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# Wood engraving as ghostwriting: the Dalziel Brothers, losing one's name, and other hazards of the trade

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## ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the work of the Dalziel Brothers, the foremost wood engraving firm in the Victorian period. It explores the problematics of authorship in an art factory with many employees who all signed 'Dalziel'. Examining wood engraving formally, theoretically and technically, it proposes ghostwriting as an analogy for the work done by facsimile engravers. Their work is read alongside the literature they illustrated, including Wilkie Collins's *After Dark* (1856), Anthony Trollope's *Orley Farm* (1861–1862) and Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking-Glass* (1871). I investigate the wood engraver's business of artistically producing someone else's lines, and carving other people's signatures. Mechanics, or creation? The line, the autograph, and the signature are powerful elements of the way we understand artistic identity. A wood engraver who signs for someone else is a paradox, undermining assumptions about creative work. *Orley Farm*, one of Dalziel's most successful illustrated novels, is itself a meditation on the fraudulent act of signing another's name. This paper compares different 'Dalziel' signatures, proposing the signature as a kind of self portrait that can help uncover the voices of unknown engraver-employees; it also presents new archival evidence about some of these employees, such as Ann and Mary Byfield from Islington.

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**KEYWORDS** Wood engraving; illustration; Victorian literature; signature; authorship

## 1.

The Victorian wood engraver had the curious business of artistically producing someone else's lines, and carving other people's signatures. Is this mechanics, or creation? How does it relate to authorship, and to the culture of names and signatures that has dominated the consumption of art and texts for centuries? Victorian book illustrations often carry two signatures. First, there is that of the draughtsman or draughtswoman. They designed their

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own monogram or signature, and drew it on the block, but it was concretised by the engraver who cut it, defining the edges and texture of the lines that comprised it. Second, there is the signature of the engraver. In the cases considered in this essay, this is 'Dalziel'. It appears to be a signature like any other. Its distinctive, autographic look alludes to the idea of a person, and this is reinforced by the signature's position next to that of the draughtsman – doubly so when the latter was a celebrated individual like John Everett Millais or Dante Gabriel Rossetti. But 'Dalziel' is not a person. It stands for Dalziel Brothers, and this signature marked the work not only of the four Dalziel engravers – George, Edward, Margaret or John Dalziel – but equally, any of the very differently named employees who engraved in their factory. These were anonymous, and often unidentifiable. Working from annotations in Dalziel's archive, my research so far has found names for 26: Aldridge, Anderson, Andrews, Boucher, Brown, Mary and/or Ann Byfield, William Burnett, James Clark, Coombe, Josiah Copleston, Eastop, Harry Fenn, Francis Fricker, Gould, William Hardy, Philip(?) Hundley, Knight, Manelli, Martin, Arthur Oswin, Pierce, William Quick, Henry William Royle, Charles and/or William Tilby, White, and Walter Williams. Engravers sometimes worked individually on a block, and sometimes the work was shared according to specialist techniques, or to save time.

What was it like to be one of these artists, signing double signatures that weren't theirs? For decades, the humanities has critically questioned our fetishisation of names and signatures, but it endures. Within studies of illustration, relatively little attention is paid to the engraver in comparison with the draughtsman. It seems to me that this minimisation of the engraver's artistic role is caused by a desire to link works to a named individual. It's easier to think of an *Alice* illustration as 'by' Tenniel, or the Moxon illustration to 'The Lady of Shalott' as 'by' Rossetti. And in the nineteenth century, an emphasis on the designer was encouraged by cultural producers, including the Dalziels themselves, keen to exploit big household names. But this essay investigates the peculiarity of a whole group of people signing their work with another's name. The gesture is one of a rigid capitalist system. It is also a theatrical gesture, in which artists are masked and slippery, suddenly exchanging places without our knowledge, and usually with an unknowable relation to any embodied or biographical person.

## 2.

Dalziel was the dominant London wood engraving firm of the Victorian period. Their archive in the British Museum of around 54,000 proofs made between 1839 and 1893 includes their whole oeuvre, all sorts of images, including plumbers' diagrams of taps and toilets, microbiology, fitness manuals and advertisements for Cadbury's Cocoa. Dalziel's role in visualising

literary texts can hardly be overestimated. Not only did they engrave all the images for Lewis Carroll's *Alice* books (1865, 1871) and many Pre-Raphaelite illustrations to Moxon's edition of Tennyson's *Poems* (1857), but also first editions of contemporary writers such as Charles Dickens, Charles Kingsley, Christina Rossetti and Anthony Trollope. Their illustrations of historical literature reinterpreted texts for contemporary audiences, with wood engravings for Cervantes, Chaucer, Defoe, Milton, Shakespeare and *A Thousand and One Nights* – or more recently canonised writings, by Walter Scott, Letitia Elizabeth Landon, Byron, Wordsworth, etc. They mediated international writing for British audiences, including Hans Christian Andersen, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Mark Twain and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.<sup>1</sup>

### 3.

Dalziel's relationship with literature can be tangential and unexpected. For instance, census returns suggest Margaret and John Dalziel were living together in 1861 on the Dalziel engraving premises, 53 Camden High Street. John was widowed, and there were also John junr and Amy, his five- and six-year-old children. In addition, the household included a 19-year-old niece, Martha Moffit, an 18-year-old servant, Sarah Percival, and another servant employed as a 'nurse maid' – Alice Gladden – who was only 12 years old herself.

Imagine working as a nursemaid at the age of 12. Alice was a child already living as a worker outside her family, grown up in relation to the children she raised. I cannot discover what happened to Alice Gladden immediately after this (she later married under her maiden name at the age of 60, to a John Garlick Pack). In 1869 John Dalziel died, so by the time of the 1871 census the household at 53 Camden High Street had broken up. But it is fascinating to speculate whether Alice remained with the family until 1865 – fairly likely – when *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* was engraved within the walls of her home. Even if she had moved on, surely this famous project would have involved recollections of *their* Alice for the Dalziels. What's in a name? For me, Gladden offers a different story to set beside Alice Liddell's. Who knows what she was like and how she lived, but she remains an alternative Alice, one whose childhood ended early with labour and responsibility, and whose adventures begin in the engravers' workshop.

### 4.

I want to begin my exploration of wood engravers, ghostwriters and the signature with Wilkie Collins's early collection of gothic stories, *After Dark* (1856). It was re-issued as an illustrated edition in 1862, with four wood engravings by the Brothers Dalziel: a title page after Walter Crane (Figure 1), and four illustrations after Arthur Boyd Houghton.

*After Dark* has an intricate frame narrative that tells the story of an amanuensis. William Kerby, an itinerant portrait painter, is losing his sight, and with it his ability to feed his family. He is an excellent storyteller, and his wife Leah has the idea that he could support them as a writer. To safeguard his sight, she becomes his amanuensis, and they do all their writing ‘after dark’, when her housework is over. The third character is the painter’s doctor, who advises and supports the project.

As a portraitist, William had been a patriarchal provider, but because of his disability, his writing is collaborative. Leah Kirby is intrigued by this distinction:

An artist lies under this great disadvantage in case of accidents – his talents are of no service to him unless he can use his eyes and fingers. An author, on the other hand, can turn his talents to account just as well by means of other people’s eyes and fingers as by means of his own.<sup>2</sup>

Leah’s conclusion that the visual arts are individualistic, in contrast with writing, becomes ironic in this second edition that includes five wood engravings in which the designer’s work is literally produced ‘by means of other people’s eyes and fingers’.

Leah Kirby’s feminine role as amanuensis is structurally submissive. However, she is not circumscribed by William’s writing. After all, she narrates the frame narrative, and this is situated outside the fictional book William writes to save his family (the latter forms the greater part of *After Dark*). Even in her role as amanuensis, Leah does not consent to be only a writing machine. At the end of the first tale, she inserts a note of her own that, since her husband is blind, he can neither see nor effectively forbid. This ‘Note by Mrs Kerby’ tells an anecdote about when he told his tale orally: it is a spooky coincidence, of how one of his listeners had a phobia of four-poster beds, an article of furniture that in the story turns out to be a murder weapon. Her husband wanted to exclude this anecdote, but she puts it in. After recounting it, she writes:

[H]e says it is scarcely worth while to mention such a trifle in anything so important as a book. I cannot venture, after this, to do more than slip these lines in modestly at the end of the story. If the printers should notice my few last words, perhaps they may not mind the trouble of putting them into some out-of-the-way corner, in very small type. (*AD*, Vol. 1, p. 78)

This is a delightfully fake apology. Leah’s husband is the author, and on his authority, this ‘trifle’ does not belong. Leah’s tale may be short, but her claim to slip it in ‘modestly’ is laughable; modesty would exclude it, whereas she puts it at the end, as a conclusion or another frame. She talks of ‘slip[ping] these lines in’. In a book about writing and art (many of the short stories are about artists, and all are about the subjects of William’s portraits), this word ‘lines’ connects the literary and visual arts – lines are a

building block of each. Lines are also a repetitive punishment, and children were commonly given lines to write in school. This punishment disciplines children – *some* children – to do repetitive, mechanical work. To work on a line. Such a punitive meaning of lines is important to so-called mechanical producers of them, like the amanuensis or indeed the wood engraver, whose job was to concretise lines designed by other artists. Leah Kirby and Dalziel in their different roles are given lines to repeat. These lines are what they do, what they hold themselves to: their discipline. For them, being given lines is not exactly punitive; on the contrary, it could be a source of profit and pleasure. But it is at least plausible to see Leah's lines as a punishment for being a wife, and to see the anonymous wood engravers who worked for Dalziel Brothers as being punished for lacking the social connections and financial backing to embark on more ambitious careers as painters or sculptors, involving expensive training and a high risk of failure.

