

**From *La Méduse* to the *Titanic*:  
Géricault's *Raft* in Journalistic Illustration up to 1912  
Tom Gretton**

This essay connects journalistic illustrations of the *Titanic* disaster with Théodore Géricault's 1819 painting, *The Raft of the Medusa*. It finds echoes of the form and scenography of the painting in the way that the events of that night off the Grand Banks were visualized in weekly illustrated magazines published in London, and argues that such echoes contributed to the truth effects that were achieved. The essay begins by setting the scene in terms of the technical conditions under which journalistic pictures were made and published when the *Titanic* sank, and then it discusses some of the ways in which the *Raft of the Medusa* was referenced and recycled in English art and magazine illustration in the years between 1819 and 1912.

In 1912 the technologies of picture-making in magazines of the *Illustrated London News* (*ILN*) genre faced both backwards, towards reliance on the work of artists to visualize the news, and forwards, towards a world in which the photograph came to monopolize the visual reporting of every sort of news.<sup>1</sup> A generation earlier such magazines had had an enormously powerful cultural role, with something like a monopoly of mass-circulation printed pictures of the news and features sort, aimed at the top end of the market. They had a global reach, both in terms of their circulations and in terms of the way that they shared pictures with each other: the *ILN*, for example, frequently printed pictures that had been published for French magazines such as *L'Illustration* (Fig. 3), and vice versa, while republishing links were also in place between the *Graphic* and *Harper's Weekly* in and after the 1880s. And in 1882, virtually all the pictures that magazines of the *ILN* genre printed had been made through the work of trained artists of one sort or another. In *Realizations: Narrative, Pictorial, and Theatrical Arts in Nineteenth-Century England*, Martin Meisel makes a fecund distinction between 'realization' and 'illustration' as he maps the congruence of fine art and literary ambitions, and sensibilities in theatrical productions and *mises en scène* in Britain in the nineteenth century. The journalist-artists whose work is at the core of this paper were in Meisel's sense 'realizers'. My use of 'scenography' to describe the resource that such realizers found in Géricault's legacy was not consciously derived from his book, but is certainly an example of how cultural producers work by drawing on a resource bank even while they do not reflect on the fact.<sup>2</sup>

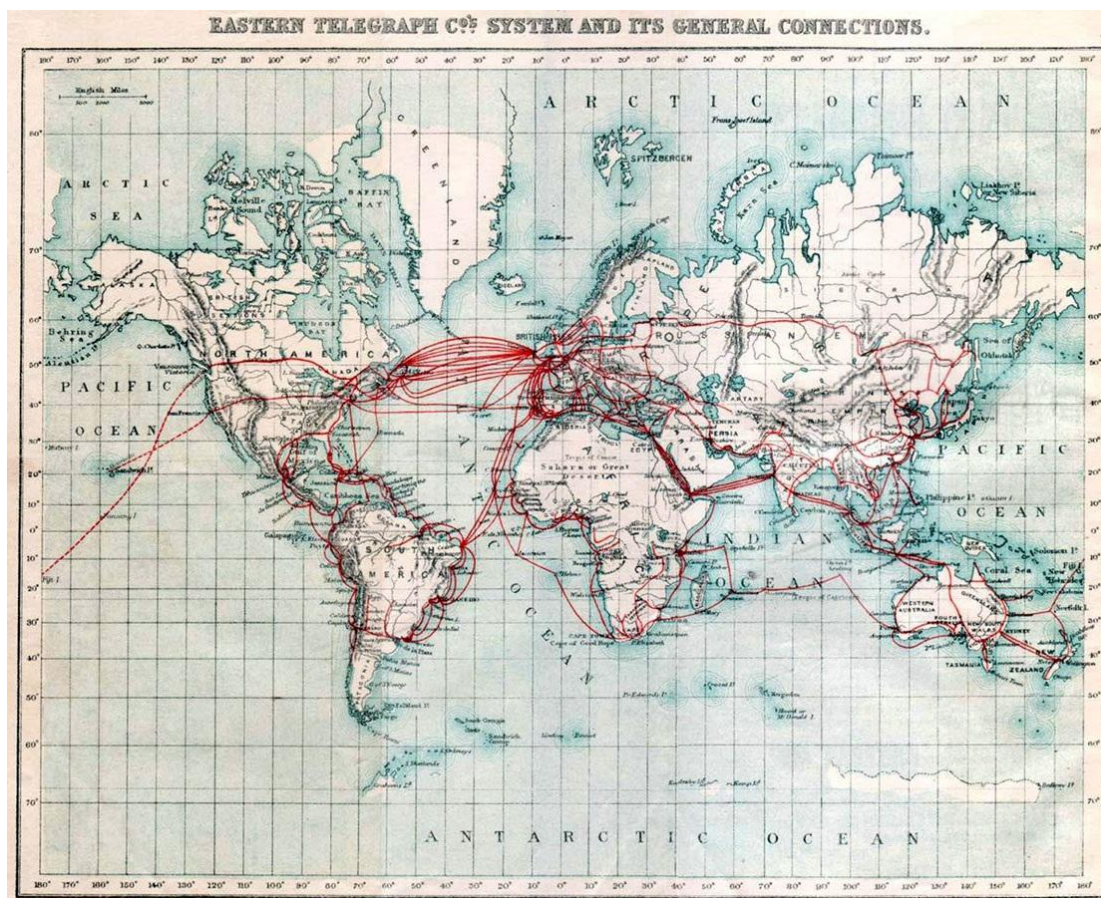
In the first half of the 1880s, the pictures such magazines printed were handmade wood-engravings from artists' pen or wash drawings, or such wood-engravings from photographs, or photomechanical relief line blocks of artists' pen, chalk, or scraper board drawings.<sup>3</sup> By 'photomechanical' I refer to the hybrid process that, in a first phase, exposes a negative onto a sheet of copper or zinc. The sheet has a photosensitive coating which, instead of turning black under the effect of light, turns insoluble, and resistant to acid. The metal plate is washed, so that only the latent acid-resist image survives: that is the 'photo' bit. In the second phase the image is then etched in stages to produce a relief surface that can be printed together with type: that is the 'mechanical' part.<sup>4</sup>

By 1912 the way magazines acquired images and turned them into printing surfaces had changed in several ways. The half-tone screen, an optical-cum-chemical process that turns the continuous tone of a photograph into larger and smaller, but equally black, dots had been in continuous trial-and-error development since the early 1870s, and by the early 1890s had been well enough domesticated for it to become the default technology for the relief-printed reproduction of photographs (whether of cones of light from the 'real world' fixed through a lens, or of studio photographs of paintings and sketches).<sup>5</sup> By 1912 photomechanical half-tone screened versions of photographs of the world-out-there, and of artists' drawings or wash sketches, had found their way into daily newspapers, as well as into weeklies and monthlies, all across the first world. Wood-engraving was making its journey to the technological graveyard and to a post-war resurrection as a graphic artists' medium mostly within the orbit of the private presses.<sup>6</sup>

By 1912 the cultural position of magazines of the *ILN* genre was also transformed from the situation a generation earlier. The market for expensive illustrated weeklies was fragmenting and diversifying under the combined impact of three crucial developments. The first was the seemingly limitless supply of paper that the wood-pulp revolution had brought.<sup>7</sup> The second was the elimination of the skilled handwork bottlenecks both in image capture and in the making of printing surfaces that the photomechanical half-tone screen had brought. The third was the 'domestication' by 1900 of Mergenthaler's linotype machine, which removed that other skill bottleneck, in the composing room.<sup>8</sup> The emergence of paper as an almost-free good had entailed an explosive growth in display advertising, so that by 1900 advertising agencies were increasingly looking for niche readerships for their clients' products, and finding them in a wide range of new magazines and magazine types: in newly established sporting magazines, in the proliferating range of

women's magazines, theatre magazines, magazines about country life, about contemporary art, and the collecting and celebration of second-hand works of art. The impact of this market fragmentation on magazines of the *ILN* genre was severe. The *Titanic* thus sank as the sun set on one sort of illustrated journalism, but before the new world of photojournalism, as exemplified in *Life* or the *Picture Post*, had had time to develop its own truth claims, reality effects, and aesthetic conventions.

Thus in 1912 picture editors presenting, and picture consumers looking at, pictures of events were still operating in a visual culture defined by the resources and conventions of hand-originated and handmade illustration/realization.<sup>9</sup> They were also still living in a world where news travelled at electric speeds, pictures only as fast as the steamship or the railway. Until the global telegraphic system could transmit pictures effectively over thousands of kilometres, the world, which for a generation had been a global village for short news texts of the sort that were sent by telegraph, was still a set of discrete information communities for news pictures. Two maps will make the point. The first shows the global network of telegraph lines directly accessible in 1901 by the London-based Eastern Telegraph Company (*Fig. 1*). Through that network and its feeder links,



*Fig. 1: 'Eastern Telegraph Company's System and its General Connections', A.B.C. Telegraphic Code (London: Eden Fisher, 1901). Wikimedia Commons.*

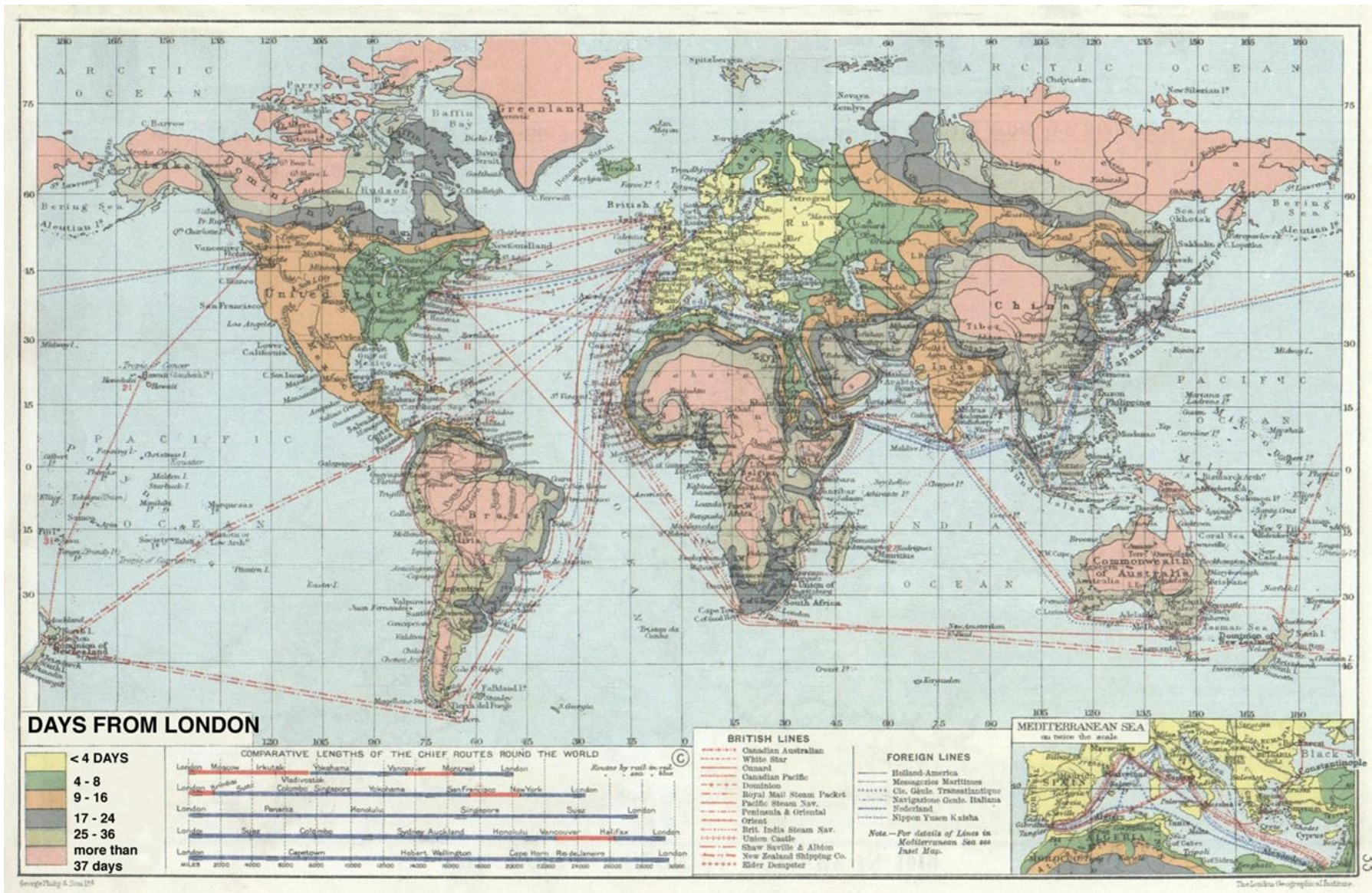


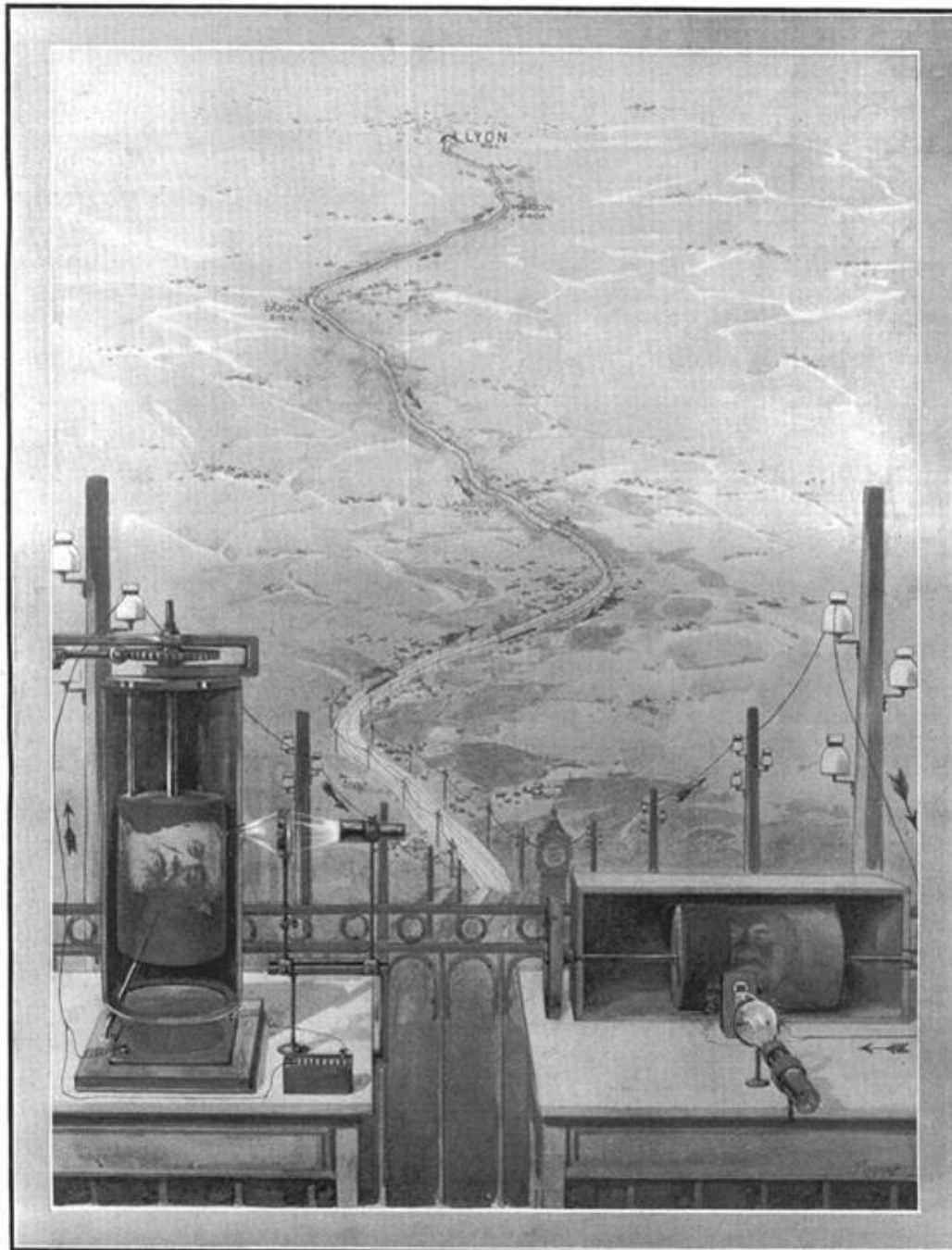
Fig. 2: 'The World: Principal Steamship Lines and Isochronic Chart', *The Peoples' Atlas* (London: George Philip for the London Geographical Institute, 1920). Adapted by Tom Gretton.

