Paratext, serialisation and authorship in Victorian England

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Paratext, Serialisation and Authorship in Victorian England

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Introduction

Serial publication first emerged in England in the late seventeenth century. In addition to novels, plays and “Newgate pamphlets”, “sermons, political works, and grammar treatises” were also published as part of a series “intended for binding in volume form” (Martin 6). By the 1720s, fictional works such as *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) had appeared in instalments as well as in volume editions (Martin 5; Wiles 27, 75-104; Genette 405). By 1730, an advertisement for *A Compleat History of Executions* announced that, at the end of the year, the parts could be bound into a “handsome Volume” that incorporated the “compleat Index” accompanying the final number (qtd. in Wiles 22 and Martin 6).

The interest in the transition of a work from serial to volume publication evinced in this advertisement points to a concern that would become central to the serialisation of Victorian novels. Emphasising the idea of completeness associated with the volume form, the advertisement suggests certain paratextual elements, such as the “Index”, that would structure the transformation of ephemeral parts into a “handsome Volume.” This transformation became even more significant in Victorian England when fictional work that had originally appeared serialised in magazines or in part-issue instalments was reissued in volume editions.

This study is based on two assertions about the relationship between serial fiction and paratext: firstly, that the essential difference between the serial and volume issues of the same work was constituted by the paratextual variations between them; and, secondly, that the paratextual features accompanying the original instalments of a novel created a significantly different representation of authorship than the depictions associated with subsequent volume editions.

My argument is that paratextual elements are of great value to literary historians insofar as they enable scholars to trace how authors used various editions of their novels to position the same work for different audiences. Readers of original serial instalments experienced a different set of paratextual elements surrounding a novel than readers of later volume editions. For example, while the covers of Dickens’s part-issue fiction often presented long, synoptic titles reminiscent of eighteenth-
century novels, the subsequent volume editions provided a significantly shortened title. Thus, the title of a volume edition such as *The Personal History of David Copperfield* (1850) was brief compared to the title of the novel in its original, monthly parts:

*The Personal History, Adventures, Experience & Observation of David Copperfield The Younger of Blunderstone Rookery (Which He never meant to be Published on any Account)* (Genette 72)

In the same way that readers of the original, part-issue instalments were addressed by a different title to readers of the volume editions, they were also addressed in a different way by authors at the conclusion of a serial novel. In the prefaces accompanying the final, double instalment of a serial, Dickens and Thackeray would often characterise serialisation as a type of “correspondence” or “conversation” shared between author and reader (Dickens 2003b: 5; Thackeray 1972: 33). If this preface was also available at the beginning of subsequent volume editions of the same novel, readers of these later editions would not yet have experienced any of the author-reader sympathy evoked by the preface. This is due to the simple fact that while the preface was the final words read by the readers of the original serial instalments, readers of the volume edition were presented with the preface before they had read a word of the novel.

This function of the preface, unique to the production of serial novels, is exemplified in Thackeray’s preface to the first volume edition of *Vanity Fair* (1848). Entitled “Before the Curtain,” the preface characterises the author as “the Manager of the Performance” (Thackeray 2004: xv). Taking his cue from the final words of the completed serial, “[c]ome children, let us shut up the box and the puppets, for our play is played out” (Thackeray 2004: 689), Thackeray extends the conceit of his novel as a puppet show to cast himself in the light of puppet-master and reveal a glimpse behind the scenes of such a role.
Figure 1: Illustrated Title Page to First Volume Edition of *Vanity Fair* (1848). Reproduced in Thackeray 2004: xiv.

The dual meaning of “Before the curtain” (which implies both in front of and prior to) draws attention to the fact that the preface and the accompanying illustrated title page (see figure 1) captures a strange, Janus-faced moment: on the one hand, the puppet-master examines his own cracked reflection at the conclusion of his story and as his puppets are returned to their box; on the other, he is welcoming to the fair his new audience, the readers who have purchased the volume for which this is the preface and do not yet have the background understanding of the puppet-show metaphor which would have already been familiar to readers who had finished reading the final pages of the novel.

Moreover, while the title of the novel was the same for both sets of readers, the subtitle changed significantly. Whereas readers of the original serial instalments were led to expect “PEN AND PENCIL SKETCHES OF ENGLISH SOCIETY”, the readers of the volume edition were presented with “A Novel without a
Hero” (Thackeray 2004: xii; xiv). While the latter might well suggest a kind of generic advancement, presenting a new type of novel to readers (Genette 98-9), the former is clearly linked to the Punch connection established on the cover to the serial instalments of Vanity Fair (see figure 2). In other words, the volume edition is presented as “A Novel”, albeit one “without a Hero”, while the original serial was presented in a way that connected it more to Thackeray’s periodical work for Punch.

Figure 2: Illustrated Monthly Wrapper to Original Serial Instalments of Vanity Fair (1847-8). Reproduced in Thackeray 2004: xii.

The differing valencies associated with these subtitles were invoked in an 1848 review of Vanity Fair by Elizabeth Rigby. Writing in the Quarterly Review, Rigby noted that Vanity Fair was “not a novel, in the common acceptation of the word” while also alluding to Thackeray’s “clever progress through Fraser’s Magazine and the ever-improving pages of Punch” (Tillotson and Hawes 1968: 79). In the same review, Rigby noted a dislike for Thackeray’s portrayal of Becky committing a “capital crime” (ibid. 85) in one of the illustrations toward the end of the novel.
Indeed, Rigby was so incensed with the “picture of our heroine’s ‘Second Appearance as Clytemnestra,’” an image that “casts so uncomfortable a glare over the latter part of the volume”, that she instructed readers to “cut out” the picture (ibid. 85-6).

It will be the central claim of this study that the current understanding of Victorian novels and novelists is incomplete given that these are often studied using modern editions in which earlier paratextual elements, such as illustrations, have either been effaced or improperly contextualised. Thackeray’s *Vanity Fair* provides a clear example of this process. The editor of the 2001 Penguin edition of the novel, John Carey, explains that Thackeray’s illustrations were not reproduced in this edition because they were omitted from Thackeray’s 1853 edition: “Thackeray was content to let his masterpiece appear in 1853 without illustrations. That is how it appears here” (Thackeray 2001: xl). However, it is important to acknowledge that the 1853 edition of *Vanity Fair* was a cheap edition of the novel which, by virtue of its low price, could not reproduce these original illustrations. In the prospectus to the Cheap Edition of his novels, Dickens noted that it was “hardly necessary” to add that the “original illustrations” would “constitute no part of the CHEAP EDITION” (Picker 149).

Carey also justifies not reproducing Thackeray’s illustrations as they clashed with how Thackeray’s idea of his characters developed over the course of the novel; they included pictorial initials which were “often heavily facetious in a way that belies the subtlety of the text”; and “they never approach the degree of mastery displayed by Thackeray’s writing” (Thackeray 2001: xxxix). Carey is unequivocal in his dismissal of the illustrations: “By no stretch of the imagination could they be considered worthy accompaniments to a great work of literature” (ibid).

But as critics such as Joan Stevens, Kamilla Elliott and John Harvey have pointed out, Thackeray’s illustrations play an important role in the semiotic economy of the novel (Stevens 1974; Elliott 2003; Harvey 1970). Moreover, for contemporary readers and critics, the illustrations not only provided a point of debate, and interpretive interest, but they also linked Thackeray’s novel to a tradition of visual
caricature and satire as well as the contemporary periodicals *Fraser’s Magazine* (1830-88) and *Punch* (1841-1992). Thackeray’s illustrations were a vital paratextual element structuring the reception of his book. They originated in Thackeray’s contract with Bradbury and Evans which specified that Thackeray would provide two steel-engraved, full plate etchings and an unspecified number of woodcuts to accompany each instalment of the novel. Therefore, the illustrations can be seen as a vivid example of a paratextual element explicitly specified in a contract but which Thackeray managed to incorporate in fascinating, and controversial, ways into the themes of his novel.

The purpose of the present study, as illustrated by this example from *Vanity Fair*, is to examine the interaction between paratext, the serialisation of narrative and representations of authorship in Victorian England. By analysing the specific set of paratextual elements that accompanied the various editions of Victorian serialised novels, I demonstrate that this corpus can be used to trace the influence of serialisation as a mode of production on Victorian conceptions of authorship. This study combines a book historical interest in specific editions and the paratextual differences between them with a theoretical approach focused on questions of authorship. Using case studies that examine specific paratextual elements, ranging from pseudonyms and author portraits to covers, prefaces and opening addresses to readers, I present a historically-oriented model for studying paratext that mobilises the concept for “analyzing authorship critically and historically” (Haynes 302).

By combining theoretical approaches to authorship, such as Michel Foucault’s concept of the author-function, with a book historical focus at the material level of novels, this study proposes a model for using these methodologies to complement and refine each other. While Foucault’s theory of the author-function offers a useful conceptual tool for thinking about the relationship between authorship, the circulation of texts and discursive units marked by authors’ names, it is not historically rigorous enough to prove useful in a detailed examination of Victorian print culture. At the same time, while book history and the associated discipline of textual criticism provide an appropriate methodology for reconstructing the various serial and volume editions of Victorian novels and the paratextual differences between them, they do
not provide the conceptual framework for comparing these differences in a way that is relevant to the history of authorship.

However, as book history is well-equipped to locate various editions of novels in their original context, it provides the sociohistorical perspective advocated, but not elaborated on, by Foucault in his essay on the author-function:

I shall not offer here a sociohistorical analysis of the author’s persona. Certainly it would be worth examining how the author became individualized in a culture like ours, what status he has been given, at what moment studies of authenticity and attributions began, in what kind of system of valorization the author was involved, at what point we began to recount the lives of authors rather than of heroes, and how this fundamental category of ‘the-man-and-his-work criticism’ began. (Foucault 1984: 101)

As will be evident from the chapter summaries that follow, this study is focused on the kind of “sociohistorical analysis of the author’s persona” suggested by Foucault. By assembling, examining and contextualising paratextual elements, it is possible to trace the kinds of “system of valorization” in which the Victorian author was involved. Popular authors such as Dickens and Thackeray became author-figures of great significance in the Victorian literary landscape. The paratext to their work was crucial in establishing a “system of valorization” in which the serialisation of fiction and the authors responsible for this kind of literary work came to represent certain aspects of the contemporary literary marketplace. As The Publisher’s Circular (1837-1959) reminded readers in 1861, the significance of Dickens’s biographical identity and pseudonymous mask, Boz, was such that contemporary critics could appeal to these different authorial identities to conjure various periods of Victorian publishing:

THE PUBLISHERS’ CIRCULAR enters this day upon its twenty-fifth volume—a length of life far beyond the average periodical existence, though we hope by the favour of our friends and subscribers only a small portion of
that career of usefulness which we are destined to run. The publishing world has made some progress since 1837, as a reference to our No. 1 would soon convince the reader. Young Mr. Dickens, concealed under the modest pseudonym of Boz, was then amusing the readers of a monthly magazine. Mr. Thackeray, still less known to fame, was contributing anonymously to Frasers his Yellow-Plush Papers; and even Mr. Macaulay was as yet hardly a literary name. (Anon. 1861c:1)

The 25th volume of The Publishers' Circular opens with a backward glance to its year of origin, 1837. In order to demonstrate how much “progress” has been made in the “publishing world” since then, the anonymous reviewer reminds readers that in 1837, Dickens still remained “concealed under the modest pseudonym of Boz” while Thackeray was “still less known to fame”. Thus, in attempting to conjure a picture of the developments in publishing covering the span of its existence, this anniversary issue of The Publishers' Circular uses the names of Dickens and Thackeray, and their reliance on pseudonyms in their early careers, to locate the periodical in the contemporary literary marketplace.

An obituary of Dickens published in The Times on 10 June 1870 noted that the success of Dickens’s sketches, published pseudonymously under the mask of Boz, provoked an interest in the man behind the mask:

These Sketches at once attracted notice, and the public looked with something more than curiosity for the time when the successful author should throw off his mask and proclaim himself to the world. (Anon. 1870: 12)

Focusing on representations of authorial work at the material level of the book and the figure of the author that emerges from such representations, this study provides a historical and critical investigation of paratextual elements such as pseudonyms, titles, frontispieces, illustrations, authors’ portraits, prefaces, postfaces and other addresses to readers. I suggest that by analysing these elements in their original context it is possible to track the way that Victorian authorship was represented on an
instalment-by-instalment or volume-by-volume basis. Moreover, I would argue that this provides the material site for the discursive and iconic process that transformed the figure of the author between 1836, when Dickens began serialising *The Pickwick Papers*, and 1870, when he died halfway through serialising *Edwin Drood* (1870) in monthly part-issue.

Consequently, my study builds on the work of Kathryn Chittick and Robert Douglas-Fairhurst, who have traced in detail the emergence of Dickens as a novelist. In *Dickens and the 1830s* (1990) and *Becoming Dickens: The Invention of a Novelist* (2011), Chittick and Douglas-Fairhurst argue that Dickens did not simply and unproblematically emerge as a canonical English novelist. Instead, this was part of a process in which his career reacted to, as well as modified, changing conceptions of the role of authorship and generic changes in the form and content of novels. Following on from the detailed reconstruction of Dickens’s early career provided by Chittick and Douglas-Fairhurst, I provide detailed case studies of the paratextual spaces in Dickens’s work in order to examine how he rhetorically exploited these spaces as part of efforts to carefully stage-manage a career in progress.

This involves restoring the literary historical context of a range of paratextual elements in order to examine how they functioned to position Dickens, and his novels, in the Victorian literary marketplace. I argue that the market-based relations upon which the production of serial fiction was predicated was inscribed at the material level of part-issue instalments, periodical magazines and subsequent volume editions. Moreover, I suggest that these paratextual elements created representations of authorship that engaged with contemporary debates about the market-based conditions structuring literary texts. If Foucault argues that the author-function is a symptom of the “existence, circulation, and operation of certain discourses within society” (Foucault 2003: 124), I would like to propose that the emergence of the figure of the professional, Victorian author enables us to trace how, at the material level of books, new models of authorship appeared tracing “the production, circulation and valorization” (Siskin 297) of certain kinds of periodical literary work.

By focusing on paratextual elements as part of a critical reevaluation of both the author-function and the literary work associated with Dickens’s career, this study
aims to examine authorship with a “more sustained attention to the historical record” (Haynes 288). Broadening the focus beyond Foucault’s discursive approach and Genette’s privileging of textual elements, I consider the various legal, economic, commercial and technological forces structuring the production of periodical print. These include copyright legislation, cost of paper, binding technology and developments in integrating engraved illustrations with text. I will also be mindful of the structures of finance and the industrial-capitalist forces that drove the production of literary commodities in Victorian England. These key elements are presented as the background to emerging conceptions of serial authors as professionals and some authors, such as Dickens, as international celebrities.

The level of fame experienced by popular Victorian novelists was an unprecedented development. Not only were more readers than ever being addressed by contemporary authors, but there was also an increased interest in the biographical figures of these authors. Popular interest in Victorian serials created such a focus on authors that Dickens and Thackeray were able to make lucrative public appearances where the main attraction was the chance to see these famous authors in person. This increased focus on the life, attitude and appearance of the author is reflected in a range of paratextual elements associated with Dickens and Thackeray. From addresses and prefaces to readers that describe their compositional process or defend their aesthetic principles to frontispiece portraits or illustrations, the corpus of paratextual elements examined in this study is intimately connected to the emergence of Victorian authors as celebrities.

Dickens and Thackeray were not the only authors who forged successful careers writing serialised novels. Other prominent nineteenth-century writers of serial fiction included Harrison Ainsworth, Charles Lever, Wilkie Collins, Elizabeth Gaskell, George Eliot, Anthony Trollope, Mary Elizabeth Braddon and Thomas Hardy. While the methodology used to examine the role of paratext in this study could also be applied to any of these authors, it is particularly apposite to the careers of Dickens and Thackeray. As I focus on how paratextual elements created representations of authorship and how these representations engaged with debates about the merits and
flaws of serialisation, I have selected two authors whose careers were inexorably connected to the emergence of serialisation as a popular form.

Dickens’s success with *The Pickwick Papers* (1836-7) inaugurated the serialisation of original fiction in Victorian England. In response to Dickens’s second novel, *Oliver Twist* (1837-9), Thackeray serialised *Catherine* (1839-40), making clear at the end of the novel his views on Dickens’s glamourisation of Newgate crime:

No one has read that remarkable tale of *Oliver Twist* without being interested in poor Nancy and her murderer; and especially amused and tickled by the gambols of the Artful Dodger and his companions. [...] A most agreeable set of rascals, indeed, who have their virtues, too, but not good company for any man. We have better pass them by in decent silence; for, as no writer can or dare tell the whole truth concerning them, and faithfully explain their vices, there is no need to give ex-parte statements of their virtues. (Tillotson and Hawes 22; original emphasis)

Providing a clear example of the interconnections between text, paratext and early representations of serial authorship, the 1841 edition of *Oliver Twist* was published with an “Author’s Introduction” in which Dickens launched a rhetorical counter-attack against his critics. Defending his portrayal of the “every-day existence of a Thief”, and invoking precedents from a hallowed pantheon including Hogarth, Fielding, Defoe, Goldsmith, Smollett, Richardson and Mackenzie, Dickens specifically answers Thackeray’s critique regarding Nancy and “the whole truth”:

It is useless to discuss whether the conduct and character of the girl seems natural or unnatural, probable or improbable, right or wrong. IT IS TRUE. Every man who has watched these melancholy shades of life knows it to be so. (Dickens 2003: 460)

If the conditions of the Victorian literary marketplace led Thackeray in 1839 to satirise and critique Dickens’s recently completed novel, these same conditions also drove the emergence of the 1841 reissue of Dickens’s novel and opened up a
paratextual space where Dickens could respond to Thackeray’s attack. By mid-
century, Dickens and Thackeray were using their novels, *David Copperfield*
(1849-50) and *Pendennis* (1848-50) respectively, to make implicit comments about
the role of authors in contemporary society. The rising fortunes of literary magazines
meant that, by 1860, Dickens and Thackeray had both become founding editors of
two landmark Victorian periodicals: *Household Words* (1850-9) and *The Cornhill

In their editorial roles, Dickens and Thackeray provide fascinating case studies
of the complex interconnections in Victorian print culture between celebrity,
authorship and the function of literary periodicals. As successful Victorian serial
authors who were active at the form’s genesis, Dickens and Thackeray were also
responsible for serialised fiction that changed the generic form of the novel. Serial
novels by Dickens and Thackeray were different in three important ways from
previous novels: they created a socialised reading experience where readers
speculated together about the progress of the story and reviewers critiqued each
instalment as it came out; they enabled content that had previously been restricted to
the domain of the periodical press to enter the hallowed domain of the three-volume
novel; and they incorporated etched and engraved illustrations which often drew from
a rich tradition of visual satire and caricature.

*Oliver Twist* captures these three characteristics. The novel was the first of
Dickens’s novels to include what we would today call a cliffhanger ending. Readers
had to wait two months following the March 1838 instalment of the novel to see
whether Oliver survived being shot during a robbery, while reviewers discussed the
novels in an unprecedented array of literary periodicals. Even the weighty quarterly
reviews were forced to discuss the phenomenon of Dickens’s success and his
incorporation of social critique, especially the new poor law, into his novel. It was
published as a three-volume edition by Bentley in 1838 and in a later 1841 version
published by Chapman and Hall, which included a long preface responding to
allegations that *Oliver Twist* had been nothing more than another Newgate novel.
Finally, George Cruikshank’s illustrations to the novel, which first appeared in
monthly instalments in *Bentley’s Miscellany*, developed a notoriety of their own and
The importance of illustration for Victorian serial novels bears significantly on the considerations of the relationship between text and paratext that will be examined in Chapter 1. If Dickens and Thackeray were able to produce work critiquing, satirising or simply alluding to contemporary behaviour and types, their textual descriptions were enhanced, and sometimes eclipsed, by the illustrations provided by some of the finest Victorian illustrators of the day. The incorporation of visual satire in serial novels marks a point in the 1830s when the market for visual satire contracted and the form re-emerged as a key element in the success of serial fiction (Harvey 44; 66-8; 74-5). The illustrations to these novels played an important role in their popular appeal and storytelling capabilities (Harvey 84-96). John Harvey notes that the illustrations of Cruikshank and Hablot Browne (Phiz) went beyond the “vivid suggestion of character and mood” and were part of visual apparatus that could powerfully develop a novel’s themes (Harvey 4). Moreover, the existence of these illustrations (and the competing claims of “authorship” that developed between authors and their illustrators) prompts questions about how paratextual elements such as illustrations affected Victorian notions of fiction and the various creative energies responsible for its production.¹ The existence of illustrations forced readers to accept the existence of another figure, beside the author, whose creative agency contributed to the enjoyment and understanding of the story. This contest for the reader’s acknowledgement and appreciation sometimes forced the figures of serialised authors and their illustrators into a state of competition and was symbolic of the tension between text and image being played out across the generically fluid serial novel (Elliott 2003: 31-71; Leighton and Surridge 2008 passim).

Wendy Wall has described how, for books published during the English Renaissance, “physical features of the text—its prefatory apparatus, its title headings [...] construct[ed] protocols of reading and provid[ed] the grounds on which text is authorized” (Wall 1993: 5). Describing her approach as part of an effort to “read the

¹ For an insightful analysis of the contest between nineteenth-century French authors and illustrators at the material level of the page, see Berg 2007.
text as an object as well as symbolic form”, Wall explains that the “packaging” of texts, “so frequently erased when a work's history is drained from it, speaks to the specific conditions by which meaning was and is transmitted” (5). In other words, she suggests an approach that combines a textual analysis of the “complex figures, tropes, and rhetorical self-identifications” in Renaissance books with a focus on the “material production” of these books and the “encoding” of this process (6).

This focus can be adopted for use in examining the “packaging” of Victorian serials. As Kathryn Chittick has pointed out, the technology for binding nineteen monthly parts in a complete volume under a cloth cover was a significant Victorian publishing development (Chittick 66). A key factor in the transformation of serial fiction into volume editions, this type of binding was impossible until the innovations of the early 1830s (ibid.). This was part of an evolution where, as Michael Sadleir has observed, book binding was moving from “ephemerality to permanence” (qtd. in Chittick ibid.). At the same time, much of the critical controversy generated by serialised novels in the 1830s and 1840s revolved around the ephemeral nature inherent in their periodical production. An unsigned review of 1840 in Fraser’s Magazine declared “we do not like this novel-writing by scraps against time” (Collins 2009: 90). The review notes how the demands of monthly serialisation encourage the “habits of the reporter to break out” and that this leads to detrimental effects when the parts are collected and read as a volume (ibid.).

Victorian serialised novels, delivered in weekly or monthly instalments to newsstands and later bound as complete volumes, were a profoundly new way of producing and distributing original fiction. They represented more than just a literary trend associated with a few successful authors who were able to exploit the commercial benefits of the form. Mark Turner notes how “notions of periodical time were [central] to shifting the understanding and representations of time in the development of modernity” (Turner 184). Turner’s thesis is that the media “provides the rhythm of modernity” and that, since the nineteenth century, the periodical press and advertising have “been important in establishing the patterns of everyday life” (ibid. 185).
Laurel Brake provides a telling Victorian example of the importance of this periodical rhythm in her description of “Magazine Day”, when “Paternoster Row worked flat-out to supply the retailers orders” (qtd. in Turner 188). One important effect of a publishing schedule operated around these red-letter days was that the “regularity and public nature of these issue days created numerous and large communities of readers, all of whom were reading the same publication at roughly the same time all over the country” (Brake qtd. in Turner 188). Serialisation, as a new mode of production for original novels, created a socialised reading experience that had never existed, and could never have existed, for the traditional three-volume novel. A review of an instalment of Dickens’s Bleak House (1852-3) claimed that “[w]hat do you think of Bleak House” had become a more popular question than “[h]ow are you?” (Anon. 1853: 241). In 1851, Fraser’s conjured the image of the public’s expectation of each instalment which “is anticipated with more anxiety than the Indian Mail, and is a great deal more talked about when it does come” (qtd. in Tillotson 34).

The reading public eagerly anticipated the next instalment of popular serials, discussing the story, speculating on its development and walking past shop windows where the current instalment was on display. Moreover, readers would sometimes go so far as to try to influence the development of the serial by sending suggestions to the author. Tillotson describes this as the beginning of “fan mail” (ibid.). But delivering new fiction in regular instalments was predicated on a number of essential requirements: a potential market receptive to consuming fiction serially; a printing technology capable of printing and binding the instalments on time; a distribution network that not only included the cities but, in embracing the countryside, enabled a flexible business model of selling books to urban and provincial markets on a sale-or-return basis (with the returns being collected and sold as later complete volumes); and, finally, a regular supply of text and, often, illustrations that kept the subscription numbers high.

The widespread distribution of Victorian serialised fiction was dependent on a new stage in industrial print capitalism. Everything from the transport infrastructure
to the price of paper and print runs had to be in order for the distribution of fiction in
serialised instalments to be commercially successful. The key point to emphasise here
is the importance of time in the production, distribution and consumption of
serialised fiction. Demand for a new serial had to be created, sustained and fulfilled
by the production of subsequent, engaging instalments as part of the scheduled
production of a serial broken into a certain number of instalments. As Kathryn
Chittick points out, before *Pickwick*, novel writing had nothing to do with writing on
time (Chittick 58). After *Pickwick*, the importance of time influenced novels at every
level, from the form and content of each daily, weekly or monthly instalment, to the
material traces of periodical publishing rhythms that remained in later volume editions.

Henry James described the “periodical appearances” of the serialised fiction by
Dickens, Thackeray and Eliot as “enrichments of life”, “large arrivals” and
“particular renewals of supply” (James 251; original emphasis). But these renewals,
as Turner reminds us, came with varying rhythms. The “monthliness” of the part-
issue instalment or the magazine serial needs to be seen alongside other
“temporalities”:

‘Quarterliness’ (the weighty reviews) [...] weekliness (the cheap penny weeklies,
and more highbrow journals of current events); dailiness (the morning and
evening newspapers. (Turner 189)

According to Hegel, the “extraordinary mass ceremony” of reading frequently issued
periodicals, such as newspapers and magazines, was modern man’s substitute for
morning prayers” (qtd. in Anderson 35). But this secular ritual was one based on the
production and consumption of periodical publications as commodities (Anderson
34-5). Indeed, as Benedict Anderson notes “in a rather special sense”, as a “self-
contained object” that was “reproduced on a large scale”, the book was “the first
modern-style mass-produced industrial commodity” (34; my emphasis).

Anderson uses this definition to present the newspaper as an “extreme form” of
the book, a “one-day best-seller” (35). This built-in daily “obsolescence”, though, results in what Anderson sees as the key consequence of periodical publication on the formation of imagined communities: at the same time as an individual is reading a newspaper in private, this individual is also aware of a multitude of other readers all engaged in the same act at the same time (ibid.). Each “communicant”, therefore, participates in a “mass ceremony” with untold numbers of others “of whose existence he is confident, yet of whose identity he has not the slightest notion” (ibid.). Anderson claims that this “imagined community” is only strengthened by the “incessantly repeated” diurnal rituals of newspaper consumption and that it is similarly reinforced by the material traces of “exact replicas” of each person’s own newspaper observed in social spaces (ibid.).

But Anderson’s focus on newspapers leads to a misreading of Dickens’s place in the history of periodical print resulting in a description of how Dickens “serialized his popular novels in newspapers” (35. n.61). While *feuilletons* published in French daily newspapers were a staple diet of that particular “imagined community”, none of Dickens’s novels were serialised in English newspapers. They appeared in monthly or weekly instalments that were produced either as stand-alone serials or as part of a magazine. There is more than a pedantic literary historical point to be made here. Just as Anderson attempts to deploy Dickens in this instance to give credence to his suggestion that newspapers can seen as “one-day best-sellers”, so the inaccuracy of the reference reveals the flaw in his comparison between newspapers and books (34). While newspapers are notable for their “ephemeral popularity”, the serials of Dickens became canonical Victorian novels that instituted a new way of reading contemporary fiction. Tying his original readers to the same “mass ceremony” of simultaneous consumption that Anderson notes for newspapers, Dickens nevertheless presents his serial work in a way that negotiates its status as an ephemeral production of the periodical press and as a work of literary merit. Anderson’s view of the newspaper as an “extreme form” of the book belies what Laurel Brake notes were the important valencies that serial fiction adopted from both periodical and volume production. Part-issue and magazine serialisation looked:
on the one hand to the ephemeral newspaper and periodical press, and on the other hand to books imitating their privileging of named and often ‘star’ authors, and their distribution by publisher, booksellers, and libraries rather than by newsmen or news vendors. (Brake 2001: 33; original emphasis)

Following Brake’s call to recover the original “framework of material culture” in which serials were first issued in order to situate them closer to “other commodities in the marketplace” (ibid. 27), I focus on the material consequences of serial production—such as regular instalments stitched inside a paper cover, advertisements, volumes bound with bibliographic extras such as dedications, prefaces, frontispieces and portraits of authors. I demonstrate that a focus on the materiality of serial novel production, and an analysis of the resulting paratextual elements, can deepen our understanding of the impact of serialisation on Victorian print culture and representations of authorship. In doing this, I critique the overly proscriptive focus on discursivity or textuality adopted by Foucault and Genette respectively.

The focus on the materiality of Victorian serial novels will lead to a detailed examination of the paratextual elements that made up the differences between different editions of the same text. I hope to demonstrate that paratext can be used in a more theoretically useful way than Genette employs in his landmark book, Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation (1997). As I discuss in the following chapter, Genette’s approach in this book provides an inventory of the different types and subtypes of paratext. This approach suffers from a textual focus, in the same way that I argue Foucault’s author-function effaces important material elements associated with authorship in order to emphasise the purely discursive, textual aspects of authorial activity. By using case studies from Victorian serial authors to support my claims, I hope to suggest a way of refining Foucault’s useful concept of the author-function by refocusing questions of authorial activity on issues of materiality and embodiment. In the same way, I suggest redefining Genette’s idea of paratext by restoring the material aspects that his focus on textuality does not incorporate. These
theoretical refinements are supported in the following chapters by a range of paratextual examples that serve to demonstrate how such a corpus can be used to study historical representations of authorship.

In the first chapter, I outline a theoretical framework focused on Foucault’s concept of the “author-function” and Genette’s notion of paratext. I suggest that in order to apply these approaches to a historically accurate analysis of Victorian serialised novels, it is important to examine the material consequences of serial production. One such consequence was the necessity for Victorian authors to negotiate a rhetorical compromise between the opportunities offered by the periodical marketplace and an attempt to locate literary work beyond the status of mere literary commodities. If serialised fiction tapped into a mass audience for original novels, it also implicated Victorian authors in a commodity-exchange that existed in ideological tension with notions of gentlemanly conduct, on the one hand, and professional behaviour on the other.

Chapter 2 examines the idea of a literary career viewed retrospectively to analyse how this worked for Victorian serials, which enabled authorial retrospection at the level of weekly or monthly instalments as well as at the point at which each serial was transformed into a volume. Examining this mode of production offers examples of authorial acts of retrospective repossession on a volume-by-volume, or even instalment-by-instalment, basis. Such constant assessment and re-assessment of a career in progress was mirrored by the number of reviews a popular serialised novel could generate. Unlike a traditional volume edition, a popular monthly or weekly serial could become the subject of equally frequent reviews and excerpts. This meant that even non-readers of a particular serial might encounter its characters, controversies or reviews in a range of Victorian periodicals. The consequence of such saturation gave certain serials and their authors the pervasive presence across Victorian culture that John Sutherland calls, in reference to Dickens, a kind of “total and continual existence for the readers of his age” (Sutherland 1976: 37).

The transition between the completed serial and its subsequent volume edition proved a very important stage in authorial retrospection. This was often expressed in the material forms and rhetorical performances with which the publication of the
volume edition was staged before the public. Subsequent volume editions of the same novel would sometimes introduce new covers, prefaces or illustrations and would, consequently, change the way that that novel was presented to readers as well as the kind of authorship it represented. The transition between serials and volumes was also significant because it was implicated in the much wider Victorian debate about the recent commodification of literature and the effects of this commodification on authorship and the English literary tradition.

Chapter 3 continues to examine the connections between Victorian concerns over the commodification of literature under industrial-capitalist processes, paratextual elements and depictions of authorship. Victorian serial fiction, mass produced for an emerging popular audience, represented a model of production moving from the patronage of the few, as was common in the eighteenth century, to the frequent appeal to the many. With the necessity of providing products that would satisfy the market-based forces upon which the survival of their work, and continued career, was predicated, Victorian authors were caught in a rhetorical bind where their work was both a commodity in a literary marketplace and something that needed to transcend the world of commodities. In producing work to meet consumer demand, Dickens and Thackeray deployed very different rhetorical strategies to account for the commodity status of their work. Chapter 3 examines the representations of authorial labour by Dickens and Thackeray and how these engaged with contemporary concerns about the market-driven conditions structuring periodical literary work.

The third chapter also suggests that the representation of authors in Victorian society functioned as an index to changing frameworks for intellectual property, the rise of middle-class professionals and the function of literary labour. In order to provide a sociohistorical analysis of the representations of authorship associated with Dickens and Thackeray, I examine how the rhetorical processes in the paratext to their work valorised, or contested, contemporary copyright legislation, the function of the author as a professional and notions of the imaginative labour performed by serialising novelists.

The fourth chapter introduces the concept of the “editor-function” and situates
this function in relationship to literary experiments with anonymity, pseudonymity
and celebrity in the Victorian literary marketplace. In contrast to eighteenth-century
papers such as The Tatler and The Spectator, many Victorian journals boasted
recognisable editors who had an established relationship with readers as authors of
serial novels. Exploring this author-editor relationship, Chapter 4 suggests
modifications to Foucault’s idea of the “author-function” by way of what I term the
“editor-function”. It is the aim of this chapter to demonstrate how paratextual
elements, particularly opening addresses, were used to create distinct types of
editorial figures and how these figures were related to the historical and cultural
transformations affecting the Victorian periodical press and the public sphere.

Throughout this study, I demonstrate that a focus on the materiality of serial
novel production, and an analysis of the resulting paratextual elements, can deepen
scholarly understanding of Victorian print culture. Moreover, I suggest that through a
historically informed reading of these elements it is possible to trace the
consequences of serialisation as a mode of production on representations of
authorship. By assembling, examining and contextualising paratextual elements, this
study traces the kind of “system[s] of valorization” (Foucault 1977: 115) inscribed at
the material level of the book through which the authorial figures of Dickens and
Thackeray were formed. Using the literary careers of these two authors as case
studies, I suggest that their author-functions cannot be understood without
acknowledging the material conditions structuring the production of their serialised
novels. Focusing on the rhetorical responses to these conditions found in the paratext
of their work, I argue that their engagement with the materiality of serial fiction
production prompts a reassessment of Foucault’s theory of the author-function and
Genette’s approach to paratext. In proposing the importance of paratext for book
historians and literary theorists, I demonstrate that this neglected corpus offers a new
perspective on Victorian literary careers, the history of the novel and theoretical
approaches to authorship.
Chapter 1: Victorian Serial Fiction, Paratext and the Author-Function

Introduction
The purpose of this chapter is to examine how literary theory, particularly theories of authorship, can be productively combined with the material history of the book. These two approaches to literature have demonstrated a mutually improving tendency in recent years. Critics such as Daniel Hack, Emily Steinlight and Andrew Miller have demonstrated how theoretical approaches covering materiality, consumer culture and the commodity-fetish can be productively used to explain the historical significance of Victorian periodical work and the relationship between the material forms of this work and emerging models of authorship (Hack 2005; Steinlight 2006; Miller 1995).

This chapter will examine how one particular theoretical concept, Foucault’s “author-function”, can be critiqued and improved by combining it with a book-historical focus on the elements situated at the contours of texts, which Gérard Genette refers to as “paratext”. While retaining the notion of the author-function as a useful theoretical shorthand for a range of processes, I will suggest that it is reductive to abstract all literary work to the immaterial realm of discourse. To support this claim, I will outline the reasons and method for conducting a historically grounded examination of how Victorian authorship was imprinted at the material level of the book.

I will suggest that Foucault’s argument needs to be modified by an approach to texts and authors that highlights the material form of texts and the various ways these material forms emerge from, and modify, notions of authorship. By focusing on Victorian serialised fiction, I will demonstrate that its material form, indicative of a specific mode of production, separated it from the novels published in traditional three-volume editions. I will suggest that the material consequences of this new type of novel, serialised and reissued across a range of publication formats, opened up new discursive spaces that not only distinguished serialised fiction from three-volume novels, but that also provided a mechanism whereby new notions of authorship could
be represented, explored and contested. Critiquing Foucault’s concept of the anonymous author-function, I will argue that the sense of authors’ embodied relationship to their novels and their readers was central to the models of authorship that emerged in the paratextual spaces enabled by Victorian serialised fiction. This argument will involve replacing Foucault’s anonymous author-function with a historically situated and biographically restored author-figure. Modifying Genette’s concept of paratext, I will reconstruct such author-figures through a close reading of the paratextual spaces in which they first appeared. Genette’s conceptions of fixed borders between inside and outside, text and paratext, become particularly complicated with serial fiction, a form in which a group of chapters are presented surrounded by illustrations and adverts. These two elements, conspicuously absent from Genette’s taxonomy of paratextual elements, signal certain generic and cultural affiliations which simultaneously position the text in particular literary, graphic and commercial traditions. As arguments over the relative merits of text and image in Victorian fiction make clear, the interaction between text and image cannot be reduced to a simple text/paratext binary without oversimplifying important traces of the material history of serial novel production (Elliott 2003; Cohen 1980; Harvey 1970). We need only compare the genesis of The Pickwick Papers, initially conceived as a set of visual caricatures joined by supporting letter-press, with its eventual success attributed largely to Dickens’s writing, to see how unstable categories of text/paratext were in the protean world of Victorian serial publishing. Given such shifting categories, and their repercussions at the generic level of the novel, an exclusively textual approach, such as Genette’s, fails to account for the relationship between the material conditions of the novel and the author-functions that emerge from these conditions.

**Victorian Serialised Fiction in Historical Context**

The serialisation of Victorian fiction marks the point in literary history when the traditional mode of producing expensive novels as luxury items was replaced by the production of novels dictated by the vicissitudes and structured by the relations of industrial print capitalism. In order to appreciate the radically new mode of
production represented by Victorian serialised fiction, it is important to understand the state of the English publishing industry in the nineteenth century. From 1800-1830, the price of new novels rose from around 5s to the astronomical 31s.6d that became standard following the success of issuing Walter Scott’s novels at this price (Altick 260-3).² New novels were available only to those who could afford to purchase them in luxurious, leather-bound, three-volume editions or who could afford to pay an annual subscription of 42s for the privilege of borrowing these volumes one at a time from a circulating library.

Richard Altick pinpoints the excessive price of three-volume novels after 1820 to the literary phenomenon of Walter Scott. The unprecedented success of Scott’s novels seemed to be the proof that “exorbitant prices” did not impede sales (Altick 262). Before the publication of Scott’s *Kenilworth* (1821) as a 31s.6d three-volume edition, there were only a “handful” of novels that were similarly priced. However, “by 1840 fifty-one out of fifty-eight new novels bore this price” (Altick 263). As a result of the artificially high cost of three-volume novels, publishers increasingly sought their profits from sales to circulating libraries, as opposed to individuals. This led to a model of novel consumption which focused on circulating libraries: not only did these libraries become “fashionable places to be seen”, they were also the only method through which the majority of readers could read the latest novels (Erickson 145); an additional consequence was that, once they had paid their annual subscription fee, readers wanted to get the most for their money and would seek to borrow the most expensive novels. For libraries to stay successful they needed to stock these expensive books. This became a driver for publishers to keep the price of their novels high, which preserved readers in the state of perpetual borrowers, rather than consumers, of novels (ibid).

One effect of such a literary market was that the vast majority of the English reading public never considered the possibility of actually buying a book.

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² In a strange quirk of literary history, the success of the “cheap monthly issues of the Waverley novels [...] revealed to publishers the existence of an audience [...] and also the possibility of appealing to them directly by encouraging monthly installment buying” (Erickson 149). Thus, Scott and his publishers were influential in establishing the two formats for novels—three-volume and serial instalments—that subsequently dominated Victorian publishing.
Contemporary authors were encountered, if at all, between the covers of volumes that were returned to the library once finished. This model of consumption was so pervasive in the first quarter of the nineteenth century that publishers’ efforts to reissue novels, or to issue new fiction, in cheap one-volume formats proved unsuccessful.

However, responsible as they were for precipitating a rise in the cost of new fiction, in the late 1820s Scott’s novels became the driver behind a trend for re-issuing recent fiction in cheaper formats. This began in 1829 with Cadell’s publication of the Author’s Edition of the Waverley Novels in five-shilling volumes and was followed from 1831 with Colburn and Bentley’s “famous and long-lived series of Standard Novels at 6s” (Altick 274). Despite these successes for republishing popular fiction in cheap, monthly part issues, efforts to sell cheap new fiction continued to prove disastrous (Erickson 156-8).

However, the trend for selling cheap monthly re-issues of popular fiction, such as Scott’s novels, had led to a range of technological advances and provided the first glimpse of an untapped market for cheap fiction. These factors set the scene for Dickens’s spectacular success with the Pickwick Papers in 1836-7 (Altick 277-9). From 1836, when Dickens started The Pickwick Papers, until his death in 1870, the serialisation of fiction became the prominent way for issuing new novels in Victorian England. A range of canonical Victorian novels were first issued in serialised format, with many of the novels by Charles Dickens, William Thackeray, Wilkie Collins, Elizabeth Gaskell, George Eliot, Anthony Trollope, Charles Lever and Harrison Ainsworth first appearing before the reading public in serialised form. An 1861 article in the Publishers’ Circular noted the significance of this development:

Perhaps one of the most striking features of the periodical literature of the day is the general levelling of all distinctions grounded upon mere price. The eminent author may now descend from the six shilling Quarterly even to the penny weekly without the slightest fear of losing caste; and Cobbett’s well-known defiance of the prejudice of his time by calling one of his own publications ‘Two-penny Trash’ would have been unintelligible to the present generation.
Have we not had Mr. Dickens, Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, Mr Wilkie Collins, and Mrs Gaskell addressing us through the popular twopenny numbers of ‘Household Words’ and ‘All the Year Round’ [...] (Anon. 1861b: 694)

The review notes a transformation in the “present generation” from a model founded on “mere price” to one in which an “eminent author” may “descend [...] even to the penny weekly without the slightest fear of losing caste”. Stating that the earlier “defiance” against cheap literature, “[t]wo-penny trash” had disappeared, the article lists famous contemporary authors whose works have been presented to readers through Dickens’s 2d weekly journals.

The success of part-issue fiction, while comparatively small when compared with the “unknown [reading] public” of 3 million noted by Wilkie Collins in 1858, served to encourage the development of other cheap formats for issuing and re-issuing contemporary novels (Collins 1858: 218). If the one-shilling, part-issue instalment put novels within the range of middle class clerks and wealthy adolescents, then the two-penny journals, such as Dickens’s *Household Words* (1850-59) and *All the Year Round* (1859-95), put them within reach of the “common reader” (Altick 264). This was the category of reader discussed by Altick who could not afford to purchase or borrow three-volume novels and so, prior to cheap journals, would not have had access to copyright works, “a category that included almost all recent books by English authors, fiction and non-fiction alike” (ibid.).