And yet. This does not encompass it. The 'Note by Mrs Kerby' – delightfully addressed to the 'printers' (who set type in lines) – undermines the very possibility of an amanuensis. The text is William Kerby's, but Kerby's book always only ever contains what Leah Kerby puts in it – and anything extra she chooses to add. Refusing to be an amanuensis, she becomes something more: a ghostwriter.

## 5.

The task of the wood engraver, to turn a drawing into print, was literally *impossible*. On a practical note, many draughtsmen and women used tone on their woodblocks: there can be no *faithful* transcription of tone into line. Even with those designers who knew to use strict line drawing, every cut of the graver altered the line. Wood-engraved lines have textures and depths that are unlike those in pen or pencil. Even the straightest have distinct qualities when magnified, with different shapes and viscosity along the edges of the line and on its surface. This amounts to a whole different look, which is visible to the casual observer, even if the reason for it isn't clear. The finished drawing made on the whitened woodblock was usually destroyed as part of the production process.<sup>3</sup> Some photographs of these remain as evidence, as well as drawn blocks that were never engraved.<sup>4</sup> They suggest that draughtsmen often remained oblivious to the difficulties of distinguishing between a dark or a light line in this medium. This could be achieved through lowering a line so that it printed more lightly, but a shift from black to grey was not feasible. In the best of Dalziel's work, the beauty of it is inseparable from the quality of the wood-engraved line. And yet their role is somehow *only* to provide the medium. As if medium could ever be an empty container.

As Antony Griffiths has discussed, scholars who write about printmaking from earlier centuries have followed a long tradition of using a literary

metaphor for copperplate engravings that reproduce paintings, describing this as ‘translation’.<sup>5</sup> This makes sense; as with a literary translation, when copper engravings translate paintings we get two distinct, related products, in different media (or ‘languages’). This analogy does not work for most Victorian wood engraving, since it only rarely translated originals that existed in another medium. There is no ‘original and translation’, since wood engraving results in one product rather than two. The drawing was just part of the process, and was destroyed in it. Instead, we have a single collaborative work, in which, supposedly, one artist provides the medium, the other the content. I would like to propose a new analogy for this, to complement the idea of translation; I see the wood engraver as an artistic equivalent of the ghostwriter, whose story is not his or her own, but who is responsible for the entire texture and fabric of the text we read. Every mark is theirs, though always in the weirdly negative kind of line-avoidance that the medium entails (wood engravers did not cut the line, but rather everything around it). Style is there in a peculiar double-voiced way.

## 6.

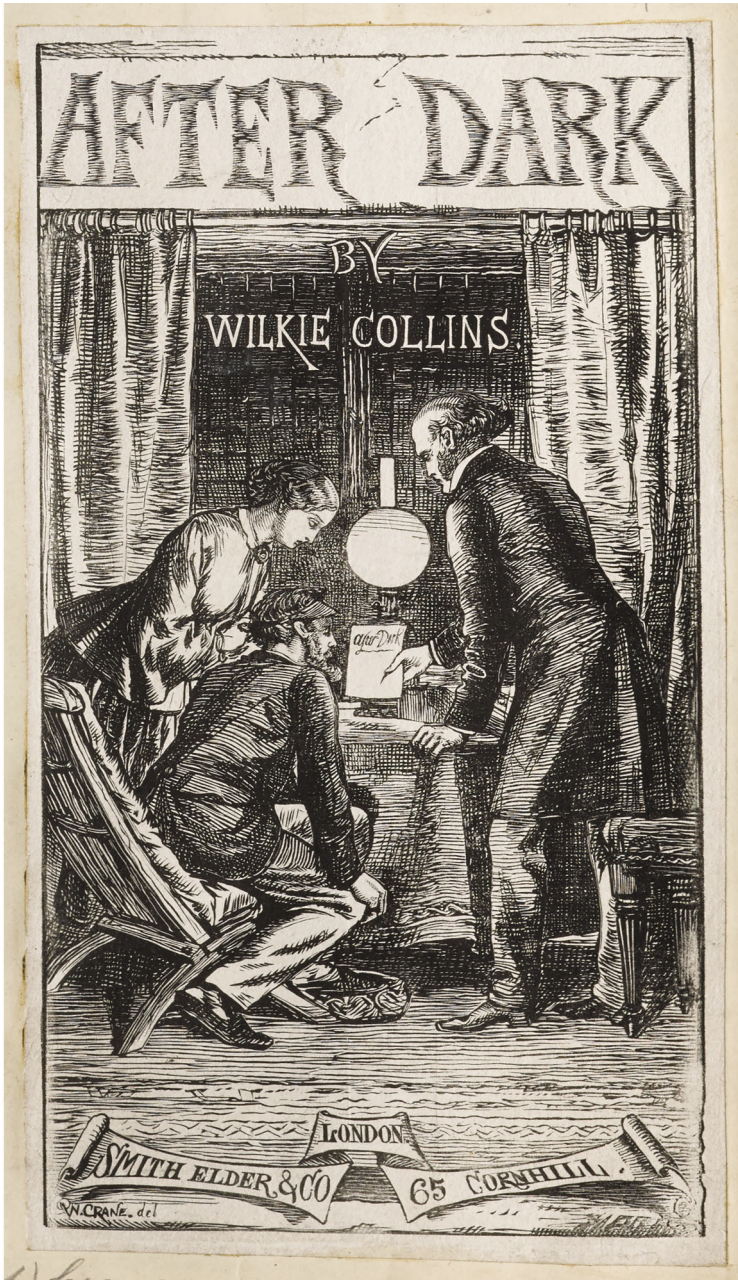
What I would love is to be a ghostwriter for wood engraving, for a medium that literally shares a bed with writing (in letterpress printing, the ‘bed’ is where type and woodblocks are placed and locked for printing), but in which the printed line will not curl neatly into the ordered shapes of letters.

## 7.

*After Dark*’s illustrated title page (Figure 1) is engraved by Dalziel after Walter Crane, a draughtsman who learnt his trade from a wood engraver (William James Linton). The title page introduces the idea of narrative framing formally, with its curtains and ever decreasing rectangles. William and Leah Kirby lean over their own title, held by the doctor. Oddly, William is portrayed to resemble a wood engraver. His globe lamp is positioned on the table exactly where a wood engraver would place their engraver’s globe (a glass vessel filled with water, that directed light and resembled this style of lamp). His eyeshade is like those engravers wore, to protect their sight from light, and focus their vision. For example, there is a similar illustration of an engraver who sits in front of a globe wearing an eyeshade in Jackson and Chatto’s foundational manual *Treatise on Wood Engraving, Historical and Practical* (1839).<sup>6</sup>

William Kirby as a disabled artist might have struck a chord with Crane and Dalziel. Crane later described in his *Reminiscences* how it was ‘very usual to apprentice deaf and sometimes even dumb youths to wood-engravers’.<sup>7</sup> Wood engravers often damaged their sight, and the job became associated





**Figure 1.** Dalziel after Walter Crane, illustrated title for Wilkie Collins, *After Dark* (London: Smith, Elder & Co, 1862). Dalziel Archive Vol. 15 (1862), British Museum reg. no. 1913,0415.176, print no. 943. By permission of the Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved. © Sylph Editions, 2016.

with the constriction and isolation of certain senses. In addition to eye masks, engravers commonly wore nose and mouth masks to protect the block from damaging condensation from their breath.<sup>8</sup> Symbolically, these masks can be seen as barriers between the body of the artist and their work, cutting off the idea of vision, and the breath of inspiration.

Crane and Dalziel's title page, with its group of three people standing in front of an artistic work, visualises the collaborative process of the engraving we are looking at. William, as painter-writer, does not touch the work (his hands held away), but the doctor steps in as proxy. As he holds the paper, his thumb casts an uncanny pointed shadow. It is perhaps intended to show a crease on the page, but this long black shape on the smooth white paper makes little sense. It looks like an erroneous line, or a monstrous overgrown thumbnail that's not truly positioned on the digit. To me, its triangular point, beautifully sharp, is reminiscent of the shape of the graving tool. It is also an ostentatious moment of pure line that stands as a signature for medium and maker.

The line cannot just be a mistake; wood engravers work from black to white, so that correcting an unwanted *white* line was laborious, whereas a small *black* line could be easily cut away. Once you've noticed this one, it stands out. Within the pictorial image, the tiny page with the title draws our eye because of its text, and its status as a title page within a title page. Compositionally, it is almost dead centre. Together with the lamp, it draws our eye through its emphatic whiteness, when most of the image is shaded, busy with lines. Who, proofing this block, could fail to notice this little line? And yet, when Crane touched one proof with white for corrections (see the impression in the Harold Hartley Collection, in the Boston Museum of Fine Art), he lightens the coat and other elements, but no one corrects, erases or comments on this line.