short messages could be sent around the world in minutes. The second is an isochronic map of the world, showing fastest scheduled journeys, for people and thus for pictures, from London in 1920: the United States out to Minneapolis or New Orleans is in the four- to eight-day band; Tibet, the heart of Africa, much of northern Australia, and the Empty Quarter of the Arabian peninsula are all at least seven weeks away from Charing Cross (*Fig. 2*). Pictures from such places (indeed, from every place) had to make their journeys to editorial desks in London on real pieces of paper, glass, or celluloid. The first optically scanned photographs had been transmitted down telegraph wires over ‘national’ distances in 1906 (*Fig. 3*). However, no transoceanic cable services for pictures were available until after the First World War, and no wireless services until 1926; Figure 4 gives some idea of the technological limitations of long-distance radio transmission of images even then: the degraded picture (below) had taken an hour and three minutes to transmit. In 1912, magazines of the *ILN* genre were thus well used to coping with the two-speed circulation of news and pictures in their global market; used to delays of weeks or even months before a news story could be given its visual representation; used to thinking of their visualization work as summative and commemorative. During the Boer War, for example, more than eight weeks might pass before front-line sketches or photographs could be turned into front-page pictures, as in this Parisian front page from 31 March 1900 showing British dead in the aftermath of the defeat at Spion Kop on 24 January, news of which calamity broke in London on 26 January (*Fig. 5*). This picture originates in what must have been a terse and powerful photograph, its terseness and its power probably heightened in its reinterpretation as a wood-engraving.

Editors could not normally expect sensational iconography and imposing composition to be delivered by photography. It was the job of art, the job of the magazines’ artists and art editors, to reanimate schematic sketches and callow snapshots, as well as stories well past their front-page sell-by date. The sinking of the *Titanic* provides an instance of this process at work. This essay frames the problem not so much in terms of the management, prolongation, and reanimation of news-sensation, as in terms of the production and reproduction of myth, and of the ways in which representations of the unknown are received as true. It considers the use made to these ends of Géricault’s *Raft of the Medusa* (*Fig. 6*), as it was interpreted and redeployed for other catastrophes and other invocations of hope and despair at sea. The paper will examine the way that reporting of the *Titanic* disaster followed the practice of other magazine illustrators

THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS, Feb. 9, 1907.—215

A CONCLUSIVE EXPERIMENT: THERE AND BACK OVER 640 MILES.



M. FALLIÈRES' PORTRAIT SENT FROM "L'ILLUSTRATION" OFFICE IN PARIS TO LYONS, AND RECEIVED AGAIN IN THE SAME ROOM. The diagram illustrates the method adopted by "L'Illustration" to test the capabilities of Professor Kerr's instrument for telegraphing photographs. Both the transmitter and the receiver were removed in "L'Illustration" office, and the electric circuit was from Paris to Lyons and back. On the left is the transmitter, showing the positive photograph in process of transmission. On the right is the receiver, showing the reception of a negative impression on the film. The film is supposed to be slowly developed.

Fig. 3: 'A Conclusive Experiment: There and Back over 640 Miles', *Illustrated London News*, 9 February 1907, p. 215. Wash drawing by Joyet. Photomechanical half-tone relief block (republished from *L'Illustration*). Kensington and Chelsea Public Libraries.

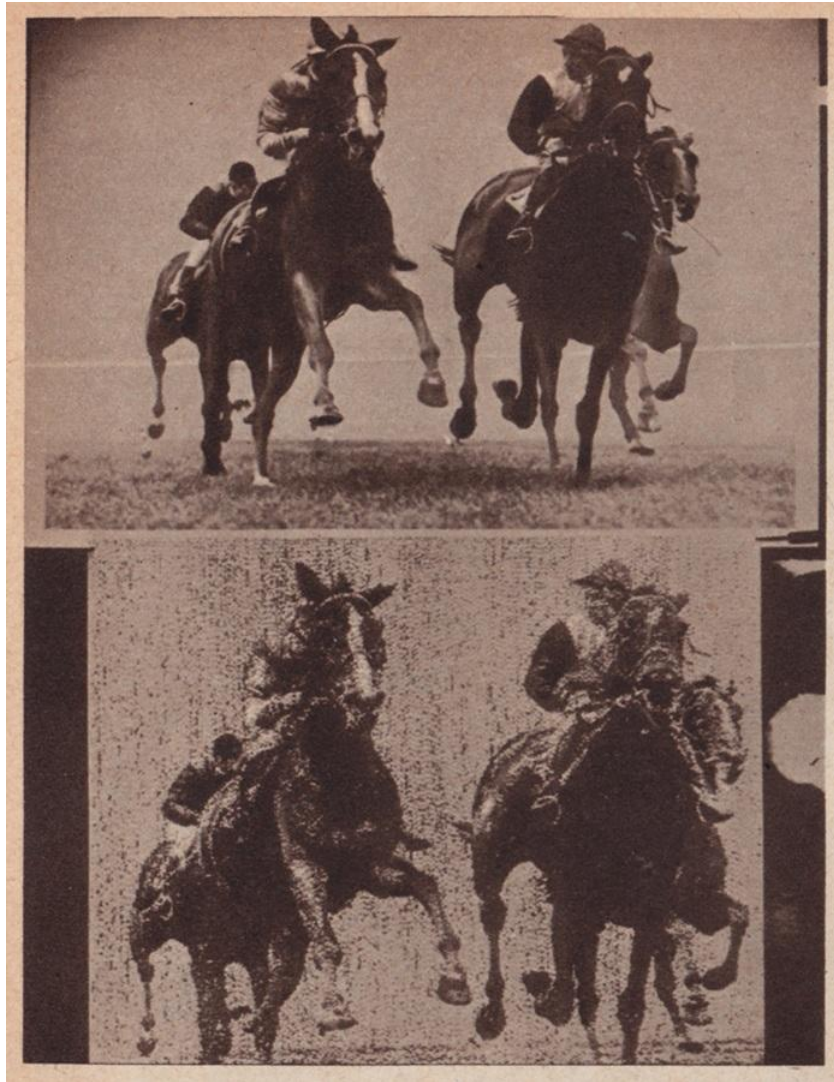


Fig. 4: 'Photography by Wireless', *The Pageant of the Century* (London: Odhams Press, [1934]), p. 544. Photogravure. © AlphaPress, private collection.



LA GUERRE AU TRANSVAAL. — CHAMP DE BATAILLE DE SPIONKOP. — UNE TRANCHÉE DE CADAVRES ANGLAIS. — (Photographie Van Houpen.)

Fig. 5: 'La guerre au Transvaal — Champ de bataille de Spionkop. — Une tranchée de cadavres anglais. — (Photographie Van Houpen)', *Le Monde Illustré*, 31 March 1900. Wood-engraving by H. Dochy. British Library F23 NPL.

making use of the compositional and narrative schema offered by Géricault's painting.<sup>10</sup> It will place the visual reporting of oceanic sinkings and rescues in a more general discussion of the ways, and the extent to which, photographic reporting was and was not replacing the sort of 'realizations' that artists had, for seventy years by 1912, been making for the illustrated magazines.

The paper discusses the *Raft of the Medusa*, both as a resource for picture-makers and as a dimension of meaning available to the interpretative communities served and structured by news magazines of the *ILN* genre, in the generation before the *Titanic* sank. Standard histories of photography tend to assume that with the development in the 1880s of fast dry-plate negatives, and by 1890 of roll film, the camera had become an easy image-capture technology to use, and therefore swiftly displaced the sketchbook as the primary tool of visual journalism. In fact handmade illustration survived as a reporting tool until the First World War and beyond, for a range of subjects. The introduction of photographs into journalistic illustration depended on the development of the half-tone screen. That technology began to be a reliable process among specialist printers using special presses and paper in the second half of the 1880s. Its generalized uptake had to wait for accurate, robust, and easy-to-use optical screens to come on to the world market; the Philadelphia firm of Max Levy made that breakthrough in 1893.<sup>11</sup> Even then, however, it took a while for photographs from the real world to supplant wash, chalk, and pen drawings as the preferred originals from which to reproduce pictures via the new technology. The reasons for that technological and cultural conservatism are complicated; but one, certainly, was that handmade pen or wash drawings could identify key details, synthesize elements from a range of sketches and library pictures, and make narrative and symbolizing points much more succinctly and effectively, and thus command and direct the attention and imagination of the viewer more strongly than a photograph could (it seemed then) ever hope to do.

This communicative competence is evident on almost any page of any such journal around 1900. A centrefold picture from the *ILN* of the aftermath of the sinking of the *Titanic*, as survivors are met stepping off the *Carpathia* in New York, exemplifies it (Fig. 7). The image has strong compositional movement. From the static left-hand edge of the picture, a slew of humans, and of Human Interest, spills out, pushing towards the right-hand side. In the left background, through a gap in the wall of the pier building, we see the tunnel-like gangway, supported by a yoke from a crane, emerging from the dark;



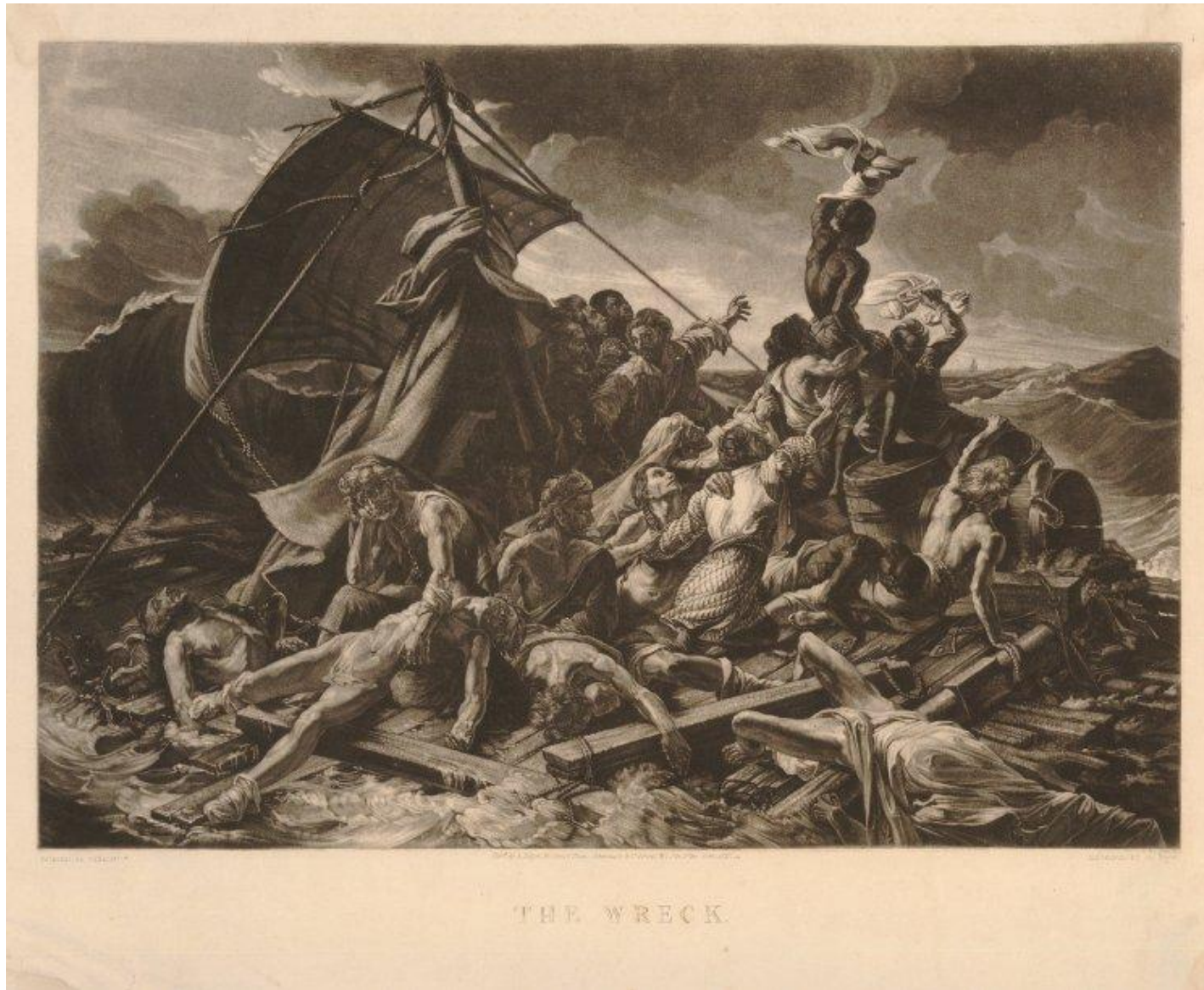


Fig. 6: J. Egan, *The Wreck*, 1832 (this state published by S. Hollyer, London, 1837), after Théodore Géricault, *Raft of the Medusa* (1819). Mezzotint. © Trustees of the British Museum.

