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Harrison, S (2022) Henry Care: Journalism and numeracy before the Field. Journalism History, 48. ISSN 0094-7679

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To cite this article: Steve Harrison (2022): Henry Care: Journalism and Numeracy before the Field, Journalism History, DOI: [10.1080/00947679.2022.2046436](https://doi.org/10.1080/00947679.2022.2046436)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00947679.2022.2046436>



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Published online: 11 Mar 2022.



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Henry Care: Journalism and Numeracy before the Field

Steve Harrison 

Journalism Department, Liverpool John Moores University, Liverpool, UK

ABSTRACT

The concept of the journalistic field as developed by Pierre Bourdieu and his collaborators has proved fruitful for media theorists. The present article arose out of considerations linking field theory—and its associated concepts of habitus and symbolic capital—to the low regard in which journalists often appear to hold numeracy. Its focus is Henry Care, a writer and polemicist active in the United Kingdom in the 1670s and 1680s whose works included a popular self-help guide to numeracy and basic arithmetic. Because he was writing prior to the establishment of the journalistic field, Care gives historians an insight into how journalism could have developed along a different path, one in which the profession valued numeracy as highly as it does literary ability. Care's background as a news writer and pamphleteer was no bar to the popularity of his guide, and it is argued that the low value that journalism places on numeracy today is historically contingent rather than inevitable. Previously overlooked internal evidence provides fresh insight into the composition of Care's self-help guide.

KEYWORDS

Habitus; Henry Care; journalism; journalistic field; numeracy; Pierre Bourdieu; quantitative literacy; symbolic capital

To media theorists interested in the links between journalism and numeracy, the work of Henry Care offers an illuminating example. Writing at the tail end of the Stuart dynasty, Care was a writer and polemicist responsible for several early newspapers, including the staunchly pro-Exclusionist *Weekly Pacquet of Advice from Rome*. But it is in his self-help manual *The Tutor to the True English* that Care's interest in quantitative reasoning comes to the fore. Written in the tradition of the seventeenth-century guidebook, it combines a guide to elementary spelling and grammar with instruction in the basics of arithmetic, complete with worked examples. It was among the last works he published and brought his career full circle, since one of his earliest publications was also a guidebook; in this case, a guide to letter writing aimed at the poorly educated gentlewoman. Care was active in a writing community that had not yet taken on the attributes of a field, and in which an interest in arithmetic as well as language raised no eyebrows. Today, by contrast, journalism's disregard of (if not disdain for) numeracy is in large measure a consequence of the field and the habitus which the field both shapes and is shaped by. At the same time, Pierre Bourdieu's related concepts of habitus and field have opened up new vistas for research into journalism and numeracy by providing a fresh perspective on journalists' long-lamented missteps when it comes to reporting on news that involves numbers. The fact that journalists are not always at ease when it comes to figures has frequently been attested to in the literature¹ and can be

CONTACT Steve Harrison  s.harrison1@ljmu.ac.uk  Journalism Department, Liverpool John Moores University, Redmonds Building, Brownlow Hill, Liverpool L3 5UG, UK

This article has been corrected with minor changes. These changes do not impact the academic content of the article.

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summed up in the conclusions of one research paper: “Some journalists are avowedly ‘number-phobic’—trying to ‘write around the numbers,’ thus yielding pieces insufficient in rich, memorable, or accurate information.”²

The intractable nature of journalistic aversion to figures points to the fact that this issue cannot be resolved via training alone; or else, after decades of trying, it would by now be a distant memory. An explanation for the persistence of this aversion to figures can be found in the way “habitus” and “field” work to reinforce professional values; in Rodney Benson’s phrase, field theory emphasizes how “the social and educational attributes of new journalists serve primarily to reproduce the field.”³ Bourdieu summed up a field as “a field of forces and a field of struggles in which the stake is the power to transform the field of forces.” Examples include the political field, the field of artistic production, and the journalistic field. A field is an autonomous sphere of positions that can be taken by agents who have a stake in the limits and structure of the field. The field is an important element of media analysis because Bourdieu argued that while journalistic interactions (interviews, press conferences, door-stepping whereby journalists turn up unannounced at the homes of people in the news in the hope of catching them unawares, investigations, exposés, etc.) take place between visible, singular agents, an objective analysis needs to take place at a structurally more general level, that of the field. This is because analysis at the level of individual journalists gets tied up in issues of subjectivity and personal responsibility, whereas a field analysis turns the focus on to the relations of power and resistance that constitute social reality.

Habitus, meanwhile, is “the law of the social body converted into the law of the body”; it constitutes the dispositions an agent takes up in relation to positions in the field.⁴ Bourdieu often characterizes habitus as “having a feel for the game”⁵ or as “socialised subjectivity.”⁶ Benson and Erik Neveu helpfully recast habitus into terms more familiar within the Anglophile tradition: it is the hypothesis that “individuals’ predispositions, assumptions, judgements and behaviors are the result of a long-term process of socialization.”⁷

The tendency of the field to reproduce itself means that journalism effectively selects for a lack of interest in numeracy. The writing career of Henry Care is emblematic in this context, as it exemplifies the way in which an interest in numeracy was able to flourish prior to the establishment of the journalistic field. At the point when he was writing, toward the end of the seventeenth century, there were no cultural (field) expectations exerting pressure on a writer such as Care, nor had the social conditions leading to a specifically journalistic habitus been formed. As a result, Care was able to give free rein to his interest in both literacy and numeracy unencumbered by field effects.