## 8.

To explore the idea of the line as name and signature, I will revisit a foundational moment in art theory: one of Pliny's anecdotes about the painter Apelles. Apelles visits his rival, Protogenes:

Protogenes was not at home, but a solitary old woman was keeping watch over a large panel placed on the easel. In answer to the questions of Apelles, she said that Protogenes was out, and asked the name of the visitor: 'Here it is,' said Apelles, and snatching up a brush he drew a line of extreme delicacy across the board. On the return of Protogenes the old woman told him what had happened. When he had considered the delicate precision of the line he at once declared that his visitor had been Apelles, for no one else could have drawn anything so perfect. Then in another colour he drew a second still finer line upon the first, and went away, bidding her show it to Apelles if he came again, and add that this was the man he was seeking. It fell out as he expected; Apelles did return, and, ashamed to be beaten, drew a third line of another

colour cutting the two first down their length and leaving no room for any further refinement.<sup>9</sup>

In this anecdote the line is identified with the name. Implicitly, the old woman (nameless and line-less herself) is expecting to receive a word: 'Apelles'. But as Apelles leaves a line in place of the name, he does not perceive this to be a substitution. 'Here it is', he says; the line *is* the name. In this he is unlike Protogenes, the lesser artist; Protogenes needs to translate the 'delicate precision of the line' into a 'declaration' of the word 'Apelles'. We could say that Protogenes is beaten not only because his line is duller than Apelles's, but equally and indissociably, because he fails to realise that a line, a name, a message and an artist are all the same thing. This identification is crucial for understanding the work and the signature of the wood engravers Dalziel Brothers. In addition, it is worth noting that the translation of *linea* into *line*, used in the above 1896 translation by Katherine Jex-Blake, and now standard, was by no means straightforward for Victorians. The dominant translation of Pliny through the nineteenth century was by John Bostock and Henry Riley. Perversely, this translates *linea* as *outline* rather than *line*; it includes a footnote explaining this choice, and suggesting:

it is not unlikely that the 'linea' or outline drawn by each was a profile of himself, and that the profile of Protogenes was drawn within that of Apelles; who, on the second occasion, drew a third profile between the other two.<sup>10</sup>

This refusal to see the line as anything other than figurative (an outline) is not unexpected in the century of realism. But it suggests an intellectual bias towards composition over line that helps us understand why wood engravers were ignored in favour of designers in nineteenth-century culture. On the other hand, the translators' whimsical suggestion that this outline was a profile of the artist – a self portrait – is a perhaps unconsciously sympathetic reading of Pliny. What the translators are grasping at – and literalising in a slightly ridiculous way – is the message that the line itself *is* the self portrait in this anecdote. Curiously, another word of Pliny's puzzled over in Bostock and Riley's footnote is the word 'secuit', the verb used to describe the third and finest line drawn by Apelles, and which literally means 'he cut'.

## 9.

My readings of Dalziel's work adopt Apelles's strategy: the line itself is a signature and a self portrait. Naturally, as a writer, I bring narrative links to embellish. Take this satire after Tenniel (Figure 2), in which an allegorical figure with a sash labelled 'Dividend' holds moneybags aloft, striding through a ruined interior in which the timbers of buildings mingle with body-parts. As with many wood engravings, there is play with Dalziel's signature, which appears to be inscribed not on the picture surface but on one of



**Figure 2.** Dalziel after John Tenniel, illustration for Henry Cholmondeley-Pennell, Puck on Pegasus (London: John Camden Hotten, 1868). Dalziel Archive Vol. 21 (1866), British Museum reg. no. 1913,0415.182, print no. 59. By permission of the Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved. © Sylph Editions, 2016.

timbers that the mythical woman is striding across. This signature on a piece of wood emphasises the engravers' literal daily activity of signing on wood, and the Pre-Raphaelite figure clutching moneybags is an apt symbol for the Dalziel Brothers, a fraternity of capitalist artists. She becomes a self portrait of Dalziel, who did actually make a profit out of the eroticised Pre-Raphaelite body in illustrations such as those designed by Arthur Hughes.

In Pliny's foundation myth of art, the finest line, the one that surpassed all others, is not drawn, or painted, but *cut*. We've already examined the cutting thumbnail of the doctor in *After Dark*. We could equally apply this thinking to the lines of 'Jabberwocky' (Figure 3), a block that reads area by area like a showcase for the various technical capabilities of wood-engraved lines.



**Figure 3.** Dalziel after John Tenniel, 'Jabberwocky', illustration for Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking Glass* (London: Macmillan, 1871). Dalziel Archive Vol. 28 (1871), British Museum reg. no. 1913,0415.182, print no. 624. By permission of the Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved. © Sylph Editions, 2016.

Reading it as such, it's hard not to see the Jabberwocky's sharp, tapering talons as representing the set of multiple gravers on the artist's table, deadly sharp tools that cut the finest of lines with a destructive precision, destroying the draughtsman's work (the drawing on the surface of the block) with the same strokes that, by re-making it as a printable image, complete it.

## 10.

Here are Dante Gabriel Rossetti's oft-quoted verses on the experience of having his designs engraved on wood by the Brothers Dalziel. They were composed during the production of the famous Moxon Tennyson (1857)<sup>11</sup>:

Address to the D-l  
(Dalziel brothers)

O woodman, spare that block  
O gash not anyhow!  
It took 10 days by clock—  
I'd fain protect it now.

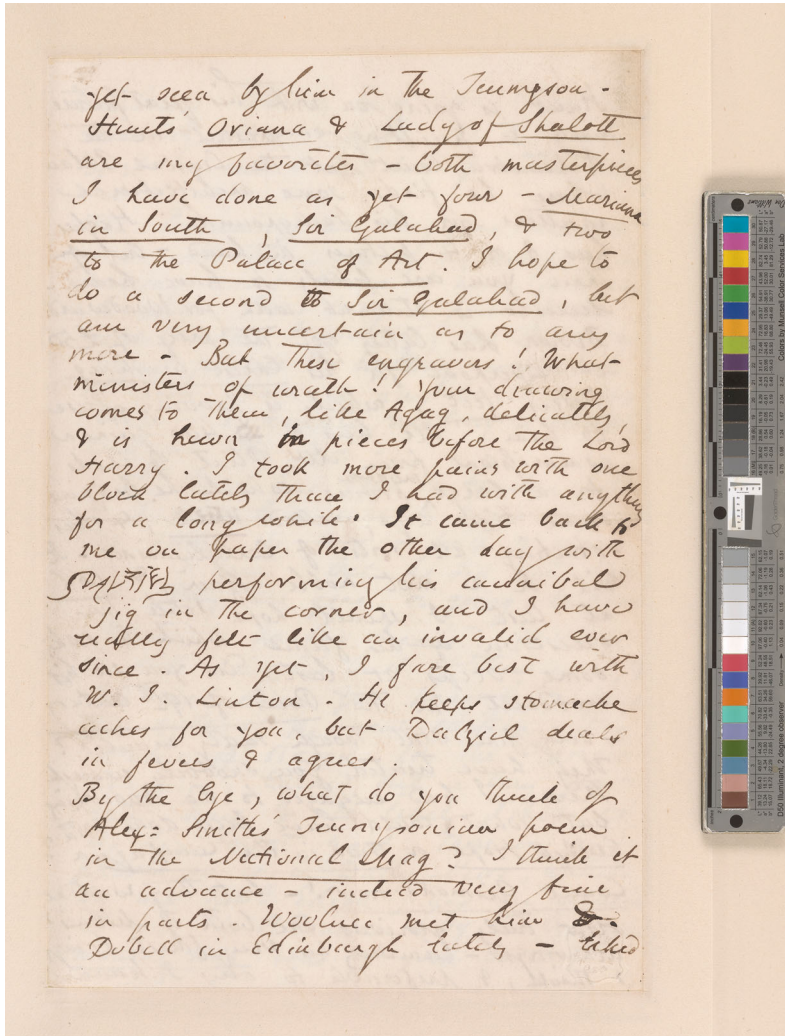
(Chorus of wild laughter—  
the curtain falls)<sup>12</sup>

Often cited as a curiosity of illustration history, or evidence of Rossetti's dissatisfaction with Dalziel, these lines have more to tell. It is worth noting that the easy literary skill of the verses is part of the history of how wood engraving has been narrated by writing, which is in many ways alien to the medium. As anyone will know who has read their memoir, the Dalziel Brothers were terrible writers, and their only way of replying to Rossetti effectively is through their wood engraving.<sup>13</sup> Here, I want to draw attention to just three aspects of Rossetti's verses: the wood engravers' relationship to a proper name; their anonymity; and the collective nature of their work.

The first line of Rossetti's 'Address' anonymizes Dalziel's well-known name, and makes it diabolical; 'D - l' is interchangeably 'devil' or 'Dalziel'. Not content with this gesture, and weirdly uncertain about whether 'Dalziel' should be erased, anonymised, or emphasised, Rossetti reinscribes it in parentheses underneath. Then, in the first line of the short poem, the engravers are referred to with the word 'woodman'. Not a word usually used in this context, it is clearly chosen for scansion. It has other effects, however. Again, it anonymises the artist, linking them with the less skilled, less fine work of an axeman, whether executioner or tree-cutter. The violent implications are comically reinforced by the word 'gash', and finally by the draughtsman's futile desire to 'protect' his drawing. What Rossetti cannot accept, is that in embarking on a wood engraving, he is making a collaborative work that intrinsically requires the destruction of his drawing.

Rossetti's final stage direction is curious. Of course, it makes Dalziel into a theatrical character, playing a role. But the 'Chorus of wild laughter' also speaks perceptively to the situation of wood engravers as an unnamed collective of artists, a chorus. Rossetti captures the impossibility of seeing the wood engraver as any kind of individual; the wild laughter also nicely figures the non-linguistic nature of the engraver's diabolical response.

One thing Rossetti found particularly offensive was the Dalziel signature. He wrote in a letter to William Allingham at the same period (Figure 4):



**Figure 4.** Dante Gabriel Rossetti, letter to William Allingham, December 1856, The Morgan Library & Museum. MA 381.32. Purchased by Pierpont Morgan, 1909. Photographic credit: The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York.