As the demand for serialised novels increased, publishers responded by offering serial fiction in a bewildering range of publication formats. Varying in price, paper quality, use of illustration, genre, frequency of issue and target audience, these formats were of central importance in defining the new mode of contemporary fiction inaugurated with the success of Dickens’s *Pickwick*. These different formats, and the paratext that constituted their differences, provide a range of insights into the way that Victorian literary culture came to represent, commodify and contest the new kind of novel produced in the serialised form. At the same time, these paratextual elements enabled authors and publishers to engage with the issues involved in periodical publishing.
**Genette, Paratext and the History of the Novel**

This study argues that the bibliographical elements that turn a portion of text into a serial instalment or complete volume leave traces of the author-function responsible for that text. Gérard Genette defines such bibliographical elements as paratext: a definition glossed by Richard Macksey in his foreword to *Paratexts* as the “liminal devices and conventions” existing within a book, “peritext”, as well as outside a book, “epitext” (Genette 1997: xvii). Examples of peritext, the focus of this study, include frontispieces, dedications, prefaces and illustrations. Epitext is a category encompassing everything from author interviews and letters to original manuscripts and discarded drafts of the text. While paratext seems to have entered critical vocabulary, Genette’s subcategories of peritext and epitext are not so well used.

For Genette, paratext is “what enables a text to become a book and to be offered as such to its readers” (1). He defines it in terms of a zone of “transition” and “transaction”, a privileged place which is “at the service of a better reception for the text and a more pertinent reading of it [...]” (2). This raises two very important issues: the question of intentionality involved in claiming that authors and publishers are able to “direct” the interpretation of texts; and the notion of a reading public that can be influenced by such direction. Genette’s approach implicitly accepts both these claims.

I would like to suggest a more nuanced view. While it is evident that authors and publishers are able to present certain texts in ways that appeal to specific audiences, it is also true that a range of other factors can influence the material forms that texts take. In Victorian England, these factors included the price and availability of paper, covers and illustrations; methods for issuing text (for example, in part-issue, magazine or newspaper instalments) and reissuing it (for example, in luxury volume editions or cheap, serialised reprints); the specific set of labour relations that connected printers, publishers, distributors, advertisers and booksellers with authors, editors, illustrators and journalists; and general social conditions such as income and literacy levels as well as the availability of leisure, light and solitude.
Genette’s focus on textuality and his inventory-like approach in *Paratexts* suggests a model in which questions of materiality are ignored and the conditions structuring the relationship between text and paratext are effaced. As Jerome McGann points out in *The Textual Condition* (1991):

[…] Genette’s materials exhibit the following two characteristics: first their textuality is exclusively linguistic; and second, they are consistently regarded as only quasitextual, ancillary to the main textual event (i.e., to the linguistic text, or what older theorists used to call the ‘poem as such’). (McGann 1991: 13)

Despite the fact that McGann is focused on poetry, his insights into the material nature of the text/paratext interaction are pertinent to a discussion of Victorian serial novels. Published in a bewildering array of formats, editions and series, these novels betray more than a passing interest in their own materiality and process of production. Daniel Hack has argued that we can see this obsession in Victorian serials such as *Bleak House* (1852-3), where the text is self-reflexively focused on “the physical materiality of writing” as it evolves into a “document about the materiality of documents and the interpretation of that materiality” (Hack 2005: 37-8). At a more basic level, as these serials proceeded from instalment to instalment there was a constant engagement with the material and market contingencies upon which their continuation depended. Serials that did not keep their readers, or that did not finish before their authors expired, were tangible evidence of the harsh realities of life and death in the Victorian literary marketplace. Moreover, they signalled that a highly contested generic question (what makes a novel and when does a serial become one) was not only concerned with issues of hermeneutics but also with issues related to the material level of texts and the embodied lives of authors.

Given such material concerns and the fact, as McGann emphasises, that like all things, human texts are “embodied phenomena”, Genette’s avowed linguistic focus seems restrictive in its inattentiveness to “such matters as ink, typeface, paper, and

3 Also see Mcgann 1993.
various other phenomena which are crucial to the understanding of
textuality” (McGann 1991: 13). As McGann suggests, while Genette’s text/paratext
distinction can be useful “for certain descriptive purposes”, it is not “strong enough”
for a “deeper investigation into the nature of textuality” because it fails to provide a
framework for analysing “the quality of self-embodiment that is so central to the
nature of texts” (ibid. 13-14).

McGann’s second point, that Genette’s paratextual examples are regarded \textit{a priori}
as secondary to the text they support, is especially relevant to Victorian serial
fiction. The text of these serials initially emerged in England as “ancillary” to the
popular genre of graphic satire and in France as subservient to the newspaper in
which it was initially relegated to the lower-half of the front page, the \textit{rez-de-
chaussée}.\footnote{The \textit{feuilleton} was initially a “supplement” to the newspaper which “quickly became the ‘ground
floor’ (\textit{rez-de-chaussée}) of the newspaper [...] clearly separated from the rest of the
paper” (Couégnas 326).} The origin of Dickens’s \textit{The Pickwick Papers} clearly demonstrates that the
text/paratext distinction is less stable than Genette portrays. Given the existence of
such unstable text/paratext boundaries, I will argue that we need to extend the
concept of paratext beyond the linguistic-oriented boundaries of Genette’s study
which, as Juliet Gardiner has noted, “signals an untenable, essentialist fixity of
meaning for the text” (Gardiner 2000: 258). The fluid nature of the text/paratext
distinction is a vital concern for any literary historian who wishes to understand the
success of Victorian serial fiction and its unprecedented blending of textual, iconic
and bibliographic elements into a new form that acted as a product in a commodity
marketplace at the same time that it redefined the generic concept of the novel and
Victorian definitions of authorship.

In order to modify Genette’s approach, which tends towards an overdetermined
focus on textuality, I will attempt to read paratextual examples in relation to broader
economic and social developments. With cheaper paper production (Huett 65) and
increasingly efficient steam presses, the Victorian publishing industry was able to
capitalise on emerging systems of credit, improved distribution networks and
increasing literacy to entice a widening circle of consumers to buy periodical
literature. Publishing went from a small coterie of established names, engaged in making high-profit margins on each volume (Feltes 3), to an ever-increasing group of publishers publishing cheaper, periodical work for a mass audience. This development in the publishing industry was part of an economic transformation restructuring all of Victorian life: namely, the transition to a mode of production dictated by industrial capitalism. In order to demonstrate how a more materially-focused approach, contra Foucault and Genette, can be useful, this study will examine how Dickens and Thackeray responded to the material consequences of industrial conditions on authorship and what this reveals about the relationship between paratext and the ideological work of Victorian periodical literature.

In assembling and analysing a corpus of paratext to Victorian periodical work, I propose to combine the approach of textual critics, such as Mcgann, who locate the physical elements of the book within a set of social relations connecting authors, illustrators, printers, publishers, readers and reviewers, with the awareness of book historians, such as Roger Chartier, that:

[...] there is no text apart from the physical support that offers it for reading (or hearing), hence there is no comprehension of any written piece that does not at least in part depend upon the forms in which it reaches its reader. (qtd. in Littau 24)

This approach to paratextuality has been neatly summarised by Samuel Kinser who states that paratextual elements indicate “the forces that have shaped the text” and can show “how contexts invade the text” as well as how authors attempt to “combat” these forces and contexts (Kinser 17; emphasis added).

Consequently, this study seeks to move away from the liminal aspect of paratext, which has been variously characterised as a doorway, a “vestibule” (Borges qtd. in Genette 2) and an “airlock”. This focus on liminality occludes the sociological processes enacted in paratextual spaces. These are processes which not only mark the transition between the world of the text and the world of the reader but which also inscribe, enact and examine a set of aesthetic, commercial and ideological values.
associated with the consequences of industrial capitalism on literary production. Responding to D.F. McKenzie’s call for a bibliographically informed criticism (Sutherland 1988: 586), I suggest that exploring the elements that Genette defines as paratext enables us to combine theories of authorship with the material history of the book. Genette mentions serialised fiction in the conclusion to *Paratexts* (Genette 1997: 405), noting that it is one of three important paratextual areas he was not able to explore. Acknowledging that serialised fiction was the original form in which the work of “hundreds of writers, including some of the greatest” appeared for 150 years, Genette notes that literary history lacks “a comprehensive historical study of the phenomenon” (406). By focusing on the historical and material contexts of paratextual elements, I suggest a reading of these elements that locates them within the historical period from which they emerged and within the material context of the book, magazine or part-issue instalment in which they appeared. Following Jerome McGann, I use textual and bibliographic elements to “elucidate that complex network of people, materials, and events which have produced and continue to reproduce the literary works which history delivers into our hands” (McGann 1985: 191). By analysing the paratext to works of specific authors as they were issued and re-issued throughout their careers, I suggest a way of tracing representations of authorship at the material level of novels.

More than just historical examples of how Victorian novels were marketed, paratextual spaces enable scholars to retrace the development of competing models of authorship over the course of Victorian literary careers. The material elements of serial fiction included such features as whether the serial was issued on a daily, weekly or monthly basis in newspaper, magazine or part-issue instalments; the indications of genre and target audience implied by the cover and the price tag of the serial; whether the serial chapters included illustrations, the quantity and location of these illustrations in the text and the method (such as woodcut or engraving) used to print them; and whether the book carried the name or pseudonym of the author together with a facsimile autograph signature or a portrait.

These material elements engaged with implied definitions of literary value associated with certain types of serialised fiction and the author-figures which were
defined by, or against, such associations. Victorian authors often used paratextual
spaces such as prefaces and addresses to readers to position their past, present and
future work in a very specific relation to the literary market and an English literary
tradition. As a corpus of study, paratext demonstrates that books are never a
“transparent means to encounters with texts” (Mulcaire 493). Texts are the
predominant way that readers encounter authors but for this encounter to take place,
texts must first be offered to readers in material forms such as books or instalment
issues. It follows that the paratextual elements which effect such a transformation can
reveal a great deal about how an author-figure establishes itself with contemporary
readers, develops through successive editions of that author’s work and bequeaths a
specific legacy for future generations of readers.

This study, then, argues against the “[t]raditional textual criticism” exemplified
in Genette’s approach to paratext. With its “concentration on the linguistic text” this
approach sits comfortably with “traditional hermeneutics” (McGann 1991: 57) in its
exclusive focus on the discovery and explication of linguistic elements. Rather than
restricting the analysis of literary works to merely “linguistic symbologies,” I will
follow Jerome McGann’s work in viewing texts as a “laced network of linguistic and
bibliographic codes” (1991: 13, my emphasis). My critique of both Genette and
Foucault is of their tendency to deploy a reductive focus in which the material aspects
of texts and their authors are effaced in order to reduce text to discourse and authors
to functions. The purpose of this study is to demonstrate the important corpus of
paratextual elements that such a reductive focus ignores and to suggest a theoretical
framework for studying these elements.

Foucault and the Author-Function
In his influential 1969 essay, “What is an Author?”, Michel Foucault defined the
characteristics of what he called the “author-function”. For Foucault, while some
texts like novels or poems can have authors, other texts, such as letters and contracts
can have only writers. The author-function is used, says Foucault “to characterize the
existence, circulation, and operation of certain discourses within a society (Foucault
1977: 124). While literary texts need to have labels so they can be separated into
texts, genres, oeuvres, [and] canons”, Foucault sees these labels operating at a functional, rather than biographical, level (During 122). His theory rests on the notion that the author is an “interpretive construct” that emerges from “our way of handling texts” (qtd. in Wilson 350).

But, as Adrian Wilson points out, Foucault is not consistent in how he defines what constitutes a “text”. Indeed, Wilson goes so far as to suggest that Foucault displays a “systematic blindness with respect to what we may call ‘the question of the text’” (Wilson 355). Moreover, in his eagerness to dispense with the idea of the author as a personal being, Foucault made the same error that he had earlier criticised in Barthes’s approach. Foucault had seen that Barthes’s concept of écriture “merely transposed the empirical characteristics of an author to a transcendental anonymity” (Foucault 1977: 120; qtd. in Wilson 361). This did not answer the question of what constitutes an author. It merely shifted the ground:

The very terms of Barthes’s own rhetoric reveal that the figure of écriture was—as Foucault accurately observed—the concealed hypostatization of the author-figure. (Wilson 361)

In replacing the personal being of the author with an anonymous function, Foucault was committing the same mistake. Foucault’s larger project, what Wilson describes as establishing the “putative sovereignty of discourse” (Wilson 360), necessitated a suppression of the personal being of the author. In place of a biographical author would be a function: a function, like a text, that fit into Foucault’s larger views on discourse.

In order to critique Foucault’s emphasis on anonymity in his notion of the author-function, I will argue that the sense of authors’ biographically specific relationship to their novels and their readers was central to the models of authorship that emerged in the paratextual spaces enabled by Victorian serialised fiction. This argument will involve replacing Foucault’s anonymous author-function with a historically situated and biographically restored author-figure. Using Genette’s concept of “paratext”, I will provide examples of how to reconstruct such author-
figures through a close reading of the paratextual spaces in which they first appeared. Emerging from the distinct material form of Victorian serialisation, paratextual spaces provided a zone where these new author-figures could engage with the changing conditions structuring literary labour. As the first generation of novelists to produce periodical work as a mass produced literary commodity, Victorian authors presented their labour in a variety of ways that engaged with the industrial conditions structuring the production of their work in the contemporary marketplace.

I argue that by focusing on the relationship between paratext and historical context as focused through the lens of authorship, it is possible to demonstrate a way of using paratext to examine how a particular culture viewed ideas of creative agency, professional authorship and authorial celebrity. This set of concepts, I contend, also maps very well onto Foucault’s theory of the author-function which he summarises as “a mode of discourse, bounded by legal and institutional conditions, in which, a culturally specific operation results in texts being attributed to authors and certain “subjective positions” becoming available to “individuals of any class” (Foucault 1977: 131)

This framework provides a useful way of approaching the structural changes in Victorian publishing. For example, by focusing on the transformation of an eighteenth-century print culture based on patronage to a Victorian literary marketplace in which authors, publishers and parliamentarians vied over copyright, it is possible to examine authorship from the perspective of the “legal codification” (Foucault 1997: 124) structuring professional literary activity. Dickens’s dedication to *The Pickwick Papers* presents copyright as fundamental to the production of a national literature and the survival of English authors. Couched as a letter to an MP who had battled for improved copyright protection for authors, this dedication provides a clear example of how legal concerns were imprinted at the material level of the book. The relationships between copyright, theories of authorship and the material history of Victorian serials are examined in more detail in Chapter 3.

Foucault’s second aspect of the author-function, that “it does not operate in a uniform manner in all discourse, at all times, and in any given culture”, seems rather
self-evident (Foucault 1997:130). Granting that the author-function varies considerably depending upon historical and cultural circumstances, I will focus on how Dickens’s author-function emerged from the conditions specific to the Victorian periodical press. This will lead, in Chapter 2, to a detailed examination of the relationship between pseudonyms and biographical authors. In Chapter 4, I will introduce the concept of the “editor-function” as a supplement to the “author-function” and will suggest that, for writers such as Dickens, these various author- and editor-functions emerged from a structural change in Victorian print culture in which the embodied figure of the author came to play a central role. In contrast to the disembodied eidolons of eighteenth-century periodicals, Victorian literary journals were usually promoted as the work of celebrity editors. Examining the relationship between anonymous and celebrity authorship, and locating it as a cultural index for Victorian attitudes towards periodical literature, I will trace the “series of precise and complex procedures” (Foucault 1997: 130) by which Victorian periodical work was attributed to authors and examine its broader cultural significance.

As Kathryn Chittick has usefully observed, Dickens’s emergence as a novelist in the 1830s was not the “inevitable matter” we might take it to be (Chittick ix). As the reviews of his works moved from the “Magazine” to the “Literature” columns of periodicals (ibid. x-xi), the paratext to this work staged a transformation from the pseudonym Boz, associated with caricatures and London sketches, to the writer of serious English literature, Charles Dickens. As Chapter 2 demonstrates, the paratextual elements associated with Dickens’s novels during the late 1830s all served to separate the successful, albeit ephemeral, serial productions of Boz from the lasting works of literature attributed to Charles Dickens. Not only was Dickens, the biographically identifiable individual, taking retrospective repossession of his works from his pseudonym Boz, but he was using paratextual elements to situate that work in relation to important issues of Victorian society and an English literary tradition.

Molly Nesbit has observed that the economics of the marketplace is Foucault’s “blind spot”: “His author had to exist in a disembodied, non reflecting, dispersed state, in knowledge, not in the world” (Nesbit 255-6). In order to restore the significance of the Victorian marketplace, this study demonstrates that the market-
based relations, upon which the production of serial fiction was predicated, were also inscribed at the material level of part-issue instalments, periodical magazines and subsequent volume editions. Moreover, I suggest that these paratextual elements created representations of authorship that were vital for understanding the effects of market-based conditions on literary work. If Foucault argues that the author-function is a symptom of the “existence, circulation, and operation of certain discourses within a society” (Foucault 1977: 124), I would like to propose that the emergence of the figure of the professional, Victorian author enables scholars to trace how, at the material level of books, new models of authorship appeared tracing “the production, circulation and valorization” (Siskin 297) of certain modes of periodical writing.

The Consequences of Victorian Literary Production on the Author-Function

Discussing the “revolution that has been effected by Periodical Literature” in *England and the English* (1833), Edward Bulwer-Lytton explained the advantages of writing for the periodical press. Authors submitting an article to a periodical magazine:

> [...] enjoyed indeed a double sort of fame, for the article not only obtained praise for its own merit, but caught no feeble reflection from the general esteem conferred upon the Miscellany itself. (Bulwer-Lytton 1833: 191-2; qtd. in Erickson 173)

Lee Erickson summarises Bulwer-Lytton’s argument, noting how publishing articles in periodical magazines was generally easier and offered writers more immediate financial returns than publishing self-contained volumes. This led to a situation where article writing eclipsed the composition of volumes so that great “talent”, “taste” and “knowledge” was focused “to fugitive purposes” (Bulwer-Lytton 1833: 46; qtd. in Erickson 173). Invoking a dramatic maritime metaphor, Bulwer-Lytton highlights the danger that this posed to English literature:
Literary works, in the magnificent thought of Bacon, are the Ships of Time; precious was the cargo wasted upon vessels which sunk for ever in a three-months’ voyage. (ibid.)

Lytton notes that, while England had “great literary men”, their works are no longer available “in standard publications, but in periodical miscellanies.” Chittick points out that Lytton is characterising a literary age where the key distinguishing feature is ephemerality (Chittick 37).

In *Adam Bede* (1859), George Eliot pinpointed the market for this ephemeral work in a changing approach to leisure dictated by new modes of industrial production:

> Ingenious philosophers tell you, perhaps, that the great work of the steam-engine is to create leisure for mankind. Do not believe them: it only creates a vacuum for eager thoughts to rush in. Even idleness is eager now—eager for amusement: prone to excursion-trains, art-museums, periodical literature, and exciting novels. (Eliot 1980: 557; qtd. in Williams 216)

If the periodical marketplace offered increasing opportunities for a rising class of periodical writers, there was a need to locate that work beyond the status of mere literary commodities. The various representations of authorial labour in Victorian England involved aesthetic, ethical and economic concerns about whether it was possible, or desirable, “[...] to find a locus of value for the author beyond the marketplace” (Pettitt 153).

In his 1829 essay, “Signs of the Times”, Thomas Carlyle called his epoch “the Mechanical Age” in which both the external and internal were “now managed by machinery” (Carlyle 1858: 100-101). This mechanistic dominance was exemplified by an industrialised literary market place where books were not only printed but also “written and sold by machinery” (qtd. in Erickson 106). For Carlyle, the mechanisation of literary production created an insatiable demand for works that were chiefly characterised by their low quality and instant oblivion. In an 1832
review, he described how the products of the periodical press were “swallowed
monthly into the bottomless Pool” (ibid). His description of the labour relations
behind this production is worth quoting in detail as it presents a vivid attack on the
dehumanised processes of the literary market place in the year before Dickens’s first
sketches appeared:

[…] innumerable Paper-makers, Compositors, Printers’ Devils, Book-binders,
and Hawkers grown hoarse with loud proclaiming, rest not from their labour;
and still, in torrents, rushes on the great array of Publications, unpausing, to
their final home; and still Oblivion, like the Grave, cries, Give! Give! (ibid.)

With authorial originality and reader interest absent, this description focuses on the
incessant, inhuman needs of a literary marketplace served by “innumerable”
labourers at the service not of literary permanence but of “oblivion”. To meet such
inhuman demand, novelists were depicted as turning into depersonalised, industrial
producers at the mercy of what the Edinburgh Review (1802-1929) called in 1860
“the senseless energy of steam” (Anon. 1860: 3).

But at the same time as he decried the contemporary literary marketplace,
Carlyle was also forced to participate in it. After “years of discouragement”, Carlyle
was reduced by financial necessity to publishing his book, Sartor Resartus (1833-34),
in a periodical magazine (Chittck 178; Bonham Carter 57). As he wrote in a letter to
James Fraser, the editor of the magazine “[...] after long deliberation I have
determined to slit it up into stripes, and send it forth in the Periodical way” (Carlyle
1833: no page). Unable to find an alternative mode of publication for Sartor Resartus
and in need of money, Carlyle agreed for his work to be serialised in Fraser’s
Magazine. Like Walter Scott, Carlyle was forced to participate in a literary
marketplace he found as morally questionable as he did financially necessary.
Moreover, the two authors shared a representation of the resulting model of
authorship in which human agency is replaced by industrial concerns, processes and
products.

In “The Hero as the Man of Letters” (1841), Thomas Carlyle set out to propose
a model for literary labour that transcended the same periodical marketplace he had struggled to avoid in the 1830s. In an 1833 letter to John Stuart Mill, Carlyle informed the philosopher:

I had hoped that I might get out of Periodicals altogether, and write Books: but the light I got in London last winter showed me that this was as good as over. My Editors of periodicals are my Booksellers [...]” (qtd. in Chittick 34; original emphasis).

While trying to distinguish the work of authors from common market labour and presenting it as something “transcending commodities”, Carlyle endeavoured to avoid presenting it as an activity that fostered begging or needed charity (Hack 68-81). Daniel Hack argues that Carlyle was forced to concede that the vicissitudes of the marketplace provided an “ordeal” that allowed authors the opportunity to prove their dedication, talent and “heroic” qualities (Hack 67-8; 79-81). Such rhetorical compromise, arguing against market-based forms of authorship only to return to the market as the site of an author’s “heroic” struggle, was a common tension in Victorian representations of authorship.

The Guild of Literature and Art, which included Dickens, Forster and Bulwer-Lytton, represents an interesting Victorian attempt to transcend market-based forms of literary production. As Claire Pettitt notes, the goal of the Guild was to “establish the public utility and instrumentality of literary writing in order to establish a value for it beyond the ephemerality of the marketplace” (Pettitt 154). Indeed, the emphasis on “the instrumentality of literature [...] in public life” was a fundamental part of their claim to “professional status” (Pettitt 157; original emphasis). The Guild of Literature and Art, aimed as a supplement if not an “alternativ[e] to the literary marketplace”, was launched with a prospectus noting that “guild” was “the name given by old Saxon custom to societies in which the members of a class contributed to the benefit of each other” (Hack 68, 89). This was also a point stressed by Dickens in references in Household Words to the Guild (Hack 90).

However, while the Guild aimed to create a fund that could be used to
supplement the incomes of worthy authors in need of financial assistance, their need to find a source of value beyond the contemporary marketplace led them to a model of authorship dangerously close to the patronage-based model of the eighteenth century. As part of a campaign to build up a fund for fellow authors, the Guild staged Edward Bulwer-Lytton’s play, *Not so Bad as we Seem* (1851), to a select audience of royalty and the English upper class at the Duke of Devonshire’s private residence. This recourse to courting the patronage of the wealthy to fund the work of contemporary authors was reflected in the dedication to the print version of the play, which mirrored the dedications to aristocratic patrons from the previous century that Dickens found so unpalatable (Hack 98).

In reference to eighteenth-century models of authorship, Dickens spoke publicly of “that one disgraceful leaf of dedication which formed the blot upon the literature of past ages” and “[t]hat huckstering, peddling, pandering to patronage for the sale of a book, the offspring of intellect and genius” (Dickens 1960: 5; qtd. in Pettitt 165). In an 1853 speech, Dickens attacked the archetypal eighteenth-century dedication scenario, noting that it was the material trace of a form of literary production that contemporary authors no longer had to endure:

> From the shame of the purchased dedication, from the scurrilous and dirty work of Grub Street, from the dependent seat on sufferance at my Lord Duke’s table to-day, and from the sponging-house or Marshalsea to-morrow from that venality which, by a fine moral retribution, has degraded statesmen even to a greater extent than authors, because the statesman entertained a low belief in the universality of corruption, while the author yielded only to the dire necessity of his calling from all such evils the people have set literature free. (Dickens 1960: 157)

The market-based mode of production, the same model that Carlyle and the Guild of Literature and Art tried to evade, if not in practice then rhetorically, is involved in the ideological tensions Dickens negotiates in this speech. While the move away from being stuck between the “shame of the purchased dedication” and the poverty of the
“sponging house” is clearly seen as positive, the reliance again seems to be on the market. But, unlike Carlyle and the Guild, Dickens does not represent the market as an abstract, oppressive force. Instead, in public speeches and in the paratextual elements examined in the following chapters, Dickens presents a much more positive engagement with the Victorian literary marketplace.
Chapter 2: “Boz Versus Dickens”: Paratext, Pseudonyms and Serialisation in the Victorian Literary Marketplace

Introduction

Dickens’s success as an author began with a series of sketches written from 1833-36. Published in a range of London newspapers and magazines, these sketches were praised for their humour and for capturing everyday urban life. The full title of the first volume edition, *Sketches by Boz: Illustrative of Every-Day Life and Every-Day People* (1836), and the assertion that the sketches “present little pictures of life and manners as they really are”, emphasised the work’s fidelity to contemporary experience (Dickens 1994: xxxix). Yet this insistence on faithful mimesis revolved around the fiction of a pseudonymous author called Boz. Emerging in 1834 as a way of labelling sketches scattered across the London periodical press, Dickens’s fictional pseudonym became, paradoxically, the marker for an authorial voice noted for its accurate representation of the metropolis. The use of the pseudonym allowed Dickens to maintain a respectable distance between his own name and a literary experiment he was hoping might supplement his income. Under the guise of Boz, Dickens could unify the sketches he was producing and build on the popular reception they received. Yet, by keeping a careful separation between pseudonym and real name, Dickens could ensure his foray into authorship would not endanger his professional career as a well respected court reporter (Chittick 57).

Kathryn Chittick has observed that Dickens did not simply emerge as a novelist with the publication of his first serial between 1836-37 (Chittick ix). His career began with sketches attributed to his pseudonym Boz, which, from 1834-36, functioned as a textual label specifying the name of an otherwise unknown authorial figure.5 Due to the specific conditions of their original publication, these sketches were unsupported by the kind of paratextual elements, such as illustrations, frontispieces, dedications, prefaces and portraits of the author that would subsequently accompany the volume

5 A situation aptly described by Gérard Genette when he discusses one of his seven categories of pseudonymity in which “a real author attributes a work to an imaginary author but does not produce any information about the latter except the name” (Genette 1997: 478).
editions of Dickens’s work. The purpose of this chapter is to examine how, from 1836-39, the relationship between the pseudonym, Boz, and the real author, Charles Dickens, was staged in the paratext to work attributed to both of them. Gérard Genette defined paratext as that which “enables a text to become a book and to be offered as such to its readers” (Genette 1). Characterising the nature of this offer by metaphors of thresholds, vestibules and airlocks, Genette suggested that such transitional mechanisms provide “a better reception for the text and a more pertinent reading of it” (Genette 2). The assumption of this study is that the paratextual elements of a literary work also serve to create or modify the image of the author responsible for it. As Genette’s consideration of the “pseudonym effect” suggests, such authorial representation is the province of the paratextual, a bibliographic “apparatus” that conjures, describes and positions “imagined author[s]” in relation to the body of work that comes to be grouped around their invented names (Genette 48-9).

The Emergence of Boz

Dickens’s early work, from Sketches by Boz (1836) to Nicholas Nickleby (1838-39), was accompanied by the “paratextual apparatus” substantiating the existence of Boz and presenting him as what Genette calls “an imagined author” (Genette 48). The written correspondence between Dickens and his publishers during these years reveal an author sensitive to the implications of paratextual choices especially in regard to how they affected representations of authorship. In a letter of 1836 to his publisher, John Macrone, Dickens tried to steer the former away from using “bwain” in the title to the latter’s first book. The author offered two other possibilities: “Sketches by Boz and Cuts by Cruikshank” and “Etchings by Boz and Wood Cuts by Cruikshank” (Dickens 1965: 82). Both of Dickens’s proposed titles incorporated the pseudonymous author, Boz, and the named illustrator, George Cruikshank. Proposing these titles, Dickens added: “I think perhaps some such title would look more modest —whether modesty ought to have anything to do with such an affair, I must leave to your experience as a Publisher to decide” (Dickens 1965: 82). Macrone finally settled on Sketches by Boz: Illustrative of Every-Day Life and Every-Day People, which was
first published in February 1836 for a guinea. This two-volume edition was illustrated by George Cruikshank, a famous illustrator of “London street scenes”, which meant that Macrone could at once “capitalize on Dickens’s growing reputation and Cruikshank’s already established one” (Patten 1978: 29). In February 1836, after the final work on the volume’s plates had been completed, the author sent the illustrator a letter, which “rejoiced” that they were so close to “the termination of our labours in Boz’s cause” (qtd. in Patten 1978: 30).

It was as Boz that Dickens addressed readers in the preface to this edition, which began with a startling comparison:

In humble imitation of a prudent course, universally adopted by aeronauts, the Author of these volumes throws them up as his pilot balloon, trusting it may catch some favourable current, and devoutly and earnestly it may go off well—a sentiment in which his Publisher cordially concurs. (Dickens 1994: xxxix)

It is interesting to note how Boz invokes the idea of an aerial panorama (see fig. 3) in his first paratextual description of authorship. The expensive volumes are transformed from a literary and visual product into a “pilot balloon” sent up “as a prudent course” to see if it “may catch some favourable current”. Letters from Dickens to Macrone leading up to the publication of this volume reveal that Dickens was well aware of the experimental nature of the venture and the risk his publisher was taking (Patten 1978: 30).

In his preface, Boz notes the cordial relationship between author and publisher before developing the metaphor of the “pilot balloon” so that it includes a “car” into which Boz precariously places not only himself but also “all his hopes of future fame”. Discussing the “perilous voyage” he is taking in such “a frail machine”, Boz notes the “assistance and companionship of some well-known individual”, the illustrator George Cruikshank, observing that although this “is their first voyage in company” it may “not be the last”.

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Figure 3: Cruikshank’s engraved title page to the second series of

*Sketches by Boz* (1836).\(^6\)


The preface ends with an acknowledgement of the experimental nature of the volume and the author’s hopes “to repeat his experiment with increased confidence, and on a

\(^6\) Note that the image echoes the reference to “pilot balloon” in Dickens’s preface to the first edition of *Sketches by Boz*. 
more extensive scale” (Dickens 1994: xxxix). This focus on the possible future efforts of Boz would have been particularly relevant to Dickens at the time he wrote the preface, as he had recently signed a contract with Chapman and Hall to provide letterpress, as Boz, for what would become *The Pickwick Papers*. Due to publish a new serial in just under two months from the date of the preface, it seems that Dickens was using the publication of a volume edition of sketches by Boz to prepare the public for the forthcoming serial which would be “Edited by Boz.”

In August 1836, the second edition of the first series of *Sketches by Boz* was published with a preface ironically informing readers that they were “guilty” if Boz produced more work because they had encouraged a “young and unknown writer, by their patronage and approval” (Dickens 1994: xl). This statement configured Boz as a biographical individual (“young” and “unknown”) and as a “writer” whose future work was dependent on the positive reaction of the reading public. The preface also suggested that Boz, the writer of sketches, might turn his hand to more serious work:

If the pen that designed these little outlines, should present its labours frequently to the Public hereafter; if it should produce fresh sketches, and even connected works of fiction of a higher grade, they have only themselves to blame.
(Dickens 1994: xl)

From a writer of urban sketches in London periodicals, Boz was now presented as an aspiring novelist whose prospective career emerged from the public’s recent reaction to his work. The promise of the original preface for writing on a “more extensive scale” had been realised in the success of *The Pickwick Papers*. Starting as a series of episodic adventures accompanying visual caricatures, by August 1836 the serial had introduced a key plot development when Mrs. Bardell faints in Pickwick’s arms thereby provoking the narrative arc of Pickwick’s trial and imprisonment. The September instalment, written in August, also began to develop the relationship between Pickwick and his servant, Sam Weller, a Quixotic pairing that came to be one of the serial’s chief attractions, together with the regular appearance and “comic soliloquies” of Sam Weller from the fifth instalment in August—an instalment that
had been excerpted in seven London papers in the fortnight following 10 August (Chittick 64). Thus, when composing the preface to the August 1836 edition of *Sketches by Boz*, Dickens may again have been using the paratextual platform of the volume edition to comment on the success of his current serial, a work he could justifiably consider “of a higher grade” and more “connected” than his previous, discrete sketches.

In early August 1836, Dickens wrote to Macrone to consult him on a prospective title for a series of sketches Dickens was planning to write for the *Carlton Chronicle*. Pre-empting any negative reaction on the part of the publisher, Dickens argued that the new sketches would convince the “nobs” who read “The Carlton Chronicle” to buy the forthcoming volume edition of *Sketches by Boz* (Dickens 1965: 160). Asking the publisher for his view on what would be a good title “for our purpose”, Dickens suggested: “Leaves from an unpublished volume by ‘Boz’ (which will be torn out, once a fortnight)” (Dickens 1965: 160). What is interesting in this proposed title is that it reverses the origin of work by Boz, presenting it as first produced in books and only subsequently yielding “[l]eaves […] torn out” periodically from an “unpublished volume”. From a pseudonym used to group together discrete sketches, Boz was now being figured as an author whose work was automatically associated with the volume editions, which, just six months earlier, had been presented as a “pilot balloon”.

**Dickens and his Early Publishers: Macrone, Bentley and Chapman and Hall**

By November 1836, Dickens had “vastly overextended himself” with “seven or eight publishing commitments” that were impossible to meet (Patten 1978: 34). Moreover, his relationship with Macrone was becoming increasingly sour as a result of contractual disagreements. This had an impact on the publication of the second series of *Sketches*, which had been advertised as being available in two volumes from October but which was eventually released as a hurried one-volume edition in time for Christmas (Patten 1978: 35). The main reason for the delay was Dickens’s distractions with other, more lucrative, projects and the breakdown in the relationship between author and publisher.
The second series of *Sketches by Boz*, published in mid-December 1836 for fifteen shillings, was accompanied by a preface which characterised the volume in a very different style from those published with the first series (Patten 1978: 35-6). Instead of asserting that the author’s continued career depended on the success of the volume in question, the preface to the second series negated its own value on the grounds that “nine hundred and ninety-nine people out of every thousand, never read a preface at all” (Dickens 1994: xl). The author nevertheless simply ventured to hope the volume might be well received and not “considered an unwelcome, or inappropriate sequel” (Dickens 1994: xl). He then continued, as Patten notes, to make a direct allusion to the work’s status as a “Christmas Piece” before showing the dialogue that ensued when author and publisher gave “a modest tap at the door of the public” (Patten 1978: 35-6).

This seemingly light-hearted scene in which, following “the well-known precedent of the charity boys”, author and publisher argued about who was to knock on the public’s door in an effort to convince them to look at their Christmas Piece, allowed Dickens to dramatise his relationship with readers (Dickens 1994: xli). Significantly, it is the publisher who is made to knock on the door of the public, begging them to take the book into their homes, and leaving as soon as they do. The author seems less concerned with the success of the volume than his relationship with readers. As a result, he “lingers behind” not to promote business concerns but simply to wish “his best friend, the Public” a merry Christmas (Dickens 1994: xli). Thus, jovial as this sketch is, there seems to be an explicit separation between the purely business interests of the publisher and the more personal relationship between the author and his public. I would like to suggest that this was part of an authorial strategy designed to mitigate any damage that might be done to the image of Boz by his publisher or by the hastily and negligently compiled second series (Patten 1978: 35-6). The preface attempts to disentangle Boz not only from the publisher (note their very different activities at the door of the public) but also from this edition of the work itself. It is surely significant that, as Patten points out, Macrone and Dickens were at the time not on speaking terms and that the edition was rushed out with enough speed for Dickens’s subtle distinction between author and publisher to make it
past Macrone and into print (Patten 1978: 36-7). Equally important was Boz’s current success with two other publishers: Chapman and Hall, who were publishing *The Pickwick Papers*; and George Bentley, who had recently contracted Dickens to provide him with more work attributed to Boz as the editor of *Bentley’s Miscellany*, which would begin publication in the following month.

**Boz: From Editor to Author**

If the preface describing Boz at the door of the public represents him as an author more focused on his relationship with readers than with his publisher, an address in *The Pickwick Papers* in the same month figures Boz as an author who prefers to keep faith with his readers rather than follow the “sad temptations” of the market (Dickens 1999: 758). In a December 1836 announcement acknowledging that *The Pickwick Papers* had reached the halfway mark of its serial run, Boz stepped out explicitly as its author (rather than his editor’s role announced on the serial’s monthly wrapper). The address marked an important moment allowing the author to thank his readers, to make explicit his motives on their behalf and to reassure them that the second half of the work would be issued as originally promised. In the address, Boz confided that the enormous success of his endeavours, increasing sales and “the most extensive popularity” could easily lead him to “exceed the limits he first assigned himself” (ibid.). However, he declared that he was determined to resist the temptation to write beyond the “original pledge” of confining his work to twenty monthly instalments. He gave two reasons for this: that he wanted to ensure that when published as a complete volume, the book would not have “the heavy disadvantage of being prolonged beyond the original plan”; and that he wished to “keep the strictest faith with his readers” (ibid.). At the same time as making these pledges, the image of Boz was transformed from his original function as the editor of *The Pickwick Papers* to its author. Until this point, Boz had been characterised merely as an editor of existing documents rather than as an author of fictional characters and events. In changing his role into one revolving around authorship, the address suggests just how this authorship should be understood.

The initial advertisement for the serial described how the “whole of the
Pickwick Papers” had been “carefully preserved” by a secretary, purchased at “immense expense” and put into the hands of the editor, Boz, who was “highly qualified for the task of arranging these [existing] important documents, and placing them before the public in an attractive form” (ibid. 756). This located value in the ability of an editor to arrange and place the various documents in an appealing manner before the public. In an image that played on the popular Victorian trope describing serial fiction as coming “warm from the brain” of the author (Sutherland 1976: 21), Boz was transformed from a purely administrative, editorial function into one characterised by a sense of the imaginative labour necessary to continue the second half of the serial:

The Author merely hints that he has strong reason to believe that a great variety of other documents still lie hidden in the repository from which these were taken, and that they may one day see the light. (Dickens 1999: 758)

The author has eclipsed the editor, and the archive purchased at “immense expense” has been replaced by the idea of a “repository” from which subsequent material could be procured. The reticent Boz of the Christmas edition of Sketches by Boz, who stands apologetically at the door of the public, has been replaced by an author in full control of his material who can hint, through the metaphor of the repository, that there will be no lack of future content for the second half of the serial. Published in December 1836, the announcement in The Pickwick Papers could also function as an implicit advertisement for the first issue of Bentley’s Miscellany, also “edited” by Boz, which was due to be published the following month.

The continued publication of serial instalments was the focus of another address to readers, accompanying the fifteenth instalment, which excused a recent delay in publication, caused by what Boz called “a severe domestic affliction” (Dickens 1999: 759). Although he did not mention it, the reason for this delay was the death of Dickens’s beloved sister-in-law, Mary Hogarth. The “Address to the Reader”, published in July 1837, counteracted the “various idle speculations and absurdities” that had been circulating about the author and stated that he had been doing nothing
more than “seeking in a few weeks” retirement the restoration of his spirits after “a sad bereavement” (Dickens 1999: 759). These rumours were discussed in a short article in the same month entitled “BOZ”, which noted that a “most stupid and mischievous report has been industriously circulated, during the last fortnight, that our inimitable Boz was very ill, there would be no more ‘Pickwicks’” (Anon. 1837: 420). The anonymous author of the article “rejoice[s] to notice” that this has been proved untrue by “an excellent paper of Oliver Twist, in ‘Bentley’s Miscellany’ (ibid.). Thus, the address accompanying the July 1837 issue of *The Pickwick Papers* can be seen as a direct response to the “most stupid and mischievous report” of Boz’s demise. The address excused the delay in publication and situated Boz in an embodied, contemporary world where grief could bring his pen to a temporary standstill. There followed a “Notice to Correspondents”, which begged readers to stop sending the “immense number of […] suggestions” for *Pickwick* as these “hints” could not be included and the author had no time “to peruse these anonymous letters” (Dickens 1999: 759). Highlighting the author’s ability to make requests of his readers, this notice also served to characterise a readership so immersed in the story that they wished to actively participate in its development.

**The Emergence of Dickens**

The final, double instalment of the serial transformed its authorship from the pseudonymous caricaturist of London life, Boz, into the real-world author, Charles Dickens. The latter emerged to take retrospective responsibility for the enormous success that had previously been accorded to Boz and began a process whereby the name Charles Dickens would come to signify a particular set of values and characteristics associated with the production of Victorian fiction.

Among the various paratextual elements of the final, double instalment, an important element in the transformation of authorship from Boz to Dickens was the dedication.7 Addressed to “Mr. Serjeant Talfourd, M.P.”, and couched in terms of a

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7 The paratextual elements such as the dedication, preface and table of contents accompanying the volume edition were also included as bibliographical extras in the final double instalment of the serial to allow those subscribers who had followed the original serialisation to have their instalments bound into a complete volume.
letter of gratitude for the MP’s work to secure authors’ improved copyright protection, the dedication featured Dickens’s real name and address. This was part of a process of re-appropriation in which the name of Charles Dickens emerged in connection with a publicly-endorsed production of authorship and made explicit his personal affiliations and concerns related to copyright and the English literary tradition. This latter concern is the focus of Dickens’s preface which is engaged with contemporary debates about how to define a periodical serial that had become a book. At the same time as referring to *Pickwick* as a “book in monthly numbers”, Dickens used the preface to explain the “author’s object in this work” (Dickens 1999: 6). Initially, this seems to have been a continuation of Dickens’s earlier sketches and was presented in terms of “a constant succession of characters and incidents [...] paint[ed] in [...] vivid colours” that are “lifelike” as well as “amusing” (ibid.).

However, Dickens also analysed the consequences of the “detached and desultory form of publication” on him as an author of a book in monthly, thirty-two page portions (ibid.) Referring to the intermingling of the serial and episodic modes, Dickens admitted that the mode of publication (lasting “no fewer than twenty months”) necessitated both a “chain of interest” that connected the instalments and an approach that ensured that each instalment was a complete unit (ibid.) In a sentence which, I would like to suggest, summarised his approach to publishing a “book in monthly numbers”, Dickens explained how the form of publication (as instalments and then a volume) “appeared to the author” to demand that:

> [...] every number should be, to a certain extent, complete in itself, and yet [...] the whole twenty numbers, when collected, should form one tolerably harmonious whole, each leading to the other by a gentle and not unnatural progress of adventure. (ibid)

Having outlined the considerations involved in publishing such a work, the preface stated that it would be unreasonable to expect “an artfully interwoven or ingeniously complicated plot” (ibid.). Responding to objections that *The Pickwick Papers* were “a mere series of adventures” with “ever changing” scenes and “characters [who] come
and go like the men and women we encounter in the real world”, Dickens suggested that similar objections had been made “to the works of some of the greatest novelists in the English language” (ibid.).

While acknowledging possible objections to what had been a phenomenally successful serial, Dickens was also grouping his book with the picaresque novels of authors such as Fielding and Smollett. Although he did not categorise his work as a “novel”, he implicitly compared it with “the works of some of the greatest novelists in the English language”. Unlike his illustrious predecessors, Dickens emphasised that he was very much contemporary with the early Victorian reading public and affected by their positive reaction to his work: “The almost unexampled kindness and favour with which these papers have been received by the public will be a never-failing source of gratifying and pleasant recollection while their author lives” (Dickens 1999: 7). The use of “author” here contradicted the earlier focus on “editor”, in the same way that the preface was signed by the biographically identifiable individual, Charles Dickens, rather than the pseudonymous Boz.

