

## A Picture or a Thousand Words – Guide to Images

This paper provides and describes some of the visual material that can be found in **ncse**. In the workshop we will display these images and welcome any comments that participants might have. They are intended to demonstrate two interconnected points:

- That nineteenth-century periodicals foreground the visual as an interpretive category
- That digital archives of nineteenth-century periodicals must devise means to represent this information.

Further discussion of these points can be found in the accompanying discussion paper.

There are three sets of examples: “Words as Pictures: the Death of Wellington,” which considers the relationship between text, spatial layout, and illustration; “Words in Pictures: *Tomahawk*,” which looks at the relationships between textual and visual components within cartoons and across the run of a periodical; and “Pictures or a Thousand Words: the *Northern Star*,” which speculates on the economics of illustration, and its relationship to news.

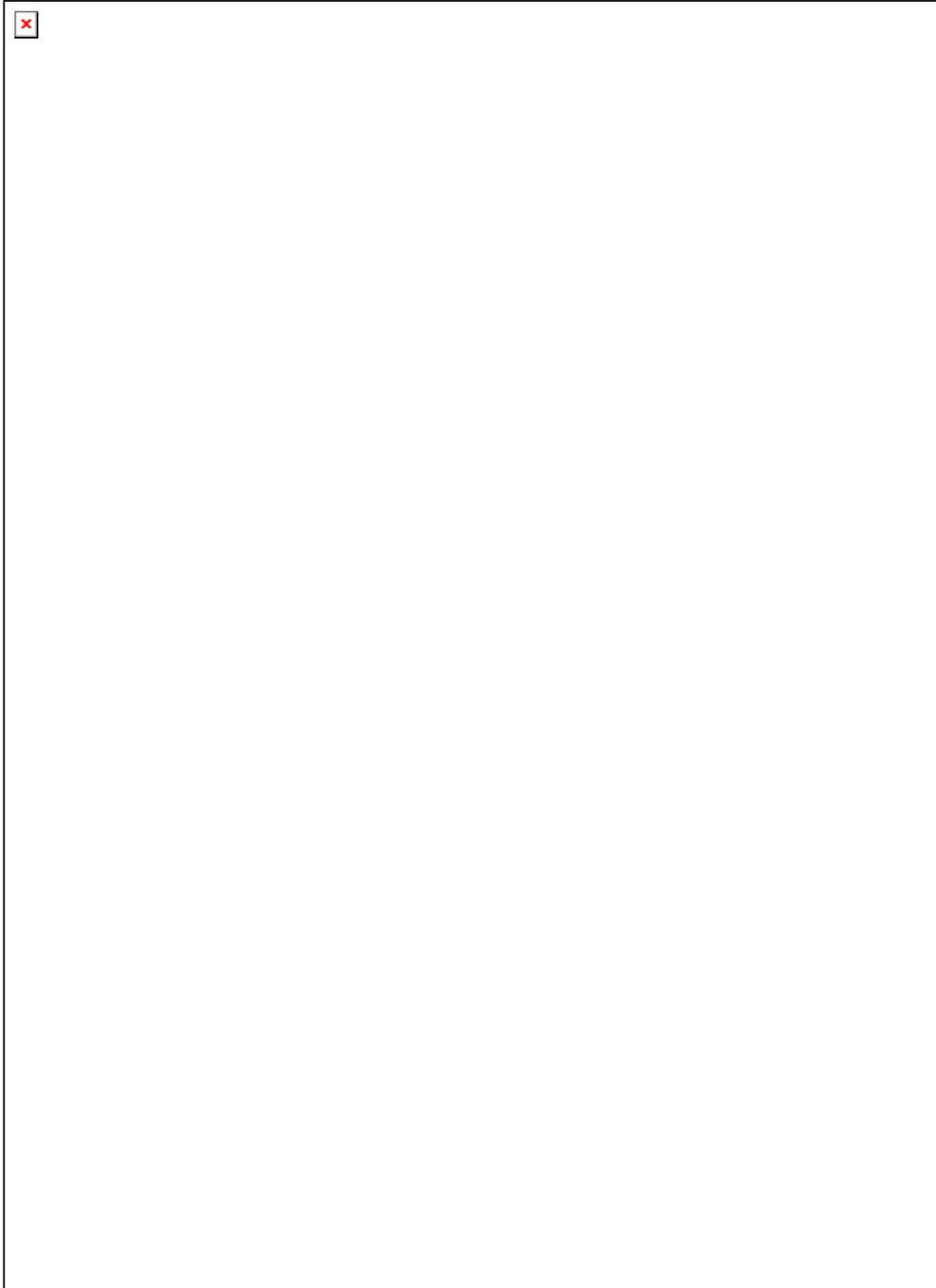
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### 1. Words as Pictures: the Death of Wellington