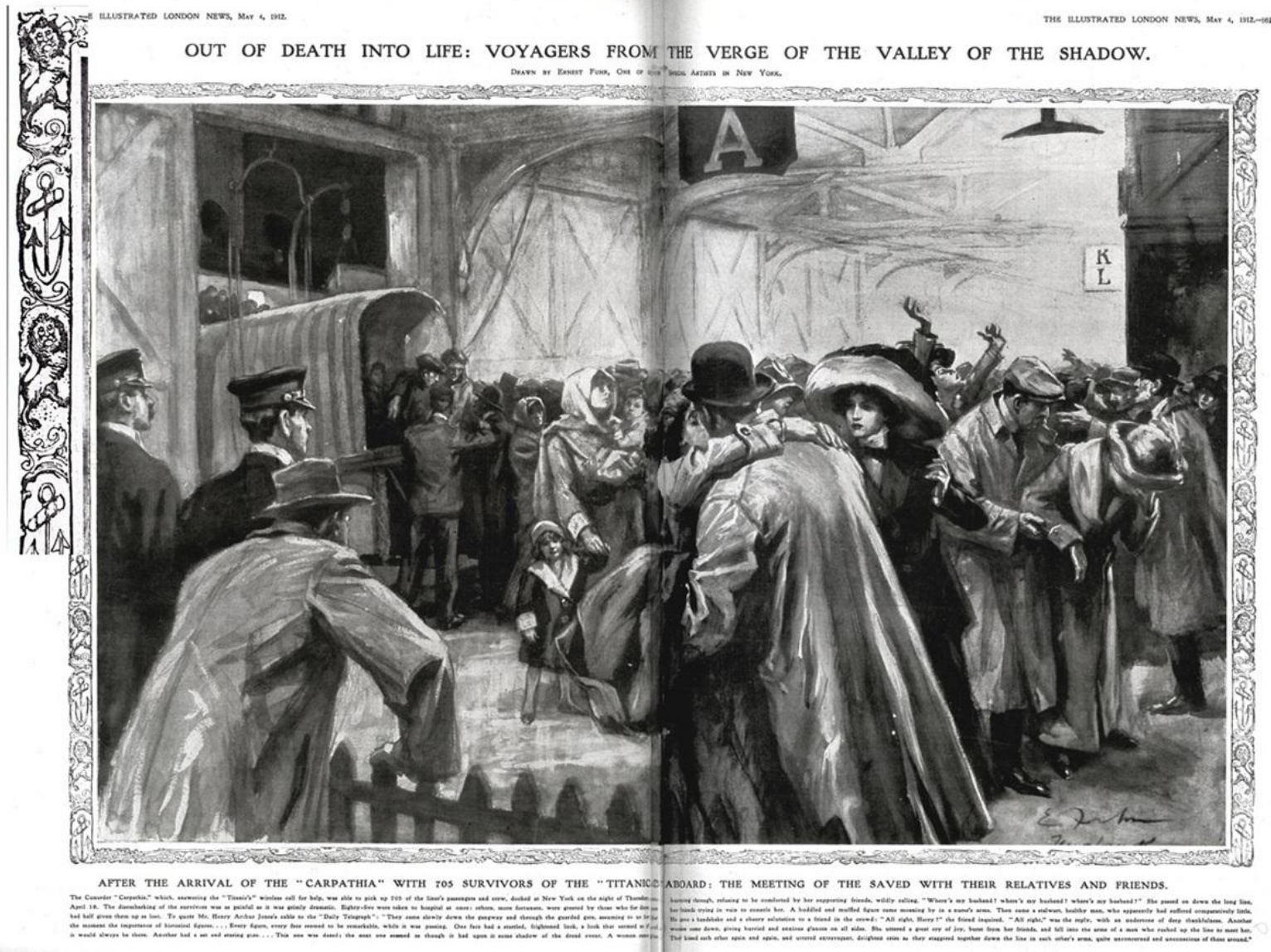


Fig. 7: 'Out of death into life. Voyagers from the verge of the valley of the shadow. Drawn by Ernest Fuhr' (with enlarged detail of scratchboard frame design), *Illustrated London News*, 4 May 1912, pp. 668–69. Photomechanical half-tone screened relief block. Kensington and Chelsea Public Libraries.

alongside that we glimpse a davit and the prow of a lifeboat in an echo of the *Titanic*'s agony. This little graphic passage acts as a memento mori, an awareness that is also evoked in the picture's emotive caption. Ernest Fuhr, the artist of the wash drawing, has arranged the scene so that from the centre-middle ground towards the right of the image we can read a set of narratives: some completed; some opened but not yet closed; some, the viewer must suppose, uncloseable except through a life lived in bereavement. A couple embraces, she returned alive to him. Behind them a mother, cloaked like the Virgin Mary, and her two children walk towards a future without a husband or a father. A handsome girl in a stylish hat searches anxiously through the waiting crowd. Looking forward out of the picture space, she interpellates us as part of that crowd. Behind her a middle-aged man supports an elderly woman weighed down by her loss. Behind his stooping figure another woman raises her hands and rushes towards a man in a bowler hat: we do not know whether they meet in grief or joy. Behind them there is another dark void, much more ambiguous than the entry-void on the left. Above it there is a wooden structure with a Z-shaped diagonal brace. In the left foreground two officials, figures of authority rather than actors in the drama, close the side of the composition, and a tense man looks over the picket fence, so that his unseen but anxious gaze and the evidently anxious look on the handsome young woman can be understood to meet each other, between them framing the reunited couple and the ever-sundered family. The caption has already told us that we live in the valley of the shadow of death; it may not be by accident, therefore, that this scene of human interest, of life and death, unfolds in a space beneath an A and a Z, an alpha and an omega.

The composition is nothing special for the pages of a magazine of the *ILN* genre at the time; it is no more than workmanlike in its engaging manipulations. It manages the relationship between staginess and snapshot quality with competence; it knows what sorts of effects and gratifications can be delivered, and how to make a picture deliver them through compositional devices, tropes that encapsulate or hint at narratives, and 'real allegories'.<sup>12</sup> In its orchestration of so many themes of human drama and so rich a set of allegorical harmonics, it does work that photography could never hope to do except through fantastic good luck, or a montage. Such sophisticated but ready-to-use power over eyes and heartstrings is hard to give up, even in a context in which 'real news' photographs were available, sent back to Europe on fast liners steering more southerly courses than had the *Titanic*.

The *Titanic* ran into that iceberg because of the refusal of her captain to take account of a known danger. One thousand five hundred and fourteen people died when she sank, at least in part because officers and crew were both incompetent and obsessed by status, so that they protected those they thought important and let lower ranks and settler classes fend for themselves. I put the matter thus crassly to draw the parallel with the affair of the French frigate *La Méduse*. Ninety-six years earlier, in July 1816, on a voyage to re-establish French colonial rule in Senegal, that ship had run aground on a shoal off the coast of Mauritania, because her incompetent captain would not steer clear of a known danger. Once aground, lower ranks and settler classes received short shrift. The senior naval and military officers and the richer passengers all had places in the boats. The raft, made from the ship's store of replacement timber, was loaded almost entirely with 'other ranks'. One hundred and forty-five men and one woman crowded onto it. This group included a score of sailors and a dozen settlers, but most were ordinary soldiers. Seventeen sailors decided to wait for rescue on the *Méduse* herself. After the boats cut the raft's tow ropes on the first day of the journey to the coast, fifty kilometres away, those on board did not have much food or water or power of locomotion. There were mutinies, murders, cannibalism, and plenty of deaths from thirst. When the survivors were rescued, a dozen days later, only fifteen people remained alive; five of these died soon afterwards.

It seems to me not impossible that the parallel with the *Raft of the Medusa* was in the minds of many who struggled to come to terms with the scandalous as well as tragic loss of the *Titanic*; but I cannot know that, and do not wish to argue it. What I want to do is to show the fertility and persistence of Géricault's painting in the bank of representational resources available to journalistic illustrators in London in the latter third of those ninety-six years; to consider the relationship between borrowing and the involuntary echoing of a compositional theme, and the nature and limits of the intertextuality that art history conventionally calls 'influence'.<sup>13</sup>

The ocean-going wooden sailing ship, which maintained a dominant position in world trade into the 1890s, was no doubt 'the most dangerous vehicle ever regularly used by man'.<sup>14</sup> Steam-driven iron- or steel-hulled ships had come to dominate some specialized passenger and mail-service routes, including the north Atlantic, well before that date, but the continued reliance of world trade on sail meant that right through the nineteenth century ships and sailors continued to be lost in horrifying numbers. Though only a small fraction of the total number of losses had much news value beyond Lloyd's,

journalistic illustrators had plenty of opportunity to make pictures of ships sinking, ships burnt, ships aground on reef or shoal or shore, and perhaps particularly of (statistically rare) rescues from any of these. It took some sort of hook for such an event to make it to the pages of magazines of the *ILN* genre. Normally that required that the calamity should have happened to a steam-driven passenger ship, probably with home-country owners, and that the survivors should be rescued at sea. These criteria explain the magazine's interest on our behalf, but they do not give any particular distinctiveness to the scene to be represented. Two topoi emerged: the scene of a boat and/or people and wreckage close to a ship in the process of plunging beneath the waves (*Figs. 8 and 9*); and the scene of a crowded and desperate collection of humans on a raft or in a small boat, converging in the vast ocean with a bigger boat and rescue: the scene with which the rest of this essay is concerned.

Though journalistic illustrators, like poets, sometimes got shipwrecked, they very seldom managed to keep their pencils sharp and their paper dry, let alone their attention from wandering, while that was happening; so they did not tend to produce sketches *sur le motif*. Thus even 'eyewitness' pictures drawn by participants were *ex post facto* visualizations; the same goes for artists' renderings of eyewitnesses' verbal accounts such as those that populated the pages of the *ILN* genre in April and May 1912. That fact reminds us that journalistic illustrators of news stories, perhaps particularly of sensational stories, work in the same way as all artists always do. Maritime disaster illustrators, just like painters whose pictures have landed in the Louvre or the National Gallery, always made their pictures up. Illustrators and easel painters had to make the same sorts of decisions about the relation between fore, middle, and background, about where to put the horizon, about compositional masses and narrative impetus; they all used the same toolbox of available genres, handed-down modes, tropes, and models. Just like any trained easel painter, maritime disaster realizers for the press had to decide how they would use the opportunity of figure drawing, and about how much of history painting's conventions they would let flow over into marine painting and its formulae.

In this, they were working in just the way that painters always worked: picking up a compositional device here, noticing and copying an arrangement of figures there, making paintings that contain, at the very least, elements of homage. Géricault had not worked in a different way. As an academically trained artist with a visit to Rome already under his belt, he had an overflowing reference book to work with: Michelangelo's *Battle*

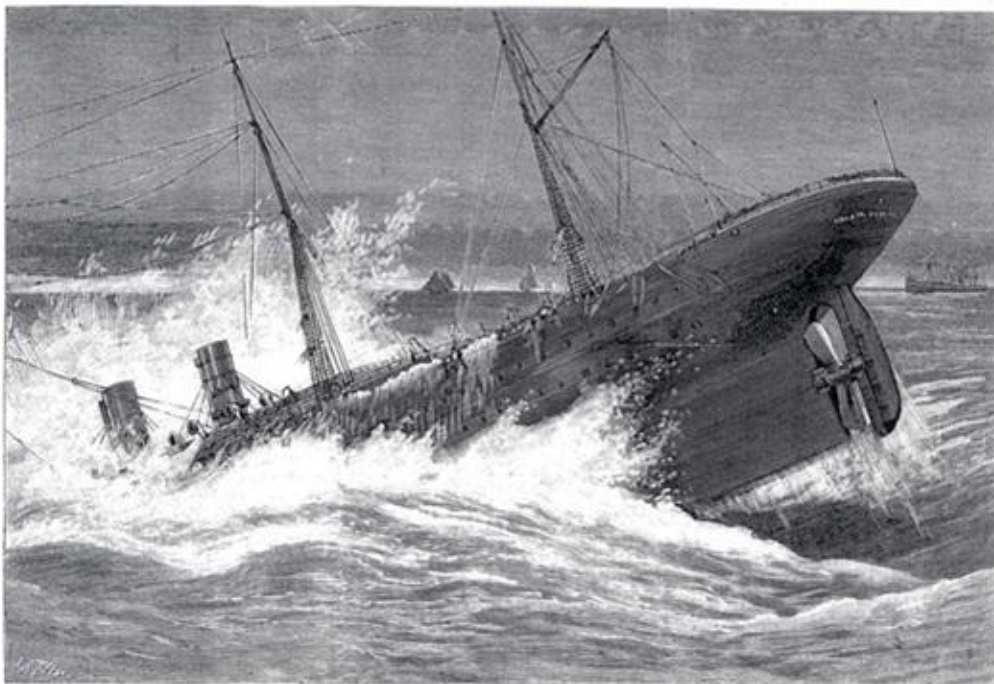
10 AVRIL 1886.

L'ILLUSTRATION

N. 233. — 233.

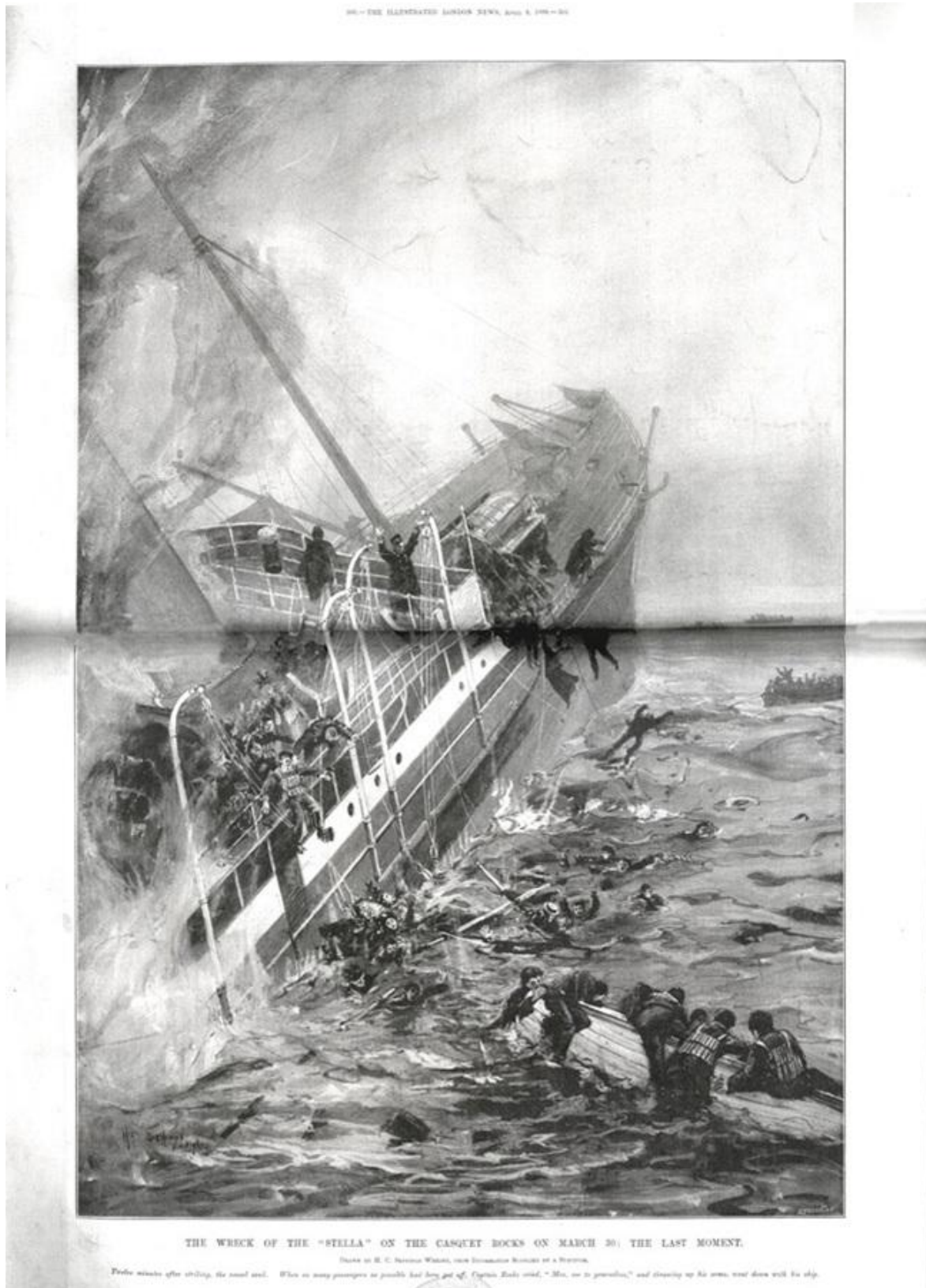


SAUVETAGE DES PASSAGERS  
LA PERTE DU PAQUEBOT TRANSATLANTIQUE L' « ORÉGON »



LE NAVIRE SOMBRANT

Fig. 8: 'Sauvetage des Passagers: La Perte du Paquebot Transatlantique "L'Orégon"'; and 'Le Navire Sombrant', *L'Illustration*, 10 April 1886, p. 233. Anonymous artists, wood-engravings by Tilly. Kensington and Chelsea Public Libraries.



