

## Dickens and the middle-class weekly

John Drew

Between 30 March 1850 and his death on 9 June 1870, Dickens was the editor and part-owner, latterly also the publisher (1859-1870), of two of the most prominent periodicals in the Anglophone world, *Household Words* and *All the Year Round*. Here were serialised many of the nineteenth-century's most notable works of fiction—among them *Hard Times*, *North and South*, *Cranford*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, *The Woman in White*, *Great Expectations* and *The Moonstone*—together with well over 7,000 original short stories, poems, non-fiction articles, essays, reports and exposés, the majority of them commissioned, cajoled and copy-edited (at times, entirely re-written) by Dickens and his trusty sub-editor, W. H. Wills. To Lord Northcliffe of the *Daily Mail* Dickens was, quite simply, 'the greatest magazine editor either of his own, or any other age.'<sup>1</sup> For the American intellectual and *Harper's Weekly* editor George W. Curtis, toasting Dickens's health in front of 200 other newspapermen in 1868, there was 'no doubt that among the most vigorous forces in the elevation of the character of the Weekly Press ha[ve] been *Household Words* and *All the Year Round*; and since the beginning of the publication of *Household Words*, the periodical literature of England has been born again.'<sup>2</sup> The founding of *Household Words* was itself the consummation of a desire to sit in the driver's cab (as Dickens liked to see it<sup>3</sup>) of a periodically-issued publication that he had harboured since his first steps in journalism, but which found expression in a variety of abortive projects in the late 1830s and early 1840s. These can be briefly sketched.

As launch editor of *Bentley's Miscellany* (1837-39) Dickens had found himself working on a thoroughly sustainable literary monthly, but felt that his power to shape and adapt it to his artistic vision was limited by the publisher's interference;<sup>4</sup> as launch editor and sole contributor to the weekly *Master Humphrey's Clock*, Dickens enjoyed this power to the

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utmost, but found himself unable or unwilling to share it with co-contributors in such a way as to make the labour sustainable. The infrastructure of the journal and the whimsical concept of the multi-authored miscellany receded to little more than the packaging for the two serially-published novels that the *Clock* carried, *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1840-41) and *Barnaby Rudge* (1841).<sup>5</sup> After travels in America and Italy, and the issuing of a further serial novel in monthly parts (*Martin Chuzzlewit*, 1843-44), Dickens's thoughts reverted strongly to the attractions of newspaper or magazine editing not only as a surer livelihood than novel-writing and a powerful way of maintaining emotional bonds with his readers, but also as a realisation of a genuine urge for some form of public service. In this he was encouraged by his new publishers, the former printers Bradbury and Evans, who were already enjoying success as proprietors of the satirical weekly, *Punch*. We may be sure that table talk between Dickens and his circle during the mid 1840s canvassed many different possibilities. Among them, hints have survived of an aborted periodical project of the kind Leigh Hunt (an important and underrated forbear) might have proposed, to be called *The Cricket*.<sup>6</sup> Vestiges of another grand scheme remain in the seventeen numbers of the *Daily News* (a new Liberal paper with strong backing among railway developers) which Dickens superintended as hands-on 'Literary Editor' in January-February 1846, before resigning and escaping what he privately—in a characteristic *volte face*—called the 'daily nooses' which the paper's other proprietors, including the hapless Bradbury and Evans, had prepared for him. His connection as a contributor, however, continued until later in the year,<sup>7</sup> by which time he had begun planning a new work of serial fiction in monthly parts (*Dealings with the Firm of Dombey & Son*, 1846-48); as this drew to a close in 1848, his journalistic interests were temporarily satisfied in a substantial if miscellaneous series of leaders, reviews and squibs in the pages of *The Examiner*, now somewhat staidly edited, in comparison with its adventurous youth under Leigh Hunt, by John Forster.<sup>8</sup>

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The desire to ‘found something’ more enduring and personally driven remained strong, however. Thus, in late 1849, with *Dombey* concluded, and the first five monthly numbers of *David Copperfield* in print, Dickens reported that he had finally ‘without a doubt, got the Periodical notion.’<sup>9</sup> His subsequent outlining to Forster of his ideas for the contents, as well as of a way of binding them all together conceptually under the rubric of ‘The Shadow,’ has often been discussed – as Forster himself remarks, ‘hardly anything more characteristic survives him’ in point of fanciful embellishment. Recent critics have fruitfully explored ways in which, respectively, the ideas of memory, the past, and ‘deep character’ are subsequently evoked in the pages of the new periodical, in ways that can be clearly related to the kind of über-persona delineated in this remarkable prelude. The more sinister implications of a newsgathering entity represented as ‘a certain SHADOW, which may go into any place, by sunlight, moonlight, starlight, firelight, candlelight, and be in all homes, and all nooks and corners, and be supposed to be cognisant of everything, and go everywhere’ have not gone unnoticed.<sup>10</sup>

