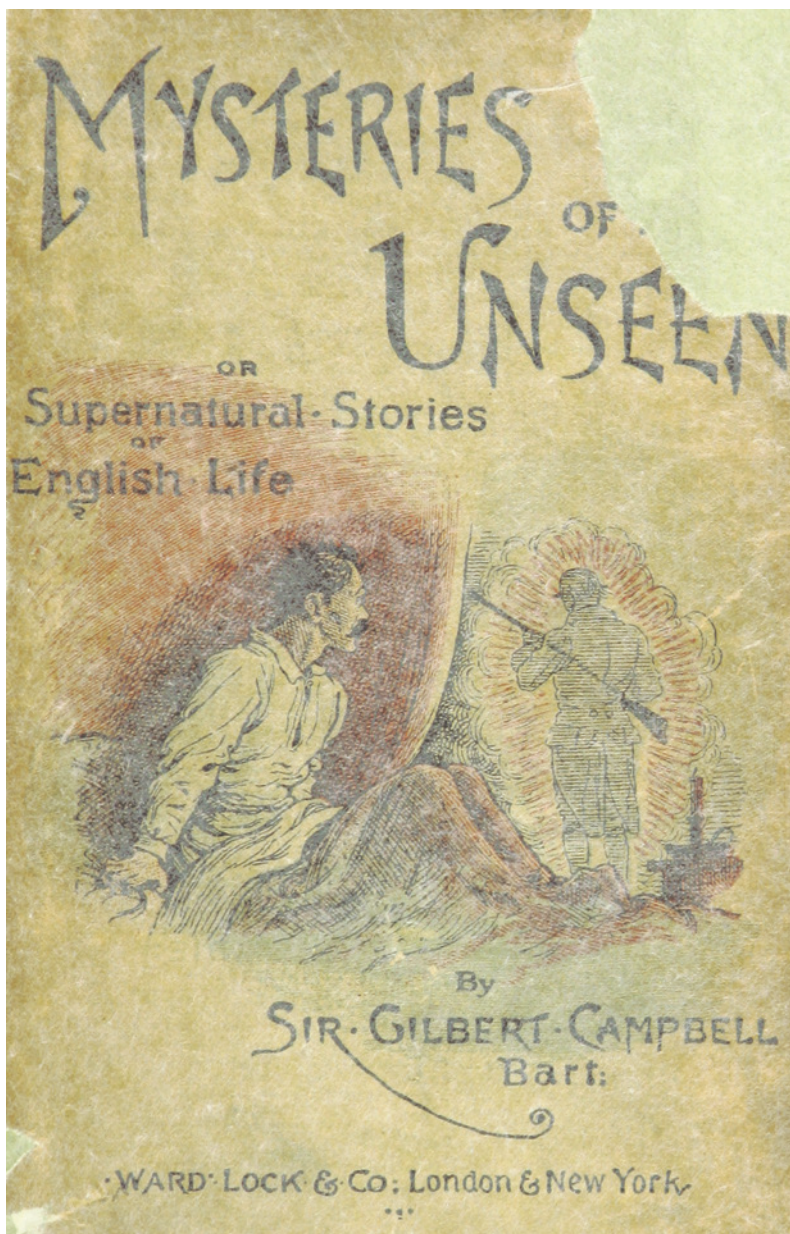


(In)visibility

Abstract This chapter takes as its starting point the centrality of illustration in nineteenth-century culture and its subsequent disappearance from printed editions and critical discourse today. Digital illustration archives have in some ways restored this visibility, but their methodologies can be problematic. Thomas identifies these problems, arguing that the process of digital remediation leads to a direct confrontation with ideas about the visual specificity of illustration. Referring to numerous digital resources, including the *William Blake Archive* and *The Yellow Nineties Online*, this chapter looks at how illustrations are put on display. This display can mark a radical break with the print format, but it also involves a negotiation of what constitutes the difference of illustration and the visual components that define it.

Keywords Nineteenth century · Illustration · Digital archives
Digitisation · Visuality · Wood engraving

Something mysterious has happened to nineteenth-century illustrations (Fig. 2.1). The images that once swelled the pages of books and magazines have vanished. Engravings, etchings, lithographs, photographs ... tens of thousands of images have all but disappeared from view. The only fragments of this lost empire of illustrations are the few that have clung on to visibility—Tenniel's Alice, Cruikshank's Fagin—the ghostly traces of a world that was once alive with illustrative pictures.



◀ **Fig. 2.1** Titlepage for Sir Gilbert Edward Campbell, Bart., *Mysteries of the Unseen; or, Supernatural Stories of English Life* (London: Ward, Lock and Co., 1889). Available on *The Illustration Archive*: <http://illustrationarchive.cardiff.ac.uk>

Illustrations dominated the cultural landscape of the nineteenth century. Indeed, the landscape itself was beautifully illustrated. Travel writing, popular novels and children's fiction all came with pictures, as did Shakespeare's works, the Bible and scientific treatise. This proliferation of illustration, facilitated by new methods of reproduction like wood engraving that made illustrations easier and cheaper to print, meant that the genre crossed social divides.¹ By the middle of the century, illustration was no longer a feature solely of the gentleman's library; it had moved into more humble abodes. Disarmingly democratic and startlingly visible, illustration pictured everything and drew everyone (in). The Victorians could not escape illustration, even if they wanted to.

