

Le Petit Journal

PROPRIÉTÉ, RÉDACTION ET ANNONCES : 41, rue Lafayette, 41, PARIS.
UN NUMÉRO : 5 CENTIMES.
LE PETIT JOURNAL FONDÉ EN 1863. LE 15 OCTOBRE 1871.
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Mayhem and the Mass Press of Paris: Representations of Violence in the *Petit Journal* in the 1890s and 1900s

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April 20, 2020

Introduction

The illustrated press of Paris
Around 1900
1 million copies a day

Full of scenes of violence:
crimes, accidents, disasters and
more

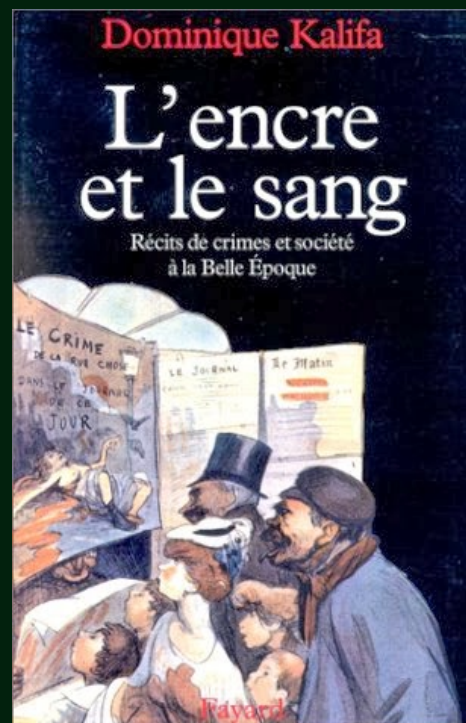
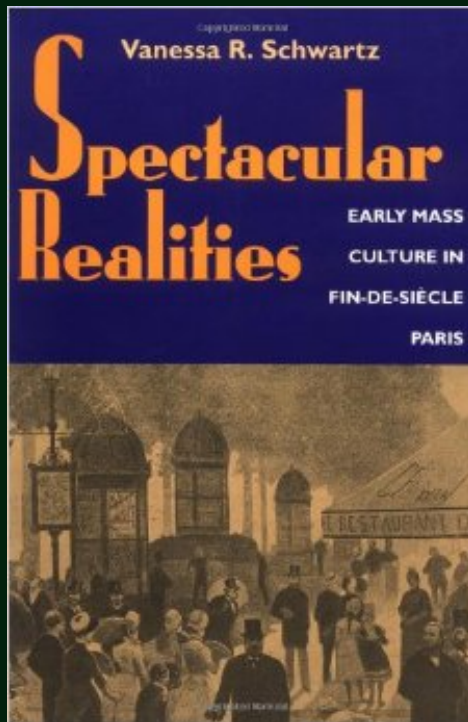


Historical Question



How did the mass press of Paris – in particular the illustrated *Petit Journal* in the 1890s and 1900s – depict violence?

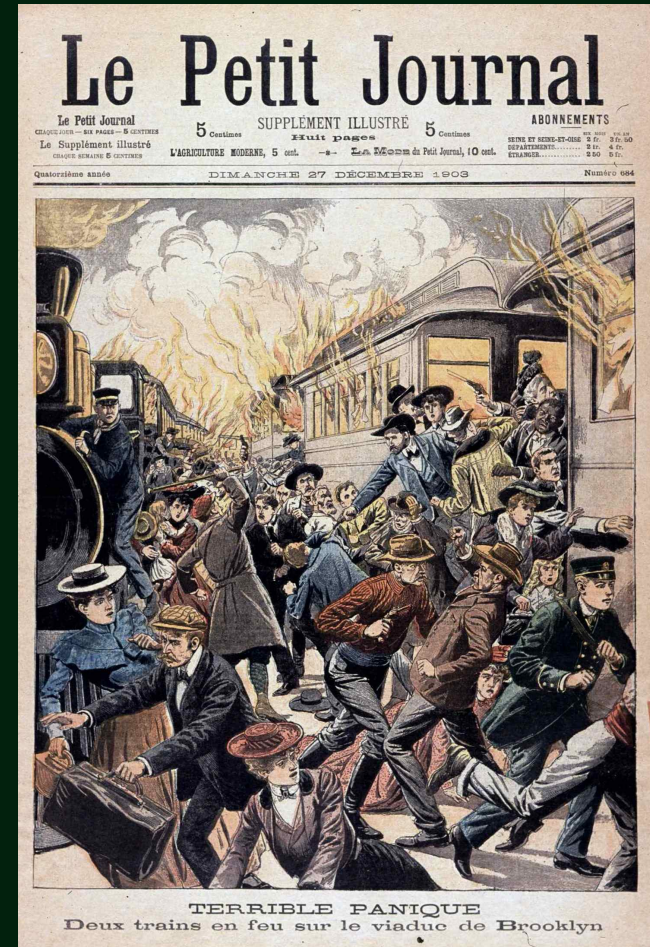
Historiography



- Schwartz (1995): Illustrated press made a “spectacle” out of reality”
- Kalifa (1994): Crime reporting was the basis of social solidarity in time of social tension. It could “bind together the broken strands of the social fabric”