A blueprint for sustainability was also embodied (perhaps one should say, disembodied?) in ‘The Shadow’, a character ‘which any of the writers may maintain without difficulty’, concentrating ‘into one focus all that is done in the paper.’ Dickens’s projection here of different contributors collectively surrendering personality to take on the disguise of the nameless guiding spirit of the publication, is not difficult to construe as an imaginative rendering of the process of writing anonymously for a publication. Anonymity was to be a distinguishing feature of Dickens’s weekly journals from their inception, and while a common enough feature of Victorian print culture at this time, their handling of it raises questions about the exercise of power, the communication of celebrity, and the tension between authorial and corporate identity in a particularly acute fashion. In so far as these have been investigated as case studies of the relationship between Dickens as weekly

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magazine editor and specific contributors—Wilkie Collins, Elizabeth Gaskell, Harriet Martineau, Henry Morley—there has been a marked tendency to view the relationship in adversarial terms of oppressor versus oppressed.<sup>11</sup> More theoretical, generalised studies of anonymity, however, have found much evidence in Victorian debates about anonymity to suggest that actually ‘Victorian readers and writers embraced a more flexible, collective notion of authorship’ in which anonymity could provide strategic freedoms rather than uniformly equate to exclusion and lack of individual visibility. The practice and imaginative delineation of collective authorship in Dickens’s journals and their challenge to constructions of the periodical ‘author as an intentional, single-gendered agent in literary history’ is a research area ripe for enquiry.<sup>12</sup>

For convenience *Household Words* and *All the Year Round* can be considered middle-class weeklies, but to do so begs a number of crucial questions about the relationship between the variables—known and unknowable—of frequency of publication, audience, and aspiration. From the outset, Dickens and his publishers distributed the journals across three distinct frequencies, physical formats, and price bands: as a 2d. weekly, sold as an uncut, unstitched folding booklet of 24 pages; as a 9 or 11d. monthly with green/blue wrapper, containing four or five weekly numbers, a table of contents and an increasingly substantial ‘Advertiser’ fore and aft; bi-annually, cloth-bound, with a titlepage and Index, at 5s. 6d. Although complete runs under Dickens’s editorship only survive in the high-end volume form, enough instances of weekly and monthly format remain as evidence to infer a deliberate hybridity of form, eloquent of an attempt to vertically integrate elements of the production and marketing, so as to maximise the publication’s reach across different classes of purchaser.

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As Lorna Huett has shown, in a ground-breaking essay on the significance of the physical format of Dickens's journals, if one takes into account such further factors as paper size and quality,

a distinct ambiguity in the nature of Dickens's periodicals emerges... In adopting the publishing and printing practices of the cheap educational magazines and the [penny] bloods, yet at the same time producing a journal which outwardly resembled the highbrow reviews, he deliberately trod a fine line between genres. The hybridity which characterised his journal's contents was also the defining characteristic of its structure and thus of its identity as a publication.<sup>13</sup>

At one level, positing hybridity as a definition of identity is little more than reiterating that *Household Words* and *All the Year Round* were miscellanies. However, the crossing of genre boundaries and the holding of different conventions in artful poise is a characteristic Dickensian performance, and something that both journals clearly encouraged.<sup>14</sup> Timing is also crucial, for, with Newspaper Stamp duty still leviable until 1855, *Household Words* legally needed to steer clear of reporting hard news. Imaginative presentation of material, its translation into fictive scenarios—thinly or thickly disguised, obliquely or tangentially approached—was an early expedient which, drawing on a longstanding traditions of whimsicality in the British essay, was gradually cultivated into an aesthetic. On another level, the socio-cultural transitions and alertness implied by hybridity of form and content are arguably inscribed in a much more literal form on the cover and inner pages of every number of the magazine. The title '*Household Words*' and the legend 'Conducted by || Charles Dickens' running across every spread can be read as important complementary determinants of the journal's identity. Both deserve scrutiny.

The hunt for a suitably versatile title dominated Dickens's thoughts in the New Year of 1850, in a stream of letters to Forster. In mid-January Dickens suggested 'The Robin. With this motto from Goldsmith. *The redbreast, celebrated for its affection to mankind, continues with us, the year round.*'<sup>15</sup> Then, before the month's end, came the suggestion 'Mankind', and next, as if to explain the underlying link between this ambitious circulation target and the

editor who could successfully address such a readership, ‘CHARLES DICKENS. A weekly journal designed for the instruction and entertainment of all classes of readers. CONDUCTED BY HIMSELF.’ When this too failed to convince his adviser, Dickens peppered him with mixed shot:

[I]f there *be* anything wanting in the other name, [...] this is very pretty, and just supplies it[:] THE HOUSEHOLD VOICE. I have thought of many others, as – THE HOUSEHOLD GUEST. THE HOUSEHOLD FACE. THE COMRADE. THE MICROSCOPE. THE HIGHWAY OF LIFE. THE LEVER. THE ROLLING YEARS. THE HOLLY TREE [...]. EVERYTHING.<sup>16</sup>

While each carries in nucleus a theme that can be detected in the journals as they unfolded over subsequent years, and the fertility of invention is remarkable, nevertheless the variety of ideas considered suggests a radical uncertainty as to the journal’s purpose or angle on its material. The ideas of power and energy running through a number of these prototypes are developed in another suggestive title, again fitted out with its own epigraph, that brings the figures of Jo Gargery and the Blakean artist into unexpected communion:

THE FORGE:  
A WEEKLY JOURNAL,  
CONDUCTED BY CHARLES DICKENS.