*Fig. 9: 'The Wreck of the "Stella" on the Casquet Rocks on March 20: The Last Moment. Drawn by H. C. Seppings Wright, from Information Supplied by a Survivor', Illustrated London News, 8 April 1899, pp. 500–01. Photomechanical half-tone relief block. Kensington and Chelsea Public Libraries.*

of *Cascina* (1504) may have been in his mind's eye, and a hundred pictures of naval fights and wrecks could have given him both theme and treatment of heaped bodies on a raft or boat. It is conceivable that the scene in the lower left-hand side of John Singleton Copley's gigantic *Siege and Relief of Gibraltar* (1791) may have figured in his reference set. It could have been brought to his attention either by his Anglophile teacher Carle Vernet, who had been a frequent visitor to London in the early 1790s, or through William Sharp's 1810 engraving of the painting (*Fig. 10*).

Géricault produced a painting in which the axes of life and death, hope and despair, past and future, structure the action and the canvas. Action is split between foreground and background. The wind blows from right to left; that is to say, in terms of the standard narrative thrust in western art, back towards the past: that is the direction in which the raft is moving. Rescue is sighted on the horizon towards the right-hand edge of the canvas. On the raft the figures compose themselves into two pyramids. The left-hand pyramid contains death, resignation, despair, and the thrust towards the past; the right-hand pyramid encloses almost all the people who have seen the rescuing ship and the hope of a future. In 1819, the composition may have communicated a political allegory of the condition of France under the Bourbon Restoration, but in any case it delivered both a powerful iconography and a fertile scenography.<sup>15</sup>

The painting made an immediate impact, relaying the earlier impact of Alexandre Corréard's sensational exposé of 1817, which had prompted a play by William Moncrieff, performed early in 1820.<sup>16</sup> After its exhibition in the Paris Salon in the summer of 1819, the canvas was shown to large crowds in Bullock's Egyptian Hall in Piccadilly for much of the second half of 1820, and in Dublin early in 1821, where Moncrieff's play, revived in London after the picture arrived, was also performed.<sup>17</sup> A lithographic version was published in London in association with those exhibitions. The canvas was bought by the French government after Géricault's death in 1824, and was back on the walls of the Louvre from 1826. References to its form and iconography were quickly seen, for example, in large paintings by J. M. W. Turner such as *The Battle of Trafalgar* (1821–22) and *A Fire at Sea* (1835) (*Fig. 11*); and in 'documentary' images such as William Smyth's sketch (1825–26) of a raft in the Pacific Gambier Islands (now Tuamotu).<sup>18</sup> The Belgian artist E. K. G. Wappers recycled Géricault's composition in his huge *Episode During the Belgian Revolution of 1830* of 1834. A two-colour mezzotint copy of Géricault's painting was published in London in 1832 (*Fig. 6*); and in 1834 the *Raft* turned up as an illustration





Fig. 10: W. Sharp after J. S. Copley, *The Siege and Relief of Gibraltar* (1791), 1810. Engraving. Private collection.



Fig. 11: J. Cousen after J. M. W. Turner, *A Fire at Sea* (1835), 1859. Engraving. Private Collection.

to a contemporary wreck-and-rescue story, that of the *Cybelle*, in a broadsheet published in *Seven Dials* for the bottom end of the market for news and sensation (Fig. 12). It seems likely that the wood-engraving Catnach used had been copied not from Egan's mezzotint, but from another source, since details of both the seascape and the drapery of the bodies are significantly different. The image was also recycled by caricaturists in England and in the United States, and doubtless elsewhere, in the generation after the painting was made. That John Leech and the editorial team at *Punch*, in 1851, could be confident that its readers would get the joke when it used Géricault's painting as the basis for a political cartoon, shows that the work was very much alive in British visual culture at the time (Fig. 13). Leech drew the image the same way round as Géricault's composition; it has been reversed in printing. For the most part Leech respects the 'wind one way, hope the other way' dynamic, but the flag on the *Crystal Palace* betrays his lubberliness.<sup>19</sup>

It is indeed possible to find a huge variety of images that may plausibly be taken to offer echoes of the *Raft of the Medusa*. Making meaning out of such echoes is a tricky task; absurdity and the playground of what Austin Powers might call consequence-free

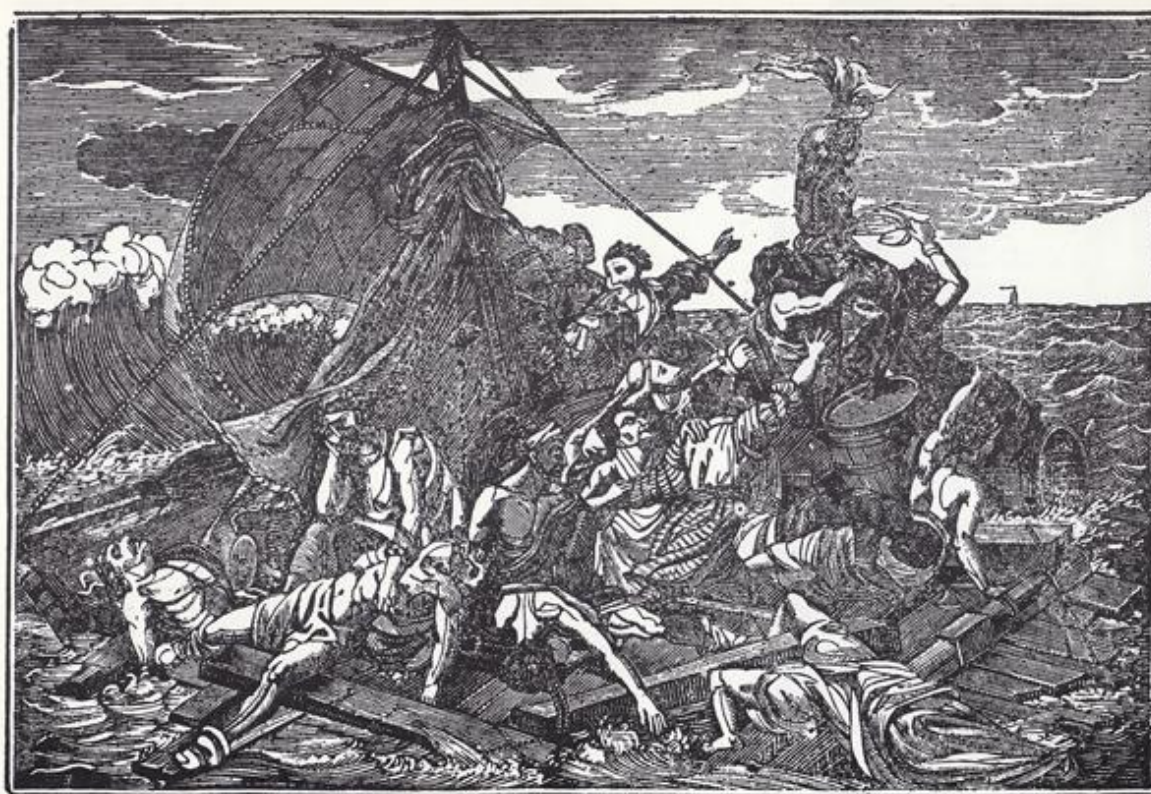


Fig. 12: *The Wreck of the Cybelle*. Broadsheet with anonymous wood-engraved copy of Géricault's *Raft of the Medusa* (London: Catnach, 1834). Courtesy of St Bride Library & Archives.

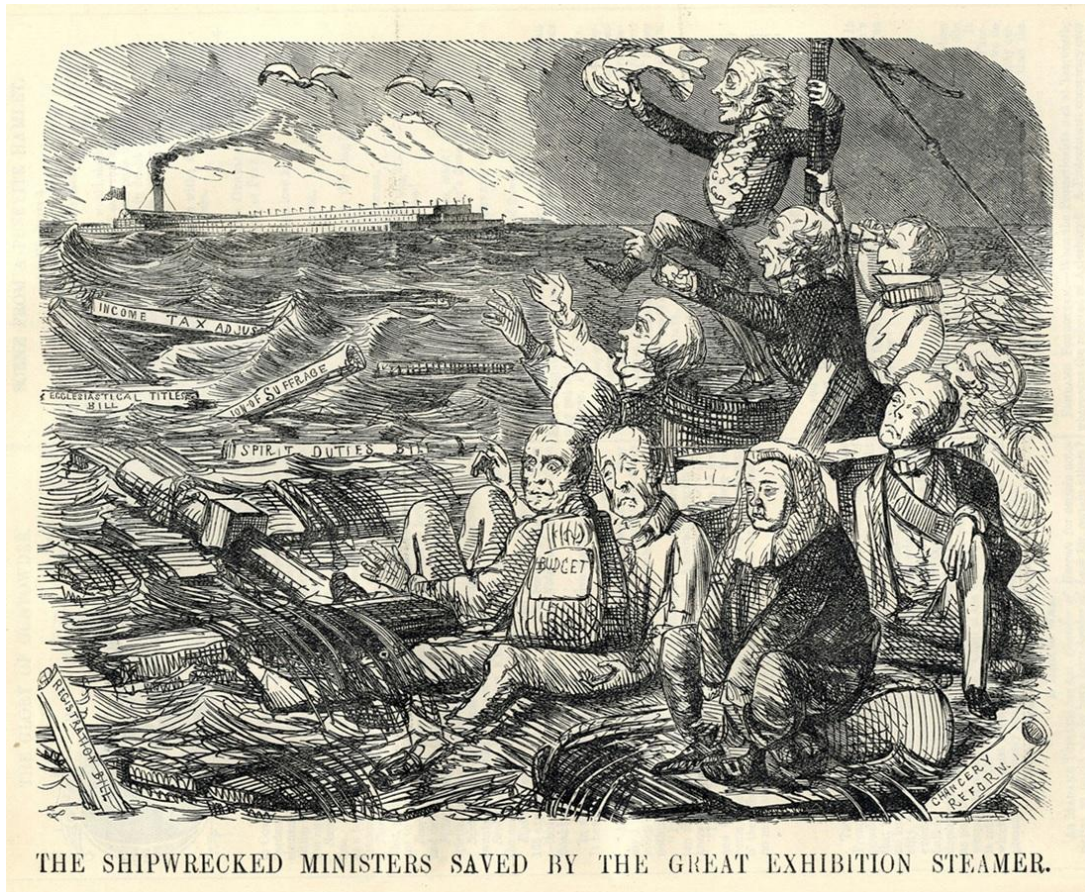


Fig. 13: John Leech, 'The Shipwrecked Ministers Saved by the Great Exhibition Steamer', *Punch*, 20 (January–June 1851), p. 237. Anonymous wood-engraving. University College London Library.

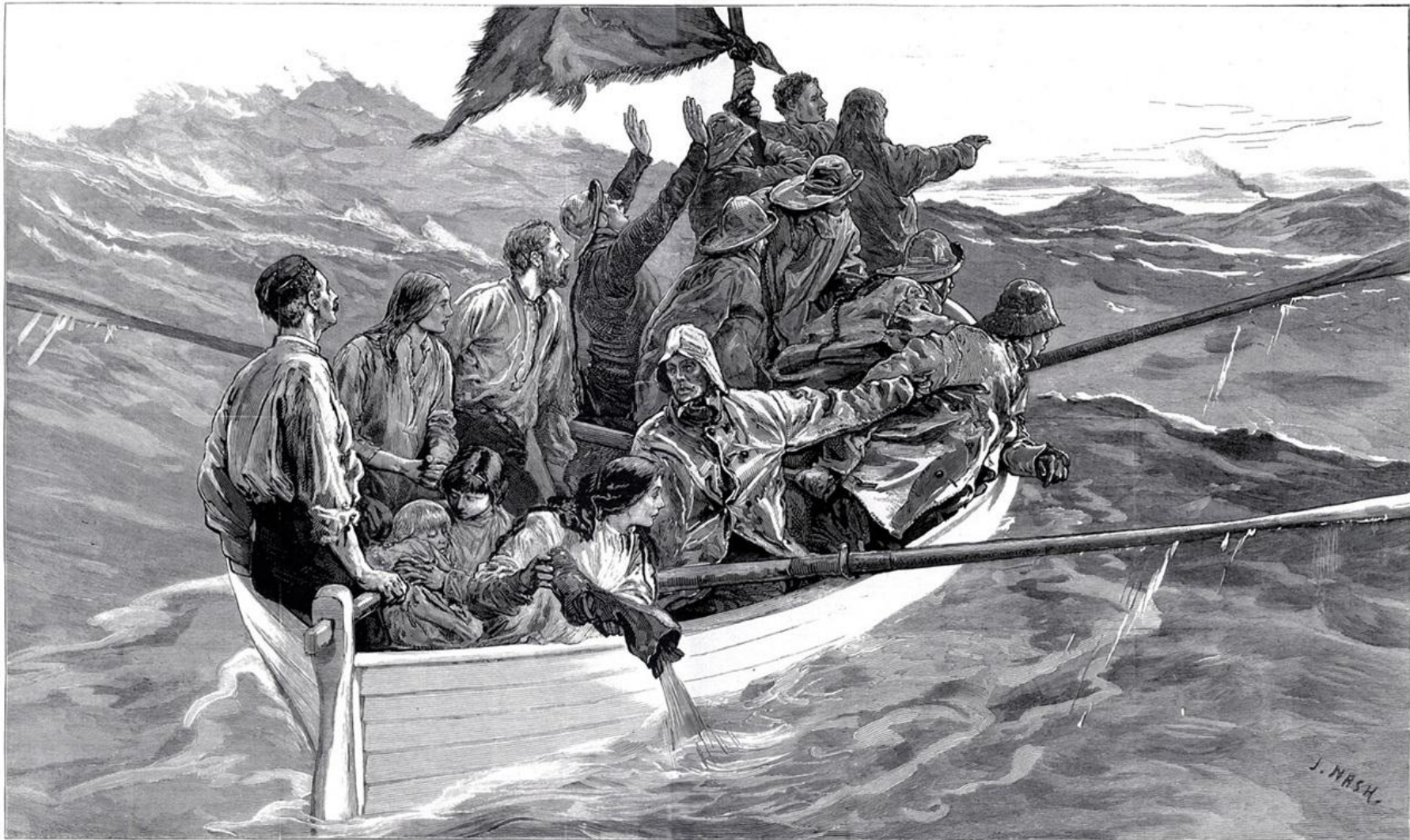


Fig. 14: Masthead of *O Povo* (Recife), 31 May 1857. Anonymous wood-engraving. Arquivo Público Estadual Jordão Emerenciano, Recife, Pernambuco, Brazil. Photographed by E. Ramos.

interpretative *jouissance* are real dangers. Take for example the 1857 masthead of the Brazilian political weekly *O Povo* (Fig. 14).<sup>20</sup> Since the moment when the similarity between it and Géricault's raft first struck me, I have seen the two as linked: the reference to Géricault's painting sharpens the critical representation of the Brazilian ship of state as in danger, and makes the masthead more meaningful to me. Given the painting's fame, it is at least likely that the designer in Recife would have been aware of it. It is highly unlikely, however, that the *Raft of the Medusa* was part of what the journal's editors intended the masthead to denote, or part of the meaning that viewers in Recife in 1857 would have 'read' from it, or been expected to read from it.