To say that the Victorian world was a visual culture, a precursor to our own, is not entirely accurate. This was an *illustrated* culture. In these years, it was this specific mode of representation that was the dominant visual form, a fact that was recognised by contemporary commentators: 'The pictorial printing-press is now your only wear!' wrote one critic in 1844. 'Everything is communicated by delineation. We are not *told*, but *shown* how the world is wagging'.² As this remark suggests, not only was this period characterised by the thousands of illustrative pictures in circulation, but these images were also a vehicle for self-definition, a visual mechanism by which the Victorians shaped and made sense of their environment. They turned themselves into illustrations, using the few square inches of the woodblock to depict their lives, their fashions, their feats of engineering, their houses and gardens, their wars, their politics and their values.

An engagement with Victorian culture needs to take account of this vast array of illustrations. The problem, however, is that they are often nowhere to be seen. Modern editions of Victorian novels are rarely published with the images with which they appeared, an exclusion that leads to some striking textual anomalies. Anthony Trollope's invocation to the reader of *Orley Farm* to 'go back' and look at one of John Everett Millais' illustrations makes little sense when the images are not present in the text.³ Likewise, William Makepeace Thackeray's frequent

references to his own illustrations are redundant in those editions of the novels where the images are excised. An illustrated footnote added by Thackeray to *Vanity Fair*, which comments on the gap between the historical setting of the text and the up-to-date fashions depicted in his illustrations is unintelligible if the pictures are removed.⁴ The solution to this problem, and one that has been resorted to since the earliest unillustrated editions of *Vanity Fair*, is to cut the references to the illustrations from the text, but the traces of the illustrations cannot be so easily erased; they seep into the very fabric of a novel that, in its original subtitle, *Pen and Pencil Sketches of English Society*, drew attention to the coexistence of word and image.⁵

Such examples not only point to the glaring absence of the illustrations in editions of the novels published today, but also suggest that, far from a marginal accessory, illustration was integral to the Victorian novel, to the extent that it influenced the writing of texts as well as the reading of them. It is an awareness of the significance of illustration in shaping the words of these Victorian ‘classics’ that is lost along with their pictures. And if this invisibility is the fate of the illustrations by high-profile artists accompanying canonical works, there is little hope for the less well known. The lowly status of illustration, or, at least, of popular illustration, means that it is not high on the list of conservation priorities. While rare and valuable illustrated books (hand-coloured travel or medical books, for instance) are usually well preserved in special collections and archives, mass-produced material is decaying. Paul Goldman has argued that few efforts have been made to exhibit or even properly care for collections of illustration in museums and libraries, with the result that ‘survival in good condition of such items is patchy at the least’.⁶ The torn title page of *Mysteries of the Unseen*, the illustration that heads this chapter, is emblematic of the current state of much Victorian illustration, which is destined forever to be unseen.

It is not just illustrations that are invisible, but also a scholarly engagement with them. Those researchers who have worked on historic illustrations have done so against the grain. The genre has been largely ignored in those disciplinary fields that should know illustration better: art history (where illustration is usually mentioned only if the illustrator also happens to be a painter); literary studies (where the exclusion of illustration from the analysis of texts gives us only half of the story); book history (there is no mention of illustration in Robert Darnton’s communications circuit⁷); digital humanities (which, despite fostering

pioneering illustration projects, remains doggedly text-based in its critical focus); and media studies (even Friedrich Kittler's *Optical Media* is full of holes when it comes to illustration⁸).

Illustration is theory's blind spot: it is everywhere and nowhere. Take, for instance, the writings of Ferdinand de Saussure. These were gathered together by Saussure's students after his death and provided the starting point for the tenets of (post)structuralism. They also happen to include illustrations, although these have rarely been examined as such.⁹ In fact, the English translations of *Course in General Linguistics*, along with the majority of critical works on Saussure, refer to the illustrations as 'diagrams', even though Saussure often uses the French word 'figure'.¹⁰ The replacement of 'figure' and its connotations of showing, appearing, representing, with 'diagram', situates these images securely within a scientific discourse and outside the illustrative play of word and image. Paradoxically, despite its visual presence in Saussure's text, illustration remains stubbornly invisible. In what is perhaps Saussure's most reproduced illustration, an ellipse with a picture of a tree in its top half and 'arbor', the Latin word for tree, in the bottom, the picture of the tree is not defined as a picture at all but as a marker of the 'signified' or 'concept' (in the parallel ellipse, this picture is actually replaced by the word 'tree').¹¹ To the extent that there is an 'image' in Saussure's formulation, it lies, ironically, with the 'signifier', the word 'arbor', which represents the '*sound-image*'. For all its obscuring of illustration, however, Saussure's ellipse stands as a meta-illustration, a comment on the interaction between word and image in illustration, the dividing line between the picture of the tree and the word 'arbor' indicating the gap between them, 'the opposition that separates them from each other'.¹² Although the word and picture come to seem inseparable, the connection between the two is not natural, innate or self-evident. Rather, like Saussure's notion of the signifier and signified, the relation between word and image in illustration is 'arbitrary' and has to be learned.¹³ It is the teaching of the 'proper' interaction between word and image that is a driving factor in children's picture books today and, indeed, is a characteristic feature of nineteenth-century illustrated books for children, where the words directly refer to what is going on in the picture ('Here is a pretty wagon with horses of great size and strength', 'See, here is a ferry-man in his boat'¹⁴).

