University of Southampton

Faculty of Arts and Humanities

School of English

Pickwick in the Papers: Charles Dickens and the Politics of Remediation in the Newspaper Press, 1836-1870

by

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Abstract

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From the moment of its first publication in March 1836, Charles Dickens's first serial novel *The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club* (1836–37) was re-purposed extensively by the newspaper press. From acting as innocuous filler material, to making strategic political statements, *Pickwick* was used in a variety of rich and tactical ways: it was plundered for its anecdotes, which were liberally excerpted for literary and 'Varieties' columns; its characters and scenes were adapted to form political commentaries; and it was disguised as spurious news items or self-help pieces under new headings. Its individual scenes and characters became familiar bywords for both journalists and readers, deployed and absorbed as part of political discussion and debate, and appearing in a wealth of different columns – from leaders and letters to the editor, to reports of public readings and political gatherings. This project examines the motivations behind and impact of this extensive journalistic phenomenon, reading *Pickwick*'s remediation as a valuable index to a considerable and critically understudied area of nineteenth-century media history. Crucially, the thesis demonstrates that literature can be found at the very heart of newspapers' political strategies, as in their columns they carved out political identities both for themselves and for their communities of active readers.

Using a replicable, data-driven methodology, the thesis examines digitised newspapers in the British Newspaper Archive in order to draw new connections between the literary, journalistic and political realms. In doing so, it reads *Pickwick*'s words and tropes as rhetorical devices that were successfully mobilised in, and that drew together, all three of these spheres, as part of a networked, trans-genre debate. The project brings new material to light, including previously uncatalogued reviews and excerpts, evidence of dozens of public readings for which *Pickwick* became part of a programme of entertainment or education, and two politically strategic newspaper adaptations of the serial that have as yet eluded critical notice. Across its three chapters, which respectively examine the excerpting, adaptation and evocation of *Pickwick* both during its initial serialisation and throughout Dickens's lifetime, the project questions what the re-use of *Pickwick* in the newspaper press can tell us about the role played by popular literature in nineteenth-century political discourse; in what ways the serial's style and structure influenced the nature and extent of its use in the press; and how attention to journalistic remediation can nuance our understanding of Dickens's relationship with the reception of his works.

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Title of thesis: Pickwick in the Papers: Charles Dickens and the Politics of Remediation in the Newspaper Press, 1836-1870

I declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

I confirm that:

4. This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
5. Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
6. Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
7. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
8. I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
9. Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
10. None of this work has been published before submission.

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Date: Monday 31st January 2022

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Much like the madcap adventures of the Pickwickians themselves, my Ph.D. journey has been greatly enriched by the many serendipitous connections, warm friendships, and moments of discovery that I am fortunate enough to have been afforded during these past three years.

This project really began back in 2016 as an undergraduate essay I wrote for a final-year module 'Victorian Bestsellers', which remains the most memorable course I have ever taken. After dragging myself through *Pickwick* by the ears the previous summer (without really understanding its appeal, it must be said!) this course introduced me to the wonderful richness of nineteenth-century print culture and reception history, lending new purpose and scope to my readings of literary texts. It was as a result of that module that I fell in love with both Dickens's writing and the delightfully messy, miscellaneous politics of the nineteenth-century newspaper press in which I have been immersed ever since.

For this reason, I owe by far the greatest debt of gratitude to my supervisors: Justine Pizzo and Mary Hammond. Both Justine and Mary taught me on Victorian Bestsellers and have been unfaltering in their encouragement of my academic ambitions. It is to Mary that I owe the origins of my fascination with the nineteenth century—which was gently encouraged during both her undergraduate classes and office hours—and from whom I learned to celebrate the thrill of the detective work involved in following a research thread that is quite your own. From Justine, I have learned a grounded, substantiated writing voice, as a result of her rigorous, patient mode of editing my work. Even when faced with a barrage of interesting writing habits (and an incorrigible use of the passive voice, by me…) Justine has remained a staunch and encouraging mentor throughout this project.

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Throughout this project, I have been enormously lucky to find numerous mentors outside my supervisory team whose support and encouragement have added new dimensions to my thinking, keeping my enthusiasm for my work alive even at the most challenging moments. I owe warm thanks to Ruth Livesey for offering me valuable opportunities to share my work on the provincial press as part of her BAVS panel strand, and I am also very grateful to Andrew King for his objective, kindly guidance about navigating the academic world. My thanks is also

due to Carolyn Oulton, for allowing me to participate in the rich discussions surrounding the Kent Maps project, as well as showing me that Dickens jokes really can be funny – you just have to find the right audience. Finally, thinking right back to the beginning of my journey in Higher Education, I would like to thank Emma Woozeer, Southampton's Access to Southampton co-ordinator, for her unwavering mentorship during the past seven years, and for the many opportunities to which A2S gave rise.

As well as mentors, I would like to acknowledge the excellent friends who have stuck with me throughout this project and made the journey all the more enjoyable as a result. First and most importantly, I would like to thank Emma Hills, my staunchest friend throughout the madness that has been completing a Ph.D. during a pandemic. Thank you for always being there to share in its successes and tribulations. Perhaps now is a good time to apologise for my incessant bad jokes about Disraeli… To Cleo O'Callaghan Yeoman, I also owe tremendous thanks for her infectious cheerfulness and the madcap Skype chats that were always a welcome break from the thesis.

I am extremely grateful to Charlotte Roundell, whose brilliant conversation (usually accompanied by shopping and some very serious pizza-eating) never fails to cheer me up, and to Fi Bowler and Anisha Netto, my fellow Wolfson scholars at Southampton, for the camaraderie we have shared during our parallel journeys. For their constant friendship since our undergraduate years together at Southampton, I would also like to thank Anna Kennington and Cameron Ridgway. Finally sharing niche and eye-rollingly nerdy jokes with the "Dickens set", especially Lydia Craig, Christian Lehmann and Catherine Quirk has been a joyful catalyst for this project and a pleasure I hope will continue for years to come.

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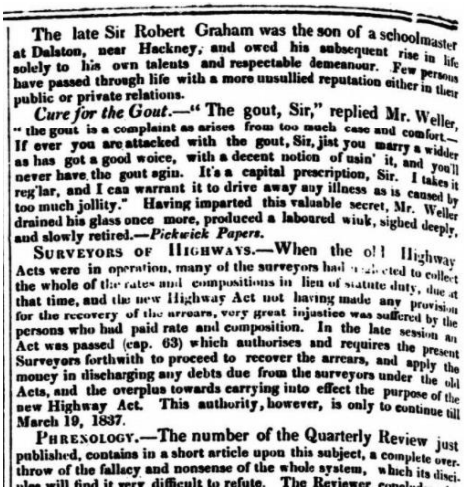
This thesis is dedicated to my family, for keeping my feet on the ground, for making me laugh when I risked taking myself too seriously, and for ensuring that, no matter how reluctant I felt, I always, always, asked the question.

Introduction

From the moment of its initial publication in March 1836, Charles Dickens's first serial novel *The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club* (1836–37) was re-purposed extensively by the newspaper press. From acting as innocuous filler material, to making strategic political statements, *Pickwick* circulated through the papers in a variety of rich and tactical ways: it was plundered for its anecdotes, which were liberally excerpted for 'Varieties' columns; its characters and scenes were adapted into strategic political commentaries; and it was disguised as spurious news items or self-help pieces under new headings. Its individual scenes and characters became familiar bywords for both journalists and readers, deployed and absorbed as part of political discussion and debate, and appearing in a wealth of different columns – from leaders and letters to the editor, to reports of public readings and political gatherings. This project examines the motivations behind and the impact of this extensive journalistic phenomenon, understanding it as an index to a considerable and critically understudied area of nineteenth-century media history, in which literature can be found at the very heart of newspapers' rhetorical strategies, as they carved out geographical, political and cultural identities for themselves and their communities of active readers.

Even the most seemingly innocuous examples of *Pickwick* in the newspapers prove rich generic palimpsests capable of revealing illuminating reception trajectories. Let us take for example just one of the hundreds of short extracts from *Pickwick* published in the press during its serial run. Figure 1 below shows a reprinted scene published in the *Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette* in October 1836, entitled 'Cure for the Gout'.



The late Sir Robert Graham was the son of a schoolmaster at Dalston, near Hackney, and owed his subsequent rise in life solely to his own talents and respectable demeanour. Few persons have passed through life with a more unsullied reputation either in their public or private relations.

Cure for the Gout.—"The gout, Sir," replied Mr. Weller, "the gout is a complaint as arises from too much ease and comfort.—If ever you are attacked with the gout, Sir, jist you marry a widder as has got a good woice, with a decent notion of usin' it, and you'll never have the gout agin. It's a capital prescription, Sir. I takes it reg'lar, and I can warrant it to drive away any illness as is caused by too much jollity." Having imparted this valuable secret, Mr. Weller drained his glass once more, produced a laboured wink, sighed deeply, and slowly retired.—*Pickwick Papers.*

SURVEYORS OF HIGHWAYS.—When the old Highway Acts were in operation, many of the surveyors had neglected to collect the whole of the rates and compositions in lieu of statute duty, due at that time, and the new Highway Act not having made any provision for the recovery of the arrears, very great injustice was suffered by the persons who had paid rate and composition. In the late session an Act was passed (cap. 63) which authorises and requires the present Surveyors forthwith to proceed to recover the arrears, and apply the money in discharging any debts due from the surveyors under the old Acts, and the overplus towards carrying into effect the purpose of the new Highway Act. This authority, however, is only to continue till March 19, 1837.

PHRENOLOGY.—The number of the Quarterly Review just published, contains in a short article upon this subject, a complete overthrow of the fallacy and nonsense of the whole system, which its disci-

Figure 1: 'Cure for the Gout', *Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette*

This extract is taken from a scene in the seventh number of *Pickwick*, during which Tony Weller relates some sage advice about why marrying a widow is a good cure for the gout, because doing so incites such an effective state of domestic misery that it can 'drive away any illness as is caused by too much jollity'.[1] In addition to its status as an excerpt, this short, embedded piece of text can also be understood as a comic anecdote, as in the context of the rest of the serial it formed an additional layer to *Pickwick*'s frame narrative. This status as a portable, embedded fragment means that when it is placed in the newspaper, in a 'Varieties' column, it takes on the aura of a standalone joke and does not rely upon surrounding context. Nonetheless, in its new journalistic setting, the joke also incorporated a new heading—'A Cure for the Gout'—that made it appear as if it was a piece of news, an extract from a medical self-help book, or even a recipe, blurring the boundaries between fact and fiction, the comic and the medically serious. This particular extract is also bookended by two very different articles: the first is an unattributed snippet which extols the uprightness of a late judge, Sir Robert Graham, for his reputation as a self-made man (which contrasts facetiously with the henpecked Tony Weller seeking refuge from his wife in chronic illness) and a legally dense article about the history of the Highways Act – odd company that unsettles the *Pickwick* anecdote's status as a fictional joke. Finally, an attribution—'*Pickwick Papers*'—which is presented at the bottom of the extract, brings the piece full circle by acknowledging its source as a piece of serial fiction, although the reference is characteristically miniscule and potentially oblique to those unfamiliar with Dickens's narrative.

When viewed in aggregate, the internal complexity of examples like this make for a rather messy, heterogeneous phenomenon, that included not only excerpts but various other kinds of text that incorporated words and tropes from *Pickwick* in more integrated ways. Nonetheless, the shared journalistic venue of these pieces, and the illuminating rhetorical patterns that can be traced between examples that at a first glance seem formally very different from one another, means that they benefit from being considered as a discrete, newspaper-based reception trajectory that formed a crucial branch of the *Pickwick* phenomenon. Yet what we might term this vicarious, strategic, and often intensely political circulation of *Pickwick* in the press is by no means a straightforward issue. Even the most capacious descriptors usually deployed to categorise the cultural products of the *Pickwick* phenomenon, including theatrical adaptations, merchandise and spin-off serials, somehow seem insufficient here. We might, for example, refer to this phenomenon as a form of 'literary afterlife', given its recent precise, yet

[1] 'Cure for the Gout', *Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette*, 06 October 1836, p. 2 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000360/18361006/010/0002> [Accessed: 06/08/2021].

accommodating definition in Joanna Hofer-Robinson's *Dickens and Demolition*, in which she describes afterlives as 'linked cultural products or expressions, inspired by, but not replicating, an original source'.[2] Hofer-Robinson argues that Dickensian afterlives were used variously to contribute to discussions about urban improvements and demolition projects in London. As well as newspaper sources, she discusses theatrical adaptations and their scenic elements, references to Dickens in philanthropic documents, and the use of his characters and tropes in charitable events. In doing so, she demonstrates the potential political and cultural stakes of the circulation of Dickens's work, concluding persuasively that the strategic deployment of the fictional world can facilitate material impacts.[3] And yet, 'afterlives' inevitably places a regrettable emphasis on the idea of 'afterness', which, for my purposes here, does not quite acknowledge the fact that extracts especially were often printed in the newspapers within days of the publication of a number of Dickens's serial, with newspapers repeatedly expressing apologies or blaming their suppliers if their notice was late.[4] For this reason, while true simultaneity of publication was of course unachievable for newspaper editors, when examined closely, often *Pickwick*'s journalistic 'afterlife' feels more like a journalistic parallel life, as the responses to *Pickwick* kept pace with the release of each new instalment.

As an alternative, and as a means of balancing the agency wielded by newspapers as they re-shaped *Pickwick*, with the arguable moral dubiousness of the process, we might consider these *Pickwick*-adjacent texts to be 'appropriations'. However here, the term's critical lineage—beginning most notably with Julia Kristeva, and channelled more recently by Julie Sanders in her *Adaptation and Appropriation*—causes immediate difficulty. Kristeva understands adaptation, appropriation and quotation to be three distinct subsections of 'intertextuality'. It is this understanding of intertextuality that Sanders builds upon, by explicitly stating that as her project is about adaptation and appropriation, it is *not* about quotation.[5] A significant portion of the data discussed in this project deals with precisely these kinds of 'quotations', whereby the creativity of the newspaper editors is concentrated at the thresholds of reprinted verbatim excerpts. At the same time, I urge that these quotations be included as part of the same journalistic phenomenon as, for example, the two newspaper adaptations of *Pickwick* I discuss in Chapter 2, or the evocation of half-remembered *Pickwick* tropes brought into leaders and letters to the editor that I analyse in Chapter 3, precisely because there is so often a slippage

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[2] Joanna Hofer-Robinson, *Dickens and Demolition* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018) p. 7.
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] See for example, 'The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club, No. XIV', *Taunton Courier*, Wednesday 31 May 1837, p. 6 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/BL/0000348/18370531/052/0006> [Accessed: 29/01/2021].
[5] Julie Sanders, *Adaptation and Appropriation* (London: Routledge, 2015) p. 4.

between these different means of evoking *Pickwick* or because one form of writing is disguised as another.

For the purposes of this project then, it is clear that established key terms are often insufficient descriptors of the products of the *Pickwick* phenomenon, which are marked by generic and structural complexity. And yet such language is obviously necessary to some extent for a clear, productive analysis to take shape. To address the tension, my project reads this various, fragmented, and fundamentally journalistic side to *Pickwick*'s reception history as a form of remediation – as coined by J. David Bolter and Richard Grusin in their work of the same name. While remediation is a phenomenon that was first applied primarily to visual media, it has since been deployed increasingly in studies of textual history because of the way it eschews the idea that cultural products should be in some way divorced from the network of sources by which they were influenced, or that success is predicated upon originality, arguing instead that all media is characterised by its indebtedness to earlier work, and is constantly re-made (remediated) as cultural trends develop.[6] *Pickwick*'s various circulation in the press, a process that resulted in the prolific reprinting, recontextualization and adaptation of its words and tropes, exemplifies the plurality and contingency of remediation. Bolter and Grusin also argue that remediation is a phenomenon comprised of two halves: immediacy and hypermediacy. These halves seem to pull in opposite directions, as immediacy demands a suspension of disbelief that leads to the viewer forgetting the presence of media and focussing only on the content. Hypermediacy, on the other hand, is a form of visual representation designed to remind us of the presence of the media.[7] The Tony Weller example above—one which is representative of the kinds of strategic interaction the newspapers forged with *Pickwick*—performs a tactical tug of war between immediacy and hypermediacy in the written mode, as the newspaper strategically erases some media while evoking recognisable features of others. For example, in the extract that begins this Introduction, we have a diminished sense of Dickens's serial because of the miniscule attribution, but at the same time, the title 'A Cure for the Gout' draws our attention to the process of newspaper compilation; we are teased with the idea that the extract might really be a news item, a self-help piece, or a joke.

That *Pickwick*'s publication heralded a revivification of serial fiction, bringing the form more firmly within the remit of a middle-class readership in an alternative format to the literary magazine or miscellany, is well established. However, *Pickwick* is also a text that is replete with

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[6] Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin, *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2000).
[7] *Ibid.*, pp. 9–11.

short micronarratives, including comic anecdotes, character sketches and vignettes that are clearly separated from the frame narrative and of which Tony Weller's dubious 'cure for the gout' is but one example. This particular brand of what Rachel Malik has called 'capsularity' facilitated the fragmentation of the text and, ultimately, its remediation in a journalistic context.[8] In a recent study which also successfully deploys the language of remediation to examine the mobility of Dickens's work, Mary Hammond traces the cultural history of *Great Expectations* from its initial publication in 1860 to the most recent film adaptations in 2012, arguing that its extensive circulation across a variety of media is due primarily to its capsularity, and its ability to be 'de-coupled' and 're-coupled' according to the requirements of each new genre – a locomotive metaphor borrowed from Malik's 'Horizons of the Publishable'.[9] Mapping its remediation across film, theatre, translation and, crucially to my purposes here, the newspaper press, Hammond offers two central justifications for her use of the term:

> [T]he usefulness of this concept of remediation is twofold, since it places equal emphasis on the creative and essentially ongoing process of textual renewal, and the role played in this process by a range of media showcasing their own technical dexterity. First, it enables me to consider the cultural (including industry-motivated) uses to which this novel has been put without shackling me either to technological determinism or to fidelity criticism, which has tended to judge all adaptations through the lens of their likeness to an ('the') original text. Second […] it enables me to think about the cultural event called 'Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations*', not as an immutable work of art to be kept behind glass and admired from a distance […] but as an Ali Baba's cave of treasures which can be […] plundered at will.[10]

Hammond's emphasis on remediation's foregrounding of 'cultural renewal' as opposed to 'fidelity criticism' implicitly reveals another advantage of the term: its de-emphasis of linearity. Remediation acknowledges the presence of an inspirational source text, but without instituting a hierarchy. Differences in the accessibility of the newspaper and the serial novel during the nineteenth century—one could purchase at least two newspapers for the price of a number of

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[8] In her work on *Great Expectations*, Malik defines the 'capsular mode of narrative' as the development of a number of relatively autonomous stories, which can be lightly coupled or decoupled by the addition or subtraction of a sentence or even a phrase'. This mode of piecing together a narrative of portable fragments is also evident in *Pickwick* and facilitates its remediation in the newspaper press. See Rachel Malik, 'Stories Many, Fast and Slow: "Great Expectations" and the Mid-Victorian Horizon of the Publishable', *ELH*, 79.2 (2012) pp. 477–500 (p.485).

