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HC 421: Digital Humanities  
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The goal for this project was to visually reinterpret Richard Kennedy's *A Boy at the Hogarth Press*. Kennedy's book offers an interesting perspective on the Hogarth Press. According to Bevis Hillier, the author of the introduction to the book, Kennedy's "greatest asset" as a storyteller is his "naivete"<sup>1</sup>:

He has the raw adolescent honesty which Denton Welch died with and which Rousseau never grew out of. Rawness is also sensitivity: with no social carapace, no excessive surface wit to deflect or mangle the truth, he was then what Wyndham Lewis called 'the revolutionary simpleton': one who asks questions which the sophisticated are afraid to ask, and who therefore gets answers they never find.<sup>2</sup>

This "adolescent honesty" is also reflected in the "delightful" illustrations Kennedy includes in his book<sup>3</sup>. The sole purpose for these casual snapshots was to provide a view of everyday life at the Hogarth Press. With no aesthetic motivations, Kennedy allows his drawings to tell an "honest" tale of "the heart of the literary world."<sup>4</sup> While these illustrations are immensely helpful for understanding the spatial dynamics of the Hogarth Press, as well as the ambiance of the space, they do not offer any concrete details about 52 Tavistock Square. The aim of this project was to balance the impressionist works of Richard Kennedy with more grounded technical details. Some of the questions I hoped to answer in the process of this reinterpretation were as follows: How was the floor plan laid out? Where were the windows located? How were the various rooms of the

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<sup>1</sup> Kennedy, Richard. "Introduction." In *A boy at the Hogarth Press. Illustrated by the author* (London: Heinemann Educational, 1972), viii.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Kennedy, Richard. *A boy at the Hogarth Press* (London: Heinemann, 1972), 25.

press spatially related to one another? Where were the vantage points of Kennedy's various perspectives?

The process for this digital humanities project was broken into two parts: data collection and visual representation. The first phase consisted primarily of analyzing the text in the book, as well as comparing the various perspective sketches with the text and with Kennedy's rough floor plan of the Press (this floor plan was the primary basis for the project). The goal of this step was to gain a deeper understanding of the space as well as to reconcile somewhat contradictory elements in the various drawings. Though Kennedy's drawings do a lot to represent the feeling of the space, they do not provide a realistic view. Hence, in this phase, I delved into Kennedy's work to extract the concrete from the impressionistic. To supplement the information provided by Kennedy, I also explored the area of Tavistock Square on Google Earth to understand the urban fabric, as well as the surrounding building typology. Though this method was immensely helpful, finding more fine-grain details (like the relationship between the basement level of the row-houses<sup>5</sup> in the area with the sidewalks) proved to be challenging. This prompted me to enlist the help of my cousin who is currently studying in London. He went to Tavistock Square and "walked" me through the site using Skype. The pictures he took of the various building facades in the area proved to be very useful.

The second phase (visual representation) began with digitizing relevant illustrations and text descriptions. After scanning Kennedy's drawings, I edited them using Adobe Photoshop to make the line-work bolder and thus more readable.<sup>6</sup> Next, I took the images into Adobe Illustrator

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<sup>5</sup> "Row House" refers to a specific housing typology. Houses built according to this typology are generally tall and narrow with central staircase connecting the various floors. Furthermore, these types of dwellings are essentially a row of houses, and as such, are joined by common sidewalks.

<sup>6</sup> Some of the changes I made to the images are as follows: Adjusted the "levels" of the images to make the white parts lighter and the black lines darker (essentially increasing the contrast of the line work with its background). Cropping

to add frames around them with the goal of making them appear more prominently in the composition. The next stage was to create a more conventional floor plan, based on the one done by Kennedy. The software I used for this task was Autodesk Revit. The details for this reinterpreted floor plan were obtained mostly from Kennedy's descriptions, as well as Google Earth, my cousin's images of Tavistock Square and also a small amount of guess work (based on the typical layout of the row-house building typology<sup>7</sup>). Once the floor plan was completed, I imported it into Adobe Illustrator and added the notes Kennedy had included in his own floor plan, using the same red color to make the presentation visually cohesive. The last step before uploading my work onto the internet, was visually representing the vantage points of some of Kennedy's key drawings of the Hogarth Press. To accomplish this, I laid out a "page" for each image on Adobe Illustrator. Each page included a floor plan of the building on the left side, with the perspective of the image highlighted<sup>8</sup>.

After investigating various websites and internet tools, like PowerPoint Online and Kizoa for example, I decided to utilize Prezi for the purposes of this project. The Prezi presentation is broken up into four segments:

- **Introduction (slide 1):** Includes the title and subtitle of the project as well as the images from Kennedy's book that were included in the project.
- **Part I | Characters Featured in Kennedy's Floor Plan (slides 2-8):** In this section of the presentation, each slide zooms in on a specific figure portrayed in Kennedy's floor plan.

Among them are: Richard Kennedy, Leonard Woolf, Virginia Woolf, Mrs. Cartwright, Miss

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unwanted areas that showed up on the scanner. Minimizing the appearance of page creases (accomplished using the eraser tool and well as adjust the "levels" of the images).

<sup>7</sup> See note 5

<sup>8</sup> In order to highlight the vantage point of Kennedy's illustration, I selected the area of the floor plan shown in the drawing and reduced the opacity of all the other parts of the floor plan. Furthermore, I highlighted the angle of the perspective using two red lines and a red gradient in the middle of those lines.

Belcher & the bagman, Mr. Bumpus. Also included on each slide are any relevant quotes from Kennedy's book.

- **Part II | Interpretation of Kennedy's Floor Plan (slides 9&10):** Provides a side-by-side comparison of Kennedy's floor plan with the more conventional floor plan developed for this project.
- **Part III | Views of the Hogarth Press (slides 11-21):** This part of the presentation offers a more in-depth understanding of a selection of relevant images (10 in total) from Kennedy's book. Each slide is dedicated to one illustration and includes the drawing with the names of the characters represented in the drawing, a highlighted floor plan to the left and a relevant quote that either describes the physical attributes of the area portrayed or the event taking place in the drawing.

As with any digital humanities project, there is a lot of room for expansion and improvement within this project. A possible next step could be going through the writings and correspondences of other people who worked at the Hogarth Press (Virginia Woolf in particular) to gain more in-depth knowledge about the location that housed it. It would be very interesting to compare the various views and opinions surrounding the location of the press. Everyone experience space differently. Going through and analyzing what Virginia Woolf thought of the space in comparison to Richard Kennedy for example, could tell us a lot about their characters and dispositions. They say: "beauty is in the eye of the beholder". I will rephrase this and say, "*space* is in the eye of the beholder". By understanding the "space" a person sees, you start to comprehend the "eye" that sees it.