Whilst the study of illustration has some significance for the issues of meaning production that are central to critical theory, it remains one

of the most enigmatic forms of representation, and the one that seems most resistant to analysis. Part of the reason for this murkiness is that illustration has conventionally fallen between generic categories, seen neither as text nor as image. Writing in 1928, Forrest Reid, one of the first collectors of mid-Victorian illustration, recognised the problematic status of illustration: it 'has come to be regarded', he states, 'as a dubious mixture of art and something that is not art'.¹⁵ In some ways, it is also the very ubiquity of illustration in the nineteenth century, with which Reid, as a collector, had to contend, that has made its analysis so prohibitive. Gleeson White, another early collector, described his task as a 'magnificent' one in which the piles of manuscripts at his side 'prove the impracticability of the enterprise'.¹⁶ Illustrations are simultaneously invisible and omnipresent: forgotten today, yet everywhere in nineteenth-century culture, to the extent that there are too many to examine with any degree of thoroughness. Gérard Genette acknowledges this in his account of the paratext, where he deals only briefly with illustration because the field is too large. Illustration, in his words, is an 'immense continent'.¹⁷ One of the main difficulties with illustration, however, is that it is not a continent at all: it does not occupy a distinct, continuous space. On the contrary, illustration is dangerously incontinent: an unruly and hybrid form that refuses to be fixed.

Critics have tried to find their way around this 'immense continent' using the foundational map of the archive. Reid and White were compelled to create their own archives by cutting the illustrations from mid-nineteenth-century publications and using these archives as the bedrock for their research.¹⁸ White designs an artist-centred catalogue, moving diligently through the images that appeared in illustrated weekly papers, some illustrated books and the key periodicals of the 1860s, including *Once a Week*, the *Cornhill Magazine*, *Good Words* and *London Society*, his guiding principle being to detail the work of 'every artist of the first rank'.¹⁹ Reid takes a similar approach, creating a 'survey' of the illustrations of 58 British artists working in the 1860s, which is arranged by artist and school, including 'The Pre-Raphaelite Group' and 'The Idyllic School'.²⁰

As the examples of these early collectors suggest, the content and organising principles of the physical archive go hand in hand with the scholarship on illustration. The same can be said of illustration studies, which, out of necessity, have been governed by the images that are made available and easily identifiable in the physical archive. It is unsurprising,

then, that discussions of nineteenth-century illustrations have focused on canonical authors (Trollope, Dickens, Hardy, Eliot, Wilde), artists (Millais, Tenniel), periods (the Romantic period, the 1860s, the *fin de siècle*), types of publication (periodicals, magazines, gift books), individual works (*Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, Moxon's edition of *Tennyson's Poems*) and places of publication (Britain, France). While such accounts of illustration undoubtedly cover a lot of ground, they depend on textual rather than visual information: bibliographic metadata, the publishing details listed in library catalogues.

If what is analysed and understood about illustration depends on the principles and shape of the archive, what shifts when we move from a physical archive to a digital one? How does a digital environment organise and define illustration? In some respects, many digital illustration repositories are not so different from physical ones in their focus on single authors (the *William Blake Archive*, the *Rossetti Archive*, *Illustrating Scott* (<http://illustrating-scott.lib.ed.ac.uk>), *Visual Haggard* (<http://www.visualhaggard.org>)), specific publications (*The Yellow Nineties Online*) and dates of publication (*DMVT*). Deriving from what illustrations are available for digitisation and what illustrations are 'known', digital archives often seem to replicate bibliographic imperatives, with the result that illustrations from less familiar texts continue to remain unseen. As Tara McPherson has recently warned, 'We must not assume that digitization will adequately capture the richness and diversity of the cultural record.... We should participate in and guide decisions about what will get digitized, ensuring that digitization does not simply reinstall the absences and imbalances of our physical archives within digital realms'.²¹ Equally, however, there is a case to be made not just for 'guiding' future digitisation but also for retrieving those illustrations that have already been digitised, but are, to all intents and purposes, lost. This was the objective of *The Illustration Archive*, where the largely 'random' dataset digitised by Microsoft eschews the idea of an illustrative canon.