Outline of Field Theory and Symbolic Capital

Field theory is a means of surveying journalism as an activity and set of institutions subject to specific constraints; which is to say, a way of looking at it in its dynamical and structural aspects. This recommends itself as a theoretical approach since it avoids both the formal limitations of structuralism (its ahistoricity and resistance to the concept of agency), and the subjectivism of an approach based on the exceptionalism of individuals or the inexorable march of institutions untethered from any material context. Because of this, field theory presents itself as a fruitful toolkit for thinking about journalism and its development—by its nature, field theory imposes a holistic view of its subject. The adoption and extension of field

theory by journalism researchers in particular indicates the peculiar fecundity and suggestiveness of Bourdieu's approach for journalism studies, combining as it does a synthesis of theoretical models alongside an insistence on the specifics of concrete analyses. For instance, in their critical survey of various appropriations of Bourdieu's thought by journalism scholarship, Phoebe Mares and Folker Hanusch express reservations over the limited use made of his intellectual toolkit but nevertheless agree that "Bourdieuian thought is increasingly popular in journalism scholarship."⁸

"Capital" in Bourdieu's thought generalizes the economic meaning of the term to refer to a quality or substance that has value in relation to a specific field, although he is clear this does not commit him to a naïve Marxist economic determinism. As Randal Johnson, one of Bourdieu's editors, puts it: "Bourdieu's use of economic terminology does not imply any sort of economism or economic reductionism. In fact, he sees the economic field per se as simply one field among others."⁹ Capital is that which embodies value within a field, such as higher degrees among academics, or Pulitzer Prizes among journalists. Different forms of capital may be exchanged, as when the award of a Pulitzer may allow a journalist to obtain a better-paid job.¹⁰ In Ida Willig's phrase: "Symbolic goods that are produced in the field of cultural production are objects that exist only when they are recognized as symbolic goods" (in fact, Willig's study in which this remark was made concerned journalistic awards in Denmark).¹¹ In any event, capital only functions within a specific field. Symbolic capital, explains Bourdieu, is "a form which is assumed by different kinds of capital when they are perceived and recognized as legitimate"; examples include glory, honor, credit, reputation, and fame. Loïc Wacquant goes so far as to remark that symbolic capital is one of Bourdieu's most complex notions and that "his whole work may be read as a hunt for its varied forms and effects."¹² Poignantly, "Symbolic Capital" is the title of the final section of one of the last works Bourdieu published in his lifetime.¹³

Bourdieu outlines what he means by journalistic field in one of the few works that explicitly address the media and media power, his polemic *On Television and Journalism*:

In order to try and grasp the explanatory mechanisms of journalistic practice, I have to introduce a somewhat technical term—the idea of the journalistic field. Journalism is a microcosm with its own laws, defined both by its position in the world at large and by the attractions and repulsions to which it is subject from other such microcosms.¹⁴

Bourdieu contrasts his field approach with the "half-baked version of materialism" of economic reductionism associated with Marxism, which "ultimately explains nothing."¹⁵ In order to grasp what journalists are able to perform, one must be aware of both the relative position of the news organizations they work for and the position the journalist occupies within this organization. Hence, the field is described as "a separate social universe having its own laws of functioning independent of those of politics and the economy," which is to say an autonomous sphere embedded within and subject to the forces of wider spheres without being reducible to them.¹⁶

Why talk about the field? Why not simply talk about journalists? Bourdieu is explicit about this: if one focuses on the strengths or failings of individual journalists—that is, centers any analysis around the notion of journalistic responsibility—one fails to identify what is truly at stake. Journalists as visible agents, Bourdieu claims, referencing Plato, are "puppets whose strings have to be found." Instead, the object of analysis should be "the structure of the journalistic field and the mechanisms that operate within it." As an example,

Bourdieu highlights the increasing pressure which the search for ratings has had on journalism's least autonomous sector, that of television (least autonomous because most reliant on the economic power of advertising), which has subsequently become the model for all other branches of journalism.¹⁷ In general, Bourdieu argues, to comprehend what is happening within the journalistic field, it is necessary to determine the degree of autonomy of the field (to what extent it is able to defend its borders, so to speak), and the degree of autonomy of a media organization or journalist within the field. For instance, the educational field has had an impact on journalism's autonomy via the "overproduction" of graduates, ensuring precarious employment conditions, owing to which "censorship can be exercised through political or economic control."¹⁸ Hence action in the field is attributed to agents (epistemic individuals defined by their place in the field) rather than metaphysical subjects, and this is why Bourdieu conducts his analyses at the level of the field rather than that of individuals or institutions: "There is action, there is history . . . only because there are agents who cannot be reduced to . . . individuals."¹⁹ In a similar way, Bourdieu attributes action to the effects of relational structures (fields, dispositions, habitus) rather than to the consciousness of individual subjects, a stance which separates Bourdieu's thought from that of mainstream Marxism. For example, he criticizes the ethnologist Jeanne Favret-Saada for remaining, like Marx, "enclosed within a philosophy of 'consciousness,'" and dismisses the Marxist concept of "false consciousness" as an "intellectualist and scholastic fallacy."²⁰ Crucially, analysis at the level of the subject is essentially truncated because it does not take into account the intrarelations between actors nor interrelations between actors and their socioeconomic context. In short, it does not take into account the field.

Numbers in Newspapers: A Background

Henry Care (Carr or Cave, in some texts)²¹ can be viewed as a proto-journalist,²² and his career has been extensively studied by Lois G. Schwoerer.²³ At the time Care was writing, from 1670–1688, the term "journalist" was of course unknown, but more to the point, the very notion of what it meant to be an intelligencer, news writer or "Scribler" was indeterminate. It is a matter of societal circumstance rather than inevitability that journalism in later years came to be associated with the literary field, and that writers such as Swift, Defoe, and Thackeray were held up as exemplars of the profession. As T. H. S. Escott put it: "In the hands of Defoe, the English newspaper first earned its conventional title by becoming . . . a Fourth Estate" and "the newspaper man's vocation seldom brought him into creditable notice before Swift's genius had elevated the calling."²⁴ Thackeray's article on the death of Prince Albert in the *Cornhill* magazine, which he edited, was "so exquisite in . . . grace of sentiment" that his publisher had it framed in his study.²⁵ Care is a glimpse into what the role of and expectations for a journalist may have become, had the profession not taken its literary turn in the years following his death.