Thus at the glowing FORGE of Life our actions must be wrought,  
Thus on the sounding anvil shaped  
Each burning deed and thought. – *Longfellow*

Hitting at last in early February on ‘HOUSEHOLD WORDS’<sup>17</sup> – a ‘very pretty name’ that pulled together earlier ideas about addressing familiarly all ages and classes of readers in their own homes—Dickens ensured that its Shakespearean epigraph (‘Familiar in their mouths as household words’) would also sound a combative and aspirational note, recalling the famous ‘St Crispin’s Day’ speech in Act IV of *Henry V*, with its projection of an elite minority and the promised conferral of social advancement. It functions as a suitably ambivalent, if not polyvalent, title for a journal that had as yet, no fixed identity. Enough has

been said to show that Dickens was brimming with imaginative hopes for what could be achieved with such a publication, but his notion of its precise contours was still understandably vague, as this outline, sent to a would-be contributor, of the kind of article that would be acceptable for submission, suggests: 'It should be interesting, of course; if somewhat romantic, so much the better; we can't be too wise, but we must be very agreeable.'<sup>18</sup>

The adoption of what ones hopes is the editorial (rather than the paternal) 'we' here leads naturally to consideration of the way in which Dickens's weekly journals figured the editorial role and persona, under the banner 'Conducted by Charles Dickens'.<sup>19</sup> For reasons already touched on, the persona has seldom been approached as representative of a genuine workers' collective but rather as a choric voice, reinforcing core Dickensian beliefs, and acting as a guarantor of good behaviour. The principal connotation of 'Conducted by' can simply be taken then, as part of its homage to *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal*, on which the layout and business model of *Household Words* was based and which, since 1832, had reassured readers that it was edited to impeccable moral standards by its two publishers-cum-educators, William and Robert Chambers.<sup>20</sup> However, in so far as conducting involves chaperoning, the strapline also implies movement on a shared journey, an already favoured editorial paradigm which Henry Morley plays with cheekily in beginning his 'Letter from a Highly Respectable Old Lady' with the ejaculation 'GRACIOUS Mr. Conductor (which is like an omnibus) what a nice new journal you have got!'<sup>21</sup> Omnibus conducting, train driving, electrical conduction, telegraphic signalling: all can become, in the *Household Words* and *All the Year Round* imaginary, analogues for magazine editing, and form what I have considered elsewhere as a widely dispersed 'poetics of communication' in Dickens's weekly journals, deriving from their strapline.<sup>22</sup>

In some ways, however, the musical connotations of ‘Conducted by...’ have the most resonance for the kind of performance art to which the magazines aspired, week after week. At the outset of *Dickens, Journalism, Music*, Robert Bledsoe establishes ‘the imaginative context for a consideration of the place of music in both journals,’ observing how

Dickens conducts the players in a journalistic orchestra who, under [his] direction, perform “home music” (one of the titles Dickens considered for the journal before settling on *Household Words*).<sup>23</sup>

Bledsoe also stresses music’s repeated function in the journals as a catalyst for memory; memory’s connection to shadow—of the past, of parting, of death—and the passage of time, has already been noted as a determining feature of Dickens’s project in its early phase. According to an early twentieth-century source, this was something he spoke of eloquently to Wilkie Collins, waxing lyrical over his desire, through a low-cost publication, to reach a mass audience:

[H]e told me ... what faith he had in it; how he loved it; how honest he had found it; how quick to respond to the good and true; and how, when he had planned his periodical, he had felt like an organist who, touching a little key-board, sets a mighty instrument quivering and throbbing, and filling the air with music.<sup>24</sup>

This beatific vision of Dickens as St. Cecilia rather stretches the imagination, yet the idea of Dickens as editor orchestrating an ensemble and conducting from first violin is a helpful way of construing the function of the imprimatur which appears on every page.

Does the character and location of a journal’s office have a bearing on its identity? If so, then the identities of *Household Words* and *All the Year Round* also owed something to mid-century Covent Garden, and a fancifully-constructed building. A lease had been taken on premises at No. 16 Wellington-street North, on the eastern side of a busy thoroughfare leading south onto the Strand:

The old, original *Household Words* office was a graceful, highly-inviting, *dainty* little structure. It really seemed in keeping with the brilliant owner, and even with his genial, sympathetic character. [...] It was but a miniature sort of building, but



sufficed. Exceedingly pretty was the bowed front, the bow reaching up for one story, and a ground floor window, each giving a flood of light, quite necessary for literary work. It seemed more a residence suited, as the auctioneer would say, for ‘a bachelor of position.’<sup>25</sup>

Bradbury & Evans’s offices on Bouverie Street, Whitefriars, were less than five minutes’ walk along Fleet Street to the east. Indeed, as Mary Shannon explores in detail, an astonishing network of editors and imprints can be pinpointed in the 1840s and 1850s to this short street and its environs.<sup>26</sup> For Dickens, it was a highly convenient set-up, and the living apartments on the upper floors proved a useful bivouac whenever – as was increasingly the case as the decade wore on – it suited him to stay in town, and not return to the marital home. The offices also functioned as a counting-house and a shop, with sales made direct to the public on the ground floor.

