies in 1890, the year 1891 brought a mere three per cent growth to estimated sales of 367 per issue. While our comparison confirms the truthfulness of the data, these show little favourable development of the review, presenting rather a stagnant situation. Presumably Deschamps would hardly have wished to make his journal's economic prospects look worse than they were.

The gap between the actual sales number and the average run per issue is indeed striking: only thirty-four per cent was sold. In 1890 the review ran 1,100 copies per issue, in 1891 between 1,200 and 1,800.³² However, Deschamps never mentioned the actual sales. We have deduced them from the financial figures collected from various sources.

The receipt for Verlaine's *Dédicaces* provides us with precious insight into *La Plume*'s printing costs.³³ This document, reproduced on the cover of the review's twenty-fifth issue, reveals that printing of the review's eight pages including the paper cover and graphic supplement amounted to five centimes per copy. As for its financial figures of *La Plume*, they may have been falsified by Deschamps. However, an analysis of printing costs throughout France at the end of the nineteenth century is consistent with the figures published in *La Plume*, and confirms the data we collected for 1890.³⁴ We can therefore evaluate that the approximate costs for 1890 amounted to about 1,320 francs for twenty-four issues at 1,100 copies. Because Deschamps mentions the expenses for 1891 and print runs of 1,200 to 1,800 per issue, we can extrapolate an increase in printing costs at 7.5 centimes per copy when *La Plume* doubled its pages in January 1891. Again, these estimates are based on Deschamps's assertion that the review did not have expenses other than printing costs during the first three years.³⁵ An unidentified — but probably negligible — amount must have been invested in office supplies like paper, ink, and stamps. The income generated from advertising is not mentioned either. It

29 Feldman, A2. Feldman's analysis of the table of contents shows that contributions on visual arts were absent from *La Plume* in 1889. In 1890 only 1.2 per cent of the content was tied to visual arts.

30 Deschamps, 'Notre souscription', p. 232.

31 Léon Deschamps, 'Les revues', *La Plume* (1 March 1893), p. 113.

32 Léon Deschamps, 'L'art devant la loi', *La Plume* (15 January 1891), p. 24; Deschamps, 'Notre souscription', p. 232.

33 Léon Deschamps, 'Comptes', *La Plume* (1 May 1890), no page.

34 Philipp Leu, 'Les Revues littéraires et artistiques (1880–1900). Questions de patrimonialisation et de numérisation' (doctoral thesis, Université de Versailles Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines, 2016), pp. 229–56; Deschamps, 'Les revues', p. 113; Deschamps, 'Notre souscription', p. 232.

35 Deschamps, 'Notre souscription', p. 232.

seems, however, that it was proportionately too insignificant to have any effect on the financial state of the review, since a considerable portion of the advertising pages was devoted to self-promotion in the years 1889–91.

Chrysalis: The Transformation of *La Plume*

In order to secure praise for his review Deschamps insisted on the fact that its revenue more than doubled each year (1889: 605 francs; 1890: 1891.05 francs; 1891: 3916.80 francs). However, in 1891 this increase primarily corresponds to that of the review's sale price, from twenty-five to fifty centimes.³⁶ Because this had been the final attempt to coax money out of his bohemian clientèle's hole-ridden pockets, Deschamps announced his plans to turn *La Plume* into a bourgeois review. He was well aware that a publishing house for unknown writers and a weekly carousal in a shabby basement would not attract the upper classes. By May 1891 Deschamps had already moved the editorial office from his six square metre attic to a more representative location at 31 rue Bonaparte, as he knew that receiving visitors in his bedroom would impede his ambitious plans.³⁷ Moreover, he was in need of serious funding in order to transform the obscure *La Plume* into a prestigious review, aimed at a bourgeois readership. An estimated 40,000 francs would suffice to give *La Plume* a head start in the chic neighbourhoods (*beaux quartiers*) of Paris. The money would mainly be used for bill-posting and paying the review's contributors, who had worked for free so far.³⁸ To raise the necessary funds, Deschamps announced the issue of 400 one-hundred-franc shares and the transformation of *La Plume* into a limited company.³⁹