A similar transformation, from the editor of a serial, Boz, to the author of a completed work, is evident in Dickens’s second serial, *Oliver Twist*, which was published from 1837-39 and overlapped first with *The Pickwick Papers* and later with *Nicholas Nickleby*. It is important to note that *Oliver Twist* was initially presented in *Bentley’s Miscellany* as a continuation of “the mudfog papers” with little indication in its early instalments that it was intended to be a novel or that it would last long enough to become one. Yet, as a result of a contractual argument, the publisher of *Oliver Twist*, George Bentley, agreed that the serial could serve a double purpose simultaneously fulfilling Dickens’s obligations for providing monthly text to *Bentley’s Miscellany* and their agreement for a three-volume novel. Without this agreement, it is possible *Oliver Twist* would have been discontinued before it could become the three-volume edition published by Bentley.

This edition was published on 9 November 1838. However, as a result of comments from Dickens and Forster, it was reissued a few days later with a new title page replacing Boz with “Charles Dickens, author of ‘The Pickwick Papers’” (Dickens 1966: xxiv). Advertisements were also altered to match this
change in attribution. In less than a week, Dickens had ensured that this volume edition (and the accompanying advertisements) would be promoted as the work of Charles Dickens instead of Boz (Dickens 1966: xxiv). With the copyrights for the novel remaining with Bentley, a second edition (dated 1839) was published in December 1838. Bentley advertised this in the *Athenaeum* as a second edition of *Oliver Twist* by “Charles Dickens, Esq.”, a sign that he had taken on board Dickens’s complaints against naming Boz on the title page (Anon. 1838b: 917).\(^8\) The second edition was reissued both in October 1839 with an expanded reference to Dickens, which included mention of *Nicholas Nickleby*, and again in March 1840 with the title page reverting to Boz a month prior to the much-anticipated publication, by Chapman and Hall, of Dickens’s *Master Humphrey’s Clock*, “Edited by Boz” (Dickens 1966: xxvii).

By December 1839, Dickens complained to his lawyers that Bentley’s indiscriminate use of his name and writing was damaging his reputation. Bentley had been busy promoting the forthcoming publication of *Barnaby Rudge*, although Dickens had not agreed to provide this novel and had only finished two chapters (Dickens 1966: xxvii). At the same time, Bentley had advertised Ainsworth’s *Jack Sheppard* as a novel “uniform in size and price with ‘Oliver Twist’” (Dickens 1966: xxvii). This comparison to a popular work that had provoked critical reaction for its glamorisation of “Newgate” crime damaged Dickens’s serial (Dickens 1966: 399). Indeed, it was just this kind of negative association that Dickens attempted to dispel in the preface to the third edition of the novel published by Chapman and Hall in 1841. It is worth noting that Dickens was only able to write this preface as a result of Chapman and Hall buying the copyright to the novel from the original publisher.

As first his pseudonym and subsequently his biographical name developed increasing significance, Dickens was careful to guard, wherever possible, the use of these names to prevent their market value being damaged by careless publishers or bad publicity. In a letter of April 1837, Dickens asked J. P. Hartley to omit mention of Boz in relation to a play the author felt anxious to avoid being linked with (Dickens 1966: xxviii).\(^8\) An earlier advertisement for *Oliver Twist* in the *Athenaeum* had presented the author as “Charles Dickens, Esq. (‘Boz’)” (Anon. 1838: 336).
1965: 246). In June 1837, Dickens was faced with a more serious concern when Macrone decided to capitalise on his ownership of the copyright of Dickens’s work and started to reissue *Sketches by Boz* in the same green-wrapper, monthly format in which *The Pickwick Papers* was then being serialised. Dickens, as he wrote in a letter to Forster, was only too aware that his “name being before the town” in three publications (*The Pickwick Papers*, *Oliver Twist* and *Sketches by Boz*) at the same time “must prove seriously prejudicial to my reputation” (qtd. in Patten 1978: 39). As a result of Dickens’s insistence, Chapman and Hall intervened purchasing the copyright from Macrone and reissuing the sketches in monthly instalments accompanied by distinctive pink wrappers with a new cover by George Cruikshank (Patten 1978: 41-2).

**“Boz Versus Dickens”**

The earliest mention of Dickens’s name in any of his serials or volumes occurred on the first page of the advertiser accompanying the eleventh instalment of *The Pickwick Papers* in February 1837 as part of an advertisement by the publisher Macrone for *Sketches by Boz* (Eckel 33). One month later, a poem in the third issue of *Bentley’s Miscellany* played with the relationship between Dickens and his pseudonym:

> Who the dickens “Boz” could be  
> Puzzled many a learned elf;  
> Till time unveil’d the mystery  
> And Boz appear’d as DICKENS’ self!⁹

This poem was located directly underneath an article called “The Pantomime of Life” attributed to Boz, which itself came beneath a headline that read “Stray chapters by Boz” (Dickens 1837: 297). This page of the miscellany, as Michael Slater helpfully reminds us, was published because Dickens had underwritten his contribution for *Oliver Twist* and needed to fill up the sixteen pages of text stipulated in his contract.

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with Bentley (Dickens 1994: 500). It seems fitting, in this respect, that the poem was titled “IMPROMPTU”. Suggesting the combination of improvisation and performance that figuratively and literally produced this very page of Bentley’s Miscellany, the title is also sufficiently theatrical to encompass the shifting authorial identity humorously depicted in the poem.

Along with this poetic meditation on authorial identity, the figure of Boz was prominently displayed in a tipped in leaflet accompanying the March 1837 issue of Bentley’s Miscellany. Entitled “The Extraordinary Gazette”, this presented a short “speech by his mightiness”, “Boz”, underneath a woodcut presenting Boz exercising his editorial duties and leading a giant porter who supports the weight of Bentley’s Miscellany (fig. 4). Copies of the latest issue of the magazine fly off in all directions to the delight of the eager readers crowding on all sides. Far from an anonymous, textual function, Boz is depicted here as an embodied figure in the world of Victorian periodical publishing who bore a striking resemblance to the twenty-five-year-old Charles Dickens.

Figure 4: “The Extraordinary Gazette”, March 1837.
The January 1838 edition of *Bentley’s Miscellany* began with a proleptic, full-plate steel engraving of Oliver being shot before proceeding to the ending to Book One of *Oliver Twist* (Dickens 1838: 1-16). It also included a poem entitled “A Poetic Epistle to ‘Boz’” (Dickens 1838: 71). Noting how the “potent mirth-compeller”, Boz, had won the public’s hearts “in monthly parts”, the poet implicitly declared that the work Boz was producing for *Bentley’s Miscellany*, such as *Oliver Twist*, was superior to his recently completed monthly serial, *The Pickwick Papers*. The rather strained verse contained a quatrains that played with the relationship between Boz and Dickens, allowing the latter to emerge in a visually descriptive fashion from the pseudonym addressed in the title:

Write on, young sage! still o’er the page pour forth the flood of fancy;
Wax still more droll, wave o’er the soul, Wit’s wand of necromancy.
Behold! e’en now around your brow th’immortal laurel thickens;
Yea, SWIFT or STERNE might gladly learn a thing or two from DICKENS.
(Dickens 1838: 71).

Following a rhyme (“flood of fancy”/”necromancy”) that suggests an occult relationship between the imaginative process and the use of wit, the poem concludes with an end rhyme that conjures Dickens, the man, from a metonymic representation of literary fame associated with the figure of the pseudonym (“around your brow th’immortal laurel thickens”). The final end rhyme thus completes the transformation from the Boz of the poem’s title to the Dickens of its conclusion.

While Dickens is traditionally showered with praise as the “genius” of *Pickwick*, the idea for the monthly serial publishing format followed by volume reissue, had originated with his publishers. For all that Dickens sought to suggest about authorship in the preface or dedication to *The Pickwick Papers*, the existence of such paratextual elements depended upon the specific form that the serial’s publishers had envisaged and enabled. Dickens’s later prefaces to *Sketches by Boz* (1839 and 1850), and his important “Author’s Introduction” to the 1841 edition of *Oliver Twist*, were
only possible because of Chapman and Hall’s willingness to purchase the copyright to these works from Dickens’s previous publishers (Macrone and Bentley respectively). Thus, as we trace the transformation from Boz to Dickens in the paratext to his early work, we should also acknowledge the assistance and capital investment provided by Chapman and Hall.

In what we might term a private paratextual performance, Dickens provided a signed copy of a bound first edition of *The Pickwick Papers* to Edward Chapman in November 1839 to mark the completion of *Nicholas Nickleby*. The copy included a humorous scene from *Oliver Twist* in which the eponymous hero naively hits on the truth that it would probably be “a much better thing to be a bookseller” than a “book-writer” (Dickens 2003: 107; Patten 1978: 88). Declaring Chapman and Hall, the publishers of *The Pickwick Papers* and *Nicholas Nickleby*, to be “the best of booksellers past, present, or to come”, Dickens signed the dedication with his own name, while Boz acted as the “witness” at the bottom left-hand corner of the page (Patten 1978: 88).

Such a display of cordiality between author and publisher in November 1839 contrasted with Dickens’s recent dealings with Macrone and Bentley and may well have been, in part, a result of two important factors: the continued success Dickens and his current publishers were enjoying with their pioneering style of monthly serial fiction; and Chapman and Hall’s involvement in the famous portrait of Dickens that accompanied the final number of *Nicholas Nickleby* in October 1839 before it was issued one month later in a volume edition. This frontispiece engraving, which had been promoted in the serial’s “Advertiser” for several months, presented a startling, signed portrait of Dickens (see fig. 5).
This frontispiece marked an important stage in the process of separating the characteristics associated with Charles Dickens from those associated with Boz. The iconographic associations of the portrait added Dickens to the pantheon of respected English writers, making use of the established tradition that portrayed “poetic genius with the light of inspiration striking the eyes” (Curtis 1995: 238). It was, as Gerard Curtis has noted, a fine-art portrait indicating quite explicitly the gravitas of the subject’s authorial presence, and implicitly asserting the move from the caricaturist, Boz, to the writer of serious literature, Charles Dickens (Curtis 2003: 130). As Curtis has noted, the “appeal to the real”, which was central in Victorian advertisements for literature and the fine arts, was used in this frontispiece portrait to market the real man, Dickens, instead of the pseudonymous caricature, Boz (ibid.). Dickens also added his signature, giving a final seal of authenticity to both the product presented to
the public and the originating, authorial presence behind it. Curtis points out that “the signature and the portrait were coming to be a trademark feature for certain products in the period, acting as stamps or seals in order to protect against fraudulent imitators” (Curtis 1995: 241).

Chapman and Hall commissioned Daniel Maclise to paint the *Nickleby* portrait of Dickens at a crucial time in their relationship with the author. *Nicholas Nickleby* had outstripped the success of *The Pickwick Papers* making Boz their prize asset. Yet in the summer of 1839, with the serial’s conclusion looming, they still had to establish an agreement with Dickens for subsequent work. Moreover, at this point in his career, Dickens had worked with three publishers in as many years.¹⁰ He had broken irreparably with both Macrone and Bentley over disagreements that focused on a three-volume novel he had promised but not produced because of the incessant demand for his serial fiction. Commissioning this portrait and using it as an engraved frontispiece to *Nicholas Nickleby* both staged the emergence of Charles Dickens before a reading public who were more familiar with the pseudonym, Boz, and was part of Chapman and Hall’s strategy to deal with an author who seemed only too happy to switch publishers and who still had not written the great, three-volume novel that the visual language of Maclise’s portrait suggested he was fully capable of producing. In other words, the portrait functioned as a marketing strategy aimed not only at the public but also at Dickens himself.

Once the portrait had been finished, some time in June 1839, Dickens demonstrated an eagerness to prolong his relationship with his publishers. In a letter to Forster dated 14 July 1839, he told his confidante that he was “well disposed towards” Chapman and Hall and that if they were willing to make him a “handsome” offer they might find him “tractable” (Dickens 1965: 562). As Patten points out, the offer Dickens had in mind involved a percentage share in the profits for his current work, which would ensure his publishers access to future work (Patten 1978: 99). The latter was outlined in a proposal for what would become *Master Humphrey’s Clock*, a miscellany that Chapman and Hall advertised in the August 1839 instalment of

¹⁰ Macrone had published *Sketches by Boz* (1836); Chapman and Hall had published *The Pickwick Papers* (1836-37); and Bentley had published *Oliver Twist* (1837-9).
Nicholas Nickleby as a “New Work on an entirely new plan” from “Boz” arranged with “Mr. Charles Dickens” (Dickens 1965: 562).

An awareness of the different associations that developed alongside these names is evident in a Parker’s London Magazine (1845) article published in 1845 in which the reviewer pointed out his preference for the work of Boz over what the reviewer judged as the inferior work associated with Charles Dickens since 1839 (Collins 2009: 168-71). The article suggested that Dickens was inauthentic, a fraud, while Boz, the pseudonym, was the true original genius: “The style of Dickens—that which distinguishes him from ‘BOZ’—is laboured and artificial, as unlike the easy natural style of the latter as a statue is unlike a living, moving man” (Collins 2009: 170). This unusual inversion, in which the pseudonym is given primacy over the biographical figure of the author, means that the “style” of the former is judged as more “original” than the latter (ibid.). The reviewer notes how Dickens borrowed from his “predecessor’s sketches” and described this act of borrowing as “plagiarism” (ibid.). According to this logic, the characters found in the “works” of Dickens are usually just “a meagre outline” compared to the pictures drawn by Boz, the “originals” upon which the plagiarised characters of Dickens were based (ibid.). If an earlier review had declared that “Boz cannot be successfully imitated”, then this 1845 review from Parker’s London Magazine suggests that this was true even for Dickens himself (Anon. 1837: 839).

Another 1845 article, entitled “CHARLES DICKENS—BOZ”, discusses the earliest of Boz’s sketches in terms that recall the effect that their pseudonymous publication had on contemporary readers: “We were all ears and eyes, merriment and pleasure, though the writer’s name was more unknown than the real origin of Junius” (Anon. 1845: 3). The article traces the success of Boz, from the early sketches in the “Morning Chronicle”, which enjoyed “a wide circulation” and ensured “the name of “Boz” was known”, to the “unprecedented” demand for the collected volume edition published by Macrone (ibid.). Finally, discussing the original serialisation of The Pickwick Papers, the anonymous author of the article recalls meeting its author:
His appearance is prepossessing; his figure small—but well made; his look intelligent, and his eyes peculiarly expressive. He seemed scanning you, not obtrusively, but unobservedly, from head to foot [...] There was a sort of whisper of ‘Dickens is here; here is Dickens’ in a concealed kind of under breath [...] (3)

When the author of the article describes coming face to face with Dickens himself, the latter is described in terms which describe the man in terms of his work as an author. Despite his small figure, there is something “prepossessing” about Dickens. The article locates this in the “intelligent” and “expressive” look that seemed like it was “scanning” his interlocutor. Thus, aware that he is in the presence of the celebrated author, the anonymous author of this article implicitly suggests that Dickens may be “scanning” him for future material. This characteristic “scanning” is accompanied by “a sort of whisper” in which Dickens’s name is repeated in an awed reverence in the face of the figure behind the name. This 1845 account of an encounter from 1837 provides an early example of modern celebrity culture. Coming face to face with the figure of Dickens, previously hidden behind the mask of Boz, the anonymous author of the article can only repeat the name Dickens in a stuttering, stunned response that captures a reaction in the face of fame that has become characteristic of modern celebrity.

While this 1845 article traces Dickens’s author figure from the mystery and “merriment” of Boz to the mystique of the man himself, an 1839 *Fraser’s Magazine* article by Thackeray suggested the complex interplay between the associations evoked by Boz and those evoked by Charles Dickens. Using his own pseudonym, “Titmarsh”, which was already familiar to readers of *Fraser’s Magazine*, Thackeray praised Daniel Maclise’s 1839 portrait of Dickens. He noted how the artist “must have understood the inward Boz as well as the outward before he made this admirable representation of him” (Thackeray 1840: 113). Thackeray was so amazed by the “likeness” of the portrait that he compared it to a “looking-glass” in which viewers could see “the real identical man Dickens” (ibid.). This led to a reading of
Dickens’s face which, though focusing on the man, paradoxically inspired a panegyric on the pseudonym:

Long mayest thou, O Boz! reign over thy common kingdom; long may we pay tribute, whether of threepence weekly or of a shilling monthly, it matters not. Mighty prince! at thy imperial feet, Titmarsh, humblest of thy servants, offers his vows of loyalty and his humble tribute of praise. (ibid.)

Thus, by 1839 the pseudonymous figure of Boz had acquired a set of values and significations that did not simply disappear when the biographical author became first identified and, subsequently, celebrated. A close reading of the ways in which the different associations of Boz and Dickens were deployed by the author and his publishers demonstrates what Genette provocatively calls the “pseudonym-effect” (Genette 1997: 48; original emphasis). Despite the open secret, by March 1837, that Dickens was responsible for the work of Boz, the wrappers to Dickens part-issue fiction (The Pickwick Papers, Nicholas Nickleby and Martin Chuzzlewit) as well as his magazine serials (Oliver Twist, The Old Curiosity Shop and Barnaby Rudge) continued to present serialised instalments as “Edited by Boz” until 1844 (Eckel 17-74). Thenceforward, references to Boz diminished in the paratext to Dickens’s work and only occurred in letters to friends where Dickens joked about his status as the “inimitable B” (Dickens 1981: 556, 605, 615).

By 1847, in the preface to the cheap edition of The Pickwick Papers, Dickens reduced the pseudonym to a mere child’s nickname:

[It] was the nickname of a pet child, a younger brother, whom I had dubbed Moses, in honour of the Vicar of Wakefield; which being facetiously pronounced through the nose, became Boses, and being shortened, became ‘Boz’ (Dickens 1999: 761).

Thus, originating in a reference to an eighteenth-century novel, and characterised in terms of a child’s facetious mispronunciation, Dickens repositioned Boz in the 1847
Cheap Edition of *The Pickwick Papers* as “a very familiar household word to me, long before I was an author” (ibid.). The description of Boz as a “household word” not only anticipates Dickens’s return to that phrase in 1850 for the title of his weekly journal but also links it to Dickens’s expressed desire for his books to be owned by a nation of readers. In the prospectus, which was included in the *Dombey and Son Advertiser* (1846-48) and as an opening address to the Cheap Edition of *The Pickwick Papers*, Dickens declared that this edition represented the “hopes of a living author” to be welcomed “as a permanent inmate of many English homes [...] and to lie about in libraries like any familiar piece of household stuff” (Picker 147; Pelzner 546). Through the success of the cheap edition of his works, reclaimed from Boz and reissued under the full authority of Charles Dickens, the author hopes to be transformed into a “permanent inmate” of his readers’ homes. Insisting that this edition was “accessible as a possession by all classes of society”, Dickens uses his presumed relationship and emphasis on domestic sympathy to refocus a market exchange into a direct contact between himself and his readers (Picker 147). “Through a metonymic substitution of the writer for the book”, the address implies that, in buying the cheap edition, readers are actually coming in to “possession” of Dickens himself (Pelzner 546).

In a rhetorical move that is significant for the study of the relationship between materiality and authorship, Dickens conflates his own figure into the form of the book that “lies[s] about in libraries”. This presents a strange combination of the mundane and the fantastic in which the author describes his greatest hope as to be so individually celebrated and cherished that he becomes nothing more than a dusty set of household books. From the work of a pseudonymous figure, Boz, *The Pickwick Papers* has not only been reclaimed by Dickens but transformed into a vehicle by which the author is represented as a “permanent inmate” in his readers’ homes.

**The Man and his Books: Materiality and the Embodied Victorian Author**

In terms of its material format, the cheap edition of Dickens’s works provides examples of how the mass production of serial fiction had material consequences at the level of the book that had repercussions for notions of authorship. As Sara
Thornton has noted, unlike the carefully crafted endings to the original instalments of Dickens’s serial novels, the cheap weekly issues often ended in mid-sentence (Thornton 106). The tightly printed, double columns gave readers a full sixteen pages of the novel each week with the story automatically cut wherever the last page ended. Thus, it is interesting to speculate how different the experience of the readers of the cheap weekly edition was compared to readers of the original version of the serial. As Dickens also noted in his address to the former set of readers, it was “hardly necessary” to add that “original illustrations” would “constitute no part of the CHEAP EDITION” (Picker 149). Despite these material constraints, an inevitable result of the edition’s affordable price, the prospectus ends by listing paratextual elements in a final appeal for readers’ custom:

A new Preface to each Tale will be published on its conclusion in Weekly Parts. A Frontispiece to each Tale, engraved on Wood from a Design by some eminent Artist, will also be given at the same time. The whole Text will be carefully revised and corrected throughout, by the Author. For a Specimen of the page of THE CHEAP EDITION, the reader is referred to the other side. (Picker 149)

This final appeal is significant in its exclusive focus on the material elements of the new edition: in the last of its weekly parts, the tale will conclude with a “Preface” and “Frontispiece” which will form the elements by which instalments will be transformed into a book. The author’s continued presence over the enterprise is made explicit in the promise of careful revisions and corrections while curious readers are invited to turn the page to see a “Specimen” of Dickens’s *The Pickwick Papers* in its new format.

In Dickens’s “Address” to readers of this prospectus, the author notes that, in terms of price, his “proposed Re-issue” was “unprecedented [...] in the history of Cheap Literature” (Picker 148). Dickens explains that he had initially intended not to publish a cheap edition until the “books were much older, or the Author was dead” (ibid). However, he notes that because of the “favour with which they have been received” and the fact that they continue to “circulate” widely, he felt that it was
only fair to offer readers his work at a fairer price (ibid.).

But in noting that the new edition is five times cheaper, Dickens again introduces the idea of an author who has a personal, rather than commercial, investment in his books and who “may enjoy the pride and honour of their widest diffusion, and may couple it with increased personal emolument” (ibid.). Dickens is, in fact, presenting an exchange of a literary commodity in which all parties benefit: readers save money, the author obtains “increased personal emolument” and both parties can bask in the reflected glow of a rhetorical sympathy in which their gains are transformed into a rhetorical emphasis on domestic intimacy (ibid. 149).

In 1867, an advertisement for the Charles Dickens Edition emphasised the unique material elements of the forthcoming edition together with a sense of the embodied figure of Dickens. Described as an “ENTIRELY NEW EDITION OF THE WHOLE OF MR. DICKENS’S WORKS,” the edition is promoted by an appeal to “four important points”: “LEGIBILITY, DURABILITY, BEAUTY, AND CHEAPNESS” (Anon. 1867: 297). The advertisement points out that since it has been twenty years since “the first stereotype plates were cast for cheap editions of this series of books”, it was concluded “that the time has come for reprinting them in a far more agreeable and remarkable form, and for offering them to the public in association with every modern advantage” (ibid.). One consequence of such advantages was that, unlike the “double columns” of the Cheap Edition, the Charles Dickens Edition provided “a flowing, open page”, “printed on clear type, on fine toned paper” and “strongly bound in red cloth” (ibid.).

These improvements in “legibility”, “beauty” and “durability” were combined with another paratextual feature introduced in the Charles Dickens Edition: “[...] a descriptive head-line [...] attached by the author to every right-hand page” (ibid.). Implying the author’s continued presence and involvement in the production of this new edition, the descriptive headlines were just one of several paratextual performances that played on the embodied sense of the author and his “presence” at the material level of the edition that bore his name. The use of Dickens’s signature for the “distinguished facsimile title” is a key paratextual example that brings together the themes of materiality and embodied authorship. The man and his work are not
only connected by the use of a biographical name to mark the edition but also by the
unique script of the individual associated with this name. The use of the facsimile
signature in this edition recalls its function in respect to the Maclise portrait of
Dickens published as the frontispiece to the 1839 edition of *Nicholas Nickleby*. In the
case of this portrait, the signature was used to further authenticate it as a
representation of the author. Not only serving as an implicit mark of authorial
approval, the signature also links the portrait to the actual “hand that writes these
faltering lines” providing a trace of the author himself below the fine-art portrait
(Dickens 1850a: 1).

The Charles Dickens Edition was focused around the significance of Dickens’s
facsimile signature at the material level of the book. It featured twice in the pre-
launch advertisement and was presented to American readers as the only sure way for
them to know they were honouring Dickens’s “claim” to his work (Anon. 1867: 297).
Moreover, in a statement that trades on Dickens’s popularity and mortality, the
Charles Dickens’s Edition was presented as enacting the same connection between
man and book as had been suggested in the Cheap Edition. Thus, the author’s
facsimile signature:

[...] may suggest to the Author’s countrymen, his present watchfulness over his
own edition, and his hopes that it may remain a favourite with them when he
shall have left their service forever. (ibid.)

The signature therefore performs a double function: it is used as a marker to connect
the physical edition to the biographical figure; and it activates the sense of a
contemporary, embodied author who has “hopes” that this new edition will “remain a
favourite” once he is no longer present. Collapsing the body of the writer into the
corpus of the work, this paratextual performance locates the value of the new edition
in its material connection to the figure of Dickens himself.

As a way of publishing new writing that was subsequently re-issued across a
range of formats, periodical publication opened up paratextual spaces where new
models of authorship could be represented, explored and revised. These spaces,
inscribed at the material level of the book, enable scholars to reconstruct the
development of new models of authorship over the course of Victorian literary
careers. The transition from Boz to Charles Dickens demonstrates how paratextual
elements could effect such a transformation as part of the staging of a literary career
in progress. As Dickens’s career developed through publication in different formats
and successive editions, he became increasingly adroit at using paratextual spaces
and in dealing with the impact his publishers had in this regard. His use of the
pseudonym Boz in his early work, and his repeated move between Boz and Dickens,
provides an interesting case study with which to consider Genette’s theory of
pseudonyms as well as his overall approach to paratextuality.

With the frequent issue of weekly and monthly instalments, together with
subsequent volume editions made up from remaining instalments, Victorian serial
fiction was predicated on an industrial mode of production that opened up certain
paratextual “site[s]” (Genette 1997: xvii; original emphasis) at the same time as it
presented a new form of fiction to readers. That Dickens could emerge from behind
the mask of Boz in the preface and dedication to *The Pickwick Papers* was dependent
on Chapman and Hall’s scheme to republish the part-issues as a complete volume.

This was only possible due to a combination of cheap paper and recent
improvements in binding. Thus, if we wish to trace how authors’ names are deployed
in discursive “modes of circulation, valorization, attribution, and appropriation”
necessary for the construction of bodies of work, literary genres and national
literatures (Foucault 1997: 137), we must acknowledge these names are presented to
readers through paratextual elements, the materiality of which are an essential
precondition for the reception and interpretation of texts and authors. Printed texts
have a material form, and this always involves some type of paratextual apparatus. There is, in other words, no way to ever have a “transparent” encounter with texts
(Mulcaire 493).

With this material focus, it becomes clear that there are a range of paratextual
elements, such as the wrappers, frontispieces, vignette title pages, illustrations,
portraits of authors and advertisements that need to be considered in a wider sense
than the “[t]raditional textual criticism” Genette applies in *Paratexts* (McGann 1991:}
If we consider, as Genette pointed out, that features such as titles and dedications were once part of “the text itself” before becoming paratextual elements, it becomes clear that any theory of paratextuality needs to account for this inherent generic instability (Berlatsky 170). Genette himself suggests a way to do this in an introduction to a special issue of *Poétique* devoted to paratext. First acknowledging the fluid nature of the text/paratext binary, and then focusing on the shifting “threshold” between “interior” and “exterior”, Genette comes to define the ideal point of paratextual interest:

> [...] paratext is neither on the interior nor on the exterior: it is both; it is on the threshold; and it is on this very site that we must study it, because essentially, perhaps, its being depends upon its site. (Genette 1997: xvii; original emphasis)

Where Genette calls for a study that focuses on the very liminality of the paratextual “threshold”, I would like to suggest that, together with paratextual features such as illustrations and serial instalment endings, pseudonyms require an approach to paratext that focuses on the materiality of texts. Genette admits that he cannot include illustration or serialisation in his survey in *Paratexts*, but these are precisely the “liminal”, paratextual examples he appears to suggest in his introduction to *Poétique*: the “threshold” elements, such as a pseudonym, which are neither “interior” nor “exterior” but on the “contours” of texts (Genette 1997: 405-6).

 Victorian serial fiction was rich in what we might call “threshold” experiences: the implacable temporal border between the current instalment and the next; the boundaries between text and illustration, as well as between serial and advertisement; and the transformation of a serial into a volume. This focus on the “threshold” is related to a central question that emerged from serialisation as a mode of production: when did serials become novels and what kind of novels did they become?

 As the generic category of the novel changed, so their paratexts provided a way of representing a new kind of fiction and the authors responsible for it. If earlier nineteenth-century writers, such as Jane Austen and Walter Scott, had employed anonymity as a device to protect their biographical identity (complicated in the case
of Scott by his identity becoming something of an open secret), by the 1830s the production of serial fiction encouraged a representation of pseudonymous authorship that, in the case of Boz, was manifested in prefaces, pictures and reader addresses and which survived the revelation of the real author. The persistent use of his pseudonym showed that Dickens, his publishers and reviewers found it useful to be able to discuss his work with reference to the different genres, nuances and expectations evoked by the pseudonym and the real man. From 1846, with the serialisation of *Dombey and Son*, Dickens used his own name on the serial and volume covers of his work. The name was also the one he used as the “Conductor” of his weekly journals and on the advertisements for the famous reading tours he undertook. Boz slipped away, having performed a function that, by the late 1840s, had become incorporated into the figure of Charles Dickens.

**Conclusion**

In an 1870 obituary published a week after Dickens’s death, the *Illustrated London News* (1842-2003) noted how readers depended on “the man Charles Dickens for a continued supply of the entertainment which he alone could furnish” (Collins 2009: 516). The emphasis on “supply” is a testament to the symbolic, cultural and commercial capital represented by the man. This was encapsulated in the title and presentation of the Charles Dickens Edition (1867 onwards), which featured Dickens’s facsimile signature stamped in gold to show the author’s “present watchfulness over his own edition” (Anon. 1867: 297). The signature, which Forster noted had become familiar to everyone, came to stand for the fame of the man behind the work. The market value of authorial anonymity, a common practice for novel writers of the early nineteenth century, had been eclipsed by the power of biographical presence. Thus, Dickens’s journey from obscurity to pseudonymity and, finally, celebrated “onymity” (Genette 1997: 39) provides a snapshot of the way that serial fiction changed the Victorian literary marketplace. It was a change inscribed at the material level of instalments and volumes and is a reminder that the representation of authorship in serial fiction was dependent not only on text but also on paratexts and the materiality of textual production.
Chapter 3: “Gentlemen of the Press”: Paratext, Professionalisation and Authorship in Victorian England

Introduction:
This chapter explores how representations of authorial labour by Dickens and Thackeray engaged with contemporary concerns about authorship especially with regard to the marketplace for periodical literary work. As two of the most celebrated authors in Victorian England, their evocations of authorship played a crucial, polemical role in contested images of authors, ranging from lazy geniuses and improvident hacks to business-like professionals. Moving away from the “evils” and “humiliations” of the eighteenth-century patronage system (Small 2004: 15) and the image of Romantic authors as alternating between bouts of inspiration and idleness (Ruth 319), the position of authors in Victorian society functioned as an index to changing frameworks for intellectual property, the rise of middle-class professionals and the function of periodical literary labour in an era widely acknowledged as “the age of periodical literature” (Kaye 1850: 343). If the eighteenth century did not have a sufficiently developed reading public to “maintain an extensive fraternity of writers” (Small 2004: 32), the increase in readers in the nineteenth century opened up debates as to whether whether “Grub Street” was a “suitable” place for a “gentleman” to work (Chittick 18). An advertisement in the January 1853 instalment of Bleak House promoted a new edition of Vanity Fair quoting a passage from the Edinburgh Review, which located the value of Thackeray's work in “its great charm” and “entire freedom from mannerism and affectation” (Dickens 1852-3: Advertiser 15). Not only does this lead to readers being “addressed” with “a confiding frankness”, the same quality emphasised in Thackeray’s 1850 preface to Pendennis, but it also exemplifies “the thoroughbred carelessness” that can only be “the work of a gentleman” (15). The review suggests that the “thoroughbred carelessness”, assured by Thackeray’s inherited gentility, allowed “thoughts and feelings suggested by the situations to flow in their natural channel” with no fear of anything “unworthy” appearing (15; emphasis added). The advertisement, in deploying a section of this review, seems to be aiming the new, 6 shilling edition of Vanity Fair at readers who
located the value of an author’s labour in his gentlemanly qualities. This is precisely the way Thackeray’s Pendennis was treated by the unscrupulous publisher Bungay when the latter learns of the eponymous hero’s gentlemanly background (Thackeray 1972: 343-4). As I will argue in this chapter, the issue of whether authors could be gentlemen, or whether gentlemen should be authors, was central to Dickens’s and Thackeray’s depiction of authorship in David Copperfield and Pendennis respectively.

The Edinburgh Review article, tactfully excerpted by the advertisers, described Vanity Fair as “the work of a gentleman, which is one great merit; and not the work of a fine (or would-be fine) gentleman, which is another” (Tillotson and Hawes 37). Praising Thackeray for his gentlemanly lightness of touch, the reviewer characterises him as dropping his remarks “as Buckingham dropped his pearls”, in a nonchalant manner that relies on “chance” to “bring a discriminating observer to the spot” (ibid.). On the opposite end of the spectrum, an 1865 review of Our Mutual Friend (1864-65) emphasised the care and attention involved in what it called Dickens’s “labour of love” (Dallas 1865: 466). Thus deploying different attitudes to authorship, the Edinburgh Review praises Thackeray for a leisurely kind of “thoroughbred carelessness”, which contrasts with the effort lavished by Dickens on his “labour of love”.

This chapter will use examples from Dickens and Thackeray to examine the relationship between Victorian periodical authorship and the emerging concept of the professional. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, the word “professional” as “an adjective describing a kind of behaviour” entered the English language in “a moment marked lexically by the debut of terms of difference such as amateur” (Siskin 108; original emphasis; Feltes 41). As Clifford Siskin argues, we can see that the nineteenth-century obsession with questions of authorship—such as whether it was the proper pursuit for a gentleman and whether it could be considered as a profession—played a part in broader sociological questions related to the rise of professions and the subsequent impact on “character, identity, status, work, money, education, property, and propriety” (Siskin 109). As Siskin explains:
professionalization itself has a history, and central to its tale is the very labor—the production, circulation and valorization of writing—which became Literature’s area of expertise. (113; emphasis added)

Noting in “What is an Author?” that the focus of his argument will be on “the singular relationship that holds between an author and a text”, Foucault itemises what he has to leave out in terms of “sociohistorical analysis”: the idea of the “author as an individual”; “the status we have given the author”; the “systems of valorization in which he was included”; and the “conditions that fostered the formulation of the fundamental critical category of ‘the man and his work’” (Foucault 1977: 115). These are precisely the considerations I will be dealing with in this chapter in order to provide a sociohistorical analysis of the representations of authorship associated with Dickens and Thackeray, especially in relation to discussions valorising, or contesting, the function of Victorian authors as professionals.

While Dickens and Thackeray “enjoyed the transformative potential of the marketplace”, they were also aware of issues of “ephemerality” and the need to find “supplementary value” for their work in terms of permanence and social importance (Pettitt 27). At the same time, as parliamentary debates about copyright had revealed, literary work was not only a vital concern in legislative arguments about the rights that should be accorded to authors but was also an important index for the way authorship fit into larger Victorian questions of intellectual property, imaginative labour and the relationship of these concepts to a burgeoning marketplace for literary commodities, on the one hand, and an English literary tradition on the other. As Mary Poovey has explained:

Precisely because literary labor exposed the problematic nature of crucial capitalist categories [such as the value of labour and private property], writing, and specifically the representation of writing, became a contested site during this period, a site at which the instabilities implicit in market relations surfaced, only to be variously worked over and sometimes symbolically resolved.
If authors such as Dickens were keen to construct representations of contemporary authorship free from the subservience to literary patronage that had characterised the eighteenth century literary sphere, the reliance on a more market-based model forced those involved in the production of periodical print to engage with the rhetorical issues involved in the changing conditions structuring literary activity. Dickens and Thackeray were all too aware of the issues involved in writing as serial authors for a contemporary audience whose continued attention to, and purchase of, each instalment was the precondition for the next and for the publication of subsequent volumes. With a model of production moving from the patronage of the few to the weekly or monthly appeal to the many, Victorian serial authors were confronted with the market-based forces upon which the survival of their work, and continued career, depended. But if they were producing work to meet consumer demand, this necessitated ways of distinguishing authorship from other trades in order to prevent literature from becoming just another commodity. As Clare Pettitt succinctly explains. “[l]iterature had to be priceless, as well as a commodity” (165). Keenly aware of the pressing concerns of the periodical marketplace in which success was dependent on continued sales, Dickens and Thackeray produced work in which they often criticised the kind of commodity culture that, as professional authors, they could not afford to ignore. Thus, while the original monthly part-issues of *Vanity Fair* (1847-8) presented a stinging satire on Victorian commodity culture, Thackeray’s text was not only surrounded by advertisements for commodities but was also a commodity itself.

This chapter seeks to explore the debates and issues revolving around ideas of professional authorship and periodical publication, a form of literary work that exemplified the structuring conditions of industrial capitalism on mental labour. Surveying paratextual elements and representations of authorship in serialised novels and reviews, I will suggest that the idea of Victorian authors as professionals was crucial for legitimising both the status of literary texts as commodities and the function of imaginative labour in the marketplace. Beginning with the copyright
debates that provided an important legal and discursive backdrop to Dickens’s early career, I will move on to examining the issues involved with claiming professional status for Victorian authors. These issues were of the utmost significance during the “Dignity of Literature” debate, a public quarrel with Dickens and Thackeray on either side that framed their representations of authorship in *David Copperfield* (1849-50) and *Pendennis* (1848-50). This will lead to a discussion of how paratextual elements were used to deploy certain representations of authorship; representations which had a significant impact on both ideas of individual agency and the surplus-value invested in the emerging figure of the celebrity author.

**The Victorian Serial Author as “a perpetual speaker”**

An 1851 article in *Fraser’s Magazine*, which included a long review of *Pendennis*, begins by claiming that the hegemony of the three-volume work of fiction was in the process of being “superseded by the periodical novel, a cheaper article” (Anon. 1851:75). Reducing matters of literary taste to the simple question of value for money, the article claims:

> Long before free trade was dreamed of, John Bull’s constant impulse was to buy in the cheapest market. Even in the case of that most superfluous of luxuries, fiction, he likes to get as much as he can for his money. Besides, it is so convenient to pay one’s cash, as it comes, in dribs and drabs. (ibid.)

Tracing the prevailing trend for “intermittent fiction” issued in “numbers”, the article notes that “[e]ven Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton had bowed before the exigencies of imperious fashion” (ibid.). Remarking on this change in publication format, the article states that Lytton has “acquiesced in the monstrous anomaly of a twenty-month’s labour and a piecemeal accouchement” (ibid.). The “monstrous anomaly” is not simply Lytton, a titled figure and veteran writer of highly regarded three-volume works, turning his hand to periodical publication; it is also the “labour” involved in such periodical work, where the created product is engendered, produced and consumed in “piecemeal” fashion.
The reviewer, however, finds that the English are comparatively better off than their continental peers when it comes to the rising popularity of serial fiction. Comparing the English serials to the “cuisine a la diable” being consumed in France, the article notes, “not without a sentiment of national pride”, that the work of Dickens and Thackeray, while not lapsing into “prudery” or “cant”, is also free of anything that would “wound Delicacy” or “shock reverence” (ibid.). The fact that the English reading public has grown away from the racier work of Fielding and Smollett is taken as a hopeful sign “in these dubious times” and is expressed in terms that conflate this improved literary morality with the image of “Dickens and Thackeray sitting in the marketplace telling tales to their fellows” (76).

However, the periodical work of Dickens and Thackeray, and the paratext to this work, often betrays an uneasiness with the impact of market-based conditions on the production of serial fiction. These authors, in different and revealing ways, negotiated the commodity status of their work by emphasising and occluding certain aspects of their own imaginative labour. In the preface to *Pendennis*, Thackeray begins by defining the kind of “composition” which has been the result of his “two years’ product” and is “now laid before the public” (Thackeray 1972: 33). Admitting that such work “must fail in art”, Thackeray nevertheless suggests that “it has the advantage of a certain truth and honesty”, which a more “elaborate” might lose (ibid.). Describing the writer of a serial novel as a “perpetual speaker”, Thackeray presents the periodical mode of production as placing the writer into a “constant communication with the reader” and forcing him “into [a] frankness of expression” and “a certain truth and honesty that a more “elaborate” work published in volumes would not accommodate so readily (ibid.). However, while this “frankness” is connected to an imperative to tell the truth (“[i]f there is not that, there is nothing”), Thackeray also admits that he carried this tendency beyond the limits tolerated by some readers (33-4). He notes how the imperative to be truthful, so forcefully asserted in his preface, runs counter to the prevailing aesthetics of the time in which “no writer of fiction” since “the author of Tom Jones” has been “permitted to depict to his utmost power a MAN” (34). Instead of subscribing to the “certain conventional simper” required by such disreputable literary habits, the author is depicted as
attempting to paint a realistic portrait in the face of a negative reaction from some members of his audience: “Many ladies have remonstrated and subscribers left me, because, in the course of the story, I described a young man resisting and affected by temptation” (34).

It is important to note the way that Thackeray’s preface implicitly genders his audience. While it is the ladies who have “remonstrated” it is the “subscribers” who have “left”, suggesting that the former’s field of activity is limited to reading and that they are not responsible for the monthly purchase of the serial. Thackeray’s explanation for the drop in Pendennis’s circulation, that readers left in protest at his truthful depiction of a man “resisting and affected by temptation” (34), is questioned by the Fraser’s Magazine article which, quoting the preface, noted that “people left off reading because the story was getting dull about that part” (Anon. 1851: 86).

A December 1850 review by J. R. Findlay in the Scotsman mentions the “capital preface in the last number” of Pendennis and “cordially and gratefully grant[s]” Thackeray the credit he claims for “truth and honesty” together with “frankness of expression” (Tillotson and Hawes 95). Findlay, however, claims that in his preface Thackeray overstates the restrictions placed on him by Victorian mores noting that Dickens’s David Copperfield included “a seduction of the worst character” but that his readers did not complain or desist reading the serial because Dickens “enveloped the whole in a cloud of sentiment, fancy, and fine writing” (ibid. 96).

Thackeray’s preface was also quoted almost twenty years later in an article in The New Monthly Magazine (1814-84). This article, quoting Thackeray’s assertion that he had attempted in Pendennis a “little more frankness than is customary”, also quotes the end of the preface before posing the “great enigma” in relation to Thackeray’s writing: how, despite his “recurring moralisings” he had managed “to leave us works so artistically perfect” (Mackay 629). It is, I would argue, significant that both contemporary and later reviews took notice of Thackeray’s preface: the former to situate Thackeray’s serialisation in the contemporary world of periodical publication; the latter as part of a discussion about Thackeray’s canonical position in the English literary tradition. Not only do the reviewers quote sections from the

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preface, but they also use it to better understand both the work framed by the preface and the authorial labour behind such work. In this way, despite the fact that reviewers such as Findlay took issue with Thackeray’s claims in his preface, we can observe that the preface fulfills Genette’s definition of all paratext as “at the service of a better reception for the text and a more pertinent reading of it” (Genette 2). Thackeray’s preface to *Pendennis* not only establishes a reception for the text, but also for the author originating that text. The author is presented as “the story-teller” sitting in his chair “as he concludes his *labour*, and bids his kind reader farewell” (Thackeray 1972: 34; emphasis added). This is a performative finale: the act of farewell closing the book. The use of “labour”, which evokes both aesthetic and economic values, reveals that, despite authorial protestations of intimacy with the reader—“constant communication” (34)—and promises of sincerity and truthfulness, the economics of the marketplace continually intruded upon the author-reader relations associated with Victorian serialised fiction.