The *Northern Star* carries many reports of processions and, by not only giving the names of people present, but also the order in which they marched, the title can signal the relative importance of the figures present. As you can see (**figure 1.1**), the same principle has been followed in the description of Wellington’s funeral procession. However, not only is a linear representation of the procession given, recreating the order in which people pass, but the use of text at 90° creates a bird’s eye view, granting the reader a scoptic site above the procession. By combining the signifying function of words (what they mean) with the signifying functions of space and typography, these descriptions function as both text and image.

Such displays are not unique to the *Northern Star*. For instance, the above description of Wellington’s funeral is also printed in *The Times* on 6 November 1852 – the Saturday before it appeared in the *Star of Freedom* (**figure 1.2**).





**Figure 1.2, “The Duke of Wellington’s Funeral,” *The Times*, 6 November 1852, p. 5.**

The death of Wellington was a major public event. The other title included in **ncse** that was running at the time of his death, the *Leader*, was also a weekly and so devoted a substantial portion of its letterpress to news. They too reproduce the details of his funeral, but they represent the body pictorially:



Figure 1.3, "The State Funeral: Burial of Wellington," *Leader*, 3, 20 November 1852, pp. 1104-1105.

The *Leader's* use of black borders is a further way visual clues signify the meaning of content. For instance, on the week that Wellington dies the *Leader*, despite its radical politics, devotes its front page to the news:



Figure 1.4, "News of the Week," *Leader*, 3, 18 September 1852, p.85 and 86.



Figure 1.5, "The Death of the Duke of Wellington," *Leader*, 3, 20 November 1852, pp. 1106-1107.

The borders here both highlight the exceptional nature of the week's news, while also registering a duly respectful tone towards the deceased. The *Star of Freedom*, which by 1852 was similar to the *Leader* in its size, number of columns, and content, records Wellington's death in a standard column of news, 5 pages into the number, perhaps registering the respective class interests of its readers.

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## 2. Words in Pictures: *Tomahawk*

Each number of *Tomahawk* featured a cartoon, on a separate sheet of paper, which accompanied a "Sketch" in the paginated letterpress. *Tomahawk* was a satirical rival to *Punch*, selling around 50,000 copies per week. The title cast itself as standing for truth, and the eponymous native American would "scalp" those it felt were misrepresenting the affairs of the day. The image below (**figure 2.1**) has *Tomahawk* overlooking the workings of the dissolute "Penny Press" (it says who he is in his hat) as he rakes the muck with his "Sensational Claptrap." Unseen behind the "Penny Press" is an Angelic female figure who carries the crown of "Truth." A motto – just below the subtitle in the original, and not reproduced for reasons given below – relates the image to *Pilgrim's Progress*:

There was a man that could look no way but downwards with a Muck-rake in his hand. There stood also one over his head, with a Celestial crown in his Hand, and proffered him that Crown for his Muck-rake; but the man did neither look up nor regard, but raked to himself the straws, the small sticks, and dust of the floor.

In the image, "Penny Press," with "Dr Beelzebub's Advice" in his pocket, doesn't see the proffered crown, and continues to trawl the muck for "Revolution," "Twaddle" and "Mock Morality." This image demonstrates how words can function within images: the iconography interacts with the more direct labelling of components in order to instruct the reader how to interpret the image. For instance, if the muck did not contain "Twaddle" and the tool was not one of "Sensational Claptrap", then the image might represent the search for "Truth" by the penny press. Similarly, the depiction of the "Penny Press" as a poor unshaven man might evoke sympathy if he was not following the advice of Beelzebub. The title and the quotation, although divided from the picture by its frame, are also in dialogue with it, providing a further allegorical level of meaning that informs its iconographic components.

These words, operating at the level of iconography, and participating in the organizational logic of the image, are unlikely to be captured by Optical Character Recognition (OCR) processes, and so would not be "readable" to the computer. The only aspects of the image that would be accessible by text searching is the caption but, without the accompanying image, its meaning is quite oblique. For instance, although "People's Guide" signals its relevance towards working class politics, there is nothing in the title or the motto to signal that the image is about the press. The cartoon also refers to *Tomahawk's* role within print culture. Although it was only



*THE PEOPLE'S GUIDE !*  
OR,  
THE MAN WITH THE MUCK-RAKE.