[9] *Ibid.*; Mary Hammond, *Charles Dickens's* Great Expectations*: A Cultural Life* (Abingdon; New York: Ashgate, 2019) pp. 7–8. See also Rachel Malik, 'Horizons of the Publishable: Publishing in/as Literary Studies', *ELH*, 75.3 (2008) pp. 707–735.

[10] Hammond, *Great Expectations: A Cultural Life*, pp. 10–11.

Pickwick or read a selection in public houses for the price of a drink—meant that readers may only have encountered the remediated version of *Pickwick*, but never read the narrative in a more connected form. In such cases, the concept of 'remediation' avoids obfuscating these reading experiences by a misleading prioritisation of an 'original', while still keeping the idea of a 'source' in mind. Another facet of this concept that is particularly crucial to my work is its accommodation of variety. Remediation's organising principle is media itself, rather than a characteristic of a given cultural product, and this lends itself to mapping *Pickwick*'s journalistic circulation. A single scene from *Pickwick* might have been reprinted as verbatim excerpts, alluded to in political speeches and opinion pieces and recast as a poem, all in the space of a few weeks. At the same time, all these Dickens-themed texts appeared in the same forum—the newspaper—and, when considered *en masse*, can reveal illuminating trends in political thought. It is remediation's inevitable emphasis of media and its simultaneous ability to accommodate both a capacious sub-terminology and unify each example as part of a single, journalistic phenomenon, that enables it to draw together the multiple kinds of cultural product to which *Pickwick* gave rise, without eliding essential distinctions.

The remediations discussed in this project fall into three broad categories, that can be loosely grouped through the use of a sub-terminology – although, as we will see, there are often considerable, strategic overlaps. The first category is the excerpt, which I am understanding as a verbatim reprint from the source text of any length. The second is the adaptation, which I use in the sense of any piece that takes a passage from the source text and modifies it. Adaptations are far less frequently to be seen among the examples discussed in this project and are particularly generically complex, with newspaper editors often presenting them as excerpts even when they are clearly modified from the source text in drastic ways (see Chapter 2). Excerpts too, are subject to light practical editing, elision through the use of asterisks, and printing errors that are perpetuated between extracts when newspapers copy from one another. The third category is the evocation, or instances where character names, scenes or tropes are deployed to support an argument advanced in a political speech, opinion piece, report or another genre of newspaper writing. Sometimes evocation did result in (often erroneous or partial) quotation from memory, which links it back to the excerpt and the adaptation.

I. Why *Pickwick*?

This project is the first of its kind to urge thinking about *Pickwick* as at the very heart of the composite political identity-shaping strategies that played out in the press during the 1830s and throughout Dickens's lifetime. It uses a replicable, data-driven methodology in order to examine

digitised newspapers in the British Newspaper Archive and draw new connections between the literary, journalistic and political realms. These connections in turn enable us to understand *Pickwick*'s words and tropes as rhetorical devices that were successfully mobilised in, and that drew together, all three of these spheres, as part of a networked, trans-genre debate. *Pickwick*'s publication between 1836 and 1837 meant that it sat at the crux of a particularly notable period of transition for politics, the press and literary fiction, and this context enriched both the nature and extent of its circulation in the press. In 1836, the newspaper industry, and especially the provincial press, was newly animated and expanding as a result of the reduction of the Stamp Tax to fourpence (which significantly lowered the retail prices of stamped papers). Correspondingly, the Stamp Office adopted a newly strict approach to unstamped newspapers, which dealt a significant blow to cheaper, elicit publications.[11] In the midst of this watershed moment for the press, serial literature like *Pickwick* also added another layer of competition between aspiring newspaper editors as they strove to give early notice of each new part and to treat their readers to the best extracts before their competitors had the opportunity.

As well as new trends in the newspaper industry, early *Pickwick* remediations were both enabled and shaped by the political fractiousness of the 1830s, a time that was marked by the ascension of a new monarch and a tempestuous general election. Most notably, even by 1836, the British press was still using print media as a way to make sense of the recent and unprecedented overhaul of the voting franchise, which had culminated in the passing of the Great Reform Act in 1832. By 1836, Parliament was still attempting to deliver the supplementary legislation promised in the initial Act—the specifics of which had been deferred to later discussion—and this prompted the press to look for new outlets to express their opinions and anxieties.[12] One such outlet was remediated literature. This political uncertainty might at first glance seem to be incompatible with the enormous popularity of a comic, picaresque narrative about the four, wandering middle-class gentlemen of the Pickwick Club, and yet, as this project shows, there are remarkable synergies between *Pickwick*'s style and structure, and its—often intensely political—reception contexts across Dickens's lifetime. In fact, it was not only during its serial run that scenes and tropes from *Pickwick* served this function; throughout Dickens's lifetime, the Eatanswill election—one of the text's most political plot threads—was constantly deployed as part of ongoing debates about the Reform Acts, electoral policy, and enfranchisement, both enriching and enriched by adjacent content.

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[11] Louis James, *Fiction for the Working Man* (Brighton: Edward Everett Root, 2017) p. 24–5.

[12] Norman Gash, *Politics in the Age of Peel* (New York: Norton, 1971) p. 67.

A striking characteristic of *Pickwick*'s composition is its disinclination towards political partisanship, which left space for authors and editors to imbue it with their own, various political agendas. This lack of political specificity, I argue, was a strategy Dickens deliberately employed to ensure his serial was noticed by journalists, placing his work as part of a tradition of collaboration—albeit often patchy, inconsistent collaboration—between bestselling authors and remediated versions of their texts. As Leah Price has discussed in detail, this tradition includes George Eliot, who cultivated the use of extracts from her novels in anthologies, diaries and gift books.[13] It is also not dissimilar to Dickens's own endorsement of certain theatrical adaptations, even as others moved beyond his control, despite his disapproval.[14] For Dickens, I argue, the incentive to collaborate was largely a commercial one, although there is also evidence in his writings and extant letters that he genuinely enjoyed watching *Pickwick*'s political ambiguity incite debate in the press. In the 1840s, we can see Dickens's amusement developing into the more familiar protest that his writing might ultimately find its way into unsavoury publications in America, a stance which his more jocose response to the unauthorised circulation of *Pickwick* in Britain somewhat complicates.[15] What is certain is that *Pickwick* remediations were too numerous, spontaneous, and fragmented for Dickens to dispute or curate in any comprehensive way, and this coupled with *Pickwick*'s internal structure and inviting political malleability meant it proved particularly rich pickings for a newspaper press already accustomed to making use of circulating fiction in this way.

That *Pickwick* was unique among its company—as paradoxical as that might initially seem—is key to why I have selected it as the subject of my case studies for this project. On the one hand, as we have seen, the synergies between *Pickwick* and its publication context, its particular structure and mode of engagement with politics across Dickens's lifetime (particularly the politics of Reform) made it particularly suited to remediation in the press and attest to its unique interest. On the other hand, remediated literature in the newspaper press has a history almost as long as the newspaper itself, dating back at least as far as the dawn of the novel, with re-serialisations of Defoe appearing as early as the 1720s. Such re-serialisations were never limited to unopinionated scissors and paste exercises: in the case of *Moll Flanders* (1722), for example, as Nicholas Seager has shown, sections of the serial interacted with topical surrounding material

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[13] See Leah Price, *The Anthology and the Rise of the Novel: from Richardson to George Eliot* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

[14] For more about Dickens's relationship to the stage adaptations of his work, see Jacky Bratton (ed.), *Dickensian Dramas: Plays from Charles Dickens*, 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

[15] For more about Dickens and American reprinting, see Meredith L. McGill, *American Literature and the Culture of Reprinting, 1834-1853* (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007)

about crime and punishment.[16] The practice of re-serialisation continued for novels across the first half of the eighteenth century until about 1750, and included many authors to whom Dickens is widely acknowledged to have been indebted, including Samuel Richardson, Henry Fielding, Laurence Sterne and Tobias Smollett.[17] Other older texts were also presented in parts, such as Cervantes' *Don Quixote* (1605) and the *One Thousand and One Nights*. After 1750, re-serialised fiction became the domain of the literary magazine.[18] By the early nineteenth century—spurred by the expansion of the newspaper industry and the demand for cheaper fiction in both the literary and the journalistic realms—remediated prose fiction had returned to the papers once again, most notably in the form of fragments from the novels of Walter Scott.

Even a cursory look at a newspaper's 'Literary' or 'Varieties' column shows that *Pickwick* was part of a broad culture of remediation. From Scott, to Elizabeth Gaskell and William Makepeace Thackeray to George Eliot, it would have been difficult to pick up a nineteenth-century newspaper without encountering fiction, either as an allusion or an excerpt. Adaptations were less common, but when they did appear, they were often remarkably creative and traversed generic boundaries in surprising ways. For example, in 1857, the *Paisley Herald and Renfrewshire Advertiser*—a weekly paper published in support of the Church of Scotland—re-wrote a description of Autumn from *Little Dorrit* as a poem entitled 'An Autumn Day', because the author believed that Dickens's style lent itself to blank verse comparable to that found in Percy Shelley's *Queen Mab* and Robert Southey's *Thalaba*.[19] Beyond fiction, anecdotes about famous figures clipped from biographies were also popular, (stories about Walter Scott taken from Lockhart's four-volume history, *Memoirs of the Life of Walter Scott* appeared often in the 1830s).[20] Also common were military anecdotes, particularly those relating to the Napoleonic Wars, such as the improbable story of a soldier who, finding himself wounded beyond recognition and dying at the battle of Waterloo, shortly after having been entrusted with the regiment's funds, wrote his name on his forehead in blood before he died so that his fellow men would find him,

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[16] Nicholas Seager, 'The Novel's Afterlife in the Newspaper', in *The Afterlives of Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, Daniel Cook (ed.), (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015) p. 124.
[17] *Ibid.*
[18] *Ibid.*, p. 112.
[19] *Paisley Herald and Renfrewshire Advertiser*, Saturday 06 June 1857, p. 1 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000464/18570606/002/0001> [Accessed: 06/08/2021].
[20] See for example, 'Broughton's Saucer', *Northampton Mercury*, Saturday 08 April 1837, p. 4 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000317/18370408/020/0004> [Accessed: 06/08/2021].

identify him, and bury him honourably as opposed to concluding he had deserted with the money.[21]

Crucially, the contemporary designation of a work as 'popular fiction' did not automatically translate to its widespread re-use in the press in the nineteenth century. For example, Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe* was, relatively speaking, hardly excerpted at all following its publication in 1819, despite the fact that it gave rise to an enormous number of stage adaptations and otherwise had one of the richest reception histories of the Scott oeuvre.[22] Even other, contemporaneous work by Dickens such as *Oliver Twist* and *Sketches by Boz* did not meet with such sustained attention in the newspapers as did *Pickwick*. The almost instant appearance and long-term proliferation of *Pickwick* remediations in the pages of the press makes the serial an object of special interest when viewed in relation to the wider phenomenon of excerpting, adapting, and evoking literary texts in the newspaper press. This uniqueness in turn prompts us to return to the text in new ways to ask what precisely it was about the serial that made it so suited to this treatment, but also to consider how the category of 'popular fiction' might be re-shaped by an acknowledgement of this journalistic phenomenon.

The purpose of this project is not to argue that beyond *Pickwick* the remediation of literature in the press did not occur, but instead to show that, when placed in the context of what I refer to as 'comparable' works, *Pickwick's* treatment shows some symptoms of uniqueness that make it particularly worth pursuing as a case study. As we will see, *Pickwick* was both more widely and more consistently remediated during its serial run than many similar texts. This treatment by the newspaper press is in turn indebted to Dickens's particular mode of fragmenting *Pickwick* and to his liberal inclusion of interactive 'hooks' throughout the narrative, which encouraged newspaper editors to engage with sections of the text and ultimately to move them from place to place. Conversely, detailed analysis of *Pickwick* as a single case study also paves the way for author- or even genre-wide studies of journalistic remediation: first, by revealing new patterns of reading experience that can in turn be used to read the cultural impact of other texts; second, by demonstrating a closer cultural relationship between the novel and the newspaper than a study of sales figures or criticism alone can allow; and third by illuminating previously undervalued lines of communication between authors, journalists, and their respective outputs.

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[21] 'Regard for Character After Death', *Kentish Gazette*, Tuesday 17 January 1837, p. 2 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000235/18370117/010/0002> [Accessed: 06/08/2021].

[22] For a more detailed account of *Ivanhoe*'s popularity, see Ann Rigney, *The Afterlives of Walter Scott: Memory on the Move* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

We can begin to build a picture of *Pickwick*'s place in this wider context of journalistic remediation by sampling newspaper engagement with just a few similar texts in the months following their initial publication. The tables and graphs below map just one of the forms of remediation this project addresses: reprinted excerpts, as they were lifted from eight different texts and republished across a wide variety of newspapers digitised by the British Newspaper Archive. Two of these texts are what I term 'comparable serials' (William Harrison Ainsworth's *Jack Sheppard* and William Makepeace Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*); three are other serials by Dickens (*Oliver Twist*, *Dombey and Son* and *Little Dorrit*); and three are volume novels (Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe*, Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton* and George Eliot's *Adam Bede*). The 'comparable' serials—*Jack Sheppard* and *Vanity Fair*—are texts whose authors were, at various points in their careers, acknowledged as Dickens's market competitors. The table and graph below show the number of extracts printed across the searchable portion of the British Newspaper Archive, following the publication of the first, middle and final numbers of each serial:

Title	**Number of Extracts (First Number)**	**Number of Extracts (Middle Number)**	**Number of Extracts (Final Number)**
Pickwick	44	53	41
Jack Sheppard	16	10	0
Vanity Fair	19	2	13

Table 1: Comparable Serials

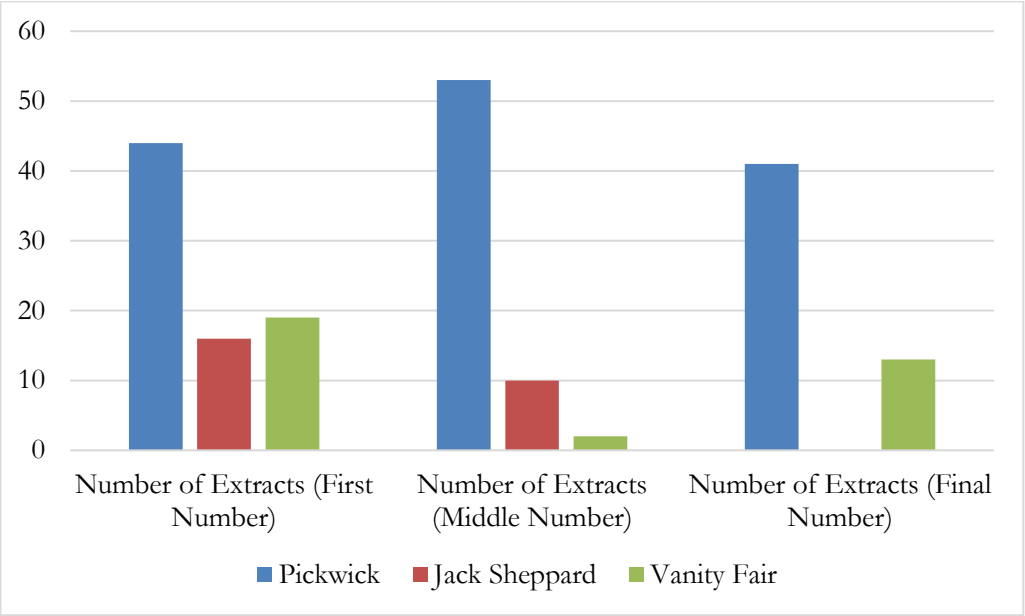

Figure 2: Comparable Serials

The most striking aspect of this graph is its visual confirmation of just how consistently *Pickwick* was excerpted by the press throughout its serial run when compared to *Jack Sheppard* and *Vanity Fair*. *Jack Sheppard*'s notices were falling noticeably by its middle number, but by its final instalment, extracts had disappeared altogether. The narrative was still very much in the public eye at this point, but extracts were replaced by reams of advertisements and reviews for the spinoff theatricals, which were in turn interspersed with murmurings in the press about 'real Jack Sheppards' and the potential for the story to corrupt its readers into a life of crime.[23] That the disappearance of excerpts was concurrent with the explosion of theatrical adaptations perhaps reflects newspapers' growing concern about playing a part in the spread of Newgate literature, as much as it does a shift to a theatrical medium which imbued the story with a new lease of life. *Vanity Fair*'s level of notice, when viewed alongside *Pickwick*'s, is perhaps even more surprising, especially given that by the time it was published, Thackeray was an established rather than an emerging author. Its notices recover a little for the final number, but even for the first instalment, it does not encourage the press to excerpt half the number of passages that *Pickwick* does. Like *Jack Sheppard*, the consistency of newspaper notice is also absent in the months I have sampled here, with excerpts anaemic for the tenth number, and far from equalling even Ainsworth's serial in quantity, before the numbers increased again for the final instalment.

[23] See for example, 'The Real Jack Sheppard', *Morning Herald*, Tuesday 11 February 1840, p. 7 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0002408/18400211/067/0007> [Accessed: 06/08/2021].