While acknowledging the potential pitfalls of digital archives, it is also important to recognise the fact that a digital environment makes a greater number of illustrations accessible than ever before. Digital archives currently display only a fraction of the illustrations that were in circulation at the time, but they give a spectacular insight into the nineteenth-century illustrated world. Taken collectively, such resources reveal the scale of this 'immense continent' in a way that is impossible in a physical archive. These resources do not simply make illustrations

accessible, though: they make them *visible*, emphasising their difference as visual objects. It is this emphasis on the visual specificity of illustration that unites digital illustration archives, despite their varying methodologies and content. It is an emphasis, moreover, that sets these resources apart from other, more ‘general’, digital image repositories and hosting sites like Flickr’s The Commons (<https://www.flickr.com/commons>).

The main advantage of uploading historic images onto Flickr, and the reason that many museums and libraries have followed this route (including the British Library, which uploaded the dataset that we used in *The Illustration Archive*) is that the material is instantly available for the public to see and make use of. But this apparent accessibility is not all it seems. Melissa Terras laments that it is ‘nigh on impossible to navigate or search Flickr in any meaningful way’.²² For Terras, this is largely the fault of Flickr’s interface, but the problem also stems from the fact that finding relevant images relies on the metadata attached to them, and this metadata is highly variable. As Patricia Harpring notes, ‘Retrieval of appropriate images depends on intelligent indexing, which one might call the “language” of retrieval’.²³ In Flickr, the inconsistency and instability of the ‘language of retrieval’, which comes about because the images are tagged differently by different contributors, means that relevant images will not always be retrieved. This is especially the case with illustration because the word ‘illustration’ is rarely used in a folksonomic markup that tends to focus on what the image depicts rather than what it is. Thus, while it might be relatively easy to find thousands of pictures of cats in Flickr, it is not so easy to find thousands of *illustrations* of cats.

Indeed, in some respects, Flickr’s cats are all the same. The site advocates sameness, equality, congruity and the *commonality* of images, with the result that a photo of my neighbour’s cat is on the same level of ‘image-ness’ as the painted cat in David Hockney’s *Mr and Mrs Clark and Percy*, or the illustrated cat that dangles over a goldfish bowl in *Hood’s Own: or, Laughter from Year to Year* (1855). J. Hillis Miller has warned that ‘digital reproduction ... may be in danger of putting everything on the same plane of instant availability’.²⁴ Such technological advancements, he asserts, can compromise notions of cultural specificity that lie at the heart of cultural studies, or they can lead to an over-generalised model of cultural difference. It could be argued that Flickr poses these ‘dangers’ by threatening to lose sight of historic illustrations at the very moment that they are brought into view. Images here have the same value and identity as other images: they are generic digital ‘images’,

or, rather, ‘photographs’. As the homepage states: ‘The key goal of The Commons is to share hidden treasures from the world’s public photography archives. Please help make the photographs you enjoy more discoverable by adding tags and leaving comments. Your contributions and knowledge make these photos even richer.’²⁵ On a day that I happen to be browsing, the ‘photographs’ that are displayed on the homepage are the book illustrations from the British Library’s dataset. Some are steel engravings, some are etchings, others are wood engravings, and they are all, of course, digital images; but none are ‘photographs’.

I am not simply being pedantic. The dilution of generic difference on Flickr might not affect the average oil painting, but it does have repercussions for historical illustrations, which are already marginalised. While a general hosting platform like Flickr sidesteps the specificity of illustration, specialist digital illustration resources have directly to confront and negotiate the issue of what constitutes the visual difference of an illustration. In a sense, there is *no more* to illustration than meets the eye. Illustrations are inescapably visual, a visuality that stands out in the nineteenth-century book where the pictures are often printed on thicker, yellow paper, with tissue interleaves separating them from the text, and in landscape format, which means that the book has to be turned around to view them. Indeed, Leah Price’s contention that ‘The Victorians cathected the text in proportion as they disowned the book’ goes some way towards explaining the deep-rooted suspicion of illustration that emerged alongside its proliferation because the presence of illustrations inevitably draws attention to the book as a book.²⁶ There are other visual constituents that define illustrations in their printed forms: the features of the method by which they are reproduced (the scratched lines of an etching, the cross hatching of an engraving, the porous texture of a lithograph); and the size of these images (their conformity to the dimensions of a page, a plate, a woodblock, although blocks were often bolted together to make a larger image).