Figure 2.1, "The People's Guide! Or the Man with the Muck-Rake," *Tomahawk*, 1, 19 October 1867, unpaginated.

tuppence weekly, *Tomahawk* was not intended for the “people:” its gentlemanly satire requires knowledge of metropolitan high society, and it had no pretensions to speak to (or indeed for) the working class. However, it did reserve the right to judge its politics and, as the picture suggests, an entire genre of periodicals. This picture, in other words, is not just a comment on the “Penny Press,” but also locates *Tomahawk* in a different sector of the print trade. Any metadata seeking to identify the image would have to also recognize this self-reflexive level of meaning.

Whereas as the other images in this paper are taken from the tiff images generated from microfilm prepared for **ncse**, **figure 2.1** is scanned from a photocopy taken from the hard copy. The reason for this is that the tiff images that are displayed for the user in **ncse** are also those that have been processed with OCR techniques, and are therefore bitmap images. These assign a black value or a white value for every pixel, and so are not very adept at capturing fine engravings that depend on the contrast between black and white. Difficulties can be overcome by altering the light conditions at the moment of capture but, because **ncse** is derived from microfilm, the operator has no idea what the final image looks like. Our processed versions of **figure 2.1** look like this:



Figure 2.2., tiff images derived from two different microfilm frames, each captured under different lighting conditions.

As part of the checking of page images we have located instances where neither frame is really usable, and are exploring ways of amending the images, either through post-processing, or by obtaining fresh images.

*Tomahawk* foregrounds the dialogic relationship between words and images. Linguistic components are both within images, and also complement them, but neither is given precedence. As the cartoons are printed on separate high-quality sheets, which, although not always paginated, are still included within the page span, they are clearly the centrepiece of each number, sometimes taking up the equivalent of four pages of letterpress. However, they often do not stand on their own. For instance, **figure 2.3** is a satire on Disraeli's role in the 1867 Reform Act:



Figure 2.3., Matt Morgan, "Samson Agonistes," *Tomahawk*, 1, 27 July 1867, p. 137.

Although it is comprehensible on its own, the caption gestures to the verses in **figure 2.4**. The poem complements the cartoon, and they reflexively refer to each other, but they do not depend upon each other to become fully comprehensible.

Instead the two components are granted an equivalence that invites the reader to move between them, and allow them to mutually inform each other.

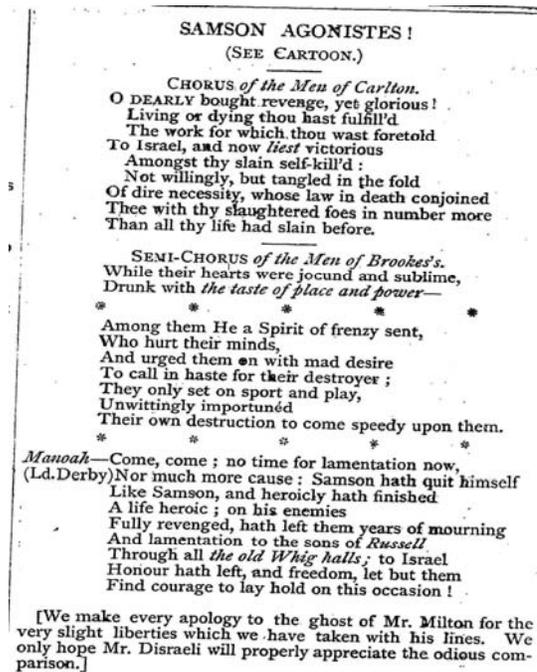


Figure 2.4., “Samson Agonistes,” *Tomahawk*, 1,  
27 July 1867, p.136

Such relationships between objects are part of *Tomahawk*'s wider textual strategy. Its wit depends on the repetition of certain identifiable tropes which are deployed – like Disraeli as Samson above – in unexpected circumstances. Knowing readers – who must have a knowledge of both high and popular culture – are invited to recognize the links between components and, by proving their loyalty to *Tomahawk* (many jokes require knowledge of the title's previous numbers), become part of its inner-circle. If we are to do the historical object justice in digital form, we must allow users access to this often oblique and intentionally misleading material, while also acknowledging the relationships between the various parts, often throughout the run, that constitute it.