“Copyright and Copywrong”: The Impact of Copyright on Victorian Authorship

The issues involved with the development of copyright in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries include a number of themes relevant to this chapter: the changing notions of originality that arose in parallel with development in copyright legislation; the focus on intellectual property as both a product of labour and a property right that was alienable and could be sold in the marketplace; the social importance of authors and whether this should be rewarded by the state or left to the vicissitudes of the free market; the status of authors as professionals or tradesmen; the biographical figure of authors themselves defined by the imaginative labour expended on their work; and the plight of authors, their families and descendants if the literary labour of authorship is not adequately rewarded. Acknowledging that changing copyright frameworks had a significant impact on the legal, social and economic relationships between authors, publishers and readers, this section will examine the effect this had on Victorian representations of authorship. I will argue that the debate over copyright was inscribed at the material level of Victorian serials as authors such as Dickens presented a new model of authorship which, by moving
away from eighteenth-century models of patronage, enabled the emergence of a professional author writing for a mass audience. I suggest that by restoring the impact of copyright legislation on the material form of books and their production, it is possible to trace in paratextual elements a set of representations of a new kind of authorial labour. The way this labour was characterised had a significant impact on the status of Victorian authors as professionals and the value accorded to the work they produced.

The issue of copyright is one that Foucault explicitly mentions in his essay “What is an Author?” where he describes “books or texts with authors” as “objects of appropriation” with a “specific form of property” (Foucault 1977: 124). Discussing the “legal codification” for this kind of property, Foucault notes that “a system of ownership and strict copyright rules were established” at the cusp of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (ibid.124-5). An important consequence of this, according to Foucault, is that as soon as authors are “accepted in to the social order of property which governs our culture” they engage with their “new status” and its relationship with “the benefits of property” (125). In order to examine this development in more historical detail than Foucault’s essay can accommodate, the section that follows outlines the emergence of copyright in order to suggest the influence it had both on literary production and on the figure of the author.

The Statute of Anne (1709) introduced a revolutionary development in terms of the relationship between authors and their work. Before the Statute of Anne, copyright had signified nothing more than a right to “print and sell copies” (Feltes 7). But following this Act, authors were legally entitled to be the “possible proprietors of their works” and, thus, emerged as “a legally empowered figure in the marketplace” (Rose 4). If authors did not reap the immediate financial benefits of this unprecedented change in copyright legislation, the image of authorship came to function, at least rhetorically, in more important ways than before.

Throughout the eighteenth century, however, authors remained subservient to the monopolists of the book trade who, following the Statute of Anne, repositioned the need for perpetual copyright away from the previous model of regulation (an “ongoing monopoly” presented as safeguarding “the kingdom against seditious
works”) to a “new strategy” focused on the rights of authors (who should have “a natural right of property in their work”) (Siksin 110-111). With booksellers significantly more powerful than authors, the argument for a perpetual copyright for authors was simply a thinly veiled proposal for perpetual copyright for booksellers (Siskin 111). This changed with the landmark *Donaldson v. Becket* case (1774) in which the House of Lords fought booksellers on the latter’s terms by affirming the right of authors but effectively ending the monopoly of booksellers by dismissing perpetual copyright (Siskin 111-12). William St. Clair has described the ending of the practice of perpetual copyright as “one of the most momentous events in the long history of reading in the English speaking world” noting that it occurred almost simultaneously with Adam Smith’s rejection of monopoly models in favour of free trade (St. Clair 436).

At the same time as the property relation of literary commodities were redefined, the representations of authorship shifted to accommodate the new legal reality. Mark Rose suggests that the primary “distinguishing characteristic” of modern authors is “proprietorship”, a concept of ownership based on the idea of an author as an “originator” (Rose 1). This concept, used for the “profitable manufacture and distribution” of literary commodities, is dependent on a “legal reality” that is as influential for “dominant modes of aesthetic thinking” as it is for judicial processes related to intellectual property (Rose 1-2). Rose pinpoints the importance of the idea of authorial originality to the eighteenth century when: “the representation of originality as a central value in cultural production developed [...] in precisely the same period as the notion of the author’s property right” (Rose 6). As Rose helpfully summarises: “the representation of the author as a creator who is entitled to profit from his intellectual labor came into being through a blending of literary and legal discourses in the context of the contest over perpetual copyright” (Rose 6).

From the 1830s, proponents of further copyright reform represented the work of authorship in ways that focused on “ideas of genius and originality” (Pettitt 60). These notions were at once the inheritance from Romantic constructions celebrating individual genius and a continuation of the eighteenth-century focus on authorial originality in relation to copyright. The “ideas of genius and originality” were
deployed in the 1830s and beyond in long-running and controversial debates about the intellectual property of contemporary authors and the importance of securing adequate protection not only for them but also for the future of English literature. An important figure in the copyright debates of the 1830s and early 1840s was Serjeant Talfourd MP, whose “tone and style” in his speeches on copyright reform were “like its subject, new to the ear of the House” (Horne 1844: 1: 251). In New Spirit of the Age (1844), R.H. Horne gives a vivid description of Talfourd’s parliamentary speeches in favour of copyright reform:

[...] he was listened to with deep attention, while with earnest and fluent language, assisted by happy illustrative reference, he enforced the claims of the struggling professors of literature upon that property in the products of the brain, which the law allow to be wrested from them. (Horne 1844: 1: 251)

In an 1838 speech to Parliament during the second reading of his copyright bill, Talfourd made the distinction between mechanical and literary invention, arguing that while the former did not rely on the originality particular to the individual who “discovered” it, the latter was invariably connected to the genius of its originating author (Pettitt 63). Consequently, mechanical innovation was more a function of time than personality with developments and innovation bound by a certain law of inevitability. In contrast, “masterpieces of genius”, such as King Lear (1608) or Clarissa (1748), were indelibly connected to their specific authors who were the only individuals possible of creating them (Pettit 63).11 Talfourd’s speech, given a year after the publication of the volume edition of The Pickwick Papers was dedicated to the Member of Parliament, reflected the terms of Dickens’s dedication (Pettitt 76).

Dickens’s dedication was addressed to “Mr. Serjeant Talfourd, M.P.” and thanked him for his “efforts” to secure better copyright terms for authors and their descendants (Dickens 1999: 5). This was not just a matter of seeking to protect commercial interests. Dickens thanks Talfourd for:

11 The historian of science, Simon Schaffer, has demonstrated how “the political economy of the 1830s relocates ‘intelligence’ from the person who manually constructs an object, making it up as he goes, to a mental professional who designs it” (Ruth 306).
[...] the inestimable services you are rendering to the literature of your country, and of the lasting benefits you will confer upon the authors of this and succeeding generations, by securing to them and their descendants a permanent interest in the copyright of their works. (5)

This dedication marks what Helen Small has described as “a career-long effort” by Dickens to “re-orient” the image of contemporary Victorian authors away from a model based on the abasement of eighteenth-century writer-patron relationships to one based directly on appeal to a contemporary mass readership (Small 2004: 34). This is, in other words, a model of literary production in which the barriers to publication depended less on the whims of a capacious, wealthy individual than on the tastes of an emerging mass market. This new mode of production prompted Dickens to make repeated polemical statements about the need for revised national and international copyright laws that better represented and rewarded the contributions of authors. At the same time, it encouraged a representation of authorship that focused on authors as embodied, contemporary figures who could suffer if not rewarded for their literary work. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the volume edition of *The Pickwick Papers* was where Dickens staged the emergence of his real name from behind the mask of Boz. Thus, at the same time as the biographical individual was claiming responsibility for the phenomenal success of a work previously accorded to a pseudonym, the real-life author paints a vivid picture of the suffering of his fellow authors under contemporary copyright conditions.

In a vision of authorial suffering that almost lapses into parody, Dickens makes clear just what is at stake in the contemporary copyright debates initiated by Talfourd:

Many a fevered head and palsied hand will gather new vigour in the hour of sickness and distress from your excellent exertions; many a widowed mother and orphan child, who would otherwise reap nothing from the fame of departed genius but its too frequent legacy of poverty and suffering, will bear in their altered condition, higher testimony to the value of your labours than the most
lavish encomiums from lip or pen could ever afford. (5)

Talfourd’s political “labours” are valuable because, by ensuring authors’ “descendants” have “a permanent interest in the copyright of their works”, they will ensure that widows and orphans of “departed genius” will “reap” what they are owed and be saved from poverty. More importantly, the dedication suggests that by “securing” these rights for authors and their families, authors will find the strength and motivation to continue with their arduous literary work. This is the renewed heroism that Dickens implies in the idea of the “new vigour” authors will feel in “fevered head and palsied hand” at their hour of “distress”. What is suggested here is that the overworked imaginations of authors, as well as their suffering bodies, will be revived by the knowledge that their work will generate more income not only for themselves but also for their families.

The depiction of the impoverished author and his family was a frequent trope deployed in copyright debates in the 1830s and 1840s. It is notable that in his dedication to the volume edition of his first serial work, Dickens explicitly situates himself in the argument over copyright allowing his opinions and loyalties to be inscribed at the material level of the book. It is also worth noting that around the time that *The Pickwick Papers* terminated its serial run and was issued in volume form, Dickens negotiated a new deal with his publishers which meant that, for the first time, he was to have a stake in the copyright of his work. Having been initially paid per instalment, Dickens managed to secure “a third share in copyright and future profits” of *The Pickwick Papers* (Dickens 1999: 774, n.2).

The increasingly profitable deals that Dickens was able to strike with publishers eager to keep him on good terms led to financial success that proved one of the main drivers for lifting authorship into the ranks of professional occupations. In his assessment of *Novelists and Novels* (1858), Cordy Jeaffreson explained that it was the potential for profit that had raised contemporary attitudes towards novel writing and that “every calling, however mean in itself, becomes honourable by custom, if it can be shown to be lucrative by experience” (Jeaffreson 313; qtd. in Sutherland 1976: 22). As John Sutherland convincingly argues, the estate of £93,000
that Dickens bequeathed his family “helped make fiction writing as professionally respectable as the law, medicine or the civil service [... and ...] did more to raise the profession than any number of Carlylean lectures on “The Hero as Man of Letters” (Sutherland 1976: 23).

However, derived from a national and international marketplace, the income of authors and publishers depended on adequate legal protection for published work. From the publication of *The Pickwick Papers*, Dickens and his publishers had been forced to deal with pirated editions and unauthorised, inferior versions, such as *The Penny Pickwick* (1837-9) and *Pickwick in America!* (1838-9) by “Bos” and published by Edward Lloyd (Schlicke 1999: 457-8). In a bid to preempt such piracy, Dickens and Chapman and Hall issued a public statement in advance of *Nicholas Nickleby* to announce the forthcoming serial and to condemn the pirates. This was in the form of a mock-legal “proclamation” which decried the “cheap and wretched imitations” of Boz’s work and denounced the “dishonest dullards” responsible (Dickens 1838-9: xxvi–xxvii). The proclamation, issued as a paratexutal accompaniment to mothly re-issues of *Sketches by Boz*, promised to execute any pirates of “the good ship NICKLEBY” by hanging them “on gibbets so lofty and enduring that their remains shall be a monument of our just vengeance to all succeeding ages” (ibid.). The lack of any enforceable copyright protection meant that the pirates soon began to produce imitations of *Nickleby* and even had the audacity to issue counter-proclamations of their own claiming that their *Nickelas Nicklebery* was the original and that Boz was the plagiarist (Schlicke 1985: 34; 1999: 459). Dickens was incensed by such “vagabonds” and wrote to Richard Bentley complaining that the pirates had “stuck placards on the walls—each to say theirs is the only true Edition” (Dickens 1838-9: xxvi-xvii; original emphasis).

The 1842 Copyright Amendment Act, the development in intellectual property that had the most impact on the career of Victorian authors, extended the term of copyright from 28 to 42 years after the first publication of the work or seven years after the death of the author, whichever was longer (Schlicke 1999: 123). The rhetoric of the act itself suggested that this legislative amendment was intended not only to protect authors but also to aid the development of literature more generally. In terms
of the economics of authorship, the effect of this act was to shift more of the value produced by literary work into the hands of the authors and their descendants. At the same time, it made it easier to prosecute pirates for copyright infringement and to prevent unlicensed theatrical adaptations (ibid. 124). As Michael Lund summarises:

After 1842 the principle of the author’s ownership — not only of the manuscript but also of the work of art — was more firmly established. The bill specifically referred to literary works as “the Property of such Author”, and included the larger social justification for recognizing this right: “it is expedient [...] to afford greater Encouragement to the Production of Literary Work of lasting Benefit to the World [...]” (Lund 1984: 19)

Thus the 1842 Act not only provided authors with a greater economic share in their work, giving them greater control over the financial and cultural value produced by their works and reputations, but it also paid testament to the social utility of literature on a global scale (“Literary Work of lasting Benefit to the World”) suggesting that the commodities in question had a unique and important set of characteristics. It highlighted questions of “originality” and “genius” serving as an index for early Victorian attitudes towards not only authorship but also wider ideas of invention and creative agency.

However, the immediate aftermath of the act was to create a kind of “metaphysical problem” for authors and publishers who were plunged into confusion over whether their various publishing agreements constituted a permanent transfer of copyright or simply a right to publish a limited number of print runs (Lund 1984: 20). In the face of such “metaphysical” confusion over precisely what it was that authors were selling to publishers, Dickens and other prominent Victorian authors met in 1843 to “secure the observance of the laws for the protection of authors and their property” (qtd. in Lund 1984: 20). But there were two crucial stumbling blocks to the formation of this kind of professional association: authors were often on friendly terms with their publishers, which made it difficult to sustain a group that seemed designed to work against the interests of the latter; and the popular perception at the
time was that authors were simply “hacks” employed by publishers with the former acting as wage-labourers while the latter performed the more important role of the professional men of business (Lund 1984: 20). I will suggest that one consequence of the copyright amendment of 1842 was an attempt on behalf of some Victorian authors to project an increasingly professional image of authorship which rhetorically and economically would serve to increase the relative power of authors in literary production. As G.H. Lewes summarised: “Opinion must first be influenced, and then the organization of a profession will evolve itself from the opinion [...]” (qtd. in Lund 1984: 20).

It is important to recognise that the complex arguments raging around issues of intellectual property were representative of currents that went far beyond disputes about the relative rights of authors and publishers. Issues of intellectual property were part of an “index” of “middle-class professional identity” (Pettitt 65), the repercussions of which were essential to representations of Victorian authorship in particular and the idea of professionalism in general. Intellectual property was the “vital difference” between lowly, “hack writer[s]” and machine operators on the one hand, and professional authors and mechanical inventors on the other (Pettitt 166). In an 1837 *Athenaeum* article called “Copyright and Copywrong”, Thomas Hood wrote: “the legislature [...] will have indirectly to determine whether literary men belong to the privileged class,—the higher, lower or middle class,—to the working class,—productive or unproductive class,—or, in short, to any class at all” (qtd. in Pettitt 80; original emphasis).

In terms of the class issues separating authors and inventors, a number of contradictory characterisations were deployed in debates revolving around the kind of labour performed by these groups and and the appropriate social, cultural and financial categories for such labour. These characterisations ranged from the notion of authors and inventors as respectable middle class professionals to representations of them as improvident, lazy figures or as impoverished geniuses (Pettitt 79). Intellectual property rights also “represented the differential between alienated and unalienated labour” (Pettitt 166), a distinction that, as will be discussed below, came into sharp focus through the different rhetorical strategies Victorian writers used to
represent the labour they performed and their relationship to the marketplace where the products of that labour was sold.

“Professions of the Pen”

A year before the copyright reform that Dickens’s dedicatee to the *The Pickwick Papers*, Serjeant Talfourd, proposed to Parliament, Dickens had been involved in editing a three-volume work “by various hands”. This had been put together in order to raise money for the family of his former publisher, John Macrone, who had been plunged into financial freefall following the publisher’s unexpected death. Published in 1841, the book contained an article on “John Dryden and Jacob Tonson” in the first volume which stated that Dryden was “the first writer of any significance” who lived on “the settled basis of literary pursuits” and that “[l]iterature was his trade” (Dickens 1841: 55; emphasis added). For Victorian writers, such as Dickens, literature was no longer a trade but an occupation that merited the title, remuneration and privileges associated with professional work. But resituating literature as an occupation away from the idea of a trade and presenting it as a profession raised host questions related to issues of copyright, distinguishing mental from manual labour, characterising the work performed by authors and the relationship between authorship and more established professions. It also resulted in an open conflict with other prominent Victorian writers, such as Thackeray, who explicitly rejected the idea of authorship as a profession. In a March 1846 issue of *Fraser’s Magazine*, Thackeray stated: “The trade of literature is a craft as any other” (qtd. in Dickens 1981: x).

The contested transition of Victorian authorship from trade to profession is crucial to understanding the role played by representations of authorship and authorial labour. As Magali Sarfatti Larson insightfully observes:

Unlike craft or industrial labour, [...] most professions produce intangible goods: their product, in other words, is only formally alienable and is inextricably bound to the person and the personality of the producer. It follows, therefore, that *the producers themselves have to be produced* if their products
or commodities are to be given a distinctive form. (Larson 14; qtd. in Feltes 43; original emphasis)

N.N. Feltes identifies as a useful area of inquiry the function of the idea of professionalism “in the aspiration and fortunes” of those who not only perform professional activities but also “produce” themselves as professionals (Feltes 41-3). Following Feltes’s focus on the “ideological practice” of professional activity (42), a project that is ultimately focused on “the monopolization of status and work privileges” (43), I will examine the discursive processes involved in presenting literary work as a professional activity and in mediating the production of literary work as commodities. The purpose of this section is to trace how Dickens and Thackeray represented their work as authors in a literary marketplace where the distinction between “professional writer” and “literary hack” (Thackeray 1972: 380) became an ideological faultline for contemporary arguments about the status of the author as a professional working in the literary marketplace and the idea of a consumer-driven marketplace for literary commodities.

For many Victorian authors and critics, the participation of authors in the marketplace was a welcome development and signified how far literature had developed from Romantic models of authorship towards something resembling a modern profession. If the Romantic genius was characterised by “erratic spates of inspiration” (Ruth 319), then Victorian writers were keen to demonstrate how imaginative labour should be conducted following a much more rigorous work ethic. An 1842 article in *Chambers’s Edinburgh Journal* (1832-54) entitled “The Literary Profession” provides an early example of this with its explicit purpose of “correct[ing] some loose and ill-founded notions of the public mind respecting the profession of the pen” (Anon. 1842: 225). The article urges literary men to avoid being idle, “wayward and irregular” so that they don’t contribute to their own “ruin” (ibid). Calling for a “reform” in the perception and behaviour of the “gentlemen of the press”, the author states the “product of the pen is a matter of business, which must be managed on business principles” (ibid.). The article predicts that “ordinary society” will become “more accustomed to see men living by
literature” but that a change in public sentiment would occur much more readily if “literary men adopted more correct views as to their position and destiny, and sought to dignify their profession by their individual conduct” (ibid.; emphasis added). The focus on lending an increasingly dignified attitude to the literary “profession” is indicative of what Claire Pettitt has described as “class-status leap”, a process which had begun by the 1830s and which enabled the author of the article to declare with confidence in 1842 that “the literary has been scarcely behind the legal profession during the last age, in respect of the cases of advancement from one grade of society to another which has been achieved by it” (ibid. 225; Pettitt 65).

Consequently, the article attacks the widespread “tendency” to “whine about the poor rewards of literature” and to bewail the “starvation which hangs over the heads of all who give themselves to pen and ink” (ibid.). In a response echoed by Thackeray in the 1850s, the article asks: “But are these casualties not to be found in all ranks of men and all professions? Are there not many starved apothecaries? Are there not many miserably poor solicitors?” (ibid.). The article seeks to dismiss the “notion that misery is the almost exclusive associate of genius” (ibid.) at the same time as positioning “the literary profession” as one comparable to the work of “teachers”, “artists”, “preacher[s]” and “barrister[s]” (225-6). The key similarity, according to the author of the article, is that the literary man, like all other professions, needs to be “a useful labourer” and “must labour that he may eat” (226).

This presents a particularly useful, early example of some of the key issues involved in changing Victorian attitudes towards the notion of professional authorship: its equivalence with other professions; its demonstrable utility; its reliance on hard work; and its business-focused approach. However, if they were keen to resituate models of authorship away from Romantic conceptions of idle, occasionally inspired genius, Victorian writers such as G.H. Lewes were still insistent that authorship had “become a profession” and not “a trade” (Lewes 299).13

12 In his The English Humourists of the Eighteenth Century (1853), Thackeray discussed “ruined inventors”, “blighted curates” and “barristers pining a hungry life” and asks “[i]f these suffer, who is the author to be exempt?” (qtd. in Pettitt 161).

13 Lewes’s novel Ranthorpe (1847) ended with a valorisation of authorship as a profession: “The poor attorney’s clerk has become an honoured author” (qtd. in Chittick 7).
Describing how English authors were “as beggarly” as continental authors up until the mid-1840s, G.H. Lewes suggests, in an 1847 *Fraser’s Magazine* article, that the cause for the recent improvement of English literary fortunes is “the excellence and abundance of periodical literature” (302). Claiming that “[i]t is by our reviews, magazines, and journals, that the vast majority of professional authors earn their bread”, Lewes characterises periodical literature as a form that at once frees “authorship from the badge of servility” and offers “a potent instrument for the education of a people” (302-3). According to Lewes, periodical work performed by “laborious, thoughtful writers” motivates “John Bull” to “pay” (303-4). But this payment is always in exchange for the work produced and never a result of “respect, solicitude, [or] anticipative charity” (304). In a sentiment that was later echoed in the so-called “Dignity of Literature” debate of 1850, Lewes states that the English reading public have no interest in “anticipative charity” or “prospective benevolence” (304) and the focus must not be on “protection” but on “employment” (304).

**The Dignity of Literature**

Despite the copyright reform of 1842, the issue of authors’ precarious livelihoods was still a common topic in the Victorian press throughout the era. If in 1847 Lewes was adamant that “for the great mass of journalists, critics, essayists, tale writers, jesters, there are means of decent subsistence” (Lewes 1847: 303), other voices in the debate were keen to point out that even with the 1842 copyright amendments, the lives of contemporary authors were anything but easy. An 1850 article in *Chambers’s Edinburgh Magazine* referred to these amendments with no equivocation about which party benefitted most from the legislative reform:

> The legislature a few years ago by way of a great benefit to authors, extended the period of copyright, whereby it will follow that the sons and grandsons of existing publishers will be making money in the twentieth century out of the works of the authors in the nineteenth. (Anon. 1850: 111)
The article focuses on a “virtuous” and “successful” author, one of the “most successful and popular authors in Great Britain” (ibid.). Despite the copyright reform and his success, this author, “Mr. Dick”, “starves in the midst of sixth and seventh editions” while fully aware that “his works will be a good dropping goose to somebody in the year 1900” (ibid.). The author of the article notes that a subscription model would not work in this case as “the liberal few” are already “groaning” under the weight of existing subscriptions. Consequently, and clearly with half an eye at the contemporary debate about state pensions for men of letters, the author suggests “the most equitable mode of rescue and remuneration is by the use of the funds of the state” (ibid.).

The notion that despite the copyright reform publishers were able to “make large fortunes” while leaving “the authors to starve” was, at mid-century, still such a “common complaint” that for some critics publishers were presented as “a kind of moral vampire, sucking the blood of genius” (Kaye 1850: 349). Authors were often depicted, as in the Chambers’ article quoted above, as unrewarded for their efforts and struggling to keep themselves and their families out of poverty. If, for some, the idea of authorship as a profession ruled out external assistance for authors in financial difficulty, others saw the valuable cultural work performed by authors as meriting state assistance.

Beginning in January 1850, the “Dignity of Literature” debate crystallised the various issues evolving from the professionalisation of authorship, increasing periodical publication and copyright reform of the 1840s. Featuring some of the most influential Victorian authors, critics and journals, the debate provides what Richard Salmon has called “one of the most visible landmarks in the shift towards a distinctly post-Romantic iconography of authorship” (Salmon 2007: 35). Broadly speaking, the debate was focused on whether authors should be treated in the same way as the “more established middle-class professional identities” or whether there was something special about the act of authorship that deserved exceptional treatment and qualified authors for the state assistance not afforded to other professions (Salmon

14 Compare a similar sentiment from Marx: “Capital is dead labour which, vampire-like, lives only by sucking living labour, and lives the more, the more labour it sucks” (Marx 1990: 342).
While the debate was initially provoked by arguments about whether the value of literary work transcended the marketplace, it quickly honed in on Thackeray’s depiction of authorship in *Pendennis* (1848-50). Both sides of the debate, conducted in editorials in the *Morning Chronicle* (1769-1862) on one side, and *The Examiner* (1808-86) on the other, criticised Thackeray’s current serial for portraying professional authors in a negative way and bringing the profession into disrepute. Examining the portrayal of authorship in *Pendennis* and *David Copperfield*, the following sections will suggest that Thackeray and Dickens’s work had a “polemical function” (Salmon 2007: 36) in debates about the function of authorship in the contemporary marketplace. Reconstructing the original serial schedules of these important mid-Victorian works, I will argue that these novels provide a useful insight into the way Dickens and Thackeray portrayed their own work as authors working in a literary marketplace where the role of professional authorship was a significantly contested issue. While it would be reductive to see the characters of David and Pen as thinly veiled self-portraits of their respective authors, the fact that they are authors raises a number of interesting questions. In the section below, I will try to determine to what extent the representations of authorship in *Pendennis* and *David Copperfield* were related to the “Dignity of Literature” debate and how they can be related to the broader issues affecting Dickens and Thackeray as periodical authors.

**Pendennis and The Indignity of Literature**

In the tenth installment of *Pendennis* in August 1849, the prospect of financial insolvency forces Thackeray’s eponymous hero to ask his friend, George Warrington, to suggest options for gainful employment: “I can’t drive a coach, cut corns or cheat at cards. There’s nothing else you propose?” (Thackeray 1972: 338). It is at this moment, in a chapter tellingly entitled “In which the Printer’s Devil Comes to the
Door”,¹⁵ that Warrington reveals his own way of making a living:

‘I write,’ said Warrington. ‘I don’t tell the world I do so,’ he added with a
blush. ‘I do not choose that questions should be asked: or, perhaps, I am an ass,
and don’t wish it to be said that George Warrington writes for bread.’ (339)

Warrington suggests that the aptly named Pen, who has naive aspirations to poetic
grandeur, write magazine articles and “turn out a pretty copy of verses” for gift
annuals where poets are required to supply copy to accompany illustrated plates
“prepared long beforehand” (340). These gift annuals thus reverse the normal text/
paratext binary where the former has primacy and emphasise that, despite the
delusions of poets such as Pen, their contribution was merely supplementary and
merited little consideration on the part of publishers and buyers.

Warrington’s influence leads Pen into the orbit of competing publishers, Bacon
and Bungay, and the sorrowful vision of a ruined writer churning out copy while
imprisoned for debt. The latter, a character called Captain Shandon, based on the
founder of Fraser’s Magazine, William Maginn (Dames 2001:39), is depicted in
prison surrounded by his destitute family and writing for his life:

[He was] sitting on his bed in a torn dressing-gown, with a desk on his knees,
at which he was scribbling as fast as his rapid pen could write. Slip after slip
paper fell off the desk wet on to the ground. (347)

Oblivious to visitors, his children “pattering” about the room and his distraught wife,
Shandon is focused on crafting the “prospectus for the Pall Mall Gazette” (347). This
prospectus, which presents a publication “written by gentlemen for gentlemen”, is
written for a publisher, Mr Bungay (350-1). Bungay’s opinions are “pretty simple”

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¹⁵ The “Printer’s Devil” was a term for the boy who would carry copy and galley proofs between
author and publishers. This was a figure that, while marginal in the economic sphere, took on an
interesting representational function in the schedule-bound world of Victorian periodical publishing
and was one to which Thackeray often referred (see, for example, the printer’s boy in “De
Finibus”).
and are less focused on gentlemanly conduct than on publishing a journal that will ensure his competition, “the opposition house of Bacon”, are “smashed” (ibid.).

Having had his first glimpse into the world of contemporary publishing, Pen admits that he finds it difficult to see “a man of genius” such as Shandon “driven by such a vulgar slave-driver” as the publisher Bungay (354). In a tirade that elicits a “Bravo” from Warrington, Pen pinpoints the issues of class, labour and capital involved not only in the literary transaction he has just witnessed but also in the world of Victorian publishing more generally:

No man shall tell me that a man of genius, as Shandon is, ought to be driven by such a vulgar slave-driver as yonder Mr Bungay, whom we have just left, who fattens on the profit of the other’s brains, and enriches himself out of his journeyman’s labour. It makes me indignant to see a gentleman the serf of such a creature as that, of a man who can’t even speak the language he lives by, who is not fit to lick Shandon’s boots. (354)

Shandon, imprisoned for debt, is the perfect example of an individual forced to perform the work of a “wage-labourer” (Marx 1990: 716). He provides the “journeyman’s labour” to Bungay who, as the capitalist, “fattens on the profit” of the former’s productivity. Crucially, it is not manual but mental labour that Shandon provides. The fact that Bungay generates profit from Shandon’s “brains” means that the former “enriches” himself from the intellectual labour of a “gentleman”, a figure socially, intellectually and, Pen suggests, naturally superior to the simple-minded publisher. While Bungay is “not fit to lick Shandon’s boots”, he has assumed the position of a “slave-driver” forcing the author to be his “serf”. Shandon, a model of fiscal irresponsibility, abandons the social hierarchy to sell his wage-labour for cash payments that he funnels into gambling and drink.16

Enjoying the passionate partisanship with which his young friend immediately

16 Authors were often accused of being characteristically impecunious. In an 1850 review of *Pendennis*, J.W. Kaye noted that authors were often financially irresponsible and that they could neither live nor “spend like other men” (Kaye 1850: 356-7; qtd. in Salmon 44).
sides with authors over publishers, Warrington responds with a rebuttal which has significant consequences in terms of Thackeray’s position in the “Dignity of Literature” debate:

A fiddlestick about men of genius! [...] I deny that there are so many geniuses as people who whimper about the fate of men of letters assert there are. [...] the talk of professional critics and writers is not a whit more brilliant, or profound, or amusing, than that of any other society of educated people. If a lawyer, or a solider, or a parson, outruns his income, and does not pay his bills, he must go to gaol; and an author must go, too. (354-5)

Warrington’s response deploys the same logic that Thackeray would repeat in his Lectures on the English Humourists, presented in 1851 and published in 1853. According to Warrington, authors should be treated just like “a lawyer, or a solider, or a parson” and should be accountable for their debts. However, while this followed the kind of logic we have seen in the articles of the 1840s, such as the Chambers’s Edinburgh Journal quoted above, Warrington does not suggest any sense of equality for authors on a professional level. From Warrington’s perspective, not only were there fewer men of “genius” than sympathisers claimed, but the “talk” of these “professional critics and writers” also had nothing that marked it as superior to that of “educated people”.

This was the kind of claim that provoked responses in the periodical press and prompted The Morning Chronicle and The Examiner to print extracts from Thackeray’s current serial. Both periodicals objected to Thackeray’s negative portrayal of contemporary literary work. What is significant in the passages that the periodicals quoted was the idea, first focalised through Pen and then through the perspective of the serial’s narrator, that “literary people” talk less frequently and less intelligently about literature than other people:

Pen was forced to confess that the literary personages with whom he had become acquainted had not said much, in the course of the night’s conversation
that was worthy to be remembered or quoted. In fact, not one word about literature had been said during the whole course of the night:—and it may be whispered to those uninitiated people who are anxious to know the habits and make the acquaintance of men of letters, that there are no race of people who talk about books, or perhaps, who read books, so little as literary men.

(374)

This was a damaging claim to make against contemporary literary work suggesting that authorial labour was performed by those with less knowledge of literature than the average educated person. It is now clear why this particular instalment of Thackeray’s novel provoked such a critical backlash. In a direct attack on the idea of authors as professionals, Thackeray reduces periodical literary work to a task that anyone could perform.

*Pendennis* stalled for three months, while Thackeray recovered from a near fatal bout of Cholera, and did not resume publication until February 1850. The serial resumed with the twelfth instalment, which began by alluding to the recent pause in serialisation: “Let us be allowed to pass over a few months of the history of Mr Arthur Pendennis’s lifetime” (380). Conflating the diegetic time of Pendennis’s narrative with the real-world pause in his “memoirs”, Thackeray’s narrator begs to skip over the missing months. The narrator then reminds readers that Pendennis had been left in the “last chapter, regularly entered upon his business as a professional writer, or literary hack, as Mr Warrington chooses to style himself and his friend” (380). Following the controversy this previous chapter had caused, it seems no accident that Thackeray started the next instalment with an implied reference to the recent debate through the juxtaposed, binary terms “professional writer, or literary hack”. In private, Thackeray had expressed regret for pushing his criticism of the publishing world so far. Discussing the contentious passages from *Pendennis*, which had been excerpted in *The Morning Chronicle* and *The Examiner*, Thackeray told Abraham Howard:
The words in Pendennis are untenable be hanged to them: but they were meant to apply to a particular class of literary men, my class who are the most ignorant men under the sun, myself included. But I wrote so carelessly that it appears as if I would speak of all & even if it were true I ought never to have written what I did. (Thackeray 2: 636: qtd. in Lund 19; original emphasis)\textsuperscript{17}

Despite his contrition, however, in the April 1850 instalment Thackeray’s narrator described Pen as a “literary hack” while explicitly siding with Warrington against the “poetic sympathisers” who propose that “men of letters, and what is called genius, are to be exempt form the prose duties of this daily, bread-wanting, tax-paying life” (380). The opening page of the new instalment presents “the literary man [...] just like any other daily toiler”, while also making an implicit allusion to the difficulty of performing literary work when stricken with health problems:

\[\text{[...]}\] we know how the life of any hack, legal or literary, in a curacy, or in a marching regiment, or at a merchant’s desk, is dull of routine, and tedious of description. One day’s labour resembles another much too closely. A literary man has often to work for his bread against time, or against his will, or in spite of his health, or of his indolence, just like any other daily toiler. (Thackeray 1972: 380; qtd. in Lund 1984: 21)

In this view, authors are like all workers forced by necessity into the position of “hired labourers” with the result that “the suffering of alienated labour is conceived as equitably universal in scope” (Salmon 40). As Warrington had earlier noted, “capital is absolute, as times go, and is perforce the bargain-master. It has a right to deal with the literary inventor and with any other” (355).\textsuperscript{18} Thackeray’s position in Pendennis and his response in The Morning Chronicle to “The Dignity of Literature”

\textsuperscript{17} It is worth noting that the tendency to write “carelessly” was precisely the thing lauded in the advert for Thackeray’s Vanity Fair in the Bleak House Advertiser (Dickens 1852-3: Advertiser 15).

\textsuperscript{18} Capital’s treatment of “the literary inventor” was an important legal and discursive issue throughout the Victorian period as Claire Pettitt demonstrates in her excellent book Patent Inventions: Intellectual Property and the Victorian Novel (2004).
debate was what we might call a disenchanted, market-driven view of authorship which treated it like any other profession and did not justify special treatment for authors. Evoking “Pegasus”, a reference to the winged-horse of Greek mythology and a popular Romantic trope for poetic inspiration, Thackeray empties the image of its purer associations and resituates it in the marketplace. The imaginative labour of authors who want to “make money by Pegasus” is configured as “saleable property” as well as an activity that occurs only on a market-oriented basis once “the spectator’s money had been paid” (380).

Dickens, on the other hand, seems to have reacted against this “disenchanted materiality of the modern literary trade” (Salmon 39) by displaying authorship, particularly his own, in ways that transcended purely market-based concerns. If a periodical author for Thackeray is a kind of worker, just like any other, forced into the position of a “hired labourer” alienated from the product of his own labour (“repugnance to the subject on which he is called to exert himself” [Thackeray 1972: 380]), Dickens represents authorship as a form of “nonalientated labor” (Hack 77). Yet such representation entails a precarious balancing act for Dickens who, on the one hand, stressed authorial characteristics such as earnestness and friendship while, on the other, emphasised that as professionals authors had a right to receive fair payment for their work and that this work had lasting cultural benefit. Thus while implicitly admitting that the product of authorial labour was “vendible”, and so strictly speaking that the labour was alienable (Hack 77), Dickens represents authorship in ways that attempt to negotiate the degrading associations with wage-labour that Thackeray presented in *Pendennis*. This balancing act is exemplified in the representation of authorship in *David Copperfield*. I will argue in the following section that David presents an authorial model through which Dickens could engage with contemporary debates about authorship. In the depiction of David’s work as an author, Dickens positions this work in relation to a range of issues such as the mental and manual labour involved in writing; the place of authors in the marketplace; and whether books are alienable products. At the same, I will suggest that these representations of authorship, which were at once an implicit comment on the contemporary “Dignity of Literature of Debate”, were mirrored in Dickens’s preface
to the finished novel in which he conflates David’s nonalienated authorship with his own role as an author transcending the literary marketplace.

David Copperfield
Dickens began monthly serialisation of David Copperfield in May 1849. However, as late as November of that year, he was still undecided about David’s profession (Schlicke 1999: 150; Lund 1984: 25-6; Dickens 1981: 650). This means that Dickens’s decision that David should be a professional author seems to have been taken after Thackeray’s negative portrayal of professional authorship in Autumn 1849 and the “Dignity of Literature” debate of January 1850 (Lund 1984: 25-6). This has led some critics to view Dickens’s depiction of authorship in David Copperfield as a “coded rejoinder” to Thackeray’s characterisation in Pendennis (Salmon 37). By incorporating the bourgeois Victorian work ethic into a representation of authorial labour, David is a response to Thackeray’s pejorative descriptions of authorship. David’s ethos of authorship is shot through with the idea of “earnestness”—precisely the same quality that Dickens complained was lacking in Thackeray’s writing in the memorial tribute published following the latter’s death in 1864: “he feigned a want of earnestness” (Dickens 1864: 321; qtd. in Salmon 42). In contrast, David is the very model of the productive, earnest Victorian with ingrained “habits of punctuality, order, and diligence” (qtd. in Lund 1984: 24):

I quietly pursued my task […] I do not enter on the aspirations, the delights, anxieties, and triumphs, of my art. That I truly devoted myself to it with my strongest earnestness, and bestowed upon it every energy of my soul, I have already said. (Dickens 1997: 849; emphasis added)

I will suggest in this section that the way that Dickens presents David as an author, highlighting some facets of authorship while occluding others, is significant in terms of the contemporary debates on authorship and the dignity of literature. Dickens’s characterisation of David as an author resituates the act of authorship away from marketplace and back into the private sanctuary of the home (Poovey 1988: 89-125;
Salmon 43). However, while effacing the industrial-capitalist connections of David’s authorship, *David Copperfield* seems also to insist on the need for the kind of rigid schedule of production which structures the “punctual discharge” of David’s “newspaper duties” (Ruth 304; Dickens 1997: 696). Indeed, the marriage between this disciplined approach to productive working hours and the use of mental, rather than manual, labour is what defines authorship as a profession and a class of labour that allows Dickens to resolve the tensions in contested Victorian ideas of authorial work.

An important element of Dickens’s representation of David’s professional development is the description of the latter’s emergence as an author:

> I have taken with fear and trembling to authorship. I wrote a little something, in secret, and sent it to a magazine, and it was published in the magazine. Since then, I have taken heart to write a good many trifling pieces. Now, I am regularly paid for them. Altogether, I am well off; when I tell my income on the fingers of my left hand, I pass the third finger and take in the fourth to the middle joint. (Dickens 1997: 633)

This passage, from the July 1850 instalment, recalls an autobiographical fragment from Dickens’s preface to the Cheap Edition of *The Pickwick Papers*, first published in 1847. In this preface, Dickens recalls how his first periodical “effusion” was “dropped stealthily one evening at twilight, with fear and trembling, into a dark letter-box, in a dark office, up a dark court in Fleet street” before appearing in “all the glory of print” (Dickens 1999: 760; emphasis added). Thus, implicitly conflating the career progression of David and his creator—a parallel explicit in the similar progression from parliamentary reporter (Dickens 1997: 533) to novelist (ibid., 696-7, 793) and noticed by contemporary reviewers (Collins 2009: 246)—this passage also suggests David’s frictionless emergence into professional authorship: “I wrote a little something [...] and sent it to a magazine, and it was published in the magazine”. The labour involved in this professional development is occluded, an effacement exemplified by the way that while we don’t see David in the actual act of
authorial composition, we are presented with a graphic image of an author counting
his professional income on the same hands we never see working. David is
“regularly” paid but, unlike the £400 per year that Pendennis, “the fortunate youth”,
was able to earn from his literary labour (Kaye 1850: 348), his wages are not given as
a figure but, through a metonymic substitution, are rendered as part of the author’s
body: the “middle joint” of the “fourth” finger. Implicit in this metonymic
representation of the income, representationally transferred from the world of
economic labour to the body of the writer, is an effacement of the alienated labour
involved in literary production (Salmon 46). In other words, instead of actually
showing, as in *Pendennis*, the process of authorial labour and the selling of this
labour for wages, Dickens represents the whole economy of David’s authorship in the
figure of a “well off” author whose income, like his work, is conceived as part of his
body and thus nonalienated from the author himself. The “hand that writes these
faltering lines” are also the site upon which the income generated by their activity is
calculated (Dickens 1850a: 1). The resituation of David’s income, the source of the
Copperfield’s domestic economy, into the fingers of David’s hand is contrasted with
Dora’s ludicrous attempts to calculate the Copperfield’s domestic expenses by
“counting all the fingers of her left hand over and over again, backwards and
forwards [...]” (Dickens 1997: 652).

The novel’s clearest example of nonalienated labour is articulated by Agnes,
David’s second wife. When asked about her work as a school teacher and whether it
is “laborious”, Agnes replies: “The labor is so pleasant [...] that it is scarcely grateful
in me to call it by that name” (Dickens 1997: 845). Agnes, whose intelligence,
constancy and diligence mark her as almost diametrically opposed to David’s first
wife, Dora, fulfills an important ideological function in terms of the novel’s
representation of labour. As Poovey explains:

> In both his representations of David’s writing and Agnes’s housekeeping [...] Dickens displaces the material details and the emotional strain of labor onto other episodes —thereby conveying the twin impressions that some kinds of work are less “degrading” and less alienating than others and that some
laborers are so selfless and skilled that to them work is simultaneously an expression of self and a gift to others. (Poovey 101)

Unlike Michael Lund, who sees Dickens’s depiction of authorial “wage labor” in *David Copperfield* as part of a polemical strategy to revise common perceptions of writers as “idle”, Mary Poovey interprets David’s authorship following the “nonalienated” domestic labour represented by Agnes (Poovey 101; Ruth 319). Thus, resituating the work of authorship away from the alienating environment of the commodity marketplace, this suggests a new model of authorship in which traditional boundaries between home and work are renegotiated.

If authorship from this perspective was an index for shifting boundaries between domestic and professional settings, it also represented a new form for combining mental labour with the industrial processes restructuring manual labour. According to Jennifer Ruth, the Victorian writer was a new hybrid with an “intelligence” vested in mental labour which “resemble[d] capital” but who also needed to follow the rigorous time scheme of manual labour (Ruth 305, 319). In other words, neither a manual labourer nor a capitalist businessman, the Victorian author is best understood as “an amalgam that rises above them both: the professional” (Ruth 319).