Early news writers in the United Kingdom were a mixed lot: scribes, secretaries, soldiers, clergymen, and even the odd tailor and ironmonger were among its first constituents.²⁶ This should come as no surprise. The manuscript news writer of the 1620s sent out regular handwritten reports on a near-industrial scale, consolidating the cottage industry of mid-Elizabethan times when private letters of intelligence were circulated to a select few powerful figures. Ben Jonson's "Factor" (scribe) in *News from the New World*

claims to pen up to 1,200 newsletters a week,²⁷ although Joseph Frank gives a few score as a more realistic figure.²⁸ Henry Muddiman, the leading manuscript newsletter writer of the 1670s and 1680s, had the help of clerks to supply his several hundred clients.²⁹

By the 1640s, when tensions between king and parliament were boiling over, interest in affairs of state reached fever pitch and a role had developed for collators of intelligences who delivered up their reports in the form of semiregular printed public news books, authorized or not. As yet, there was no clearly defined career path for a journalist, and those who undertook the task did so more as a diversion than a destination. As late as the mid-nineteenth century, the distinguished writer and editor Frederick Greenwood declared he had gone into journalism “as a makeshift” (“like many another aspirant,” notes his biographer J. W. Robertson Scott) and Greenwood jokingly labeled his own career a “perversion.”³⁰ The point is well-made by M. A. Shaaber that early news writers had a variety of motives:

It is not surprising that men wrote and published news from many motives, of which the disinterested desire to serve the public interest that prompts the modern journalist is only one. Consequently much news was written by men who were moved by an ulterior purpose—the inculcation of godliness, for example, or the glorification of the English nation.³¹

In the seventeenth century, then, it was not taken for granted that news reporters were necessarily number averse. It is later chroniclers who fostered the image of the journalist as fluent in the arts but hesitant with figures. Escott, for instance, anachronistically notes of Defoe that his education, as well as featuring Latin, Greek, French, and Italian had “even [been] grounded in mathematics,” as though the fact were an aberration.³² The notion of the number-phobic news reporter, this study argues, is a historically determined one that grew up alongside the “literatisation” of journalism in the latter half of the nineteenth century (the writers around *Pall Mall Gazette* editor Frederick Greenwood in the 1860s championed “the claim of journalism to be considered a branch of literature”).³³ This was partly a result of journalism’s professionalization, since, as Silvio Waisbord observes: “It was only in the late nineteenth century that professional ambitions progressively captured the imaginations of journalists.”³⁴

As the role of the journalist crystallized, so did the qualities and characteristics expected of a journalist. It became a stereotype—in Walter Lippmann’s sense of the word³⁵—that to be a journalist was to be immersed in the world of literature and the literary imagination. In consequence, numeracy barely figured at all, unless in a negative sense as something to be avoided, downplayed, or ignored. Escott goes as far as to remark, approvingly, that Leigh Hunt’s *Examiner*, launched in 1808, was a newspaper that “abhorred statistics.”³⁶ Disregard of numeracy became one of the characteristics of the journalistic field. There were exceptions, of course. Edward Michael Whitty, the Parliamentary sketch writer for the London weekly *Leader* in 1853 makes a math-based pun when he censures Lord Aberdeen’s coalition government for acting in a petty-minded way: “When we accept a Coalition Government, we must expect an average liberalism—a ‘mean’ result, in fact,” where “mean” takes the sense both of an act of ill will and a species of average (the arithmetic mean).³⁷

Care stands out from his contemporaries and near-contemporaries because of his fluency with and interest in arithmetic, and he is distinctive in this regard. None of the correspondents, writers, and compilers discussed by Shaaber in his review of newspaper precursors up

to the 1620s show a similar interest, and the author searched through the texts of figures such as Peter Heylyn, Marchamont Nedham, Sir Roger L'Estrange, Henry Muddiman, and Sir John Berkenhead for examples of arithmetical or numerical writings.³⁸ The writings of James Ralph (the “archetypal ‘dunce’” in Harris’s phrase)³⁹ are instructive in this regard, as Ralph is among the first to put forward a defense of the writer (including the news writer) as an author: that is, a creative and essentially literary spirit. Note, however, that the dichotomy Ralph addresses is not that between the literary and the numerate, but between two modes of the literary, namely the Grub Street hacks who wrote to order for filthy lucre, and the leisured classes who either wrote for pleasure or patronized those who did. Perhaps the nearest analog we can find for Care is the artist and writer Francis Hoffman, whose career is briefly described by Stanley Morison in the appendix to his survey of the English newspaper from 1622. Hoffman was active as a writer and illustrator from around 1706 when he produced a versified *Pilgrim’s Progress*, including copperplate illustrations. In addition to his pamphlets and artwork for the newspaper press (which included signed factotums and block illustrations), Hoffman was also an inventor of scientific devices, including an invention to save lives in battle by making troops more courageous. In this respect, he at least fancied himself a man of science; in a caption to his self-portrait of 1710, Hoffman describes himself as “First inventor of shipping with three bottoms . . . Invented, drawn, written and engrav’d by him.” Hoffman, like Care, straddled what in a later century C. P. Snow would term “the two cultures,” the worlds of quantitative reasoning and of artistic creation.⁴⁰

Care’s Career in Context

Care was born into a modest, probably impoverished background, and it is likely he received some legal training in his youth. He is known best for his series of anti-Catholic, pro-dissenting tracts published as *The Weekly Pacquet of Advice from Rome*, from 1678–1683. Schwoerer describes the *Weekly Pacquet* as “the most important popular history of the seventeenth century in England” and Care as the most important popular historian of early modern England.⁴¹ Defoe was an admirer, although it was not a view universally shared. Muddiman concludes a passing reference to the *Weekly Pacquet* with the words “Little notice need be taken of Care during this reign [Charles II],” although of course Muddiman was writing from an avowedly pro-Royalist perspective.⁴² The *Weekly Pacquet* is Care’s most sustained work and is regarded by some as the first regular newspaper; it preceded Benjamin Harris’s *Domestick Intelligence* by six months and although its topic is the history of Roman Catholicism, its ulterior purpose was to comment on the unfurling Exclusion Crisis amid the ferment caused by the Popish Plot.