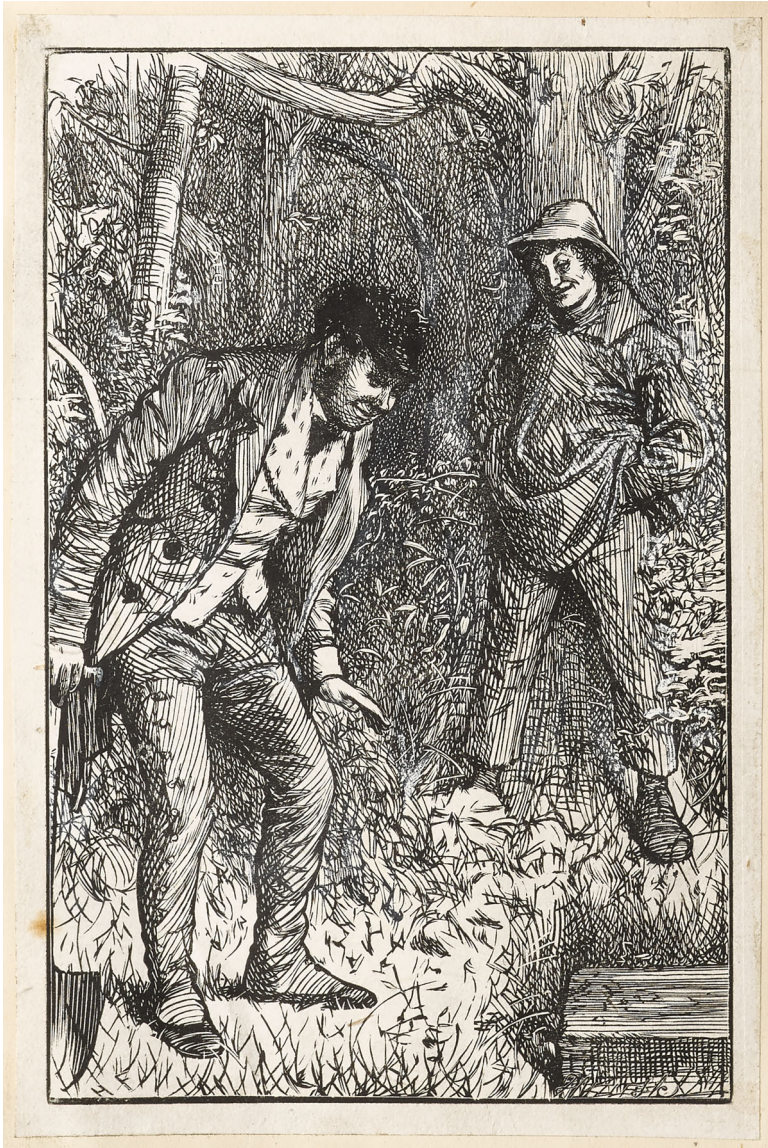
I took more pains with one block lately than I had with anything in a long while. It came back to me on paper the other day, with Dalziel [imitates Dalziel's signature] performing his cannibal jig in the corner, and I have really felt like an invalid ever since.<sup>14</sup>

What villainous energy Rossetti attributes to Dalziel's signature! Not only is Dalziel dancing a jig, but the dance is powerful enough to be magical – syntactically, the dance renders Rossetti an invalid. Othered as cannibal, Dalziel is also uncannily embodied in Rossetti's work of art; Dalziel *is* the signature at the corner of the wood engraving, the letters spreading to infect all the lines of the illustration. Within the letter to Allingham, Rossetti's visual caricature of the Dalziel signature is brilliant. It's immediately recognisable, but instead of sloping forward, the letters of 'DALZIEL' pull away at bizarre angles, each doing its own dance. From the first and last letters of the name, lines jump out away from it, bleeding into the letter – just as Dalziel's signature tended to bleed out and blend with the other lines on the block.

## 11.

As I've mentioned, draughtsmen and engravers frequently had fun with monograms, placing them underfoot, or on pictorial gravestones, trees, or slabs of wood. But I have never seen monogram play quite like that produced by Dalziel and Henry French, in illustrations for Elizabeth Eiloart's *The Young Squire: Or, Peter and his Friends* (1872). Generally, French has a simple but memorable 'HF' monogram. The letters are distinct, while drawing attention to the similarity between the 'H' and 'F' shapes. The characters are boxy rather than slanting (the strokes almost at right-angles to each other) but positioned on the block diagonally. In six out of eight of the illustrations, French follows his usual monogram practice. However, in one illustration, the monogram is oddly similar in its form to the blades of grass that surround it (Figure 5, bottom left). And another of the illustrations takes this to extremes. Figure 6 is the only illustration in *The Young Squire* that has no 'proper' HF monogram anywhere. But once you start *looking* for a signature, it becomes apparent that all the loose foliage, from the bottom half of the block and extending up to the top right, is overrun by diagonals and crosses that resemble letter shapes and particularly the H and F of French's monogram. There are H's and F's *everywhere*. Once you see this, the block shouts its signature; all thought of picture or illustration is overwhelmed by and indeed fabricated by the letter. As with Apelles, line and signature are indistinguishable, but here in a highly textual way. French was a far less prestigious designer than someone like Dante Gabriel Rossetti. The title page of Eiloart's *The Young Squire* advertised the presence of 'original illustrations' but did not bother naming French.<sup>15</sup> French's lawn of monograms is perhaps a protest at the frequent lack of authorial acknowledgment given to minor illustrators in the book trade.

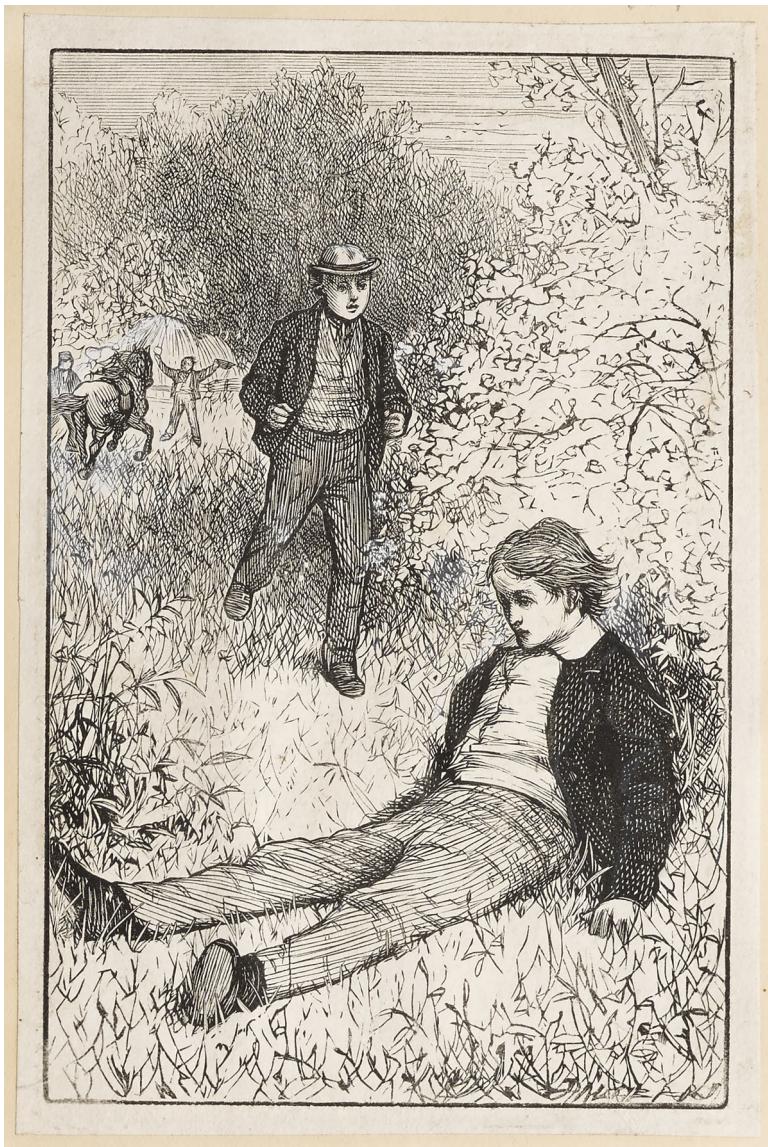




**Figure 5.** Dalziel after Henry French, illustration for Elizabeth Eiloart, *The Young Squire: Or, Peter and his Friends* (London: Frederick Warne, [1872]). Dalziel Archive Vol. 30 (1872), British Museum reg. no. 1913,0415.191, print no. 486. By permission of the Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved. © Sylph Editions, 2016.

## 12.

Elsewhere, the Dalziel Archive includes a rare correction to a signature. On a proof with corrections by designer James Godwin, there are many frustrated annotations. Displeased, he blanks his name out with white bodycolour,



**Figure 6.** Dalziel after Henry French, illustration for Elizabeth Eiloart, *The Young Squire: Or, Peter and his Friends* (London: Frederick Warne, [1872]). Dalziel Archive Vol. 30 (1872), British Museum reg. no. 1913,0415.191, print no. 489. By permission of the Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved. © Sylph Editions, 2016.