As discussed above, the idea of authors as professionals was one that had been a prominent theme in debates about authorship since the 1840s. The concept of professional authorship, evoking differences between manual and mental labour as well as changing intellectual property rights, is an essential concept for an analysis of Victorian authorship and one that N.N. Feltes mentions in his Marxist interpretation of Victorian novels (Feltes 5). However, Marx had little to say in *Capital* about the emerging professional class in general and authors in particular. His focus was on how the body of the worker was used as “conduit or vehicle through which profit might accrue” (Ruth 311; emphasis added). The process by which the manual worker is converted into a “wage-labourer” at the service of capital, and the focus on the worker’s physical body, is described in *Capital* as follows:
[…] the worker himself constantly produces objective wealth, in the form of capital, an alien power that dominates and exploits him; and the capitalist just as constantly produces labour-power, in the form of a subjective source of wealth which is abstract, exists merely in the physical body of the worker, and is separated from it own means of objectification and realization; in short, the capitalist produces the worker as a wage-labourer. This incessant reproduction, this perpetuation of the worker, is the absolutely necessary condition for capitalist production. (Marx 1:716)

It is just this capitalist process that Dickens negotiates in his depictions of David’s authorship. For all the focus on hands in *David Copperfield* (Salmon 46-9), and despite David counting out his income on his fingers, there is no sense that David’s authorial work should be conceived in the same physical terms in which Marx and other Victorian commentators described wage-labour. Indeed, early in the novel, in an episode that may have prefigured Dickens’s final decision to present his mature hero as a professional author, David’s ability to tell stories at Salem House makes him “an exception to the general body” (90; Qtd Ruth 313). I would suggest we attend to the double-meaning of this phrase, invoking at once the general group of students and the “general body” of the labourer from which David will come to be distinguished by virtue of his imaginative powers. It’s also worth noting this evocation of childhood story-telling abilities was given an autobiographical twist in October 1850 when Dickens described in the preface to the Cheap Edition of *Sketches by Boz* his composition of “certain tragedies achieved at the mature age of eight or ten, and represented with great applause to overflowing nurseries” (Dickens 1850b: vii). Thus, in the paratext to a reissue of his early work, published one month before *David Copperfield* completed its serial run, Dickens makes a reference that conflates his biography with David’s.

Unlike the factory labourers discussed by Marx and presented by Dickens himself in *Hard Times* (1854), David’s authorial work does not create a binary division between home and work (Poovey 100-1; 114-5). If David can work on his current book while on a “solitary walk” (Dickens 1997: 672), he is also presented as
performing authorial labour in a domestic setting: “[...] I was at home and at work” (652). This creates a striking contrast to Dickens’s depiction of Wemmick ten years later in Great Expectations (1860-1) who so clearly distinguishes between his work life and home life that he morphs into a different person during his daily commute (Dickens 1996: 172, 291). In contrast to this divided existence, David suggests that his authorial work was not so much wage-labour as a “vocation” that was a result of “the activation of his own nature” (Marx 1990: 1044; original emphasis). This is important in terms of contemporary approaches to labour. Marx describes alienated labour in his Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts (1845) just five years before David Copperfield in ways which have an important bearing on representations of authorship in the novel:

Firstly, that labour is exterior to the worker, that is, it does not belong to his essence. Therefore he does not confirm himself in his work, he denies himself, feels miserable instead of happy, deploys no free physical and intellectual energy, but mortifies his body and ruins his mind. Thus the worker only feels a stranger. He is at home when he is not working and when he works he is not at home. His labour is therefore not voluntary but compulsory, forced labour. (Marx 1971: 137; qtd. in Salmon 43)

It is noteworthy to compare how David represents his authorial work in ways which evade those elements that Marx details in his description of alienated labour. David discusses how as “[...] nature and accident had made me an author [...] I pursued my vocation with confidence” (Dickens 1997: 696). David’s natural imaginative capability, developed through the “accident[al]” events of his childhood and honed by hard work, seem to suggest a model not of alienated labour but of “vocation” which, while still at the service of capital, is positioned in a different way to the wage-labour anatomised by Marx and criticised by Thackeray in Pendennis.

It is interesting to note that Dickens’s Bildungsroman of an author’s development was published in parallel with Wordsworth’s poetic equivalent, The Prelude (1850), which Clifford Siskin has described as “the most extraordinary résumé in English literary history” (Siskin 112). Presenting his credentials for the role
of a “professional poet” (Siskin 112), The Prelude, in Wordsworth’s words, showed the poet’s “history” up until “the point when he was emboldened to hope that his faculties were sufficiently matured for entering upon the arduous labour which he had proposed to himself” (qtd. in Siskin 112; emphasis added). Dickens bought The Prelude almost as soon as it was published and paraphrased its descriptions of Switzerland in a chapter of David Copperfield (Dickens 1997: xx-xxi, 972). This was incorporated into a section of the novel in which the work of authorship is presented as far from alienated labour and, instead, is characterised as offering David solace following the death of Dora:

She [Agnes], who so gloried in my fame, and so looked forward to its augmentation, well knew that I would labor on. [...] I resolved to remain away from home for some time longer; to settle myself for the present in Switzerland, which was growing dear to me in the remembrance of that evening; to resume my pen; to work. (Dickens 1997: 822)

In some ways, then, David seems similar to Marx’s portrayal of Milton as producing “Paradise Lost as a silkworm produces silk, as the activation of his own nature” (Marx 1990: 1044). For Marx, Milton, who famously sold Paradise Lost for £5, is an example of “unproductive labour” because, in the act of selling his own product, he became a “merchant” who did not create “surplus-value” for the capitalist (Marx 1990: 1043-4). If Dickens makes clear that David is certainly productive, in his role as a successful parliamentary reporter and novelist, his position as an alienated worker producing “surplus-value” within circuits of capital is occluded in the novel. In contrast to Thackeray’s Captain Shandon, David is not shown to serve any capitalist “who fattens on the profit of the other’s brains” (Thackeray 1972: 354). In his depiction of David’s authorship, Dickens carefully balanced the idea of an earnest, productive professional with the sense of an author who is not alienated from the product of his own labour. Thus, the key ideological function of David’s authorship is to negotiate the same literary, economic and ideological issues involved in the production of literary work that Dickens also faced at mid-century. The following section will return the focus to paratext to examine how these issues were
rhetorically incorporated into a representation of literary work that effaced market forces in favour of an emphatic appeal to notions of nonalienated labour and the intimate relationship between authors and their readers.

“The Creatures of his Brain”: Prefatorial Professions of Authorial Labour

In his discussion of Dickens’s preface to *David Copperfield*, Genette states that the author took the the “simplest, and perhaps the sincerest” prefatorial strategy by claiming he had said everything he wished to say in the book and that all that remained was to express “his regret at parting from such dear companions and so engrossing an ‘imaginative task’” (Genette 234). However, as I will suggest in this section, if we read the preface in terms of the ideological issues involved with the professionalisation of authorship discussed so far, it is possible to trace an important rhetorical strategy at work. My claim will be that in the same way that David is represented as an author who is able “to retain imaginary possession of the products of his alienated labour” (Salmon 43), Dickens’s rhetorical effects in his preface create a strikingly similar effect related to the author himself. Additionally, I will argue that, while for nineteenth-century political economists labour is represented as unpleasant, Dickens presents his authorial labour in *David Copperfield* as an enjoyable activity whilst conflating his own work as an author with the representation of authorship embodied by David.

In comparison to Thackeray’s preface to *Pendennis*, published in December 1850 just a month after the final double instalment of *David Copperfield*, Dickens’s preface eschews the marketplace associations of words such as “labour” and “product” which Thackeray deploys (Thackeray 1972: 33-4):

> It would concern the reader little, perhaps, to know, how sorrowfully the pen is laid down at the close of a two-years’ imaginative task; or how an Author feels as if he were dismissing some portion of himself into the shadowy world, when a crowd of the creatures of his brain are going from him for ever. (Dickens 1997: 11)
The use of “task” as opposed to “labour” is significant. While “labour” carried the pervasive sense of a “painful or compulsory” activity (OED first entry; qtd. in Gallagher 58), related concepts such as “task” carried different nuances in terms of the pleasure and pain involved in work (Gallagher 58). While some alternatives might suggest a more neutral attitude towards the pain or pleasure involved in work, “[u]npleasantness was conveyed in the very use of the word ‘labor’ and hence did not need to be further elucidated” (Gallagher 59). Thus, if Thackeray’s use of “labour” implicates Pendennis in the same world of alienable literary commodities as presented in his novel, Dickens’s use of the more neutral “task” echoes the word David uses a number of times in David Copperfield to describe his own writing:

 [...] I fell to work, in my old ardent way, on a new fancy, which took strong possession of me. As I advanced in the execution of this task, I felt it more and more, and roused my utmost energies to do it well.

 [...] until my book should be completed, [...] I quietly pursued my task.

 And now, as I close my task, subduing my desire to linger yet, these faces fade away [...] O Agnes, O my soul, so may thy face be by me when I close my life indeed; so may I, when realities are melting from me like the shadows which I now dismiss, still find thee near me, pointing upward.

(Dickens 1997: 823, 849, 882)

The last quote, David’s final words of the novel, introduces the verb “dismiss” and the description of “shadows” that Dickens echoes in his preface. If, as he claims at the start of this preface, Dickens cannot “get sufficiently far away from this Book” to

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19 Gallagher lists other common synonyms for “work” that each carry more neutral meanings in terms of the unpleasant sensations evoked by “labour”. These include “industry,” “employment,” “operation,” “creation,” and “finished product” (Gallagher 58); Engels commented in a note to the fourth German edition of Das Kapital that English possessed a way of referring to “different aspects of labour” by using either “labour” or “work” (Marx 1990: 137-8, n.16).
discuss it with “composure”, this disconnection is implied lexically by the echoes of “task”, “dismiss” and “shadows” (11). Indeed such echoes seem to place Dickens, like David, in the middle of “the shadowy events of that imaginative world in which I lived” (862). I would like to suggest that, regardless of whether this reflects any objective truth about Dickens’s feelings or his compositional process, this focus on the “imaginative world” shared by the author and David, the “cra...
when I shall again put forth my two green leaves once a month, and with a faithful remembrance of the genial sun and showers that have fallen on these leaves of David Copperfield, and made me happy. (11)

The final word of the preface reinforces the sense that the “imaginative task” of writing *David Copperfield* has not provoked the negative feelings usually associated with labour but have, instead, been a source of happiness to the author. Indeed, if the systemic problem with industrial labour, which Dickens was to emphasise four year’s later in *Hard Times* (1854), was that it inevitably led to misery, the preface to *David Copperfield* seems to stress that authorial labour was neither laborious nor unpleasant. This is, I would argue, part of a discursive strategy which presents authorship as an activity that transcends the alienated labour of commodity production. In a metaphoric transformation, the monthly wrappers of Dickens’s part-issue fiction are represented as both printed product and natural object in a rhetorical move that plays on the double-meaning of “leaves” and leverages the popular affection for the iconic green wrappers. Thus, in his final words to the “reader whom I love”, Dickens reorients the market-based production and consumption of a monthly serial away from the commodity-focused world of the marketplace and towards a more natural, less commodified scene of “faithful remembrance”. The passing of the seasons, evoked by “genial sun and showers”, continues the double meaning of “leaves” capturing the almost two-year duration of *David Copperfield*’s serial run and turning the regular production of his recently completed serial novel into something more akin to a wonder of nature.

That such rhetorical performances had an impact on critics and readers is amply demonstrated by a review of Dickens’s next serial, *Bleak House*, which began serialisation in March 1852:

In keeping with a late spring, Mr. Dickens has at length put forth the ‘two green leaves’ which he promised at the close of ‘David Copperfield,’ and have since been looked for by his countless admirers. He has at length re-established
his monthly relations with them, and for some twenty months at least they will enjoy the pleasure of his welcome periodical visit. (Anon. 1852: 3)

The reviewer not only adopts the metaphorical pun of “green leaves” but also the ideological sentiment that informs it and which transforms the monthly purchase of Dickens’s latest literary commodity into the “pleasure of his welcome periodical visit”. This was a popular representation of the author both in the paratext to his own work and in reviews. Following the completion of *Dombey and Son* (1846-8), a review by Charles Kent in the *Sun* in 1848 captured the transformation of a periodical commodity into the voice of an intimate acquaintance: “An old friend has left us—the voice of a dear favourite is silent—*Dombey and Son* is completed” (Collins 2009: 228). Kent describes how, with the recent completion of Dickens’s serial, “we are loath to imagine that our acquaintance with the different creations in the volume has terminated” while noting the thousands of readers who have “devoured the work bit by bit” and have come, like the reviewer, to “regard with a sort of tenderness even the green covers of the monthly instalment” (228).

In the preface to *Dombey and Son* (1846-8), Dickens bid farewell to his readers, commenting on the “journey” that they had completed together and the sympathetic relationship that had developed between them:

> I cannot forgo my usual opportunity of saying farewell to my readers in this greeting-place, though I have only to acknowledge the unbounded warmth and earnestness of their sympathy in every stage of the journey we have just concluded. (Dickens 2008a: xlix)

Emphasising the “sympathy” that had developed between author and readers over the course of the serial, Dickens represents author and reader as having just completed a long journey together. But this sense of a “journey” occludes the commercial basis of the relationship predicated upon the repeated consumption of successive instalments. The terms of Dickens’s farewell focus on sympathy, physical proximity and an author addressing his readers from a “greeting-place” that has nothing to do with
commodities and everything to do with intimacy. This rhetorical process, influenced by the commercial concerns of an author dependent on the success of his literary commodities, nevertheless served to occlude the economic conditions underlying the serial’s success as a commercial production. The processes of industrial capitalism that enabled the serial to be consumed by so many readers on a regular basis is transformed in the paratext of this work into an affirmation of the sympathetic relationship between Dickens and his readers.

**Sympathy, Celebrity and the Victorian Literary Marketplace**

On 1 February 1842, Dickens gave a speech at a Boston banquet held in his honour as part of his triumphant first visit to the United States. Describing Little Nell, whose death had sparked unprecedented levels of transatlantic grief for a fictional character, Dickens declared:

I had letters about that child, in England, from the dwellers in log-houses among the morasses, and swamps, and densest forests, and deepest solitudes of the Far West [...] my correspondent has always addressed me, not as a writer of books for sale, resident some four or five thousand miles away, but as a friend to whom he might freely impart the joys and sorrows of his own fireside. (Collins 2009: 114)

The market relations between producer (“a writer of books for sale”) and his readers is transformed here into one based on a dialogue (“my correspondent”) between sympathetic parties. It is significant that the boundary between public and private has been so far eroded that Dickens’s distant readers, “four or five thousand miles away”, choose to “freely impart the joys and sorrows” of their own “fireside” to an individual they have never met. Dickens’s labour is, thus, transformed from the alienable work of a paid writer to the basis for a sympathetic relationship with his transatlantic readers.

21 The first American visit, however, became embroiled in controversy following Dickens’s vigorous campaign for a bilateral copyright agreement between England and the United States.
The transformation of an economic relationship between the producer and consumer of a literary commodity into one which masks commercial relationships with a rhetoric of sympathy and intimacy occurs in the paratext to Dickens’s work as early as *Nicholas Nickleby*. In the preface to this novel, Dickens also bids “his readers farewell” emphasising the intimate relationship that develops between the readers of a serial and the “author of a periodical performance”:

As he has delivered himself with the freedom of intimacy and the cordiality of friendship, he will naturally look for the indulgence which those relations may claim; and when he bids his readers adieu, will hope, as well as feel, the regrets of an acquaintance, and the tenderness of a friend. (Dickens 2003b: 4)

This quote, part of a larger quotation taken from the eighteenth-century writer, Henry Mackensie, focuses on the “intimacy” and “friendship” that develops between an author of work published in periodical fashion and its readers. It is followed by Dickens “flattering himself” that on “the first of the next month” his readers may miss “his company at the appointed time as something which used to be expected with pleasure” (ibid. 5). The preface transforms the mechanics dictating the regular production and consumption of serialised instalments into a picture of a friend whose recent and regular company will be missed. The reference to the regular production is qualified by notions of intimacy (“delivered himself with the freedom of intimacy”). The reference to regular consumption is qualified by associations of joyful satisfaction (“at the appointed time as something which used to be expected with pleasure”). It is significant to note that Dickens’s terms occlude the status of his work as literary labour, representing this work instead as a “performance” and a “journey” shared with readers rather than a book written and sold. The repression of the labour involved in literary work, something that Catherine Waters has pointed out in relation to the imaginative labour involved in articles appearing in *Household Words*, is an issue that is significant to all stages of Dickens’s career (Waters 85). I would like to suggest that this is evident in the paratext to Dickens’s work in which an author-function based on market relations of producer and consumer was transformed into
an author-figure represented as the readers’ intimate friend.

Consequently, the representation of Victorian authors was a process implicated both in critical re-evaluations of the place of imaginative labour in the capitalist marketplace and in wider representations of individual agency. Therefore, as Steinlight explains:

Under the regime of industrial print capitalism, the work of commercial discourse is not merely that of selling commodities, but of advertising agency. To invoke the name of Dickens is to draw upon the collective cultural investment in the idea of the singularity of the author as a person and in the idea of his uniqueness as a producer of literature. (Steinlight 153)

In the preface to *David Copperfield*, Dickens insists that “no one can ever believe this Narrative, in the reading, more than I have believed it in the writing” (11). Moreover, sidestepping the negative associations evoked by ideas of labour, Dickens in this preface presents his work as an “imaginative task” that makes him “happy” (11). That such statements need not necessarily have been true, as suggested by the repeated reference in Dickens’s letters to being in a “paroxysm” of writing during the last instalments of *David Copperfield*, does not detract from their rhetorical impact (Dickens 1988: 170-1; 179).

In another preface where Dickens focuses on the biographical details behind his authorial work, he discusses the genesis of *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859) as occurring while he was performing on stage in a play written by his friend and literary collaborator, Wilkie Collins:22

When I was acting, with my children and friends, in Mr. WILKIE COLLINS’s drama of The Frozen Deep, I first conceived the main idea of this story. A

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22 It is worth noting that the reference to Wilkie Collins would have also served as a strategic advertising ploy given that this preface accompanied the final monthly part-issue, and subsequent volume edition, of a serial that had just finished weekly serialisation in Dickens’s *All the Year Round* and was followed as the leading weekly serial in the journal by Collins’s *The Woman in White* (1859-60).
strong desire was upon me then, to embody it in my own person; and I traced out in my fancy, the state of mind of which it would necessitate the presentation to an observant spectator, with particular care and interest. [...] Throughout its execution, it [the idea of the story] has had the complete possession of me; I have so far verified what is done and suffered in these pages, as that I have certainly done and suffered it all myself.

(Dickens 2008b: 3; emphasis added)

It is interesting to note the way that Dickens moves between the suggestions of mental labour, that “state of mind” which was “traced out in my fancy”, and the physical, embodied work of authorship, a result of “strong desire” to “embody” the story in his “own person”. Far from being simply an imaginative exercise, the “execution” of this story “had the complete possession” of the author. Reversing the normal order where the author is in control of the product of his “fancy”, in the terms of this preface it is Dickens himself who is “possessed”.

Given that the novel ends with Carton’s heroic sacrifice upon the guillotine, the double meaning of “execution” in the preface is notable. On the one hand, it clearly refers to the production of the work, a result of Dickens’s “execution” of his original “idea of this story”. On the other, this “idea” culminates in the “execution” of one of the main characters, a sacrifice that Dickens implies he felt. As in the preface to *David Copperfield*, Dickens is here focusing on the fact that the events of his story were “verified” by the author’s experience of them at a level that seems much more visceral than the earlier reference to the author’s “fancy”. The preface states that “what is done and suffered in these pages” has been “certainly done and suffered” by the author with the repetition emphasising the correspondence between the events depicted in the novel and how they have been verified through the figure of the author who “embod[ied]” them.

The link between an embodied author and the fictional world created by that author is central to the “Postscript in Lieu of a Preface” of *Our Mutual Friend*. The postscript begins with an emphasis on the fact that Dickens had been working deliberately to mislead his readers throughout the novel’s serialisation. This act of
imaginative labour, one in full view of the author but hidden from readers, is described as follows:

When I devised this story, I foresaw the likelihood that a class of readers and commentators would suppose that I was at great pains to conceal exactly what I was at great pains to suggest: namely, that Mr. John Harnon was not slain, and that Mr. John Rokesmith was he. (Dickens 1997b: 893)

Presenting a behind the scenes glimpse of an author at work on the “design” of his story, Dickens renders an act of imaginative labour that at once presents an author in full control of his material while recalling the etymology of the textual product that results from such labour. He describes the story in terms of the “the relations of its finer threads to the whole pattern which is always before the eyes of the story-weaver at his loom” (ibid.). In a bravura ending, he then conflates the end of what would be his last completed serial with the simultaneous termination of his own biography. Showing that he can close the former with the performative act of writing “THE END”, Dickens configures his eventual death (described not in terms of mortality but of being parted from his readers) as an event that will be marked in the same, textually-based way as the end of a novel. Detailing his experience of the famous Staplehurst railway crash, which occurred during the serialisation of the novel, Dickens recalls how:

On Friday, the ninth of June in the present year, Mr and Mrs. Boffin (in their manuscript dress of receiving Mr and Mrs Lammle at breakfast) were on with South-Eastern Railway with me in a terribly destructive accident. When I had done what I could to help others, I climbed back into my carriage - nearly turned over a viaduct, and caught aslant upon the turn - to extricate the worthy couple. They were much soiled, but otherwise unhurt [...] I remember with devout thankfulness that I can never be much nearer parting company with my readers

23 “Text” from the Latin “textus” meaning “weave”.

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for ever than I was then, until there shall be written against my life the two words with which I have this day closed this book—THE END

2 September 1865. (ibid. 894)

Dickens’s involvement in this crash, a serious accident in which ten people died, was already well known by the time he wrote this Postscript. On 24 June 1865, the Penny Illustrated Paper ran a front-page picture of Dickens tending a victim of the accident amidst the debris of the train wreck (see fig. 6).

Figure 6: The Penny Illustrated Paper, 24 June 1865.
In his postscript to *Our Mutual Friend*, the author is conflated in a narrative and paratextual present with his characters, who are embodied in their “manuscript dress”. Having helped the victims of the crash, an action he was already recognised for in the popular press, Dickens describes rescuing his imaginative characters who, represented in the material form of the author’s manuscript, were “much soiled, but otherwise unhurt”. The postscript ends by noting the frailty of his own existence in a textual metaphor linking his own biographical end with the final closure of his book. The conflation of Dickens’s own projected end with the end of his book is part of a strategy of representation connecting the man and the work, collapsing the corporeal form of the man into the author’s corpus. I would suggest that this was indicative of the significant “cultural investment” in Victorian England “in the idea of the singularity of the author as a person” (Steinlight 153). These representations, focusing on the biographical figure of the author, were responsible for the “man-and-his-work” criticism of the nineteenth century that Foucault’s focus on discursive practices is intended to subvert.

This cultural investment in the author as a single, biographical figure whose importance is a result of representing the “agency” involved in authorial work is an insight that draws together the three central themes in this chapter: copyright developments; the importance of originality; and the emergence and contested status of the professional Victorian author. Discussing the copyright reforms that took place in eighteenth-century England, N.N. Feltes observes that the complex legal “struggles and decisions” involved represented the transformation of the literary text into “a commodity like any other” (Feltes 7). From the previous focus on a bookseller’s monopoly, the author emerged as an individual with a monopoly over his or her work and, as such, in the unique position to grant publishers the right of publication (Feltes 7). This marked the transition from a legal framework regulating the distribution of books to one governing the distribution of *texts* (Feltes 7); a transition, moreover, that vested in the literary text a property right that was “alienable” enabling texts to enter into the framework of other commodities and, creating new structures for the production of such texts (Feltes 8).
This development raised a number of important legal and aesthetic questions about where exactly the value of a literary work should be located. Was the material incarnation of the book the carrier of this value or was value, rather, somehow located in the immaterial text? Who had the right to the immaterial “text” and how was this transferred into a material form available to potential consumers? What precisely constituted literary labour —the manual labour involved in typesetting, printing and distribution or the mental labour involved in an “original” thought? What exactly constituted an original thought and how was this converted into surplus value?

As Pettitt points out in relation to Victorian debates on intellectual property, “[...] one of the recurrent problems throughout this period of intense legislation was the definition of originality” (Pettitt 74). Talfourd’s focus on the “originality” of authors in his parliamentary speeches was not only focused on altering legal frameworks structuring authorial production, but was also part of the kind of change in aesthetic and ethical attitudes towards authorial work exemplified by Thomas Carlyle’s focus on “originality” in “The Hero as Man-of-Letters” (Pettitt 7). By the mid-nineteenth century, the effect of industrialisation on the literary marketplace and the prevailing metaphors of mechanisation provoked questions of what constituted originality and prompted recourse to the idea of “single authorship as the fulcrum of value” (Pettitt 83). Thus, by the time Dickens and Thackeray were writing *David Copperfield* and *Pendennis*, the connection between the aesthetic category of “originality”, the idea of surplus value and the figure of the professional author had become crucially linked. This was an ideological development summarised by Siskin in which professional authors were both on the side of labour, “producing actual commodities”, while simultaneously “facilitating the appropriation of surplus value by relocating it ideologically within the individual” (Siskin 162-3; qtd. in Salmon 41).

This was an important development because it meant that commodities were developed with surplus-value generated by the idea of a biographical author. That such ideological development also had economic consequences is evident from the way subsequent editions of Dickens’s work were represented as almost required reading. In a glowing preview of the Library Edition of Dickens’s works in 1857, *The
Leader (1850-60) described this “boon to the whole reading public” in terms which configure “possession” of Dickens as the essential pre-requisite to participation in the “circulating social medium” created by his “works”:

To possess DICKENS’S works, in one shape or other, has, in fact, become almost indispensable. Of all modern writers he is the one most frequently quoted and referred to. The characters and incidents of his stories have become a kind of circulating social medium [...] acquaintance with his works have become a social necessity [...] you must know DICKENS, or be continually at fault in the ordinary intercourse of life and the current literature of the day.

(Anon. 1857: 1049)

According to this reviewer, to “possess” Dickens is “indispensable”. In these terms, knowing your Dickens is “a social necessity” and one which is constantly changing with “the current literature of the day”. Thus, implying that readers must avoid being “continually at fault” in their everyday life, the review presents a “handsomely printed [...] library edition” that is more than simply a set of books. For this reviewer, Dickens’s work offers nothing less than the precondition for participating in contemporary conversation.

A review by J.R. Findlay written the same month Pendennis finished its two-year serial run, lamented the fact that Thackeray’s novel had ended. In terms very different to the value invested in Dickens’s work by The Leader, Findlay’s review transforms Thackeray’s work through a process of commodity-fetishisation:

Pendennis is ended; a supply of pleasure and wisdom, anticipated from month to month by many eager votaries, has ceased to flow; the last two bottles of this double dozen of fine-flavoured well-matured wine, have been sent in and drunk, and we must now patiently wait for a renewal of the stock. The readers of periodical novels contract a certain habit of exaction towards the authors who serve up their works in courses of two or three chapters at a time; they
come to fancy that the feast should be perpetually renewed.

(Tillotson and Hawes 93)

The consumption of a serial in this excerpt is transformed into the commodity-fetish for “fine-flavoured well-matured wine” with readers represented as “eager votaries” who can’t quite believe that such a “supply of pleasure and wisdom [...] has ceased to flow” (ibid.). They develop a “certain habit” of consumption, which comes to “fancy that the feast should be perpetually renewed”. This review, then, presents a model in which consumers have come to develop such an addiction for the serialised work of a contemporary author that literary consumption is metaphorically transformed into a “feast” that readers “fancy [...] should be perpetually renewed”.

To contextualise this fetishisation of the author in terms of the emergence of serial publication as a mode of production, it is useful to refer to Clifford Siskin’s analysis of how surplus-value was generated in the mid-eighteenth century periodical market. Siskin suggests that, in this market, the key transformation that drove the “proliferation” of writing was the fact that more readers started becoming writers, lowering the cost of labour involved in producing the periodical, the capital needed to start one and representing “the appropriation of surplus value in its purest form” (Siskin 4; original emphasis). Most of the material was produced for free and there was no copyright restrictions limiting re-printing (ibid.). This was an example of how “[w]riting induced a fundamental change in readers--leading them to behave as writers— which, in turn, induced more writing” (ibid.).

The concept of “proliferation” that Siskin notes to describe this process, one that consists of the “production of more writing” (ibid.) creating more surplus-value, is evident with Victorian serialised fiction. This was a development in which writing “induced a fundamental change in readers”. In the case of serial fiction, the Victorian era saw an unprecedented transition from the reading of volume editions often borrowed from a circulating library to the purchase of periodical fiction and magazines. This led to a “proliferation” of text but, in this instance, the production of text, and hence the surplus-value, was vested in the individual figures of authors. Thus, in the Findlay review above, it is the “renewal” of Thackeray’s work that is
desired with readers represented as “eager votaries” ready to imbibe the next “double dozen” bottles. As is evident in the lucrative reading tours conducted by Dickens and Thackeray, readers were more than willing to pay for the privilege of seeing the embodied figure of the author. As emerging figures of celebrity, they provoked the kind of reaction noted in an 1845 article in which the author notes the awed whispers in reaction to Dickens’s entrance: “‘Dickens is here; here is Dickens’ in a concealed kind of under breath [...]” (Anon. 1845: 3).

As this and many other reviews suggest, Victorian interest in the embodied figure of the author was focused on the figure of Dickens. While David Lodge has noted that the word “celebrity”, used as “as a concrete noun, applied to persons”, is first cited in the Oxford English Dictionary in 1849, from the beginning of the 1840s Dickens’s career offered an early glimpse into the “perceptual category” (Lodge 2002: 117; Daly 2001: 25) his career was helping to modify. The term itself, scattered throughout periodical reviews of the 1840s, is often found in its embryonic stages connected to Dickens. In an 1842 review in Chambers’s Edinburgh Journal on “The Literary Profession”, Dickens is given as an example of an author distinctive for his “extraordinary payments” and “extraordinary success” (Chambers 1842: 300). The article claims that society has seen “few revolutions in personal fortune greater or more rapid” than the rise of Dickens in the six years since 1836. Resorting to hyperbole, the article proclaims that, in 1842, Dickens “walks the world more in the manner of a Roman conqueror than any man since the days of Rome” (Chambers 1842: 225; qtd. in Pettitt 66).

Engaging in contemporary debates on copyright connected to the parliamentary debates taking place in 1842, the article describes how one “particularly luminous writer” has taken the “lachrymose vein” to such an extreme as to suggest that “few men of literary celebrity have left descendants” (Chambers 1842: 226; emphasis added). While this alludes to claims that authors and their families were driven into poverty by the lack of copyright protection for authorial work, the article’s use of “celebrity” is significant given that the term was not recorded in the Oxford English

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24 It is worth noting that the “double dozen” here might be an allusion to the twenty-four monthly instalments of Pendennis.
Dictionary until seven years. If the *Edinburgh Review* could declare in 1848 that “periodical essayists” or “gentlemen of the press [...] only arrive at *celebrity* in rare instances”, the career of Dickens was an exemplary case of just such literary celebrity in periodical publishing. The case of Dickens’s fame was discussed by *Parker’s London Magazine* in 1845 as part of a discussion of “the field in which Boz has gained his *celebrity*” (Hayward 1848: 47; Collins 2009: 170; emphasis added).

The development of the “perceptual category” of the celebrity had a significant impact on shifting boundaries between public and private, and was of central importance in defining a new “public realm” as a site where private individuals could meet as a public:

> In the ‘celebrity,’ mid-Victorian culture found a social and perceptual category that could not only become more conceptually promiscuous—subsuming martial, literary, artistic, financial, governmental, and criminal fame into one form—but that could also root itself more deeply into the heretofore private consciousness of the public, and, therefore, could reorient consciousness (particularly memory) toward a newly configured public realm. (Dames 2001: 25)

Nicholas Dames’s insightful analysis of the function of celebrity in Thackeray’s work, and in Victorian society more generally, is also applicable to authors and editors themselves. As a “perceptual category” offering an insight into shifting relationships between private and public realms, the literary celebrity was a crucial development emerging from, and structuring, the products of the periodical press. At the same time, it came to function as the locus of literary value to the extent that Bradbury and Evans could declare, in 1859, that their forthcoming new journal would include “serial tales by Novelists of *celebrity*” (Anon. 1859: 280; emphasis added).

I would like to suggest that Dickens’s career functioned to promote the agency of the professional author as a celebrity. If the “cultivation of publicity and celebrity were necessary [...] to establish a market value for the private intellectual property” (Pettitt 152) that came into being as a result of copyright legislation, the
figure of celebrity authors such as Dickens served to increase the surplus-value that such legislation made possible. Thus, rather than seeing the surplus-value of Victorian serial texts in their material incarnations, first published in serialised installments and then a range of volume editions, we should locate this value in the figure of the professional author: one that produces “alienable” commodities in the form of texts that can be sold but that also, following Sarfatti Larson, shares the fate of other professional figures where “their product [...] is inextricably bound to the person and the personality of the producer [so] that the producers themselves have to be produced if their products or commodities are to be given a distinctive form” (Larson 14; qtd. in Feltes 43; original emphasis).

Such a focus overlaps in an interesting way with Catherine Gallagher’s discussion of “traces of authorial subjectivity” in the works of Dickens and George Eliot, which proposes that such traces constitute that “elusive creature known variously as the implied author, the authorial persona, or the author effect” (Gallagher 5). Gallagher’s argument for the novels she investigates is that they “bea[r] the impressions of a creative subject who is emphatically also a productive economic subject as understood by nineteenth-century political economists” (ibid.). This raises a host of questions related to the transfer of authorial “sensation and vitality” into “textual product[s]”, which includes, as Gallagher suggests, questions of whether authors can be both productive and happy, whether they can transcend mortality through their works and whether “cultural progress” depends on a type of authorial labour which, qua labour, is predicated on suffering (ibid.).

The concept of authors being the source of value was one that eighteenth- and nineteenth-century political economists agreed was impossible. In *The Wealth of Nations* (1776) Adam Smith consigned “men of letters of all kinds” to the status of unproductive labourers (Hack 64). Authorial labour was neither “useful to society” nor “useful [to the author] himself” (qtd. in Gallagher 26). Along with other social figures (including the sovereign and the buffoon), authors were considered “unproductive” not so much from a moral standpoint but because the material consequences of their actions did not add to the wealth of the nation (Gallagher 26). The importance of materiality to ideas of productive labour was taken up by John
Stuart Mill in his *Principles of Political Economy* (1848) in which he provides a definition not only of labour but also of the labour performed by literary authors. Mill’s definition of productive labour as “exertion which produce[s] utilities embodied in material objects” contrasts with his view of theatrical and oratorical activities as unproductive labour (Hack 63). So important is the material aspect of books for Mill that he is at pains to point out that “the labour of the author of a book is equally a part of its production with that of the printer and binder” (qtd. in Hack 63).

**Conclusion**

Victorian authors such as Carlyle, Dickens and Thackeray were forced to negotiate a balance between acknowledging authorship as a productive activity and establishing a value for it as something that somehow exceeded the exclusively economic terms of the market. As I have shown in this chapter, Dickens and Thackeray deployed very different rhetorical strategies in terms of the way they each represented authorial work. The former presented an embrace of the contemporary mode of periodical production emphasising that it was the new model of mass produced literature that had allowed authors to become professional and had “set literature free” (Dickens 1960: 157). For Thackeray, the benefits of the periodical marketplace, wages, were offset by its incessant demands and the potential loss of status in working to supply these demands.25 While Dickens pushed for authors to be treated as professionals, with guilds and guaranteed pensions, Thackeray argued that authors had to work in the same unpredictable marketplace as everyone else. Their serial novels, *David Copperfield* and *Pendennis*, were both written in the context of the “Dignity of Literature” debate and presented views of authorship that have a significant resonance with the way that they each represented their own work in the periodical press. If Dickens and Thackeray used their novels to present different models of authorship, I would argue that they used the paratext of their work to represent

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25 In *Pendennis*, Warrington introduces Pen to the London publishing scene. As they pass a newspaper office on the Strand, ablaze with the activity of editors and reporters, Warrington remarks: “There she is—the great engine—she never sleeps” (Thackeray 1972: 335).
themselves as engaging with the literary, aesthetic and ideological consequences of these models. Such representations and engagement were directly implicated in a range of important Victorian concerns: the issues involved with copyright reform; literary work as a commodity; authors as professionals; and the emergence of modern celebrities.

Paratextual elements, such as prefaces, were a direct result of the specific mode of production driving serialised production and provided sites where Victorian authors could engage with contemporary debates about authorship. The corresponding rhetoric of authorship enabled by these paratextual performances had a significant impact upon Victorian theories of creative agency as well as the cultural and surplus-value vested in the individual author. Given that any sort of labour was supposed to be unpleasant, Dickens’s focus in the preface to *David Copperfield* on his own happiness is significant. Dickens had ended the preface discussing “[...] the genial sun and showers that have fallen on these leaves of David Copperfield, and made me happy” (11). Such rhetoric presents authorship as a labour of love, a productive act that creates value in the literary marketplace but also has a value that exists beyond exclusively commercial terms. At the same historical moment that other commodities were becoming increasingly anonymous, eclipsing the social relations between people with a set of relationship between things, Dickens’s rhetoric of authorship positioned his work as driven not by market concerns but by a sincere sympathy both for his readers and the characters he created to entertain them.

The cultural investment in the figure of Dickens is captured in a glowing review of *Our Mutual Friend*, which appeared in 1865. In this review in *The Times*, E.S. Dallas declared:

One thing is very remarkable about it [*Our Mutual Friend*] —the immense amount of thought which it contains. We scarcely like to speak of the labour bestowed upon it, lest a careless reader should carry away a notion that the work is laboured. What labour Mr. Dickens has given to it is a labour of love, and the point which strikes us is that he, who of all our living novelists has the
most extraordinary genius, is also of all our living novelists the most careful
and painstaking in his work. (Dallas 1865: 466; emphasis added)

Dallas’s review establishes a distinction between a novel that is “laboured” and
one which is “a labour of love”. Explicitly drawing on the multiple valencies of
labour, Dallas insists that Dickens’s novel should not be associated with ideas of
work but with a sense of the author’s personal fulfillment in “a labour of love”. This
recalls the earlier analysis of David’s authorship and emphasis that this represents
“the activation of his own nature” (Marx 1990: 1044). However, it is interesting to
note that the deconstruction of the binary between “laboured” and a “labour of love”
is presaged by the introduction of the adjective “painsstaking”. Despite seeming to
suggest a barrier between Dickens’s genius and the “laboured” work of “other living
novelists”, the terms of Dallas’s review return to the same site of “laboured” activity
that they seek to repress.

The idea of “a labour of love” also appeared in Dickens’s draft of the preface to
_Bleak House_. The original version of the preface, preserved in manuscript, reads: “I
believe I have never had so many readers as in this book. May we meet again! My
labor of love is, so far, ended. LONDON August, 1853” (Dickens 1977: 815). Given
that _Bleak House_, published just two years after the dignity of literature debate, was
dedicated to the Guild of Literature and Art, I would suggest that Dickens’s use of the
phrase “labour of love” in the draft of the preface is significant. The fact that Dickens
was tempted to use it, and that it was later used in a review of his final, completed
novel, suggest that it was a common recourse for writers looking to represent literary
work in ways which transcended notions of market-based exchange.

Both the draft and final version of the _Bleak House_ preface perform the
paratextual effect Genette summarises as controlling “one’s whole reading of the
text” (2). It is worth noting, however, that the preface to a serial novel addresses at
least two sets of readers simultaneously: readers of the completed serial and readers
of the subsequent volume edition. Therefore, in examining the paratextual effects of a
preface such as Dickens’s preface to _Bleak House_, it is important to consider the
balancing act performed between rounding out the experience of serial readers who
had just finished the novel and addressing subsequent readers who were about to read the volume edition. An important aspect of the *Bleak House* preface addressing the former was Dickens’s response to calls for him to explain his use of spontaneous combustion. The explosive ending to the tenth instalment of the novel, in which Krook spontaneously combusts, provoked G.H. Lewes to write letters to *The Leader* criticising Dickens for his use of “spontaneous combustion” and asking him to clarify the sources he drew upon (Collins 2009: 274-5). Dickens replies in his preface to the novel by listing the “authorities” which he had used and by promising that he would never mislead readers on a point of fact (Dickens 1977: 4). Given this insistence upon the veracity of spontaneous combustion, Dickens ends the preface with a strange, generic admission: “In Bleak House, I have purposely dwelt upon the romantic side of familiar things” (Dickens 1977: 6).

This last phrase is significant for three reasons: firstly, it acts as a kind of counterbalance against Dickens’s insistence on factual “authorities” in defending his use of spontaneous combustion; secondly, it not only modifies the experience of readers of the serial version but also proscribes a particular kind of reading for readers starting out with the volume edition; finally, it appeals to a genre of “romantic realism” (Fanger, passim) that echoes both his early work as Boz and the terms in which he had recently launched *Household Words*.

If his work as author involved the mental labour involved in the new generic mode of “romantic realism”, Dickens’s representation of his authorial role often focuses on an embodied, contemporary figure engaging with readers on a level transcending the commercial imperatives of market capitalism. Indeed, Dickens’s “rhetoric of authorship” (Lonoff passim) deploys an inverse logic to Marx’s concept of the commodity-fetish. For Marx, this was a process transforming social relations into a set of relationships between things. In contrast, the value vested in Dickens’s serials and volumes, in commercial, aesthetic, legal and economic terms, was related to, and defined by, the figure of Dickens.

This cultural investment in the author as a single, biographical figure whose importance is a result of representing the “agency” involved in authorial work is an insight that draws together the three central themes of this chapter: copyright
developments; the importance of originality; and the emergence and contested status of the professional Victorian author. From the dedication to *The Pickwick Papers*, which is deployed as part of a strategy to support the reform of copyright laws, to prefaces establishing a sympathetic intimacy with his readers, the paratextual elements of Dickens’s work were used to stage a representation of the author that related to legal, aesthetic and professional concerns. While represented as invested in these concerns, the figure of Dickens is also represented as being on intimate terms with readers and radiating an aura of shared, affective sympathy. The following chapter will examine how these elements of Dickens’s author-figure participated in the rise of a celebrity culture. This was all the more significant given the fact that, emerging from such a culture, well-known authors became celebrity editors of Victorian journals. In the next chapter, I will examine the impact of such an editorial role in terms of the history of the periodical press and will argue for the conceptual value of an “editor-function” to demarcate a separate sphere of activity from the “author-function” proposed by Foucault.
Chapter 4: Eidolons, Celebrity Editors and the Opening Address of Literary Periodicals

Introduction
In an 1848 sketch in *Punch* (see fig. 7), Thackeray presented a scene in which an “Old gentleman” berates a young woman for reading “that trivial paper *Punch*” (Thackeray 1848: 198). Explaining that a railway carriage is not the place for such jokes, the gentleman goes on to describe how the “conductors of that paper” are “Chartists, Deists, Atheists, Anarchists, and Socialists, to a man” (198).

![Figure 7: Thackeray, “Author’s Miseries. No. VI”. *Punch*, Vol. VX, 1848: 198. Reproduced in Thackeray 1902: 745.](image)

The joke is that, in commenting on the inappropriateness of *Punch* for public consumption, the old man is unaware that two of the individuals responsible for this work share his railway carriage. Thackeray’s picture shows Douglas Jerrold, nervously listening to the exchange, and the artist, on the far left, hiding behind the *Sunday Times*. This presents a visual metaphor for the relationship between
authorship and the public sphere that will be examined in this chapter. Thackeray’s sketch speaks to a nineteenth-century interest in the rise of the periodical press and an accompanying tendency for anonymous or pseudonymous publication. In figuring an amusing close scrape, one in which public responsibility is eclipsed by a print culture of authorial disavowal, Thackeray’s sketch exemplifies the issues involved in the anonymous publication of newspapers, miscellanies and literary periodicals. If Thackeray and Jerrold remain incognito, to bear an “author’s miseries” in silence, it is because of the anonymity afforded by the eidolon Mr. Punch. This eidolon, like that of Isaac Bickerstaff and Mr. Spectator in the eighteenth century, allowed for a freedom to comment on contemporary society that unbound authors from the responsibilities attendant upon work attached to their name. Thus, while Thackeray depicted himself hiding behind the *Sunday Times*, in figurative terms it was the anonymous nature of the periodical press which protected him.