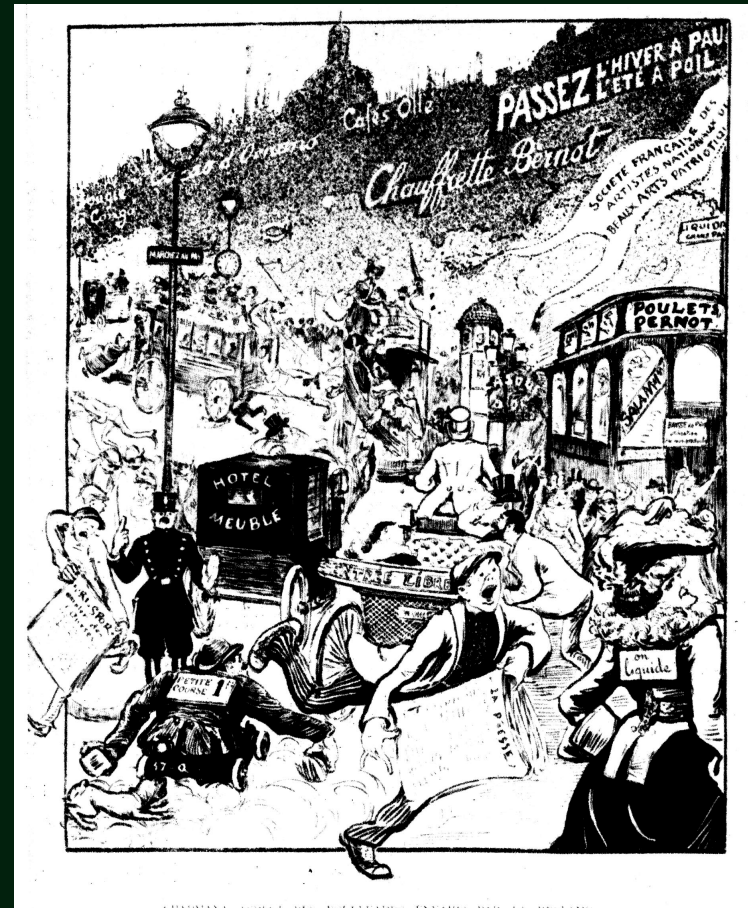
Historical Argument

The *Petit Journal* presented a close-up vision of death and destruction. Its editors and journalists and artists invited readers to imagine the worst. In depictions of events drawn from far and near, they portrayed a world gone to the dogs. In doing so, they built a mass audience and habituated their readers to violence.



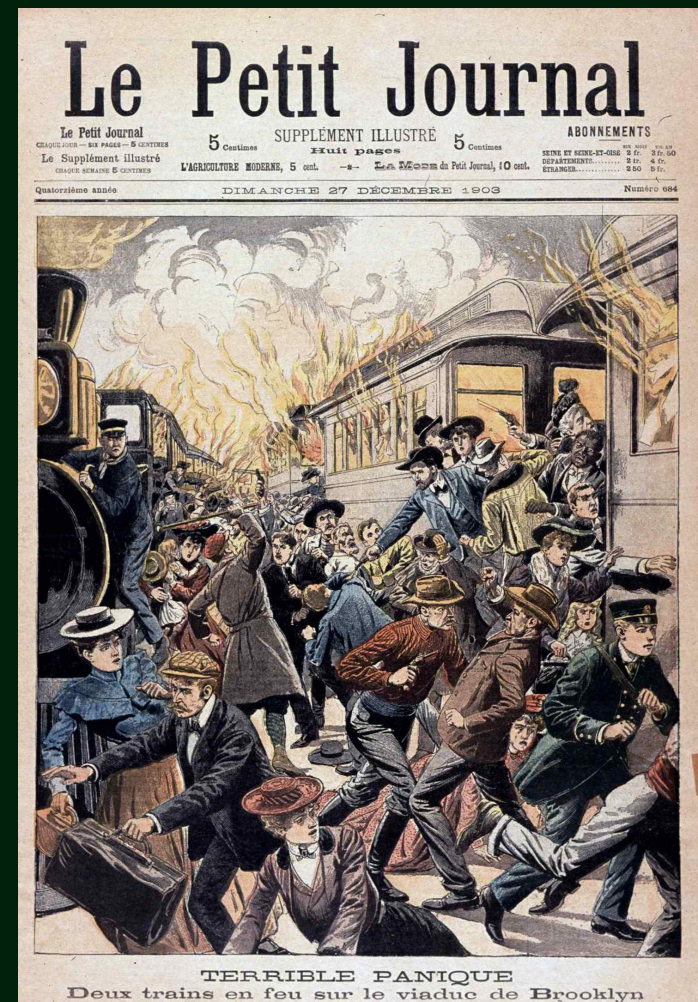
Context

- France in the late 19th & early 20th c.
- Belle Epoque Paris
- Mass culture
- Debates over press & democracy