But, while there might be a specific ‘look’ to an illustration that distinguishes it from, say, a painting, its visual identity is never fixed or static. On the contrary, an illustration has multiple visual incarnations: it is the artist’s design (which is lost when the image is drawn or pinned onto the woodblock), the engraved woodblock or etched/engraved plate (which could go through several modifications and corrections), the proof engraving on India paper, and the stereotype or electrotpe made from the block. Even in its printed form, the visual specificity of

illustration slips precariously around: the image changes from copy to copy as the impression wears down; illustrations that are originally published in magazines, periodicals or monthly parts take on a new visual dimension when they are bound in books; and illustrations that started off as engravings can turn into photographs or, conversely, photographs can be recast as engravings.²⁷

And then there is the illustration's relation to the text. The difference of an illustration is located not only in the visuality of the image itself, but also in the visuality of its conjunction with the words. The play of word and image in illustration is pictorial as well as semantic, with vignettes encroaching on textual borders, pictorial letters exposing the graphic nature of words and wood-engraved images wrapping themselves parasitically around the text.²⁸ Even when an illustration is cut off from the text, or 'clipped' in the style of Forrest Reid and Gleeson White, there is a sense in which it retains the spectral trace of its missing limb. An amputated illustration seems to announce its incompleteness, the fact that it is (or was) part of a narrative trajectory, and this is the case even in those illustrations that have only the most tenuous and enigmatic relation with the actual words (I am thinking of Alvin Langdon Coburn's illustrations for Henry James' novels, the illustrations that appear in *The Yellow Book*, decorative 'ornaments'). Illustrations are pictorial fragments, in some ways viable as independent works of art, yet always lacking.

The visual specificity of illustration comes to the fore in the digital archive because the digital does something different with illustrations: it puts them on display. In this respect, the visuality of illustration generated in the digital archive is starkly at odds with the visuality embodied in an illustration's analogue existence. Simon Cooke sees the illustrated gift book of the 1860s as a 'clash of outer and inner', a space of disjunction and mismatch between the fine gilt and coloured bindings of the exterior and the black and white illustrations inside.²⁹ However, there is a sense in which this aesthetic disjunction can never actually be viewed without a concomitant temporal disjunction: the black and white illustrations are hidden when one looks at the binding, and the binding is hidden when one looks at the illustrations. The problem with illustrations is that they are not prints: they appear inside books, newspapers and magazines, and this material location renders them invisible. After all, a book is closed more often than it is open. Illustrations are concealed between the covers, the visual riches inside only hinted at by descriptive titles or ornate

bindings. As Paul Goldman succinctly puts it, 'In libraries, illustrations are virtually ignored, encased as they are in books and periodicals'.³⁰

Books might be closed, but the digital archive is always open. Digital illustration resources make these 'encased' images visible in new ways. This is not simply a matter of digitally 'translating' or 'remediating' historic illustrations. The digital display of illustrations involves a consideration of *how* they should be displayed and of what aspects of their visual identity should be emphasised or effaced. The digitisation of illustration (and I am using the term 'digitisation' in its broadest sense here to signify the scanning, image processing and mechanics of display that transform an analogue illustration into a digital one) inevitably involves a negotiation of what constitutes the difference of illustration, of the visual components that define it. Such a negotiation takes place at the level of the individual image (the extent to which it should be 'cleaned up', for example) as well as at the level of the broader editorial principles that shape the digital repository. Scanning illustrations, for instance, involves choices about the resolution of the image and the level of detail that can or should be seen, with most resources retaining their TIFF image files for archival purposes and displaying the online images as JPEGs. Of course, the scanning process is not always in the domain of the developer of the resource, as the example of *The Illustration Archive* indicates; but even where the digital images have come ready-made, there are still decisions about how to display them. Digitisation and its associated tools set out the parameters of an illustration's visuality; they determine its visual presence. The digital archive, in effect, establishes what is visually significant and distinct about illustration.

In the case of *The Yellow Nineties Online*, which contains editions of late nineteenth-century aesthetic periodicals, the specificity of illustration lies in a material integrity that is deferred to and emulated in the 'minimal' image processing. As the editors comment, 'Visual images have been minimally edited using Photoshop to adjust colour and resolution in order to enhance accuracy of representation'.³¹ This 'accuracy of representation' characterises the facsimiles of the periodicals available on the site, which include digitised images of the tissue interleaves and a FlipBook tool that gives users the impression that they are turning the pages. Melissa Terras reminds us that the 'digitized representation of an original analogue object is not a replacement for the object', but the methodologies of *The Yellow Nineties Online* signal an active engagement with the difference of an illustrated text—a difference that

is located in the physicality of the entire periodical.³² In the words of the editors, ‘Preserving the physical features of each periodical in virtual form, together with paratexts of production and reception (such as cover designs, advertising materials, and reviews), enables users to analyze the significance of each periodical’s materiality as well as its content’.³³ It is an objective that takes on some importance because these particular periodicals tend to be located in rare books and private collections and are made out of pulp paper that is fast disintegrating. The digital editions are the closest some users will get to the actual periodicals.

There are other competing definitions of the visual specificity of illustration, though. With a nod towards archives like *The Yellow Nineties Online*, the *Victorian Illustrated Shakespeare Archive* (www.shakespeareillustration.org) also includes minimally edited or ‘raw’ digitised images of the illustrations that accompanied four Victorian editions of Shakespeare’s works, but these images are juxtaposed with heavily photoshopped and, in some cases, cropped versions of the same images. The result is unsettling, partly because of the nostalgia that this juxtaposition elicits for the ‘original’ illustration with its foxing and show-through letterpress, and partly because this juxtaposition raises questions about the identity of an illustration, of what constitutes its visual core or essence, and at what point an illustration becomes different from itself.