Emergence

The response was impressive. Only four months later, by October 1891, 370 shares had been bought and in January 1892 the limited company was founded.⁴⁰ Even though this date represents the official start of *La Plume's* bourgeois aspirations, Deschamps had from its conception laid the foundations of this transformation by engineering the out-placement of some of his collaborators to the editorial offices of mainstream Parisian journals. In 1891, he proudly noted that 'Charles Morice just entered *Le Gaulois* [...], Georges Roussel, *Le Constitutionnel*, Willy, [...], *L'Écho de Paris* and finally Henri Lapauze, *Le Figaro*'.⁴¹ An unpublished letter confirms the importance that Deschamps attached to the infiltration of big newspapers. He admitted that the main purpose of *La Plume's* special issue in honour of *Le Gaulois* was to encourage the paper to employ his secretary, George Bonnamour.⁴²

In the spring of 1892, *La Plume* started organising dinners in honour of artists, writers, and celebrities, such as Stéphane Mallarmé, Émile Zola, Auguste Rodin, or Francis Magnard, the editor-in-chief of *Le Figaro*, because the weekly literary evenings

36 Deschamps, 'Notre souscription', p. 232.

37 Joseph Orhand, [letter to Paul Redonnel], *La Plume* (15 February 1900), p. 80; Deschamps, 'Notre souscription', p. 231.

38 Deschamps, 'Notre souscription', p. 232.

39 Deschamps, 'Notre souscription', p. 232.

40 *La Plume* (1 October 1891), no page; *La Plume* (1 December 1893), no page.

41 'Charles Morice vient d'entrer au *Gaulois* [...], Georges Roussel, au *Constitutionnel*, Willy, [...] à l'*Écho de Paris* et enfin Henri Lapauze, au *Figaro*.' 'Échos d'art et de littérature', *La Plume* (1 March 1891), no page.

42 Deschamps, unsent letter to René Ghil and Théobault, 19 May 1891, Paris, BJD, MNR bêta 394.

no longer conveyed the glamour of the new *Plume*.⁴³ Although the test run for the ‘Banquets de *La Plume*’ was held in honour of Verlaine, this needy poet was obviously not the kind of representative figure Deschamps required for the first official dinner. Instead, Aurélien Scholl, a well-respected personality of the Parisian press, was chosen to inaugurate the Banquets. From then on, the main celebrity-focused Parisian papers assured the periodical regular coverage.

In order to increase *La Plume*’s prominence, Paris was to be covered in posters, as reflected in Adolphe Retté’s memoirs:

Crossing the hall of the Saint-Lazare railway station, in Paris, my attention was drawn by a considerable yellow poster on which one was meant to read the following:

See:

La Plume!

La Plume!!

La Plume!!!⁴⁴

While Deschamps used to depend on the goodwill of contributors, the new model of payment for articles provoked a dramatic increase in quality. Sophisticated literature, music, theatre, and art criticism soon replaced the flood of mediocre poems that had dominated *La Plume* at its beginnings. In 1890 poems made up twenty-eight per cent of contributions to *La Plume*, but this proportion dwindled to ten per cent by 1892. The number of literary portraits of writers was also drastically reduced: while they represented 16.6 per cent of the content in 1889, they were merely 1.8 per cent in 1892. Henceforth the space was filled with illustrations and articles on art, occupying forty per cent of the review by 1895.⁴⁵

The preference for artistic content over literature is the most notable change in *La Plume*’s editorial profile. From 1892 onwards, the review strongly pushed posters as a form of art and planned a virtual art gallery in its column ‘Le Salon de *La Plume*’. Already in 1890, Deschamps had expressed his wish to establish a real art gallery.⁴⁶ Nonetheless, this costly endeavour would only materialize in 1894, when a 120 square metre hall, referred to in one of Deschamps’s portraits (Fig. 2), was added to the two narrow rooms that made up the editorial offices of *La Plume*.⁴⁷ Despite its isolated location, on the left bank of the Seine, the Salon des Cent proved a great success. It quickly became popular and attracted the Parisian elite with its monthly exhibitions.⁴⁸ Moreover, with a thirty-three per cent commission levied on the sale of artworks and

43 For a detailed study of the ‘Banquets de *La Plume*’, see Julien Schuh, ‘Les dîners de *La Plume*’, *Romantisme*, no. 137 (2007), 79–101. Gabriel de Lautrec, *Souvenirs des jours sans souci* (Paris: Tournelle, 1938), p. 24. The cousin of Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec considered the literary evenings as an antisocial bohemian gathering of outcasts who refused to get a proper job.