The extent of *Pickwick*'s remediation in excerpt form is also notable in the context of other texts from his oeuvre. The table and graph below compare the *Pickwick* excerpts with those to which *Oliver Twist*, *Dombey and Son*, and *Little Dorrit* gave rise:

Title	**Number of Extracts (First Number)**	**Number of Extracts (Middle Number)**	**Number of Extracts (Final Number)**
Pickwick	44	53	41
Oliver Twist	22	7	1
Dombey and Son	96	23	11
Little Dorrit	44	7	12

Table 2: Dickens Serials

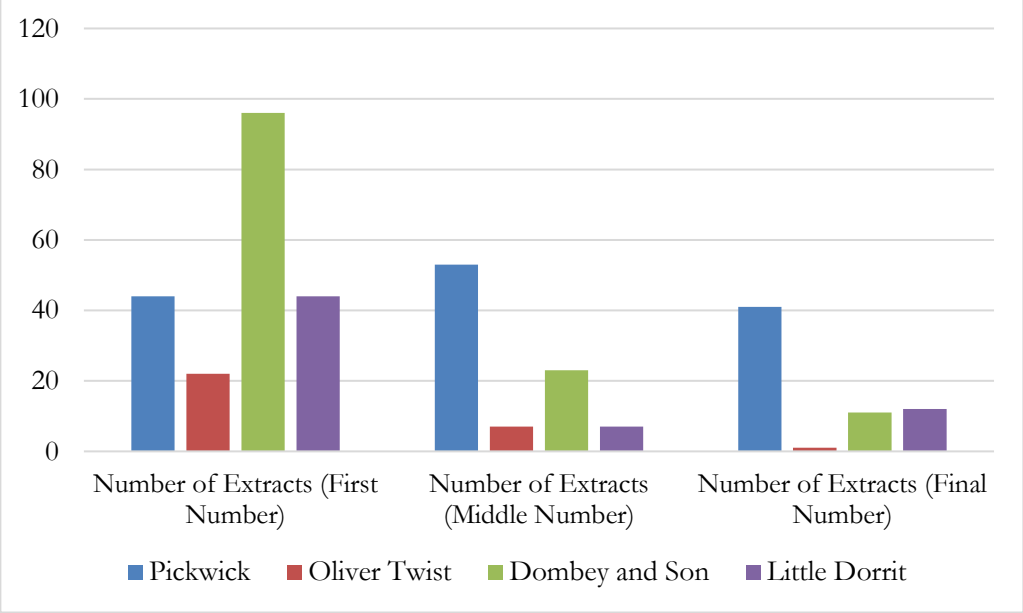

Figure 3: Dickens Serials

With the noteworthy exception of the first number of *Dombey and Son*, *Pickwick* extracts either equalled or outnumbered those from Dickens's other serials in all of the months sampled. Additionally, when newspapers excerpted from the first number of *Dombey and Son*, they often printed huge amounts of material, with reprinted sections frequently amounting to a scene

from each chapter or more.[24] This level of enthusiasm arguably occurred because the elapsed time between the end of Dickens's previous serial, *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1843) and the start of *Dombey*—which began in 1846—was longer than usual. That *Dombey and Son* and *Vanity Fair* competed for popularity due to their overlapping serial runs has been well-documented, but what these extracts offer is an alternative way of measuring and comparing reception in terms of the proliferation of reprinted material.[25] In this regard, *Dombey* was undoubtedly received and remediated more enthusiastically than its competitor.

While we must be cautious about equating numerousness with success—reviews can of course be negative—newspapers tended to mark their dislike of a serial with brevity as opposed to including and tearing down numerous extracts, and even *Little Dorrit*, which was often poorly reviewed in the press, was excerpted more frequently than *Vanity Fair*, and in positive ways, with long chunks of text reprinted in the columns of the press. *Oliver Twist*, it is worth noting—although overlapping with *Pickwick* in terms of publication schedule and commencing when *Pickwick*'s popularity was at its height—did not attain the level of notice in the press that *Pickwick* did and, like *Jack Sheppard*, excerpts trailed off as the numbers proceeded. Readers of *Pickwick* were, like Oliver, asking for more, but ironically, newspapers did not seem to feel that *Oliver* quite fulfilled that need. The absence of extracts is likely also a result of the publication of *Oliver* as a volume prior to its completion as a serial in *Bentley's Miscellany*, which revealed the ending and, when they eventually appeared in *Bentley's*, would have made the final numbers considerably less fresh to newspaper editors on the lookout for new, topical sources of extracts. *Oliver*'s reception also chimes with that of *Jack Sheppard*, as its fizzling out in the press occurred simultaneously with the appearance of advertisements and reviews for theatrical adaptations. Like *Jack Sheppard*, there was also some concern about *Oliver*'s status as Newgate fiction, which may ultimately have dissuaded some newspapers from reprinting its contents.[26] Of all four of the Dickens texts surveyed here, *Pickwick* remained the most consistently excerpted during the course of its serial run.

The final sample I have taken from the press is for the volume novel, which, while not directly comparable to serialised publications, nonetheless offers a way to examine the excerption of texts following a different publishing rhythm. The *Pickwick* results from the Figures above are

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[24] See for example, 'Charles Dickens's New Work' *The Atlas*, Saturday 03 October 1846, p. 10 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/BL/0002115/18461003/012/0010> [Accessed: 06/08/2021].

[25] See, Delia Correa de Sousa, *The Nineteenth-Century Novel: Realisms* (London: The Open University, 2000) p. 147.

[26] For an overview of *Oliver Twist*'s relationship with Newgate fiction, see Stephen Gill's introduction to the Oxford Edition: Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist* (Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 2008) pp. vii-xxv.

repeated here, rather than statistics about the number of extracts that followed its publication as a volume in November 1837, since the point is to compare *Pickwick*'s excerption as a serial with a rough equivalent in the alternative format. In addition, by the end of November, when critical notice about the final number had died down, the reprinting of excerpts almost entirely ceased.

Title	**Number of Extracts (Month One)**	**Number of Extracts (Month Three)**	**Number of Extracts (Month Six)**
Pickwick	44	53	41
Ivanhoe	18	0	0
Mary Barton	13	11	0
Adam Bede	15	20	11

Table 3: Volume Novels

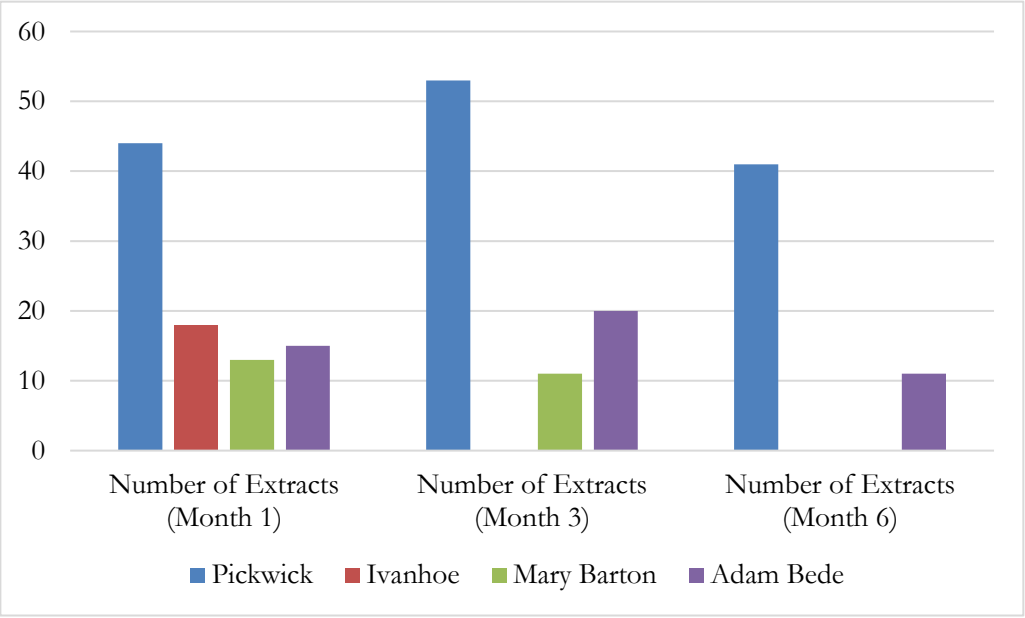

Figure 4: Volume Novels

Most striking of the three examples here is undoubtedly *Ivanhoe*. A healthy number of extracts from the text appeared in the press in the first month following its publication, but by month three, they have completely disappeared. Of course, it is necessary to be mindful of the fact

that fewer newspapers existed in 1819 than in 1836, which inevitably skews quantitative results to some extent. Nonetheless, viewed individually, many of the extracts also do not delve too deeply into the novel's narrative, reprinting poems or songs that would have stood out to an editor as particularly portable, or selecting scenes from early chapters, thus precluding the need for extensive engagement with the entire book.

This lukewarm treatment of a text like *Ivanhoe* might be put down to the fact that newspaper advertisements promised a considerably earlier publication date, before the text finally appeared in December 1819.[27] However, this jars with the otherwise enthusiastic reception of Scott's novels that Ann Rigney has so meticulously analysed in her *Afterlives of Walter Scott*, whereby 'readers were rushing out to buy each new novel as it appeared' (although it is worth noting that journalistic remediations are not mentioned in the book). *Ivanhoe* in particular, she concludes, was 'the Scott novel that has generated the greatest number of versions of itself on page, stage, and screen […] and, relative to other works by Scott, over […] a long period'.[28] Where readers may have rushed to buy *Ivanhoe*, newspaper editors were certainly far less enthusiastic about reprinting passages, and unlike the longevity of *Ivanhoe*'s other afterlives, its remediation in the press was both short-lived and limited. This might be interpreted as a result of its status as an historical novel, rather than a text with a clear topical resonance or vignettes of recognisable contemporary scenes, such as those presented in the much more widely-excerpted *Pickwick*. Rigney notably understands Scott afterlives as forms of portable *memory*, *Pickwick*, on the other hand is better described as a form of portable *topicality*, which, in the ephemeral and ever-renewing environment of the newspaper press was a more desirable characteristic.[29] This favouring of the topical clearly shows how studying newspaper remediation can enable us to glimpse fleeting traces of trends in political and cultural thought that, were they not reflected in the strategic deployment of certain texts, would otherwise be lost to us.

Unlike *Ivanhoe*, *Mary Barton* certainly had topicality in its favour, but its status as a debut novel published anonymously is nonetheless evident in my data. Although published on 18th October 1848, the first excerpt that my searches identified did not appear until ten days later,

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[27] The newspapers show the novel being advertised as early as mid-October 1819 and publication promised 'in the course of November'. See for example, 'Ivanhoe: A Romance', *British Press*, Thursday 14 October 1819, p. 1 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0002643/18191014/007/0001> [Accessed: 14/10/2021.

[28] Rigney, p. 1, 5, 15.

[29] *Ibid*, p. 1.

on 28th October.[30] *Adam Bede*, another debut novel, met with similar delays in recognition: it was published on 1st February and the first excerpt catalogued here did not appear until 12th.[31] Both these examples suggest the length of time it took for newspaper editors to familiarise themselves with a three-volume novel, especially when its arrival was not hotly anticipated, as opposed to the opening number of a serial, from which key excerpts could be extrapolated more quickly. The excerpts from *Mary Barton* overwhelmingly emphasised scenes in which Gaskell elaborated the thought processes of her working-class characters and the reasons behind their actions: the loss of morale following the mill fire, John Barton's death and repentance, and descriptions of the handloom weavers' efforts to pursue an education, all appear repeatedly in the first and third months after the novel's volume publication. These remediations clearly reflect the climate of the Hungry Forties and the direction of public discussion, for which the novel became a vehicle in the press.[32] This topicality and the fact that *Mary Barton* was a slow-burning success, perhaps also explains why excerpts remained abundant in the press by the third month after its publication, whereas notices of *Ivanhoe* had, by that point, disappeared.

These two examples would perhaps suggest that remediated extracts simply appear for longer when they are lifted from serial novels like *Pickwick*, because the piecemeal publication schedule offers digestible amounts of new material at regular intervals. However, the distinction is not necessarily as straightforward as this, as *Adam Bede* shows. While overall, newspapers reprinted fewer excerpts from Eliot's first novel when compared with *Pickwick*, they nonetheless remained at a consistent level in the first, third and sixth month following publication. This occurred, I argue, because of a feature of the text that Price has also identified as rendering it particularly suitable for anthologization:

> Readers' fondness for quoting Eliot can ultimately be traced to the structure of her own narratives, punctuated with epigraphs and lapidary generalizations. It owes a more specific debt to Mrs. Poyser – in the words of another character in *Adam Bede*,

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[30] 'An Attempt to Rescue the Degraded', *Arbroath Guide*, Saturday 28 October 1848, p. 6 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0002740/18481028/025/0006> [Accessed: 06/08/2021].

[31] 'Review of New Books', *The Atlas*, Saturday 12 February 1859, p. 6 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0002115/18590212/061/0006> [Accessed: 06/08/2021].

[32] For more about these contextual synergies see Mary Hammond, 'Wayward Orphans and Lonesome Places: The Regional Reception of Elizabeth Gaskell's Mary Barton and North and South', *Victorian Studies*, 3 (2018) pp. 390–411.

> "one of those untaught wits that help to stock a country with proverbs" – whose persona defined Eliot from the first as a source of quotable wit and wisdom.[33]

These 'epigrams' and 'generalisations' are also a clear feature of the excerpts that newspapers decided to print – in which the appeal of Mrs. Poyser, with her Welleresque tendency to deliver short, pithy maxims about given situations, in a comic, regional dialect, is rewarded by liberal reproduction in the pages of the press. In fact, over a third of the *Adam Bede* excerpts recorded for Database 1 are witticisms from Mrs Poyser.[34] This suggests that while serial rhythms offered a monthly or weekly incentive for newspapers to reprint material, given a volume novel with clear internal capsularity—where the ability to decouple and recouple short passages was made evident to newspaper editors—volume novels might also serve the same function in the press for many months following their publication. When compared with *Pickwick*, what *Adam Bede* reveals is that, regardless of publication schedule, internal capsularity was one of the most important factors in securing widespread and varied remediation in the papers. Whether the vehicle for those capsular episodes was a Sam Weller or a Mrs Poyser, it was ultimately the importance of the anecdote as a form—and, crucially, the topicality of those anecdotes—that facilitated their spread. The Pickwickian anecdote and its powerful rhetorical function in the press will be examined more comprehensively in Chapter 1. Here it is sufficient to say that it is as a result of their internal fragmentation that *Adam Bede* and *Pickwick* are the only texts on the graphs above with a rate of remediation that remained broadly consistent across the three sampled months, suggesting a sustained interest in their content that none of the other serials and volume novels discussed here manage to attain. This in turn points to the interrelatedness of a text's internal structure and the extent of its proliferation in the press – an interrelatedness that is itself a reflection of the author's tacit co-operation (or otherwise) with newspaper editors. Unpacking the nature of this collaboration for Dickens—whose infamous advocacy for the rights of the author and immense frustration with the unauthorised transatlantic circulation of his texts is well-established—proves a particular challenge.

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[33] Price, p. 105.

[34] For example, Mrs Poyser's remark from Chapter LIII of *Adam Bede* that 'some folks tongues are like the clocks as run on strikin', not to tell you the time o' the day, but because there's summat wrong with their own inside', is reprinted as a witticism in five of the papers surveyed for Database 1.

II. Dickens's Relationship with the Press

The opinionated, strategic process of remediating literature in the press was in many ways inseparable from cultures of review.[35] Whether the remediation in question involved a newspaper editor excerpting verbatim sections of a text, evoking a scene or character in a leader column, or adapting passages to make them fit an entirely different argument, each remediation is an intervention, and each intervention represents a value judgment of the source text. This link between remediation and review is strengthened by the consideration that reviews of literature in the press frequently contained lengthy extracts from the source text. In recent critical practice, the stakes of this relationship have been undervalued or even elided completely, with the opinions of the reviewer prioritised over the excerpts they chose to illustrate them. Standalone excerpts, in the absence of written commentary, are largely overlooked or ignored, especially those that appear in 'Varieties' or 'Miscellaneous' columns, rather than the 'Literature' or 'Review' sections of the paper, seemingly because their status as review is less evident.[36] Notably, the most comprehensive anthology of Dickens reviews to date, *Charles Dickens: The Critical Heritage*, reprints reviews of *Pickwick*, but favours well-known metropolitan dailies and literary quarterlies above provincial papers for its sources. Additionally, even among the reviews that form part of the collection, the extracts with which each was originally interspersed are elided, with choices explained vaguely in square brackets or not mentioned at all.[37]

By recovering and analysing these extracts, as well as other journalistic references to *Pickwick*, this project seeks to recover this relationship between remediation and review by re-emphasising the potential for circulating words or tropes from literary texts to shape readers' understanding of their sources in subtle, strategic ways. In *Pickwick*'s case, excerpts, adaptations and evocations were also tactically reshaped and recontextualised to speak to topical political problems, meaning that each became a commentary on and a means of re-shaping both its source text and its destination newspaper.

Just as the meaning of each instance of *Pickwick* in the newspapers was contingent, so too was Dickens's own reaction to the process of remediation. Thus, a more in-depth analysis of

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[35] This argument is indebted to Adam Abraham, who in his introduction to *Plagiarising the Victorian Novel* argues that 'each Pickwickian aftertext is a form of literary criticism'. See Adam Abraham, *Plagiarising the Victorian Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019) p. 28.

[36] A recent notable exception is William F. Long's, '*Pickwick* in the Provinces', *Dickensian* 116.3 (2020) pp. 273–294.

[37] Philip Collins, *Charles Dickens: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge, 1995).