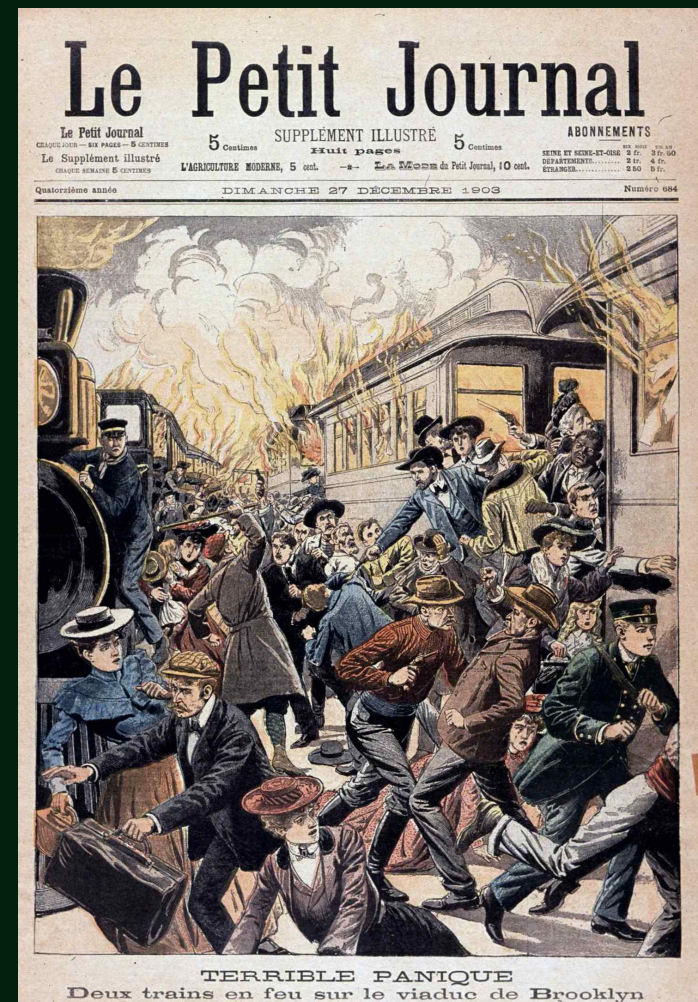
Primary Source Research

- Selections from three years of the *Petit Journal* – 1890, 1898, 1906
- 150 cover images
- A close look at a handful of representative images

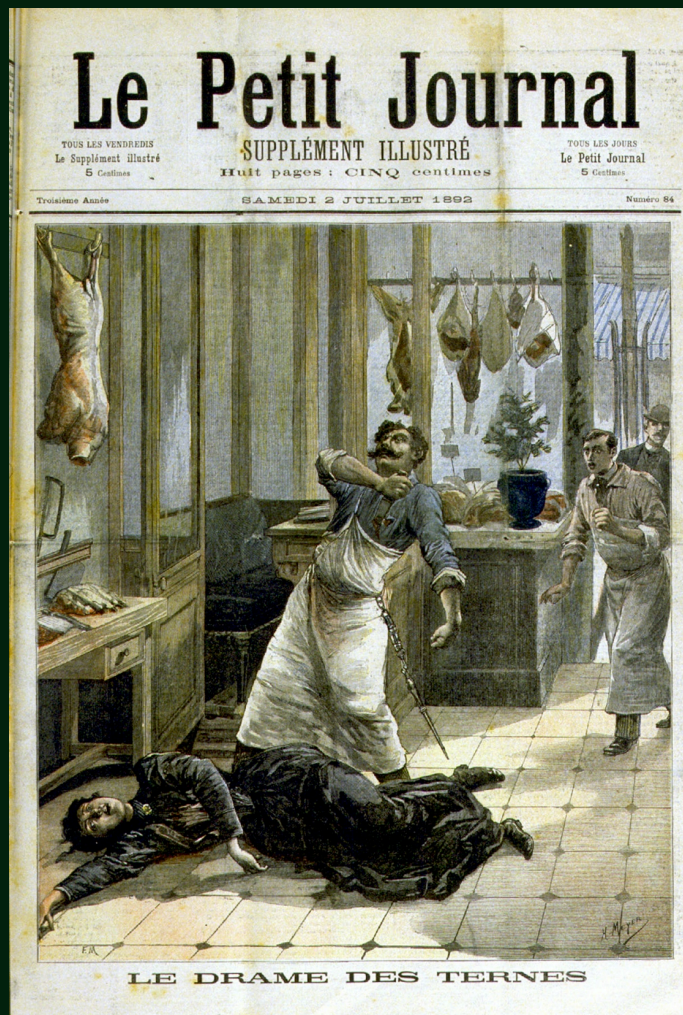


Examples from the Petit Journal

- News from around the world
- Brooklyn 1906



Examples from the Petit Journal



- Terrible events seen from the point of view of an onlooker
- Paris 1890

Conclusions

- The illustrated press depicted a world of violence
- An era when newspaper was more powerful and more present than ever before. Central part of a new mass culture
- Accustomed readers to violence before the First World War