The *Pacquet* typically consisted of eight pages measuring approximately 5 1/2 inches by 7 1/2 inches and the pages were consecutively numbered within five volumes (although a parallel fifth volume was published by Care’s original printer), so Care and his readers clearly considered it a continuing publication. The final two pages were generally given their own heading, “The Popish Courant,” and set in a larger body font to appear like a separate publication, in which Care remorselessly satirized Catholic beliefs and publications; Elizabeth Clarke has explained why Protestant propaganda of the time was often “viciously anti-Catholic.”⁴³ When the *Weekly Pacquet* was prosecuted for defying the Licensing Act in 1680, H. R. Fox Bourne describes how presiding judge Chief Justice Scroggs labeled the

publication “a newsbook or pamphlet of news” and censured publishers and booksellers who “undertake to print news foolishly.” The point is that Care’s status as a writer of news is well-supported by the evidence of his publications and the way in which he was treated by his contemporaries.⁴⁴

One of Care’s earliest publications was what historians would characterize today as a self-help guide. *The Female Secretary*, published in 1671, took the form of a series of model letters aimed at the poorly educated letter writer; in this case, specifically aimed at the “gentlewoman,” whose educational opportunities had diminished over the preceding century. Care was writing within a well-established tradition of the “secretary” manual, the most influential of which was Angel Day’s *English Secretorie*, which went through several editions following its original publication in 1586. Though the format was hardly original, Care’s was the largest collection of model letters of its kind at the time. It was a genre to which Care returned among the last works of his career. Published in 1687 (although sections were written earlier), *The Tutor to True English* was also a self-help guide, this time aimed more generally at “FORREIGNERS,” “Children and Ignorant People,” and the “Countrey-man,” although its main intended audience was merchants and those who plied the “Mechanic Arts.”⁴⁵ Significantly for the purposes of this research, it includes a section on arithmetic that outlines “as much of that Necessary Art, as most Professions and Ranks of Men have occasion to make Use of it.” In Care’s view, that extended as far as “the Rule of Three” (proportion), at that time especially common in commercial arithmetic,⁴⁶ which supports the view that Care’s intended audience was commercial and mercantile. While the idea of a self-made man writing a self-improvement guide may strike the modern reader as an early example of an encouragement to social mobility, the text is not designed to help its audience members transcend their allotted place in society but to fulfill it better. Care expresses the hope that by means of his book, his audience will “Learn as much of that Necessary Art, as most Professions and Ranks of Men have occasion to make Use of.”⁴⁷ That is, he hopes they will learn enough to perform and conform to their role in society, rather than supplying them with the means to rise above it. In this sense, comparisons with later superficially similar self-improvement manuals, such as Samuel Smiles’s *Self Help*, first published in 1859, are misleading.

While guides to letter writing were more common by the seventeenth century than guides to arithmetic, the arithmetic section of Care’s textbook was by no means the first. Among the earliest, and by far the best-known, such writers was Robert Record (or Recorde), whose six-volume set of instructional manuals was published between 1543–1557, one volume of which was still being reprinted as late as 1699, although Pauvel convincingly suggests the majority of Elizabethan readers got no further than the first volume.⁴⁸ Record is chiefly remembered as the originator of the symbol “=” to represent equality because, as he wrote, “noe 2 thynges can be moare equalle” than two parallel lines. His chosen form of presentation was the dialogue—a more “literary and humanistic” form that draws on Platonic rather than Aristotelian sources and which prefigures Galileo’s more celebrated use of the form.⁴⁹ Record was evidently less circumspect than Galileo, though, since he ended his days in prison, possibly for political or religious reasons. In contrast to Record’s use of the dialogue, which by this time may well have come to seem stylistically dated, Care uses the fluid, conversational style developed over his years as a propagandist, addressing the reader directly as when he writes on page 75 of *The Tutor*: “you are to observe, that we commonly express all Numbers by these Nine Figures . . .” This contrasts

with the more pointedly didactic approach adopted by writers such as Blundeville a generation earlier, that employs as its form the catechism.⁵⁰ Care uses the second person throughout, including in *The Tutor's* longer first section on language, and Care is not afraid to employ humor to make his point. In a section giving examples of homonyms (“Of words much alike in Sound but unlike . . . in Signification”), he illustrates the difference between the words “nose,” “news,” and “noise” with the colorful exemplar: “What a noise do you keep with your snotty Nose, that we cannot hear the News”—a reference, surely, to his own occupation. This supposition is strengthened when we recall Care published a pamphlet entitled “Snotty Nose Gazette; or Coughing Intelligence” in November 1679.⁵¹

Care’s arithmetical syllabus is far less advanced than Record’s, of course. Record’s six-volume set included such advanced topics as the newly discovered method of extraction of cube roots (commonly attributed to del Ferro around 1500 but only published by Cardano in 1545), while Care covers only basic arithmetic operations up to the so-called “rule of three” (in which three quantities in proportion are given, from which the fourth is to be determined). The Rule of Three, Care explains, is “as far as most PROFESSIONS have Occasion for.” Even in Care’s time, the Rule of Three was hardly cutting-edge material; it was known to the ancient Egyptians, who applied it (admittedly without describing it) in the Rhind papyrus dating back to 1650 BC, and the problems are certainly earlier, as Carl Boyer and Uta Merzbach point out. Care’s notation and presentation, such as the “galley” method of division, was still being taught up to the nineteenth century in parts of Europe.⁵²