In the *William Blake Archive*, the visual difference of illustration is the defining principle of a project that aims to ‘restore historical balance’ in a scholarly and print culture in which Blake’s illustrations have been neglected.³⁴ As the editors note, the tradition of editing Blake has been ‘overwhelmingly literary’, with the illustrations ‘largely invisible’ because they are too expensive to be reproduced in print form.³⁵ The digital archive rectifies this situation by focusing on the visual integration of text and image that informs Blake’s work: ‘*we emphasize the physical object – the plate, page, or canvas – over the logical textual unit – the poem or other work abstracted from its physical medium*’.³⁶ These principles shape the structure of this archive, from the XML framework to the positioning of the user in relation to the texts and pictures:

The part-to-whole path reinforced by print – which typically starts with a reading of Blake’s ‘poems’ (often, in fact, transcriptions extracted from illuminated pages) and may or may not move along to a later, secondary look at ‘illustrations’ (which often turn out to be a predetermined editorial selection of the pictures that seem most relevant to the words) – is reversed.³⁷

The idea of illustration that informs the architecture of this digital archive has a direct bearing on the status of the genre. By taking into account the ‘whole’ rather than the ‘part’, the illustrations in the *William Blake Archive* are not secondary, but an integral and equal part of this whole, and the justification for this is found in the visual specificity of Blake’s illuminated pages. Blake’s digital illustrations have a holistic relationship to the text: they are joined together with the words and should not be torn asunder. Ironically, it is the books and printed editions of Blake’s works that have marginalised a visuality that is ‘restored’ by the digital, a factor emphasised in the software tools that this archive pioneered, including the Java applet, ImageSizer, which allows for a calibration so that Blake’s works are displayed at their true physical size on the user’s monitor. N. Katherine Hayles has argued that this simulation of visual accuracy in the *William Blake Archive* is deeply problematic because it downplays the differences between printed and electronic editions of Blake (changing how the work means, Hayles argues, also changes *what* it means).³⁸ Of course, Hayles has a point, but the agenda of the *William Blake Archive* needs to be seen as a crucial intervention that prioritises the illustrative dimension of Blake’s works and does so by using the digital as a vehicle for emphasising the visuality of the illustrations, a visuality that has frequently been marginalised in printed editions. The difference of the digital in the *William Blake Archive* is foregrounded in the very fact that it brings these images to light.

Tools like ImageSizer and FlipBook indicate how digital resources can point towards notions of the analogue visuality that defines illustration, while also hinting at the possibilities of a digitally generated visuality. During the development of the *Rossetti Archive*, Jerome McGann distorted and ‘deformed’ Rossetti’s images in a way that revealed new relationships between the colouring, pattern and shapes of the images. ‘The deformed images’, McGann comments, ‘suggest that computerized art editing programs can be used to raise our perceptual grasp of aesthetic objects’.³⁹ More recently, Lev Manovich has developed methods for comparing visual patterns in big image datasets using automatic image processing to identify the features in pages from Manga comics (the ‘features’ here include contrast, texture, lines, curvature, shape, brightness and colour) and then organising these images in visualisations. Such an approach enables viewing of an individual image in the context of bigger, overarching, patterns; a million images morph into a single, and radically other, image. As Manovich writes, ‘This would enrich our

understanding of any single artefact because we would see it in relation to precisely delineated larger patterns'.⁴⁰ The seeing of illustration in relation to 'larger patterns' was also central to *The Illustration Archive*, although not quite in the sense that Manovich describes. A negotiation with the visual specificity of illustration in this Archive did not lie in the scanning of the images (over which we had no control), but in the display of the images, with the multiple display options foregrounding the ways in which illustrations signify in their relation to other illustrations (I will say more about this in the 'Tailpiece').

At times, however, the visibility of illustration that is exposed by the digital is not so much about 'larger' patterns, but about those minute details that are often overlooked. Michael Goodman, the developer of the *Victorian Illustrated Shakespeare Archive*, has experimented with Photoshop to turn digitised wood-engraved illustrations into negative images. This is a relatively straightforward task but the result is astonishing because the negative image shows what the picture on the wood-block might have looked like before it was printed.⁴¹ Wood engravers themselves produced what could be called 'negative' images, engraving the illustration in reverse so that it appeared the right way around on the page, and cutting out the white space, leaving the black lines to be inked standing in relief. Goodman's 'negative' illustration brings to the fore an aspect of the visibility of illustration that is not usually 'seen': the process of wood engraving, which has more or less disappeared from view today in a focus on what the illustrations show rather than how they show it.⁴²

The invisibility of wood engraving is not simply a product of twenty-first-century modes of viewing, however. It is a comment on the historic role of the engraver, which in Victorian Britain was largely that of a 'facsimile' draughtsperson, who was responsible for faithfully copying (as opposed to interpreting) the artist's design, a role that William Vaughan has called 'an excruciating feat of self-effacement'.⁴³ The *Database of Mid-Victorian Illustration* partially reverses this process of self-effacement by locating the visual specificity of the illustrations in their identity as wood engravings, a factor that is emphasised in the use of the magnification tool, Zoomify (www.zoomify.com), which 'tiles' the images, allowing the user to zoom in on its constituent parts. The magnification of a wood-engraved illustration, especially when displayed on a large monitor, never fails to raise a gasp from viewers, who can see for the first time the complexities of the lines, those details that cannot be viewed with the naked eye.