44 Adolphe Retté, *Le Symbolisme: Anecdotes et souvenirs* (Paris: Vanier, 1903), p. 164: ‘En traversant la salle des Pas-perdus de la gare Saint-Lazare, à Paris, mon attention fut attirée par une considérable affiche jaune sur laquelle on *devait* lire ceci: | Voyez: | **La Plume!** | **La Plume!!** | **La Plume!!!**’

45 Feldman, A2.

46 ‘Avis aux artistes’, *La Plume* (1 November 1890), no page.

47 Deschamps, ‘Notre souscription’, p. 231.

48 Ernest Raynaud, *Souvenirs de police: Au temps de Ravachol* (Paris: Payot, 1923), p. 116.

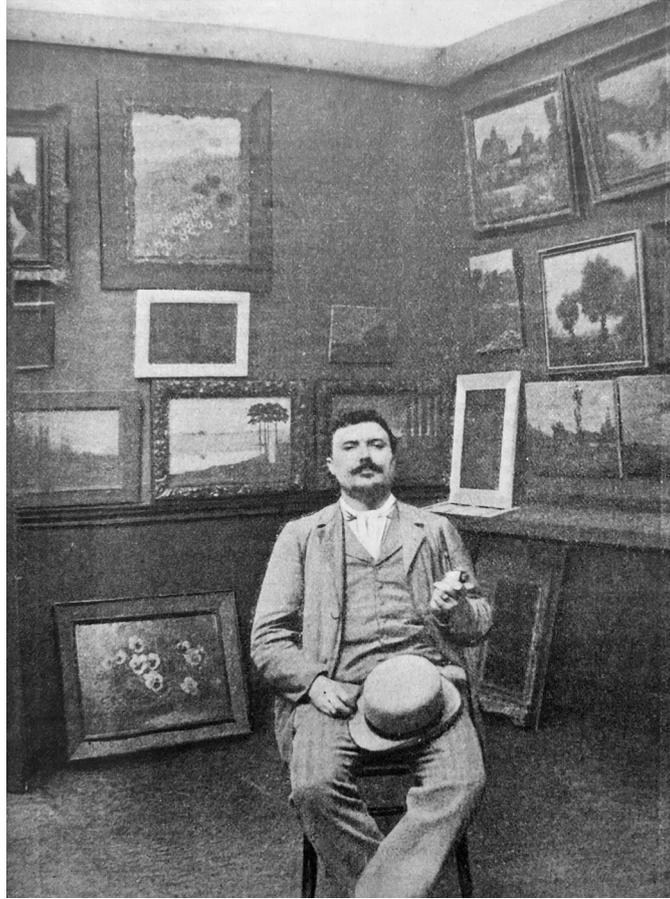


Fig. 2 Léon Deschamps in the Salon des Cent, *La Plume* (15 February 1900), p. 81.

a massive catalogue of posters, the artistic orientation added not only to *La Plume's* prestige but also to its cash flow.⁴⁹

Announced on 15 November 1893, the opening of *La Plume's* art gallery features in one of the review's special issues on the illustrated poster.⁵⁰ The artists among *La Plume's* readership were encouraged to subscribe to the Salon des Cent, officially limited to a hundred members, whence the art gallery's name.⁵¹ We have not been able to trace the registration fee figure at the gallery's opening, but, according to Léon Maillard, early registration must have been free.⁵² The first wave of subscribers was composed of artists who already had a certain reputation, such as Félicien Rops, Félix Charpentier, Jules Chéret, and Eugène Grasset.⁵³ Their names were presented in an ever-growing list of subscribers on the review's cover pages, certainly with the intention of attracting younger artists, banking on their desire to see their own names in print so closely associated

49 Ensor, letter to Deschamps, November 1898. Paris, BJD, MNR bêta 520; Ensor, letter to Deschamps, 6 May 1899, Paris, BJD, MNR bêta 516; Ensor, letter to Deschamps, 25 February 1899, in Ensor, *Lettres*, p. 236: Ensor received 33.25 francs from Deschamps as payment for his print *Hop-Frog*, sold at fifty francs. See also Dominique Morel, 'James Ensor et *La Plume*: Histoire et fortune critique de la première exposition personnelle d'Ensor à Paris (1898–1899)', *Gazette des beaux-arts*, no. 1474 (November 1991), 205–12 (p. 206). Morel considers that the commission was only ten per cent.