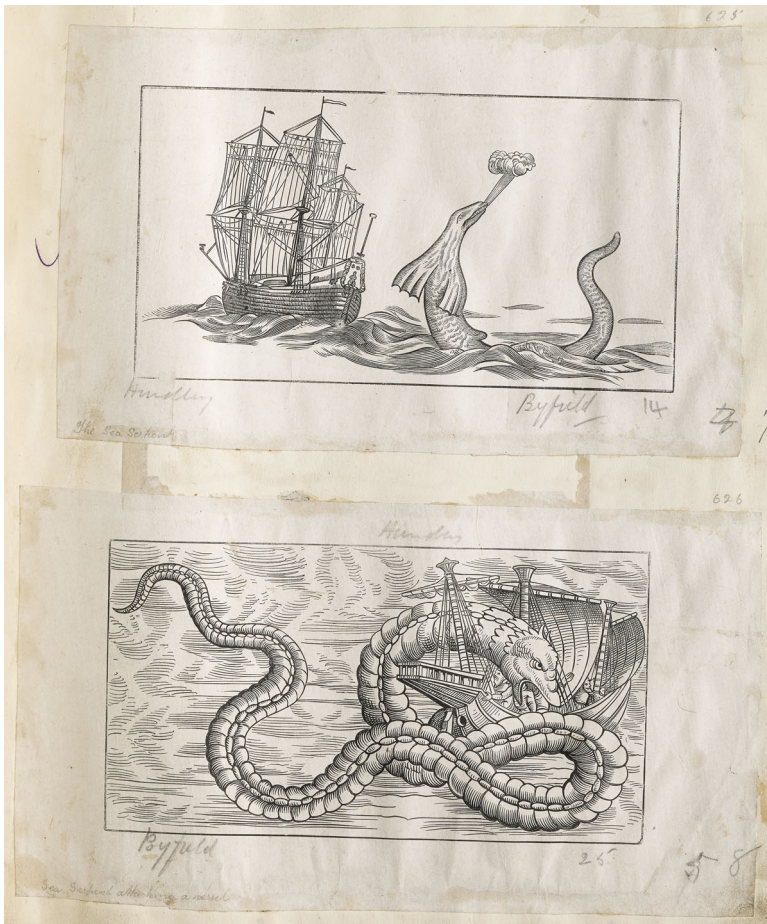
demanding ‘Take out the name please !!!’ (punctuation in original). He follows this up with a joke around his name, requesting: ‘For God – win’s sake revise it carefully.’<sup>16</sup>

## 13.

When I began this project, I thought that the names of employee-engravers who created Dalziel productions were probably unknowable. An exciting discovery in the Dalziel Archive has been several proofs with pencilled names of the individual who engraved them. Alongside the names are a few terse references to hours and money. A few of the names are of other established engraving families. And some of them, like William Arrowsmith, Harry Fenn, Francis Fricker and James Clark, are briefly mentioned in the Dalziels' memoir, *A Record* (1901). This memoir cursorily describes Fricker and Clark as having been 'pupils' for half a century; 'pupil' had by this time become a euphemism for factory employee.<sup>17</sup>

Let's take a wood engraving made in 1882, of a sea serpent attacking a ship (Figure 7, bottom). It was engraved by Byfield and Hundley. 'Hundley' may refer to Philip Hundley, who made a few contemporary illustrations as a draughtsman (artists often trained as draughtsmen and engravers). Byfield probably refers to Ann Byfield, who lived in Islington. Usually, where blocks are shared, the engravers' names are scrawled together at the bottom of the proof. But in this case, the names are far apart, and 'Byfield' is beside the serpent, while 'Hundley' is beside the ship. This would appear coincidental except that it is repeated on a neighbouring proof (Figure 7, top). Blocks were sometimes divided according to specialism, with master engravers working the face and figure. Perhaps Byfield was better at creating the more difficult curving shapes required by the serpent; Hundley's name appears seldom in nineteenth-century illustration, and he was probably less experienced. I like the idea of the two elements of the design standing for the two engravers who realised them. Making works of art collaboratively is a fraught business, as anyone knows who has tried it. These proofs invites us to imagine Byfield's aesthetic and her lines as battling and conquering Hundley's.

Byfield had been a big name in wood engraving earlier in the century. The previous generation – John, Ebenezer and Mary Byfield – made celebrated work for the Chiswick Press in the 1830s. They signed many blocks (including a wood engraving made after William Blake in Thornton's *Pastorals of Virgil* (1821)). Mary Byfield taught the next generation to engrave: Edward, Ann and Mary Byfield junr, and their cousin Louis. By 1882, the older generation was dead, Edward too, and Louis had changed his profession to 'undertaker and engraver'.<sup>18</sup> The Byfield engravers were then Mary Jnr and Ann, who lived and worked together in Islington at least until the early 1860s. Working from the same address, the sisters might have engraved interchangeably, sharing blocks according to convenience, skill and inclination. At some point in the sixties, Mary married and changed her name to Bowyer. She still lived nearby, but there is no evidence whether or not she continued to engrave, whereas Ann's occupation continued to be listed on the census as



**Figure 7.** Byfield / Hundley / Dalziel, illustrations for Charles Gould, *Mythical Monsters* (London: W H Allen, 1886). Dalziel Archive Vol. 42 (1882-3), British Museum reg. no. 1913.0415.203, print nos. 625-6. By permission of the Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved. © Sylph Editions, 2016.

‘Engraver on Wood’ until 1881. Ann probably engraved the serpents in [Figure 7](#). The identification of a female member of the family as working for Dalziel Brothers is strengthened by an image in the 1877 album, annotated in a different hand from usual, specifying ‘Miss Byfield’, and noting, ‘Paid Cash’.<sup>19</sup> Since the Byfields had been an elite family of artists, it must have been difficult to accept small jobs from another firm. This would inevitably result in a lower fee, and meant signing her own work ‘Dalziel’ instead of ‘Byfield’.

It turns out that these wood engravings were for a work of science or pseudo-science by the geologist Charles Gould, *Mythical Monsters* (1886). Gould uses evolutionary theory and historical sources to argue that many folktales of marvellous creatures were derived from real or extinct species.

Most illustrations are copied from earlier sources; [Figure 7](#) is after Conrad Gessner's *Historiae Animalium* (1551–1587). *Mythical Monsters* advertises its 'ninety-three illustrations', but does not mention the name of Dalziel, let alone Byfield or Hundley, who created the contours of the lines of the image before us.<sup>20</sup> The book is frequently reprinted until today, complete with reproductions of the wood engravings.

#### 14.

Like in Wilkie Collins's *After Dark*, in Anthony Trollope's *Orley Farm*, the possibility of a good amanuensis is discounted. Here, the failure leads not just to ghostwriting, but forgery. The novel climaxes in a trial, but before this even begins, the judge attributes all the problems to the use of an amanuensis (as ever, a gendered relation). He declares:

[I]t shows how careful men should be in all matters relating to their wills. The will and the codicil [...] are both in the handwriting of the widow, who acted as an amanuensis not only for her husband but for the attorney. [...] The attorney who advised Sir Joseph should have known better.<sup>21</sup>

*Orley Farm* was published over 1861–1862 with 40 illustrations by Dalziel after John Everett Millais. The plot explores Mary Mason's forgery of a codicil, allowing her son to inherit property. Everyone loves Mary, but she is portrayed as a fake woman. She is always 'plainly dressed' but so as to subtly seduce and win support from powerful characters, since 'to her belonged the great art of hiding her artifice' (*OF*, Vol. 1, p. 31). Everyone is shocked when they discover her fraud. The issue of guilt hangs around several signatures, and the novel becomes preoccupied with the idea of signing:

By whose hand in such case had those signatures been traced? Could it be possible that she, soft, beautiful, graceful as she was ... could have done it, unaided, – by herself? – that she could have sat down in the still hour of the night, with that old man on one side and her baby in his cradle on the other, and forged that will, signatures and all, in such a manner as to have carried her point for twenty years ... ? (*OF*, Vol. 1, p. 103)

Mary's guilt is attached to the act of signing another's name: 'What; forged his name!' exclaims her son, 'It must be a lie!'. Then he asks for clarification: 'What all; all the names herself?' (*OF*, Vol. 2, p. 263).

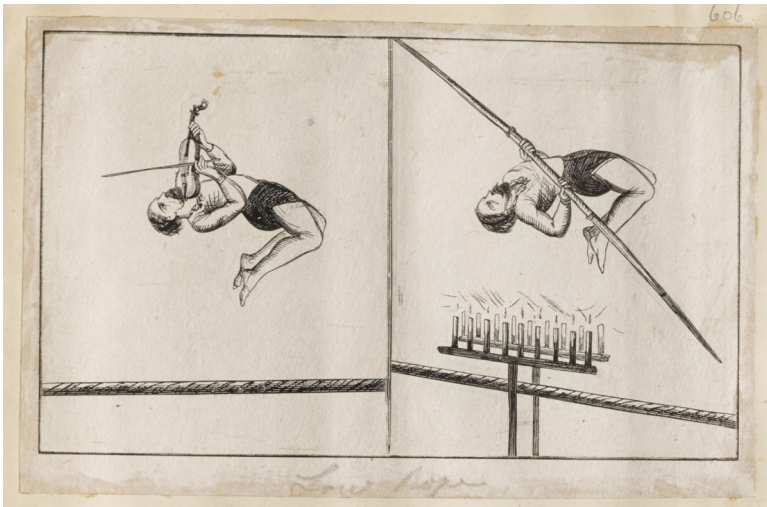
Perhaps criminal forgery is a long way from what an engraver does when they sign another's name. But it is curious that *Orley Farm* features an engraver as a minor character: Snow (he is given no first name) is an alcoholic engraver working hand to mouth, obviously on cheap productions on wood, for example, 'assist[ing] in the illustration of circus playbills'.<sup>22</sup> (Incidentally, while I haven't found a circus playbill in Dalziel's archive, in the

same year they engraved *Orley Farm*, Dalziel illustrated a souvenir book about circus performer Blondin; see [Figure 8](#)).

Snow is a leech praying on Felix Graham, an idealistic lawyer, and the star of a major subplot. Felix adopts the engraver's only child, Mary Snow. His plan for 'educating this damsel for his wife, – moulding her, so that she might be made fit to suit his taste' is one of the ostensibly comic, and unwittingly terrible, parts of the novel. Felix intends this as an act of charity and radicalism, but it is turned by the 'impoverished' and 'cunning' engraver into a financial transaction; Snow insists on a marriage contract before handing over his child. (*OF*, Vol. 1, pp. 139, 258).