It was from here that the first number of *Household Words* was issued, inaugurating a weekly rhythm of editorial duties that would last, without break, until Dickens’s death in June 1870. Friends and acquaintances, as usual, had personal perspectives on the promise of the early numbers. A good example is Henry Morley, a university-educated doctor who had written for *The Examiner* and who was just starting to contribute articles on sanitary matters to *Household Words*. Morley doubted strongly that ‘Dickens was the right man to edit a journal of literary mark [...] he has not a sound literary taste.’ Part of Morley’s reservation concerned the writing style that he was asked to adopt, and the audience he was expected to entertain and educate:

Dickens’s journal does not seem my element [...] the readers are an indiscriminating mass to whom I’m not accustomed to imagine myself speaking [...]. [P]oetry I write for cultivated tastes; [...] in the *Examiner* I speak to people who are clever, liberal-minded, and love wit. *Household Words* has an audience which I cannot write for naturally.<sup>27</sup>

It is to Morley’s credit, and Dickens’s as his mentor, that he broadened his outlook and adapted his style so as to become the most prolific contributor to *Household Words* bar none.

Nevertheless, this perception of – not to say prejudice against – the new readership Dickens was trying to reach was something of which commentators were acutely aware. After the first number, the *Bradford Observer* reported Dickens's initiative as a bold stratagem to move downmarket to capture a vast but lowly readership whose support, unlike that of the middle-class devotees of his monthly serials, could not be counted on:

Mr Dickens has started a new periodical... Whether the effort will prove successful, time alone will tell: it is far from being a matter of course... In that particular department hitherto selected by the author of 'Pickwick,' he has had few if any rivals... Coming down however to the common battlefield of the pennies; forsaking the silver and cleaving to the copper, stepping out of the parlour, the drawing room, the boudoir and the club, to shake hands with miners and combers, with factory workers and "horny palmed" artisans ... at the same time encountering the shock of some scores of rude competitors, who have pre-occupied the field and enlisted the sympathies of the multitude,—this is another matter.<sup>28</sup>

Predictably friendly puffs, in the form of extracts from Dickens's leading article in the first issue ('A Preliminary Word'), were offered by *The Daily News*, *The Morning Chronicle*, and *The Examiner*<sup>29</sup>—but the sense that Dickens was taking a great gamble, albeit from philanthropic motives, was widespread.

Granted that part of Dickens's general intentions for his new work involved, as he saw it, stealing readers from sensational and incendiary publications at the cheaper end of the market, he cannot have expected a warm welcome from every quarter. Such publications were 'Bastards of the mountain [...] Panders to the basest passions of the lowest natures', which *Household Words* considered it would be 'our highest service to displace' ('A Preliminary Word', p. 2). Unsurprisingly then, one of the papers that felt itself attacked, the recently-launched *Reynolds's Newspaper*, made no bones about responding aggressively, with later editorial references to 'this drivelling, fawning, lickspittle Dickens [...] that lickspittle hanger-on to the skirts of Aristocracy's robe [...] originally a dinnerless penny-a-liner on the *Morning Chronicle*.'<sup>30</sup> With sales of his first issue estimated at over 100,000

Dickens wrote to his wealthy Tory friend, Angel Burdett Coutts that his new venture was ‘playing havoc with the villainous literature.’<sup>31</sup>

In the same letter, Dickens predicts that *Household Words* ‘will become a *good property* ... and although the expences {sic} of such a venture are necessarily very great, the circulation much more than repays them.’ The audited receipts ledger<sup>32</sup> shows that the total profits distributed amongst the magazine’s four partners for its first six months of publication amounted to £526 5s. 2d., or around £37,990 in terms of today’s purchasing power.<sup>33</sup> Factoring in an estimate for start-up costs, as well as fixed and variable costs for the first semester, allows something like a total income figure to be projected, which in turn can be converted into an average number of copies sold weekly over the 26 weeks of the first half year: in this case, 34,500.<sup>34</sup> The first number was reported to have hit six figures; the sale seems to have steadied at just under 40,000; reports of sales for the ‘Extra Numbers’ for Christmas (1851–1867), comprising inter-connected stories and poetry, plot a steep upward trajectory in the 1860s, from 191,000 (*Somebody’s Luggage*, 1862) ‘and ultimately reaching, Forster records, “before he died, to nearly three hundred thousand”’<sup>35</sup> Dickens’s decision, following an irreversible quarrel with his publishers Bradbury & Evans and fellow proprietors in *Household Words*, to establish *All the Year Round* with an instalment of serial fiction as its leading article—a distinct break from its predecessor’s custom of leading with a freshly researched, often satirical, non-fiction essay—was a modest publishing coup, and it led, so far as the UK circulation was concerned, to a doubling of regular circulation to something approaching 100,000. The break gave him ‘the freedom,’ as Laurel Brake argues, given the advent of a plethora of illustrated monthlies carrying high quality fiction, ‘to fashion a second life for his original plan, with relatively small changes, rather than to wholly rethink his project in light of the new generation of the magazine in the 1860s.’<sup>36</sup>

Yet circulation figures, even when accurate, are the most unidimensional of statistics, leaving us in the dark as to the numbers of readers countrywide who come into the sphere of influence of the distributed text after the census date, and ignorant of its extra-national journeying. The little that is known about the print runs and sales of Victorian periodicals within the British isles can only be augmented by suppositions and anecdotes about their impact overseas: in continental Europe, in the dependencies of the Empire, and in the New World. The following nugget from *The Bury and Norwich Post*, however, indicates that Dickens's weeklies, like *Magwitch* and *Micawber*, were highly successful emigrants:

Mr. Dickens's new story, "A Tale of Two Cities," seems to have secured a large circulation for the new periodical, *All The Year Round*. [I]t is in type at the present moment, and a thousand or two copies are now in the cabin of one of the Atlantic steamers, on their way to certain publishers at New York. This foreign branch of our periodical literature is increasingly lucrative. Although there is no copyright with America, yet arrangements are made by which early copies are forwarded, and a genuine sale obtained. But it is to the colonies that the chief export takes place. Every three weeks or so, you may see a van creeping heavily up Bouverie-street, laden with literature from the establishments of Messrs. Bradbury and Evans and others. Copies of *Punch* will greet the traveller's eye at the Cape, in the cities of Ind, in Melbourne, Sydney, Newzealand. I hardly know, indeed, what place to except.<sup>37</sup>

Dickens and W. H. Wills did not leave such matters to chance. At some point before 1854, arrangements were made with Bernard Tauchnitz in Leipzig to republish selections from *Household Words* in the publisher's pioneering pocket-size 'Collection of British and American Authors.' The ordering and presentation of material in these rare volumes is quite different from the date-stamped originals, and seems partly designed to protect the continental copyright, in so far as this was possible, of the authors of the items deemed most likely to be pirated or translated without permission. That the European version of Dickens's journals had its own, substantial afterlife, is attested in one of Percy Fitzgerald's recollections of his hero and mentor:

Once at Aix-la-Chapelle the German attendant brought me a little book which he thought would please me, "Owzelverd von Dickens."<sup>38</sup>

The Tauchnitz editions do indeed announce *Household Words* as ‘by Charles Dickens’ (rather than ‘conducted by’), leading, naturally enough, to confusion over authorship—including one embarrassing incident when a Swedish story by Fredrika Bremer (‘Den Rätta’) was translated into English and published in *Household Words* in 1851, then promptly translated back into Swedish and published in a newspaper under Dickens’s name.<sup>39</sup>

It was in America, however, that Dickens and Wills made the greatest inroads, at a time when the development of a trans-federal rail network was beginning to integrate the market, encouraging publishers to advertise and pay for exclusive ‘authorised’ reprinting of British authors, well in advance of binding international copyright legislation. Dickens was ‘a prize catch for such houses’ and he and Wills rapidly established a series of profitable arrangements for the reprinting of material from the journals, often synchronously with their first British publication.<sup>40</sup> It was J.M. Emerson of Emerson & Co., who declared during his firm’s serialisation of *Great Expectations* that the journal they held in their hands ‘has now the largest circulation of any similar publication in the world’ and would ‘find in this country alone more than three million readers.’<sup>41</sup> Americans thus encountered *All the Year Round* simultaneously with their Old World contemporaries, and formed an important part of its community of readers. Inevitably, perhaps, the contents of the journal shifted to accommodate its new transatlantic and colonial readerships, helping account for what has often been noted as the increased internationalism of its outlook, in comparison with *Household Words*.<sup>42</sup>

Such a shift is entirely consonant with twenty-first century theorization of the kind of cultural hybridity in which Dickens’s journals knowingly participated. As new readerships developed, the columns of *All the Year Round* were permeable to submissions concerning and frequently sourced from distant contributors, according to the ‘cultural logic of globalization,’ for, as Marwan Kraidy puts it, hybridity

entails that traces of other cultures exist in every culture, thus offering foreign media and marketers transcultural wedges for forging affective links between their commodities and local communities.<sup>43</sup>

One does not have to look very far to find evidence of this kind of process at work in *All the Year Round*.<sup>44</sup> Its first number carried an article called ‘A Piece of China,’ introducing the satirical recollections of the showman Albert Smith, following a lightning trip to Hong Kong, to gather material for his latest entertainment at Egyptian Hall—a show advertised prominently on p. 6 of the Advertiser for the first monthly part issue of the journal. Hannah Lewis-Bill argues that such critico-comical commodification of China in articles in Dickens’s journals reveals ‘an interest heightened by the threat [that] China ... a growing commodity superpower ... posed, albeit from afar, through its refusal to conform to British will.’<sup>45</sup> Indeed. The article itself suggests that readers were perhaps expected to be sufficiently savvy concerning the realities of globalization not to feel too threatened either by cultural non-conformity or the limitations of cultural exchange:

IT is a glowing, glaring morning at Hong Kong. I awake inside my net-muslin safe, wherein my boy, A-Pow has consigned me for security from the flies, like a jam tart under gauze in a pastrycook’s window, during the dog-days. ... A-Pow is about nine, of grave demeanour, and wearing a little pigtail.

“Gud mornng,” he says.

“Chin-chin, A-Pow,” I reply.