The masthead of *O Povo* brings the matter of interpretative communities into focus.<sup>21</sup> Does the fact that an intertextuality was available then to painters and illustrators as a dimension of their professional competence, and is now salient for art historians, mean that it was also available to magazine consumers in contexts of first reading-viewing? This essay will use two centrefold illustrations done in the 1880s, one in the *ILN* and one in its main British rival, the *Graphic*, to consider both the ways that illustrators could use the resources that Géricault's scenography offered, and the ways in which an awareness of the relationship between Géricault's work and these journalistic illustrations would have been part of the context in which reader-viewers understood the news, and found value in the magazines that brought them these pictures. It is likely that the caricature producers of *Punch* in 1851 expected their 'public', their ideal reader-viewer, to pick up the reference to Géricault's picture. In doing so they would add force to the representation of a hopeless and rudderless ministry, and contribute to *Punch*'s ironic running critique of the impact of capital-city tourism. It is not so immediately clear that the public of either the *Graphic* in 1883 or of the *ILN* in 1888 would have been expected by the editors of these magazines to produce 'Géricault's raft' as part of the meaning of these wood-engraved centrefolds, nor what force such a recognition would add to the representation.<sup>22</sup>

On 24 February 1883 the *Graphic* published a centrefold picture of a rescue in the Bay of Biscay, after the *Kenmure Castle* had foundered in a gale on 2 February (Fig. 15). All eight passengers and seven of the eight crew members (out of thirty-eight) who had made their way into the only lifeboat launched, survived until picked up by a French ship on 4 February, to be landed at that ship's destination, Boulogne, on 7 February. The boat's passengers arrived in London on 9 February. By the time adequate survivor accounts



THE LOSS OF THE S.S. "KENMURE CASTLE"—THE SURVIVORS SIGHTING THE FRENCH STEAMER "MONTATAIRE," FEBRUARY 4, 1883  
FROM INFORMATION SUPPLIED BY MR. JAMES HOLNESS, THE SECOND OFFICER OF THE "KENMURE CASTLE"

Fig. 15: J. Nash, 'The Loss of the SS "Kenmure Castle"', *Graphic*, 24 February 1883, pp. 196–97. Anonymous wood-engraving. Kensington and Chelsea Public Libraries.

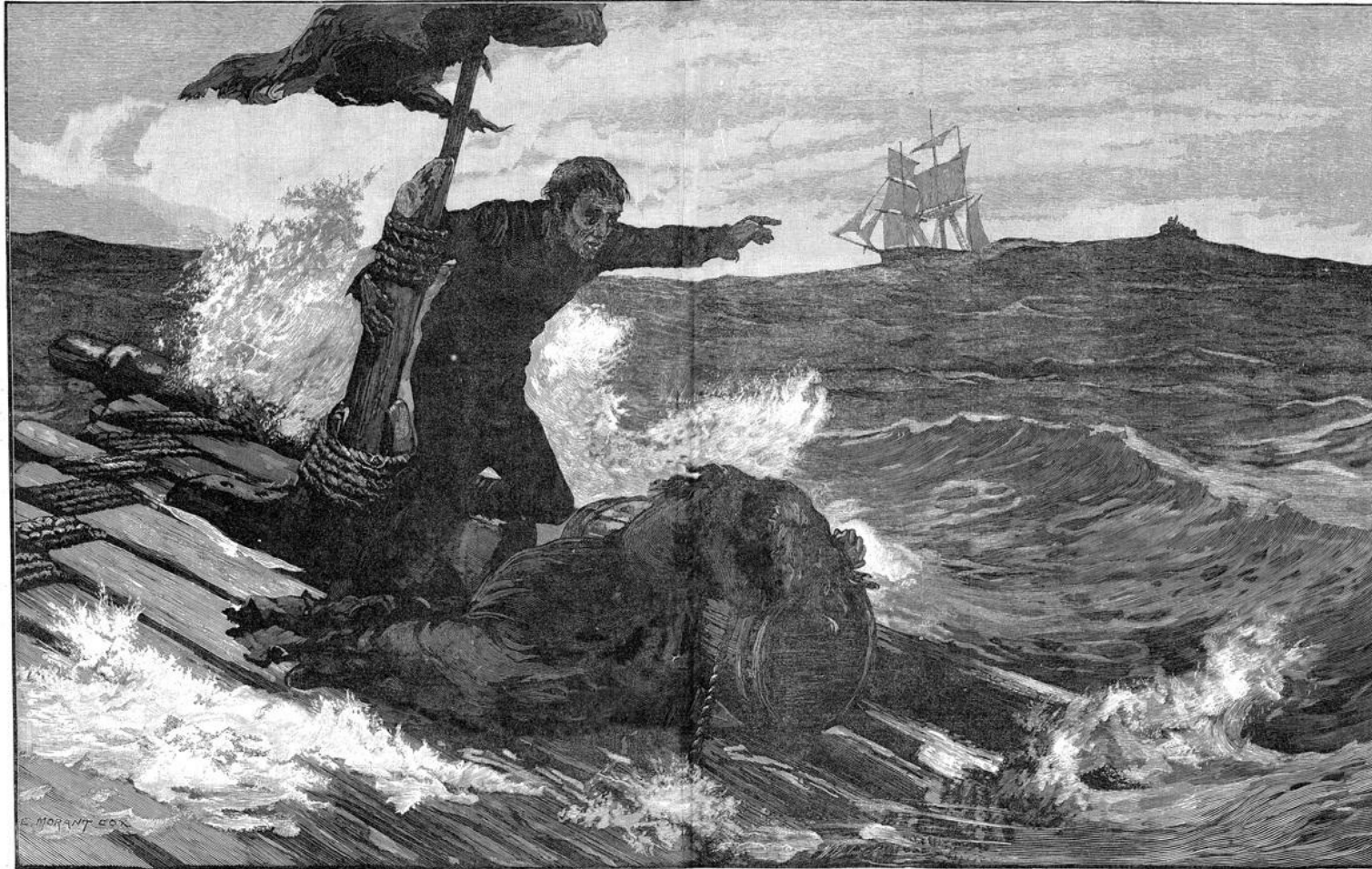
Tom Gretton, *Géricault's Raft in Journalistic Illustration up to 1912*  
*19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, 16 (2013) <<http://19.bbk.ac.uk>>

emerged, it was too late to produce a big picture for the *Graphic*'s 17 February issue, and the decision was taken to wait a week and make a splash of the incident. The artist, J. Nash, one of the *Graphic*'s core editorial team, has used Géricault's painting not only to fix the main elements of this design, but also to organize its narratives.<sup>23</sup> As in the *Raft*, the wind blows towards the left / past, while the ship on the horizon, the track of the boat, and the pointing hands on board all drive the narrative to the right and the future. The composition also mobilizes Géricault's organization of the relationship between despair and hope to articulate the spreading realization that rescue is at hand, even though Nash has not quite deployed Géricault's twin pyramids of left-looking despair and right-looking hope. In the West End clubs and bourgeois drawing rooms that constituted the *Graphic*'s public, this centrefold had a complicated job to do. It was first seen two weeks and more after the story broke in London, so it had to find a way both of (re)specifying the action and of generalizing its significance, transcending its existence as mere news. The process of transcendence involved anchoring the incident in a visual trope. This anchoring could take place without reader-viewers being aware of the Géricault-ness of the schema deployed. But reference to this famous painting from the Louvre, a boat-train's ride away in London's doppelgänger metropolis, would surely have been recognizable to many in the magazine's target market, and in as much as it was recognized, would have brought status to the recognizer, while adding authority to the image, and pleasure to its viewing.

Five and a half years later, the *ILN* published a two-page picture, 'The Last Survivors', with a closely similar subject and scenography (*Fig. 16*). This centrefold does not illustrate any specific last-gasp rescue after maritime disaster; the wood-engraving is offered to us not as a news report, but as a piece of original art on the theme of danger, suffering, and rescue at sea. One supposes that Evelyn Morant Cox would have taken a preliminary sketch to the editors, received a commission for a centrefold on the basis of the sketch, and then produced a worked-up wash drawing.<sup>24</sup> That 'art-work' would have been photographed to make a negative to be printed onto the photosensitive surface of a woodblock, before Palmer, the named wood-engraver, cut through the photographic image on the surface of the block to make a black-and-white linear analogue of its wash tones.

Given its status as a work of art, the references in 'The Last Survivors' to Géricault's painting are clearly of the same order as those made by Turner or by Wappers; viewers who recognized the intertextuality would most certainly both have given the work and the magazine greater authority, and taken more pleasure in their viewing. This

30.—THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS, MARCH 3, 1888.—



THE LAST SURVIVORS.  
PRINTED BY HARRIS AND SONS, 15, N. BROADWAY, LONDON.

Fig. 16: E. Morant Cox, 'The Last Survivors', *Illustrated London News*, 3 March 1888, pp. 230–31. Anonymous wood-engraving. Kensington and Chelsea Public Libraries.

**Tom Gretton, Géricault's Raft in Journalistic Illustration up to 1912**  
*19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, 16 (2013) <<http://19.bbk.ac.uk>>



intertextuality reminds us that the metropolitan visual-culture world of 1888 did not operate with categorical distinctions between the world of art and the world of journalistic illustration. Vanguard artists may indeed have been working to open such distinctions, but journalist-illustrators, and the editors who employed them, were working to suture them, and to keep magazines of the *ILN* genre firmly inside the world of ‘high’ image-culture, using its resources to produce not only dramatic and seductive images, but also both reality effects and claims to be ‘truth resembling’ in images with plausible claims to be art. The reality effects, and the truthlikeness effects, that they developed did not in principle differ from those achieved in ‘realist’ painting. Indeed, that each individual picture in a magazine was in a glance-supporting matrix with other similar pictures which contributed referents that were in Barthes’s terms excessive in relation to the message of the particular image under scrutiny, suggests that the illustrated magazine may have been even more of a *locus classicus* of the modern real than was salon painting.<sup>25</sup>

As I have already suggested, the citation of Géricault’s work in magazine pictures is both easy to see if you think that journalist-painters work with the same handed-down repertoire as salon painters, and hard to accept if you think that journalistic illustrators, like Leopold von Ranke, simply show things the way they actually were. The mobilization of Géricault could indeed be part of the process of bathetic and run-of-the-mill reconstructive reporting, in the production of pictures that make ‘the way things actually were’ sorts of truth claims. Take the wreck of the *Stella* on a Channel Island coast in March 1899. The sensational story made the front cover of the *Pictorial World* and was given a highly dramatic ‘last plunge’ centrefold in the *ILN* (Fig. 9). The *Graphic* instead gave a visually informative truth-claim-laden two-page spread to the incident (Fig. 17). This spread displays a photograph of the *Stella*’s captain, two coastline sketches, a chart giving the intended and the actual track of the vessel, a wash drawing of a dramatic incident when passengers recycled a wagon washed from the deck as a life raft, and a calm and lucid reconstructive sketch of two lifeboats with their disciplined and single-minded occupants sighting their rescuers the next morning (Fig. 18). I do not think the reader-viewer is enticed or expected to think about Géricault here; what is being aimed at is the ‘truth resembling’ effect that the recourse to Géricault’s schema induces. The arrangement of the actors in the composition, the construction of the picture space, and even anecdotal details such as the wind blowing right to left while the gazes and the action flow left to

### The Disaster in the Channel

#### THE WRECK OF THE "STELLA"

The terrible disaster in the Channel, one of the most painful for many years, will long make this feature memorable. The London and South-Western Railway Company's passenger boat Stella was one of the fastest boats in the Channel when she was on a special daylight trip to the Channel Islands on Thursday when in a dense fog she ran on the dreaded Caquets, eight miles to the west of Alderney, and foundered in fifteen minutes. Although the Channel is crowded about 150 passenger and crew. Over 100 have been saved, but it is feared that nearly 50 have perished, including the commander, Captain Breen.



CAPTAIN BREEN  
Commander of the London and South-Western Company

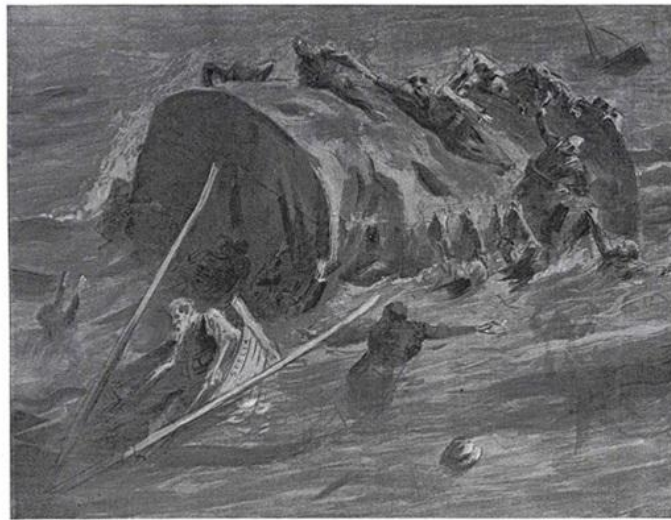
but his bearings, and that, almost without knowing it, he was heading up out of the side, and the unfortunate ship struck upon the jagged submerged rocks which form the continuation of the reef. In consequence of the speed at which she was going her side was tipped over right along, and the work of the disaster was done in a few moments. There was, however, no panic, and if any-



THE CAQUETS AND ALDERNEY AS SEEN FROM STERREY  
From a Sketch by Conrad Hansen

thing could mitigate the terrible nature of the tragedy it would be the splendid conduct of one and all who suffered by it. Captain Breen from the bridge gave his orders firmly and quickly, and these were scrupulously obeyed by all his officers and men. The boats were got out and the passengers were provided with lifeboats, the lifeboats being only too rapidly sinking. Nevertheless, the order "Women and children first" was faithfully obeyed, and with a speed and unflinching courage beyond all praise the boats, with all the women and children, and with just sufficient means to support and work them, were clear of the sinking ship. After this two other ship's boats and two collapsible boats were lowered and by alongside, awaiting the captain's order, which quickly came, "Let the men look out for themselves." There was an instant rush for the boats, which were quickly filled and pulled away from the ship, the last one only by strenuous exertions managing to keep clear of the rocks caused by the fast undertow. The women had they got under weigh when the bulkheads, which had been holding out, gave way, the sea leaved into the engine room and stateroom, and the ship, slipping off the rocks, sank rapidly, even fast, in deep water. Though this boat escaped being dragged down at this time,

the sea afterwards ebbed and sank, and of the thirty or forty men on board the majority were lost, though certain of them managed to reach a pastureland was and cluster on to it. Their fate for a long time remained uncertain, but eight were ultimately rescued by a Chertsey fishing boat. The time had not been sufficient to lower more than six boats, and many passengers, probably more than fifty, remained on deck when the last boat showed off. With the captain still on the bridge they all went down with the ship. A few jumped clear as the vessel went down, and with the aid of lifeboats and duck seats and other floating wreckage, kept themselves afloat. A few were taken into boats, already somewhat crowded, but most of them perished being swept by the swift current and tide far away from the scene of the disaster. There is charge of the boats found to do more than duty, but their eyes strained far first in consequence of the fog they might get to the treacherous rocks or come into collision with the floating wreckage. The manner of the boats, the dinghies, and the men, already somewhat crowded, but when the sea in it was a boat filled to bulges and apparently in difficulty, they promptly took it to



THE WRECK OF THE "STELLA" AN ARK OF REFUGE  
FROM MATERIALS SUPPLIED BY A SKETCHER  
One of the boats, before it had a sufficient crew, was found to be surrounded by a dangerous current which before the fog cleared off the morning, but it was then too late to remedy the evil. As the ship foundered the boat was rapidly swamped by the waves. The escaped crew did not come ashore until the first and north-east breeze had blown down the coast, and it was then that the boat was found. Several, however, were seen to be in the water, but it was too late to rescue them.