Snow and Mary Snow both eventually become intolerable to Felix, who gets out of the marriage, and condemns Snow as a 'begging imposter'. Imposter? Logically, the wood engraver must be an 'impostor' in the unusual sense of 'one who imposes on others' (*OED*). He begs, but never deceives Felix, nor 'assumes a false character', the more common definition. And yet his daughter, Mary Snow, does turn out to be an imposter, a kind of inauthentic woman. She is shown up at every moment as (in a pre-Jamesian way) not the real thing. This is emphasised in many details. One will suffice:

Her letters were always of the same length, filling completely the four sides of a sheet of note paper. They were excellently well written; and as no one word in them was every altered or erased, it was manifest enough to Felix that the original composition was made on a rough draft. (*OF*, Vol. 2, pp. 259–60)



**Figure 8.** Dalziel, illustrations for C Linnaeus Banks (ed.), *Blondin: His Life and Performances* (London: Routledge, 1862). Dalziel Archive Vol. 15 (1862), British Museum reg. no. 1913,0415.176, print no. 606. By permission of the Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved. © Sylph Editions, 2016.

Mary Snow's crass fakeness becomes a foil for the subtle, impressive fakeries of the antiheroine, the forger Mary Mason. And the presence of the wood engraving impostor in the background structurally and thematically echoes all this impostorship. Like Mary Mason, he signs the names and lines of others. In a culture that for centuries has metaphorically linked artistic and generative production, it is no accident that the daughter of the engraver is a fake.

Trollope presents the forging of signatures as a specifically night-time work. Mary is 'this midnight forger', 'a perpetrator of midnight forgery', who 'wrote it herself, in the night', 'executed it' with 'midnight care'. Earlier, Snow had been described as an artist who 'executed flourishes', and this deathly verb is frequently used in printmaking for production without invention (*OF*, Vol. 1, p. 257, Vol. 2, pp. 123, 177, 218, 263). Mary's night labour has echoes in the work of the wood engraver, for whom publication deadlines demanded it. Dalziel's memoir is just one source for this, commenting how 'a large amount of wood engraving being done on the rush, it was a common thing to "burn the midnight oil" and the engraver's eyes at the same time'.<sup>23</sup>

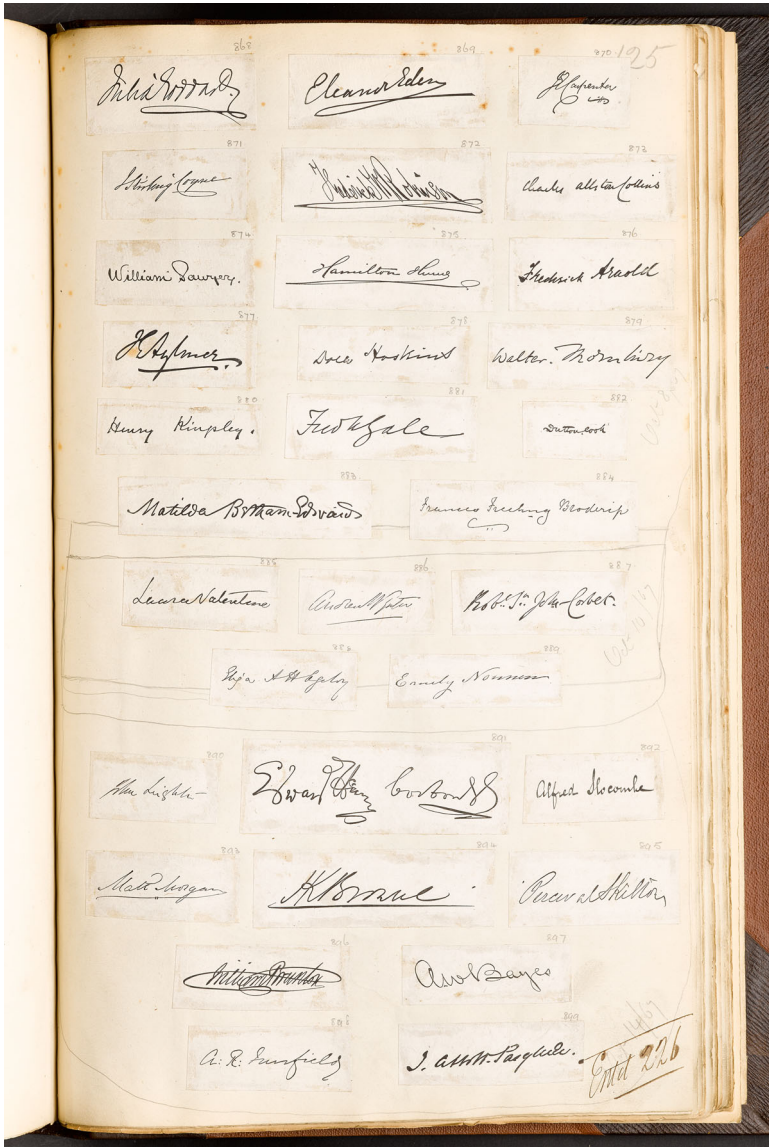
All these Marys make me remember the two generations of Mary Byfields.

Structurally, the novel demands someone more natural and authentic to set against the faked signatures and femininity of the Snows and Mary Mason. This is Madeline Staveley, the perfect girl, and Felix wins her. Just as Mary Snow the wood engraver's daughter – an undesirable bride – is contrasted with Madeline Staveley as the perfect match, so Mary Mason's faked signatures are contrasted to the true signature of Madeline. This is Madeline's response to Felix's marriage proposal: 'very slowly she raised her little hand and allowed her soft slight fingers to rest upon his open palm. It was as though she thus affixed her legal signature and seal to the deed of gift' (*OF*, Vol. 2, p. 268). Madeline's signature is true because it's unwritten (there is a fantasy about signature and presence in this novel that anticipates Derrida's 'Signature, Event, Context').

When engravers produce the lines of someone else's signature – their employer's, a designer's, or one of the many reproduced signatures fashionable in nineteenth-century books and periodicals (Figure 9) – of course it isn't a crime, not even when they're exploiting it for money. Dalziel illustrated both Trollope and Dickens, and then in 1884, after the writers had died, started producing their signatures commercially, for example making adverts for Brandauer & Co fountain pens (Figure 10).

## 15.

Ironically, one area of a block in which an engraver had relative freedom was in producing the signature 'Dalziel Sc' ('Sc' stands for 'sculpt'). All broadly confirm to the distinctive flourish that marked the firm, but close examination reveals startling differences, even within a single book. Look at Figure 11, all for the Household edition of Dickens's *Bleak House*; some are spidery, some



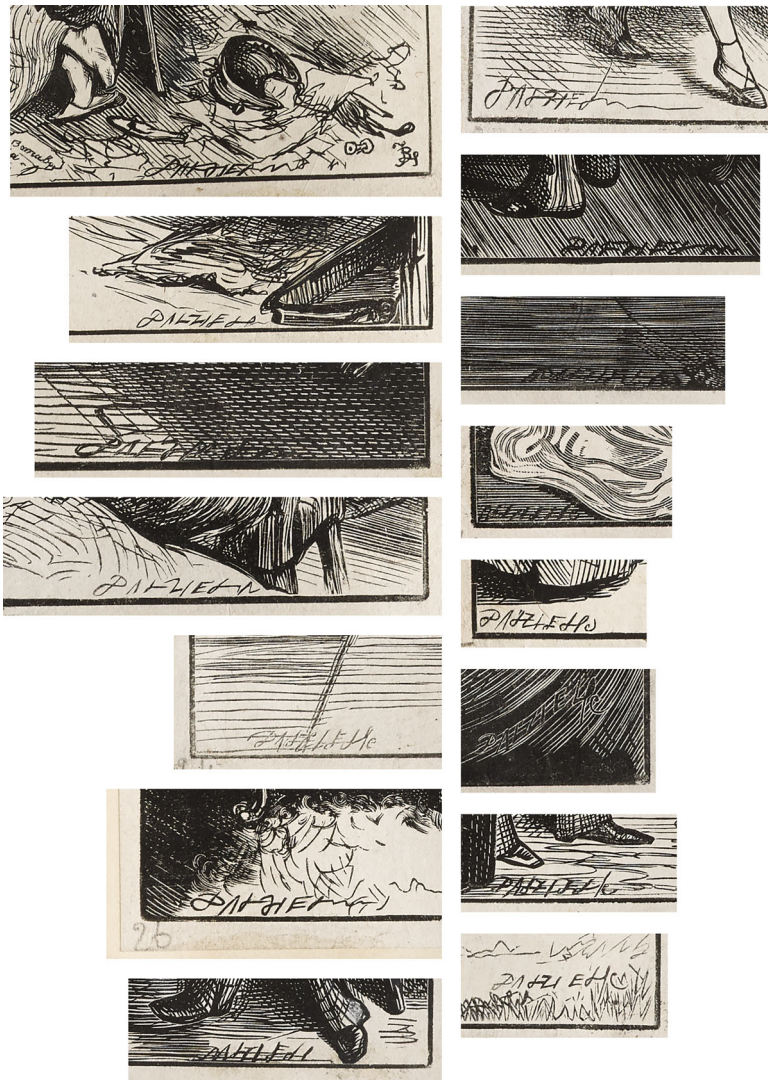
**Figure 9.** Dalziel, album page with miscellaneous signatures, including many after artists. Dalziel Archive Vol. 23 (1867), British Museum reg. no. 1913,0415.184, print nos. 868-99. By permission of the Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved. © Sylph Editions, 2016

angular, some open, some bold and graphic. They suggest different voices, Often the signature gets mangled; sometimes this happens to the extent of illegibility, and it's fascinating to speculate on any motivations behind such carelessness.