Care is clearly master of his material and there is no suggestion he worked with a collaborator (although he readily admits he drew on earlier authors), so historians can infer Care’s grounding in at least basic mathematics was sufficient to give him the confidence to undertake this part of the book. At one point, he comments on European attempts (only partially successful) to align the calendar with the actual movement of the heavens by adopting the Gregorian calendar with the words: “If I mistake not, I could propose a Method which should keep our Reckoning even with the Suns Course forever,” which exhibits no lack of belief in his own talent.⁵³ The examples Care gives have a real-world context. For example, rather than proposing an abstract instance of multiplication after giving a series of rules, Care writes: “There are commonly reckoned 365 days in a year, and I am 39 years of Age, I would like to know how many days I have Lived?” before going on to calculate the product as 14,235—leap years being expressly ruled out under the terms of the question.⁵⁴

Intriguingly, if the age given in the above example was Care’s true age at the time of writing, it would imply the book was written or revised in 1685–86. Care’s biographer Schwoerer suggests it was written earlier, perhaps in 1683–84, before Care joined James II’s court and at a time when Care was out of favor with the authorities, thus having time on his hands. Schwoerer supports this date on the basis of Care’s statement in his preface to *The Tutor* that the book was written “in a tedious time of inforc’d Leisure and Retirement.”⁵⁵ But an alternative possibility is that the main body of the work (on spelling and grammar) was indeed written at the earlier date; that Care’s remark above relates specifically to this section; and that the section on arithmetic was added nearer to its publication in July 1687, the date it was approved by the licenser Robert Midgley. Such a possibility is supported by Care’s remark in his preface that to his *Tutor* he has “added an Introduction to Arithmetic,” which could of course have been composed at a later date. There is one further hint as to the sequence of composition: Care leaves the reader with a series of worked examples, one of

which begins: “Now suppose I am 41 years old . . .”⁵⁶ It is tempting to think these final exercises were added immediately prior to publication, which would give 1687 as the date the sentence was written. Of course, it may be that both the ages given in the text were entirely arbitrary, bearing no relation to Care’s actual age at time of writing; but it is curious the ages coincide with the dates so neatly. If the considerations discussed above are correct, this would provide fresh information regarding the sequence of composition of *The Tutor*.

The examples in the Arithmetic section are drawn from the military, agricultural, and commercial worlds, grounding the lessons in territory which would have been practical and familiar to Care’s readers. It is a technique of which modern champions of numeracy education would approve. For example, Rose Marie Ward et al. observe, “Common to all of the definitions is that QL [Quantitative Literacy] is the ability to apply mathematical operations to real-world problems,”⁵⁷ or again according to Nathan Grawe and Carol Rutz, numeracy is “the power and habit of mind to search out quantitative information, critique it, reflect upon it, and apply it in . . . public, personal and professional lives.”⁵⁸ The selection of examples is not random; Care makes an effort to furnish his readers with real-life situations to which they can relate, rather than treating the subject purely in the abstract.

Care acknowledges that he has drawn on previous works; he has “partly by my own Observations, and partly from the Ablest Authors on this Subject, Collected and Digested the following Rules and Directions.” But there is no doubt the writing style and tone is his own. Throwaway comments indicate Care was either working from memory in places or at least wished to give that impression (and it is difficult to imagine why he would wish to do so were he not working from memory). In the first section on language, for instance, he lists words that begin with the letter “c” but are pronounced “s” before adding: “All other words (as near as I can remember) . . .,” while in the following paragraph he assures the reader, “There are seven words (I can think of no more at present) beginning with . . .”⁵⁹ The style is more that of casual conversation than a formal training manual. Style is very important here: the lack of a fully developed arithmetic symbolism in seventeenth-century England (which in any event would have appeared alien to Care’s intended readership) means operations such as division and proportion (the “rule of three”) are described in words rather than illustrated by formulas. While this can result in sentences that strike the modern reader as convoluted, this is typical of arithmetic textbooks of the period and Care is perfectly clear at every step of his explanation. In short, Care is master of his material and is no mere puppet ventriloquizing the work of others. This suggests his own numeracy skills are highly developed.

There is evidence that Care viewed mastery of arithmetic as morally desirable, as well as of practical benefit. In his 1686 pamphlet *The Character and Qualifications of an Honest Loyal Merchant*, he puts forward the proto-Whig argument that the merchant-trader is “one of the most useful members in a State” and should be treated with respect and honor rather than with contempt and disdain.⁶⁰ The argument would become well-worn in the eighteenth century, reaching its apogee in Defoe’s *Complete English Tradesman* (1726) where Defoe observes that “the tradesmen in England fill the lists of our nobility and gentry.”⁶¹ Care’s own panegyric to the tradesman in his pamphlet contains the observation that: “HE is well-skill’d in that Foundation of Arts, the Science of Numbers: for as Merchandize (next after Religion and Justice) is the life of the Weal-Publick, so Practical Arithmetick is the Soul of Merchandize.”⁶² It was precisely in order to spread knowledge of “Practical Arithmetick” that Care wrote the second part of *The Tutor*, as it covers the very ground he identifies in

The Character and Qualifications . . . as the ideal merchant's *sine qua non*: "Measures, Weights and Money of all foreign Countries . . . not only by their several Denominations but also in their Intrinsic Values in weight," rates of exchange, calculation of wages, tolls and taxes, and bookkeeping.⁶³ We can see the similarity between the two works by taking just one worked example from *The Tutor*: "If one Sea-man have 14s. per Month Wages, what will the Wages of 3349 Sea-men for the same time come to?"⁶⁴ It is as if, then, *The Tutor* is part of a moral mission to provide that education which is the indispensable basis of the merchant class.

