

**Editing the Images of Volume 10 of *The Yellow Book*:  
a Practicum Project (July 2013)**

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For my practicum project, I was responsible for editing the images of Volume 10 of *The Yellow Book*, which was originally published in July 1896. I did research on each of the images in the volume and their respective artists, looking specifically at the reception of these pieces and how each works in relation to other materials, both in this volume and in the 13 volumes of the publication's entire print run. I then used this information to markup each of the images using *The Yellow Nineties Online (Y90s)* Iconographic Proforma. I coded each image in TEI markup language and uploaded the materials on the site, having first scanned and edited the images themselves. My project was a distinct component of the larger goal of the *Y90s* research team for this summer, which was the online publication in July 2013 of all of volume 10 of *The Yellow Book*, including paratextual materials such as advertisements and reviews, as well as a scholarly introduction written by the co-editors.

**Researching the Artwork in Volume 10**

The first step of my project was to research the artwork of Volume 10. In the process, I found that, while the *Yellow Book's* editors insisted on not publishing serial works, there was visual continuity between the volumes, most notably through the artistic styles (such as in the use of materials by the Glasgow School for both Volume 8 and Volume 10). In addition, critics have claimed that *The Yellow Book* became more

conservative after the Oscar Wilde trials and the firing of Beardsley as art editor in April 1895, but Volume 10 shows that in 1896 the periodical was still controversial and still challenged normative views, with Lane including artists such as Frances Macdonald, who often depicted the controversial figure of the New Woman. Like many of the other issues of *The Yellow Book*, Volume 10 had many contributions from women artists; specifically, there were 5 female contributors and 5 male — including J. Illingworth Kay, who designed the cover and title page. This volume also suggests a possible decline in the quality or popularity of the publication, at least in terms of the artwork, as there are fewer images and many of the artists (excluding Laurence Housman and D.Y. Cameron) were not well known or established at the time. Furthermore, when I was searching for reviews of Volume 10, both on the *Yellow Nineties Online* and on the C19 Index, there were significantly fewer reviews for this issue than for earlier volumes.

As a single issue of a periodical, Volume 10 of *The Yellow Book* does not exist in isolation, but has connections to the other volumes in the series, as well as to art movements in the late-nineteenth century. For instance, it was through the artists that Volume 10's connection to Volume 8 became apparent, as Volume 8 advertised the Glasgow School of Art (GSA) in its table of contents for the art and Volume 10, while not advertising the school, has a significant number of GSA contributors. In addition, D.Y. Cameron, who designed the cover for Volume 8, also contributed to Volume 10. Another connection comes through Nellie Syrett, who went on to illustrate the cover and title page for Volume 11, and who was a sister of Netta and Mabel Syrett, who both contributed literature to other volumes of *The Yellow Book*. Laurence Housman contributed to this volume, as well as to the first volume of the magazine. In addition,

Housman was a book artist at the Bodley Head, which is where *The Yellow Book* was published.

Not surprisingly, in light of the many cultural connections of the contributors, some the artwork for the volume has a life outside of *The Yellow Book*. This is the case with most of the pieces contributed by the Macdonald sisters, as their original work was also displayed at the Liverpool exhibition a few months after the publication of Volume 10 in 1896. In addition, Frances

Macdonald's "Ill Omen" was originally created in 1893 under the name "Girl in the East Wind with Ravens Passing the Moon," which critics reviewed negatively because of its controversial depiction of the female figure

(*Liverpool Courier*, qtd in Helland 80). Her other image, "The Sleeping Princess," was originally exhibited with a metalwork frame, which she made herself and which carried the inscription "Love if thy tresses be so dark / How dark those hidden eyes

must be" (Helland 79). These lines are meant to complement, explain, or add to the understanding of the artwork. By removing them for publication in *The Yellow Book*, part of the original meaning of the image was lost.



Frances Macdonald, "Ill Omen," *The Yellow Book* Volume 10.