**Figure 10.** Dalziel, Brandauer pen advertisements, with signatures of Dickens, Trollope and Sala. Dalziel Archive Vol. 43 (1884), British Museum reg. no. 1913,0415.204, print nos. 505, 515-6. By permission of the Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved. © Sylph Editions, 2016.



**Figure 11.** Dalziel, various engravers' signatures, all from illustrations after Frederick Barnard for Charles Dickens, *Bleak House*, Household Edition (London: Chapman and Hall, 1873). Dalziel Archive Vols. 30 and 31 (1872-3), British Museum reg. nos. 1913,0415.191-2, print nos. 128-60, 50-77. By permission of the Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved. © Sylph Editions, 2016.

Figure 12 is an unidentified proof by Dalziel, probably designed by the draughtsman in the family, Thomas Dalziel. There is no evidence of the engraver, but extraordinarily, it includes two 'Dalziel' signatures, side by side (see bottom right). They were clearly made by different hands. The upper signature has a more elongated, elegant 'D', and more pronounced looping in the 'D' and the 'S'. It also uses more acute angles in all the



**Figure 12.** Dalziel, unidentified illustration. Dalziel Archive Vol. 7 (1855), British Museum reg. no. 1913,0415.169, print no. 422. By permission of the Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved. © Sylph Editions, 2016.

letters, with a greater tendency to upward-sloping strokes. For instance, see the sharp shapes of the ‘Z’ and the second ‘L’; in both cases the lower examples are more open and boxy. The letters in the upper signature are better spaced, and have been more carefully engraved, so the lines print evenly. Given the way hierarchical specialisms dictated who did what on a block, we can speculate that the upper ‘Dalziel’ is the signature of a more experienced engraver who might have created the druidic figure and his harp, and perhaps the fire and tree trunk, whereas the lower ‘Dalziel’ may be the signature of the engraver of the foliage, or background tint work. In all probability, this double signature was spotted and one of them removed at the proofing stage. But the two signatures remain here as visual evidence of the multiple artist that was Dalziel.

In a profound way, Dalziel actually did become the name of the artists who worked for the firm, and the clues about their unique signatures are one of the only ways of remembering the distinctive delineations that make up the firm’s oeuvre. Simultaneously, we must recognise the oddness and personal effacement for any creative artist in constantly signing their work with someone else’s name.

Given the pencilled annotations in the Dalziel Archive with particular engravers’ names, it would be fantastic to be able to identify particular styles of signature with particular artists. For instance, where Byfield signs ‘Dalziel’, we get a strongly curving version, with bold, rounding loops.<sup>24</sup> Unfortunately, the number of prints with an engraver’s name written on is

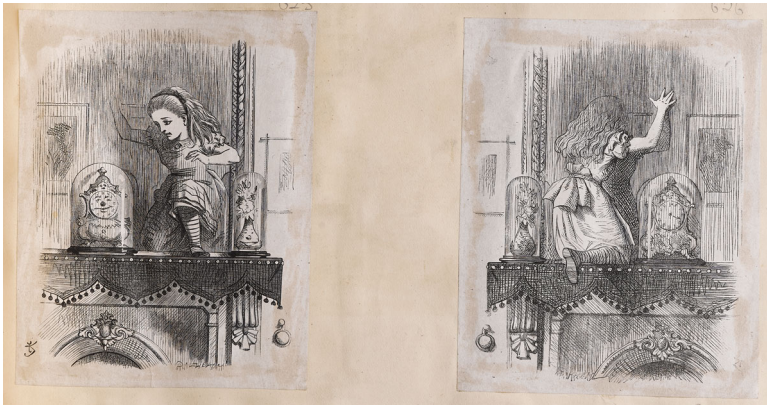
only a tiny proportion of the Dalziel Archive (a minority of prints from the 1870s and 1880s, when the medium was starting to lose its commercial stronghold). And among these, there are relatively few ‘Dalziel’ signatures; the majority are the banal, simple illustrations of the sort that Dalziel *never* signed. I wonder whether the use of penciled names is connected with a system of freelancing, especially since costs or hours are sometimes given too, and it makes sense that the least complex images would be sent out. But this is speculation, and the evidence is sporadic and contradictory. Dalziel’s annotation practices were by no means consistent. Intellectually, the archive’s refusal to restitute named bodies to each signature may be productive, reminiscent of literary theory’s long project, as Peggy Kamuf puts it, ‘to *unnerve* discourses about textual authorship, to unsettle the institution of the author’s rights to some property [...]. There is indeed something unnerving about a signature that remains to return to no one’.<sup>25</sup>

## 16.

Dalziel often left album pages unannotated, but sometimes a name or heading is used. The proofs to *Through the Looking-Glass* are titled with Dodgson’s first name for his book, ‘Behind the Looking Glass’. The looking glass is an important symbol for the wood engraver, since everything on the block must be in reverse, a mirror image of the printed picture. Printmakers inhabit a world in which writing and pictures all go backwards (not unlike the backwards ‘Looking-glass book’ that Alice finds in the novel).<sup>26</sup>

The title *Through the Looking-Glass* suggests a fantasy world *outside* actual space, entered through the mirror. In comparison, *Behind the Looking Glass* sounds prosaic, promising to reveal the plain wooden backing that supports the mirror. To look *behind* the looking glass is not to enter a dream, but to examine the dusty infrastructure that supports it. *Behind the Looking Glass* there is the factory and woodblocks of Dalziel.

Let us consider the iconic images of Alice as she enters the glass and is seen from both sides of it (Figure 13). In the mirrored world, all is reversed, not only Alice and the furniture, but even Tenniel’s monogram, which is presented as a mirror image and flipped over to the opposite side of the block (one of the monograms is very lightly printed on the proof, but both are clearly visible in published versions). This playful detail of inverting the signature would have been a joke for all involved in illustration; while this has obviously been done deliberately, it is extremely common to see blocks in which the signature is reversed accidentally (photographic evidence of drawings on woodblocks suggests that it was the designer’s responsibility to reverse their own signature in preparation for engraving, and sometimes they just did not bother).<sup>27</sup> Dalziel follows the logic of Tenniel’s looking glass pairing to some extent, in that the *position* of their signature is mirrored on the block.



**Figure 13.** Dalziel after John Tenniel, illustration for Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking Glass* (London: Macmillan, 1871). Dalziel Archive Vol. 28 (1871), British Museum reg. no. 1913,0415.189, print nos 625- 626. By permission of the Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved. © Sylph Editions, 2016.

But the actual letters are not mirrored, as Tenniel's are. Whether deliberate or careless, this is an interesting refusal on the part of the engraver to enter into the reversing spirit of the block.

What we *do* see in the proofs is a brilliant representation of the looking glass world as more vibrant than the ordinary one, not just in details such as the sudden anthropomorphisation of the vase, clock and fireplace, but in the use of bolder lines and more contrast. The latter distinction is far more visible in the hand-printed burnished proofs than it is in the published book; the electrotyping process and commercial printing make the lines more uniform in the book. Curiously, whereas published editions naturally order the two illustrations to show the actual world first, and the looking-glass world second, Dalziel's album reverses this. Again, this may simply be a mistake or a lack of interest in following narrative (the latter, very significant itself here). But the revised narrative in the album, whether intentionally or not, re-works the order to privilege the wood engraver's point of view. For the wood engraver, an image always begins, on the block, with the looking-glass version. A reversed reality is how every published picture starts, it is only after the engraving is finished and printed that the normal orientation of the world is re-established.

## 17.

Dalziel's bizarrely disembodied signature goes hand in hand with an approach to character that empties it of signification, in favour of formal aspects. I'm using the word 'character' with three *OED* definitions in mind:

Definition 3a: 'A member of a set of symbols used in writing or printing ...'.

Definition 4b: 'A particular person's style of handwriting'.

Definition 14: 'A person portrayed in a work of fiction, a drama, a film, a comic strip, etc.'

In various ways, 'character' disappeared from line in the wood engraver's art. Many proofs survive that have marginal annotations, the designer's instructions for improving the print. These annotations discuss narrative images in a way that is impersonal and clinical. They refer to things like 'nostril', 'the figure', 'the sole of the foot', 'the old man', etc. – not to anything like a literary character. One example is striking; in Tenniel's annotations to another set of proofs of *Through the Looking-Glass* (in the Morgan Library, New York), he repeatedly refers to the figure of Alice as 'the child'.<sup>28</sup> This was in 1871, by which time Carroll's *Alice* was already a huge cultural hit, inspiring multiple imitations. Tenniel and Dalziel had collaborated on the first set of images in 1865, and here they were six years later, making the sequel. No-one involved could fail to be familiar with Alice (though one can imagine engravers of other books not knowing the stories or characters). So why did Tenniel write 'the child'? Why not 'Alice' or even 'A' – these were informal notes – which is shorter and quicker? To me, this speaks to a way of looking and working which wood engraving embraces, a method that rejects character, name and narrative for form.

A different example (this time taking character as symbols used in writing or printing) is in a dull illustration after James Abbott Pasquier, of 'Ben and Bessie going to Church', for Emma Marshall's *Happy Days at Fernbank* (1861, [Figure 14](#)). If you examine the bottom right corner you will see, within the frame of the image, some reverse writing: 'P. 137'. Though printed, the lines capture someone's informal handwriting. To anyone familiar with conventions of Victorian books, it is obvious these characters were not meant to be engraved. The designer probably wrote the page number in pencil as a reference, so the engravers knew where this belonged in the book. Any page references that were printed with wood-engraved illustrations were always added outside the frame in letterpress. We can interpret the mistake as careless engraving of a mediocre image. But it's also more than that. Wood engravers looked at lines, shapes, textures and tones for their own sake, considering how to re-create them in wood, in print. This relates to another practice wood engravers' offices, what Gerry Beegan calls the 'fragmentation' of the medium, when a single, drawn block was cut into several pieces and distributed to different engravers, either to meet a short deadline or to create a larger picture than the small pieces of boxwood allowed.<sup>29</sup> For the working engraver, it could mean that sometimes, their contribution to a realist, narrative-based art was small blocks with startling line-work but little pictorial meaning.