He thinks he is speaking English, and I imagine I am talking Chinese. We are both equally wrong. (*AYR* I [30 April 1859], p. 16)

Dickens and his co-writers in *Household Words* and *All the Year Round* were capable, in other words, of conducting a nuanced debate—encapsulated in the coverage of the Great Exhibition no less than in Harold Skimpole’s nonchalant satisfaction with imperial exploration and American slavery—over the difference between cynical and ‘virtuous cosmopolitanisms.’<sup>46</sup>

Two postscripts are perhaps required, to complete this overview of Dickens’s weekly magazines. The first is to point out that while, as Brake indicates, Dickens himself was ‘a celebrity editor like very few others in nineteenth-century Britain,’ whose persona and

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‘presiding spirit’ was crucial to the success of a stable of publications (32), the publications themselves outlived him by many more years than those during which he occupied the editorial chair. His son, Charlie, as ‘Charles Dickens, Jun.’ took over the baton, and continued conducting *All the Year Round* successfully until 1895. Partway through his tenure (1881), he revived *Household Words* in a new larger format, and ran both journals simultaneously for 14 years, the latter continuing publication after his death, eventually being taken over by Manx novelist Hall Caine in 1902, as a project for his eighteen-year-old son Gordon to manage, which he appears to have done—as a penny magazine ‘Founded by Charles Dickens’—until 1905.

A second, digital afterlife was inaugurated in March 2012, with the public launch of both *Household Words* and *All the Year Round* (1850–70) in an Open Access scholarly edition called *Dickens Journals Online*,<sup>47</sup> which combines full page facsimiles with an accurate searchable transcript (corrected by over 900 volunteers in a major crowdsourcing initiative), linked to tables of contents with which have been integrated authorship information from the two published indexes compiled by Anne Lohrli and E. A. Oppenlander, together with author biographies, subject and genre identifiers, and various forms of contextual annotation. The project has been welcomed by academic reviewers in so far as its ‘interactive approach—which encourages community moderation and correction—is the most innovative aspect of the site’ and ‘its role as a historical marker ... promises a quantum leap in our understanding of Dickens and the Mid-Victorian Press.’<sup>48</sup> As well as invigorating debate about qualitative aspects of the journals under Dickens’s editorship, the site offers the kind of real-time information about circulation, the location of readers, their favourite items, and the amount of time they spend reading, that is so conspicuously lacking from nineteenth-century records. Thus, for example, site statistics reveal that from launch to 29 March 2015, a period of three years, there was a total of 1,198,072 page views from users

in 180 different countries, averaging 10 minutes and 50s per reading session; the fourth most popular PDF download was Dickens's controversial meditation on 'The Noble Savage'.<sup>49</sup> However, lest we overestimate the value of such apparently rich quantitative data or the impact of such an apparently large online readership, it is worth converting the page view total into the readership of a 24-page issue, which produces a circulation of just under 50,000 for a single magazine, or of a mere 320 over a three-year publication run. Clearly the new digital readership is of a radically diminished kind, in comparison with the journals' heyday in the nineteenth-century 'community of print'. That the online edition is also a diminished witness to the past, a shadow text not to be confused with the original, is a timely reminder articulated by Gillian Piggott in a late contribution to the *Tale of Two Cities* reading group blog, run in 2012 as a partnership between the Victorian Studies Centre at the University of Leicester and *Dickens Journals Online*:

On opening the page, one is presented with a montage, heightening the fragmentariness of the serialized format. One is given ... the facsimile page of *All the Year Round*, cut off at the waist, montaged with part of the corrected modern text (a simple, clean font for greater reader clarity). This rather uncanny doubling of fragments can soon be resolved, with further mediation, through the use of scrolling tools. ... With its old font and reproduced shadows and creases, the original facsimile is far more alluring to read than its modern double. Closer to the visual experience of the text the Victorians might have had, it is also, however, lying prostrate under the strange power of digitalization. Corpse-like, the page's shadows never vary and its creases do not move, which has an uncanny effect. Our experience of this historical text is very much determined by the present.<sup>50</sup>

Like a dead butterfly preserved under glass, never to flap its wings, the pages of the digitized journal embody a further paradoxical hybridity, teasing us out of thought: that of ephemera transfixed.

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#### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Maurice, Arthur Bartlett, 'Dickens as an Editor', *Bookman* 30 (1909), p. 111.

<sup>2</sup> Cited in Frederic Hudson, *Journalism in the United States, from 1690 to 1872* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1873), p. 664.

<sup>3</sup> For discussion of the railway metaphor in Dickens's editorial paradigms, see John Drew, 'Texts, Paratexts and "E-Texts": the Poetics of Communication in Dickens's Journalism,' in *Dickens and Modernity (Essays and Studies, 2012)* ed. Juliet John, (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2012), pp. 61–93; 67–71.