However, this print culture of anonymity existed in tension with another structuring condition of Victorian publishing: the figure of the author. While journalists and the journeymen writers of the periodical press were mired in obscurity, popular authors, such as Dickens and Thackeray, became individuals of significant biographical interest. This is indicative not simply of an interrelationship between authorship and the emerging “perceptual category” of the celebrity (Daly 2001: 25) but also of broader historical questions about the relationship between private individuals, periodicals and the public sphere. Thus, if in 1848 Thackeray could present a humorous sketch based on an ability to disengage his biographical figure from his periodical work, an 1853 review of his portrait makes an appeal to a notion of “embodiment” that complicates ideas of authorial disavowal:

> Those to whom the lineaments of the novelist are familiar will at once recognize him here under his best aspect. It is a most truthful likeness,—an *embodiment* of character as well as of feature. (Anon 1853; emphasis added)

According to the anonymous reviewer of *The Athenaeum* (1828-1921), who is as invisible as Thackeray is visible, what gives Thackeray’s portrait its “most truthful
likeness” is the fact that it presents an “embodiment” not simply of “feature”, a mimetic assumption of all portraiture, but also of “character”. The review suggests that Thackeray’s portrait, capturing both the author’s external features and his intangible “character”, offers readers a privileged glimpse of the “lineaments of the novelist”. Attested by those who know the novelist in person, this portrait is represented as conveying not simply an idea of the man but also an insight into the man as novelist.

This chapter will focus on examples of anonymity and pseudonymity in the periodical marketplace in order to establish how such a framework interacted with an emerging Victorian discourse of celebrity authorship. That these two elements cannot be reduced to a simple opposition is evident in Thackeray’s sketch. While invoking the contemporary print culture of anonymity, the sketch is based around a tacit recognition, on the part of readers, of the well-known figure of Thackeray himself. Wearing his characteristic glasses (see fig. 8), the author/illustrator of the sketch creates a comic situation where his supposed anonymity allows him to make a joke based on readers’ familiarity with his biographical image.

Figure 8: Tailpiece to Ninth Chapter of Vanity Fair (1847-8).
By 1850, while newspapers were “an entire novelty in social machinery”, there was also an overwhelming tendency to “conduct” them “anonymously” (Chambers and Chambers 1850b: 321). In lieu of named individuals to associate with printed opinions, readers reacted as if periodicals and newspapers had a “recognised personality”, a collective voice they ascribed to the publications themselves:

We ask what is the opinion of the ‘Times’ on the subject? How the ‘Chronicle’ has written? And whether the ‘Examiner’ and ‘Spectator’ may be expected to take up the question strongly. The human being whose hands hold the pen in certain dingy back-rooms are not thought of at all. (321)

This article, in a magazine whose editors’ names were emblazoned across the masthead, argues for an authorial presence exemplified by the Chambers’s *Edinburgh Journal* itself. Thus, ascribing the contents of the magazine to Robert and William Chambers, we can infer that they, like the periodical authors desired in the article, brokered a similar promise to readers based upon the surety of biographical identification. The shift to named authorship opened up the possibility for a previously invisible author or editor to take responsibility for printed work and to make a new set of ethical claims about this work: “[…] in the avowal of his personality, he gives a guarantee to society for his conduct” (322). What Chambers’s *Edinburgh Journal* called for, and what the journal exemplified in its named editors and eponymous title, was a sense of authorial/editorial responsibility anchored in the biographical existence marked by real names.

A similar avowal was present when Dickens launched *Household Words* in March 1850 with an opening address in *propría persona*. Writing of his cherished relationship with the public, one based on a friendship, intimacy and access to the family hearth that went beyond the literary marketplace, Dickens declared:

We know the great responsibility of such a privilege; its vast reward; the pictures that it conjures up, in hours of solitary labour, of a multitude moved by one sympathy; the solemn hopes which it awakens in the labourer's breast, that he may be free from self-reproach in looking back at last upon his work, and
that his name may be remembered in his race in time to come, and borne by the
dear objects of his love with pride. The hand that writes these faltering lines,
happily associated with *some* Household Words before to-day, has known
enough of such experiences to enter an earnest spirit upon this new task, and
with an awakened sense of all that it involves. (Dickens 1850a: 1; original
emphasis)

Not only is the editor described in an embodied form (“the hands that write these
faltering lines”), but this figure is represented as the central point in a web of
affective sympathy which reconstitutes private and public realms. For, in the “hours
of solitary labour”, the named editor, Charles Dickens, “conjuges up” an audience of
individuals transformed through his work into a “a multitude moved by one
sympathy”. This sentiment, key to understanding how Dickens positioned his
editorial role in *Household Words* and his authorial relationship with readers more
generally, is symptomatic of a broader historical shift from the disembodied, fictional
eidolons used in the eighteenth-century to the Victorian phenomenon of the celebrity
author and editor.

If previous chapters have focused on ideas of pseudonyms, professional
authors and embodied authorship, this chapter’s focus is the concept of the “editor-
function” and its relationship to literary experiments with anonymity, pseudonymity
and celebrity. In contrast to *Punch*, which used an eidolon in ways reminiscent of
eighteenth-century papers such as *The Tatler* (1709-11) and *The Spectator* (1711-12;
1714) many Victorian journals boasted recognisable editors who had an established
relationship with readers. Exploring this author-editor relationship, I will suggest,
offers insights into Foucault’s idea of the “author-function” by way of what we might
term the “editor-function”. It is the aim of this chapter to demonstrate how
paratextual elements, particularly opening addresses, were used to create distinct
types of editorial figures and how these figures can be related to the historical and
cultural transformations affecting the periodical press and the public sphere.

Couched in various forms—“Preliminary Address”, “Prologue”, “A
Preliminary Word”, “A Letter to a Friend and a Contributor”—and often published in
a range of formats, including separate prospectus, advertisement, front page editorial and review excerpt, opening addresses can be viewed as operating within certain generic conventions. In Harrison Ainsworth’s 1842 “Preliminary Address” to his eponymous magazine, the author-turned-editor noted the generic expectations associated with such an introduction: “[While prologues] have gone out of fashion [...] an address to the town at the opening of a Magazine is still as regularly looked for as a speech from the throne at the opening of a session” (Ainsworth 1842: i). Ainsworth goes on to depict how, given this expectation, the writers of an opening address for a new periodical easily fall into the trap of making promises that will prove impossible to keep:

‘The address looks rather short,’ said the writer of such a performance, on starting a new periodical. ‘Add some more promises,’ observed the conscientious proprietor of the work. In such a dilemma, a simple pledge to be profusely witty, to work a revolution in taste, to increase the harmless stock of public pleasures, and to eclipse the gaiety of nations when the hour of discontinuance shall arrive, fills up the chasm, and gives its due dimensions to the address. (Ainsworth 1842: i-ii)

Ainsworth’s response to “the rule that prescribes an address” is to avoid the “faithlessness” inherent in such a genre (i). Introducing a magazine in which the power of the title is derived from the significance of the editor’s established name, Ainsworth declares that “he whose name it bears” makes a pledge to readers (i). This pledge is that Ainsworth will not break “a single promise” in the “many volumes yet unformed” as he “does not intend to make one” (i). Instead of employing promises as “literary conveniences”, rather than “moral obligations”, he proposes to present his new publishing venture “in plain words”:

The originator of this new ‘Magazine of Romance, General Literature and Art,’ is animated by a grateful sense of the favour with which his own productions have been honoured, when he proposes to unite in companionship
with himself, various accomplished writers, qualified to administer to public amusement, and to advance the best purposes of literature. (ii)

Ainsworth’s address makes a number of claims that were common to Victorian novelists-turned-editors: his “grateful sense of the favour with which his own productions have been honoured” anticipates the opening addresses of Dickens and Thackeray in which the former observed that he was “happily associated with some Household Words before to-day” and the latter that he and the reading public were “too long acquainted to try and deceive one another” (Dickens 1850: 1; Thackeray 1859: 1); he implies a certain relationship with the “various accomplished writers” with whom he “proposes to unite in companionship” and thus provides a contrast to Dickens’s editorial dominance of Household Words, which occluded the identity of its contributors, and Thackeray’s open invitation for “Contributor[s]” to The Cornhill Magazine; and, finally, in his emphasis on “amusement” and “the best purposes of literature”, Ainsworth claims, in a way characteristic of other Victorian literary journals, that his miscellany can both entertain periodical readers on a monthly basis while providing work that will achieve a more permanent status. As Ainsworth stated in an address to readers preceding the January 1843 issue of Ainsworth’s Miscellany (1842-54), his journal aimed “to advance the solid and the permanent no less than the light and the temporary purposes of literature” (Ainsworth 1843: iii; qtd. in Colby 206).

As a famous literary figure, Ainsworth’s role of editor for his own miscellany was bound up in his previous roles as editor of Bentley’s Miscellany, following Dickens’s departure, and author of such celebrated novels as Rokewood (1834) and Jack Sheppard (1839) (Colby 205). Thus, it is no surprise that in the opening address to Ainsworth’s Magazine, he informs readers of “a new tale by the Editor” in the “fields of romance” (Ainsworth 1843: iii). For contemporary readers, the notion of “Romance” was already intertwined with Ainsworth’s name. Consequently, his evocation of it as a promotional angle for his new miscellany can be seen as a part of
a strategy that exploited the generic associations inspired by his authorial celebrity.

The editor’s status as a celebrity was also highlighted by the frontispiece engraving of Ainsworth that accompanied the miscellany’s volume reissue and which served to further stamp the biographical presence of the famous author-as-editor at the material level of the journal (fig. 9). It is notable that the artist of this portrait was Daniel Maclise, the close friend of Dickens who was responsible for the famous portrait of the latter accompanying Nicholas Nickleby. Intriguingly, Maclise’s portrait of Ainsworth evokes the 1839 portrait of Dickens (Douglas-Fairhurst 146). If the portrait of Dickens accompanying Nicholas Nickleby suggested an authorial gravitas that transcended the ephemeral world of Victorian periodical publication and marked a move from Boz to Dickens, Ainsworth’s portrait, printed as the frontispiece to volume editions of his journal, served to illustrate a similar point: at the moment that a periodical was reissued as a volume, various paratextual elements, ranging from dedications and prefaces to portraits and frontispieces, combined to represent the relationship of the work to the celebrated biographical individual functioning, in rhetorical terms, as the work’s point of origin.

Coffee, Print and the Public Sphere: The Emergence of the Literary Periodical

*Ainsworth’s Magazine* provides one of the earliest examples of a Victorian novelist assuming the role of editor of a periodical. This combined role of novelist and editor became common in the Victorian literary marketplace by mid-century and shows a clear development from the way in which eighteenth-century journals were positioned. A key distinction is that while Ainsworth, Dickens and Thackeray were all well-known novelists when they turned their hand to the editor’s position of *Ainsworth’s Magazine*, *Household Words* and *The Cornhill Magazine* respectively, the editorial figures of eighteenth-century journals were eidolons which did not locate the journal’s moral and aesthetic gravity in an embodied, contemporary celebrity but, rather, created the image of a fictional, disembodied editorial figure. This section will outline the emergence of the literary periodical in eighteenth-century England situating the opening addresses of a number of key journals in the historical development of the public sphere.

Habermas’s concept of the public sphere is based on a broader theory of history which traces a transition from a model of divine rule to a sphere in which “state authority” came under scrutiny, public debate and parliamentary discussion (Habermas 57-8). As Thomas McCarthy describes in his introduction to Habermas’s *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1992; first published 1962):
[...] the emergent bourgeoisie gradually replaced a public sphere in which the ruler’s power was merely represented before the people with a sphere in which state authority was publicly monitored through informed and critical discourse by the people. (Habermas xi; original emphasis)

Habermas has argued that literary periodicals, such as *The Tatler* and *The Spectator*, were a crucial element in the emergence of such “critical discourse”. However, as with Foucault, Habermas tends to sideline “the figurative significance of any medium” (Dean 32) reducing all printed and spoken statements to the abstract level of “discourse” and sidelining the material conditions structuring the movement of information.

This level of abstraction is also apparent in a blurring between “the ideal potential of an informed rational forum for all private citizens and the actually existing public sphere that developed in conjunction with capitalist production and bourgeois wealth and confidence in the eighteenth century” (Morris 16). I would like to suggest that while Habermas’s notion of the public sphere is a wonderfully rich conceptual tool, it can be more effective if combined with a material focus. In order to avoid generalising about the structural conditions of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century England, this section will summarise the launch of a range of literary periodicals. The focus will be on the rhetorical manoeuvres and other paratextual strategies, employed at the material level of the print, which offer concrete examples of how influential periodicals negotiated their emergence into the public sphere. Modifying the exclusively discursive focus characteristic of both Habermas’s approach to the public sphere and Foucault’s concept of the author-function, I will argue that the paratextual elements of literary periodicals, particularly the figure of the editor and the editorial opening address, play a crucial role in the way periodicals represent the relationship between editors and readers. This relationship was a key element in contemporary discussions about the place of the periodical press in contemporary society. In delineating the respective roles of their editors and readers, periodicals could implicitly comment on, and explicitly engage with, the
consequences of mass-produced print and the potential it offered for addressing a new, and ever growing, reading community.

From their inception in the eighteenth century, literary periodicals often shared a number of characteristic traits: their title, which suggested a point of view from which contemporary society could be viewed; the content, which was promoted as both entertaining and instructive; their relation to an urban life that was becoming increasingly suffused with political polemic and news; and a representation of the periodical’s fictional editor at the centre of a set of relationships marking what Habermas terms the public sphere.

Beginning with a discussion of the function of the opening address, I will describe how the editorial eidolons of eighteenth-century periodicals, Isaac Bickerstaff, Mr. Spectator and the Female Spectator, gave way in the nineteenth century to named editors who were also famous novelists. This will lead to the suggestion that the move from the disembodied, pseudonymous editors of eighteenth-century periodicals to the celebrity editors of Victorian journals was part of a broader transition from the eighteenth-century “bourgeois public sphere” to the imagined community of Victorian mass media (Kreilkamp 97).

*The Tatler* was presented to the public as edited by the eidolon Isaac Bickerstaff, a pseudonym originally created by Jonathan Swift and subsequently appropriated by Steele for his periodical. This is alluded to in the dedication to the first collected volume of the *Tatler*, which mentions, “two or three pieces” written by someone else in Bickerstaff’s name which “had rendered it famous through all parts of Europe” (iv). This celebrated name is cited as a largely responsible for the journal’s original success:

> By this good Fortune, the Name of Isaac Bickerstaff gained an Audience of all who had any Taste of Wit; and the addition of the ordinary Occurrences of common Journals of News brought in a Multitude of other Readers. (iv)

The use of the pseudonymous figure of Bickerstaff persisted till the end of *The Tatler’s* original run and became such an important element of the periodical that the
collected volume of the last set of issues was accompanied by a frontispiece with a “portrait” of the imaginary editor (see fig. 11).

![Figure 11: Engraved Frontispiece to 1710 Edition of *The Tatler.* Source: The British Museum. Accessed 1 November 2011.](image)

It is worth noting that this portrait of Bickerstaff retains the astrological aspect that was the central source of the eidolon’s origin when Swift used it as part of a literary hoax on John Partridge, an astrologer and publisher of almanacs. While this part of Bickerstaff’s character is clearly signalled in the visual language of the frontispiece, and is alluded to in the opening address of *The Tatler* where Bickerstaff trumpets his ability to divine the future, the eidolon is also presented as existing in the more down-to-earth world of periodical publishing.
In the opening address of *The Tatler*’s first issue, which was given away for free, Bickerstaff itemises the costs he will incur in gathering the intelligence to be presented in his new journal: he explains that, to cover his daily expenses, he needs at least “twopence” for the “Ingenious Man” he sends to “Will’s” coffee-house; for his man at White’s, it rises to “Sixpence”; while for his correspondent at the Graciean and St. James’s expansive dinners with “clean Linnen” are required to pick up the “Learned Table” talk (Mackie 50). Having listed the necessary outgoings, Bickerstaff requests that his readers consider the value for money on offer given the fact that each issue is available for just a penny.

In evoking contemporary coffee-houses, the opening address also deploys them to mark the range of content that will feature in the new periodical. Thus, in the opening address, Bickerstaff explains that:

> [a]ll accounts of Gallantry, pleasure, and Entertainment, shall be under the article of White’s Chocolate-house; Learning, under the Title of Graecian; Foreign and Domestick News, you will have from St. James’s Coffee-house; and what else I have to offer on any other Subject, shall be dated from own Apartment. (Mackie 50)

By the time *The Tatler* first appeared there were already three thousand coffeehouses in London that catered for a wide cross section of society (Habermas 32-3). If coffee-houses were a site where private individuals could come together to discuss contemporary affairs, the fuel for this conversation was provided by the periodical press. In 1709, when *The Tatler* was first published, “coffee houses were already so numerous and the circles of their frequenters already so wide, that contact among these thousandfold circles could only be maintained through a journal” (Habermas 42). From *The Tatler*’s division of its content by coffee-house, to *The Guardian*’s lion’s head for reader correspondence, placed ostentatiously at Button’s coffee-house, periodicals were structured around the idea of a “conversation” taking place in the public sphere. If Habermas is correct in assuming that the twin factors of the coffee-house and literary periodicals were vital to the
emergence of the public sphere, then I suggest that it is possible to trace in these periodicals examples of editors attempting to negotiate with, and influence, the new realm of public opinion that such publication made possible (Habermas 32-3; 42-3). As *The Tatler* makes clear in its opening address, the journal aimed to intervene in social affairs by transforming the thoughts of its readers:

> It is both a Charitable and Necessary Work to offer something, whereby such worthy and well-affected Members of the Commonwealth may be instructed, after their Reading, *what to think*. (Mackie 49; my emphasis)

Thus, far from simply entertaining readers or offering timely gossip, *The Tatler* presents itself, at its launch in April 1709, as a vehicle for modifying public opinion. *The Spectator*, launched in 1711 as a successor to the *Tatler*, proclaimed its dedication to “the Advancement of the Publick Weal” (Mackie 82). Focused, like its predecessor on the London coffee-houses, it offered a new feature whereby readers could correspond with the eidolon of the new journal, Mr. Spectator: “[...] those who have a mind to correspond with me, may direct their Letters *To the Spectator*, at Mr. Buckley’s in Little Britain” (Mackie 82).

Such a focus on readerly interaction with a fictional editor was taken even further when the *Guardian*, also produced by Addison and Steele, installed a lion’s head “at Button’s Coffee-house in Russel street, Covent-Garden, where it opens its Mouth at all Hours for the Reception of such Intelligence as shall be thrown into it” (Mackie 164). This sculpted lion’s head, “compounded out of that of a Lion and a Wizzard [sic]”, yielded correspondence published in a weekly column. Announcing this development, the eidolon of the *Guardian* declares that: “I intend to publish once every week the roarings of the Lion, and hope to make him roar so loud as to be heard over all the British Nation” (Mackie 164-5).

The emergence of the public sphere was based on two interlinked developments, both of which were recurrent topics of interest in periodicals like *The Spectator*: the coffee-house and the periodical press itself. As Erin Mackie notes, the “intimate affiliation between the periodical press and coffeehouse society established
The reciprocal relationship of these two elements was evident in the “conversations” they helped circulate through the public sphere:

Coffeehouses generally subscribed to periodicals which they made available to customers who either read them to themselves or read them aloud to others. The debates on public issues contained in the press became the subjects of debate among the patrons of the coffeehouses, and by the same token coffeehouse conversations appeared in the columns of the periodicals. (Newman 23)

According to Donald J. Newman, Mr. Spectator’s “role as editor dramatizes the public sphere and represents political discussion as it should be conducted” (Newman 24). Acting as an editor responsible for dealing with reader correspondence, he embodies “in his own person the features and functions of the emerging public sphere” (Polly 105; qtd. in Newman 24). We must be careful, however, with the notion of “embodiment” given the fact that “Mr. Spectator” was not a real person, but an editorial eidolon masking the literary labour of Addison and Steele.

The opening address of The Spectator makes the figure of the eidolon a central focus, introducing Mr. Spectator, who, in his own voice, gives readers some account of his “History”:

I have observed, that a Reader seldom peruses a Book with Pleasure ‘till he knows whether the Writer of it be a black or a fair Man, of a mild or cholerick Disposition, Married or a Batchelor, with other Particulars of the like nature, that conduce very much to the right Understanding of an Author. To gratify this Curiosity, which is so natural to a Reader, I design this Paper, and my next, as Prefatory Discourses to my following Writings, and shall give some Account in them of the several persons that are engaged in this Work. As the chief trouble of Compiling, Digesting, and Correcting will fall to my Share, I must do
myself the Justice to open the Work with my own History. (Mackie 79)

This insistence on the biographical “History” of an eidolon was a recurrent feature of eighteenth-century periodicals. Popular periodicals, such as *The Tatler, The Spectator* and *The Female Spectator*, all presented readers with a fictional editorial figure. In this veiled game of editorial disavowal by writers such as Addison, Steele and Haywood, as the biographical author disappeared into anonymity, a pseudonymous editorial figure advanced pointing to its mask. This mask, I argue, was part of a strategy of representation in which eighteenth-century periodicals defined their role in the literary marketplace and their relationship to an emerging public sphere.

Clifford Siskin has observed how, in the eighteenth century, “not only was the Author put before the work as a point of contact, periodicals also gave the Author a more or less fictive voice to make conversational contact desirable” (Siskin 165). This idea of “conversation” was crucial to the emergence of both the public sphere and eighteenth-century periodicals. This was all the more important in a public sphere where the development of specialised jargon for different trades was precluding important discussions on matters of common interest. The notion of “conversation” in eighteenth-century periodicals functioned both as a marker for a set of discursive processes and for the renegotiations between the public and private realms with which these processes engaged:

*Conversation* became a crucial term in the eighteenth century for describing not just the private individual exchanges, nor the public ones generated out of their multiplicity, but the flow across those newly reconstituted fields. (Siskin 164; original emphasis)

In order to rhetorically represent this “conversation”, and to promote the idea of a public sphere accessible to all readers, *The Tatler* and *The Spectator* effaced the identities of the biographical figures responsible for their production and presented readers with fictional character. If, as Ivan Kreilkamp argues, the eighteenth-century public sphere was based around the idea of addressing a unified “body” of the public,
the characteristic mode of periodical address was significantly disembodied: “The bourgeois public sphere claimed to have no relation to the body image at all” (Kreilkamp 124; Warner 166). As a result of their fictional status, the “characters of Bickerstaff and Mr. Spectator” are part of a rhetorical strategy for effecting “social reform” and “affecting public opinion” (Mackie 42-3).

As “pioneering agents of the bourgeois public sphere”, publications like The Tatler and The Spectator “reflect the ideals of rationality, common sense, public access, plain English, and universal humanity that characterize the liberal ideology of the emerging public sphere” (Mackie 44). They “engage[d] in an ongoing process of self-definition that emphasize[d] their difference from other periodicals”, especially ones devoted to “political and polemic” content (Mackie 41). Consequently, unlike papers catered to particular party interests, The Tatler and The Spectator could “define their mission as ethical and social, rather than political or journalistic” (Mackie 42).

Therefore, far from simply being a symptom of authorial reticence or periodical promotion, the use of these fictional eidolons in mock portraits, advertisements and opening addresses offers a valuable corpus for literary historians. Given my criticism of the abstractions of Foucault and Habermas, I would suggest that, by studying the rhetorical mode of address by which eighteenth-century periodicals interpellate a particular reading public, it is possible to examine such publications as an “important site for literary and social change” (Siskin 166). By analysing this process of interpellation it is possible to trace how periodicals established themselves as both agents of “literary and social” change as well as textual products with a material history which structured their influence on the literary and social spheres.

In an 1850 article in Household Words, the journal’s subeditor, W.H. Wills, described The Spectator as “a publication which is still read with delight and which was destined to play an important part in the reform of the coarse social manners of the time [the early eighteenth-century]” (Wills 1850: 272). Positioning The Spectator as at once timely and timeless, Wills sees the periodical as an exemplary instance of the power of print to affect social reform and create “delight” for future readers. As
Erin Mackie observes, such a balancing act between periodical and posthumous significance was encoded into the material form of The Spectator and the Tatler themselves:

Addison and Steele self-consciously strive to temper the generic ephemerality of the papers by publishing them in bound volumes and by making the local and particular context of their meditations yield observations understood as eternal and universally human. (Mackie 44)

But this leads to an interesting question related to the function of the periodical in the contemporary public sphere: given the emphasis on promoting “conversation” and creating a feedback loop between content produced from issue to issue and contemporary coffee-house conversation, what are we to make of this focus on the publication of volume editions implying content that is “eternal and universally human”? This would seem to suggest that The Spectator had more than one putative public in much the same way that Household Words was later available to readers of weekly, monthly and volume formats. Consequently, to understand the kind of public being addressed by such periodical publications it is important to focus on the materiality structuring these periodicals’ appearance and the effect of this on representations of the editor-function.

The Materiality of Influence: Victorian Periodicals and the Adaptation of Eighteenth-Century Models

Early eighteenth-century innovations, such as the Tatler and The Spectator, exerted significant influence on Victorian editors and publishers who often had recourse to imitate, or at the least invoke, these famous predecessors. An early sign of this Victorian fascination appeared with the 1830 relaunch of Chat of the Week (1830). As a result of unwanted attention from the “Stamp Office”, which taxed publications based on an ambiguous distinction between news and other content, the journal had been forced to change its “shape” and “undergo [an] entire metamorphosis” (Hunt
1830: 1). In an address “To the Readers of the Chat of the Week”, the editor of what had become the Tatler (1830-32) glossed the new title not simply with reference to its rhetorical significance but also to the material consequences bound up in such a transformation:

The reader who takes up this paper, and is interested in the title of it, might be informed, that its size and general aspect is that of the original TATLER published in 1709; such as Pope and Addison held in their hands, and that Belinda bent over while the Sylphs were fanning her coffee. (ibid.)

The change in title and format, necessitated as part of a tax-avoidance strategy, is transformed into a fetishistic focus on the journal’s materiality. The “size and general aspect” of the new “paper” are represented as identical to, as well as evocative of, its eighteenth-century antecedent. Explicitly evoking the great names of Pope, Addison, and Steele, and representing an appeal to English literary history vested at the material level of periodicals, the address signals not only the influence that eighteenth-century periodicals had on their Victorian successors but also the evocative rhetorical terms by which this influence was represented.

The significant influence of Addison and Steele is also evident in the career of Dickens who, following his resignation as the editor of Bentley’s Miscellany, began to develop a new miscellany with the more amiable Chapman and Hall. The resulting weekly periodical, Master Humphrey’s Clock (1840-41), was a strange mix of the innovative and conventional. On one hand, Dickens attempted to “baffle the imitators”, who were cashing in on his success in serialisation and flooding the market with inferior, part-issue fiction (Dickens 1969: 7); on the other hand, despite the innovative use of illustrations, Dickens resorted to a miscellany format significantly influenced by his affection for eighteenth-century papers, such as The Spectator, that had played a crucial role in his formative reading (Dickens 2000: xii).

26 A March 1841 review of Master Humphrey’s Clock noted the “horde of base imitators” which were “multiplying” around Dickens and described them as “a whole forest of noxious weeds and base nettles” (Collins 2009: 93).
The first issues of *Master Humphrey's Clock* sold well, on the strength of Dickens’s phenomenal success in the previous three years with *The Pickwick Papers*, *Oliver Twist* and *Nicholas Nickleby*. But sales soon fell as readers became dissatisfied with the miscellany format and the lack of a serial story from Boz. As soon as it became clear that the miscellany format was not satisfying readers, Dickens promptly re-organised the structuring principle of his miscellany and transformed it into a vehicle for publishing two serial novels (*The Old Curiosity Shop* and *Barnaby Rudge*) in weekly installments. With the abandonment of the miscellany format, and the introduction of *The Old Curiosity Shop*, sales revived and peaked at 100,000, an enormous figure and a big increase on *Pickwick’s* unprecedented circulation of 40,000 (Dickens 2000: xiv; Dickens 1999: xiii).

Laurel Brake has described how *Master Humphrey’s Clock* shifted “breathtakingly” between its “periodical miscellany” format and the “part-issue” content, such as *The Old Curiosity Shop*, which was the main attraction for Victorian readers (Brake 2001: 45). At the same time as it “straddled disparate forms of serial publication, part-issue and magazine” (ibid.), *Master Humphrey’s Clock* at once evoked eighteenth-century models and demonstrated the use of new engraving techniques to illustrate a serialised story. On the one hand, the miscellany’s eidolon of Master Humphrey and its use of the eighteenth-century conceit of letters from correspondents created a nostalgic appeal to older periodical formats; on the other, the innovative use of wood-cut engravings marked a much more contemporary influence (see fig. 12).

The opening illustrations, on the cover and as the headpiece to the first issue, both depict the eponymous clock. Dickens had been very clear about the use of woodcuts from the beginning of the project, as can be seen from his instruction to the illustrator, George Cattermole:

> Now among other improvements, I have turned my attention to the illustrations, meaning to have woodcuts dropped into the text and no separate plates. I want to know whether you would object to make me a little sketch for a woodcut—in indian-ink would be quite sufficient—about the size of the
enclosed scrap; the subject, an old quaint room with antique Elizabethan
furniture, and in the chimney-corner an extraordinary old clock—the clock
belonging to Master Humphrey, in fact, and no figures. This I should drop into
the text at the head of my opening page (qtd. in Stevens 114; original
emphasis).

Dickens is here moving away from the separate, steel-plate engraving which had
preceded the text of his previous monthly part-issue novels and *Oliver Twist* in
*Bentley’s Miscellany*. Instead, the use of woodcuts for headpiece illustrations and
pictorial initials gave *Master Humphrey’s Clock* an innovative look in relation to
contemporary periodicals. Preceding *Punch* by a year, and Thackeray’s *Vanity Fair*
by six, Dickens’s miscellany displays an early exploitation of highly-accomplished
woodcut engraving to illustrate a periodical publication.

![Illustration from *Master’s Humphrey’s Clock*, No. 4. 25 April 1840. Reproduced in Stevens: no page.](image)

Figure 12: Illustration from *Master’s Humphrey’s Clock*, No. 4. 25 April 1840. Reproduced in Stevens: no page.
Despite the fact that the clock dominates the iconic landscape at the opening of the miscellany and was its central structuring conceit, Master Humphrey is described, originally, as the presiding figure under which the tale *The Old Curiosity Shop* unfolds. Thus, that story is presented as one in an implied series of “Personal Adventures of Master Humphrey”. While Little Nell was to emerge from the miscellany as one of Dickens’s iconic literary figures, Master Humphrey was originally the central figure around which the stories revolved.

The first instalment of the miscellany begins with Master Humphrey declaring that his location must remain secret yet hoping that it might come to represent the “homely affection” he wishes to establish with readers:

> The reader must not expect to know where I live [...] but if I should carry my readers with me, as I hope to do, and there should spring up between them and me feelings of homely affection [...] even my place of residence might one day have a kind of charm for them. (Dickens 1840-1: V01.1: 1)

Echoing the opening of *The Spectator*, Dickens structured the new miscellany, edited by Boz, around an eidolon figure with a similar conceit of contributions originating from a club of fictional characters. In a letter to Forster, Dickens details his plan for the forthcoming miscellany in terms which make the eighteenth-century influence explicit. This letter is worth quoting at length as it captures the format of eighteenth-century periodicals that Dickens was looking to exploit in his own miscellany:

> The best general idea of the plan of the work might be given perhaps by reference to *The Tatler, The Spectator*, and Goldsmith’s *Bee*; but it would be far more popular both in the subjects of which it treats and its mode of treating them. I should propose to start, as *The Spectator* does, with some pleasant fiction relative to the origin of the publication; to introduce a little club or knot of characters and to carry their personal histories and proceedings through the work; to introduce fresh characters constantly; to reintroduce Mr. Pickwick and Sam Weller, the latter of whom might furnish an occasional communication
with great effect; to write amusing essays on the various foibles of the day as they arise; to take advantage of all passing events; and to vary the form of the papers by throwing them into sketches, essays, tales, adventures, letters from imaginary correspondents and so forth, so as to diversify the contents as much as possible. (Dickens 1965: 563-4)

Thus, in looking to comment on the “foibles of the day”, to “diversify the contents as much as possible” and to produce an illustrated miscellany that would appeal to Victorian readers, Dickens had recourse to an eighteenth-century periodical model. As well as presenting a fiction eidolon, Master Humphrey’s Clock followed the eighteenth-century precedent of presenting letters from imaginary correspondents. This created an interesting paratextual relationship with the The Old Curiosity Shop, which has been lost in modern editions of the novel. In the original serial instalments, the end of the first chapter, complete with the picture showing Nell asleep—an image which eerily anticipates her iconic death-bed scene—is followed by a facing page in which Dickens switches from a sentimental register to an eighteenth-century miscellany format (see fig. 13).

This consists of a small section headed “Correspondence” and involves a letter from the fictional “Belinda”, who writes, breathlessly, that:

My brain is in a whirl again. You know his address, his occupations, his mode of life,—are acquainted, perhaps, with his inmost thoughts. You are a humane and philanthropic character; reveal all you know—all; but especially the street and number of his lodgings. The post is departing, the bellman rings,—pray Heaven it be not the knell of love and hope to

BELINDA. (Dickens 1840-1: Vol. 1: 47)
This letter, in the fourth instalment of the miscellany, refers to the portrait of a previous, fictional contributor, who had been introduced two weeks earlier. This can be seen as an attempt to create a chain of fictional characters referring to each other across the pages of the miscellany as it progressed from week to week.

The Belinda letter was at once a resurrection of the fictional correspondents presented in eighteenth-periodicals and an allusion to an eighteenth-century tradition of parody. Evoking Fielding’s parody of Richardson in *Shamela* (1741), where the impossibility of recording real-time events in the epistolary form is mercilessly satirised, Dickens gives Belinda two postscripts focusing on a similar epistolary
paradox:

P.S. Pardon the wanderings of a bad pen and a distracted mind. Address to the Post-office. The bellman, rendered impatient by delay, is ringing dreadfully in the passage.

P.P.S. I open this to say that the bellman is gone, and that you must not expect it till the next post; so don't be surprised when you don't get it. (47)

The register of Belinda’s letter is at once the eighteenth-century epistolary novel, or rather Fielding’s satire on it, and the emphasis in eighteenth-century periodicals on contributors’ correspondence. Yet Dickens can’t quite pay off his anachronistic borrowings. In Master Humphrey’s response to Belinda’s letter, we glimpse the limited nature of the eidolon figure, a rhetorical failure which chimes oddly with the end of *The Old Curiosity Shop*’s first chapter on the facing page: in the latter, the chapter ends with a picture of Little Nell and Humphrey’s evocative description of her, amid “the old dark murky room”, as “the beautiful child in her gentle slumber, smiling through her light and sunny dreams” (46; see fig 13.); in the former, Humphrey replies to Belinda as follows:

Master Humphrey does not feel himself at liberty to furnish his fair correspondent with the address of the gentleman in question, but he publishes her letter as a public appeal to his faith and gallantry. (47)

It is perhaps such empty rhetoric that Margaret Oliphant had in mind when she criticised Dickens’s miscellany format and expressed “very little patience with the mumming of the initial chapters” of *Master Humphrey’s Clock* (Collins 2009: 332). An unsigned June 1840 review in the *Metropolitan Magazine* (1831-50) noted dissatisfaction with the construction of Dickens’s miscellany:
In the series of papers connected together by the horological predilections of Master Humphrey, the principal fault is the want of novelty and of art in introducing them. (Collins 2009: 93)

Thomas Hood made a similar complaint in a November 1840 review of Master Humphrey’s Clock in the Athenaeum:

The main fault of the work is in its construction. The parts are not well put together; and some of the figures, however ornamental, tend seriously to complicate and embarrass the movements of the machine. We allude to Master Humphrey and his leash of friends. (Collins 2009: 95)

If we consider the relationship of the miscellany to the end of the first instalment of The Old Curiosity Shop, Master Humphrey’s literary game of fictional correspondence and a mock appeal to “gallantry” rings a little insincere. The discourse of the illustrated story and the weekly miscellany rub against each other here in significantly contradictory ways. While the creation of Belinda and her paramour are intended merely as ephemeral filler, perhaps a way to make up space on an unfilled page, Little Nell is depicted, according to Hood’s review, as “an Allegory of the peace and innocence of Childhood in the midst of Violence, Superstition, and all the hateful or hurtful Passions of the world” (Collins 2009: 96).

Thus, this facing page provides an example of both the disposable nature of the ephemeral content, which was excised in subsequent volume editions, and the formation of iconic literary character. Existing only in the original, weekly edition of Master Humphrey’s Clock, it provides an excellent example of the hybridity of Dickens’s miscellany and suggests that when he launched The Old Curiosity Shop it was, like Oliver Twist in Bentley’s Miscellany, not so much initially considered a serial novel as periodical content that would provide just one aspect of the miscellany’s appeal. The deprecation of Master Humphrey as the miscellany’s eidolon and the exclusive focus on the The Old Curiosity Shop to the exclusion of all other content were part of a process inscribed at the material level of the miscellany where, in “the laboratory of this failed venture” we can trace “Dickens forging the
rhetorical agenda of his exemplary Victorian career” (Stewart 174).

From the tenth installment of *Master Humphrey’s Clock*, the whole publication was devoted to *The Old Curiosity Shop* while still retaining its original title. As Laurel Brake summarises, *Master Humphrey’s Clock* provides a fascinating glimpse of Dickens modifying the format of his weekly miscellany and an accompanying shift of authorial attribution in an attempt to win back contemporary readers:

> Within the format of a weekly periodical, the various authorial personae—‘Charles Dickens’ the signatory of the wrappers letters, ‘Boz’ the author /‘editor’ of the cover, and Master Humphrey, the conductor within—dazzlingly multiplied the voices of the periodical, moving generically in and out of serial formats. (Brake 2001: 47)

As part of his efforts to rescue the failing miscellany from the eighteenth-century associations that were its genesis, Dickens wrote an address to readers accompanying the ninth issue, where the author, Charles Dickens, explicitly takes control of the venture. The terms of Dickens’s rhetoric collapse any lingering sense of *Master Humphrey’s Clock* as a miscellany at the same time as all notions of authorial responsibility are attributed to the embodied image of a solitary author at work:

> Mr. Dickens begs to inform all those Ladies and Gentlemen who have tendered him contributions for this work, and all those who may now or at any future time have it in contemplation to do so, that he cannot avail himself of their obliging offers, as *it is written solely by himself* and cannot possibly include any productions from other hands. (Dickens May 1840; qtd. in Brake 2001: 45-6; emphasis added)

The idea of the miscellany is eclipsed here at the same time as a focus on Master Humphrey or Boz gives way to a statement from the hand of “Mr. Dickens”. The games of authorial and editorial disavowal are clinically dispensed with in an assurance that the work “is written solely” by Dickens himself.

Unlike Bickerstaff, an eidolon beginning as the presiding spirit of a periodical
and ending up as an imaginary portrait in the frontispiece to a subsequent volume edition (see fig. 11), Master Humphrey did not survive the transition from periodical to book publication. Dickens refers directly to this “demise” in the preface to the Cheap Edition of *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1848) which begins by informing readers that the miscellany “was intended to consist, for the most part, of detached papers, but was to include one continuous story, to be resumed, from time to time” (Dickens 2000: 7-8). Dickens traces the emergence of *The Old Curiosity Shop* to the “fourth number” of his miscellany when he, together with his readers, had been made “uneasy by the *desultory* character of that work” (Dickens 2000: 7; my emphasis). Using the same word he applied to *The Pickwick Papers* in the preface to that novel (Dickens 1999: 6), Dickens in a similar fashion attempts to present the mitigating circumstances behind “the original design” as well as justify the manner in which he “set about cheerfully disentangling” himself from the failing miscellany format (Dickens 2000: 7).

The preface explains how the author effaced Master Humphrey from the final novel’s history in terms that indicate a lingering affection for the unpopular eidolon. Dickens depicts a moment of editorial closure in which, for the good of the “story”, Master Humphrey had to be erased from the work’s subsequent existence:

> When the story was finished, that it might be freed from the incumbrance and interruptions with which it had no kind of concern, I caused the few sheets of MASTER HUMPHREY’S CLOCK, which had been printed in connection with it, to be cancelled; and, like the unfinished tale of the windy night and the notary in *The Sentimental Journey*, they became the property of the trunkmaker and the butterman. I was especially unwilling, I confess, to enrich those respectable trades with the opening paper of the abandoned design, in which MASTER HUMPHREY described himself and his manner of life. Though I now affect to make the confession philosophically, as referring to a bye-gone emotion, I am conscious that my pen winces a little even while I write these words. But it was done, and wisely done, and MASTER HUMPHREY’S CLOCK, as originally constructed, became one of the lost books of the
earth—which, we all know, are far more precious than any that can be read for
love or money. (Dickens 2000: 7)

This is worth quoting at length to examine the way in which Dickens finally lays the
Master Humphrey eidolon to rest. Describing the necessity behind effacing Master
Humphrey from all future copies of The Old Curiosity Shop, Dickens nevertheless
evokes an authorial pang at Humphrey’s final demise. In encoding this into the
peculiar formulation of the “pen [that] winces a little”, Dickens collapses writer and
writing implement into a single entity, where the latter feels and reacts to the
emotions of the former. This at once symptomatic of Dickens’s frequent recourse to
the generic mode of “romantic-realism” (Fanger passim), exemplified in his work by
the permeable boundary between human subjects and their possessions, and an
implicit representation of the materiality of writing. At the same time as Dickens
attributes his “emotion” to his pen, which is depicted as reacting with a human
“wince” to Master Humphrey’s fate, his metaphorical substitution refocuses questions
of authorship to particular modes of writing. The same pen from which Master
Humphrey originated “winces” in the act of transcribing the sad report of his demise.
This relocation of authorial consciousness from Dickens to a specific form of writing
represents neither the author nor the writing implement but the material act of writing
and re-writing in which a character like Master Humphrey can be brought into
existence and later unwritten.

It is telling that what Dickens seems to regret most is the disappearance of the
passages where Master Humphrey, like Mr. Spectator, describes his history. In
acknowledging the need to adapt serial works to the demands of contemporary
readers (the editing is seen as “wisely done”), the preface nevertheless retains a
fondness for the original eidolon at the moment of its final erasure. As in all volume
editions to Dickens’s work, the figure of the author is asserted in the paratext as part
of a re-appropriation in which Charles Dickens took retrospective responsibility for
periodical work previously structured around a pseudonym (Boz) or an eidolon
(Master Humphrey).
That periodical authors could speak more freely under fictional pseudonyms was a truism established as early as *The Spectator*, in which the eidolon figure, representative of such freedom, declares:

It is much more difficult to converse with the World in a real than personated Character. That might pass for Humour, in the *Spectator*, which would look like Arrogance in a Writer who sets his Name to his Work. (*Spectator* No. 555, qtd. in Warner 163)

The “personated Character” enables authors to assume a “Mock-Authority” that would appear “vein and conceited” if presented under their own name (ibid.). In a telling phrase, *The Spectator* makes the case for authorial disavowal focusing on the protection such “personated Character” offers an author:

The Praises or Censures of himself fall only upon the Creatures of his Imagination, and if any one finds fault with him, the Author may reply with the Philosopher of old, *Thos dost but beat the Case of Anaxarchus* (ibid.)