Pickwick in the papers demands that we engage with the received narrative about Dickens's control over the reception of his work by clearly acknowledging that his assertion of authority was both context-specific and inconsistent. On the one hand, we have the best-documented side of Dickens's response to remediation: his fury towards the practice of transatlantic reprinting and adaptation, and his fight for an international copyright agreement in the 1840s. On the other, we must also consider his rather less furious response to the domestic phenomenon with which this project engages. In a letter to Lord Brougham in 1842, Dickens raged about the former practice:

> The system, as it stands, is most iniquitous and disgraceful. A writer not only gets nothing for his labours, though they are diffused all over this enormous Continent, but cannot even choose his company. Any wretched halfpenny newspaper can print him at its pleasure—place him side by side with productions which disgust his common sense—and by means of the companionship in which it constantly shews him, engenders a feeling of association in the minds of a large class of readers, from which he would revolt, and to avoid which he would pay almost any price.[38]

It is precisely the potential 'feelings of association' that might be evoked in readers as a result of the placement of literary fiction alongside other kinds of newspaper article, in which the political and cultural significance of the journalistic remediations discussed in this project lies. Each example formed part of a newspaper bricolage which collectively advanced a response to the topical issues of the day. Although complete reprints of Dickens's works during their serialisation were uncommon in Britain, some newspapers did reprint extraordinarily lengthy sections from each of the monthly numbers, including more from a given serial number than they omitted. A good example is the first number of *Dombey and Son*, where it was not uncommon for newspapers—desperate for a fresh Dickens serial after a longer than usual delay between projects—to print swathes of material from each of the four new chapters, to the extent that the reader could obtain most of the interesting parts of the number from the paper alone. There is no evidence in extant letters that Dickens was angered by this situation in Britain, however, as Meredith McGill has duly noted in *American Literature and the Culture of Reprinting*, in an American context, his fear of similar treatment became so great that he imagined himself subsumed as part of his text and subjected to the seedy influences of the American cheap press.[39] In this respect, it isn't just remediation that Dickens feared but the

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[38] 'To Lord Brougham, 22nd March 1842', *The Pilgrim Edition of the Letters of Charles Dickens,* 3, 1842–1843, Kathleen Mary Tillotson, Madeline House, and Graham Storey (eds) (London: Pilgrim, 1974).
[39] McGill, p. 114.

impact of newspapers strategically recontextualising his work by dint of the careful placement of neighbouring material, a technique that was nonetheless extremely common in the British press also.[40]

Interestingly, Dickens's fear of uncontrollable recontextualization does not translate to his comparatively amenable response to domestic reprinting. As McGill notes:

> Dickens exaggerates the wealth and power of the [American] "scoundrel-booksellers" and retrospectively projects greater command over his English readers than he actually possesses: does Chapman & Hall's proprietary control over the price and issue of his editions actually give him "choice" over his audience in England? If the figure of the author-as-proprietor provides a useful fiction behind which publishers can consolidate power, it also shields writers from their subjection to the market by exaggerating their sense of agency.[41]

For McGill, Dickens's outrage at transatlantic reprinting does little but reveal a comparable lack of control over the reception of his works at home, much as Dickens himself sought to separate the two. However, McGill troublingly concludes that '[t]he culture of reprinting was so alien to Dickens that he had difficulty comprehending why his vocal support of international copyright posed a serious threat to his literary reception'.[42] This is where a clearer distinction between transatlantic and domestic remediation is necessary to fully acknowledge Dickens's very different relationship with the home-grown phenomenon. Dickens's letters clearly show not only his awareness of excerpting, but his *endorsement* of the practice because of its potential to advertise *Pickwick* when its fame was yet uncertain (see Chapter 3, below). Dickens fully understood the potential of the journalistic remediations of *Pickwick* and other texts to work favourably for his reception in Britain. The difference is that—as McGill herself acknowledges—he was markedly less concerned about the damage that might be done during the process of recontextualization in a British paper than in an American paper.

This distinction in turn can be explained by the reduction of the Stamp Tax in 1836, which led to the collapse, in Britain, of many of the radical papers that had sprung up earlier in the century. Dickens's markedly different attitudes to each phenomenon are reflected in an article entitled 'The Newspaper Literature of America' by John Forster in 1842, published in the

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[40] See McGill's reading of Dickens's letter to Brougham in *American Literature and the Culture of Reprinting*, p.114.
[41] *Ibid.* p. 115.
[42] *Ibid.*, p. 110.

Foreign Quarterly Review. Following a tirade about the dangers of the cheap American press, Forster continues:

> And have you nothing of this nearer home? it will be asked. Sorrowfully we answer that we have: but with a difference, and a large one. The papers of that class are very few with us, wholly restricted to London, and of no other or higher account than as part of the social dregs and moral filth which *will* deposit somewhere in so large a city. Since the stamp-office regulations checked the system of false returns, the circulation of these papers is proved to be miserably low.[43]

When McGill draws attention to this review, which was widely and damagingly attributed to Dickens himself in America, she argues that 'Forster suggests […] the difference between English and American print cultures lies not in the products of the press but in a social order that enforces a distinction between legitimate and illegitimate representation'.[44] What I want to emphasise here is that, in the context of journalistic remediation, too, this distinction between the mainstream and the radical press in Britain was in many ways a false one. As we will see, the former was given to pushing the boundaries of what we would now term 'fair use' equally as often as the radical press. Yet somehow Dickens mostly trusts British non-radical papers to recontextualise *Pickwick* and other literary texts in 'appropriate' ways. Forster sees provincial papers as particularly harmless in this regard, even though, as we will see, the provincial press was often just as creative, spirited and politically motivated in its re-use of *Pickwick*; it is simply the case that their richness is more often overlooked by anthologies mining periodicals for reviews and reader testimonies.

The connections Dickens and Forster make between the radical press and cultures of excerpting were not entirely unfounded, however. In fact, in her monograph *Re-Making Romanticism: The Radical Politics of the Excerpt*, Casie LeGette has clearly shown how the works of canonical Romantic-era writers, produced in the 1790s, were carefully excerpted, re-framed and re-purposed by radical newspaper editors in the early-nineteenth century to engage with new political issues and debates.[45] LeGette contends that these excerpts can ask us to interrogate periodization, when the poetry or prose of the 1790s resurged in extract form in the service of new political moments; it can blur generic boundaries, as lengthy, polyvocal poems were clipped to form shorter lyrics with a single speaker, or texts were re-shaped so as

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[43] John Forster, 'The Newspaper Literature of America', *Foreign Quarterly Review* (1844) p. 198 <https://archive.org/> [Accessed: 06/08/2021].
[44] McGill, pp. 132-3.
[45] Casie LeGette, *Remaking Romanticism, the Radical Politics of the Excerpt* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

to traverse the boundaries between fiction and non-fiction, play and poem. Shifts in genre could, in turn, hide, heighten or alter a piece's political affiliations.[46] Finally, she argues, excerpting can call into question the centrality of the author, who, to some extent, loses control of their work when it is re-purposed by newspaper editors for their own ends.[47]

LeGette's work provides an invaluable theoretical framework for this study. Nonetheless, I move away from an exclusive focus on radical publications, arguing that not only was the phenomenon equally prevalent in the mainstream press but that, despite Dickens's attempts to separate them, the strategies of both types of publication are often remarkably similar in their use of *Pickwick* to blur generic boundaries and assert opinions about Reform politics. Most notably, in Chapter 1, which focusses on the reprinting of verbatim excerpts, my data sample deliberately excludes radical papers to show that, rather than being limited to the radical press, the phenomenon prevailed in mainstream papers even following the 1836 Stamp Act. Dickens's co-operation with the press also began, I argue, earlier than the point of reception. This was because, as we have seen, *Pickwick*'s structure lent itself to remediation, with its capsular anecdotes, vignettes and characters sketches reminiscent of *Sketches by Boz* – a text which was, in large part, written for the newspaper press. Additionally, Dickens remained embroiled in a journalistic career when he began *Pickwick* – his writing for the *Morning Chronicle* continued, for example. Dickens's hand in journalism, and his knowledge of the ways to cultivate a successful journalistic reception of a literary work imbued *Pickwick* with journalistic qualities. This in turn facilitated its journalistic reception trajectories.

Other factors influencing the severity of Dickens's response to the phenomenon were the volume of material reprinted, the intent behind the remediation, and the similarity of the remediation to the source text. For example, in 1839, Dickens's publishers threatened a radical paper, the *Odd Fellow*, with legal action for attempting to reserialise the entirety of *Sketches by Boz* in a weekly column. The threat was successful, and the *Odd Fellow* was ultimately forced to cease publication.[48] A key difference between the *Odd Fellow* and a newspaper remediating *Pickwick*, beyond its radical status, was the volume of material being re-used; another objection was that the *Sketches* had a journalistic origin and already seemed particularly at home in a newspaper column. Even the *Evening Chronicle*, one of the papers that initially published some of the *Sketches*, saw that this made the text more susceptible to being passed off as the

[46] *Ibid*., p. 1–2, 9, 67.
[47] *Ibid*., p. 3–4.
[48] Anne Humpherys, 'Odd Fellow 1839–1842', *DNCJ*, Laurel Brake and Marysa Demoor (eds), (Gent: Academia Press, 2009) p. 468.

property of another paper, and prefaced its sketches with 'For the Evening Chronicle'.[49] That Dickens was quick to defend the *Sketches* from re-serialisation but equally quick to demand from a fellow *Morning Chronicle* editor in 1836 that *Pickwick* be excerpted (see Chapter 3), suggests that the volume of material being remediated was key to how anxiety-inducing it was for Dickens as an author, but perhaps also indicates that he felt equally confident in *Pickwick*'s integrity as a complete narrative, as he did its journalistic potentialities.

The question of the volume of material re-used, and that of whether a remediation might be mistaken for its source (and therefore take something from the publisher's profits) were also the two points which determined the outcome of legal disputes about remediations in both the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as Casie LeGette has argued:

> Importantly, however, eighteenth- and nineteenth-century copyright law concerned itself primarily with the reprinting of books in their entirety. So while the progressions of copyright law can be told as a narrative of consolidated authorial power and control, things look quite different when extracts – portions of texts – are taken into consideration. Since no law treated the reprinting of extracts specifically, issues of copyright in relation to pieces of text were determined somewhat haphazardly, and only when copyright holders sued other publishers for piracy of their works. Such cases were many and varied, but judicial opinions often attended to two questions: (1) What percentage of the original text had been reprinted? and (2) Could the newly reprinted version compete for sales with the original?[50]

Beyond occasional reserialisation, *Pickwick*'s presence in the newspaper press was at its most lengthy when it took the form of excerpts, which, as LeGette confirms here, were grey legal territory anyway. As for competing for sales, by the time *Pickwick* had been broken down into fragments and surrounded by various other material, isolating its contribution to the success of the newspaper would hardly have been practicable. Even by 1842, when Thomas Noon Talfourd's Copyright Act finally passed—extending copyright to forty-two years or the author's life plus twelve years—it failed to account for extracts in any explicit way, and did little for the problems of authorial power and control over remediations that LeGette describes above.[51] In fact, a clause which referred to excerpts specifically was excised in an

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[49] See for example, 'Sketches of London.—No. VIII', *The Evening Chronicle*, Saturday 11 April 1835, p. 3 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0001315/18350411/032/0003> [Accessed: 06/08/2021].

[50] LeGette, p. 102.

[51] *Act to Amend the Law of Copyright 1842*, 5&6 Vic c.45, (London: House of Lords) p. 578.

earlier draft of the Bill, as the outcry was so significant that Talfourd found himself unable to justify it.[52] The closest the 1842 Act comes to acknowledging excerpts is in its definition of a "Book" which its states 'shall be construed to mean and include every Volume, Part or Division of a Volume, Pamphlet, Sheet of Letter-press, Sheet of Music, Map, Chart, or Plan separately published'.[53] That the phrase 'Part or Division of a Volume' carried little legal weight in the ensuing decades where the remediation of fiction in newspapers was concerned, is evident in the extent to which legal precedent prioritised cases where greater volumes were re-purposed. Thus, the practice continued, not only in the case of Dickens's work but also the work of many others published throughout his lifetime.

Ironically, *Pickwick* was dedicated to Talfourd when it was published as a volume in 1837, and in his preface, Dickens commended his friend's fight for a Copyright agreement would protect the rights of the author.[54] *Pickwick* therefore came to emblematise ownership and the rights of the author. Even more bizarrely, newspapers emphasised this status, even as they were remediating *Pickwick* themselves. Such was the case in this article published in the *Brighton Patriot*, just as *Pickwick*'s serialisation concluded, which declared dramatically:

> [T]he Pickwicks have had their day; they have done their purpose; they have put, we believe, large sums of money into the publishers pockets; they have given a high and estimable reputation to the writer, and increased, we hope, the means of easy and happy existence to him. He deserves every thing [sic] he has laboured for; money, fame, happiness […][55]

That this article, with its bitterness towards the publishers and emphasis of the author's labour, was printed just as *Pickwick* was published in volume form with its dedication to Talfourd, highlights the irony that the serial was used as part of the fight for the rights of the author, even as it was being cut up, re-shaped and liberally shared around the papers. Indeed, the *Gazette* had no qualms, following its declaration of support for the rights of the author, in printing a column or two of *Pickwick* for good measure. In this respect, studying remediations of *Pickwick* show the serial to have been emblematic of the tensions between authorship and copyright on the one hand, and excerpting and publicity on the other. They therefore offer a

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[52] LeGette, p. 102.
[53] *Act to Amend the Law of Copyright 1842*, p. 578.
[54] Charles Dickens, *The Pickwick Papers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) p. xxxii. Subsequent references are to this edition unless otherwise stated.
[55] 'The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club', *Brighton Patriot*, Tuesday 07 November 1837, p. 4 <http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/BL/0000040/18371107/017/0004> [Accessed 28/01/2022].

new dimension to our understanding of both Dickens's relationship with his work and *Pickwick*'s implication in questions of ownership and originality. By extension, tracing *Pickwick*'s fluctuating journalistic role enables us to appreciate more fully the proximity between the novel and the newspaper during the nineteenth-century and the impact that proximity had upon the shape of political discourses. Such discourses could even include the very debates about authorial rights that sought to quell such a generous re-use of Dickens's material.

III. Thesis Structure

This thesis deals with three, semi-discrete categories of remediation: excerpting, adaptation, and evocation. Each of these categories is discussed in turn in the following three chapters with due acknowledgement of their moments of complex but illuminating overlap. Chapter 1 begins with the excerpt, the most common type of remediation to be found in the newspaper press during *Pickwick*'s serialisation. The chapter analyses all the remediations of *Pickwick* that appeared in thirty newspapers across England between March 1836 and November 1837, paying particular attention to their comedy. It contends that, although reprinting sections of *Pickwick*'s frame narrative, newspaper editors showed a particularly keen interest in the potentialities of *Pickwick*'s comic anecdotes, or the embedded micronarratives that *Pickwick*'s characters tell one another during the course of the serial. I suggest that the proliferation of these anecdotes offer a new way of understanding Dickens's notoriously elusive comic formula by examining its significance at the point of reception rather than the point of production. I propose a basic formula for the Dickensian comic anecdote, as a vital way of distinguishing it from writing that is self-evidently anecdot*al*, using the formula to suggest that the internal structure of Pickwickian comic anecdotes meant that they lent themselves to excerpting by the press – a considerably earlier but recognisable form of the de-coupling and re-coupling Rachel Malik identified as a feature of *Great Expectations*. This rich reception history, which centres itself around the comic anecdote, also demands that we re-think our synecdochal understanding of *Pickwick* as serial parts ultimately integrated into a continuous narrative. This is especially important, as reading *Pickwick*'s structure in this way has historically meant that critics have imbued the interpolated tales—*Pickwick*'s longest embedded narratives, with their prominent positions in each number—with a unique status. However, the data examined in this chapter shows that the interpolated tales were often overlooked by the press in favour of the shorter comic anecdotes. The chapter concludes that remediated excerpts were not only a means for the newspapers to claim content from Dickens, but a variation of what James Kincaid has termed Dickens's 'rhetoric of laughter', as

they used the comic power of the *Pickwick* anecdotes to persuade readers of their own perspectives.[56]

This use of *Pickwick*'s comic anecdotes as rhetorical devices is ultimately a foundation for a more politically engaged journalistic phenomenon in which *Pickwick* became deeply embroiled. While Chapter 1 considers the slant that could be applied to excerpts by strategic paratextual work alone, Chapter 2 offers a detailed examination of two provincial, conservative papers that felt this technique did not go far enough, and adapted *Pickwick* so that it would suit their very specific, anti-Reform political agendas. Using these two newspaper adaptations—published in the *Coventry Standard* and the *Hampshire Advertiser* in January and April 1837 respectively—as well as the material that surrounded them, this chapter sheds light on how *Pickwick* became part of a strategy of Conservative flag-waving and community-building at work on both a local and national level, as Robert Peel rose in popularity during the mid-1830s. Studies into the role of the press in the rise of Peelite Conservatism have shown how Conservative, provincial papers helped generate a sense of local and national community, as well as a 'critical civic consciousness', as Carole O'Reilly has termed it.[57] This chapter shows how *Pickwick* adaptations became one way of articulating this Conservative consciousness, alongside various other genres of journalistic content, including leader columns, reports of Conservative meetings and articles about the movements of key Peelite leaders. As well as high political stakes, these two adaptations were also generically complex: they aimed to modify recognisable scenes from *Pickwick* to bring them more firmly into line with their Conservative agendas, but, in order to do so, disguised their remediations as verbatim extracts lifted directly from Dickens's serial. While these examples were not numerous, they enable us to address important questions raised in Chapter 1 about the generic complexity of *Pickwick*'s use in the press, and how remediations made use of Dickens's emerging credentials and authorial brand. This in turn demands a more detailed discussion of how *Pickwick* adaptations have been categorised, by considering the ways that these two rich examples complicate the categories of piracy, plagiarism and excerpt that are often imprecisely applied to the cultural products of the *Pickwick* phenomenon. The chapter concludes that these adaptations' fraught relationship with genre, and with Dickens himself, shows literature to have been uniquely placed to make nuanced arguments about local politics and its place in a national agenda. Each opinion voiced in the adaptations could be shaped by the paper, but was spared the clatter of

[56] See, James Kincaid, 'Dickens and the Rhetoric of Laughter', *The Victorian Web* (2010) <http://www.victorianweb.org/authors/dickens/kincaid2/> [Accessed: 05/05/2020].
[57] Carole O'Reilly, 'Creating a Critical Civic Consciousness', *Media History* (2018) <10.1080/13688804.2018.1530975> [Accessed: 04/02/2020].

vested interest, since they were represented as doubly mediated through *Pickwick*'s cast of familiar characters, and the authoritative author that shaped them.

I explore how *Pickwick* operated at the intersection between popular literature, the newspaper press and political debate more comprehensively in Chapter 3, which turns to the rich journalistic circulation of one of *Pickwick*'s most political threads: the Eatanswill election. Beginning with the politicisation of the excerpts that were printed during Eatanswill's serialisation, this chapter primarily focusses on Eatanswill's remediation from 1837 to Dickens's death in 1870. It opens by examining Dickens's construction of the scene, which, when coupled with the reappraised evidence of his letters, provides a clear indication that Eatanswill was shaped to facilitate its remediation in the press in ways that would promote the early numbers of the serial, the commercial viability of which remained uncertain at that stage. Dickens cultivated in Eatanswill a deliberate lack of political specificity, teasingly leaving its whereabouts and specific partisanships open to conjecture so that the scene functioned in a similar way to the Pickwickian silences examined in Chapter 1 – encouraging the newspapers to imbue the scene with their own agendas. Following its serialisation, the chapter shows that Eatanswill remediations underwent a generic shift whereby verbatim extracts almost completely disappeared, and were replaced instead with 'evocations'. Such evocations assumed a particular usefulness from 1852 onwards, as Lord John Russell's first attempt to introduce a second Reform Bill to Parliament sparked renewed media debate about enfranchisement that remained unabated for over a decade. In such examples, Eatanswill became a recognisable example or analogy to bolster leader columns, letters to the editor and other political opinion pieces, and joined a network of political associations independent from its source text. The chapter concludes that, contrary to the body of scholarship which ties *Pickwick*'s success to its 1830s topicality—a topicality also referred to as 'the *Pickwick* moment'—Eatanswill's remarkably enduring circulation in the press was to some extent a result of the serial's malleability.