Some of these artists have received notable scholarly attention, including Laurence Housman, the Macdonald sisters, and Charles Condor. Meanwhile, other contributors to Volume 10 never became widely known, and were therefore more difficult for me to research. These include Nellie Syrett, Katharine Cameron, and J. Illingworth Kay. To collect information on these artists, I had to use other methods than simply searching them in research databases (such as JSTOR and MLA Bibliography). For example, Katharine Cameron, sister to D.Y Cameron, is a known associate of the Macdonald sisters, and some information on her work and life can be found in the scholarly resources on the latter. Nellie Syrett is closely associated with her sisters, and it is helpful to search these women in connection with each other. There are some useful resources, such as Simon Houfe's *The Dictionary of British Book Illustrators and Caricaturists, 1800-1914* and Barbara Schmidt's dissertation *Le Yellow Book, Ou les Masques des Années 1890*, which I was able to access on the Centre for Digital Humanities (CDH) communication hub. Both of these resources provide a small biography on all the artists, and were good starting points as they sometimes associated the Volume 10 artists with other work they had done and other people with whom they had worked. Another resource unique to the CDH is the Children's Literature Archive, which is located within the Centre's physical space. This library has a collection of older children's books as well as some critical material on these books. This proved useful as some of the contributors to *The Yellow Book*, namely Katharine Cameron, Laurence Housman, and Nellie Syrett, were illustrators for children's books.

While researching the contributors and their respective artwork for Volume 10 of *The Yellow Book*, I had to work through a variety of sources to find the most relevant

and useful information on their works. As a result of this research process, I gained insight into the importance of having all this relevant information in one place and the value of *The Yellow Nineties Online* as an e-resource for scholars. One of the ongoing projects at the *Y90s* is collecting biographies on the contributors to *The Yellow Book* from established scholarly experts, which are then peer-reviewed and published on the site, facilitating research into the publication of *The Yellow Book* and other aesthetic periodicals of the 1890s. In addition, through the digital medium, these biographies link to each other, making the connections between the contributors more apparent, as many of the contributors had associations with each other outside of *The Yellow Book*, through art schools or social groups. This aspect of my project allowed me to see some of the editorial work that goes along with publishing scholarly material. In addition, DH projects require a lot of funding in order to be carried out and, to receive that funding, the project needs to show its usefulness and contribution to research. The *Y90s* does so by bringing together pieces of scholarly information, such as contributors' biographies, that are otherwise difficult to access and spread out across different resources.

### **Scanning and Photoshopping Images for Digital Uploading**

Part of my practicum project included preparing the images of Volume 10 for publication on *The Yellow Nineties Online*. To do so, the high-quality TIFFs of the images needed to be Photoshopped, as the colours of the images and, more importantly, the tone (as the images are all black and white) have to be adjusted to be as true as possible to that of the original images published in the print volume. At the same time, however, in order to create consistency throughout the digital edition of *The Yellow Book*, the images have to match the PDFs already uploaded onto the site (which were

created from an outside source, the library system at the University of Toronto). The PDFs maintain the same tone and contrast of the original images, but the colour of the pages is different from the original, as they are whiter in comparison to the pages in the actual volume, which are off-white or cream in colour. There also needs to be consistency across all the images on the site, so part of the Photoshopping includes matching the background colour (or page colour) to images already uploaded onto the site.

This task of preparing the images for uploading familiarized me with aspects of Photoshop software, including colour matching and tonal adjustments. It also exposed me to the fact that, in digital publishing, it is not always possible to create an exact facsimile of the original object — in this case, the original volumes, pages, and images of *The Yellow Book*. Instead, editorial decisions, such as matching the page colour to that of the PDFs, must be made to create consistency throughout the site. At the same time, the most important aspect of these pages, the illustrations themselves, need to be preserved with the tones and shading that most accurately capture that of the original images.

### **Image Proformas**

Once the images were properly edited, I needed to prepare a proforma for each image. The Y90s Image Proforma template has been designed to facilitate the coding process as well as to standardize the terms by which the images can be searched on the website. Once the proforma of an image is completed and approved by one of the editors, the image is coded and then uploaded to the site. Designed by the CDH research

team, this proforma information includes the basic bibliographic metadata about the images, such as the artist, the engraver, the image title, the image medium, and the image description. In addition, the proforma includes descriptive categories for the image contents, such as geography, setting, people/figures, objects, and transcriptions. These categories are filled with the applicable iconographic terms that will be included in the coding of the images to enable them to be searchable. These proformas, which record both bibliographic and iconographic metadata, also make it easier to organize information on each image so that it can be coded in xml and uploaded.

Once I completed the proformas for the images in Volume 10, including the front cover, back cover, and title page, the forms were reviewed by my supervisors, Lorraine Janzen Kooistra and Dennis Denisoff. This editorial process ensures that all the information is correct, but also that the most searchable keywords are encoded to each image, and that a consistent iconographic index is developed. The proforma thereby ideally captures different perspectives or approaches to the images that could be useful to the visitors of the site.