THE WRECK OF THE "STELLA" AN ARK OF REFUGE

The experience of these people in the dinghies were somewhat to all the boats. All the last night though they drifted about, or were occasionally rescued, until passengers became exhausted by the damp and the unaccustomed labor. Only the necessity of survival when day broke kept them in mind. "One night," said a man who was in the dinghy, "I heard three boats. Some of us often had lamps in our chests, but we would not glow in. Each man took his turn in rowing, and rarely stopped as if when his spell was done dropped asleep quite knocked up. About six o'clock in the morning they saw a steamer coming towards them, and signaling as well as they could, were hoisted aboard. The steamer proved to be the Great Western Company's Channel service steamer *Lyons*, which had been warned of the disaster and was on the look-out. Although the *Lyons* saved thirty-eight souls, and took them to Chertsey. The South-Western Company's Channel service steamer *Fines*, making her daily trip to the islands, came across two other boats, in which were fifty-seven men and women, all of whom were safely got on board and landed at Jersey. Among these were Mr. Parson, manager of the Ass. Ins. Transatlantic Ins. and his wife. They had a very painful experience, as they were the boats in danger as to the fate of such others. Mr. Parson was sent off in the last boat, which was disarranged in the fog. Mr. Parson managed to get a pilot in a later boat. The husband and wife were reunited after fifteen hours of separation. Mr. Parson has given a very graphic account of the wreck, describing the way in which the boats found a submerged rock, the admirable discipline which prevailed, the behavior of the officers, and the energy of the steamer in going out to look for the boats. "I scarcely saw anyone without a hat," he writes. "The confusion and confusion of the officers were only exceeded by the passengers generally. There was no panic nor any wild rubbing for the boats, but the blanketed boats and the passages between bulkheads and when and others showed that all reached the port. I got my wife into the second boat that left the ship, and I got away myself in the last boat that left the ship. I regard my escape as entirely providential. The boat was just ordered away when, seeing a large buoy hanging from the stern, it did not stop, but went on to the next buoy, dropping into the boat as she moved off."



GENERAL VIEW OF THE CAQUETS SHOWING THE FOG IN WHICH THE "STELLA" IS SUPPOSED TO HAVE STRUCK



SKETCH MAP SHOWING THE PROPER COURSE FROM SOUTHAMPTON TO JERSEY AND THE COURSE FOLLOWED BY THE "STELLA"

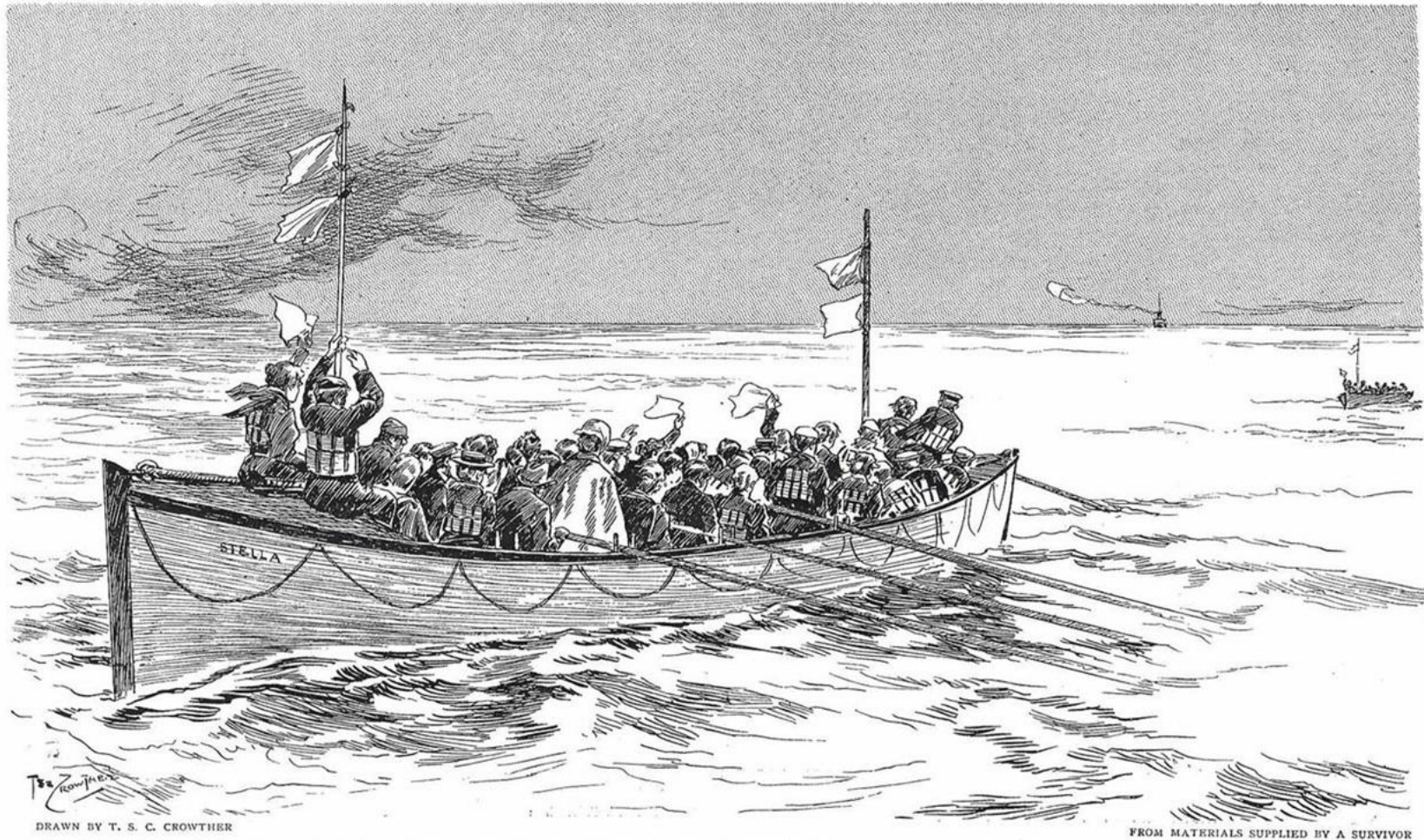
but as our boat was full we could not render any assistance. Our boat held twenty-five, and the other boat which kept us company had fifteen. At daylight, we saw a big steamer in the distance, but our boats could not be heard. During the night we heaved every scrap of paper in the boat as a signal, but without answering attention. In the morning the passengers did hand-to-hand together and fastened time to a pin to attend the notice of my family. The *Lyons* emerged very suddenly out of the fog and picked us up."

There are many other narratives from the occupants of the boats which verified the terrible night, but they differ only in detail. Mr. Valour, of Harrow, jumping from the sinking ship, came up under a capstan situated on a rock to which he managed to cling, being subsequently found by some others. "There were dozens of others floating round on wreckage. They could not swim to us, and we could not help them. They made attempts to approach for assistance. It was a heart-rending scene. We drifted about at the mercy of the waves, and then one by one the eyes closed as caused as the poor victims became exhausted with the cold and dropped off the wreckage to which they were clinging. It was chief to me three days close by us. Amongst those whom I saw clinging to wreckage near the boat were the chief officers and the chief steward. There were also a few ladies who had lifeboats and were clinging to wreckage. The boat subsequently righted, but the plug was not fit, and so it filled almost to the gunwale, being kept only by the air tanks, and in this every slight the night was passed, though of the fourteen only five lived to see morning, the others dying of exposure before the ultimate rescue by a French tug. The only officer saved was Mr. Reynolds, the second mate, who was picked up out of the sea, and his being saved probably saved the safety of the Island and the dinghy, for his knowledge of the coast enabled them to keep away from the dangerous rocks around Alderney. On this steamer boat we held our own all night, while many saw the steamer of splendid hull and decoration. One of the saddest features of the whole, though, is to be found in the number of cases where families have been broken up, and where with husband and wife, one has been taken and another left, while the tragedy is to be read in a dark place between the lines of a brief paragraph, and never been thinking over. The most cause of the disaster must be left to be ascertained by later inquiry. At the time of writing the wreck has not even been raised. Certain only it is that Captain Breen had his bearings in the fog. Beyond this he was experienced and trusted officer. After the vessel struck he did everything possible in the way of saving as many of the splendid hullmen, and when nothing more remained to be done went down with his ship.



SURVIVORS SIGHTING THE "VERA" THE MORNING AFTER THE DISASTER  
FROM MATERIALS SUPPLIED BY A SKETCHER  
One of the boats was disabled, and it was then that the boat was found. Several, however, were seen to be in the water, but it was too late to rescue them. The boat was found by the *Vera* the morning after the disaster. The boat was found by the *Vera* the morning after the disaster. The boat was found by the *Vera* the morning after the disaster.

Fig. 17: 'The Disaster in the Channel: The Wreck of the "Stella"', *Graphic*, 8 April 1899, pp. 426-27. Various photo-mechanical media. Two artists, one sketch-provider and one photo-agency acknowledged. Kensington and Chelsea Public Libraries.



One of the survivors in this boat writes:—"The boat was a very tiny one, but twenty-two managed to get into it. During the afternoon and night we drifted about. Second Mate Reynolds, who was in another boat, kept us off the breakers by showing lighted matches. It was a weary time. We had nothing in the shape of food in the boat, and the night was bitterly cold. Never before have I wished so much for morning. With the first streak of dawn we saw that we had drifted a considerable distance from the scene of the disaster. Save for the splashing of the water on the side of our boat, all was deathly still." About eight o'clock, how-

ever, the funnel of a steamer was descried, and at once the brave occupants of the boat set to work to manufacture flags of distress out of handkerchiefs, which they tied to their oars, and they had the satisfaction of knowing soon afterwards that their signals of distress were observed. At half-past eight o'clock, after sixteen hours of awful suspense and anxiety, the shipwrecked boatload were taken aboard the South-Western boat *Vera*.

SURVIVORS SIGHTING THE "VERA" THE MORNING AFTER THE DISASTER

Fig. 18: Detail of Fig. 17, 'Survivors Sighting the "Vera" the Morning after the Disaster, Drawn by T. S. C. Crowther from Materials Supplied by a Survivor'. Line-block. Kensington and Chelsea Public Libraries.

Tom Gretton, *Géricault's Raft in Journalistic Illustration up to 1912*

19: *Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, 16 (2013) <<http://19.bbk.ac.uk>>

right are surely recycled from his work, or from works that in their turn have recycled the *Raft*, building on the consensus that lies at the heart of ‘truth likeness’ (Barthes, p. 86).

What, then, of the *Titanic*? By 1912 the half-tone screen had been domesticated for two decades, but the truth claims of photography, and the reality effects that could be achieved using half-tone accounts of photographs, had not driven Géricault out of the repertoire of magazine realization. I will look in some detail at pictures in the 4 May edition of the *ILN*. In London, magazines of the *ILN* genre had published their first pictures about the disaster, which happened during the night of 14 to 15 April, and whose scale was clear in the headlines of the London morning papers on 16 April, in their 20 April editions. At that stage both the *ILN* and the *Graphic* relied for illustrations on library photographs of the ship and her passengers, and on cutaway diagrams of the great liner. The *ILN* montaged its versions of the ship and her accommodations into a double-page spread, tying ten number-keyed photographs and two text boxes together with drawn ropes and anchors framing. It also gave a page of portraits of notable passengers, from pictures supplied by photo agencies (*Fig. 19*). As the magazine went to press that week there was still confusion about who was alive and who was dead, so the framing given to these portraits, taking its logic from the frames often drawn round *carte de visite* photographs assembled on the pages of photo albums, was given in mid-grey rather than in the black of mourning.<sup>26</sup>

Participants’ accounts had begun to arrive in London, either by telegram or in the New York papers, in good time for the 27 April editions. However, neither photographs of the encounter between the lifeboats and the *Carpathia*, which had already been published in daily newspapers on both sides of the Atlantic, nor artists’ renderings of the scenes recounted by the eyewitnesses, were published until 4 May in either the *ILN* or the *Graphic*. The delay in publishing photographs from the *Carpathia* was perhaps due to them not being available in London by the deadline for 27 April. The delay in publishing artists’ impressions is harder to explain. The *Sphere* (founded 1900), the newcomer among the London magazines of the *ILN* genre, had indeed published a centrefold of the *Titanic*’s final plunge in a special twelve-page supplement to its 27 April edition. Perhaps the older magazines were working within a convention about eyewitness authenticity that has now vanished. Under such a convention, for a wash-drawn illustration to have a sustainable truth claim, it had to be based on a sketch sent back from the scene; or at least to respect the rhythms of the relation between (verbal) reporting and (visual) memorialization that

## ON BOARD THE "TITANIC" IN THE GREAT DISASTER: NOTABLE PASSENGERS.



1. MR. BRUCE ISRAEL, CHAIRMAN OF THE WHITE STAR LINE.  
 2. MAJOR A. PECHEN, OF THE CANADIAN INFANTRY.  
 3. MAJOR A. W. BUTY, AIDE-DE-CAMP TO PRESIDENT TAFT.  
 4. MR. C. B. HAYS, PRESIDENT OF THE GRAND TRUNK RAILWAY.  
 5. MRS. J. J. ASTOR, THE MULTI-MILLIONAIRE.  
 6. COLONEL J. J. ASTOR, THE MULTI-MILLIONAIRE.

7. LADY COMDE DUFF-GORDON (KNOWN AS "LUCILE"), WIFE OF SIR COMDE DUFF-GORDON, B.  
 8. MR. JACK PHILLIPS, WIRELESS OPERATOR ON THE "TITANIC."  
 9. THE COUNTESS OF ROTHER.  
 10. MR. DANIEL MARVIN, SON OF THE HEAD OF A GREAT AMERICAN QUINERATOGRAPH FIRM.