The reading public evidently harbored no misgivings about purchasing a book that provided advice on arithmetic written by a man so closely associated with the writing of periodicals. *The Tutor to True English* was re-issued in 1668 and 1690 and a second edition appeared in 1699, according to the introductory note to the facsimile edition (this note should, however, be treated with caution as it erroneously labels the arch anti-Catholic propagandist Care as "a controversial journalist with Catholic leanings").⁶⁵ Contrast that with the situation today, where the fact that a mathematics book had been written by a news reporter would be more likely to injure than increase sales. A case in point is the recent bestseller *Alex's Adventures in Numberland*, where UK author Alex Bellos is described on the flyleaf as an academic first and subsequently as having "worked for the *Guardian*." In fact, Bellos spent a decade working as a reporter, initially with the regional newspaper *Brighton Argus* and also as a freelancer, yet the publisher refrained from marketing the title as by a "journalist" or "reporter," judging quite reasonably that such a description might undermine public confidence in its numeracy credentials. In terms of the publishing field, journalists clearly have less symbolic capital when it comes to the subject of numeracy. In a similar way, numeracy has little cultural capital within the journalistic field itself, certainly within the subfield of general news reporting, a fact that Bellos acknowledged when he wrote how it was "disquieting to realize just how innumerate most journalists are. . . . For my colleagues, the calculation [about road cones on a motorway] was a step too far."⁶⁶ Despite Bellos's own interest in the subject, it was not a topic he regularly discussed with journalist colleagues: "You never really talked about it."⁶⁷

Conclusion

Henry Care was writing at a time when these fields barely existed, never mind the journalistic field (as Bourdieu observed: "The journalistic field emerged as such during the nineteenth century").⁶⁸ In fact, fields are constitutive of modernity. The author takes here a widely shared view that modernity begins in the mid-seventeenth century (c.f. Brian Trainor: "Writers such as Hobbes and Locke . . . inaugurated modernism").⁶⁹ Neveu remarks: "Bourdieu's theories follow Weber and Durkheim in portraying modernity as a process of differentiation into semi-autonomous and increasingly specialized spheres of action. These spheres or 'fields' are structured systems of social relations."⁷⁰ So the fact that Care was operating prior to the establishment of the journalistic field allows us to glimpse how that field could have been structured otherwise. Fields and subfields are always contingent. They are also subject to change. The example of Care's *The Tutor* shows there is nothing about the journalistic field that is inherently antithetical to numeracy.

It is important to study a prefield figure such as Care because, as Bourdieu argues, fields are subject to the force of inertia; once a set of practices takes hold, it requires effort to shake them off, and so the earliest configuration of the field tends to dominate. As Benson puts it: “The ‘rules of the game’ that are established at a field’s founding tend to endure.”⁷¹ Bourdieu conceives of this as a form of “path dependency,” because the stakes of struggle within a field depend on “the state of the possibilities bequeathed by previous struggles.”⁷² At the outset, then, the morphology of the field is up for grabs. But once it coalesces into a formation, cultural inertia tends to preserve its structure, and it takes a conscious effort to modify this structure. In the case of journalism, the field’s formation occurs at the close of the eighteenth and the first decades of the nineteenth centuries as industrial, technological, and sociopolitical factors wrought journalism into a quintessentially literary form. Its highest values were enshrined as those of fine writing rather than fact-finding, and its touchstone was the polished prose of Addison and Steele, not the tawdry penny-a-line news stories that filled the gaps between advertisements of the daily prints.⁷³ This development has not been entirely beneficial to journalism’s progress: as the current writer has argued elsewhere, up until the turn of the twentieth century, “news” was conceived as a low-value commodity that was unearthed rather than crafted. The figures, statistics, and numerical facts that constituted the raw material of news stories were therefore doubly undervalued, as unrefined ore destined to be smelted into commonplace news reports.⁷⁴ The concept of news reporting as an act of creative originality, as exemplified in practices such as the interview and the news investigation, are inventions of the late nineteenth century.⁷⁵ The glimpse into proto-journalism afforded by the example of Care suggests this subordination of numeracy to literacy as the journalistic ideal was not inevitable.

Hence the value of looking at an interregnum-era figure like Henry Care is that it allows us to peel back the layers of socialized activity that have resulted in the form of news with which we are familiar today. By more fully appreciating the contingent nature of the production of news, we can conceive of its future possibilities more fully, such as a journalism with deeper roots in numeracy and quantitative literacy. The media historian Stuart Allan, drawing on the insights of veteran journalism commentator Walter Lippmann, concluded that a professional shift in emphasis toward a more numerate journalism would have wide-ranging benefits that went beyond the quotidian:

More than a question of journalism training being compelled to improve the teaching and learning of numeracy skills, as welcome as this would be, he [Lippmann] believed it would necessarily entail a critical reorientation of journalism’s routine, everyday engagements in the mediation of statistical data.⁷⁶

The fact that news writers who came after Care did not develop numeracy skills or value them to the extent they valued literary skills represents the road not taken in the evolution of the journalistic field. When we think about the way in which news values become codified in the early eighteenth century and beyond, the concepts of field and habitus are theoretical vantage points that offer useful perspectives. For example, by considering the relative autonomy of the book publishing and newspaper publishing fields, one can trace the development of the form of the modern newspaper in terms of its separation from and indebtedness to the book, and in particular the liturgical book.⁷⁷ More generally, consideration of fields and the relation between them is a way of escaping from the most pervasive

form of essentialism, the conviction that “what is” is natural and inevitable. Faced by this apparently natural and inevitable order of things, field theory is a way of allowing us to “reconstruct the history of the historical labor of dehistoricization.”⁷⁸