50 'Salon de *La Plume*', *La Plume* (15 November 1893), no page.

51 *La Plume* (15 November 1893), no page.

52 Maillard, p. 3.

53 *La Plume* (15 November 1893), no page.

with the well established. The gallery's membership list offers a mix of young artists and renowned masters. Charles Saunier commented in the first exhibition catalogue: 'Alongside these talented young people whose works will no doubt soon be canonized, it is interesting to find certain masters.'⁵⁴

La Plume's issue of 1 December 1893 outlined the main characteristics of the review's artistic endeavour: six annual group exhibitions were to be held, changing every other month, with occasional solo shows in between. Initially, admission was free except on Tuesdays. For two francs the visitors could attend concerts, lectures, and dramatic performances such as *Le Bobémien*, an illuminated play (*lumino-conte*) by Jean Lorrain, or *Le Prince naïf* by Jacques Des Gachons, another illuminated play in thirty-two sets by painter Andhré Des Gachons.⁵⁵ After the first exhibition, free entries were suspended and the admission fee amounted to one franc on ordinary days and five francs on Tuesdays.

Deschamps's effort did not only address *La Plume's* dinners and gallery. The review itself was also considerably transformed. Encouraged by the Anglo-Saxon bibliophilic tide that gushed over continental Europe in the 1890s, *La Plume* improved its paper quality and even offered a first luxury edition on Japanese paper (*Japon impérial*) with special prints from 1894 onwards.⁵⁶ This strategy aimed at distancing the review from its former bohemian image. It was fostered by a second luxury edition from 1897, and regular special offers tailored for a wealthy readership (an instant camera, champagne, or an effigy).⁵⁷ In 1894, the sober typography of *La Plume's* cover was replaced by a version illustrated by Grasset (Fig. 3), and from 1897 onwards, a coloured design by Alphonse Mucha (Fig. 4) further enhanced its appearance.

From Pen to Feather

The financial figures for 1893 speak for themselves. Thanks to funds raised by equity financing, Deschamps was able to transform *La Plume* into a flourishing enterprise. With about 1400 copies sold per issue, the income increased by 268 per cent — from 3916.80 francs in 1891 to 15,126.23 in 1892.⁵⁸ Further, two months into 1893, Deschamps announced an additional increase of 140 per cent, that is, 4000 francs of income.⁵⁹ It is therefore likely that the run of 3500 copies per issue in 1895 indicates actual sales rather than an embellished total run, which would have included promotional and complimentary copies.⁶⁰ Certain special issues of *La Plume*, such as the one on Grasset, even sold up to 10,000 copies.⁶¹

But who exactly is this new reader *La Plume* had so efficiently captured thanks to its novel business model? When tried for indecency — that is, for publishing a rather explicit poem in 1890 — Deschamps defended his review by insisting that no one could take offence at this piece, since the readership of *La Plume* consisted only of men: not

54 'À côté de cette jeunesse talentueuse dont les œuvres seront bientôt inmanquablement consacrées, il est intéressant de rencontrer certains maîtres.' Charles Saunier, 'L'art d'aujourd'hui', in *Catalogue de la première exposition du Salon des Cent* (Paris: [n. pub.], 1894), pp. 4–5.

55 'Lignes générales du Salon des Cent', *La Plume* (1 December 1893), no page; *La Plume* (15 December 1895), p. 577; *La Plume* (1 December 1895), p. 541.

56 From *La Plume* (15 January 1892) onwards; *La Plume* (15 December 1892), no page.

57 'Prime hors ligne', *La Plume* (1 July 1893), no page. The same offer can be found in numerous fashionable magazines of the 1890s. *La Plume* (15 March 1892), no page; 'Prime hors ligne à nos abonnés', *La Plume* (1 October 1893), no page.

58 Deschamps, 'Les revues', p. 113.

59 Deschamps, 'Les revues', p. 113.

60 Avenel, p. 182.

61 *Catalogue des publications de la Société anonyme 'La Plume'* (Paris: [n. pub.], 1899), p. 20.