11. MR. DANIEL MARVIN.  
 12. MR. W. E. STEAD, THE DISTINGUISHED JOURNALIST.  
 13. MR. BENJAMIN COGGESHILL, A WELL-KNOWN AMERICAN BANKER AND BULLY-BULLOCKIER.  
 14. MR. EARL H. BENT, THE LAW-TENNIS PLAYER.  
 15. MR. ISIDORE STRAUSS, A MEMBER OF CONGRESS AND A MULTI-MILLIONAIRE BANKER.

The passengers on the "Titanic" included many distinguished people, both English and American. Among them were several American millionaires, who represented collectively something like £100,000,000 of capital. The air raised in New York by Colonel J. J. Astor's marriage to Miss Mathilde Tillingast Foss is a matter of recent memory. Mr. Isidor Straus is a partner in the great firm of Messrs. R. H. Macy, of New York. The Countess of Rother was on her way to meet her husband, the Earl, in California, where he has, it is said, bought large fruit-farms. Lady Comde Duff-Gordon was going out with her husband.

Mr. W. T. Stead, the famous journalist, editor of the "Review of Reviews," was going to address a meeting on the "World's Peace," in Carnegie Hall, New York, on April 21. Mr. Jack Phillips, the wireless operator, is a son of Mr. and Mrs. G. A. Phillips, of Godalming. Miss Peuchen came to England with the Canadian regiment brought over by Colonel Pullen. Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Marvin, both under twenty, were returning from their honeymoon. At the moment of writing the news is so fragmentary that it is impossible to give a final list of the passengers who have survived.

Photographs by Ellis and Walcott, Royal Press, C.N., Sport and General, Elinor, Barrow (6, 7, 8), and 10; Langlois, Dover Street Studios (11 and 12); Rolick, Underwood and Underwood, London; and Elinor Martin.

Fig. 19: 'On Board the "Titanic" in the Great Disaster: Notable Passengers', *Illustrated London News*, 20 April 1912, p. 594. Photomechanical half-tone relief block from photographs and from hand-drawn framing. Kensington and Chelsea Public Libraries.

the difference in speed between the telegraph and the transmission of real pieces of paper imposed on magazines of the *ILN* genre and on the participation skills of their reader-viewers. That, at any rate, is how both the *ILN* and the *Graphic* seem to have acted in terms of the cadence in which they published their reconstitutive dramas of chaos, stoicism, and rescue.

The photographs of the *Titanic*'s lifeboats, taken by someone looking down from the *Carpathia*, show little boats on a big sea, with indistinguishable figures aboard them. They were widely published, and do indeed have an 'eyewitness' truth effect. They do not however contribute to or intensify the emerging core narrative, which by the beginning of May was no longer about the survivors, but about the collision, the sinking, and the loss of life. The *ILN* editorial team may have doubted the continued power of this often-seen set of photographs, given the amount of reward-intensifying work it did on them (*Fig. 20*). It turned three of the pictures into a montage, with small snaps inserted in circles at the level of the high horizon of a larger view: perhaps we are to imagine the view through a telescope. It combined five photographs in all into a two-page spread, giving each page the same nautically themed frame to bolster the status of the ensemble, thus insisting on their status and adding to their value, and to the value delivered to reader-viewers by the behind-the-times return to the story.

By 1912 many magazines of the *ILN* genre were using framing devices to add authority to the half-tone images they published: heavy single lines, triple lines, thin lines bordering a white margin around the photograph, combinations of collaging and framing; all were deployed.<sup>27</sup> The *ILN* used allegorical and emblematic framing devices more insistently and with the expenditure of greater effort than most magazines in the genre. It did so for a range of purposes: sometimes to give a programmatic unity to a set of snapshots; sometimes to unite thematically linked images in a page-size installation; sometimes to add a commentary that exceeds or ironizes what could be made manifest in an image or specified in a caption; sometimes, simply by framing an illustration as if a painting, to remind us of its status as art. Its presentation both of photographs and of wash drawings relating to the *Titanic* shows this editorial culture in practice. The frame around these lifeboat scenes provokes the reader-viewer to consider the relationship between the surface and the depths of the ocean; while the scene of the meeting on the pier in New York has a frame whose visual commentary may perhaps be ironic, since its anchors frame a story of departures uncontrolled and lives unmoored, and its British lions, at least

THE SAVING OF THE 705: UNCROWDED LIFE-BOATS OF THE "TITANIC."

PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN BY A PASSENGER ON THE "CARPATHIA." REPRODUCED BY COURTESY OF "CHILDREN'S WEEKLY."



1. SURVIVORS ABOARD A COLLAPSIBLE FROM THE "TITANIC," THE BOAT BEING ROWED SLOWLY TOWARDS THE "CARPATHIA" IMMEDIATELY BEFORE THE RESCUE OF THE PASSENGERS. 2. DRAWING ALONGSIDE THE "CARPATHIA" TO BE PICKED UP, SURVIVORS OF THE "TITANIC" DEPARTED, MOSTLY WOMEN, IN ONE OF THE UNLADDED LIFE'S LESS-CROWDED LIFE-BOATS.

A "Carpathia" steward, describing the rescue of "Titanic" survivors to the "Times," said of the morning of the first boat of passengers: "Just as it was about half day we came upon a boat with eighteen men in it, but no women. It was not more than a third filled. ... Between 8.15 and 8.30 we got the last two boats, crowded to the gunwale, almost all the occupants of which were women." Mr. Kubi, of Nicolaiki, said: "There was just looking when the 'Carpathia's' passengers were awakened by the excitement occasioned by coming upon a fleet of life-saving boats. ... The work of getting the passengers over the side of the 'Carpathia' was attended by the most heartrending scenes. The ladies were crying, many of the women were hysterical, while the men were cold and speechless." The lower photograph especially shows how unaccommodated some boats were.

SAVED BY "S.O.S.": "TITANIC" SURVIVORS IN THE LIFE-BOATS.

PHOTOGRAPHS NO. 2, TAKEN BY A PASSENGER ON THE "CARPATHIA." REPRODUCED BY COURTESY OF "CHILDREN'S WEEKLY," Nos. 1 AND 4 BY J. W. BARBER, SUPPLIED BY C.M.



1. UNDER THE COMMAND OF MR. LOWE, FIFTH OFFICER OF THE "TITANIC," A LIFE-BOAT, WITH SAIL FURLED, CARRYING "TITANIC" SURVIVORS. 2. HOPED TOGETHER TO PREVENT SEPARATION, TWO OF THE "TITANIC'S" LIFE-BOATS IMMEDIATELY BEFORE THEY WERE PICKED UP BY THE "CARPATHIA."

3. PHOTOGRAPHED AS SHE NEARED THE "CARPATHIA," ONE OF THE "TITANIC'S" LIFE-BOATS. The "Carpathia" arrived on the scene of the "Titanic" disaster in answer to the wireless distress-signal. "S.O.S." not in time to see the end of the great liner, but in time to pick up her boats, and took the 705 survivors to New York. A "Carpathia" passenger, describing the rescue to the "Times," said: "I went up on to the deck and found that our vessel had changed her course. The life-boats had been sighted, and began to arrive one by one. It was a pitiable sight. Ropes were tied round the waists of the adults to help them in climbing up the rope ladders. The little children and babies were hoisted on to our deck in bags. Some of the boats were crowded, but a few were not half full. ... There were husbands without their wives, wives without their husbands, parents without their children, and children without their parents, but there was no commotion, and not a sob was heard. They spoke scarcely a word, and seemed to be stunned by the shock of their escape."

Fig. 20: 'The Saving of the 705: Uncrowded Life-Boats of the "Titanic"'; and, 'Saved by S.O.S.: "Titanic" Survivors in the Life-Boats', *Illustrated London News*, 4 May 1912, pp. 670–71. Photomechanical half-tone relief block from photographs and from hand-drawn framing. Kensington and Chelsea Public Libraries.

to my eyes, look decidedly down in the mouth. Other photographs printed in this issue include these snaps of touching-if-you-read-the-captions scenes on the *Carpathia*'s deck, images that had already been published in *Harper's Weekly* without the telling 'only surviving honeymooning man' detail in its caption (*Fig. 21*). But both these magazines wanted to do more than reframe and recontextualize by now familiar photographs. To command their market they needed to use pictures in order to give a real presence to key narratives. To do this they were both compelled and still able to turn to the work of artist-illustrators. The captions beneath such pictures ('from material supplied by Mr H. Senior, one of the surviving crew') remind us that the magazines project their work as no more than the realization of eyewitness statements, to make images the reader-viewer can see for themselves. There are in the 4 May issues of the *Graphic* and the *ILN* a lot of such scenes, of boats adrift, of the liner rearing and plunging, of dignity, pathos, and panic on board. I sense Géricault's image as a resource for several of them; and there is no doubt that the scenography of his image was fully available to art editors and illustrators in April 1912.

When the set designers and the director of the revival of *Ben Hur* at Drury Lane that Spring wanted to produce a 'tableau', as our hero and the Roman patrician Arrius wait to be rescued after the sea battle, they reached for Géricault's picture; or at any rate, the *Graphic*'s theatre reporter Steven Spurrier slanted the tableau in such a way as to make its reflection of *Medusa* visible (*Fig. 22*). The moment when Captain Smith went to his death was so important in the emergent mythopoesis of the end of the great liner that the *Graphic* put it on their 4 May front page, without necessarily inciting us to make any connection to Géricault's picture. But surely the *ILN* does so nudge us, in its full-page picture of the same date (*Fig. 23*). There are of course significant differences. We are shown a night scene, rather than a sunset; there is no wind, no surging seas, and the dead are not insistently present in the *ILN*'s narrative moment. But, even though there is more use of the middle ground here, the scene plays out within Géricault's pictorial structure. It is composed using twin pyramids, the left-hand one higher than the right-hand one, with a tiny focus of attention in the flashlight in the second lifeboat just where the rescuing ship in Géricault's painting had been. The caption tells us that we watch as Captain Smith takes off his lifebelt, saves a baby, and consigns his own soul to the deep. Thus the image offers a sacramental, rather than Géricault's mobilizing, epiphany.



THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS, MAY 4, 1912—667

## ABOARD THE RESCUE-SHIP: "TITANIC" SURVIVORS ON THE "CARPATHIA."

Photographs No. 1 of L.N.A.; No. 2 Reprints by Underwood and Underwood.



SUCCOURING THE SAVED: WOMEN PASSENGERS ON THE "CARPATHIA" SEWING FOR THE "TITANIC" SURVIVORS AND DISTRIBUTING CLOTHES.



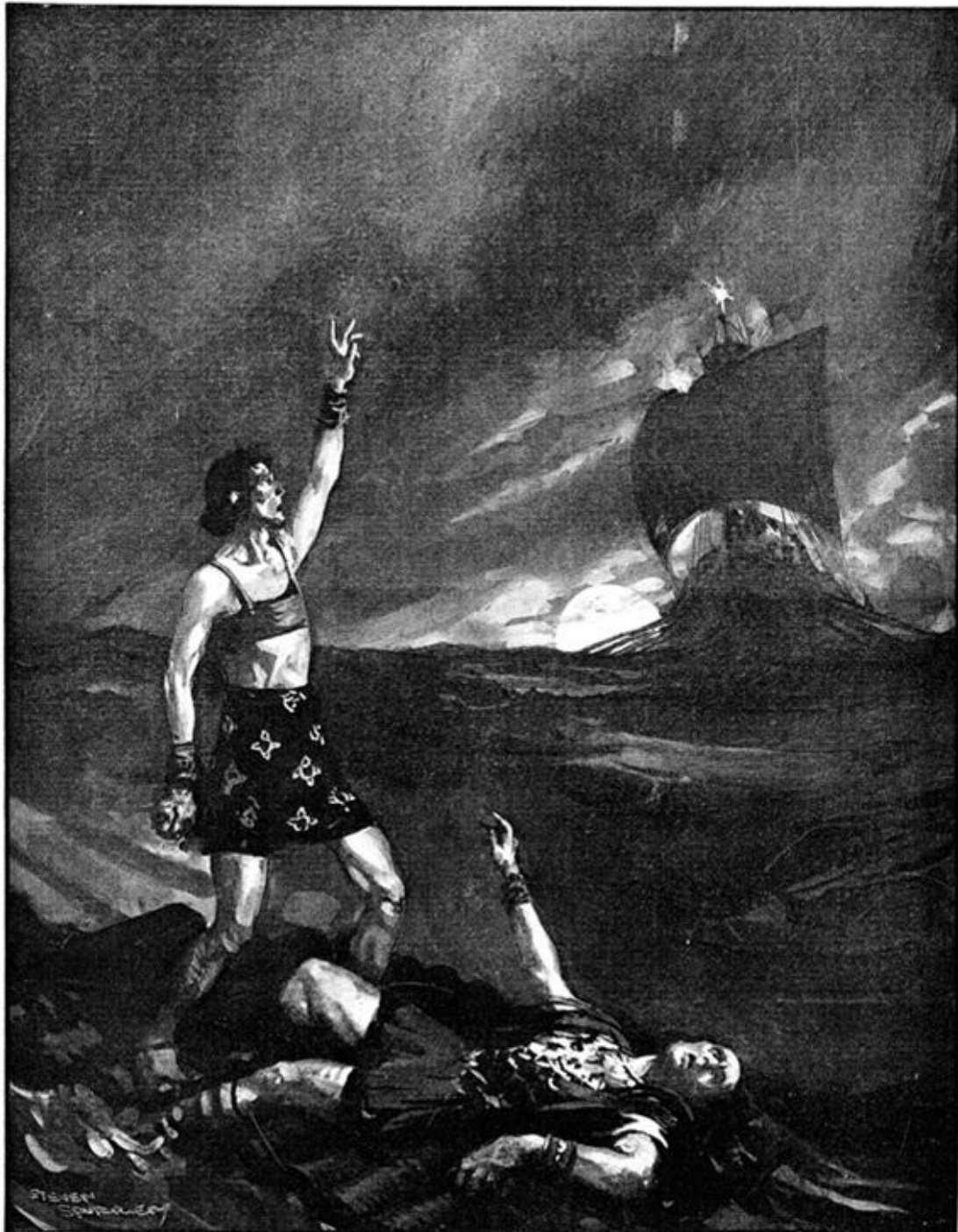
RESCUED "TITANIC" PASSENGERS ABOARD THE "CARPATHIA"; MR. GEORGE A. HARDER, WHO WAS THE ONLY MAN SAVED OF ELEVEN HONEYMOON COUPLES; MRS. HARDER; AND MRS. CHARLES M. HAYS, WHOSE HUSBAND WAS LOST.

When the "Titanic" survivors were picked up, many of them were very scantily clad, and some even wore in their night-clothes; hence the necessity for the red, charitably undertaken, on which the first of our two photographs shows women passengers of the "Carpathia" engaged. With regard to the second photograph, it should be said that it was taken aboard the "Carpathia" by Miss Beatrice Peckham. As we have already noted, Mr. Harder was the only man saved out of eleven honeymoon couples aboard the

"Titanic." Mr. and Mrs. Harder were in the concert-room, listening to the music, when the collision occurred. They heard the cry to man the life-boats, and, for fun, believing there was no danger, jumped into the first boat—very fortunately, so it turned out, for themselves. Mrs. Charles M. Hays, who was married, last her husband, the President of the Great Trunk Railway. His body was afterwards picked up by the cable-steamer "Mina" near the wreck of the disaster.