The three chapters of the thesis offer a detailed analysis of the precise stakes of *Pickwick*'s uniqueness in the context of a long, rich tradition of journalistic remediation. They uncover not only alternative narratives about Dickens's management of the reception of his texts, but an alternative, periodical-centred way of charting reception history. What these texts show, and *Pickwick* more than all, is that the remediation of literary texts in the press can radically re-write our understanding of their rhetorical and political functions, and even unsettle our categorisation of popular texts by demanding that we move beyond sales figures, or by cutting across or contradicting the conclusions that might be drawn from an analysis of other reading experiences. By bringing this journalistic phenomenon to light, the following three chapters

reclaim the newspaper press as a crucial factor in *Pickwick*'s popularity and its powerful generation of political meaning.

Note on Method

All the newspaper searches undertaken as part of this project were conducted using the British Newspaper Archive. The following explains the key decisions I took during the course of this research to mitigate the most significant sources of bias and to produce clearly parameterised datasets from which quantitative and qualitative conclusions can be drawn. It also offers a key to using the databases alongside the thesis.

I. Details of Data Collection

Studies that have deployed digital methods to catalogue and analyse the circulation of printed matter in the newspaper press have tended to focus on either very large or very small samples of data. The most notable examples of the former approach are Ryan Cordell and David A. Smith's 'Viral Texts Project' and Melodee Beals's 'Oceanic Exchanges' and the 'Scissors-and-Paste-Project'. All these projects are concerned with mapping patterns of reprinting in the nineteenth-century press, with Beals's project also resulting in a web-based search tool, the 'Scissors-and-Paste O'Meter' that can be used to map trajectories of reprinting between papers.[1] The smaller-scale studies are less concerned with tabulating newspaper data or quantitative approaches, but instead deploy digital tools to find small numbers of illustrative examples of particular phenomena to support the hermeneutic analysis of individual texts. For examples of this approach, we might return to Joanna Hofer-Robinson or consider work by Laura-Kasson Fiss about the transatlantic reprinting of Wellerisms.[2] These projects are less concerned with producing large, encoded, machine-readable datasets, and more alert to the potential for small numbers of examples, analysed closely, to significantly enrich hermeneutic research.

This study blends key aspects of these two different approaches to newspaper texts to produce a replicable methodology capable of redeployment in similar analyses for other texts and authors. In contrast to Beals's various projects which deploy AI, plagiarism software and machine reading to process large amounts of textual data, the searches undertaken for this

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[1] Oceanic Exchanges Project Team, *Oceanic Exchanges: Tracing Global Information Networks In Historical Newspaper Repositories, 1840–1914* (2017) <10.17605/OSF.IO/WA94S> [Accessed: 06/08/2021]; Ryan Cordell and David A. Smith, *The Viral Texts Project: Mapping Networks of Reprinting in 19th-Century Newspapers and Magazines* (2019) <https://viraltexts.org/> [Accessed: 06/08/2021]; Melodee H. Beals, *Scissors and Paste: A Collection of Newspaper Transcriptions and Connections* <http://scissorsandpaste.net/scissors-and-paste-o-meter> [Accessed: 06/08/2021].
[2] Laura Kasson Fiss, '"Out with It," as the Subeditor Said to the Novel: Wellerisms and the Humor of Newspaper Excerpts', *VPR* 50.1 (2017) pp. 228–237.

project have all been completed manually, but nonetheless aim to be synthesisable in a similar way. This approach allows for a more accurate analysis of individual examples and avoids erasing the human reading experience which, as the ensuing chapters clearly show, became so crucial to the transportation of the nuances of *Pickwick*'s political meaning. My keyword searches are therefore a starting point for detailed interpretation. This is not to suggest that my approach compromises on scope as a result. Using the British Newspaper Archive as my source of data, I have collected and curated over 1,200 examples of remediated *Pickwick* from 1836-1870 and an additional 421 excerpts from the case study texts discussed in Section I of the Introduction. For context, it is worth noting that Beals's 'Georgian Reprints' dataset—which is one resource from the Scissors-and-Paste Project and was compiled by machine reading—contains about 1,800 TSV files, and covers the period 1800-1837.[3] Given that my project operates around a series of precise research questions about the circulation of a single text, rather than all patterns of reprinting across a large, defined corpus, the volume of data analysed is more than sufficient to draw both quantitative and qualitative conclusions while also evading the multiplication of errors that are the inevitable result of machine-reading newspaper transcripts produced by OCR software.

Despite clear benefits, a manual search approach is unavoidably more time-consuming and requires some mitigating actions to limit the effect of the British Newspaper Archive's significant internal skews. The BNA is a digital resource that is being expanded at speed, and that will remain 'incomplete' for the foreseeable future. At the same time, when swift digitisation is coupled with the comparative slowness of manual data collection, there is an obvious potential for inconsistency if searches aren't clearly parameterised.[4] For example, if a researcher begins a search for the bigram 'nicholas nickleby' between 1838 and 1870, the results of which take several weeks to catalogue, but in the meantime, the BNA begins adding a long running metropolitan daily to the collection—as recently happened with the new addition of the *Morning Herald*, which was liberal in its production of extracts—this presents a problem. Unless the researcher catches all these new additions, or keeps perfect pace with the archivist (both of which scenarios are difficult, if not impossible to achieve with the ordering and sorting tools available on the BNA's current platform) then the result is a skew, where the newspaper is accounted for in some parts of the search and not others.

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[3] M. H. Beals, 'Scissors and Paste: The Georgian Reprints, 1800–1837', *Journal of Open Humanities Data* (2017) <http://doi.org/10.5334/johd.8> [Accessed: 14/10/2021].
[4] Luke McKernan, 'Heritage Made Digital – The Newspapers', *The Newsroom Blog* (2019) <https://blogs.bl.uk/thenewsroom/2019/01/heritage-made-digital-the-newspapers.html> [Accessed: 14/08/2019].

Also necessary to address is the problem of commercial skew, which is an unavoidable part of the dataset itself. The British Newspaper Archive is partly funded by Find My Past, a family history and genealogy site that includes newspaper archives as part of the material its subscribers can access. This partnership has meant that, in the past, the BNA has prioritised the digitisation of local, provincial publications. Interestingly, this is a methodology that is at odds with the overwhelming focus on metropolitan dailies in collections of reviews like the *Critical Heritage*, but that nonetheless presents an internal skew. Conversely, about a year into this study, the British Library launched 'Heritage Made Digital', a project which included a new digitisation incentive from the BNA, which is attempting to redress the balance by the open access digitisation of some lesser-known metropolitan publications, among others of less use to Find my Past. This project is ongoing, further destabilising the archive and complicating its skew.[5] The primary way that I address these issues in my project is either by adopting a case-study based approach, or by clearly demarcating the parameters of each search, by ignoring material digitised after a certain date. Both these approaches essentially create smaller, more stable repositories of recorded material within the more changeable BNA, but that are less influenced, for the purposes of this study, by its development. The databases that are the foundation of this project are accordingly either cross sections of the archive which select a representative sample of newspapers, or a snapshot of the entire digitised collection at a given moment in time.

II. Database Structure

The foundation of this research is formed by three databases which are listed as 'Accompanying Materials'. Database 1 presents information about reprinted excerpts from eight texts that I understand as comparable to *Pickwick* – either as a result of their having attained comparable levels of commercial success, their similar publication contexts, or analogous thematic concerns. This data is discussed in the Introduction. Database 2 catalogues all references to *Pickwick* across thirty newspaper case studies between March 1836 and December 1837, and is discussed in Chapter 1. Database 3 catalogues all references to Eatanswill across the BNA between 1836 and 1870, and is discussed in Chapter 3. The precise decision-making process for each database is outlined in the sections below.

[5] Beth Gaskell, '"Heritage Made Digital": The Work and Pleasure of Curating and Creating a New Digital Collection of Nineteenth Century Newspapers at the British Library', RS4VP Conference: *Work, Leisure, Duty, Pleasure* (2019).

Each of the databases organises its content using the following headings:

1. I.D.: each record is assigned a six-digit number to render it more easily searchable and distinguishable from similar hits
2. N-Gram: Details of the search term used to locate the record to ensure the search process is replicable for future users
3. Genre: e.g. 'Advert'
4. Title of Piece
5. Title of Section: such as 'Literature' or 'Varieties'
6. Publication Date: each publication date is separated into columns so that the results can be sorted consecutively by Year, Month, Day and Weekday and placed in chronological order (Excel struggles to recognise dates prior to 1900)
7. Newspaper: the title is copied exactly from the British Newspaper Archive, using their systems of disambiguation. For example: Sun (London).
8. Details: this offers details about the remediation, including any notable paratextual material such as a review or preamble, and, where appropriate, a chapter reference for the source text or a representative quotation. The details of the remediation are recorded slightly differently in each database to provide information according to the emphases of the chapter. For example, where Databases 1 and 2 focus on providing a standardised and searchable catalogue of excerpts, Database 3 uses fewer columns and focusses on providing detailed quotations from the source to contextualise the use of Eatanswill for each record.
9. Surrounding Material: two fields entitled 'Preceding Article' and 'Subsequent Article' briefly describe the articles that precede and follow the remediation, to enable users to build a mental picture of the *mis-en-page* of each remediation
10. Attributions: details of whether the remediation mentions the author, author's pseudonym, title of the text, title of the periodical in which the text was initially printed (where applicable), or a page/chapter reference.
11. URL: link to the newspaper page containing the remediation on the BNA's platform. In the event of the link becoming broken, the other fields will be sufficient to locate the individual newspaper page.

With the exception of the 'Details' fields in Databases 2 and 3, which are inevitably more discursive, as they primarily exist to offer a more comprehensive sense of the content and context of each remediation for the purposes of close analysis, each heading is designed so that one cell records one piece of synthesisable data. This ensures that the data could, with relative ease, be exported to a .csv file or moved to more complex database software, such as

MySQL, in the future, without compromising on the detailed data collection necessary to analyse individual examples.

The n-grams used to search for each text or scene were chosen to be as capacious as possible while avoiding function words that would return numerous irrelevant results. Single words with unusual spellings such as 'eatanswill' and 'ivanhoe' were preferred, but where searching more common terms proved necessary, bigrams such as 'mary barton' or 'oliver twist' were used for increased precision.

While many of the newspapers included in my databases often published several editions in one day, the BNA does not yet have a clear or consistent way of displaying these versions. This is partly a result of the structure of the platform and partly because, prior to new legislation in 1869, which meant that the final edition of the day was sent to the British Museum for indexing, there is often little indication on hard copies as to which edition the paper submitted via the Stamp Office.[6] For this reason, this project counts one newspaper for each publication date (whichever is the digitised copy). If more than one digitised copy exists I have used one edition only, unless there are visible differences between the remediations in each edition, or clear markings on the masthead stating different publications times, such as 'Evening Edition'. This is an important distinction as, for some newspapers, such as the *Cambridge Chronicle and Journal*, the BNA has digitised a black-and-white and a colour copy for each publication date that are otherwise identical. To catalogue both would risk imbuing my quantitative results with an unnecessary skew.

During the course of my research, the BNA also began to digitise some English language colonial newspapers published overseas. While some of these papers excerpted and re-serialised *Pickwick*, I eliminated them from my searches, as they were part of transnational circulation networks, rather than the domestic cultures of remediation with which this project is primarily concerned.

Each of the databases has been thoroughly spot-checked. Where possible the language has been standardised so that even basic filters enable the user to pick up similar or identical uses of the texts. Every fourth or fifth record in the databases has been checked twice to ensure accuracy and to avoid recurring errors – the number of records checked being proportionate to the size of the database.

[6] With thanks to Stewart Gillies, News Reference Team Leader at the British Library, for these insights.

III. Database 1

The purpose of this database is to historicise *Pickwick*'s remediation in the newspaper press by comparing its circulation in excerpt form to that of eight similar texts. The texts include a mixture of male and female, metropolitan and provincial writers publishing at a variety of moments across Dickens's lifetime. The first two texts, which I term 'comparable serials', are William Harrison Ainsworth's *Jack Sheppard* and William Makepeace Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*. The next three are serials by Dickens from across his oeuvre: *Oliver Twist*, *Dombey and Son* and *Little Dorrit*. The final three texts are those that were published as volume novels, so that the relationship between formal features and excerpt frequency might be considered. These novels are Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe*, Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton* and George Eliot's *Adam Bede*.

Despite my use of bigrams to compound the less idiosyncratic search terms and reduce the number of hits returned, the amount of newspaper pages returned for texts such as *Mary Barton* (which tended to include a significant number of records in which 'Mary' and 'Barton' appeared severally on the same page, rather than as a bigram) meant it was necessary to take small samplings from key moments in each text's publication history as opposed to attempting to catalogue every excerpt over a given period of time, as the results returned were simply too numerous. For the serials, this meant recording every excerpt (including those published as part of reviews) that every newspaper digitised by the British Newspaper Archive by 26th April 2021, printed in the month following the publication of the first, middle and final number of the serial. The 26th of April cut-off date reflects the day I began collecting data for Database 1. For example, this means that I have recorded all extracts of *Oliver Twist* that were printed up to a month after the publication of the first, twelfth, and final numbers, because the serial ran for twenty-four months (although not without gaps).[7] For the volume novels, I have recorded every excerpt digitised by the BNA by the 26th of April 2021 printed in the first, third and sixth month following publication. The exact date ranges I have used can be found on the 'Master Sheet' tab in Database 1, and where possible I have followed the publication dates advertised by the press as a means of defining my parameters. Newspaper pages added subsequently to the 26th of April were ignored. This offered a way to parametrise the research data in a growing archive and to ensure that the results were as consistent as possible across each text, even when collecting the data over a period of weeks. In Database 2, when faced with a remediation of *Pickwick* which contained several different extracts, I separated them

[7] See Gerald Giles Grubb, 'On the Serial Publication of *Oliver Twist*' *Modern Language Notes* 56.4 (1941), pp. 290–294.

into individual scenes, and gave each a record on the spreadsheet to ascertain which were the most popular. The texts in Database 1 were rarely so easy to break down into clearly-defined chunks, and it was often impossible to make consistent decisions about where to divide extracts and/or scenes in the source texts into separate cells (for example, some newspapers excerpting *Adam Bede* used as many as eleven different scenes from the source text). For this reason, while Database 1 aims to divide the excerpts into scenes as consistently as possible, for the purposes of data analysis, I record one record as one remediation only, irrespective of the number of extracts. This means I can apply consistent counting strategies across all eight texts, although readers will notice some disparities between the *Pickwick* extracts catalogued for Databases One, Two and Three, as different rules were applied.

IV. Database 2

Database 2 records all relevant references to *Pickwick*—including remediations—that were printed in thirty newspapers between March 1836 and December 1837 (thereby covering its serial run, with an additional month either side to account for early advertisements and late notices of the completed text). Recording all references to *Pickwick* enabled me to calculate the proportion which were excerpts—when compared with advertisements, for example—and to offer a sense of the scale of the phenomenon.

The thirty papers were selected to be as representative of the period's diverse media marketplace as possible, covering a range of metropolitan and provincial titles, daily, weekly and evening publications. My sample also mapped a variety of political standpoints including an equal number of titles with conservative and liberal leanings. I verified the political affiliation of the titles by comparing entries from the Waterloo Index and the British Newspaper Archive's own potted histories; I also consulted the editorial line of each paper when the first two sources did not reach a consensus. In this database, although not with the other two, I deliberately avoided radical unstamped titles. This was so the results would clearly demonstrate that many of the patterns of remediation revealed by recent research into the radical press specifically, such as Casie LeGette's *Re-Making Romanticism*, are equally applicable to the non-radical press. The papers were also selected to represent the greatest possible geographical spread across England. Parametrising the results in this way negated the effects of the BNA's expansion. However, there are some inevitable gaps in the data where individual issues were missing, which are itemised in Appendix A. There were also inevitably instances where the OCR software did not align with the transcript and the remediation could not be located.

This database records all *relevant* references to Pickwick, which means that there is a discrepancy between the number of hits returned by searching the n-grams and the number of results recorded in the database. References to the Pickwick coaching company, for example, were omitted from the database as they do not refer to Dickens's text.

V. Database 3

Database 3 tracks references to the monogram 'eatanswill' from *Pickwick*'s initial publication until Dickens's death. In doing so, it offers a case study of *Pickwick*'s engagement with the press over time. Some of the early hits returned are understandably duplicates of those in Database 2, since searching 'pickwick' in the press between 1836 and 1837 also returns many of the early Eatanswill excerpts. It will also be noted that several of the Eatanswill excerpts present in Database 2 are not present in Database 3, and vice versa; this is because the different search terms and inevitable errors in the BNA's search software return slightly different results for each database. In addition, I conducted the searches for each database at different times, which meant more material was available when I began Database 3 than when I began Database 2. I have not copied hits from one database to another to render both more comprehensive, because this would render the 1836-1837 period inconsistent with the rest of the data and unnecessarily skew any quantitative conclusions. These databases are best viewed as methodologically different (and therefore not combinable), although their content does in places overlap.

For Database 3, I conducted searches across all British Newspaper Archive titles. This was because adopting a case-study based approach as I did with Database 2 would not have returned enough search hits for 'Eatanswill' for me to draw comprehensive quantitative conclusions about its role in the press over time. As with Database 1, it was necessary to 'freeze' the search by only counting newspaper pages that had been digitised up to a certain date, in this case the 13th of April 2021.

Chapter 1 Separating the Wheat from the Chaff: Excerpting, Pickwickian Silence and the Rhetoric of the Comic Anecdote

In a review of *The Pickwick Papers* published in May 1837, *Bell's New Weekly Messenger* states:

> It is pleasanter to read "Boz" in the fragments which are published in the newspapers, than in the "Pickwick Club" itself. His "grains of wheat" are mixed up with a very large quantity of chaff, or, to borrow a simile from the number before us, like the stock in trade of the small apothecary, half whose drawers "have got nothing in 'em, and the other half don't open". His most excellent peculiarity is his retentiveness of memory, which enables him to put down upon paper a thousand of the minor incidents of life, which are droll enough, but the utter insignificance of which causes them to be forgotten by others in the contemplation of the broader and more important aspects of society.[1]

Although this review was published at the height of *Pickwick*'s fame, its writer delivers an unusually scathing reading of the serial. Dickens is deemed unmemorable, because his narratives of 'a thousand of the minor incidents of life' are seen as incompatible with 'the contemplation of the broader and more important aspects of society'. And yet, the reviewer's comments about *Pickwick*'s forgettability are belied by their own careful description of the strategic work undertaken by hundreds of newspaper editors—here termed 'separating the wheat from the chaff'— in which sections of the serial were reprinted in the form of excerpts, and re-contextualised to exact just the kinds of discussions this reviewer feels to be above Dickens's amusing observations. In fact, in this example and hundreds of others like it, the 'grains of wheat' that are selected to undertake this serious discursive work are the very comic or 'droll' scenes the extract above finds amusing but unremarkable.