Zoomify, along with Goodman's negative illustration, might be the tools of what J. David Bolter and Richard Grusin have called 'remediation', tools that enable old forms to be assimilated in new media,⁴⁴ but these tools work here in reverse, harking back to a (digital rendition of a) visuality that existed prior to the printed illustration: the image as seen and worked upon by the engravers, who often used magnifying glasses as they cut the blocks.⁴⁵ What I have suggested here is that the processes and methodologies for making illustration digitally visible are part of an active engagement with questions of what constitutes the visual specificity of illustration. As James Mussell comments, 'Every digitization project is also an editorial project and all editorial projects must define in some way what it is they edit'.⁴⁶ The definitions of illustration articulated in digital illustration resources might be plural and competing, but they mark attempts to tease out the visual nuances of illustrations, to elucidate where their difference lies, and to solve the mysteries of the unseen.

NOTES

1. Richard Maxwell argues that there are three main factors that explain the burgeoning of illustration in these years: experimentation and innovation in book layout and typography, which led to mass-market publishing; the rise of the notion of British literature as an institution; and a subliminal resistance to the presence of images in books that actually spurred on invention. Richard Maxwell (ed.), introduction, *The Victorian Illustrated Book* (Virginia: University of Virginia Press, 2002), pp. xxi–xxx.
2. [Catherine Gore], 'The New Art of Printing. By a Designing Devil', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 55:339 (January 1844): 45–49, p. 47.
3. The illustrations are not present in the edition from which I am quoting. Anthony Trollope, *Orley Farm*, ed. David Skilton (1861–1862; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 2 vols., vol. ii, p. 230.
4. William Makepeace Thackeray, *Vanity Fair. A Novel Without a Hero* (London: Bradbury and Evans, 1848), p. 56.
5. For a discussion of the exclusion of the illustrations from the Penguin Classics edition of *Vanity Fair* (2001), see Peter L. Shillingsburg, 'Practical Editions of Literary Texts', *Variants 4: The Book as Artefact: Text and Border*, ed. Anne Mette Hansen, Roger Lüdeke, Wolfgang Streit, Cristina Urchuaguiá and Peter Shillingsburg (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2005), pp. 29–55, pp. 36–40.
6. Paul Goldman, 'Defining Illustration Studies', *Reading Victorian Illustration, 1855–1875: Spoils of the Lumber Room*, ed. Paul Goldman and Simon Cooke (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2012), pp. 13–32, pp. 17–18.

7. Robert Darnton, 'What is the history of books?', *Daedalus*, 111:3 (1982): 65–83, p. 68.
8. Kittler is one of the few media theorists to mention copperplate engraving, albeit in passing, but he excludes illustration from major nineteenth-century artistic practices. His comment that 'After 1839, there were ... two options for images: either to paint or to photograph them' completely elides the domination of wood engraving in the middle of the century. Friedrich Kittler, *Optical Media: Berlin Lectures 1999*, trans. Anthony Enns (Cambridge: Polity, 2010), p. 136.
9. Although these aspects of Saussure's work have not been studied as 'illustrations', they have, occasionally, been analysed as visual or iconic interventions. Sung-Do Kim, for example, discusses the 'graphical' nature of Saussure's writing in 'La Raison Graphique de Saussure', *Cahiers Ferdinand de Saussure*, 61 (2008): 23–42.
10. The preference for 'diagram' occurs several times in the translated text. See, for example, Saussure's comment, 'que nous figurerons comme suit', which turns into the rather awkward formulation 'which I shall diagram as follows'. Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, ed. Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye, trans. Wade Baskin (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1959), p. 12.
11. Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, p. 67.
12. Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, p. 67.
13. Saussure's illustration can also be seen as part of a history of graphical forms of knowledge, in which, as Johanna Drucker points out, images of trees assume a prominent position. See Johanna Drucker, *Graphesis: Visual Forms of Knowledge Production* (Cambridge, MA: metaLABprojects and Harvard University Press, 2014), pp. 95–105.
14. These examples, which are typical of the time, are taken from *Nurse Rockbaby's Easy Reading, and Pretty Pictures* (London: Dean and Son, 1853), pp. 4, 10.
15. Forrest Reid, *Illustrators of the Eighteen Sixties* (1928; Toronto: Dover, 1975), p. 2.
16. Gleeson White, *English Illustration, 'The Sixties': 1855–1870* (1897; Bath: Kingsmead Reprints, 1970), p. x.
17. Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (1987; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 406.
18. See White, *English Illustration* and Reid, *Illustrators of the Eighteen Sixties*.
19. White, *English Illustration*, p. x.
20. Reid, *Illustrators of the Eighteen Sixties*, p. 2.
21. Tara McPherson, 'Post-Archive: The Humanities, the Archive, and the Database', *Between Humanities and the Digital*, ed. Patrik Svensson and David Theo Goldberg (Cambridge, MA and London: MIT Press, 2015), pp. 483–502, p. 490.