FROM PEN TO FEATHER

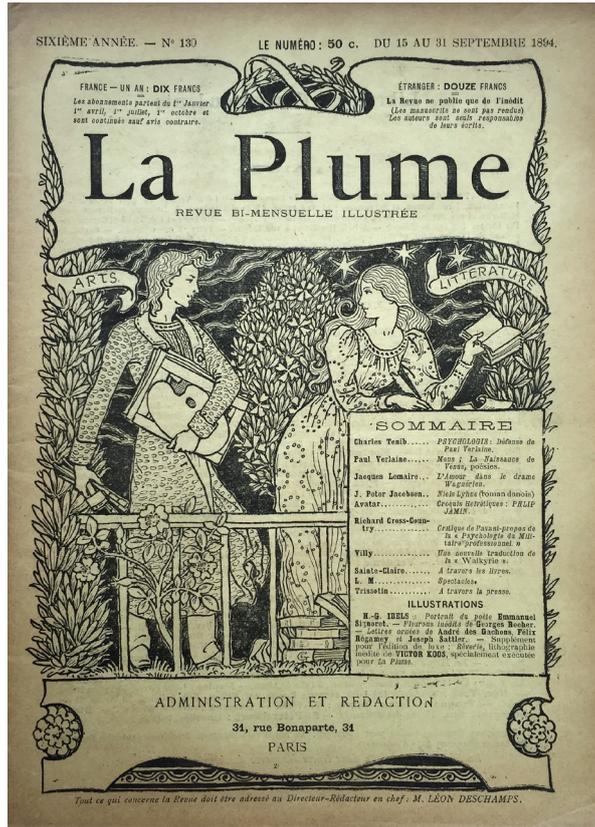


Fig. 3 Eugène Grasset, *La Plume* (15 September 1894), front cover.

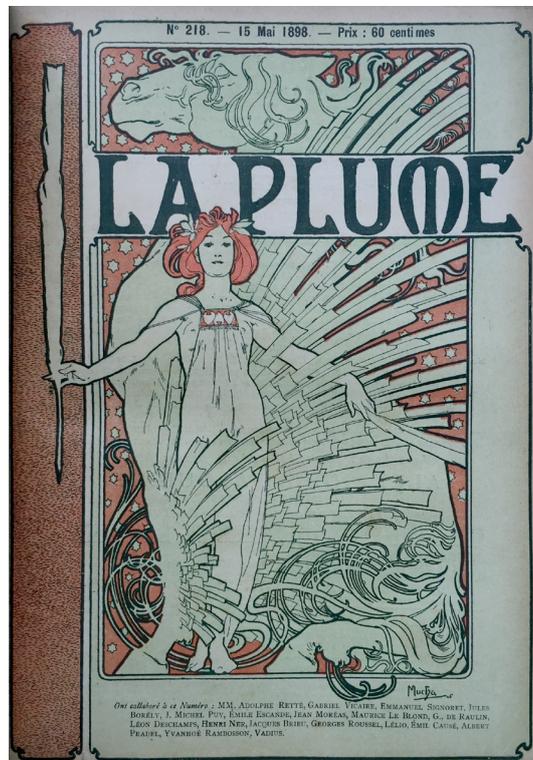


Fig. 4 Alphonse Mucha, *La Plume* (15 May 1898), front cover.

a single woman had yet subscribed to the magazine.⁶² It is thus probable that a factor limiting *La Plume's* growth was its lack of a female readership. The phallogocentric origins of the review would, however, give way to an editorial reorientation towards women, more specifically bourgeois women. In this respect, the review's title, *La Plume*, no longer relates to the writer's pen, but to the feather-in-hat of the Parisian female to whom Deschamps even dedicated a special issue in 1895. A fashionable woman dominates the posters that advertise the Salon des Cent (Fig. 5). She, and not the Parisian gentleman, is depicted on her way to the latest exhibition.⁶³



Fig. 5 Gaston Noury, 'Réduction en noir de l'affiche Noury pour la 3me exposition du Salon des Cent', *La Plume* (15 July 1894), p. 301.

Even though literary studies tend to ignore advertisements as an essential part of the periodical matrix, consideration of the commercial context and the surroundings in which literary texts are embedded has raised a certain interest among scholars, and can be of practical use, as Sean Latham and Robert Scholes have demonstrated.⁶⁴

Advertisement pages can provide an indication of the review's readership since they reflect both the vision a review or an advertising agency has of the publication's readership and the readership itself. Anyone ought to grasp that the inherent objective of investing in an advertising campaign is to increase demand for a given product or service. Therefore, to maximize its return on investment a company wishing to advertise would

62 'Pari perdu', *Concours de sonnets*, supplement to *La Plume* (1 November 1890), p. 7; Deschamps, 'L'art devant la loi', p. 25.