Fig. 21: 'Aboard the Rescue-Ship: "Titanic" Survivors on the "Carpathia" [...] Sewing for the "Titanic" Survivors'; and 'Mr George A. Harder, who was the only man saved of eleven honeymoon couples, Mrs Harder', *Illustrated London News*, 4 May 1912, p. 667. Photomechanical half-tone relief blocks. Kensington and Chelsea Public Libraries.

THE THRILLING SHIPWRECK AT DRURY LANE  
THE ESCAPE OF BEN HUR ON THE RAFT

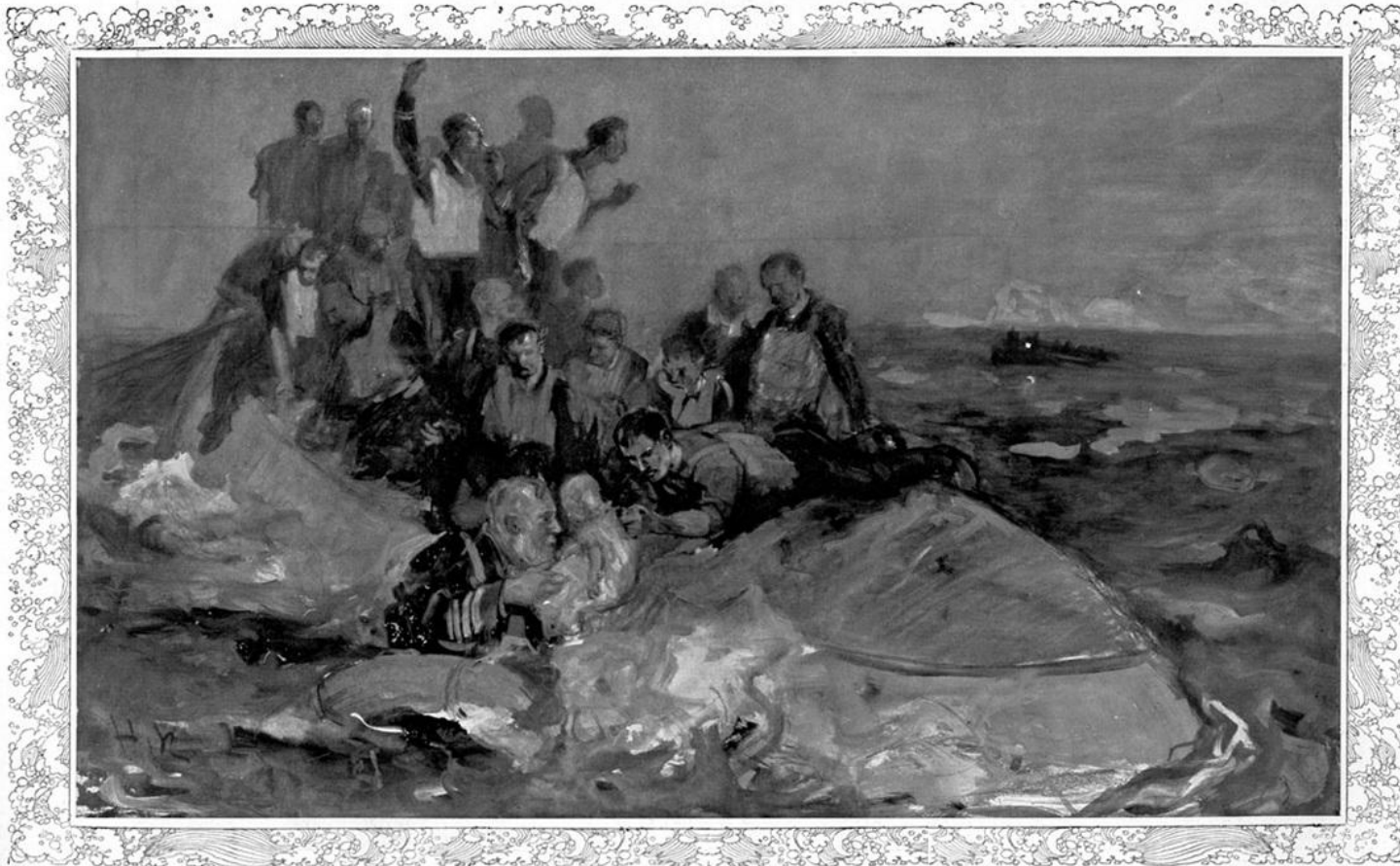


By a curious coincidence a wreck forms one of the most exciting incidents in "Ben Hur," revived at Drury Lane on April 18, while a yacht in motion is staged at the Garrick in "Improper Peter," produced on the following evening. Ben Hur (Mr. Arthur Wontner) tumbled three years at the oar on a Roman galley. When it is attacked by pirates and sunk, he is cast away on some wreckage with the Roman tribune who had been his slave-master, and both are ultimately picked up and saved.

ILLUSTRATION BY STEVEN SPURRIER

Fig. 22: Steven Spurrier, 'The Thrilling Shipwreck at Drury Lane: The Escape of Ben Hur on the Raft', *Graphic*, 27 April 1912, p. 595. Photomechanical half-tone relief block from wash drawing. Private collection.

DRAWN FROM MATERIAL SUPPLIED BY MR. H. SENIOR, A SURVIVOR: THE END OF THE "TITANIC'S" CAPTAIN.



THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS, MAY 4, 1912.—687

THE MOMENT BEFORE HE SAID THAT HE WOULD FOLLOW HIS SHIP, TOOK OFF HIS LIFE-BELT, AND WENT DOWN; CAPTAIN SMITH, OF THE ILL-FATED LINER, HANDING A BABY TO THOSE ABOARD AN OVERTURNED LIFE-BOAT.

Mr. H. Senior, one of the crew of the "Titanic," who went down with the vessel, swam for half an hour, then clambered on a floating cabin door, which sustained him for an hour or so, and was then pulled aboard an overturned life-boat, which was floating bottom upward with a lot of people on it, said of the heroic end of Captain Smith, the ill-fated master of the liner: "The mate, the captain, the second officer, and myself, all happened to be together on the boat-deck. There was an Italian woman standing near us with two babies, and there was another little baby running about. The captain took one baby; I took one of the Italian woman's babies; and she kept the other. . . . When I came up the baby I had in my arms was dead from the shock of the water." Later

he said, of his being pulled aboard the overturned life-boat: "The captain had been able to reach this boat and had handed over the baby, which died very shortly afterwards. They had pulled him on to this boat, but he slipped off again, telling them to let him go, that it was of no use, and that he would follow after the ship. In the water he had been resting on a life-buoy and had a life-belt on. He took the life-belt off and went down." On the overturned boat in question were, amongst others, Mr. Charles Lightoller, Second Officer of the "Titanic"; Colonel Archibald Gracie; and Mr. J. B. Thayer, jun. all of whom had gone down with the liner, and had come to the surface again.

DRAWN BY HENRY REUTERDAHL, ONE OF OUR SPECIAL ARTISTS IN NEW YORK, FROM MATERIAL SUPPLIED BY MR. H. SENIOR, ONE OF THE SURVIVING CREW.

Fig. 23: Henry Reuterdahl, 'Drawn from Material Supplied by Mr. H. Senior, a Survivor: The End of the "Titanic's" Captain', *Illustrated London News*, 4 May 1912, p. 687. Photomechanical half-tone relief block from wash drawing. Kensington and Chelsea Public Libraries.

The differences in structure, setting, and emphasis notwithstanding, the invocation of the *Raft* was surely deliberate. The printed page shows that Henry Reuterdaahl, the artist, added a horizontal strip of paper to the composition (running through the lifebelt of the man with raised arms, above the converging heads of the two men in the upper centre of the image) precisely so that there would be vertical space for that second pyramid, making the image's Géricault-ness more readily available to reader-viewers. Once complete, Reuterdaahl would have sent the wash drawing on a mail steamer from New York to London. Editorial input came first in the decision to give the image a full page, rather than a centrefold or half a page, and second, in the decision to give it a frame. Here, it seems to me, the foaming-breakers frame is rather an accolade to Reuterdaahl's work, than an evidence of anxiety about its status or significance.

It is impossible for us to see this picture as the *ILN*'s public would have seen it. We see in its relation to Géricault's *Raft* a manipulative hijack, without any of that postmodern irony that makes postmodern indebtedness OK. Also, we view the picture from a culture in which 'like the truth' has been conquered by photography, so that we see the picture's likeness to art only as mimicry, and not at all as collaboration. The 1912 public was differently equipped. They would have recognized the scene as truthlike, because since 1819 so much of the consensus that shipwrecked voyagers look like this had flowed through realizations that deployed Géricault's scenography. They would at the same time have taken the reference as homage, and would have understood its effect as both heightening and deepening the mythic significance of the moment they witness through this visual fiction.

---

<sup>1</sup> I want to thank Laurel Brake and Jim Mussell, and all those involved in the Stead conference at the British Library, for two days of rich and rewarding discussion. I also want to thank the reference librarians at Kensington and Chelsea Public Libraries for supporting my work in their collections, and my anonymous reviewer at *19*, for reading me carefully and generously, and for suggesting a real improvement.

<sup>2</sup> Martin Meisel, *Realizations: Narrative, Pictorial, and Theatrical Arts in Nineteenth-Century England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), pp. 30–33.

<sup>3</sup> Luis Nadeau, *The Encyclopedia of Printing, Photographic and Photomechanical Processes* (Frederickton: Atelier Nadeau, 1994) is an indispensable guide through the complex and confusing history and nomenclature of the field at a time of continuous innovation, when patent law was still somewhat less likely to protect a competitive advantage than was commercial secrecy and misdirection.

<sup>4</sup> Photomechanical lithography was confined to luxury reproductive printmaking (principally as collotype); offset lithography and the simplifications that would deliver photolithography from skilled craft processes and short print runs were still in their infancy in 1912. Photomechanical intaglio prints (photogravures) were also produced for the luxury end of the print market, as high-status reproductions for framing or putting in a portfolio; the high-volume industrialization of intaglio-printmaking (as rotogravure) which had such an important role in expensive magazine printing from the 1920s onwards, was still in its infancy in 1912. Otto Lilien, *History of Industrial Gravure Printing up to 1920* (London: Lund Humphries, 1972), pp. 45–54, 107–22; David Reed, *The Popular Magazine in Britain and the America, 1880–1906* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), pp. 27–49.

<sup>5</sup> Gary Beegan, *The Mass Image: A Social History of Photomechanical Reproduction in Victorian London* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

<sup>6</sup> Joanna Selborne, *British Wood-Engraved Book Illustration 1904–1940: A Break with Tradition* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).

<sup>7</sup> Richard L. Hills, *Papermaking in Britain 1488–1988: A Short History* (London: Athlone Press, 1988).

<sup>8</sup> Oliver Musson, *The Typographical Association: Origins and History up to 1949* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1954).

<sup>9</sup> Paul Hogarth, *The Artist as Reporter* (London: Fraser, 1986); Leonard de Vries and Ilonka van Amstel, *History as Hot News 1865–1897* (London: Murray, 1973). See also the resources of The Melton Prior Institute <<http://www.meltonpriorinstitut.org/>> [accessed 12 April 2013]. The major study remains that by Peter W. Sinnema, *Dynamics of the Pictured Page: Representing the Nation in the 'Illustrated London News'* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998).

<sup>10</sup> Lorenz Eitner, *Géricault: His Life and Work* (London: Orbis Publishing, 1982); Nina Athanassoglou-Kallmyer, *Théodore Géricault* (London: Phaidon, 2010).

<sup>11</sup> The worldwide impact of Levy's screens can be traced through the pages of the *Penrose Annual* from 1895 onwards. See also 'Max Levy and Company', an unsigned memoir available online as 'The History of Max Levy' at <<http://thelevy.org/>> [accessed 31 August 2012].

<sup>12</sup> Courbet gave his *Painter's Studio* of 1855 (Musée d'Orsay, Paris) the subtitle 'a real allegory'.

<sup>13</sup> Michael Baxandall, *Patterns of Intention: On the Historical Explanation of Pictures* (London: Yale University Press, 1985), pp. 58–59.

<sup>14</sup> Basil Greenhill, *The Life and Death of the Merchant Sailing Ship* (London: National Maritime Museum / HMSO, 1980), p. 28. Rudyard Kipling's evocation of the ocean's annual harvest of souls at the climax of *Captains Courageous* (1897) makes the point.

<sup>15</sup> Jules Michelet had offered a reading of the *Raft* as an allegory of the French People during the Bourbon Restoration in a lecture printed in *Cours professé au Collège de France 1847–1848* (Paris: Chamerot, 1848).

<sup>16</sup> A. Corréard and J. B. H Savigny, *Naufage de la frégate La Méduse, faisant partie de l'expédition du Sénégal, en 1816* (Paris: Hoquet, 1817). Moncrieff's play was revived in 1830, when it was given a distinctly Géricaultesque staging. See Meisel, p. 190.

<sup>17</sup> Christine Riding, 'Staging *The Raft of the Medusa*', *Visual Culture in Britain*, 5 (2004), 1–26. See also Athanassoglou-Kallmyer, chapter 5.

<sup>18</sup> Published in Captain Frederick Beechey's *Narrative of a Voyage to the Pacific and Beering's Strait* (London: Colburn and Bentley, 1831).

<sup>19</sup> Patrick Leary, *The Punch Brotherhood: Table Talk and Print Culture in Mid-Victorian London* (London: British Library, 2010).

<sup>20</sup> Everardo Ramos, *Du marché au marchand: la gravure populaire brésilienne* (Gravelines: Musée du dessin et de l'estampe originale de Gravelines, 2005), p. 28.

<sup>21</sup> Stanley Fish, 'Interpreting the Variorum', *Critical Enquiry*, 2 (1976), 465–85.

<sup>22</sup> T. J. Clark, *Image of the People: Gustave Courbet and the 1848 Revolution* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1972), pp. 11–12.

<sup>23</sup> Nash, one of the *Graphic's* team of 'actual professional artists' is so called and included in a group portrait in an unpaginated four-page supplement to the *Graphic's* Christmas Number for 1882.

<sup>24</sup> 'One supposes' is always an unhappy position. But it seems unlikely that the *ILN's* editors would have felt in such want of a non-news marine disaster picture that they would have originated the commission. If they had had that yen, they must have known that there would be another disaster along shortly. Everard Morant Cox produced several illustrations for the *ILN* on nautical and boating themes in the 1880s and 1890s, and several for *Punch*. The signatures of Evelyn (here) and Everard (elsewhere), 'E. Morant Cox', look very similar.

<sup>25</sup> Roland Barthes, 'L'Effet de Réel', *Communications*, 11 (1968), 84–89, depends on an opposition between the *réel* and the *vraisemblable*. In English, 'verisimilitude/inous' are ludicrous in their sesquipedalian Latinity. The presence of 'likeness' in their Germanic equivalents seems apt in this context.

<sup>26</sup> Elizabeth Siegel with Martha Packer, *The Marvelous Album of Madame B: Being the Handiwork of a Victorian Lady of Considerable Talent* (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago, 2009); Patrizia Di Bello, *Women's Albums and Photography in Victorian England: Ladies, Mothers and Flirts* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2007).

<sup>27</sup> Tom Gretton, 'Le statut subalterne de la photographie: Etude de la presentation des images dans les hebdomadaires illustrés (Londres, Paris 1885–1910)', *Etudes photographiques*, 20 (2007), 34–39.