- <sup>4</sup> For a profile, see 'Bentley's Miscellany, 1837–1868' in Walter E. Houghton and Jean H. Slingerland, (eds.) *The Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals*, 5 vols. (Toronto & London: University of Toronto Press/Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966–89), Vol. IV, pp. 5–14; for Dickens's stormy relationship with its publisher, see 'Dickens and the Burlington Street Brigand' in R. Patten, *Dickens and his Publishers* (Oxford University Press, 1978), pp. 75–87.
- <sup>5</sup> See Malcolm Andrews, 'Introducing Master Humphrey', *Dickensian*, 67 (1971), pp. 70–86 and Kathryn Chittick, 'The Idea of a Miscellany: *Master Humphrey's Clock*', *Dickensian*, 78 (1982), pp. 156–64.
- <sup>6</sup> A lengthy letter to John Forster outlines the scheme; see *Letters of Charles Dickens: Vol. 4, 1844–1846*, 'Pilgrim' Edition, ed. by Kathleen Tillotson and Nina Burgis (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977) pp. 327–29.
- <sup>7</sup> See John Drew and Michael Slater, 'What's in the *Daily News*? A re-evaluation, Part I', *Dickensian*, 106 (2010), 197–206; 'What's in *The Daily News*? A re-evaluation, Part II', *Dickensian*, 107 (2011), 22–39.
- <sup>8</sup> For an overview of the *Examiner* contributions, see Drew, *Dickens the Journalist* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2003), chap. 6.
- <sup>9</sup> Both quotations from Dickens's letter to Forster, 22 and 23 November 1846, in *Letters* 4, pp. 658–60 (p. 660); To Forster, 30 September 1849, in *Letters* 5 (1847–1849), ed. by Graham Storey and K. J. Fielding (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), p. 619.
- <sup>10</sup> To John Forster, *Letters* 5, pp. 622–23. For discussions of 'The Shadow' see Rosemarie Bodenheimer, *Knowing Dickens* (London and Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007) pp. 55–56, 89; Jonathan V. Farina, "'A Certain Shadow': Personified Abstractions and the Form of *Household Words*", *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 42 (Winter 2009), pp. 392–415; for its implications, see John Drew, 'An Uncommercial Proposition? At work on *Household Words* and *All the Year Round*,' *Victorian Periodicals Review* 46.3 (Fall 2013) 291–316; 300–302.
- <sup>11</sup> See, respectively, Lillian Nayder, *Unequal Partners. Charles Dickens, Wilkie Collins, and Victorian Authorship* (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 2002); Linda K. Hughes and Michael Lund, 'Textual/Sexual Pleasure and Serial Publication: North and South,' chap. 4 of *Victorian Publishing and Mrs. Gaskell's Work* (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1999), pp. 96–123; Iain Crawford, "'Hunted and Harried by Pseudo-Philanthropists': Dickens, Martineau and *Household Words*' and Daragh Downes, 'Morley was alive: to begin with. The Curious Case of Dickens and his Principal Household Wordsmith,' both in Hazel Mackenzie and Ben Winyard, eds, *Charles Dickens and the Mid-Victorian Press 1850–1870* (University of Buckingham Press, 2013), pp. 157–74, 185–200.
- <sup>12</sup> See, respectively, Rachel Sagner Buurma, 'Anonymity, Corporate Authority, and the Archive: The Production of Authorship in Late-Victorian England', *Victorian Studies*, 50 (2007), p. 15 and Alexis Easley, *First-Person Anonymous: Women Writers and Victorian Print Media, 1830–70* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), p. 188. Also Jasper Schelstraete "'Literary Adventurers": Editorship, Non-Fiction Authorship and Anonymity' in Mackenzie and Winyard, *Mid-Victorian Press*, pp. 147–56.
- <sup>13</sup> Lorna Huett, 'Among the Unknown Public: *Household Words*, *All the Year Round* and the Mass-Market Weekly Periodical in the Mid-Nineteenth Century', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 38 (Spring 2005), 61–82 (pp. 78, 79).
- <sup>14</sup> See Drew, 'An Uncommercial Proposition?' pp. 306–307.
- <sup>15</sup> As with the 1845 outline for *The Cricket*, the suggested quotation is from Goldsmith's *History of the Earth and Animated Nature* (1774). If Dickens thought this would induce Forster, author in 1848 of a biography of Goldsmith, to approve the title, he was mistaken.
- <sup>16</sup> Letters to John Forster, ?mid-January, ?24–30 and ?31 January and ?1 February 1850, in *Letters* 6 (1844–1846), ed. by Graham Storey, Kathleen Tillotson and Nina Burgis (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), pp. 11, 21, 25, 26.
- <sup>17</sup> The full published title, strictly, was 'Household Words. / A Weekly Journal. / Conducted by Charles Dickens'; the fact that Dickens's name formed part of it would later prove legally decisive; see Drew, *Journalist*, 135–36.
- <sup>18</sup> Letter to Thomasina Ross, 21 January 1850, *Letters* 6, p. 13.
- <sup>19</sup> For an extended meditation on Dickens's use of 'I' and 'we' in periodical publications, see Paul Schlicke's 'Our Hour: Dickens's Shifting Authorial Personae' in Mackenzie and Winyard (eds.), *Mid-Victorian Press*, pp. 261–276.
- <sup>20</sup> For the debt to *Chambers's*, see Drew, *Journalist*, p. 110, and Laurel Brake, 'Second Life: *All the Year Round* and the New Generation of British Periodicals in the 1860s,' in Mackenzie and Winyard (eds.), *Mid-Victorian Press*, pp. 11–34; 18–20.
- <sup>21</sup> *HW* I, 186.
- <sup>22</sup> Drew, 'Paratexts,' *passim*.
- <sup>23</sup> Robert Terrell Bledsoe, *Dickens, Journalism, Music* (London: Continuum, 2012), pp. 8, 15.