Even in the act of declaring them forgettable, this reviewer is unable to avoid reprinting comic scenes from *Pickwick* to substantiate their argument. The quotation about the empty and broken apothecaries' drawers—here evoked as a humorous simile to describe the uselessness of Dickens's work—is taken from a chapter of *Pickwick* which describes Bob Sawyer and

[1] 'The Pickwick Club. No. XIV', *Bell's New Weekly Messenger*, Sunday 07 May 1837, p. 5 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/BL/0001319/18370507/024/0005> [Accessed: 29/08/2020].

Benjamin Allen's medical practice, deploying one of Dickens's 'minor incidents', so that *Pickwick* ironically effects its own disparagement.[2] The review is also followed by multiple similar extracts from *Pickwick*—including Sam Weller's humorous conversation with a groom, and the Pickwickians' adventure with Arabella Allen, as if the reviewer is struggling to reconcile their dismissal of Dickens's comic scenes with their inevitable interest and usefulness in their own argument.[3]

In this chapter, I demonstrate that the extensive excerpting of *Pickwick*'s comic scenes carried out by newspaper editors during its serialisation illuminates our understanding of the close relationship between fiction and the newspaper press in the 1830s, by revealing Dickens's comic anecdotes to be a medium through which local communities spoke to and for themselves. The decrease in newspaper Stamp Duty in 1836 led to the proliferation of new publications, especially provincial papers.[4] Their various perspectives were reflected by the similarly heterogeneous re-use of *Pickwick* extracts, which in turn reveals a less orderly reception history of the text than an analysis of the serial parts alone. In the first section of this three-part chapter, 'Defining the Dickensian Comic Anecdote', I analyse the data displayed in Database 2 to demonstrate both the frequency of the *Pickwick* excerpts that were reprinted in newspapers across England between March 1836 and December 1837, and the heterogeneous ends to which they were put. I show that while reprinting details of the Pickwickians' own journeys and experiences, newspaper editors turned most often to the comic anecdotes that the serial's main characters were told along the way, by Sam Weller and others. Using a range of examples from metropolitan and provincial newspapers, I propose a basic formula for the Dickensian comic anecdote, as well as suggesting ways that this formula facilitated the widespread appearance of those anecdotes in the nineteenth-century press. Fascinated by *Pickwick*'s tangents, digressions and micronarratives, newspapers are replete with tales of pies made out of cats, the suspiciousness of turnpike-keepers, and cabmen's horses – scenes that even *Pickwick*'s most ardent twenty-first century enthusiasts might struggle to call to mind, because, like the reviewer in *Bell's* life, we find them amusing, but turn elsewhere for an engagement with serious political and social issues.

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[2] This scene appears in Chapter XXXVIII. See, Charles Dickens, *The Pickwick Papers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) p. 478.
[3] 'The Pickwick Club. No. XIV', *Bell's New Weekly Messenger*.
[4] For the purposes of this thesis, I have adopted Rachel Matthews' definition of the provincial press as a term which 'signifies those titles which are based outside of the capital and is contiguous with the definition of 'local paper' used by the Newspaper Society'. I apply this definition to the 'provincial' generally, reading provincial geographies as those outside London. See Rachel Matthews, *The History of the Provincial Press in England* (New York; London: Bloomsbury, 2017) p. 2.

Nonetheless, the reprinting of these comic anecdotes—the most popular of which would often appear between thirty and fifty times each in the month following their first publication—shows Dickens's comic formula to have been more relevant to *Pickwick*'s didactic messages than reading the serial alone would suggest.[5] In the second part of this chapter, 'Remediating the Rhetoric of Laughter', I use the data and theory I discuss in the first to show that reprinted comic anecdotes in the press complicate our understanding of what James Kincaid has termed Dickens's 'rhetoric of laughter' or the use of laughter to persuade. Kincaid has argued that *Pickwick*'s comic anecdotes—especially those related to Mr Pickwick himself by Sam—are teachings which help to facilitate the happy ending at Dulwich in which Pickwick learns his lesson, as well as enabling Dickens to mould his readers' opinions, since 'laughter implies, among other things a very solid agreement with a certain value system'.[6] I show that, as these sections of *Pickwick* circulated in the press, newspaper editors variously remediated not only Dickens's anecdotes, but his ability to direct the laughter they might evoke in their own readers, to attempt to persuade them of their individual perspectives. This foundational journalistic engagement with *Pickwick* ultimately paved the way for its creative use as political ammunition across the nineteenth century, as we will see in Chapters Two and Three.

Whether the Pickwickians themselves learn anything from their journey, and whether this is even the point of the serial, are questions that have been widely debated and remain unresolved.[7] However, the newspapers' responses to *Pickwick*'s comic anecdotes show the Pickwickians' education on a fictional level to be fraught with difficulties, as the characters rarely heed or respond coherently to the tales they hear, leaving moments of silence in the serial where their opinions and reflections ought to be. Viewed in light of the rest of the Dickens canon, these silences are unique to *Pickwick*. They can be quite literal, as Pickwickian characters are often described as being lost for words, or silences can open up as characters are interrupted before they can comment, or fall asleep during the course of a narrative or

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[5] For more about *Pickwick*'s didactics, see Amir Tevel, 'Counter-Didactic Pickwickians', *Dickens Studies Annual*, 50.2 (2019) pp. 207–231.

[6] James Kincaid, 'Dickens and the Rhetoric of Laughter', *The Victorian Web* (2010) n.p. <http://www.victorianweb.org/authors/dickens/kincaid2/> [Accessed: 05/05/2020].

[7] See Philip Rogers, 'Mr. Pickwick's Innocence', *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 27.1 (1972) pp. 21–37, for an account of this debate from the 1950s-1970s. Rogers's reading is closest to my own: he contends that Dickens strives to maintain Mr Pickwick's innocence throughout the serial. Malcolm Andrews has suggested turning to *Pickwick*'s comic predecessors and the serial's illustrations for an explanation of how Pickwick's character changes during the course of the serial. See Malcolm Andrews, *Dickensian Laughter*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016). Barbara Hardy has suggested that Mr Pickwick changes little, stating that '[i]t is true that Pickwick's innocence is slightly eroded in the Fleet, but if we look closely at these parts of the story, we find it is a restricted erosion'. See Barbara Hardy, *The Moral Art of Dickens* (London: Athlone, 1970). On the other hand, both James Kincaid, in *Dickens and the Rhetoric of Laughter* and David Parker are important flag wavers for the perspective that Pickwick does learn from his experiences. See David Parker, 'The Topicality of *Pickwick Papers*', *Dickensian* (2009) pp. 202–212.

immediately afterwards. Moments of silence also open up when the Pickwickians respond in ways that are not relevant or are phatic, rather than engaging directly with the lessons to which the narrative has given rise. Appearing across the serial numbers at a variety of moments, beyond the formal lacunae of the serial form (which was of course a feature of both Dickens's other novels and *Pickwick*'s contemporaries), these silences intersperse and fragment the serial further, acting as interactive hooks by enabling a form of remediation that is more difficult for newspaper editors to facilitate with Dickens's later, more integrated novels. Newspaper editors read these silences as encouragement—whether intentional or otherwise—to participate, by selecting and reprinting their favourite scenes and adding new headings and preambles.

For many editors, too, the potential to exploit the 'rhetoric of laughter' was realised not only in the nature of the extracts that were chosen but in their placement on the page. This section will also consider how the effects of Dickens's comic anecdotes and the rhetoric of laughter were altered by newspaper editors' acute awareness of the importance of what we would now call paratext and recontextualisation. In *Dickensian Laughter*, Malcolm Andrews has suggested that '[n]ot to be in on Boz's jokes implied exclusion from the circle he was so successfully drawing around him—and risked the reputation perhaps of a slight lack of sophistication'.[8] Andrews's reference to Dickens's 'circles' here are perhaps better read as 'interpretative communities', specifically in Stanley Fish's sense:

> Interpretative communities are made up of those who share interpretive strategies not for reading (in the conventional sense) but for writing texts, for constituting their properties and assigning their intentions. In other words these strategies exist prior to the act of reading and therefore determine the shape of what is read rather than, as is usually assumed, the other way around.[9]

As I will demonstrate, by accessing Dickens's rhetoric of laughter, newspaper editors attempted to show that they and their readers understood Dickens's comedy sufficiently to be part of this interpretative community of comic understanding. At the same time, because they chose particular extracts and added new headings, preambles and contexts with their local readership and political affiliations in mind, such newspapers also used *Pickwick* to reinforce their own interpretative communities, urging various readings of the text that were shaped by their different geographies, politics and editorial agendas. As sections of *Pickwick* are taken out of context, the emphasis of the comic exclusivity Andrews describes shifts from Dickens to

[8] Andrews, *Dickensian Laughter*, p. 9.
[9] Stanley Fish, 'Interpreting the "Variorum"' *Critical Inquiry*, 2.3 (1976) pp. 465–485 (p. 483).

local newspaper editors. Newspaper excerpting therefore shows specific interpretative communities to have claimed the prerogative to curate the way *Pickwick* was understood, offering insight into one way that editors envisioned and discussed themselves and their readers in a rapidly expanding media marketplace. At this point in the 1830s, the development of the provincial press in particular meant that such community-building was in focus and became a cultural trend that both shaped *Pickwick*'s role in the press and contributed to securing its popularity.

The use of *Pickwick* in the papers to help forge and define interpretative communities also suggests an alternative way to read Dickens's comedy that emphasises its tremendous contingency. Analysing the process of 'separating the wheat from the chaff' which led to the reprinting and recontextualization of *Pickwick*'s comic anecdotes reveals a far less orderly and a considerably more heterogeneous reception history than is yielded by an analysis of readers' responses to Dickens's version of the serial. In my third section 'Seriality, Reception, Circulation', I will show that the portability of the comic anecdote, and the gaps left by the Pickwickians' silences, demand that we rethink our synecdochal understanding of *Pickwick*'s reception as carefully curated serial parts ultimately integrated into a single (albeit untidy) volume. *Pickwick*'s seriality, with its silences between numbers, is often understood as creating opportunities for readers to anticipate and reflect, and Robert Patten has argued that this gives Pickwick's longest and most widely-discussed anecdotes, the interpolated tales, a unique status, as they frequently appear or are promised at the ends of numbers.[10] Yet when reading *Pickwick* as excerpts, the structure of the serial form is partially lost and there is clear evidence that some newspaper editors did not even refer to Dickens's *Pickwick*, but instead chose their extracts from other newspapers. The gaps between numbers do result in newspaper editors reflecting upon the content and development of the narrative, as well as its applicability to their own communities, because they review and reprint as each part is published, and extracts are usually taken from the latest number. However, there is no evidence to suggest that anecdotes appearing towards the end of a number are excerpted more often by the press (see Appendix B for a table detailing how all the comic anecdotes recorded in Database 2 were placed in Dickens's version of the serial). In fact, newspaper editors often make other formal features, such as brevity and comedy, their priorities, which means that *Pickwick*'s interpolated tales—much longer, darker and less humorous than other comic anecdotes—rarely re-appear in the papers that form part of this study. Accordingly, I will argue that attention to the

[10] Robert L. Patten, 'The Art of Pickwick's Interpolated Tales', *ELH*, 34.3 (1967) pp. 349–366, (p. 351).

circulation of comic anecdotes suggests that Dickens's process of writing *Pickwick* as a serial narrative was less relevant to its reception history than Patten and others have claimed.

I. Defining the Dickensian Comic Anecdote

During the course of this research, I have catalogued 693 references to *Pickwick* between March 1836 and December 1837 across thirty stamped newspapers, and these form the dataset for this chapter (see Database 2). These 693 references have been divided by genre (advert, excerpt, review, adaptation and other) in Figure 5.[11] Excerpts comprise 277 or about forty percent of references to *Pickwick*, matching the combined total of adverts for the serial and for theatrical adaptations, which comprise 279 of the hits. These numbers become even more fascinating when we consider their potential implications for *Pickwick*'s place in the wider newspaper press. Recent research has suggested that, by 1836, an estimated 397 stamped titles were in circulation in Britain.[12] Assuming that the trends remain roughly constant, this suggests that as many as 3,666 *Pickwick* extracts may have appeared in the stamped press alone during its serialisation (and in the final month of 1837), with the potential for many more examples in unstamped publications. This figure does not include other kinds of *Pickwick* remediations—such as adaptations or evocations in letters and reports—which I will discuss in Chapters Two and Three, but it does demonstrate the potential extent of the phenomenon in the press. At the very least, by 1837, it would have been difficult to pick up one of the thirty papers analysed here, without encountering some sort of reference to *Pickwick*, and the reference was as likely to be a remediated extract as it was an advertisement.

[11] Note that, while in Database 2, each hit is recorded only once, in Figure 5, below, some hits are recorded twice so that they can be separated by genre. For example, if the reference appeared in a review which also contained an extract, it will be counted once in the 'review' category, and once in the 'extract' category.
[12] Andrew King, Alexis Easley and John Morton (eds), *The Routledge Companion to Nineteenth Century Newspapers and Periodicals* (Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2016) n.p.

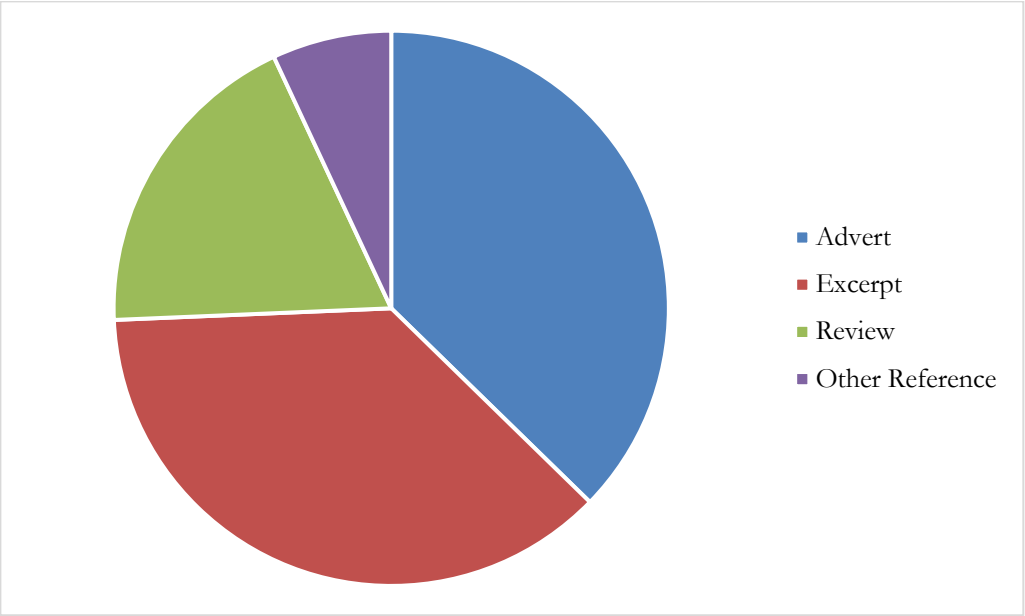

Figure 5: References to *Pickwick* Categorised by Genre

So, which scenes did newspaper editors excerpt? What were their preferences and why? The graphs below (see Figures 6 and 7) divide the 277 *Pickwick* excerpts I have catalogued into groups, revealing the scenes and character sketches that were most popularly excerpted (see Appendix B for details of where each can be found in the text). The Eatanswill Election is in first place, with nineteen appearances in fifteen different papers. As we will see when I return to Eatanswill in Chapter 3, this figure demonstrates not only the scene's appeal when it was first published in late July 1836, but also its continuing ability to be deployed in the service of the politics of the moment throughout Dickens's lifetime. A fact that will be no surprise to readers of *Pickwick* is that Sam Weller also appeared in many of the excerpts that newspapers selected. This is consistent with the focus of contemporary reviews, which praised his character consistently from the moment he appeared in the fourth number.