*The Spectator’s* deployment of a disembodied eidolon was the precondition upon which the periodical could claim to be “addressing everyone, merely on the basis of humanity” (Warner 163). But as the quotation above suggests, it was also a necessary literary device for enabling types of speech that were usually precluded by virtue of being attached to an author’s name. In effacing named authors in favour of a disembodied figure, *The Tatler* and *The Spectator* could claim an impartiality and a “Mock-Authority” impossible if a real author’s name was attached. Thus, the device of the eidolon, represented as the precondition for the circulation of “conversation”, is crucial in the claim of these eighteenth-century periodicals to be the “voice of civil society” (Warner 99).

In contrast, by the mid-nineteenth century, the cultural significance of an author’s name had become a crucial element. I would like to suggest that there were three important reasons for this: firstly, a structural change from a mode of petit-
bourgeois production to an industrial-capitalist mass production of print (Feltes, passim); secondly, the increasing influence of parliamentary speech, reported throughout the periodical press in relation to key debates on issues such as political reform, copyright and the Corn Laws, which was part of a Victorian fascination with oral communication and the figure of the speaker (Bevis, passim); and finally, a shift from an eighteenth-century public sphere which was rhetorically structured around the idea of reasoned conversation to a nineteenth-century literary marketplace in which printed work was seen as at once a commodity and an important social mechanism.

“It would be a great thing to found something”: Victorian Editors, Periodicals and the “Public Mind”

Like Ainsworth’s opening address in 1842, the 1832 opening address to *Chambers’s Edinburgh Journal* noted the generic expectations associated with such paratext:

> It is a custom so ancient, that I do not know when it had a beginning, for editors of newspapers, magazines, and other periodicals, large and small, to commence their labours with an apology for their intrusion, and an expression of sorrow for their deficiencies. (Chambers 1832: 1).

Asking for “no undue favour”, the editor informs readers of the “grand leading principle” underlying the new journal, which is “to take advantage of the universal appetite for instruction which at present exists” (1). Promising “food of the best kind” and a fair price, the address declares that the journal “must suit the convenience of every man in the British dominions” (1). However, instead of presenting his audience as a homogenous type, as the reference to “every man” suggests, Chambers separates them into a colourful range of characters:

> the poor man, poor old men and women living in remote cottages, Artizans, naturalists, ladies and gentlemen of the ‘old school’, ladies of the ‘new school’ and ‘fair young countrywomen in their teens’. (1-2)
Separating his prospective audience allows Chambers to summarise the different kind of articles he will present and how these will find satisfaction with different readers. Not only does the opening address make claims aimed at various readers (such as the promise “to do a great deal for boys”), but these claims also imply an ideological potential for the journal. From the “poor old men and women living in remote cottages” to “ladies of the ‘new school’” and “boys”, the opening address suggests that diverse groups, ostensibly with little in common, may become unified as readers of Chambers’s Edinburgh Journal.

In a rather bold claim, Chambers declares that his new journal will show “such a specimen of the powers of the printing press as has hitherto been unexampled in the history of Literature” (1). This reference to the “powers of the printing press” points to a characteristic tendency for nineteenth-century periodicals to engage with the consequences of the industrial-capitalist processes responsible for the production of periodicals themselves. Thus, in positioning itself in the literary marketplace, a periodical needed to account for its relationship to its mode of production. This is made explicit in an 1853 article in Household Words called “H.W.” in which a description of “the processes by which this Journal is produced” (145) conjures a vivid image of the relationship between industrialisation, periodicals and the public sphere (Dickens and Morley 1853: 145):

Since the whole mind of our own nation finds its way into type, a London printing office is a sort of composed brain, in which the busy working of the thoughts of the community are represented by the rapid flowing of the fount of lead between the fingers of the compositors. (ibid. 146)

Focusing on the materiality of the printing process, and depicting it as a process which gives tangible form to a “composed brain”, this description is notable for its emphasis on the “whole mind of our own nation”. Commenting on the unprecedented productive power of print, which was able by 1853 to capture the “whole mind” of the “nation”, the article nevertheless excludes some views from this unified national consciousness. At the same time as glorifying the potential of the press to capture
public opinion, the article also mocks the “legion” of “Voluntary Contributors” who submit unsolicited material to *Household Words*. Thus, while noting the potential for the “whole mind” of the nation to appear in print, there is an implicit understanding that there are some voices that do not qualify for transformation between the “fingers of the compositors”. Given such implicit exclusions, the question of who selects, edits and presents the “mind” of the “nation” becomes central.

The importance of the Victorian editor was linked to the capacity for print capitalism to extend and affect the public sphere in potentially dangerous ways. Noting that “the powers of the printing” have the potential to corrupt a multitude of readers, in his opening address William Chambers ponders the consequences of his own literary production:

> I have voluntarily, and unprompted, taken in my hands an engine endowed with the most tremendous possibilities of mischief. I may have it in my power to instil the most pernicious opinions on almost any subject, into the minds of three millions of human beings. (Chambers 1832: 1)

While noting the “tremendous possibilities of mischief” afforded by the “engine” of the periodical press, this opening address stresses the good intentions of the journal’s editor and his wish to effect a moral and intellectual improvement in readers. A similar sentiment is evident in Francis Jeffrey’s preface to an 1844 collection of his articles from the *Edinburgh Review*. As the quarterly’s founding editor, Jeffrey described the goal of his journal as “familiarising the public mind (that is, the minds of very many individuals) with higher speculations, and sounder and larger views of the great objects of human pursuit” (Jeffrey 1844: ix; qtd. in Crawford 58; emphasis added). The notion of the “public mind” that Jeffrey seeks to improve, a process which involves subsuming the individuality of his “very many” readers into a collective entity, was linked to Victorian “anxieties about how to manage a collective reading public or publics” (Winter 320). While for some commentators, the growing reading public for print offered the potential for vast social improvement, others saw it as tainted by the market forces that structured the mass production of Victorian
literary commodities. John Stuart Mill inveighed against “public opinion” describing it as a symptom of “mediocrity” and the contemporary condition “[a]t present [where] individuals are lost in the crowd” (Mill 131). The target of Mill’s critique was newspapers. He notes the “novelty” that in mid-Victorian England “the mass do not now take their opinions from dignitaries in Church or State, from ostensible leaders, or from books” but gather all their knowledge from the ephemeral periodical press: “Their thinking is done for them by men much like themselves, addressing them or speaking in their name, on the spur of the moment, through the newspapers” (Mill 131; my emphasis).

If Isaac Bickerstaff could unreservedly declare in the opening of The Tatler that one of the primary purposes of the periodical was to teach readers “what to think” (Mackie 49), this seemed a much more contentious proposition in Victorian England. The distinction of most importance in this respect was the difference between anonymous and named publication. There was a sense from writers such as Mill and Chambers that ephemeral work, made up on “the spur of the movement”, could be a pernicious influence on public opinion. As a corrective to this, there was a reaction against anonymous and pseudonymous publication with a call to authorial responsibility focused on the name and figure of authors. As Chambers’s Edinburgh Journal declared: “We must see and hear MEN preaching to us, not papers” (Chambers and Chambers 1850b: 322).

The appeal to a notion of embodied authorship was continued in a small piece called “Modern Letters” on the final page of the same journal. This consisted of an excerpt from Edward Bulwer-Lytton’s The Caxtons: A Family Picture (1848-9), which had been serialised in Blackwood’s Magazine. With its emphasis on the transition of literature into a more democratic realm in which the “masses” are addressed not by “scholars addressing scholars, but men addressing men”, the excerpt captures the phenomenon with which this chapter is concerned. In tracing the transformation of the eighteenth-editorial eidolons to celebrity authors, I propose that Victorian periodicals, and the material traces of their paratext, offer a revealing insight into the change from a public sphere based on rational conversation to an imagined community based around the figure of celebrity authors. If, for Addison and
Steele, the public sphere was built on “conversation” (Habermas 43; Mackie 90), in Victorian England the focus had shifted to a “polis” based around sympathy and affection:

The literary polis was once an oligarchy; it is now a republic [...] Do you not see, that with the cultivation of the masses, has awakened the literature of affections? (Bulwer-Lytton 1849: 297, qtd. in Chambers and Chambers 1850a: 48)

This model of embodied authorship, one based on the sense of an author’s physical presence and a sympathetic transfer of “affections”, was part of a broader transition from what Michael Warner has described as “earlier varieties of the public sphere, [where] it was important that images of the body not figure centrally in public discourse” (Warner 169). The effacement of the body, and the identities attendant upon it, was part of an “anonymity of discourse” and a way of “certifying the citizen’s disinterested concern for the public good” (ibid.).

Following the disembodied eidolons of the eighteenth-century,27 it is possible to read the rise of the celebrity Victorian author/editor as part of a historical shift from a public sphere to a commodity marketplace. As Bulwer-Lytton states in the same passage from The Caxtons excerpted in Chambers’s Edinburgh Journal:

“Authors in all ages address themselves to what interests their reader; the same things do not interest a vast community which interest half a score of monks or bookworms” (Bulwer-Lytton 1849: 297). This points to a structural development in the world of Victorian publishing where a search for mass appeal is part of a shift in the “literary polis” from an “oligarchy” to a “republic”. A symptom of this shift was the changing representation of authorship. This was based on the notion of “men addressing men”, which represented a transition from the “bourgeois public sphere”

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27 The clearest example of this is The Female Spectator’s incorporation of all authorial and editorial labour into the metaphorical figure of the mouth: “and how many contributors soever there may happen to be to the work, they are to be considered only as several members of one body, of which I am the mouth” (Haywood 1775: 10-11).
made of “disembodied and abstract” speakers to the subject of Victorian “mass culture”, which was “re-embodied with a vengeance” (Kreilamp 124).

This re-embodiment represented “the contradiction between the construction of disembodied subjects within the rhetorical mode of the public sphere and the public visuality of consumer capitalism that puts bodies on display everywhere and seeks to endlessly differentiate them” (Morris 22). The “cultivation of the masses” and the resulting “literature of affections” (Chambers and Chambers 1850a: 48) was based on a commodity-fetish focused on celebrity whereby authors, from the 1840s, gave increasingly frequent and lucrative performances of their works. These public appearances, in which the touchstone for the audience was not so much the literary work as the figure of the author, engaged with emerging notions of celebrity and a “form of authorship [...] very different from the disembodiment Warner argues eighteenth-century writers sought in print” (Kreilkamp 124).

When he launched Household Words, described on every facing page as “Conducted by Charles Dickens”, Dickens included “A Preliminary Word” which at once invoked his celebrity status at the same time as negotiating the move from celebrity author to editor of a new journal. This invocation was part of a paratextual strategy for positioning Household Words in a competitive literary marketplace. With no illustrations and a drab, double-column format, the key selling point of the cheap weekly journal was the figure of the editor. The following section will trace Dickens’s development of the editorial character of Household Words to examine how, in contrast to eighteenth-century models and his experiment with Master Humphrey, Dickens deployed his own, celebrated name when launching the journal.

This development is all the more interesting for, in its early form, Household Words was envisioned as a review based on The Spectator. According to accounts of the inception of his magazine, Dickens had originally intended to mask all authorial work, including his own, with the strange figure of the “Shadow”. Abandoning this anachronistic editorial figure, Dickens focused Household Words on his own celebrity figure. In Dickens’s abandonment of eighteenth-century models in favour of an editorial role based on his biographical identity, it is possible to trace a structural
change in the public sphere, from one based on reason and disembodied eidolons to one focused on celebrity and sympathetic affection between authors and readers.

“Ancient objectivity and disembodied order: Authors, Editors and Literary Celebrity

In an 1846 letter to John Forster, Dickens invoked Addison’s Spectator to describe his plans for a new periodical:

As to the Review, I strongly incline to the notion of a kind of Spectator (Addison's)—very cheap, and pretty frequent. We must have it thoroughly discussed. It would be a great thing to found something. If the mark between a sort of Spectator, and a different sort of Athenaeum, could be well hit, my belief is that a deal might be done. But it should be something with a marked and distinctive and obvious difference, in its design, from any other existing periodical. (Dickens 1977b: 660)

Discussing the need for establishing “a marked and distinctive” difference for his “Review”, Dickens’s comments indicate a focus on form that combines the influence of the eighteenth-century Spectator with the contemporary Athenaeum. His proposal that a journal combining their elements could “hit” the “mark” suggests an attempt to create a miscellany that would both recall previous periodical models while offering similar content to a successful Victorian miscellany made up of articles on science, fine art, society and literature. Dickens had been experimenting with periodical formats throughout the 1830s and 1840s. If we note that his original part-issue novels were presented as “edited” by Boz, and that this pseudonym was also presented as the editor of Bentley’s Miscellany, it is possible to view Household Words as the culmination of more than a decade’s experience of what it meant to be an “editor” of a Victorian periodical publication.

Despite the 1840 failure of the eighteenth-century elements in the “machinery” of Master Humphrey’s Clock, Dickens continued to be influenced by the eighteenth-century models throughout the 1840s. This influence is evident in a letter to Forster in
which Dickens appeals to model of *The Spectator* and evokes an editorial figure of “a certain SHADOW”. This was an eidolon, a character which could be used to accommodate the collective authorship of the journal and in which his readers could also “believe” (Dickens 1981: 622-3). That Dickens at some time intended to give this “Shadow” a biographical history is clear from his reference to opening the first number of *Household Words* “with this Shadow’s account of himself and his family” (623). He even went as far as considering, following the model of *The Spectator*, that “all correspondence” for the periodical should be “addressed to him” (623).

Stating that this figure will not be “Mr. Spectator” or “Isaac Bickerstaff”, Dickens suggests that the “Shadow” would be “cognisant of everything”; “the Thing at everybody’s elbow, and in everybody’s footsteps [...] everyone’s inseparable companion” (622-3). More than simply a tool collecting a range of content under an editorial pseudonym, this creates the sense of an omnipresent figure accompanying readers through their everyday lives. At the same time, it evokes the uncanny, disembodied presence that Dickens had described in *The Christmas Carol* (1843) in which the narrator claims to be “so intimate with the reader” that he is present at the reader’s side, “standing in the spirit at your elbow” (Dickens 2006: 28; qtd. in Ferguson 737).

Dickens describes the “Shadow” to Forster as something that was “just mysterious and quaint enough to have a sort of charm for the imagination while it will represent common sense humanity” (Dickens 1981: 623). The description is suggestive in terms of the epistemological relationship between the editorial figure of the journal and the everyday lives of readers:

I want to suppose 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 [sic] of everything, and go everywhere, without the least difficulty. Which may be in the Theatre, the Palace, the House of Commons, the Prisons, the Unions, the Churches, on the
Railroad, on the Sea, abroad and at home: a kind of semi-omniscient, omnipresent, intangible creature. (ibid.)

Through the eidolon of the “Shadow”, and its ability to “go everywhere without the least difficulty”, Dickens figures a rhetorical, structuring conceit for the miscellaneous content of his journal. There were over 380 individual contributions to what would become *Household Words* (Brake and Demoor 293; Farina 394) and if Dickens had kept to the plan outlined to Forster, all of their separate articles would have been subsumed under the spirit of the “Shadow”. Dickens’s description of this figure presents a “creature” that is “omnipresent” and “intangible”, a liminal state allowing it to at once travel everywhere and report back to readers. Such an eidolon figures a limitless public sphere in which a mode of knowing, the “Shadow”, has access to “all homes, and all nooks and corners”. Far from simply being a central figure around which local intelligence is sent, as in the editorial conceit structuring *The Tatler, The Spectator* and *The Female Spectator*, Dickens’s “conceit” of the “Shadow” “appeals to an emergent epistemology of character, a way of knowing everything as divided and irreducible to systematization or simple description” (Farina 393).

Noting that the “personification of a journal’s corporate voice in such a character was a standard trope for British periodicals”, Jonathan Farina mentions two influential Victorian journals, *Fraser’s Magazine* and *Blackwood’s*, which also “personified a ‘fictitious unity’” (Farina 396). While nineteenth-century periodicals appealed to “characters and conventions of characterisation” to give structure to their miscellaneous content (Farina 396), Dickens’s character of the “Shadow” is of a different ontological order. Not so much copying *Fraser’s* or *Blackwood’s*, or recalling Addison or Steele, Dickens’s use of the “Shadow” represents a disembodied intelligence that is “cognisant” of everything, ever present and yet entirely unidentifiable.

This model of authorial impersonality was expressed in the “Introductory Epistle” to *Fortunes of Nigel* (1821), written by Walter Scott but attributed to the “Eidolon, or Representation, of the Author of Waverley”. In the opening address, this
eidolon states: “Let fame follow those who have a substantial shape. A shadow —and an impersonal author is no better —can cast no shade” (Scott 2004: 8; qtd. in Duncan 32). By 1821, however, despite Scott’s insistent disavowal of his authorial responsibility in print, his identity as the author of Waverley had become something of an open secret. Thus, in ceding responsibility for the “Introductory Epistle” and, the book as a whole, to the “Eidolon”, Scott is playing on the respective associations generated by this eidolon and his concealed-yet-known biographical figure. Therefore, when examining authorial disavowal, it is important to note how the use of pseudonyms and eidolons becomes rhetorically more complex once the biographical identities behind these fictional figures has been revealed. If a pseudonym or eidolon “can cast no shade”, they are nonetheless associated with the biographical figure of the author. Once that figure became well-known, an issue central to Thackeray’s 1848 sketch, “Author’s Miseries No. VI”, Scott’s prefaces to his Waverley Novels and Dickens’s prefaces from the late 1830s, experiments with anonymity and pseudonymy took on a deeper cultural significance. As I will argue below, the differences between the “substantial shape” of a biographical individual and the “impersonal author” that individual becomes through print was crucial to changing notions of authorship and the ideological work of the periodical press.

A letter from Thackeray ahead of his serial novel, The Newcomes (1852-3), captures a mid-Victorian attitude to the relative merits of celebrity and “impersonal” authorship. Thackeray explains that by resurrecting Pendennis, the eponymous hero from a previous book, he will have a discursive freedom unavailable if he spoke under his own name: “[with] the help of this little mask [...] I shall be able to talk more at ease than in my own person” (Thackeray 1946: Vol.3: 29; qtd. in Tillotson 2011: 56).

In another letter, Thackeray described how Pendennis enabled a measure of authorial liberty in The Newcomes that his own celebrity name precluded:

Mr Pendennis is the author of the book, and he has taken a great weight off my mind, for under that mask and acing, as it were, I can afford to say and think many things that I couldn’t venture on in my own person, now that it is a
person, and I know the public are staring at it (Thackeray 1946: Vol. 4: 436; qtd. in Tillotson 2011:56).

Thackeray’s description is notable for three significant details: his focus on speech, rather than print; the idea of the “mask” provided by Pendennis; and the idea of the “person of the author”, which only becomes a person once the “public are staring at it”.

Much like his observation in the preface to *Pendennis* that a serial novel was “a sort of confidential talk” between author and reader (Thackeray 1972: 33), Thackeray’s emphasis in the above letter is on literary work as speech. Pendennis will enable him to “speak” and to “talk” with greater freedom. What Thackeray may have understood by such speech can be inferred from his description of the profound impact *The Tatler*’s appearance had in the early eighteenth century when “scholars, gentlemen of the world, men of genius, began to speak.” (Thackeray 1853: 118; my emphasis). For Thackeray, while print gives “men of genius” the medium in which to “speak” to a public, or to “soliloquize” as he describes it in the opening address to *The Cornhill Magazine* (Thackeray 1859: 1), there are certain limitations which structure a biographical author’s speech to the reading public. According to Thackeray’s letter, these limitations are relaxed when periodical work is attributed to a fictional character. Thackeray often used pseudonymous masks to acquire such authorial latitude throughout his magazine novels in the 1840s, his part-issue novels in the 1850s and the three-volume *Henry Esmond* in 1852.28 This repeated use suggests that Thackeray found in the paratextual element of the pseudonym a useful device enabling him to say things that were not possible under his own name. If he considers speaking in his “own person”, there is an implicit understanding that this person is not so much synonymous with Thackeray’s biographical identity as a function of discourse describing an authorial figure that “the public are staring at”.

The letter implies that Thackeray was aware not only of the price of literary celebrity

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28 *The Luck of Barry Lyndon* was first serialised in *Fraser’s Magazine* under the pseudonym of Fitzboodle in 1844; *The Newcomes* was presented as “Edited by Arthur Pendennis, Esq.”; and *Henry Esmond* was represented as a three-volume autobiography of the titular character with later paratextual notes supplied by his family.
but also of its essentially rhetorical construction and that, by using a fictional pseudonym, he hoped to avoid damaging his established reputation with the reading public. Authorial reticence, in this example, is a paradoxical result of the limitations, and powerful rhetorical benefits, of literary celebrity.

Thus, careful to guard the associations accruing around his increasingly well-known name, Thackeray is proposing a model of authorship based on “personal obscurity” (Collins 2009: 329). This was a phrase Margaret Oliphant used in an 1855 article in *Blackwood’s Magazine*, which engaged with similar questions about the boundaries and propriety of authorial agency:

> Mr Dickens has unveiled himself from that *personal obscurity* which softens so gracefully the presence of a great writer. He has ceased to *speak* his strictures or to pronounce his approbation out of that mist of half-disclosed identity which becomes the literary censor. (Collins 2009: 329; my emphasis)

The veil of authorship, one which Thackeray takes such pains to fashion by the creative use of pseudonymous substitutes such as Fitzboodle, Titmarsh and Pendennis, is rent aside when Dickens comes forth in his own person “to speak his strictures”.29 Oliphant is not so much objecting to the idea of Dickens’s role of “literary censor” and promoter of social improvement as she is criticising the author for lacking the good grace to remain in “that mist of half-disclosed identity” which she suggests is appropriate for such moralising.

Oliphant’s analysis establishes a critical distinction between the author- and editor-function in mid-Victorian England:

> He is less the author of *Pickwick*, of *Copperfield*, of *Bleak House*, than he is Charles Dickens; and we confess that we cannot regard him with the same

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29 Compare this to a description of how Thackeray “was constantly using pen names of a common sort, and this helped create an aura of good humour around him” (Bonham Carter 1978: 61).
affection or the same indulgence in the latter character as in the former.
(Collins 2009: 329)

Oliphant’s professions of “affection” and “indulgence”, for the creator “of *Pickwick, of Copperfield, of Bleak House*” but not “Charles Dickens”, pinpoint the crucial difference between Dickens, the “impersonal” author, and Dickens, the man and editor of *Household Words*. Based on this key distinction, Oliphant can object to being “place[d] opposite, not the writer, but the man” (Collins 2009: 330). Describing Dickens as the “spoiled child of the popular heart”, Oliphant proceeds to critique *Hard Times* (1854) as “the petulant theory of a man in a world of his own making, where he has no fear of being contradicted, and is absolutely certain of having everything his own way [...]” (330).

In contrast to the early eighteenth-century periodicals, which effaced the figure of the editor in a rhetorical move that supposedly encouraged more egalitarian and representative discussion, Dickens is described as a man with “no fear of being contradicted”. According to Oliphant, Dickens’s popularity, resulting in a role for the author that eclipsed the bounds of his original, “higher authorship” (336), had a negative influence on the public sphere stifling all other voices and leaving only a man in his own world, “absolutely certain of having everything his own way”.

Critiquing “the very poor platitudes” of *Household Words*, Oliphant stresses that were it not for the power of Dickens’s name, the fact that “conducted by Charles Dickens’ [appeared] on the top of the page”, the journal would “scarcely reach any public” (335). Focusing on the materiality of authorship, and the relationship between a biographical author and a periodical publication associated with that name, Oliphant complains: “Mr Dickens’ hand does not appear, we confess, where his name does, on the periodical which it has pleased him to call *Household Words* [...]” (335).

Oliphant’s idea of the hand is interesting given that Dickens contributed many articles, as well as a serial novel, to *Household Words* and maintained a “meticulous vigilance” over the journal (Patten 1978: 240; qtd. in Crawford 57). It would appear that Oliphant is deploying the idea of “hand” metonymically in order to suggest that Dickens’s *imprimatur*, that quality of authorship she praises as his “higher
authorship” (336), was absent from the journal that carried his name. Yet it was this very presence that other commentators noted was *Household Words*’s signal feature. Percy Fitzgerald noted that Dickens’s “personal inspiration” was the characteristic feature of *Household Words* and the key factor of its success (Fitzgerald 1911: 111; qtd. in Waters 22; original emphasis). On the day of its first issue, an anonymous review in *The Leader* explicitly linked the “name and presence” of the new journal’s editor with its appeal to readers:

The first number of *Household Words* will be in every one’s hands to-day. If anything could make the new journal realize its title it is the name and presence of CHARLES DICKENS,—a beam of sunshine gladdening thousands. (Anon. 1850: 13)

This laudatory review exemplifies the popular appeal of Dickens’s biographical identity. In a fetishistic focus on the author, the reviewer projects the “name and presence” of Dickens onto the material level of the journal “in every one’s hands to-day”. This act of metonymic transference transforms a commodity exchange into an act of affective sympathy. By consuming Dickens’s new weekly journal, readers are not so much engaging in a purchase but are basking in the “beam of sunshine gladdening thousands”. The circuits of capital structuring Victorian publishing as well as the labour of illustrators, engravers, publishers, printers, compositors and distributors are collapsed into a “beam of sunshine”, the positive natural metaphor effacing the industrial processes that underlie the mass production of print.

The ability of commodities to project illusions of sympathy with potential consumers is part of a rhetorical strategy of intimacy aptly described by Jean Baudrillard in an analysis of how advertising works “to solicit the subject through an offer of reciprocal affect, or even love” (Steinlight 158):

We are taken as the object’s aims, and the object loves us. And because we are loved, we feel that we exist: we are ‘personalized’. This is the essential thing - the actual purchase of the object is secondary. (Baudrillard 2005: 186; qtd. in
This seems in many ways to be applicable to the work of Dickens, whose paratextual performances “solicit” readers in precisely this way. If the prefaces to Dickens’s novels efface the market relations inherent in their production and consumption, his opening address to *Household Words* negotiates a transformation of “labour” into “sympathy” (Dickens 1850a: 1). As will be examined below, Dickens implies that his authorial labour, performed in private, is not performed for personal gain but, rather, has the social function of creating a reading public “moved by one sympathy” (ibid.). This reading public is solicited as the “dear objects” of Dickens’s “love” and as the source for the perpetuation of his name and his posthumous national fame (ibid.). In a process that simultaneously brought Dickens into being as a particular kind of author/editor and his readers as an implied reading public, the rhetorical staging of his “love” for his readers “trade[d] on the symbolic capital invested” (Steinlight 153) in the figure of Dickens.

Therefore, despite all rhetorical efforts, the “Shadow” could never equal the charm exerted by the figure of Charles Dickens himself. I will argue that the appeal of the name and figure of Dickens is part of what Pam Morris describes as “the logic of publicness” in which “*physical embodiment* is the only way in which charismatic grace can be signified” (Morris 15, my emphasis). Thus, in a commodity-marketplace, in which capitalism incessantly “puts bodies on display everywhere and seeks to endlessly differentiate them” (Morris 22), the embodied figure of the author/editor performs an important social function. As an individual addressing a multitude of readers, Victorian authors and editors came to offer a kind of cultural index to the relationship between notions of celebrity, sympathy and the function of periodicals in the contemporary public sphere.

In *Paratexts*, Genette suggests the independent life assumed by titles and an author’s name as they circulate beyond the limited reach of the author’s immediate audience. Implicit in the fact that titles and authors’ names have a wider reach than the texts associated with them is the relative importance of text in relation to paratext:
The title is directed at many more people than the text, people who by one route or another receive it and transmit it and thereby have a hand in circulating it. For if the text is an object to be read, the title (like, moreover, the name of the author) is an object to be circulated — or, if you prefer, a subject of conversation. (Genette 75)

Thus, if not everyone had read Dickens by 1850, the year he launched Household Words, his name, and the figure associated with his name, had achieved a cultural currency far outstripping the material reach of his novels. Despite the fact that, by 1847, the Cheap Edition of Dickens’s novels made them accessible to a wider audience than ever, by mid-century Dickens’s name and image had achieved a talismanic significance exceeding the circulation figures of his novels. As an anonymous reviewer asserted in December 1850 at the conclusion of David Copperfield:

Probably there is no single individual who, during the last fourteen years, has occupied so large a space in the thoughts of English folk as Charles Dickens. [...] During these years kings have tumbled from their thrones [...] but the name and fame of Charles Dickens have been exempt from all vicissitude. (Collins 2009: 243)

This account suggests that, by 1850, Dickens’s “name and fame” had come to occupy such a central place in the national imagination that their significance far outstripped the work of authorship.

Making the same distinction that Oliphant stressed, between author as a man and as idealized figure, a review of 1848, by John Forster, uses the terms “writer” and “author” to mark these differences:

[...] We doubt if any writer that ever lived has inspired such a strong feeling of personal attachment, in his impersonal character of author. He counts his readers by tens of thousands, and all of them ‘unknown friends’ with perhaps
few exceptions. The wonderful sense of the real thrown into his ideal creations may sufficiently account for this. (Collins 2009: 232; my emphasis)

While the “writer” marks the biographical figure of Dickens himself, it is the “impersonal character of author” who is represented as establishing a “personal attachment” with readers. That such an “impersonal character” could establish “personal” relations was an assumption shared by the eighteenth-century periodicals described above. However, while *The Spectator* and *The Tatler* employed a mode of “impersonal discussion” in order to give “private matters full public relevance” (Warner 99) the characteristic register with which Dickens addressed his reading public was based on a notion of intimacy rather than on conversation. If the evocation of a disembodied eidolon was represented, in eighteenth-century periodicals, as enabling private individuals to discuss matters of public importance, Dickens’s focus was on the relationship that developed between an embodied, celebrity author and his readers.

This position was exemplified in an 1848 *Examiner* review of *Dombey and Son*:

There was probably not a family in this country where fictitious literature is read, that did not feel the death of Paul Dombey as something little short of a family sorrow [...] that it flung a nation into mourning, was hardly an exaggeration [...]. (Collins 2009: 232)

Forster’s analysis creates an interesting representation of the private realm, “a family sorrow”, and a public sphere, “a nation” in “mourning”. It suggests that, through Dickens’s work, a group of individual families both experienced a private sorrow and participated in a public act of national mourning. Dickens, in this description, becomes a figure through which readers are transformed from a multitude of individuals into a unified reading community “moved by one sympathy” (Dickens 1850a: 1).

Dickens commented on this aspect of his authorship in the 1848 preface to the Cheap Edition of *The Old Curiosity Shop*, where he proudly discusses his intimate
relationship with readers:

The many friends it has won me, and the many hearts it has turned to me when they have been full of private sorrows, invest it with an interest, in my mind, which is not a public one, and the rightful place of which appears to be ‘a more removed ground’. (Dickens 2000: 6-7)

The allusion to Hamlet (1603) deploys a literary trope to represent the space of Dickens’s shared intimacy with readers.\(^3\) Invoking an iconic moment from English literary history, Dickens deploys a shared cultural reference to characterise the form of sympathetic affection he has developed with readers. In a transformation of the commodity-based relationship between authors and readers, Dickens describes his readers as “friends” whose “hearts” have “turned” towards him in times of grief. The terms of Dickens’s rhetoric transfer the “interest” of his novel from the public realm to “the rightful place” of a “more removed ground”, a public space where, paradoxically, author and reader alike can face the ghosts of their “private sorrows.”

Farina invokes this quotation from Hamlet, without noting its appearance in Dickens’s preface, as a description of Dickens’s idea of the “Shadow”. For Farina, the “removed ground” is the space on which the “realist narrator” is predicated (Farina 398). According to his analysis, following Elizabeth Deeds-Ermath, the “disembodied human voice” creates the “effect of realism by creating consensus between readers” (Farina 398). In disavowing any sense of physical corporeality, the “disembodied human voice” needs to create a space, a “removed ground”, which can act as the ontological predicate for a relationship with readers. Yet, this same space can also be seen, in Dickens’s 1848 preface to The Old Curiosity Shop, as the basis for a named author establishing a more emotionally-based consensus through an appeal to notions of sympathy. Dickens’s use of “removed ground” suggests, in contrast to Farina’s approach, that it is part of a rhetorical strategy for representing a community of readers united around a biographical figure and not a “disembodied

\(^3\) The phrase recalls Marcellus’s description of the ghost beckoning the eponymous hero: “Look with what courteous action / It waves you to a more removed ground” (Shakespeare 1980: I.4.60-1).
human voice”. In the sharing of their private griefs, in turning their “hearts” to Dickens as a result of his work, individual readers become a reading public formed around the unifying principle of the embodied figure of Charles Dickens.

Dickens’s original idea for the eidolon of the “Shadow” was very different to the eventual form his journal would take. In March 1850, the first issue of *Household Words* was published with a masthead declaring it was “Conducted by Charles Dickens”. Among the drab, double-column format, the opening page of the journal deployed “eye-catching graphic devices [...] with the largest and boldest capitals used for the title, smaller italics for its Shakespearean source [...] and boldface capitals linking the title” and the proclamation of Dickens as “Conductor” (Waters 21).

The journal’s Shakespearean source was a line from Henry V, “Familiar in their mouths as household words”, which captured Dickens wish to “live in the Household affections” of his readers (Dickens 1850a: 1). This was a similar sentiment to the one expressed in the 1847 prospectus to the Cheap Edition of his novels in which Dickens declared a desire to become an “inmate” of the private domestic realm of his readers (Picker 149).

The quote from Shakespeare is from a moment in *Henry V* in which Henry addresses his troops before battle and rouses them with promises that their exploits will be celebrated every year on that day (Pollack-Pollack-Pelzner 546). In adapting this quotation for his journal, “the annual periodicity of recalling British battle heroes becomes the weekly reminder of the periodical” (ibid.). At the same time, the evocation of battle balances the more domestic implications of “household” mirroring Dickens rhetorical strategy of addressing “all sexes” in “A Preliminary Word” (Dickens 1850a: 1).

Dickens’s opening address, slipping immediately into the editorial “we”, justifies the title of the new journal by reference to its editor’s “desire” and “heart”: “The name that we have chosen for this publication expresses, generally, the desire we have at heart in originating it” (ibid). Following this gloss of the title, Dickens appeals to his editorial wish to “live in the Household affections” of his readers

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31 Dickens followed the Quarto’s “their mouths” rather than the “his mouth” given in the Folio (Pollack-Pelzner 546).
This claim, however, is based on his established position as a novelist. In an image which plays on the embodied nature of authorship, Dickens represents his relationship with readers in terms which focus on the materiality of writing:

The hand that writes these faltering lines, happily associated with some Household Words before to-day, has known enough of such experiences to enter in an earnest spirit upon this new task, and with an awakened sense of all that it involves. (ibid.)

Like his 1848 preface to the Cheap Edition of *The Old Curiosity Shop*, in which Dickens described how his “pen winces”, the 1850 opening address to *Household Words* transfers an author’s “experiences” to the “hand that writes these faltering lines”. If the adjective, “faltering”, indicates an authorial consciousness that pauses to consider the next phrase, the focus on the “hand that writers” relocates authorial agency in the metonymic relationship between this consciousness, which “experiences”, and the embodied figure of the author, which “writes”. This metonymic relay, between the idea of a consciousness that creates and a hand that writes, is the central structuring conceit of an encounter Dickens describes in an 1858 letter:

I was brought very near to what I sometimes dream may be the [pinnacle of] my Fame, when a lady whose face I had never seen before stopped me yesterday on the street, and said to me, *Mr. Dickens, will you let me touch the hand that has filled my house with many friends.* (Dickens 1995: 656; qtd. in Kreilkamp 222, n.21; emphasis added)

While in one respect this example of Dickens’s daily life as a Victorian celebrity is not unusual—Dickens is stopped “on the street” by a stranger who asks to touch his hand—the mode of authorship that this implies is significant. Focused on the materiality of writing, it is the hand, rather than the brain, of Charles Dickens “that has filled” the lady’s house “with many friends”. In such a reorientation, the work of authorship is condensed into the physical sign of Dickens’s hand. His authorial
labour, not so much imaginative as impersonal and mechanical, is represented as originating from “the hand that writes these faltering lines”.

Unlike this instance of direct, physical contact between Dickens and a fan, the reading public for *Household Words*, “many thousands of people, of both sexes, and of all ages and conditions”, was so extensive that Dickens remarks in “A Preliminary Word” that he will never have the chance to “look” on all their “faces” (Dickens 1850a: 1). In an observation that echoes Habermas’s analysis of the role of periodicals in the eighteenth-century public sphere and Anderson’s description of their role in nineteenth-century imagined communities, Dickens figures an atomized reading public where readers pass their “fellow creatures [...] like the wind” (Habermas 42-3; Anderson 33-6; Dickens 1850a: 1). *Household Words* is represented as a remedy to this kind of social alienation with the cure vested in the “compensation” offered by the journal for the difficulties caused by modern urban life:

> The traveller whom we accompany on his railroad or his steamboat journey, may gain, we hope, some compensation for incidents which these later generations have outlived, in new associations with the Power that bears him onward; with the habitations and the ways of life of crowds of his fellow creatures among whom he passes like the wind. (Dickens 1850a: 1)

Promising to make “the habitations and the ways of life” of readers accessible to each other, Dickens implies that his journal will restore them to a communal sense of the “crowds” of which they form a part. If this is an attempt to counter the atomising tendency of the “Power” that structures Victorian life, Dickens’s rhetoric betrays a surprisingly reactionary tone. In remarking on developments of Victorian industrialisation, such as the widespread use of “railroad” and “steamboat”, Dickens promises the “travellers” on these modern forms of transport “some compensation” for the conditions and incidents which they have “outlived”. This is an intriguing and cryptic phrase, the meaning of which is occluded by the ambiguity of such crucial terms as “Power”, “incidents” and “outlived”. This “Power” seems to encompass the
forces of industrial capitalism behind railways and steamboats as well as the industrial conditions enabling the production of *Household Words*. I would suggest, therefore, that “Power” refers both to the locomotive power propelling the “traveller” on “his” journey and a more abstract idea of the industrialised processes which were shaping Victorian life and *Household Words* itself.

It is ironic that in a journal in which *Hard Times* was first serialised, *Household Words* begins with an opening address in which Dickens occludes the reformist sentiment of that novel and of the journal’s original promise in a pre-launch advertisement to “help in the discussion of the most important social questions of the time” (Crawford 393). Representing his journal as consolatory rather than radical, and offering “compensation” rather than reform, Dickens explicitly rejects any sympathy for radical politics. He even goes so far as to claim that the new journal’s “highest service” will be to “displace” the “Bastards of the Mountain, draggled fringe on the Red Cap, Panders to the basest passions of the lowest natures—whose existence is a national reproach” (Dickens 1850a: 2).

Positioning *Household Words* in direct opposition to such a “national reproach”, Dickens eschews all politics and invokes, not a public sphere based on rational discussion, but a mode of discourse that is:

> not calculated to render any of us less ardently persevering in ourselves, less tolerant of one another, less faithful in the progress of mankind, less thankful for the privilege of living in this summer-dawn of time. (ibid. 1)

There is no suggestion here of any ideological opposition to the structuring conditions of contemporary Victorian life. Unlike the eighteenth-century periodicals discussed above, there is no focus on the need to promote increased “conversation” in the public sphere or to encourage a community of readers to discuss public matters using reasoned debate. Instead, *Household Words* locates its value in an ability to draw readers out of their atomized state and to bring them together around the celebrated figure of the journal’s “Conductor”. The readers themselves, the potential “conversation” that they could have and the figures of other professional contributors
are effaced and only the figure of Dickens remains.

It is this figure which is the focus of one of the most startling images of the opening address in which Dickens reveals the solace of his “solitary” labour:

We know the great responsibility of such a privilege; its vast reward; the pictures that it conjures up, in hours of solitary labour, of a multitude moved by one sympathy; the solemn hopes which it awakens in the labourer's breast, that he may be free from self-reproach in looking back at last upon his work, and that his name may be remembered in his race in time to come, and borne by the dear objects of his love with pride. (Dickens 1850a: 1; emphasis added)

In order to gloss the ideological significance of this passage, it is useful to compare it to another representation of periodical authorship from 1850. Thackeray began the final instalment of Pendennis with a description of George Warrington’s sleepless night labouring for the periodical press. It is notable that this description uses terms that recall Dickens’s opening address to Household Words”: “[...] each man who lives by the pen, and happens to read this, must remember if he will, his own experience and recall many solemn hours of solitude and labour” (Thackeray 1972: 734; qtd. in Lund 22; emphasis added). While Warrington’s labour produces periodical work that effaces “the man’s feelings as well as the author’s thoughts” (Thackeray 1972: 734), Dickens’s opening address is focused on these very elements. Moreover, while Warrington’s “solemn hours of solitude and labour” is an implicit indictment of a publishing system explicitly satirised throughout Pendennis, Dickens’s invocation of his “hours of solitary labour” presents a very different representation of authorship. In contrast to Warrington’s biographical identity, which is occluded for readers of his periodical work, the figure of Dickens is absolutely essential. Based upon an assumption of an affective sympathy between Dickens and his readers, the rhetoric of his opening address evokes the associations of mesmerism lurking in the implications of a multitude of readers “Conducted by Charles Dickens” (Winter 318-20). The appeal to the figure of the celebrated author supplants the originally intended eidolon of the “Shadow” in a transformation that is indicative of shift from the disembodied public sphere of Addison and Steele to a literary marketplace based not on rational
discussion but on sympathetic relations between readers and a celebrated “Conductor”.

Thackeray’s representation of the editorial role and his relationship to the reading public of *The Cornhill Magazine* were couched in very different terms. In an address presented as a “Letter from the editor to a friend and contributor”, Thackeray lists a range of possible candidates for contributors to his new magazine: “It may be a Foxhunter who has the turn to *speak*; or a Geologist, Engineer, Manufacturer, Member of the House of Commons, Lawyer, Chemist [...]” (Thackeray 1859: 2; emphasis added). This set of contributors is expanded to include “well-educated gentlemen and women” who have “good manners, a good education, and write good English” (ibid.; emphasis added). At the same time as defining potential contributors as anyone with the requisite cultural capital and command of written English, Thackeray implicitly connects his printed journal to an oral model of the public sphere where people have “the turn to speak”.

Whereas Dickens is the sole voice speaking through *Household Words*, Thackeray depicts his editorial role as focused on encouraging other voices. As a result of the “kindness and favour” with which his previous authorial work has been received, Thackeray hopes that readers will “not be unwilling to try me as a Conductor of a Concert, in which I trust many skilful performers will take part” (1-2). Unlike Dickens, in presenting his role as “Conductor”, Thackeray makes the orchestral significance explicit. This reference had particular force given the recent introduction of conductors in mid-century European orchestras (Winter 318-22).

Thackeray’s opening address, presented in the form of a letter addressed from an editor “to a friend and contributor”, also presents the editor as presiding over “our social table”. This idea of an editor presiding over a contributors’ table was one which would have recalled for contemporary readers the famous editorial table from *Fraser’s Magazine*. Thackeray’s depiction of *The Cornhill Magazine* as a collaborative effort speaks to Thackeray’s past associations with such literary production through his well-known involvement with *Fraser’s Magazine* (Bock 241; see fig. 14).
Thackeray’s role as editor is thus presented not as the single dominant force of the journal, as with Dickens in *Household Words*, but as part of a process of bringing his readers into “friendly communication with persons whom the world knows”:

A professor ever so learned, a curate in his country retirement, an artisan after work-hours, a schoolmaster or mistress when the children are gone home, or the young ones themselves when their lessons are over, may like to hear what the world is talking about, or be brought into friendly communication with persons whom the world knows. (Thackeray 1859: 2)

Representing his journal’s function as one based on speech, where a range of readers “may like to hear what the world is talking about”, Thackeray implicitly suggests his journal’s role in defining this “world” and who is qualified to speak about it. In the
terms of Thackeray’s opening address, public recognition is a prerequisite for addressing a reading public. Thus, if his success as a novelist was the precondition for his role as the new journal’s editor, Thackeray intimates that “persons whom the world knows” are invited to contribute to *The Cornhill Magazine* on the basis of a similarly pre-approved social identity. Just as Raymond Williams notes how the world in Jane Austen’s novels presents a “knowable community” of local gentry which occludes more immediate neighbours of inferior social class (Williams 203-4) so Thackeray invokes a sense of the “world” which suggests that only a limited range of professionals and “well-educated gentlemen and women” are qualified to discuss it. In this “Letter from the editor to a friend and contributor”, Thackeray is at once inviting contributions and setting the parameters for what such contributions might mean and who might be qualified to make them.