63 *Le Livre et l'image*, p. 372: It is pointed out that the woman on the poster of the third Salon des Cent will serve further generations as a precious document for the latest 1894 fashion.

64 Sean Latham and Robert Scholes, 'The Rise of Periodical Studies', *PMLA*, no. 121 (2006), 517-31 (pp. 525-28).

place its advertisement in a periodical with a readership they considered responsive to the product or service displayed.

The announcements of the nascent pharmaceutical industry were ubiquitous in popular magazines and newspapers of the late nineteenth century. Syrups, tablets, and drops were touted against all known diseases. Lechaux's Quinic Ointment, which not only assured full regrowth of hair but also allegedly prevented it from turning white, was typical of this 'miraculous' or 'magic' quackery.⁶⁵ As for Henry Mure's snail syrup, it boasted healing epilepsy, hysteria, dance of St Vitus, seizures, dizziness, bedazzlement, brain fatigue, migraine, insomnia, and spermatorrhea.⁶⁶

These advertisements appear to target a social group ostensibly concerned by issues of health and hygiene but nevertheless willing to acquire these drugs sporting doubtful effects. They are to be found in literature and art journals with higher print runs, appealing to a large readership. Specialized reviews with small print runs would advertise products or services targeting their respective readership's interests. Advertising for hygiene and health products is widespread among Parisian periodicals but rather rare in provincial ones, where beer and spirits dominate the commercial pages.

Given this context, a comparison of back covers before and after *La Plume's* transformation is striking. In 1891, the back cover is dominated by in-house advertisements appealing to writers (Fig. 6). One year later, depilatory cream and textile advertisements clearly target a female readership (Fig. 7). In its second phase *La Plume* thus proves to be a profitable venture, connected to mass media, integral to bourgeois lifestyle through its Salon des Cent, but less autonomous on the literary front. This is also confirmed by the reduction of literary content; a mere 3.7 per cent of the review in 1898.⁶⁷

The discovery of women wielding economic power in the late nineteenth century is pointed out in James Dean Howells's novel *A Hazard of New Fortunes*.⁶⁸ Originally published as a serial in *Harper's Weekly* between March and November 1889, this novel can be considered a precise sociological study of the new economic opportunities on the periodical market. It describes the creation of the fictional magazine *Every Other Week* in New York and sums up the essence of Howells's own experience as an editor between 1871 and 1881 of *Atlantic Monthly* (founded in 1857). In it, Howells underlines the importance of women not only as readers but also as contributors to literature and art reviews.⁶⁹ Although the late nineteenth century gave birth to magazines specifically for women while mainstream journals also catered to their female readership with sections on cooking and fashion, literature and art were still male preserves, particularly in France. While female writers feature strongly in John Lane's Bodley Head publishing house and its literature and art review the *Yellow Book* (1894–97), *La Plume* recognized women as part of its readership but hardly recruited any female contributors.⁷⁰ Likewise, the regular banquets of *La Plume* were strictly aimed at male writers, and women were only admitted to the literary gatherings in the company of a man.⁷¹

65 'Pommade Quinique Lechaux', advertisement, *Le Courrier français* (16 November 1884), p. 8.

66 'Sirop d'escargots de Henry Mure', advertisement, *La Plume* (1 January 1893), no page.

67 Feldman, A2.

68 William Dean Howells, *A Hazard of New Fortunes*, 2 vols (New York: Harper, 1890).

69 Howells, 1 (1890), p. 186.

70 Among the numerous studies on women in the *Yellow Book*, see Hanna Deller, 'The *Yellow Book*' und seine Autorinnen (Frankfurt a. M.: Lang, 2005); Linda K. Hughes, 'Women Poets and Contested Spaces in The *Yellow Book*', *Studies in English Literature*, 44.4 (2004), pp. 849–72; Margaret Diane Stetz, 'Debating Aestheticism from a Feminist Perspective', in *Women and British Aestheticism*, ed. by Talia Schaffer and Kathy Alexis Psomiades (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999), 25–43.