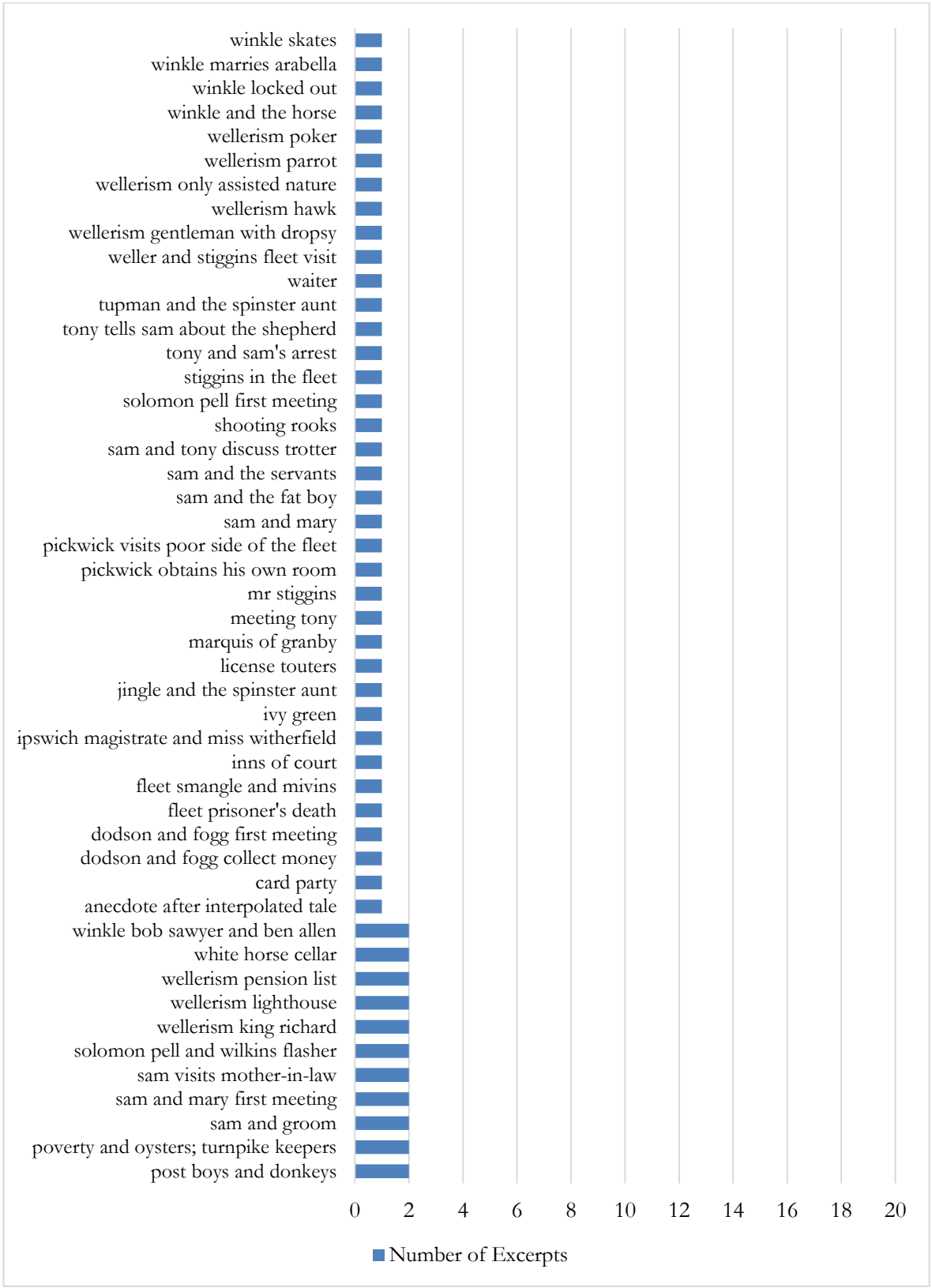

Figure 6: *Pickwick* Excerpts, March 1836 - December 1837 (A)

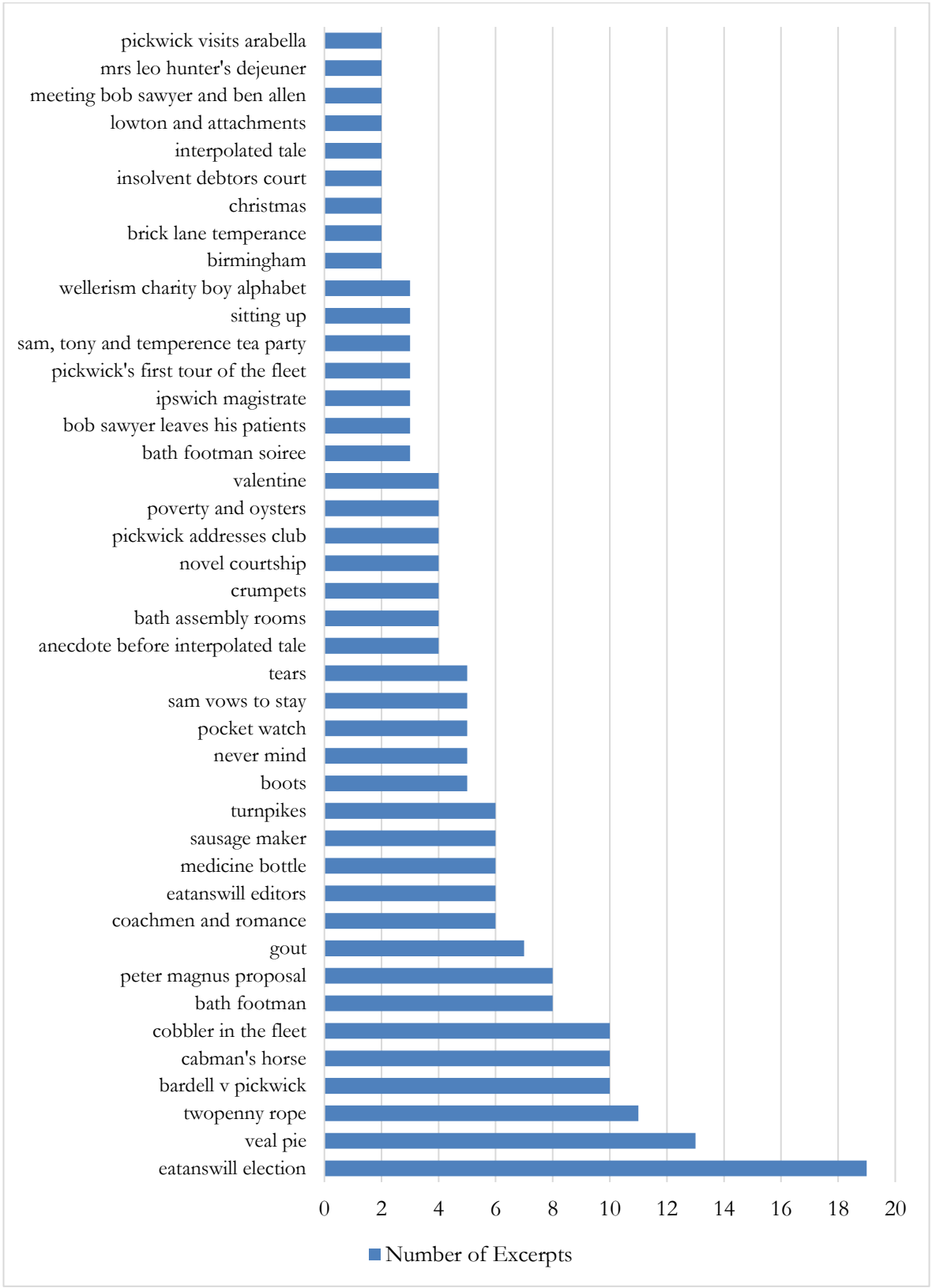

Figure 7: *Pickwick* Excerpts, March 1836 - December 1837 (B)

In one example, the *Chester Chronicle* even curtailed their other extracts because they wanted to dedicate the most space to a scene including Sam. Following an extract in which Dickens describes the happiness of Christmas, the editor declares:

> We reluctantly confine our extract to this small portion of a very interesting chapter. In which the author evinces his great and varied talent […] and we do so for the purpose of extracting more largely from another: from which the inimitable Sam Weller is not excluded.[13]

Of course, as well as being 'inimitable' or what Mr Pickwick would describe as an 'original', Sam is also a persistent storyteller, and his tendency to relate comic anecdotes is one reason for his repeated appearance in newspaper extracts, contributing to the already extensive critical discourse about his importance. As Laura Kasson Fiss has argued in her work on excerpted Wellerisms:

> The Wellerism accentuates Sam's larger relationship with newspapers, particularly excerption in miscellany columns. In the early stages of *Pickwick*'s serialization, the Wellerism helped Dickens harness newspaper readership to drive his circulation; after *Pickwick* became a phenomenon, the Wellerism form enabled newspapers to ride on Dickens's coattails, capitalizing on *Pickwick*'s success. *Pickwick*, the Wellerism, and the newspaper miscellany column all share a preoccupation with both quotation and formal fragmentation.[14]

Fiss is quite right to emphasise the spread of the Wellerism in the press, and Sam's presence in newspaper excerpts during *Pickwick*'s serialisation is evident in the graph above. However, it is also worth noting that Wellerisms comprise only fourteen of the extracts I have catalogued here. What I want to emphasise here is that, despite Sam's evident role in popularising *Pickwick*, it was Dickens's mode of structuring the comic anecdote that was the primary incentive for newspapers remediating sections of the serial. It was because Dickens's anecdotes left such capacious gaps for further comment or engagement that they moved so freely across the press, and that responses to them were often so creative. For this reason, I argue that their circulation is less about journalists passively 'riding on Dickens's coattails' and more about their clear understanding that

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[13] 'The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club', *Chester Chronicle*, Friday 13 January 1837, p. 4 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000342/18370113/013/0004> [Accessed: 30/08/2020].

[14] Laura Kasson Fiss, '"Out with It," as the Subeditor Said to the Novel: Wellerisms and the Humor of Newspaper Excerpts', *VPR* 50.1 (2017) pp. 228-237 (p. 229).

comic anecdotes could serve a rhetorical function for their own publications and communities.

As my graph shows, anecdotes told by *Pickwick*'s characters, rather than selections from *Pickwick*'s frame narrative, were often favoured by the press. For example, there are extracts in ten different newspapers which all contain an anecdote told by a cobbler in the Fleet, in which Sam enquires why he sleeps under a deal table in the prison, to which the prisoner replies that it reminds him of a four-poster bed.[15] Among the nineteen Eatanswill election extracts, sixteen are or include Sam's comic anecdotes of the corruption he has seen that morning, or that he or his father have seen at previous elections; only three do not include these anecdotes, choosing to share Dickens's descriptions of the Eatanswill election itself instead. In fact, in the ten most widely reprinted scenes in the graph (comprising 102 extracts in total), sixty extracts are, or include, comic anecdotes told by characters. These patterns of choices suggest a feature of *Pickwick*'s internal structure—but not, crucially, its seriality alone—rendered it especially remediable in the newspaper press.

Nonetheless, the scenes the press chose to reprint do vary significantly in length, structure and content, and among them, those that I am terming 'comic anecdotes' are similarly heterogeneous. Therefore, it is helpful to pause to consider what a Dickensian comic anecdote looks like in practice. There are few studies which explicitly analyse anecdote as a concept in Dickens's work, and those that do tend to avoid defining it, by writing instead about one of its features. This is perhaps because understanding anecdote as a form of storytelling—and Dickens as a teller of stories—is deemed too self-evident to be worthy of analysis in its own right. For example, Andrews's work contains the only existing survey study of the comic anecdote in Dickens's wider *oeuvre*, and yet, rather than offering a definition, Andrews focusses on how such anecdotes resemble pantomime, because they combine violence with a sense that none of the characters might really be hurt.[16] However, Andrews's examples range from short capsular stories, with clear beginnings and endings, which appear in Dickens's letters or novels—a type of narrative we might traditionally refer to as an anecdote—to passages of dialogue or character sketches that are not so easily separable from their surrounding narrative, but that nonetheless use some of the same pantomimic techniques. For example, Andrews describes a scene from *Nicholas Nickleby* in which Squeers strikes one of his new

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[15] *Pickwick*, p. 554.
[16] For more on Dickens and Pantomime violence, see Jonathan Buckmaster, 'Brutal Buffoonery and Clown Atrocity: Dickens's Pantomime Violence', in *Victorian Comedy and Laughter: Conviviality, Jokes and Dissent* (London: Palgrave, 2020) pp. 49–74.

students off a trunk and back on again.[17] This scene certainly has the same theatrical comic energy as pantomime, but is only an anecdote insofar as Dickens is telling us the story of *Nicholas Nickleby*. The repetition of examples like this, and a lack of a clear definitions, means that Andrews' analysis of anecdote ultimately becomes an analysis of theatricality.

The problem here arises from a need to disambiguate 'an anecdote' (a genre about which we have a series of expectations), from 'the anecdotal' (a style of writing that resembles anecdote, but without necessarily conforming to its structure). The distinction is crucial here, because it is the former rather than the latter that the newspapers I discuss in this chapter find most suited to their purposes. This is because Dickensian anecdotes have a series of formal features that make them both portable and malleable. The difference between the anecdote and the anecdotal can be explained with reference to Lionel Gossman's work on the history of the anecdote, in which he distinguishes between what he terms the 'classic anecdote' and the 'anecdote history'. Gossman describes the 'classic anecdote' as a type of short narrative with several identifying features:

> As to its form, what most people would consider the classic anecdote is a highly concentrated miniature narrative with a strikingly dramatic three-act structure consisting of situation or exposition, encounter or crisis, and resolution—the last usually marked by a "pointe" or clinching remark, often a "bon mot".[18]

According to Gossman, the anecdote is also synecdochal, in that it 'may be fairly detached and free-standing, as in anecdote books or collections. Or it may be integrally connected with and embedded in a larger argument or narrative, as in sermons and most historical writings'.[19] The portable, 'three act structure' is also characteristic of Dickens's comic anecdotes, although Dickens reinvents these formal features so that they are sometimes more difficult to locate.

Let us turn, for example, to one of the shortest anecdotes in the serial, a Wellerism:

> It wos to be—and wos, as the old lady said arter she'd married the footman[20]

Although only one sentence, this example still maintains the tripartite structure of Gossman's 'classic anecdote': with a beginning, 'It wos to be'; middle, 'and wos'; and end, 'arter she'd married'. It would be an over-reading to suggest that this narrative includes a full-fledged 'exposition, encounter and resolution', but the essential structure of the anecdote is there and

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[17] Andrews, *Dickensian Laughter*, p. 47.
[18] Lionel Gossman, 'Anecdote and History', *History and Theory*, 42 (2003) pp. 143–168 (p. 149).
[19] *Ibid.*
[20] *Pickwick*, p. 655.

is quite clearly not as simple or didactic as an aphorism. The narrative is also portable: it makes sense on its own, but also in the context of the rest of Sam's speech. Portability, a tripartite form or a modified version of it, and a synecdocal structure (i.e. usually appearing as an embedded narrative) are the essential features of Dickens's comic anecdotes, encompassing their varied lengths and tones, from the long 'interpolated tales' to short Wellerisms of only a line or two in length. I will turn specifically to the way these anecdotes use comedy in a moment.

On the other hand, Gossman describes anecdote-histories—an eighteenth-century phenomenon—as works that 'resist narrativisation' and 'seem to be defined by their ostensible refusal of systematization, totalization, and ideological interpretation and by their reporting of only particular, relatively isolated episodes, often enough in simple chronological order'.[21] Gossman lists eighteenth-century French historical narratives in his examples of anecdote-histories, and yet there are echoes of *Pickwick*'s chaotic form in this definition also. If *Pickwick* does not quite 'resist narrativization' it certainly resists 'totalization' in favour of serial parts, fragmented character sketches and isolated episodes narrated chronologically. Gossman also explains anecdote's etymology, demonstrating that it originally denoted an 'unpublished work' or a secret history.[22] This is definitively Pickwickian, as, especially in the early numbers, both Dickens and his publishers took great pains to present the serial as a set of existing papers for which 'Boz' acted as the 'arranger'. On the one hand, then, there are short, portable, embedded narratives in Dickens's work, and we can describe these as anecdotes. On the other hand, *Pickwick*'s fragmentariness, lack of totalising narrative, and its presentation by both Dickens and Chapman and Hall as 'unpublished works', means that much of its style and structure as a whole can also be described as anecdotal. Nonetheless, and quite crucially, these two modes are linked by the newspaper press, because the ease with which *Pickwick* circulates as comic anecdotes brings the serial's anecdotal features into sharp focus. These features also include the silences that often bring the comic anecdote to an abrupt and definitive end in the original serial, and which ultimately act as invitations to newspaper editors to lift and reprint in new contexts and with new glosses.

With these definitions in mind, let us now turn to one of the most frequently-reprinted Pickwickian anecdotes which appeared in the newspapers, to consider how Dickens re-worked the features of the anecdote to create a specific brand of comedy that the newspapers found particularly useful. The subjects of these anecdotes are wide-ranging, but the below example

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[21] Gossman, p. 154.
[22] *Ibid.*

reveals some common features which may have determined newspapers' editorial choices. The scene is labelled 'Veal Pie' on the graph, but is almost always entitled: 'The Particulars of Pie-Making' by the press, a title which belies the comedy of the ensuing excerpt, suggesting an extract from a recipe book or advice manual. This type of generic, news-like heading was very common, and often seems serious when read for the first time, but comic when understood in the context of the extract; its representation as serious news or advice appears to be part of the joke. This extract is one of the most widely circulated anecdotes from *Pickwick*, appearing in thirteen of the thirty papers, and many more times in the searchable portion of the wider press. The tale begins as the Pickwickians are about to have a picnic; Sam lifts a veal pie from the picnic basket and narrates the following tale to *Pickwick*:

> 'Weal pie,' said Mr. Weller, soliloquising, as he arranged the eatables on the grass. 'Wery good thing is weal pie, when you know the lady as made it, and is quite sure it ain't kittens; and arter all though, where's the odds, when they're so like weal that the wery piemen themselves don't know the difference?'
>
> 'Don't they, Sam?' said Mr. Pickwick.
>
> 'Not they, sir,' replied Mr. Weller, touching his hat. 'I lodged in the same house vith a pieman once, sir, and a wery nice man he was—reg'lar clever chap, too—make pies out o' anything, he could. "What a number o' cats you keep, Mr. Brooks," says I, when I'd got intimate with him. "Ah," says he, "I do—a good many," says he, "You must be wery fond o' cats," says I. "Other people is," says he, a-winkin' at me; "they ain't in season till the winter though," says he. "Not in season!" says I. "No," says he, "fruits is in, cats is out." "Why, what do you mean?" says I. "Mean!" says he. "That I'll never be a party to the combination o' the butchers, to keep up the price o' meat," says he. "Mr. Weller," says he, a-squeezing my hand wery hard, and vispering in my ear—"don't mention this here agin—but it's the seasonin' as does it. They're all made o' them noble animals," says he, a-pointin' to a wery nice little tabby kitten, "and I seasons 'em for beefsteak, weal or kidney, 'cording to the demand. And more than that," says he, "I can make a weal a beef-steak, or a beef-steak a kidney, or any one on 'em a mutton, at a minute's notice, just as the market changes, and appetites wary!"'

> 'He must have been a very ingenious young man, that, Sam,' said Mr. Pickwick, with a slight shudder.[23]

This extract both follows and alters Gossman's formula for the anecdote to heighten the comic effect of the scene. The beginning and the end of the tale are clearly signalled: we are told that Sam is 'soliloquising' in the opening paragraph, and, once Sam has finished speaking, a more complex integration of the discussion about the pieman into the main narrative is rendered impossible by Mr Pickwick's inane response to the horrors about which he has just heard. There is also a clear tripartite structure, which includes exposition, an encounter and a *bon mot*, but Dickens delivers the sections in a different order to enhance the comedy. We are first presented with the *bon mot* which here takes a comically moralistic tone, as Sam states that a veal pie is a 'wery good thing' if you're 'quite sure it ain't kittens'. It is only after this lesson that we are presented with the explanatory exposition (details of the pieman Sam used to know) and the 'encounter' in which the pieman confesses his methods. This reversal of the anecdote's tripartite chronology serves to exaggerate Pickwick's naïve response to the story he hears. Pickwick interrupts twice: firstly to express absurd wonder that piemen don't know the difference between veal and kittens, and secondly to comment on the pieman's ingenuity. Of course, both these remarks entirely miss the point of Sam's anecdote, and demonstrate Pickwick's refusal to view it as a worldly caution. Additionally, Pickwick's naïve response causes a silence to open up, and it is this silence upon which the newspapers capitalise.