Notes

1. See, for example, Lynn Steen, “Mathematical News That’s Fit to Print,” 1989, <http://www.steenfrost.org/Steen/Papers/89leeds.pdf>; Amelia Genis, “Numbers Count: The Importance of Numeracy for Journalists” (master’s thesis, University of Stellenbosch, South Africa, 2001); Scott Maier, “Numbers in the News: A Mathematics Audit of a Daily Newspaper,” *Journalism Studies* 3, no. 4 (2002): 507–19; and Susana Pereira, António Machiavelo, and José Azevedo, “Maths in the News: Uses and Errors in Portuguese Newspapers,” *Journal of Science Communication* 15, no. 4 (2016): A03, doi: 10.22323/2.15040203
2. Michael A. Ranney et al., “Designing and Assessing Numeracy Training for Journalists: Toward Improving Quantitative Reasoning among Media Consumers,” in *International Perspectives in the Learning Sciences: Proceedings of the Eighth International Conference for the Learning Sciences*, eds. P. A. Kirschner, F. Prins, V. Jonker, & G. Kanselaar (Utrecht, The Netherlands: International Society of the Learning Science, 2008), 2, 246.
3. Rodney Benson, “Mapping Field Variation,” in *Bourdieu and the Journalistic Field*, eds. Rodney Benson and Erik Neveu (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2005), 101.
4. Pierre Bourdieu, “The Political Field, the Social Science Field and the Journalistic Field,” in *Bourdieu and the Journalistic Field*, 44.
5. Pierre Bourdieu, *Pascalian Meditations* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000), 179.
6. Bourdieu and Loïc Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 11, 126.
7. Rodney Benson and Erik Neveu, “Introduction: Field Theory as a Work in Progress,” in *Bourdieu and the Journalistic Field*, 3.
8. Phoebe Maeres and Folker Hanusch, “Interpretations of the Journalistic Field: A Systematic Analysis of How Journalism Scholarship Appropriates Bourdieusian Thought,” *Journalism* (October 4, 2020): 14, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1464884920959552>.
9. Randal Johnson, translator’s introduction to Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1993), 8.
10. Pierre Bourdieu, *In Other Words: Essays Toward a Reflexive Sociology* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1990), 128.
11. Ida Willig, “Ideals of Journalism: The Historical Consecration of Media Capital in Prize Awards and the Case of the Danish Cavling Award 1945–2016,” *Media History* 26, no. 4 (2019): 489–507, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13688804.2019.1608169>.
12. Bourdieu and Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, 119n73.
13. Bourdieu, *Pascalian Meditations*, 240.
14. Bourdieu, *On Television and Journalism* (London: Pluto Press, 1998), 39.
15. Bourdieu, *On Television and Journalism*, 39.
16. Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, 162.
17. Bourdieu, *On Television and Journalism*.
18. Bourdieu, “The Political Field, the Social Science Field and the Journalistic Field,” 42–43.
19. Bourdieu, *Pascalian Meditations*, 155.
20. Bourdieu, *Masculine Domination* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2001), 40.
21. Fox Bourne is among those who transcribed Care’s surname as “Carr” and reprimanded Antony à Wood for mistakenly writing it as “Cave.” H. R. Fox Bourne, *English Newspapers: Chapters in the History of English Journalism*, vol. 1 (London: Chatto and Windus, 1887), 45n2.
22. The term “journalist” as applied to Care is, of course, anachronistic but, prefixed as it is by “proto-” acts as a shorthand for the range of periodical writing activities in which he was engaged. Other writers have employed the term in a similar vein. For instance, Harris spells out how the demarcation between author and publisher was ambiguous throughout the eighteenth

century and that the term “author” is “particularly elusive,” yet he nevertheless declares that one notorious news writer described in a pamphlet of 1729 “surely is a journalist in all but name.” Michael Harris, “Journalism as a Profession or Trade in the Eighteenth Century,” in *Author/Publisher Relations during the 18th and 19th Centuries*, ed. Robin Myers and Michael Harris (Oxford: Oxford Polytechnic Press, 1983), 40, 42. Shaaber frequently alludes to journalism and journalists in his study of news publications from the fifteenth to early seventeenth centuries. M. A. Shaaber, *Some Forerunners of the Newspaper in England, 1476–1622* (1929; repr. London: Frank Cass, 1966). Mari notes that the term “journalism” at the turn of the eighteenth century tended to be reserved for “the more culturally marginalized writers for periodicals” and, significantly, grouped them with “actors and poets”; again, associating journalism with the literary, the artistic and the cultured. William T. Mari, “Writer by Trade: James Ralph’s Claims to Authorship,” *Authorship* 4, no. 2 (2015): 3.

23. Lois G. Schwoerer, *The Ingenious Mr. Henry Care: London’s First Spin-Doctor* (Stroud UK: Tempus, 2004).
24. T. H. S. Escott, *Masters of English Journalism: A Study Of Personal Forces* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1911; reprinted Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1970), 78, 92.
25. J. W. Robertson Scott, *The Story of The Pall Mall Gazette* (London: Oxford University Press, 1950), 62.
26. Alexander Andrews, *The History of British Journalism*, vol. 1. (London: Richard Bentley, 1859; republished Grosse Point, MI: Scholarly Press, 1968); *The Times*, “Origin and Growth of the British Newspaper 1622–1715,” supplement to September 10, 1912, 13–15.
27. Ben Jonson, “News from the New World Discovered in the Moon,” 1620, <https://math.dartmouth.edu/~matc/Readers/renaissance.astro/9.1.Moon.html>.
28. Joseph Frank, *The Beginnings of the English Newspaper* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1961), 20.
29. J. G. Muddiman, *The King’s Journalist 1659–1689: Studies in the Reign of Charles II* (London: Bodley Head, 1923), appendix B.
30. Robertson Scott, *The Story of The Pall Mall Gazette*, 121.
31. Shaaber, *Some Forerunners of the Newspaper in England*, 7.
32. Escott, *Masters of English Journalism*, 54.
33. Escott, 251.
34. Silvio Waisbord, *Reinventing Professionalism: Journalism and News in Global Perspective, Key Concepts in Journalism* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2013), 22.
35. Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1922).
36. Escott, *Masters of English Journalism*, 142.
37. Edward Michael Whitty, *St. Stephen’s in the Fifties: The Session 1852–3—A Parliamentary Retrospect* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1906), 153.
38. Anthony Milton, *Laudian and Royalist Polemic in Seventeenth-Century England: The Career and Writings of Peter Heylyn* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007); Jeremy Black, *The English Press 1621–1861* (Stroud, Gloucestershire: Sutton, 2001); and Peter W. Thomas, *Sir John Berkenhead, 1617–1679: A Royalist Career in Politics and Polemics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969).
39. Harris, “Journalism as a Profession or Trade in the Eighteenth Century,” 37.
40. Stanley Morison, *The English Newspaper: An Account of the Physical Development of Journals Printed in London 1622–1932* (1932; repr. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); C. P. Snow, “The Two Cultures,” *New Statesman and Nation* (London: October 6, 1956); for a more detailed discussion of the relevance of Snow’s two cultures to field theory, see Steve Harrison, “Journalists, Numeracy and Cultural Capital,” *Numeracy* 9, no. 2 (2016): <https://scholarcommons.usf.edu/numeracy/vol9/iss2/art3/>.
41. Schwoerer, *The Ingenious Mr. Henry Care*, 44, 261.
42. Muddiman, *The King’s Journalist*, 213.
43. Elizabeth Clarke, “Re-Reading the Exclusion Crisis,” *The Seventeenth Century* 21, no. 1 (2006): 141–59, 145.
44. Fox Bourne, *English Newspapers*, 44.