71 'Clôture des soirées et des banquets de *La Plume*', *La Plume* (15 May 1893), no page.

If women played a limited and rather passive role in the universe of *La Plume*, they still had a tremendous impact on the magazine. The orientation towards a female readership was a key element of *La Plume's* new business model and contributed to it becoming an influential literature and art fin-de-siècle periodical. While the lack of subscribers' lists leaves us in the dark concerning the genuine number of women who read *La Plume*, the review itself seems to be designed to specifically appeal to women. After Deschamps passed away in 1899, the review transformed itself into a very serious publication under Karl Boès. The following years were marked by the editors' struggle to keep *La Plume* alive. The example of Deschamps's editorship thus reveals the flexibility of the literary and artistic media and their ability to reinvent and innovate in order to attract and keep a new readership. In this sense, the case of *La Plume* shows how a literary review, perceived as an authentic expression of militant writers, and regularly presented as a 'petite revue', can assimilate communicational strategies borrowed from the mass media to enlarge its range and ensure prosperity.

Philipp Leu earned his PhD in 2016 on 'Digitisation and Cultural Heritage of Fin-de-siècle Literature and Art Reviews (France, Great Britain, Germany)' from the University of Versailles-Saint-Quentin. Supervised by Evangelhia Stead, he worked in partnership with the Bibliothèque nationale de France with the support of the Fondation des Sciences du Patrimoine. He focuses on the complex relationship between form and content in periodicals, and collective artistic expressions as incubators of cultural innovation.

Bibliography

- Adam, Paul, 'Influence des élites', *Le Journal* (2 January 1900), 1
- Avenel, Henri, *Annuaire de la presse française et étrangère* (Paris: Ancienne Maison Quantin, 1895)
- Bartres de Estrada, Yolanda Edith, 'The Salon de *La Plume* (1892–1895)' (doctoral thesis, University of Kansas, 1991)
- Bieri Thomson, Helen, Patricia Eckert Boyer, and Jocelyne Van Deputte, *Les Affiches du Salon des Cent: Bonnard, Ensor, Grasset, Ibels, Mucha, Toulouse-Lautrec* (Gingins: Fondation Neumann, 1999)
- Billy, André, 'Sur la mort de Karl Boès', *Le Figaro* (2 March 1940), 4
- 'Boîte aux lettres', *La Jeune France* (May 1878), 40
- Catalogue des publications de la Société anonyme 'La Plume'* (Paris: [n. pub.], 1899)
- Cate, Philip Dennis, '*La Plume* and its Salon des Cent: Promoters of Posters and Prints in the 1890s', *Print Review*, no. 8 (1978), 61–68
- 'Clôture des soirées et des banquets de *La Plume*', *La Plume* (15 May 1893), no page
- Cornell, William K., '*La Plume* and French Poetry of the Nineties', in *Yale Romanic Studies*, xviii, *Studies by Members of the French Department of Yale University*, ed. by Albert Feuillerat (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1941), pp. 331–53
- Deller, Hanna, *'The Yellow Book' und seine Autorinnen* (Frankfurt a. M.: Lang, 2005)
- Deschamps, Léon, *À la gueule du monstre* (Paris: Dupret, 1886)
- , 'L'Art devant la loi', *La Plume* (15 January 1891), 24–26
- , 'Comptes', *La Plume* (1 May 1890), no page
- , *Contes à Sylvie* (Paris: Lévy, 1887)
- , 'Notre souscription', *La Plume* (15 July 1891), 231–32
- , 'Les Revues', *La Plume* (1 March 1893), 113–14