### **XML Coding and TEI Markup**

Extensible Markup Language (XML) is a coding markup language similar to HTML. While HTML has a fixed set of tags, XML allows the user to define their own tags, making it more flexible for retaining information in a database for search purposes. This language is meant to structure and store data, making it easier to view and to transfer onto the internet. XML uses plain text, which stores the data in a basic form that facilitates the transfer of that data onto new platforms or software. With

software upgrades and changes in technology, some data may become incompatible with the original coding, whether HTML or another language. Fortunately, the XML language stores that data so that it can be transferred to new media and platforms without any loss of data due to incompatibility.

Before any images or texts are published on *The Yellow Nineties Online*, they are first marked up using a particular form of XML coding designed for the humanities by the Textual Encoding Initiative (TEI). The *Y90s* research team has customized the TEI schema for the different types of works in the periodicals they edit, such as written texts, images, and visual ornaments. For my project, I worked with the schema for coding all *Y90s* images, which is based directly on the iconographic proforma. Using the metadata from the proforma, coders are able to select appropriate tags. This ensures standardization of the data published on the site, and enables users to search images and text simultaneously, as both are encoded in TEI. By using TEI for its encoding, *The Yellow Nineties Online* is also able to change its software platform should new programs or coding languages appear that are more suited to display the information in *The Yellow Book* and other aesthetic periodicals published on the site.

TEI markup language was created specifically for marking up texts for meaning and content within the disciplines of the humanities and to create a set of principles for encoding texts in the same format. TEI is supported by a number of international institutes and research councils that help digital humanities projects. The guidelines for TEI were created in order to:

1. Be sufficient to represent the textual features needed for research



2. Be simple, clear, and concrete
3. Be easy for researchers to use without special-purpose software
4. Allow the rigorous definition and efficient processing of texts
5. Provide for user-defined extensions
6. Conform to existing and emergent standards (Cummings).

These guidelines ensure that TEI markup is useful and accessible to all research in the humanities, and facilitates the transfer and sharing of information. TEI markup is designed to be a *descriptive* XML language, which means that the tags or coding markups describe specifically what a component is. For example, when coding a text in TEI-compliant XML, any place name is isolated with a “place” tag, effectively denoting what the word is. This markup also allows for these specific tags to be searchable. Other versions of XML are either presentational, which designate how a text should look, or procedural, which dictate what to do with the text. The advantage of using descriptive markup over presentational or procedural markup is that descriptive markup can be transformed into presentational or procedural, but not the other way around. As a result, a single descriptive markup can be used for multiple purposes.

One of the key issues with using TEI-compliant XML coding is that it is based on a system of hierarchies, which does not always fit with the structure of a text. All elements must be properly nested, meaning that, if an element is opened within another element, it must be closed before the outer element can be closed. This sometimes creates problems when coding a text: for example, if a “paragraph” element is opened within a “page” element, it must be closed within the “page” element, but this is not possible if the paragraph in question actually continues onto the next page. While TEI

users have found ways around this specific dilemma, there are still other conflicting hierarchy problems that can occur in TEI. However, despite this complication of hierarchies (to which there are some solutions), TEI coding remains the most applicable coding language for standardizing textual markup, and is continually developing to suit the needs of humanities studies.

### **Practicum Outcomes**

Through my practicum I was able to get involved in a digital humanities project and to witness how these kinds of projects are carried out. By attending regular meetings at the CDH and the CDH brainstorming workshop, I participated in the collaborative work that is needed to carry out a digital project successfully. In addition, I was able to get experience in doing scholarly editorial work, through researching the material surrounding the artists' lives, their illustrations, and their artistic schools. My contributions to the project will enable users to search, collect, and analyze the illustrations for Volume 10 of *The Yellow Book* in relation to images in other volumes in this magazine as well as other aesthetic periodicals published on *The Yellow Nineties Online*. The images I edited will also be searchable within the NINES federation of peer-reviewed digital projects. In addition, my research on the artists will provide a foundation for the co-editors to draw on when they write the critical introduction to Volume 10.

## Works Cited

Cummings, James. "The Text Encoding Initiative and the Study of Literature." A *Companion to Digital Literary Studies*. Ed. Susan Schreibman and Ray Siemens. Oxford: Blackwell, 2008. *Alliance of Digital Humanities Organizations*. Web. June 18<sup>th</sup>, 2013.

Helland, Janice. *The Studios of Frances and Margaret Macdonald*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1996. Print.