45. Henry Care, *The Tutor to True English* (1687, facsimile of the first edition, Menston, England: Scholar Press, 1971).
46. Graham Flegg, *Numbers: Their History and Meaning* (Middlesex, England: Pelican Books, 1984), 126.
47. Henry Care, Preface to *The Tutor to True English*.
48. John Fauvel, "Platonic Rhetoric in Distance Learning: How Robert Record Taught the Home Learner," *For the Learning of Mathematics* 9, no. 1 (February 1989), 5.
49. Carl B. Boyer and Uta C. Merzbach, *A History of Mathematics*, 2nd ed. (New York: Wiley, 1989), 323.
50. Thomas Blundevile, *M. Blundevile His Exercises Containing Eight Treatises*, 6th ed. (London: Printed by William Stansby, 1622).
51. Schwoerer, *The Ingenious Mr. Henry Care*, 343.
52. Boyer and Merzbach, *A History of Mathematics*, 18; and Flegg, *Numbers*, 115.
53. Great Britain finally adopted the Gregorian calendar to achieve this purpose in 1752.
54. Care, *The Tutor to True English*, 73, 87.
55. Schwoerer, *The Ingenious Mr. Henry Care*, 225.
56. Care, *The Tutor to True English*, 103.
57. Rose Marie Ward, Monica C. Schneider, and James D. Kiper, "Development of an Assessment of Quantitative Literacy for Miami University," *Numeracy* 4, no. 2 (2011): 4.
58. Nathan D. Grawe and Carol A. Rutz, "Integration with Writing Programs: A Strategy for Quantitative Reasoning Program Development," *Numeracy* 2, no. 2 (2009): 1.
59. Care, *The Tutor to True English*, 27.
60. Henry Care, *The Character and Qualifications of an Honest Loyal Merchant* (London: printed by Robert Roberts, 1686). Full text available at http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:45578233.
61. Cited in Erin Mackie, ed., *The Commerce of Everyday Life: Selections from the Tatler and the Spectator*, Bedford Cultural Editions (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1998), 291.
62. Care, *Character and Qualifications*, 7.
63. Care, 88.
64. Care, 88.
65. It is true that Care did go on to write in support of the Catholic James II, but Schwoerer (224–28) convincingly argues this was out of self-preservation rather than because of any spiritual *volte-face*. In Andrews's words: "Thus did persecution turn an honest gentleman into a mercenary scribe." Andrews, *History of British Journalism*, vol. 1:77.
66. Alex Bellos, *Alex's Adventures in Numberland* (London: Bloomsbury, 2011).
67. Alex Bellos, interview with author, 2019.
68. Bourdieu, *On Television and Journalism*, 70.
69. Brian Trainor, "The Origin and End of Modernity," *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 15, no. 2 (1998): 135.
70. Erik Neveu, "Pierre Bourdieu: Sociologist of Media, or Sociologist for Media Scholars?" *Journalism Studies* 8, no. 2 (2007): 336.
71. Benson, "Mapping Field Variation," 95.
72. Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1996).
73. On the "penny-a-liners," see Martin Conboy, *Journalism in Britain: A Historical Introduction* (London: Sage, 2011), 166. The effect this had on the development of the prolix style of news writing common up to the late Victorian era is well-documented.
74. Steve Harrison, "The Byline," in *The Edinburgh History of the British and Irish Press, vol. 2: Expansion and Evolution, 1800–1900*, ed. David Finkelstein, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020), 5, 188–96.
75. Michael Schudson, *The Power of News* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 72–93.
76. Stuart Allan, introduction to *News, Numbers and Public Opinion in a Data-Driven World*, ed. An Nguyen (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018).

77. Stanley Morison is the figure most closely associated with the study of the development of the physical form of the newspaper. His biographer James Moran makes the persuasive link between Morison's conversion to Catholicism and his burgeoning "hobby of printing." Moran, *Stanley Morison: His Typographical Achievements* (London: Lund Humphries, 1971), 35. Morison wrote the lectures that were published as *Politics and Script* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), a study linking changes in typography to political and religious forces—a "typo-histography," if you will—although Moran among others was skeptical as to the general validity of Morison's argument (*Stanley Morison*, 161). For an analysis of how and why newspapers transformed from being the "printer's newspaper" to the modern "industrial newspaper," see Kevin Barnhurst and John Nerone, *The Form of News: A History* (New York: The Guildford Press, 2001).
78. Bourdieu, *Masculine Domination*, 82.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

About the Author

Steve Harrison is a senior lecturer in journalism at Liverpool John Moores University, UK. He spent twenty-five years working on regional daily newspapers as a reporter and production editor, and was later digital content editor. His research interests include the history of newspaper production, health and science reporting, and the role of numeracy in journalism education.

ORCID

Steve Harrison  <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-7709-2677>