- <sup>24</sup> Hall Caine, 'Preface' to re-launch of *Household Words* (1902). Cited by Paul Lewis, '1902: *Household Words*' on the *Wilkie Collins Pages* <<http://www.web40571.clarahost.co.uk/wilkie/biography/Caine1902.htm>> [accessed 27 March 2015].
- <sup>25</sup> Percy H. Fitzgerald, *Memories of Charles Dickens* (Bristol: J. W. Arrowsmith, 1913), p. 125.
- <sup>26</sup> See *Dickens, Reynolds, and Mayhew on Wellington Street. The Print Culture of a Victorian Street* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2015).
- <sup>27</sup> Cited in H. S. Solly, *Life of Henry Morley* (London: Arnold, 1898), p. 150.
- <sup>28</sup> 'LITERARY NOTICES'. *The Bradford Observer* (Bradford, England), Thursday, 4 April 1850; p. 7 col. c.
- <sup>29</sup> *The Daily News* (London, England), Thursday, 28 March 1850, Issue 1198, p. 5d; *The Morning Chronicle* (London, England), Friday, 29 March 1850, Issue 25099, p. 7b; 'THE LITERARY EXAMINER', *The Examiner* (London, England), Saturday, March 30, 1850; Issue 2200, p. 198b.
- <sup>30</sup> 'Charles Dickens and the Democratic Movement,' 8 June 1851, p. 7c.
- <sup>31</sup> Fitzgerald, *Memories*, p. 135 and Philip Collins, 'The All the Year Round Letter Book', *Victorian Periodicals Newsletter*, 10 (1970), 23–29 (p. 25); *Letters* 6, p. 83.
- <sup>32</sup> Reproduced in Patten, *Dickens and his Publishers*, Appendix D, pp. 462–64.
- <sup>33</sup> Figs. calculated from *Inflation: the Value of the Pound, 1750–1998*, House of Commons Research paper 99/20 (23 February 1999); online at <<http://www.parliament.uk/documents/commons/lib/research/rp99/rp99-020.pdf>>. According to the magazine's articles of agreement, Dickens received a half, Bradbury & Evans a quarter, and Forster and Wills, an eighth share respectively.
- <sup>34</sup> See John Drew and Jonathan Buckmaster, 'Household Words, Volume II September 28, 1850 – March 22, 1851: Nos 27–52,' *Dickens Quarterly* 31.4 (2014), 312–333; 314–15&n.
- <sup>35</sup> Drew, *Journalist*, 148&nn.
- <sup>36</sup> Laurel Brake, 'Second Life' &c., in Mackenzie and Winyard (eds.) *Mid-Victorian Press*, pp. 11–33; 33.
- <sup>37</sup> *The Bury and Norwich Post, and Suffolk Herald*, (Bury Saint Edmunds, England), Tuesday 19 Apr 1859; Issue 4008, p. 2e.
- <sup>38</sup> *Memories of Charles Dickens* (Bristol: J. Arrowsmith, 1911), p. 121n.
- <sup>39</sup> See H. K. Riikonen, 'Dickens's Reception in Finland' in Michael Hollington (ed.) *The Reception of Charles Dickens in Europe*, 2 vols. (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), II, p. 389. Riikonen does not identify the *HW* article; it is presumably Anna Mary Howitt's 'The Right One' *Household Words* III (9 August 1851), pp. 473–477.
- <sup>40</sup> Hazel Mackenzie, Ben Winyard and John Drew, 'Introduction to *All the Year Round* Volume 1' *Dickens Quarterly* 29.3 (2012): 251–77; 271. See also Drew, 'Paratexts,' 72–73.
- <sup>41</sup> US ed. of *All the Year Round* Vol. IV (12 January 1861), p. 336.
- <sup>42</sup> See Drew, *Journalist*, pp. 148–151.
- <sup>43</sup> *Hybridity, Or the Cultural Logic of Globalization* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2005), p. 148.
- <sup>44</sup> The process is analysed illuminatingly in Catherine Waters, *Commodity Culture in Dickens's Household Words: The Social Life of Goods* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), pp. 118–119, and more widely in Sabine Clemm, *Dickens, Journalism, and Nationhood: Mapping the World in Household Words* (London: Routledge, 2009).
- <sup>45</sup> 'China, Commodities and Conflict in *Household Words*' in Mackenzie and Winyard (eds.), *Mid-Victorian Press*, pp. 123–32; 122.
- <sup>46</sup> Tanya Agathocleous's wording, in *Urban Realism and the Cosmopolitan Imagination in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 35.
- <sup>47</sup> [www.djo.org.uk](http://www.djo.org.uk) hosted by The University of Buckingham.
- <sup>48</sup> Respectively, Clare Horrocks, 'Advances in Digitization: The *Dickens Journals Online* Project, 2012' *Victorian Periodicals Review* Volume 45.3 (Fall 2012), 358–362 (359); Joseph McLaughlin, review, *Charles Dickens and the Mid-Victorian Press, 1850–1870, Nineteenth-Century Contexts* 37.1 (2015), 84–87; 87.
- <sup>49</sup> *Household Words* VII, 11 June 1853] 337–339.
- <sup>50</sup> See <https://dickensatoleoftwocities.wordpress.com/2012/11/09/narrative-and-time/> accessed 29 March 2015.

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