22. See Melissa Terras, 'Reuse of Digitised Content (1)', blogpost, 6 October 2014, <http://melissaterras.blogspot.co.uk/2014/10/reuse-of-digitised-content-1-so-you.html>.
23. Patricia Harpring, 'The Language of Images: Enhancing Access to Images by Applying Metadata Schemas and Structured Vocabularies', *Introduction to Art Image Access: Issues, Tools, Standards, Strategies*, ed. Murtha Baca (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2002), pp. 20–39, p. 20.
24. J. Hillis Miller, *Illustration* (London: Reaktion, 1992), p. 46.
25. <https://www.flickr.com/commons>.
26. Leah Price, *How to Do Things with Books in Victorian Britain* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2012), p. 4.
27. Before photomechanical techniques for printing photographs were advanced, it was common for artists to trace photographs, which would then be engraved for publication. See Gerry Beegan, *The Mass Image: A Social History of Photomechanical Reproduction in Victorian London* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p. 62. Even when these techniques became more sophisticated, photographs were often turned into wood engravings for the mass market. For details of Julia Margaret Cameron's photographs undergoing this fate, see Lorraine Janzen Kooistra, *Poetry, Pictures, and Popular Publishing: The Illustrated Gift Book and Victorian Visual Culture 1855–1875* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2011), p. 234.
28. For an account of how the *Illuminated Magazine* structured its pages around the shapes that could be made with wood engravings, see Brian Maidment, 'The *Illuminated Magazine* and the Triumph of Wood Engraving', *The Lure of Illustration in the Nineteenth Century: Picture and Press*, ed. Laurel Brake and Marysa Demoor (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 17–39, p. 27, *passim*.
29. Simon Cooke, 'A Bitter After-Taste: The Illustrated Gift Book of the 1860s', *Reading Victorian Illustration*, ed. Goldman and Cooke, pp. 53–78, pp. 57–58.
30. Goldman, 'Defining Illustration Studies', pp. 17–18.
31. 'Editorial Principles', *The Yellow Nineties Online*, ed. Dennis Denisoff and Lorraine Janzen Kooistra, http://www.1890s.ca/Editorial_Principles.aspx.
32. Melissa Terras, 'Cultural Heritage Information: Artefacts and Digitization Technologies', *Cultural Heritage Information: Access and Management*, ed. Ian Ruthven and G. G. Chowdhury (London: Facet, 2015), pp. 63–88.
33. 'Editorial Principles', *The Yellow Nineties Online*.
34. 'Editorial Principles: Methodology and Standards in the *Blake Archive*', *William Blake Archive*, ed. Morris Eaves, Robert N. Essick and Joseph Viscomi, <http://www.blakearchive.org/blake/public/about/principles/index.html>.

35. 'Editorial Principles: Methodology and Standards in the *Blake Archive*'.
36. 'Editorial Principles: Methodology and Standards in the *Blake Archive*'.
37. 'Editorial Principles: Methodology and Standards in the *Blake Archive*'.
38. N. Katherine Hayles, *My Mother Was a Computer: Digital Subjects and Literary Texts* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2005), pp. 90–91.
39. Jerome McGann, *Radiant Textuality: Literature after the World Wide Web* (New York and Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), p. 85.
40. Lev Manovich, 'How to Compare One Million Images?', *Understanding Digital Humanities*, ed. David M. Berry (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 249–278, p. 252.
41. In a similar vein, a future project might take advantage of the sophistication of 3D printing and use the illustration to create a physical manifestation of the block from which the image was printed.
42. This exclusion of wood engraving is being rectified in a digital project undertaken by Bethan Stevens in which the albums of the Dalziel Brothers, one of the most prominent engraving companies of the nineteenth century, are being digitised, made searchable, and mounted on the British Museum's Collection Online site, http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/search.aspx.
43. William Vaughan, 'Facsimile Versus White Line: An Anglo-German Disparity', *Reading Victorian Illustration*, ed. Goldman and Cooke pp. 33–52, p. 34. For another account of the shift from an 'interpretive' engraving method, where engravers had more artistic license, to facsimile engraving, see Beegan, *The Mass Image*, pp. 56–61.
44. J. David Bolter and Richard Grusin, *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999).
45. So prolific was the practice of using a magnifying glass, whether the engraver needed it or not, that the celebrated wood engraver, John Jackson, made a point of warning against it on the basis that it was injurious to the sight. John Jackson, *A Treatise on Wood Engraving, Historical and Practical* (London: Charles Knight, 1839), pp. 649–651.
46. James Mussell, *The Nineteenth-Century Press in the Digital Age* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p. 4.

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