Thackeray’s letter was used as a pre-launch advertisement for *The Cornhill Magazine* and was printed on the reverse of the opening issue’s front cover (Colby 221, n.13). Unlike Dickens’s opening address to *Household Words*, which as the magazine’s first leading article was preserved in subsequent volume re-issues, Thackeray’s letter to readers is not found in all bound volumes of *The Cornhill Magazine* (ibid). It provides an example of an ephemeral paratextual element which, though eclipsed by later editions of the magazine, nevertheless provides an important insight into the rhetorical strategies Thackeray employed as he negotiated the transition from a celebrity novelist to editor of a journal. The letter highlights a transition from the pseudonymous masks Thackeray had used in previous periodical work to a mode of editorial address focused on his own identity. While this was a good promotional tactic and ensured *The Cornhill Magazine* a high circulation, it also left Thackeray open to the very mode of biographical attack he had previously used pseudonyms to avoid.

In an anonymous review of the first issue of *The Cornhill Magazine* in January 1860, the reviewer acknowledges the new journal as a “triumph of trading enterprise and skill” and “a pure, high literary, monthly magazine” offering better value for money than even *All the Year Round* (Anon., 1860b: 18). Nevertheless, the reviewer proposed to “have a word with Mr. Thackeray” regarding his “‘letter’ (or prospectus)
'from the editor to a friend and contributor’” (ibid.). The reviewer notes that when this was “launched in the newspapers [...] as a preliminary advertisement, its whole tone and spirit were directed against those authors and editors who were supposed to set up as social and political regenerators of mankind” (ibid.). Yet, in taking such an editorial stance, the reviewer points out that Thackeray was committing a personal inconsistency having “once contested a parliamentary election for Oxford” (ibid.). Given the contradiction between the tone of his opening address to readers and his biography, the reviewer asks of Thackeray:

If his political sentiments are really of that don’t-care-a-rush character, what right had he to occupy the Oxford hustings, and what kind of training has he had for conducting that department of his Magazine, which is now largely occupied by an article on the ‘Chinese and the Outer Barbarians?’ (ibid.)

The reviewer points out that this article, which “disgraces the first number of the Magazine”, contradicts the emphasis of Thackeray’s prospectus which suggested that the magazine would avoid all political and contentious questions and would insist that “[a]t our social table, we shall suppose the ladies and children always present” (ibid).

If the deployment of his own name enabled Thackeray to use his established celebrity to launch a new journal, it imposed a certain set of restrictions on what he could say in his own person. While their novels of the 1830s and 1840s allowed Dickens and Thackeray to experiment with literary pseudonyms, the launch of their successful literary journals in 1850 and 1860 respectively provides an insight into the deployment of celebrity at the material level of periodicals. Instead of the disembodied editorial eidolons of the eighteenth-century, two of the most famous Victorian journals were attributed to two of the most celebrated contemporary novelists. It has been the purpose of this section to examine how the various representations of authorial and editorial work were involved with wider questions of the periodical press, the public sphere and anonymous versus named literary production. I would like to suggest that the representation of editorial figures
provides revealing insights into historical attitudes towards not simply periodical work but also the cultural significance of its material forms and social functions.

**Conclusion**

The opening of *The Spectator*, while attributing speech to a fictional eidolon, nevertheless creates an interesting relationship between notions of literary work, materiality and identity: “[...] and since I have neither Time nor Inclination to communicate the Fulness of my Heart in Speech, I am resolved to do it in Writing and to Print my self out, if possible before I die” (Mackie 82). The fictional figure, presented as reticent in “Speech”, desires to embrace periodical “Writing” to the extent that he can “Print my self out”. This process traces a passage from orality to writing and, finally, to print as the disembodied figure of Mr. Spectator comes into being through successive copies of *The Spectator*.

In an 1850 article in *Household Words*, the journal’s subeditor, W.H. Wills, discussed the “antecedents of the present race of Editors” and cites an eighteenth century view: “Oh, they are men worthy of commendation. They speak in print” (Wills 1850: 270). Capturing the sense of Mr. Spectator, who, “Print[s] my self out”, and Thackeray’s focus on periodical work as more akin to speech than writing, Wills’s choice of quote was also informed by what Ivan Kreilkamp has called the Victorian obsession with approaching print, especially novels, as “an inscribed voice” (Kreilkamp 125). From shorthand, which he mastered as a parliamentary reporter in the 1830s, to the performance of his novels as a celebrated author, Dickens’s career evinces an engagement with various techniques for relating the ephemerality of voice to the permanence of print. These techniques, and their different material conditions, opened up a range of paratextual spaces in which Dickens could represent his author-figure to readers in a ways which appealed to Victorian ideas of sympathy, celebrity and the changing function of the periodical press in a print culture focused on an unprecedented mass audience.

This chapter has focused on the rhetorical maneuvers that eighteenth- and nineteenth-century editors made when launching new journals. I have suggested that the opening address of a new journal was an important site not only for promoting the
new publication but also for representing the image of the editor and reading public associated with it. While Genette’s focus in *Paratexts* is primarily on works of fiction published in the form of books, his approach to paratext—as a set of bibliographical devices for assisting the “reception” of a literary text—also applies to the opening addresses of periodicals (Genette 1). As part of the promotional apparatus associated with the launching of a new journal, the primary role of the opening address is to attract readers. However, in positioning a new journal to best advantage, opening addresses must also make, if only implicitly, a range of claims about the purpose and role of the new journal, its engagement with political or social concerns and the figure of the editor under which the miscellaneous content of the journal will be united and through which the relationship between the journal and its audience will be mediated.

In order to understand the significant development represented by mid-nineteenth-century journals such as *Household Words* and *The Cornhill Magazine*, it is important to outline the editorial roles presented in eighteenth-century periodicals. If *The Spectator* was built around the conceit that members of its “club”, from Andrew Freeport, Sir Roger de Coverley and Will Honeycomb, represented the views of merchants, the landed aristocracy and ladies of fashion respectively, then the implication was that every sector of the reading public was represented by some “Body” contributing to *The Spectator* (Warner 103-4). Accompanying this focus on the “embodied” nature of contributors, who in their contributions represented the periodical’s different readers, was a corresponding “disembodiment” of the editor. The device of the eidolon acted as a guarantee that no single biographical figure would monopolize the “conversation” of the periodical. The implication was that the “body” of the public could speak but that this speech was most representative when marshalled under the aegis of an eidolon, rather than a named individual.

While eighteenth-century eidolons effaced the image of editorial and authorial labour, Victorian editors and authors, exemplified by Dickens, used their celebrity to interpellate a reading community based not only on their literary work but also on the range of associations accruing around their celebrated biographical identity. I have argued that this lead to a focus on the embodied figure of the author which had
significant consequences for Victorian attitudes towards the ideological work performed by literary periodicals and the social function of authors and editors.

A key characteristic associated with Dickens’s author-figure was the notion of an intimacy between author and reader which transgressed the potential anonymity of industrial-print capitalism. Through the medium of a periodical aimed at the family hearth (Kreilkamp 106) and a series of public readings, the representation of Dickens in relation to his audience “expresses nostalgia for face-to-face storytelling that print culture had long ago rendered unnecessary, though hardly extinct” (Brantlinger, The Reading Lesson, 14; qtd. in Kreilkamp 90). At the same time as enabling a nostalgic return to an outdated oral mode, Dickens’s author-figure represented an embrace of the structural conditions affecting the relationship between literature and the public sphere. As the eighteenth-century model based on reason and disembodied eidolons gave way to a print culture dominated by celebrity and sympathetic affection, Dickens emerged as the representative author of this transformation.

His relationship with his audience, as an embodied, celebrity author, was exemplified by the popular public readings he gave of his works. Helen Small has noted how these events allowed his readers to become visible as a community of readers, a “fiction reading public [that] was to a significant degree made visible to itself as a collectivity” at Dickens’s celebrated public appearances (Small 1996: 266). The core of her argument, which connects the “contemporary political debate about franchise reform” with the way Dickens’s personal performances created a sense of a specific and defined reading public (272), signals a renegotiation of the respective roles of authors and readers. As opposed to the disembodied eidolons of the eighteenth-century, Dickens’s biographical figure is of primary importance, and serves as a crucial, common focal point for a set of middle-class readers. Through the work of Dickens, these readers come face-to-face not only with the author but also with each other:

Because Dickens’s readership was perceived as the widest of his age, when the public heard him read they were in a sense offered their most authoritative experience of being a reading public. (276; original emphasis)
In each chapter of this study, I have suggested how Dickens used paratextual spaces to represent the characteristics of this reading public and his relationship with it. This study has focused on the various material forms in which these texts were issued and the resulting paratextual elements. I have argued that we can trace in this corpus of materials, a canonical Victorian author “forging the rhetorical agenda of his exemplary Victorian career” (Stewart 174). In each subsequent edition of his novels, Dickens continually modified the paratextual elements that constituted the new edition in order to reposition not only Dickens’s novel but also his career as whole to best advantage.

That he represented this author-figure as existing beyond the realm of a mere novelist is evident in the preface to the 1849 Cheap Edition of *Martin Chuzzlewit*. In this preface, which was part of a series aimed at “all classes of society” (Picker 148) Dickens is keen to stress the social utility of his literary work:

> In all the tales comprised in this cheap series, and in all my writings, I hope I have taken every possible opportunity of showing the want of sanitary improvements in the neglected dwellings of the poor. (Dickens 1849: ix)

In seeking to establish the relationship between literary work and society, Dickens is here attempting to negotiate a distinctive tension in Victorian publishing:

> Two opposite but mutually linked tendencies were going on at the same time, as though struggling to belong together: on the one hand, the establishment of literature as a distinct and defended area, also a separate profession and even an industry; on the other, within those forms, a counter-tendency which internally recommitted art—in its content, in its urgency—to the service of the world outside. (Davis 238; qtd. in Bevis 5)

In this context, the figure of the author provides a crucial battleground for various arguments about the commodity status, professional framework and social utility of contemporary literature. I argue throughout this study that the traces of these
important Victorian discussions can be found in representations of authorship inscribed at the material level of books.
Conclusion

As Lewis Roberts has noted, Foucault’s conception of the author-function is focused more on how “a culture views the act of writing” than on the “multiple ways by which textual objects come into being” (Roberts 4). However, it is the interaction between representations of literary work and the material conditions structuring its production that I argue is missing from Foucault’s approach. By assembling, examining and contextualising a range of paratextual elements, this study has traced the kind of “system[s] of valorization” (Foucault 1977: 115) in which Victorian authors such as Dickens and Thackeray were involved. In doing so, I have demonstrated that it is possible to provide a historically informed reading of Victorian authorship which uses paratextual elements and the materiality of their production to examine authors’ use of pseudonyms, the notion of professional authorship and the figures of serialised novelists as celebrities and literary editors.

I suggest that to make Foucault’s concept of the author-function more productive for a study of Victorian authorship, it is necessary to modify it so that it can account for the material conditions structuring nineteenth-century print culture. By focusing on the connections between these conditions, the paratextual elements that resulted from them and the subsequent representations of authorial work, this study contributes to recent critical efforts “to pay increasing attention to the material conditions and social relationships in which the practices of authors have been embedded” (Haynes 306). Acknowledging the work of Daniel Hack and Emily Steinlight on the material aspects of Victorian novels, this study has focused attention on the paratextual spaces opened up by serialised production. Examining contested questions of authorship in terms of an emerging conceptual category of the professional author, this study builds on Christine Haynes’s suggestion for reconceptualising “the study of authorship by considering changes in ideas about writing through the lens of parallel transformations in conceptions about work and labor more generally” (Haynes 304).

Focusing on notions of labour, whether manual or imaginative, provides a useful way of interpreting Victorian authorship without resorting to dogmatic Marxist assumptions about class or commodities. Acknowledging the drivers, mechanisms
and cultural paradoxes of the “industrial capitalist economy”, Michael Newbury advocates an approach to authorship that treats it:

[...] not as a product of a purely literary or intellectual history conventionally conceived, but within a broader history emphasizing varied and conflicting cultural paradigms embodied by particular forms of labor. Only in this way can we begin to grasp the complexities and anxieties about class status, gender and the place of an ‘artistic’ self-identity that accompanied the emergence of authorship as a profession within an incipiently industrial capitalist economy. (qtd. in Haynes 315)

The virtue of such a method has been demonstrated by N.N. Feltes in a chapter on “Gender, Profession and the Production of Middlemarch” (Feltes 1989: 36-56). Feltes’s discussion of George Eliot is part of an attempt to understand her work, as well as the novels of Dickens, Thackeray and Hardy, in terms of the historical and “material conditions” structuring “the production of Victorian novels” (ibid. ix). He examines serialisation from the perspective of what he terms the “commodity-text”, a type of commercial product emerging from the framework of Victorian print capitalism. For Feltes, the commodity-text functions as the “locus of surplus value” (ibid. 9) enabling publishers to generate increased profits from the production of literary commodities. According to his Marxist framework, Feltes’s analysis prioritises issues of class and economics:

Whether the commodity-text is to take the particular form of a series of books, a magazine serial, or a part-issue novel, series production, by allowing the bourgeois audience’s ideological engagement to be sensed and expanded, allows as well the greater extraction of ever greater surplus value from the very production (or ‘creative’) process itself. (ibid.)

But this description begs a number of questions focused around Feltes’s assertion that it is the “bourgeois audience’s ideological engagement” that can be “sensed and
expanded” through the “commodity-text”. What are we to make, for example, of the enormous success of the Penny Bloods and the cheap, weekly serials by G.W.M. Reynolds such as *The Mysteries of the Court of London* (1848-56)? These presented the example of a “commodity-text” addressing the “ideological engagement[s]” of an entirely different class of readers to the bourgeois audience Feltes describes. Moreover, what precisely does Feltes mean by the “creative” process? This is crucial as he locates this a process as the source of surplus-value yet nowhere does he dwell on a detailed definition of what it might entail.

I would suggest that, in terms of literary commodities, the source of surplus-value is neither an abstract “creative” process nor a physical commodity but, rather, the figure of the author. This is not to discount the valuable critical and historical insights of Feltes’s work; neither is it to promote a return to the “man-and-his-work” criticism of the nineteenth century; rather it is to rehabilitate the figure of the author as a subject of critical discussion and to show, using paratextual examples, how representations of authorship changed the surplus-value generated by novels and their discursive function in Victorian society. Approaches that reduce authors to functions of discourse, such as Foucault’s author-function, evade “questions of circulation and medium” (Warner 158). In the case of Foucault, this is evident in his notion of how “the name of the author remains at the contours of texts” and how it functions to separate these texts from each other (Foucault 1977: 123). In “What is an Author”, Foucault does not explain precisely where such “contours” operate. Specifying that texts are authored by a de-personalised author-function and insisting that they represent mere instantiations of discourse, Foucault collapses the difference between text and discourse, rendering non-existent the space where an author-function could emerge. The essential problem that Foucault fails to solve is what constitutes a “text” and how texts carry the traces of authorship that are used to separate them from other instances of discourse as well as other texts. The present study demonstrates that, in order to solve such problems, critical theory can benefit from a more materially focused, book-historical approach.

My argument in this study has been that paratext offers a corpus enabling a more historically grounded and theoretically informed analysis of authorship.
Moreover, I have demonstrated that the various representations of authorship associated with Dickens and Thackeray depended upon certain paratextual spaces specific to Victorian serial fiction. While volume editions had been published accompanied by bibliographical extras such as title pages, author portraits and prefaces since the Renaissance, the unique material conditions structuring Victorian serial publication meant that the transformation of a completed serial into a volume edition carried a new range of cultural consequences.

As described in Chapter 2, the serialisation of Victorian novels had a significant impact in terms of the literary use of pseudonyms and the relationship between a fictional, pseudonymous mask and the biographical figure of the author. Chapter 3 explored how Dickens and Thackeray used their mid-century novels to engage with competing notions of professional authorship, while Chapter 4 analysed their work as literary editors. Throughout these chapters, the focus has been on using paratext to perform a “sociohistorical analysis of the author’s persona” in Victorian England (Foucault 1984: 101). One of the key findings of this study is that paratextual spaces, deployed to create representations of authorship from the late 1830s, predated, and contributed to, the emerging discourse of literary celebrity that began in the 1840s and developed throughout the 1850s.

Thackeray’s lectures in the 1850s demonstrated the lucrative market for celebrated Victorian novelists able to perform their professional role in person as well as through the medium of print. These lectures were all the more interesting as they were delivered by a contemporary celebrity who was discussing the biographical details of famous English eighteenth-century novelists. An 1869 review in *The New Monthly Magazine* (1853-81) noted Thackeray’s biographical, rather than critical, focus: “It is indeed as men rather than authors—it is indeed biographically rather than critically, that Mr. Thackeray treats the English humorists who come before him” (Mackay 1869b: 263). It is notable that these lectures netted Thackeray the enormous sum of £9,500 as opposed to the mere £2,000 he had earned from *Vanity Fair* (Miller 1995: 27).

But it was Dickens’s reading tours of the 1850s and 1860s that made clear just how much cultural and commercial value had come to be vested in the embodied
figures of celebrity Victorian authors. Dickens’s public readings, “an innovation both in theatrical performance and in the role of the novelist”, were “extraordinarily celebrated and profitable” (Ferguson 729-30). Sarah Ferguson’s argument that Dickens “founded a more intimate notion of the author”, one based on the “new idea” that “the author is every reader’s domestic companion and friend”, is based on an analysis of some of the almost 500 public readings he gave between 1853 and 1870 (Ferguson 730).

Ferguson notes how, in a reading of *A Christmas Carol* on 28 December 1854, Dickens emphasised the “perfectly unfettered, cordial friendly sentiment” that existed between himself and the 3,700 members of the audience who he urged to “give expression to any emotion” that might arise (qtd. in Ferguson 742). Invoking the domestic intimacy encoded in the title of his journal *Household Words*, and a feature of his prefaces from *Nicholas Nickleby* in 1839, Dickens beseeches the audience to “imagine this a small social party assembled to hear a tale told round the Christmas fire” (ibid.). These readings were part of Dickens’s career-long process of “transforming the professional and financial relationship of reader and author as buyer and seller [...] into a type of relationship that elides such differences: friendship” (Ferguson 744).

My argument is that this notion of friendship and intimacy was not simply an unprompted readerly reaction but had been developed in the paratext to Dickens’s work from as early as the late 1830s. In addition, it was part of a rhetorical strategy for negotiating the transition from older forms of literary production based on patronage or small-scale subscription models to a Victorian periodical publication system implicated in the same marketplace as other mass-produced commodities. Finally, appeals to notions of an affective sympathy were, I suggest, part of a complex rhetorical process whereby Dickens sought to represent literary work both as a professional activity and as a special type of work transcending the marketplace. As his career developed, his image as a famous author was structured by, at the same time as it modified, Victorian representations of authorial labour. Throughout this study I have emphasised that these representations were not simply textual. Moving away from the textual focus in Genette’s approach in *Paratexts*, I have suggested that
any study of paratext and authorship must be attentive to visual representations of imaginative labour.

By mid-century, images of authors had become not only part of a lively visual culture, but also subject to what Gerard Curtis has called “the commodification of personality in celebrity images” (qtd. in Waters 36). This was a commercial development connected to technological innovations, such as the reproduction of high-quality photographs, as well as changing cultural attitudes to the figure of authors. Through the rise of the carte-de-visite and a range of commercial applications for exploiting photography, portraits became a central “promotional mechanism for products as well as for popular figures” (Waters 35-6). This is reflected in the myriad of advertisements littering the periodical press of the late 1850s and 1860s for various portraits of Dickens.

Messrs J. & C. Watkins noted in 1862 that the market had become flooded with “so many portraits of the novelist” that they felt the need to provide an accurate drawing “free from the comicalities and sentimentalities which disfigure” the other images on the market (Anon. 1862: 157). Appealing to a different target audience, J. Amadio used Dickens as part of a series capturing “LIVING CELEBRITIES” as “Microscopic objects”:

MICROSCOPE PHOTOGRAPHIC NOVELTIES - J. AMADIO 7

Throgmorton street has just produced the first two of a series of minute PHOTOGRAPHIC PORTRAITS of LIVING CELEBRITIES as Microscopic objects: CHARLES DICKENS and ALBERT SMITH. These minute works of art must be seen to be appreciated. (Anon. 1859b: 94)

Magazines used portraits, signatures and reviews of celebrity authors as a selling point to tempt potential buyers. In a September 1858 advertisement in The Athenaeum, The Critic appealed to readers’ interest in the author-figure of Dickens. The advertisement describes how the current issue of The Critic comes complete with a:
[...] beautifully executed portrait of Mr Charles Dickens (printed on toned paper, after a Photograph by Herbert Watkins), accompanied by a fac-similie of his Autograph and a Biographical sketch. The same Number will contain a review of all his Readings. (Anon. 1858: 284)

The equation of Dickens with both cultural and commercial value is exemplified by an 1858 advertisement for “No. 36 of the Illustrated News of the World and National Portrait Gallery of Eminent Personages” (Anon. 1858b: 444). This advertisement uses the figure of Dickens in a way that leaves no doubt as to the precise commercial value of the author’s image. While the price for the magazine is only 6d, the portrait of Dickens “alone [is] worth 2s 6d” (ibid). Thus, potential purchasers are asked to offset the 6d asking price of the magazine against the more valuable price tag associated with Dickens’s portrait.

The commodification of Dickens’s image was not just restricted to Europe. In 1867, the New York Herald commented on Dickens’s use of photography as a way to promote his American reading tour. Arguing that his agreement for an exclusive sitting with the photographer Gurney was a transparent move to assert the authority of ownership, they noted that Dickens was attempting to oppose the “pirated and counterfeit images by creating a profit making portrait trademark” (Curtis 1995: 236). Despite the hyperbole, the article reveals how significant Dickens’s image had become in America. The New York Herald proclaimed:

Since the dust of the Pharaohs was sold as nostrum and mummy became merchandise there has been nothing so precious and so wonderful in the market as the face of Charles Dickens [...] the happy merchant who possesses a monopoly of the real article should take all pains to prevent deceptions. Even in commodities of a viler stamp such precautions are necessary [...] (qtd. in Curtis 1995: 220)

The market-based terms that saturate the article (“merchandise”, “market”, “merchant”, “monopoly”, “real article” and “commodities”) configure the face of
Charles Dickens in the language of commodities, the same language that configured the “metonymic merchandise” that sprung from his novels. Emily Steinlight suggests that this involved a range of branded commodities trading on the popularity of the characters and the author-function of Dickens himself. She notes Jennifer Wicke’s observation that, in addition to the “Pickwick cigar” and the “Weller cab”, a host of other “Dickensian objects” emerged from the market:

Sairey Gamp umbrellas, Dolly Vardon aprons, Mr. Turveydrop shoe polish, Captain Cuttle tobacco, Micawber pens, canes, gaiters, hats, chintz fabrics imprinted with Dickens scenes, and even corduroy trousers came out with some variety of Dickens’s imprimatur. (Wicke qtd. in Steinlight 142)

I would suggest that if it is true that many of Dickens’s characters would take on an afterlife, as branded commodities or iconic cultural figures in their own right, it is also true that they continued to be linked, metonymically, back to the brain of the author from where they had emerged. They were forever connected to the iconic image of the head of Charles Dickens. It is this metonymy that is at stake in the Nicholas Nickleby frontispiece portrait (see fig.5), which Gerard Curtis notes produces “the effect of an extranarrative voice and point of view operating within the epistemology of the text’s marketplace” (Curtis 1995: 242). By including this fine-art portrait, evoking the eighteenth-century predecessors that made up the canon of English novelists, Dickens’s publishers were making an implicit comment about how readers were to interpret the imaginative labour of the figure, Dickens, emerging from behind the shadow of his periodical pseudonym. An important finding of this study is that, unlike Genette’s almost exclusively textual focus in Paratexts, the representation of authorship in Victorian England was intimately tied to developments in contemporary visual culture.

In 1861 a caricature appeared showing Dickens with an oversized head and a miniature body (see fig. 16). He is portrayed sitting at his desk with his pen in one hand and with the other, “tapping his forehead to knock out an idea” (Dickens 1997e:
400). The image, one that Dickens seems to have enjoyed immensely,\textsuperscript{32} is worth examining in detail, especially in light of the caption that appeared underneath.

\begin{figure}[h!]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{caricature.jpg}
\caption{Charles Lyall Caricature of Charles Dickens, 1861. Reproduced in Priestley 1961: 107}
\end{figure}

The caricature presents an iconographic representation of authorship that speaks to the key concerns addressed in this study. Representing an embodied scene of writing, the caricature makes an implicit comment on the type of imaginative labour performed by Dickens. While his body is shown in its entirety, sitting on the edge of

\textsuperscript{32} In a letter of 8 July 1861, while he was still writing the final instalments of \textit{Great Expectations}, Dickens described his reaction to the caricature: “[...] it made me laugh when I first came upon it, until I shook in open sun-lighted Piccadilly” (Dickens 1997e: 400).
a chair with the legs childishly twisted under a desk, it is presented as an almost insignificant appendage when compared to Dickens’s over-proportioned head. The hand that is holding the pen is presented as if it is almost disassociated from Dickens so that the author does not even need to watch its progress across the page. Unlike the “hand that writes these faltering lines” that Dickens describes in in “A Preliminary Word”, the 1861 caricature relocates the focus of authorial work from the materiality of hands and pages to the imaginative labour involved in the composition of serial fiction.

Indeed, one way to read this caricature is in terms of the division of labour encoded in its visual language. While the more mechanical, repetitive task of writing is relegated to a forgotten hand, the focus is on the imaginative labour involved in providing words for the hand to transcribe. With his chair pushed back from the desk, and his face looking directly at the viewer, Dickens’s imaginative labour is not presented as an activity primarily associated with work. Instead, the viewer is brought face-to-face with a famous celebrity author and invited to see the production of serialised fiction as a unique type of imaginative activity.

While this focus on Dickens’s inspired, imaginative effort is similar to Maclise’s famous 1839 portrait of Dickens, there is a significant difference: in the Maclise portrait, Dickens stares to the left in authorial reverie; in contrast, the 1861 caricature presents Dickens staring directly at the viewer as if, in acknowledging the “great expectations” of his audience, his creative process is spurred into action. Punning on the title of the novel Dickens serialised from December 1860 until August 1861 in *All the Year Round*, the caricature deploys a visual language that bespeaks an interest in the imaginative activity of a contemporary author in the process of completing a popular serial novel in the pages of his own weekly magazine.

Noting the “universal magazine writing” dominating the publishing worlds of France and England in 1861, *The Publisher’s Circular* described that “this system of publishing” provided works “in the pages of a popular periodical” that came “warm from the brain” of authors (Anon. 1861d: 1). This evocative sense of fiction being composed from week to week captures the rhetorical potency of the figure of the
author. At the same time that the incessant demands of the periodical press required constant works “warm from the brain”, readers developed an affection for the authors that produced this work and an interest in their biographical identities. The management of these identities became increasingly important for authors such as Dickens and Thackeray whose names came to function as a kind of brand legitimising and promoting their serial fiction and periodical magazines. I have argued that in their use of paratextual elements, and in their statements about authorship in their fiction, magazines and public speeches, Dickens and Thackeray represented themselves in specific ways in relation to the contemporary marketplace, in general, and other authors, in particular.

Dickens’s obituary on Thackeray, published in the *The Cornhill Magazine*, provides a particularly interesting example. In this memorial notice, Dickens not only makes explicit the aesthetic and ethical principles governing their roles as authors, but also promotes the forthcoming serial publication of Thackeray’s unfinished novel. Describing himself as Thackeray’s “old comrade and brother in arms”, Dickens praises the former for his “refined knowledge of character”, “his delightful playfulness as an essayist” and for his “mastery over the English language” (Tillotson and Hawes 320 322). In a telling phrase, he notes how Thackeray’s imprimatur had been stamped on *The Cornhill Magazine* “from the first of the series” and how its editor’s new magazine had been “beforehand accepted by the Public through the strength of his great name” (ibid. 322; emphasis added).

Acknowledging the power of an author’s name in promoting the success of a new journal, Dickens immediately shifts focus to introduce the delicate matter of how that journal would posthumously publish its founding editor’s unfinished novel: “But, on the table before me, there lies all that he had written of his latest and last story” (ibid. 322). Expressing his sadness as a writer tracing the evidence of “matured designs never to be accomplished”, Dickens nevertheless commends the manuscript claiming that it demonstrates that Thackeray was “in the healthiest vigour of his powers when he wrought on this last labour” (ibid.). In terms of “earnest feeling, far-seeing purpose, character, incident, and a certain living picturesqueness blending the whole”, Dickens declares that this is “much the best” of all Thackeray’s works (ibid.)
Thus, at the same time as commemorating Thackeray, this obituary, published in *The Cornhill Magazine* in February 1864, paved the way for the publication of his unfinished novel, which began the following month and continued until June 1864. Dickens’s “In Memoriam” both asks readers to grieve for the recently deceased editor and prepares them to read his final work. Discussing the unfinished state of the novel, Dickens focuses on its manuscript form in a way which illustrates the connections between materiality, serial fiction and authorship that have been the focus of this study:

The last line he wrote, and the last proof he corrected, are among these papers through which I have so sorrowfully made my way. The condition of the little pages of manuscript where Death stopped his hand, shows that he had carried them about, and had often taken them out of his pocket here and there, for patient revision and interlineation. (ibid.)

Implicitly casting Dickens in the role of Thackeray’s posthumous editor, this description is notable for its material focus on the “little pages of manuscript” and the traces of Thackeray that remain evident there. Preserving the work exactly as it was when “Death stopped his hand”, Thackeray’s manuscript conjures the image of an author, shuttling “here and there”, taking out his pages for “patient revision”.

The ghostly presence of the recently departed author-editor is captured by the untitled wood-engraving which follows Dickens’s tribute to Thackeray (see fig. 15). In a testament to the cultural significance of authorship, the absence of the author is the structural principle upon which the meaning of the picture depends. Presenting a view of Thackeray’s bereft of activity, the image nevertheless locates the author’s chair in a beam of light suggesting the imaginative labour that lately took place.
Depicting the environment in which great work has lately been composed, this picture generates its pathos from the author’s absence. As serial novelists and editors of popular periodicals, a characteristic element of the literary work of Dickens and Thackeray was that it was often highly anticipated by readers following the original serialisation schedule. This mode of production had a significant impact not only on the literary work performed by authors but also on the representations and cultural significance of that work. While it was difficult to categorise their work as productive in terms of the dominant, nineteenth-century ideas of political economy, the enormous popularity of serial authors generated profits that could not be denied even by the form’s fiercest critics.

But the cultural value of a serial author was an issue that exceeded simple questions of commerce. It extended to a metaphysical problem at the material level of the text about the relationship between periodical instalments and the novel. Victorian
readers in the 1830s and 1840s were faced with the interesting generic question of how to classify the serial fiction being written by authors such as Dickens and Thackeray. As Chittick notes, the shift in terms of the reception of Dickens was marked by a transition of the reviews for his work from the “Magazine” to the “Literature” columns of periodicals (Chittick x-xi). But this introduced a further question: if the works of Dickens and Thackeray could be described as “Literature” how would one categorise an unfinished serial by these authors?

Dickens died in June 1870, midway through serialising *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*. In a similar way to Thackeray and Gaskell, who died while writing the serial novels *Denis Duval* (1864) and *Wives and Daughters* (1864-66) respectively, Dickens provided his Victorian publishers and readers with the problem of how to approach an unfinished, and unfinishable novel, by the great “inimitable”. Adopting a direct approach, Chapman and Hall tersely declare on the recto of the title page to *Edwin Drood*: “All that was left in manuscript of EDWIN DROOD is contained in the Number now published—the sixth” (Dickens 1980: no page). They then inform readers that the final page “had not been written two hours” when Dickens died (ibid.). This event, inscribed at the material level of *Edwin Drood* by its incomplete state and statements on this incompleteness, is reflected in the way the publishers chose to end the final instalment.

Chapman and Hall, who together with Dickens had revolutionised Victorian publishing with the success of *The Pickwick Papers*, faced the question of how to give some sense of a finality to a work that was, by definition, unfinished. Through the choice of a paratextual marker to represent the last line of Dickens’s text, the typography of the page captures the issues involved in publishing the final part of an unfinished serial (see fig. 17). This is not only because of the unknowable text lurking below the asterisks, but also because of the interaction between this final text and its paratext.

The unfinished paragraph, marked by the asterisks, was positioned on the left-hand side of a double page and was placed opposite the title page. The latter, a bibliographic extra and prerequisite for collecting and republishing serial instalments as volumes, sits in an interesting tension with the incompleteness marked by the
asterisks and the blank space below them. If title pages normally provide the paratextual assurance of a complete volume, this title page makes the normal promise of material completeness while facing the surest sign of the novel’s unfinished status.

Thus, in this final publishing paradox, the career of Dickens ends with an unfinished serial entering the domain of volume editions. Before 1836, the text for a volume edition of a new novel was completed before the volume was printed. Dickens’s career had a significant impact on the way periodical content, previously outside the domain of volume publication, came to be included in the subsequent editions of serialised novels. His final work, interrupted by death, created a publishing situation that would have been unthinkable in 1836: the publication of an incomplete novel as a volume.

Figure 17: Final Page of *Edwin Drood*, Part VI, September 1870.
Reproduced in Dickens 1980: 190.
Chapman and Hall included a final portrait of Dickens as the frontispiece to *Edwin Drood*. In a similar way to the final page of the novel examined above, the portrait evokes the ghostly sense of the recently-departed author (see fig. 18).

Figure 18: Portrait of Dickens preceding final, unfinished text of September 1870 edition of *Edwin Drood*. Reproduced in Dickens 1980b: no page.

The unfinished serial, published as a volume complete with frontispiece, title page and an address to readers, stands as a testament to the demands of the industrial-capitalist marketplace. Dickens was dead, but Dickens must still be published. This reflects the cultural tension between Dickens as a producer of text, a maker of what Feltes, following Marx, terms “surplus-value”, and Dickens as a beloved, national author. The frontispiece to *Edwin Drood* manages to capture these dual aspects.

Rather than facing his unfinished text, Dickens’s portrait points in the direction of the facing page. Significantly, this page is blank, allowing the portrait to function
both as a memorial to the author and as a metaphor for the cessation of his imaginative labour: just as the page below the asterisks is empty (see fig. 17), so the portrait’s orientation towards a blank page emphasises the end of literary production “warm from the brain” of Dickens. If Dickens’s current imaginative process was the focus of the 1861 caricature (see fig. 16), then Chapman and Hall’s choice of this portrait and its relationship to the materiality of the page suggest a eulogy to Dickens’s imaginative activity at the time of its passing.

Such visual eulogies to Dickens’s imaginative labour are the unifying aspect of two famous pictures produced to commemorate his death. The first, entitled “The Empty Chair” was painted by Luke Fildes on the day Dickens died (see fig. 19).

Figure 19: “The Empty Chair”, Gad’s Hill. 7 June 1870. Painting by Luke Fildes. Reproduced in Ackroyd Pl.9, between 816-7.

As the illustrator to the unfinished *Edwin Drood*, Fildes would have been more sensitive than most to the sudden absence of Dickens from his desk given that he was professionally involved in illustrating the text that Dickens suddenly stopped producing. The focus on the author’s room and the eerie absence of the author can be traced back to the picture accompanying Dickens’s “In Memoriam” for Thackeray in *The Cornhill Magazine*. Interestingly, while critics have noted the iconographic importance of the desk in images depicting Dickens, (Miller 1997) the connection to the picture of Thackeray’s desk has remained unnoticed.
Two years later after Dickens died, R.W. Buss, who had been dismissed as the second illustrator of *The Pickwick Papers* in 1836, reinserted Dickens into the iconography of his study (see fig. 20). It is interesting to note that this portrait presents the author sat back from his desk in a reverie that suggests an imaginative activity in no way connected to professional labour.

![Figure 20: R.W. Buss, “Dickens’s Dream,” c.1872. Reproduced in Bowen and Patten 2006: 70.](image)

The spectral images of his various characters surround the author, with the those closest to his body portrayed as more vivid than the characters floating out of the window. Significantly, not only are the characters more vivid the further they are
from Dickens’s desk, but the author himself is beyond arm’s reach of his writing materials. This suggests that whatever activity is being represented, it is not immediately connected with writing. The picture presents an iconographic representation of authorship that locates imaginative work as an activity beyond the marketplace and, indeed, beyond even the materiality of the page.

In a discussion of Wendy Wall’s *The Imprint of Gender: Authorship and Publication in the English Renaissance* (1993), Christine Haynes advocates Wall’s analysis for the same kind of sociohistorical approach to paratext that has been used in this study:

> Through the innovative analysis of the physical features as well as the rhetorical tropes of Renaissance texts, including layouts, images, title pages, and prefaces, Wall shows how male writers struggled to defend their authority against the stigma that surrounded circulation of a work in print to the general public, rather than in manuscript for a gentlemanly coterie. (Haynes 302-3)

Victorian authors were faced with a “stigma” associated not with printed work per se, but with printed work designed to be sold as mass-produced literary commodities. Throughout this study I have shown how a detailed examination of paratextual elements enables scholars to trace the rhetorical negotiations deployed by authors as they staged the first issue and subsequent republication of their work in serial and volume format. I have explained how the use of pseudonyms was part of a strategy on the part of authors like Dickens and Thackeray to differentiate their biographical identities from their work in the periodical press. If both authors later claimed this work back under their own names it was part of publication process at the material level of the book predicated on the “physical features” and “rhetorical tropes” that enabled authors, publishers and readers to differentiate between editions.

This study is not meant to provide an exhaustive list of the various editions of work by Dickens and Thackeray. Instead, the purpose has been to demonstrate how to identify, contextualise and theoretically examine some of the most interesting differences between these editions in order to provide a historically grounded analysis.
of Victorian authorship. The various covers, titles, frontispieces, prefaces, layouts, illustrations and typography accompanying successive issues of a serial enable scholars to track the way that certain novels were deployed in relation to the author's career and a broader history of authorship.

Enabling the analysis of both textual and visual elements, the methodology used in this study demonstrates a need to extend Genette’s approach as described in *Paratexts* beyond the exclusively textual. Moreover, in showing how the material conditions structuring the production of serialised novels can be related to a study of authorship, I have demonstrated that paratext represents a rich corpus for tracing the “sociohistorical persona of authors” (Foucault 1984: 101). As a mostly unexamined corpus of materials, paratext offers a revealing way for scholars to track how authors and publishers engaged with the contradictions, challenges and enormous possibilities afforded by the rapidly expanding market for Victorian serialised novels.
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Summary

The purpose of this study is to demonstrate the influence of material conditions and paratextual elements on representations of authorship. Focusing on representations of authorial work at the material level of the book and the figure of the author that emerged from such representations, this study provides a historical and critical investigation of Victorian paratextual elements such as pseudonyms, titles, frontispieces, illustrations, authors’ portraits, prefaces, postfaces and other addresses to readers. Using these paratextual elements as part of a critical re-evaluation of Foucault’s concept of the author-function and Genette’s concept of paratext, I demonstrate that for these concepts to be productively applied to the study of Victorian serial novels they need to be modified with a more historically-oriented focus. This study proposes such a focus and describes how it can account for the material conditions structuring the production of Victorian serial novels and the representations of authorial labour associated with these novels.

By assembling, examining and contextualising a corpus of paratextual elements, this study traces the rhetorical and iconic processes inscribed at the material level of the book through which the authorial figures of Charles Dickens and William Thackeray were formed. As two of the most prominent authors of their day, and as serial novelists who were active at the form’s genesis, the careers of these authors provide the appropriate corpus for the theoretical focus of this study.

In order to examine the paratextual elements of their work with due attention to the material and historical context, the study broadens the theoretical focus beyond Foucault’s discursive approach and Genette’s privileging of textual elements. Throughout chapters on the use of pseudonyms, the professionalisation of authorship and the emergence of celebrity authors and editors, this study considers the various legal, economic, commercial and technological forces structuring the production of Victorian periodical print. It interrogates the structures of finance and the industrial-capitalist forces that drove the production of literary commodities in Victorian England in order to explain how Dickens and Thackeray used paratext to position their literary work in the contemporary marketplace.
Establishing the connection between the materiality of serial fiction and representations of authorship, this study argues for a reassessment of Foucault’s theory of the author-function and Genette’s approach to paratext. In proposing the importance of paratext for book historians and literary theorists, I argue that this neglected corpus offers a new perspective on Victorian literary careers, the history of the novel and theoretical approaches to authorship.
Samenvatting

Het doel van deze dissertatie is om de materiële eigenschappen en paratekstuele elementen in de representatie van auteurschap aan het daglicht te brengen. Door te focussen op de representaties van auteurschap op het materiële niveau van het boek en de auteurfiguur die hierbij ontstond, biedt deze studie een geschiedkundige en kritische analyse van Victoriaanse paratekstuele elementen zoals pseudoniemen, titels, titelplaten, illustraties, portretten van auteurs, voor- en nawoorden, en andere teksten die aan de lezer gericht zijn. Door deze vormen van paratekst te gebruiken in een kritische herbeoordeling van Foucaults concept van *author-function* en Genettes ideeën over paratekst, laat ik zien dat deze concepten pas productief kunnen worden ingezet bij het bestuderen van Victoriaanse feuilletons en romans met een meer historische focus. Deze studie stelt zo’n focus voor en beschrijft hoe het de materiële eigenschappen helpt te verklaren die structuur geven aan de productie van Victoriaanse feuilletons en romans, alsmede de daarmee geassocieerde representaties van auteurschap.

Door een corpus van paratekstuele elementen te verzamelen, te onderzoeken en te contextualiseren, beschrijft deze studie de retorische en symbolische processen waaruit het boek op een materieel niveau bestaat en waardoor de auteurfiguren van Charles Dickens en William Thackeray konden worden gevormd. Aangezien zij de twee meest prominente schrijvers van hun tijd zijn en omdat hun werk vorm heeft gegeven aan de serieproductie van literatuur, zijn Dickens en Thackeray bij uitstek geschikt voor het corpusonderzoek voor de theoretische focus van deze studie.

Deze dissertatie kijkt ook voorbij de theoretische horizon van Foucaults aanpak van discours alsmede Genettes bevoorrechting van tekstuele elementen, zodat de werken van Dickens en Thackeray met de juiste hoeveelheid aandacht voor hun materiële en historische context kunnen worden bestudeerd. Met hoofdstukken over het gebruik van pseudoniemen, de professionalisering van het auteurschap en de opkomst van beroemdheid onder schrijvers en redacteurs, bekijkt deze studie de verscheidene juridische, economische, commerciële en technologische krachten die de Victoriaanse productie van periodieke publicaties stuurden. Het onderzoekt de
financiële structuren en industrieelkapitalistische krachten die de productie van literaire handelswaren in Victoriaans Engeland voortdreeven om zo te verklaren hoe Dickens en Thackeray paratekst gebruikten om hun werk in de markt te positioneren.

Door de relatie tussen de materiële eigenschappen van periodiek gepubliceerde fictie en representaties van auteurschap aan te geven, pleit deze studie voor een revaluatie van Foucaults theorie van *author-function* en van Genettes benadering van paratekst. Door paratekst naar voren te schuiven als een belangrijke overweging voor boekgeschiedkundigen en literaire theoretici, toont deze studie aan dat dit verwaarloosde corpus een nieuw perspectief biedt op Victoriaanse literaire carrières, de geschiedenis van de roman en de theoretische benadering van auteurschap.