### 3. Pictures or a Thousand Words: the *Northern Star*

In the first edition for 20 August 1842, the *Northern Star* went to press with an embarrassing white space on its front page (**figure 3.1**). The text within the space (**figure 3.2**) reveals that this is where an engraving of a monument to Henry Hunt, under construction in Manchester, was to have appeared. The *Northern Star* was a Saturday weekly, but in 1842 its first edition was part-printed on Wednesday, completed on Thursday, and then published on Friday in order to reach Scottish and other readers distant from Leeds. This suggests that the note was written on the Thursday, while there was a chance the engraving would arrive in time, but that they were forced to go to press without it. The next edition of the *Northern Star* had an extra day for preparation, and sure enough the engraving is present (**figure 3.3**). The decision to go to press without the engraving suggests that the editors of the *Northern Star* believed that their Scottish readers would value an on-time newspaper rather than a delayed but fully-illustrated one. Of course there may be other reasons to do with distribution and printing schedules that would make such a delay unaffordable, but the fact that the space was set, and then kept available until the last moment, gives the front page a timeliness that emphasizes its news value. The space itself is particularly suggestive of the absent image: the retention of the title and the caption allows readers to appreciate what should have been there, and the space itself indicates its size. By signalling the absent image, the editors of the *Northern*

HENRY HUNT: AND THE MANCHESTER MONUMENT TO PERPETUATE HIS MEMORY.

The accompanying descriptive account is a translation from the original of the Monument to Henry Hunt, in the form of a letter to the Editor of the Northern Star, Manchester, dated 10th August 1842.

It is a matter of course that the monument to Henry Hunt, in the form of a letter to the Editor of the Northern Star, Manchester, dated 10th August 1842.

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The Northern Star, AND LEEDS GENERAL ADVERTISER.

VOL. V. NO. 249.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 20, 1842.

PRICE SIXPENCE HALF-PENNY, OF SIX PAGES PER WEEK.

MONUMENT TO THE MEMORY OF HENRY HUNT.

The line above shows what ought to have occupied this space: a representation of the Hunt Monument. The engraving is being executed in London. It is to have been done on Monday last; it has not yet arrived, and we are obliged either to go to press without it, or to omit our South friends, and all who get the First Edition of the Star. This we cannot think of doing under present circumstances, as they will be naturally annoyed to hear the error. The other cut we have had ready some weeks ago, and is to have been done on Monday last; it has not yet arrived, and we are obliged either to go to press without it, or to omit our South friends, and all who get the First Edition of the Star. This we cannot think of doing under present circumstances, as they will be naturally annoyed to hear the error. The other cut we have had ready some weeks ago, and is to have been done on Monday last; it has not yet arrived, and we are obliged either to go to press without it, or to omit our South friends, and all who get the First Edition of the Star. This we cannot think of doing under present circumstances, as they will be naturally annoyed to hear the error.

(Printed in the Chapel Yard, Every Street, Manchester, by the Working People.)

The following is a list of names of persons who were present at the meeting held on Monday, the 10th August 1842, at the Manchester Monument, for the purpose of erecting a monument to Henry Hunt.

At the meeting held on Monday, the 10th August 1842, at the Manchester Monument, for the purpose of erecting a monument to Henry Hunt, the following resolutions were passed:

Resolved, That the sum of £1000 be raised by subscription for the purpose of erecting a monument to Henry Hunt, in the form of a letter to the Editor of the Northern Star, Manchester, dated 10th August 1842.

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Printed by J. P. ...

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THE "MASSACRE" ON THE FIELD OF PETERLOO, AUGUST 16, 1819.

Figure 3.1., Northern Star, first edition, 5, 20 August 1842, p. 1

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MONUMENT TO THE MEMORY OF HENRY HUNT.

The line above shows what ought to have occupied this space; a representation of the Hunt Monument. The engraving is being executed in London. It was to have been done on Monday last; it has not *yet* arrived; and we are obliged either to go to press without it, or disappoint our Scotch friends, and all who get the First Edition of the *Star*. This we cannot think of doing under present circumstances, as they will be naturally anxious to hear the news. The other cut we have had ready now nearly a fortnight; and it was the necessity we were under, of sending the drawing of the Monument furnished by the Committee back again to Manchester to be re-drawn, that prevented us having that cut, too, in our hands a week ago. This morning's post brought a letter from the Engraver, saying it would be dispatched by the *Six* o'Clock train this morning. That train arrives in Leeds at four in the afternoon. It has arrived; but no Engraving. Perhaps the next train may bring it.