**Figure 14.** Dalziel after James Abbott Pasquier, 'Ben and Bessie going to Church', for Emma Marshall, *The Happy Days at Fernbank: a story for Little Girls* (London: James Hogg, 1861). Dalziel Archive Vol. 14 (1861), British Museum reg. no. 1913,0415.175, print no. 657. By permission of the Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved. © Sylph Editions, 2016.

**18.**

The status of the facsimile wood engraver in Victorian culture and later historiography has much to do with their relationship to the signature and to narrative composition. Their work goes against a mainstream visual culture invested in the following: in myths of the authority of singular artistic producers; in a belief in the importance of names and identifiable personalities in art; in autographic expression; and in a nineteenth-century prioritisation of composition over formal or material aspects of work. If the signature is the ultimate self portrait in western culture, one that makes aesthetic *and* legal claims, the wood engraver's signature is always a self portrait of the other, and this extends to all the lines they made. Nevertheless, these artists were responsible for creating thousands of images that shaped their culture and continue to shape ours.

Researching, reconstructing and imagining the way engravers worked is one way of acknowledging this debt and their work. It is a method in sympathy with other recent research that investigates collaborative and corporate authorship, for example, in sculpture, photography and periodical writing.<sup>30</sup> One thing that for me is distinct and irreducible about wood engraving is the way that – during the great historical moment of narrative, realist and figurative art – it produced superb artists whose labour was *all* about line and abstraction.

The facsimile system produced many artists who were not required to go out and witness what they portrayed; instead, their continual labour was to be in the office, at the table – at the block. Supposedly they were mechanical artists, puppets for other artists whose creative gestures they realised. This paper acknowledges, explores and contests the way such that role has been defined. To end, I want to offer some speculation about the other side of print culture, involving a shift of focus from the printed wood engraving – which could have an audience of tens of thousands – to the woodblock, whose tiny audience was limited to engravers themselves and others who made, printed and published them in books and periodicals.

Woodblocks are more than mere matrices for a burgeoning public print culture. What if, instead of considering an illustration in relation to a narrative, a printed page, book or periodical, or the market (and the political and social realities it exploited), we think of the engraver's relation to this visually different, more abstract world? Take one Dalziel illustration. The print is a stereotypical patriarchal image illustrating a poem by James Montgomery, 'The World Before the Flood'. Now see how the block looks, in two photographs by Ornan Rotem from Sylph Editions, lit from different angles (Figure 15). In one, the figure is dark, his hands and face engulfed by fog, and sharp rays of brightness dominate the background. In the other, the patriarch glows softly, light emanating from his hands towards the edges of the





**Figure 15.** Dalziel after John Gilbert, *The World Before the Flood*, for James Montgomery, *Poems* (London: Routledge, 1860). British Museum reg. no. 1996,1104.52. By permission of the Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved. © Sylph Editions, 2016.

block. The blocks have intriguing textures that will never be printed. Before being proofed, the colour was golden brown, rather than black. They are dynamic objects, holding multiple shifting images within themselves. Looked at straight on, they give little away. But every oblique angle offers a new picture, as does different lights (best at sunset). This is not a composition for mass readerships or viewers; it's a secret experience of the engravers' and printers' offices. As a work of art, it is a gorgeous off-shoot entirely different from the fantastic commercial illustrations that these artists shaped.

## Notes

1. For an early overview of the Dalziel Archive, see Paul Goldman, 'The Dalziel Brothers and the British Museum', *The Book Collector*, 45 (1996), pp. 341–50. For my catalogue of the Dalziel Archive with many attributions of designers and publications, see Bethan Stevens, 'India-Proofs of Wood-Engravings by the Brothers Dalziel' (British Museum, Collection Online, 2015–2016), at [http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/search.aspx](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/search.aspx), using author or title (in quotation marks) as search term.
2. Wilkie Collins, *After Dark* (London: Smith, Elder & Co, 1856), Vol. 1, p. 23. Hereafter referred to as *AD*.
3. There was a growing technical capability to photographically transfer drawings to blocks, especially from the 60s and 70s onwards, but results were mixed and difficult to handle; for practical purposes, drawing on the block continued to be the norm until around 1880.

4. For one example of many, see William Holman Hunt, 'Godiva', photographic reproduction of a drawing on a woodblock, Harold Hartley Collection, Boston Museum of Fine Arts (Accession number 55.2038). Note especially the light lines in the scene outside the window, which cannot appear this way in the printed version.
5. Antony Griffiths, *The Print Before Photography: An Introduction to European Printmaking 1550–1820* (London: British Museum Press, 2016), pp. 464–5.
6. John Jackson and William Andrew Chatto, *Treatise on Wood Engraving, Historical and Practical* (London: Charles Knight, 1839), p. 635. This pictorial initial opens the chapter that teaches the practice of wood engraving.
7. Walter Crane, *An Artist's Reminiscences* (London: Methuen, 1907), p. 48.
8. Jackson and Chatto, *Treatise on Wood Engraving*, p. 651.
9. Katherine Jex-Blake (trans.), *The Elder Pliny's Chapters on the History of Art* (London: Macmillan, 1896), p. 123.
10. John Bostock and H T Riley (trans.), *The Natural History of Pliny* (London: Bohn, 1857), Vol. 6, p. 257.
11. There are several excellent analyses of this landmark book. See for instance Julia Thomas, *Pictorial Victorians: The Inscription of Values in Word and Image* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2004), pp. 53–64; Lorraine Janzen Kooistra, *Poetry Pictures and Popular Publishing: The Illustrated Gift Book and Victorian Visual Culture* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2011), pp. 34–78.
12. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, letter to William Bell Scott, February 1857, Princeton University Library. Digitised in Jerome McGann et al. (eds.), *Rossetti Archive*, at [www.rossettiarchive.org](http://www.rossettiarchive.org).
13. See George and Edward Dalziel, *The Brothers Dalziel: A Record* (London: Methuen, 1901).
14. Rossetti, letter to William Allingham, 18 December 1856, The Morgan Library, New York (accession number MA 381.32).
15. See Elizabeth Eiloart, *The Young Squire: Or, Peter and his Friends* (London: Frederick Warne, [1872]), title page.
16. Dalziel after James Godwin, unidentified wood engraving. Dalziel Archive Vol. 13 (1860), British Museum reg. no. 1913,0415.191, print no. 1631.
17. Dalziel, *The Brothers Dalziel*, pp. 343–51.
18. For the biographical information about the Byfields cited here, see census returns and Rodney K Engen, *Dictionary of Victorian Wood Engravers* (Cambridge: Chadwyck Healy, 1985), pp. 39–40.
19. Byfield/Dalziel, unidentified commercial wood engraving, showing a hotel. Dalziel Archive Vol. 36 (1877), British Museum reg. no. 1913,0415.197, print no. 9.
20. See Charles Gould, *Mythical Monsters* (London: W H Allen, 1886), title page.
21. Anthony Trollope, *Orley Farm* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1862), Vol. 1, 148–9. Hereafter referred to as *OF*.
22. Snow is carefully defined *against* upmarket copperplate engravers. He is 'not an artist who receives four or five thousand pounds for engraving the chef-d'œuvre of a modern painter, – but ... a man who executed flourishes on ornamental cards for tradespeople, and assisted in the illustration of circus playbills'. Felix associates with him through 'transactions ... with the press' (*OF*, Vol. 1, pp. 257–8).
23. Dalziel, *The Brothers Dalziel*, p. vi.

24. See, for example, Byfield/Dalziel, illustrations for Charles Gould, *Mythical Monsters* (London: W H Allen, 1886). Dalziel Archive Vol. 42 (1882–3), British Museum reg. no. 1913,0415.203, print nos. 625–6. 823, 827, 844, 848, 850, 852.
25. Peggy Kamuf, *Signature Pieces: On the Institution of Authorship* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1988), p. 14.
26. Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking-Glass, and What Alice found there* (London: Macmillan, 1871), p. 21.
27. For two examples of many where the designer's signature is casually reversed, see an illustration after Phiz (Hablot K Browne), Dalziel Archive Vol. 17 (1863), British Museum reg. no. 1913,0415.178, print no. 405; or, an illustration after Frederick Barnard, Dalziel Archive Vol. 36 (1877), British Museum reg. no. 1913,0415.197, print no. 136.
28. Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking-Glass, and What Alice found there* (1871; London: Macmillan, 1872), extra-illustrated copy with proofs annotated by John Tenniel, The Morgan Library (Accession number PML77537).
29. Gerry Beegan, *The Mass Image: A Social History of Photomechanical Reproduction in Victorian London* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2008), pp. 47–71.
30. See for instance Jordan Bear, *Disillusioned: Victorian Photography and the Discerning Subject* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2015), pp. 80–118; Rachel Sagner Buurma, 'Anonymity, Corporate Authority and the Archive: The Production of Authorship in Late-Victorian England', *Victorian Studies* 50.1 (2007), pp. 15–42. For collaboration in Victorian illustrated periodicals, see Simon Cooke, *Illustrated Periodicals of the 1860s: Contexts & Collaborations* (London: British Library, 2010).

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