- , *Le Village* (Paris: Lévy, 1888)
- , unsent letter to René Ghil and Eugène Thébault, 19 May 1891, Paris, BJD, MNR bêta 394
- Ensor, James, , letter to Léon Deschamps, November 1898, Paris, BJD, MNR bêta 520
- , letter to Léon Deschamps, 25 February 1899, Pierpont Morgan Library, New York
- , letter to Léon Deschamps, 6 May 1899, Paris, BJD, MNR bêta 516
- , *Lettres*, ed. by Xavier Tricot (Brussels: Labor, 2004)
- Feldman, David, ‘La Revue symboliste *La Plume* (1889 à 1899)’ (doctoral thesis, Université de Paris, 1954)
- Goudeau, Émile, *Dix ans de bohème: Suivi de Les Hirsutes de Léo Trézenik*, ed. by Michel Golfier and Jean-Didier Wagneur (Seyssel: Champ Vallon, 2000)
- Howells, William Dean, *A Hazard of New Fortunes*, 2 vols (New York: Harper, 1890)
- Hughes, Linda K., ‘Women Poets and Contested Spaces in *The Yellow Book*’, *Studies in English Literature*, 44.4 (2004), 849–72
- La Direction, ‘Notre programme’, *La Plume* (15 April 1889), 1
- ‘La Jeune France’, *La Jeune France* (May 1878), 1–3
- Latham, Sean, and Robert Scholes, ‘The Rise of Periodical Studies’, *PMLA*, no. 121 (2006), 517–31
- Lautrec, Gabriel de, *Souvenirs des jours sans souci* (Paris: Tournelle, 1938)
- Leu, Philipp, ‘Les Revues littéraires et artistiques (1880–1900): Questions de patrimonialisation et de numérisation’ (doctoral thesis, Université de Versailles Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines, 2016)
- Maillard, Léon, ‘Les Hydropathes — Les Hirsutes et les Soirées de *La Plume*’, *Le Soir* (7 September 1928), 1–4
- Mazel, Henri, *Aux beaux temps du symbolisme, 1890–1895* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1943)
- Morel, Dominique, ‘James Ensor et *La Plume*: Histoire et fortune critique de la première exposition personnelle d’Ensor à Paris (1898–1899)’, *Gazette des beaux-arts*, no. 1474 (November 1991), 205–12
- Orhand, Joseph, letter to Paul Redonnel, *La Plume* (15 February 1900), 80
- ‘Pari perdu’, *Concours de sonnets*, supplement to *La Plume* (1 November 1890), 7
- ‘Pommade Quinique Lechaux’, advertisement, *Le Courrier français* (16 November 1884), 8
- ‘Prime hors ligne’, *La Plume* (1 July 1893), no page
- ‘Prime hors ligne à nos abonnés’, *La Plume* (1 October 1893), no page
- Rambosson, Yvanhoé, ‘La mort de Karl Boès’, *L’Ordre* (11 February 1940), 1
- Raynaud, Ernest, *La Mêlée symboliste (1870–1890): Portraits et souvenirs*, 3 vols (Paris: La Renaissance du Livre, 1920–22)
- , *Souvenirs de police: Au temps de Ravachol* (Paris: Payot, 1923)
- Retté, Adolphe, *Le Symbolisme: Anecdotes et souvenirs* (Paris: Vanier, 1903)
- Sainte-Claire [pseud. of Léon Deschamps], ‘Nos soirées littéraires’, *La Plume* (15 November 1889), no page
- Sanborn, Alvan F., ‘Deschamps and Lamoureux’, *Boston Evening Transcript* (17 January 1900)
- Saunier, Charles, ‘L’Art d’aujourd’hui’, in *Catalogue de la première exposition du Salon des Cent* (Paris: [n. pub.], 1894), pp. 4–5
- Schuh, Julien, ‘Les dîners de *La Plume*’, *Romantisme*, no. 137 (2007), 79–101
- ‘Sirop d’escargots de Henry Mure’, advertisement, *La Plume* (1 January 1893), no page
- Stetz, Margaret Diane, ‘Debating Aestheticism from a Feminist Perspective’, in *Women and British Aestheticism*, ed. by Talia Schaffer and Kathy Alexis Psomiades (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999), pp. 25–43

FROM PEN TO FEATHER

- Thébault, Eugène, letter to Léon Deschamps, August 1889, Paris, BJD, MNR bêta 1908/1–2
- , letter to Léon Deschamps, 5 December 1890, Paris, BJD, MNR bêta 1908/4
- Van Deputte, Jocelyne, *Le Salon des Cent (1894–1900): Affiches d'artistes* (Paris: Paris-Musées, 1994)
- Verlaine, Paul, *Dédicaces* (Paris: Bibliothèque Artistique et Littéraire, 1890)
- , *Invectives* (Paris: Vanier, 1896)
- Zmelty, Nicholas-Henri, Jean-Michel Nectoux, and Grégoire Tonnet, '*La Plume*' (1889–1899): *Une revue 'Pour l'art!'* (Paris: INHA, 2007)