(Erected in the Chapel Yard, Every Street, Manchester, by the Working People.)

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Figure 3.2, Anonymous editorial note, *Northern Star*, 5, 20 August 1852, p. 1

*Star* demonstrate the expense they have gone to in order to produce the image (even though it isn't there), while sacrificing the space by not filling it with letterpress or advertisements. The space invites readers to imagine the absent image, especially as the other relevant components on the page – the tribute to Hunt printed in the space usually reserved for the proprietor Fergus O'Connor in the first column, and the other cut showing Hunt in full flow with the Peterloo Massacre raging around him – are present. Yet the white space reminds readers that this is an incomplete version of the *Northern Star* and that a different, more up-to-date version exists elsewhere. The space, in other words, records the temporal dimension of both publishing processes and the distributed nature of the reading audience for the *Northern Star*.

HENRY HUNT: AND THE MEMORIAL MONUMENT TO PERPETUATE HIS MEMORY.

The summary of the proceedings... Henry Hunt was a leader before the ranks of the people... The memorial monument to Henry Hunt... The monument is a tall, slender column... The monument is a tall, slender column... The monument is a tall, slender column...

The Northern Star, AND LEEDS GENERAL ADVERTISER.

VOL. V. NO. 249. SATURDAY, AUGUST 20, 1842. PRICE FOURPENCE HALFPENNY or Two pence per quarter.

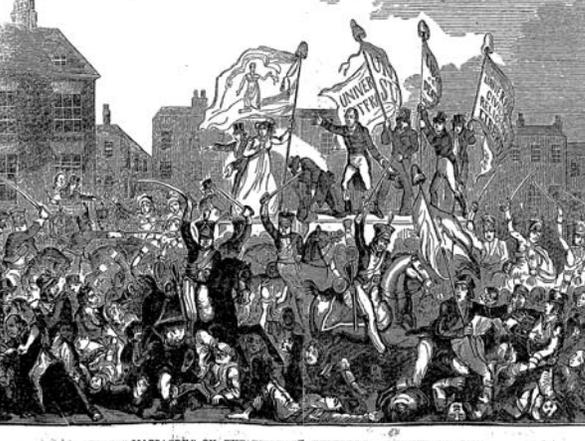
MONUMENT TO THE MEMORY OF HENRY HUNT.



Designed by the Sculptor, Mr. John Gibson, and executed by the Sculptor, Mr. John Gibson.

Henry Hunt was a leader before the ranks of the people... The memorial monument to Henry Hunt... The monument is a tall, slender column... The monument is a tall, slender column...

The memorial monument to Henry Hunt... The monument is a tall, slender column... The monument is a tall, slender column... The monument is a tall, slender column...



THE "MASSACRE" ON THE FIELD OF WATERLOO, AUGUST 16, 1815.

Henry Hunt was a leader before the ranks of the people... The memorial monument to Henry Hunt... The monument is a tall, slender column... The monument is a tall, slender column...

The memorial monument to Henry Hunt... The monument is a tall, slender column... The monument is a tall, slender column... The monument is a tall, slender column...

The memorial monument to Henry Hunt... The monument is a tall, slender column... The monument is a tall, slender column... The monument is a tall, slender column...

The memorial monument to Henry Hunt... The monument is a tall, slender column... The monument is a tall, slender column... The monument is a tall, slender column...

Figure 3.3., Northern Star, second edition, 5, 20 August 1842, p. 1.

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#### 4. Summary and Conclusion

Above are some of the examples of visual material in *ncse*. There are many others:



Figure 4.1. Assorted images from *ncse*.

Figure 4.1 shows a “Open Council,” the correspondence department from the *Leader*, a finger post from an advert in the *Publishers’ Circular* in 1880 (“all orders”); a printed finger post from the *Monthly Repository* in 1814 and a hand-drawn finger post from a margin in the same volume; and the masthead from the *Northern Star* in 1839. All of these are not noted by the OCR transcript, so would not be returned in free text searching unless some sort of text is provided to go with them. Metadata structures are resolutely textual: the irony is that it is only by incorporating textual data to complement these images, that the visual can be integrated with the verbal in the digital domain.

Jim Mussell and Suzanne Paylor