As well as Dickens's deliberate jumbling of the chronology of the anecdote to generate laughter, this short piece of text is comic because of its incongruous juxtapositions.[24] We are presented with a grotesque, recognisable scenario replete with hyperbole, which Sam relates in a calm cockney idiolect, with smatterings of faux politeness (notably, he touches his hat and the pieman declares he will never stoop so low as to inflate the prices of meat, as the butchers do). This combination of the polite and the grotesque strikes the reader as incongruous, who, ostensibly, laughs as a result. This is an example of what Henri Bergson has called laughter as a 'social gesture', in which laughter becomes a response to a fear of social deviation or a means of resisting eccentricity, because 'rigidity is the comic, and laughter is its corrective'.[25] Often Sam's anecdotes are related entirely in his accent, including the dialogue between other

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[23] *Pickwick*, p. 230.
[24] Malcolm Andrews talks extensively about the applicability of Arthur Koestler's theory of incongruity to Dickens's comedy in *Dickensian Laughter* (pp. 77–98). Here it is sufficient to add that such incongruity is often a feature of the extracts selected by newspaper editors.
[25] Henri Bergson, '"Laughter" (1901), edited and translated by Wylie Sypher', in *Reader in Comedy: An Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, Magda Romanska and Alan Ackerman (eds), (London; New York: Bloomsbury, 2017) pp. 225–6.

characters that forms part of the story, so we never stop hearing his calm, indifferent voice throughout the tale; this maintains the sense of incongruity. I also describe the scenario of the pieman as recognisable because the frequency with which it was reprinted suggests that newspaper editors identified with or felt that their readers would identify with the anecdote's content. This is substantiated by contemporary accounts which show the fear of piemen making pies out of cats to have been genuine. Charles Manby Smith, for example, includes a chapter entitled 'What has become of the pieman?' in his book *Curiosities of London Life*, published in 1853, when penny pie-men have disappeared. In the book—another anecdote history of sorts—Smith discusses the problem of the loss of seasonal fruit in spring, which led some to be concerned that cats were used until 'the showers and sunshine of May bring the gooseberry to market'. *Pickwick* is also cited in this account.[26] Pickwick's naive responses pave the way for newspaper editors to demonstrate their understanding of this history as, having deciphered and appreciated the comedy, they make the decision that it is worth disseminating to a new audience. To return to Gossman's definition of the anecdote, another reason for this anecdote's familiarity is because it is, like many others, 'borrowed' rather than 'found'.[27] The clear history and topical resonance of this narrative, means it is both definable as an anecdote and suitable for excerpting in the press.

That this anecdote and others have foundations in reality, we can understand to have facilitated their comedy and their widespread circulation. This is supported by the content of contemporary reviews, in which it is not only *Pickwick*'s comedy that was understood to be one of the most significant reasons for its popularity but its 'verisimilitude' or the fact that the serial's jokes and sketches reflect life 'as it is'. For example, in a short review, the *Sheffield Independent* states that '[i]n the Posthumous Papers, Boz depicts many comical scenes, evidently drawn from the life'.[28] The review is a fairly representative judgement of the text at this time. For some reviewers, *Pickwick*'s comedy and its commentary about the nature of life and people work in opposite directions, with each feature of the writing aimed at different kinds of readers. This stance is taken by the *Chester Chronicle* which states that '[t]he author has certainly the merit of unfolding a new world in the haknied [sic] walks of London. His writings go far to prove that the history of every insignificant unit of our species is a romance, and

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[26] Charles Manby Smith, 'What has become of the pieman?', *Curiosities of London Life* (London: William and Fredrick G. Cash, 1853).
[27] Gossman, p. 163.
[28] 'Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club. Nos V. & VI.—The Library of Fiction. Nos V. & VI.', *Sheffield Independent*, 13 August 1836, p. 4 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000491/18360813/048/0004> [Accessed: 30/08/2020].

peculiarities a study to make the shallow laugh and the wise think'.[29] For this reviewer, a reflection on the serious messages of the serial is the work of an educated reader, whereas those who simply laugh at Dickens's jokes about 'peculiarities' do not appreciate its nuances. More frequently, the comedy and verisimilitude of the serial are understood to be working together to generate some kind of moral lesson or reflection on life, uniting readers rather than dividing them. The *Carlisle Journal* uses this argument to justify Dickens's use of comedy:

> '[*Pickwick*] has obtained a most extensive circulation—is read, re-read—laughed with—laughed at by some, and eagerly expected and purchased by thousands. Pickwick and his satellites are a set of most egregious simpletons; but as their failings "lean to virtue's side," and a record of their scrapes and difficulties forms a vehicle for shoeing up the foibles, follies, and extra vagaries of high life—and the low cunnings and, too often, heartless villany [sic] of their dependents—we hope the trifling amusements of an hour may produce effects conducive to the promotion of virtue'.[30]

This combination of comedy and verisimilitude in Dickens's anecdotes is evident in the veal pie episode. Sam's moral lesson about the dubiousness of pie-makers finds a knowing and appreciative audience in the papers (if not in Mr Pickwick himself) because of its resonance in the real world. It also prompts laughter because the tone of the topic juxtaposes with its narration, and because it is related in an absurd order, as the tripartite structure of the anecdote is inverted.

Finally, the clearly proclaimed beginning and ending of the anecdote mean that it is portable. That this example appeared fifty-three times in the British Newspaper Archive alone, in the month following its publication in Dickens's serial, attests to the usefulness of the formula of the Dickensian comic anecdote, yet other scenes were not reprinted this often.[31] The significance of this example is that it allows us to speculate about what one of Dickens's most 'successful' comic anecdotes might have looked like, measuring 'success' according to its reception in the press. In this example, a combination of comedy, verisimilitude and topical

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[29] 'Pickwick Papers', *Chester Chronicle*, 18 August 1837, p. 4 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000342/18370818/019/0004> [Accessed: 30/08/2020].

[30] 'Pickwick Papers. No. 14.', *Carlisle Journal*, 13 May 1837, p. 4 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000363/18370513/012/0004> [Accessed: 30/08/2020].

[31] This figure is an estimate, taken by searching 'weal' and counting the number of times this scene appeared in the press during October 1836. The anecdote was originally printed in the seventh number of *Pickwick*, which first circulated the same month. The search was undertaken on 28/01/2021 and allowances should be made for the British Newspaper Archive's constant state of expansion.

resonance leads to widespread circulation. While laughter is notoriously difficult to trace over time, particularly in Dickens's case, tracking these anecdotes in the press acts as one way to index the extent to which Dickens's comedy translated to its reading communities. In this respect, Dickens's comic formula also served newspaper editors beyond the necessity of finding humorous or resonant material to fill gaps in columns. The process of reprinting alone was in itself a response to the comic messages of the serial, but newspapers often did more to ensure their engagement with *Pickwick* was both unique and strikingly local. Even in the cat pie example, we can begin to see evidence of a more personalised engagement with the serial. For example, when the scene was printed in the *Reading Mercury*, rather than adopting the usual heading of 'The Particulars of Pie-Making', it was re-titled 'Veal Pies in London', which imbued the extract with a geographical specificity, and an anti-metropolitan sentiment.[32] This kind of rivalry between metropolitan and provincial papers was played out frequently in the press, and *Pickwick* was often used as ammunition for the debate in some highly creative ways, as we will see in the next section.

II. Remediating the Rhetoric of Laughter

The individualised engagement with *Pickwick* evinced in the *Reading Mercury* example urges a re-thinking of the uses to which the Dickensian comic anecdote was put by the journalists and readers of the popular press. Let us return for a moment to Kincaid's statement that 'laughter implies, among other things a very solid agreement with a certain value system'. For Kincaid, this means that Dickens wields the prerogative of the 'rhetoric of laughter'. However, when newspaper editors transported these comic anecdotes to another medium, they remediated not only the text but the power to use the laughter it evoked to persuade. This in turn develops the stakes of the re-appearance of anecdotes in the newspapers, because even the most preposterous have the potential to become part of local identity-shaping strategies. Such strategies became particularly necessary at this moment because, as Andrew Walker has shown, the increasing number of provincial papers published in the 1830s decreased circulation areas and made the maintenance of a local distinctiveness, respected by readers, necessary for survival.[33]

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[32] 'Veal Pies in London', *Reading Mercury*, 10 October 1836, p. 4 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000368/18361010/034/0004> [Accessed: 30/08/2020].
[33] Andrew Walker, 'The Development of the Provincial Press in England, c. 1780–1914', *Journalism Studies*, 7.3 (2006) pp. 373–386 (p. 377).

To understand newspapers as remediating the rhetoric of laughter in this way nonetheless requires some nuancing of Kincaid's theory. He describes *Pickwick* as 'Dickens's one unequivocal comedy, in which all the energies are directed toward providing for the final and beautiful society radiating from Dulwich'.[34] To prepare his characters for this idyllic denouement, Kincaid suggests that Dickens presents Pickwick's travels as an opportunity to learn, with Sam assuming the role of a teacher.[35] He even implicitly connects Dickens's comic formula with the genre of the anecdote, when he describes Sam's micronarratives as 'his favourite and most effective teaching aid', and suggests that Pickwick's brief responses to the anecdotes he hears become more informed as the narrative progresses.[36] Yet this reading relies on finding considerable meaning in Pickwick's very short, limited responses to Sam's anecdotes and his reflections on his time in the Fleet prison, ignoring the fact that Pickwick never refers to the suffering of the debtors after he departs, and that Sam feels unable to leave Pickwick at the end of the serial. In a scene that was praised by the press for its exemplary working-class humility, Sam refuses an opportunity to start a small business with Pickwick's money and asks: 'Wot's to become of you, Sir?' before commenting 'you should always have somebody by you as understands you, to keep you up and make you comfortable'.[37] Yet as well as a demonstration of loyalty, Sam acts thus because he fears the future and realises that somebody who understands, or who can anticipate the pits before Pickwick can tumble into them, is necessary to avoid calamity.

In his more convincing alternative reading of the serial's denouement, Philip Rogers counters Kincaid's narrative of improvement, stating that 'Pickwick himself is not obtuse; his response to the world of his travels is often naive, but never stupid. Frequently, however, he does not respond at all'. He then proceeds to argue that '[t]he apparent change in Pickwick results not from his education, nor from our becoming better acquainted with him, but rather from a change in Dickens' estimation of Pickwick's innocence'.[38] Rogers makes two points here that are key to an alternative interpretation of Kincaid's work. Firstly, he argues that Pickwick is not significantly changed by his travels – what changes instead, is the extent to which Dickens esteems and wishes to preserve his naivety. Secondly, Rogers's work implicitly calls into

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[34] Kincaid, n.p.
[35] *Ibid.*
[36] *Ibid.*
[37] *Pickwick*, p. 708. Several newspapers printed an effusive review, praising Sam Weller and stating that 'nothing can be more manly, graceful, and affecting than his declaration to Pickwick that he will never quit his service'. See for example: 'The Pickwick Papers', *Sun*, 01 November 1837, p. 3 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0002194/18371101/029/0003> [Accessed: 10/11/2020].
[38] Rogers, p. 23.

question whether the matter of Pickwick's educational development is even a relevant question. The point is not that Pickwick's responses to his surroundings and learning experiences become any better or worse as the serial progresses, but that Dickens's characters often meet the lessons themselves with negligible responses, or even total silence.

Like Rogers, I contend that Dickens's craft is more interesting than what precisely Pickwick's character does or does not learn. However, as well as looking at the ways in which Dickens maintains Pickwick's innocence, his curation of these moments of silence and benign comment—the only responses with which anecdotes told by characters in *Pickwick* are usually greeted—also offers a way of explaining how newspaper editors remediated the rhetoric of laughter and, crucially, why. Dickens might have had the Pickwickians respond to comic anecdotes with political rants, or comically ill-informed counterpoints, but he did not. Rather than the absence of learning, we might treat these moments of silence and unrealised response or debate as the presence of interactive hooks, which encourage the kind of varied responses that the newspapers advance.

The presence of these interactive hooks forms part of what Amir Tevel has described as a 'counter-didactic discourse' in Dickens's works.[39] This discourse, he argues, takes shape because, in *Pickwick*, Dickens is keen to pull away from political partisanship and sermonic moralising, and attempts to prevent this from happening by a 'repetitive silencing' of Pickwick and others. This silencing is enforced by not allowing the Pickwickians to respond to the tales they hear, and a satirising of the didactic mode which uses Wellerisms and interpolated tales to parody the didactic's moralistic tropes.[40] Tevel argues that 'by thus setting himself up so explicitly as a champion of the counter-didactic, Dickens allows himself, later in the novel, to wax didactic without seeming to do so'.[41] Crucially for a study of Dickens's comic anecdotes, Tevel implicitly argues that this tension between the didactic and counter-didactic is inevitably bound up with Dickens's micronarratives:

> A pattern develops—seen in miniature in the Wellerisms—wherein the novel will make a didactic foray, only to provoke a counter-didactic response from the larger narrative, which will flag the didactic moment as pompous, nonsensical, or boring. Nevertheless, as with the Wellerisms, this reflex has the effect not so much of negating the didactic moment, as of shielding it against the readerly suspicion that the

[39] Tevel, pp. 207–231.
[40] *Ibid*, p. 218.
[41] *Ibid*, p. 209.

> novel is turning into a sermon. Nowhere is this pattern clearer than in *Pickwick*'s interpolated tales.[42]

Tevel then goes on to argue, that '[t]he dialectic between the counter-didactic and the didactic thus subtly provokes readerly engagement with social critique, even as it ostentatiously models readerly disengagement in the form of Pickwick himself'.[43] While Tevel focusses on the interpolated tales, the inclusion of interactive hooks, or what he calls counter-didactic responses, are, as we have seen, considerably more widespread, appearing across various types of comic anecdote in the serial. While a search for interactive hooks in comic anecdotes can show us where Dickens 'provokes readerly engagement', looking at their reappearance in the press can help to show how that readerly engagement was realised, not only extensively, but variously.

To observe this variation in readerly engagement, let us turn to another anecdote for an example. This scene is taken from the eleventh number, and, like many of the comic anecdotes, it is related to Pickwick by Sam in order that Dickens can elide the time it takes for them to travel between locations. In this example, the pair are walking to Grays Inn Square to pay a visit to Dodson and Fogg, when Sam points out an interesting landmark:

> 'Wery nice pork-shop that 'ere, sir.'
>
> 'Yes, it seems so,' said Mr. Pickwick.
>
> 'Celebrated sassage factory,' said Sam.
>
> 'Is it?' said Mr. Pickwick.
>
> 'Is it!' reiterated Sam, with some indignation; 'I should raythe think it was. Why, sir, bless your innocent eyebrows, that's where the mysterious disappearance of a 'spectable tradesman took place four years ago.'
>
> 'You don't mean to say he was burked, Sam?' said Mr. Pickwick, looking hastily round.
>
> 'No, I don't indeed, sir,' replied Mr. Weller, 'I wish I did; far worse than that […][44]

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[42] *Ibid*, p. 214.
[43] *Ibid.*
[44] *Pickwick*, pp. 379–80.

Following his set of useless questions, in which Mr Pickwick's concerns relate more to his own safety than to the story, he remains silent while Sam relates a tale of a sausage-maker whose 'patent-never-leavin'-off sassage steam-ingin' attained fame for its efficacy. Persecuted by his wife, the sausage-maker one day goes missing. It is later found, when a customer complains about finding trouser buttons in his sausages, that the sausage maker has thrown himself into the mincer, or been drawn into it by accident. Sam closes the story with easy humour:

> "Nice seasonin' for sassages, is trousers' buttons, ma'am." "They're my husband's buttons!" says the widder beginnin' to faint, "What!" screams the little old gen'l'm'n, turnin' wery pale. "I see it all," says the widder; "in a fit of temporary insanity he rashly converted hisself into sassages!" And so he had, Sir,' said Mr. Weller, looking steadily into Mr. Pickwick's horror-stricken countenance, 'or else he'd been draw'd into the ingin; but however that might ha' been, the little, old gen'l'm'n, who had been remarkably partial to sassages all his life, rushed out o' the shop in a wild state, and was never heerd on arterwards!'
>
> The relation of this affecting incident of private life brought master and man to Mr. Perker's chambers.[45]

Similarly to the veal pie anecdote, this tale has a very clear tripartite structure: Sam begins with exposition, relates the problem of the wife's behaviour and the sausage-maker's threat to leave for America, before finishing with the horrific discovery of his buttons in the sausages. The beginning and end are also clearly framed, as Sam signals the start of his soliloquy with his opening remark that the sausage factory is 'celebrated'—which shows it has a story to tell—and his closing comment, styled like the denouement of a fable or fairy tale that he 'was never heard on arterwards'. As a humorous counterpoint to some of Sam's comically extraneous elaboration (such as the remark that the customer had been 'remarkably partial to sassages all his life') this anecdote is squashed into one blocky paragraph, which has two notable effects on the comedy of the scene. Firstly, it helps to establish the reduction of dialogue to idiolect I discussed earlier. The speech of the sausage-maker, sausage maker's wife and the customer are all narrated in Sam's voice, and this effect is exacerbated, as the lines of dialogue crash into each other with comic incongruity, rather than appearing on separate lines, so that the reader's eye struggles to distinguish between characters. This also means that the anecdote alternates rapidly between hyperbole and meiosis: juxtaposing the miserable entreaty of the ill-used

[45] *Ibid.*, pp. 380–81.

sausage-maker that his wife not 'persewere in this here sort of amusement' with her shrill, ironic reply of 'You're a idle willin,' within the same visual and aural space. Secondly, in book and serial form, this *mis-en-page* visually establishes the anecdote as an embedded narrative: on the page, it looks almost as if it can be picked up and moved. Comic incongruity means that the stage is set for explosive laughter, and yet Pickwick does not laugh. Instead, another silence ensues, and it falls to others to fill this moment with laughter or another response of their own.

This is, of course, precisely what happens, and this scene not only appears in six of the thirty case studies, but twenty-three times in total, if we include appearances in the wider press.[46] By precluding the discussion of (or reaction to) anecdotes among *Pickwick*'s characters, Dickens leaves interactive hooks in his text that enable these discussions to take place in the press. At stake here is the way these moments of Pickwickian silence enable varied responses from newspaper editors, as they remediate the rhetoric of laughter. For example, when the *Hampshire Advertiser* reprints the sausage maker's anecdote in February 1837, the editor decided to add a response at the bottom of the reprinted excerpt. Unfortunately, the ink is partially worn away, so the elisions below represent illegible print:

> Ludicrous as this story is made, it is […] unfortunate accident that occurred to a […] sausage manufacturer, at the Holborn corner of […] poor man's arm was drawn in by the machine and chopped off. Notwithstanding the best surgical aid, […] survive the accident many hours[47]

Here, the remediation of the rhetoric of laughter means evoking and then erasing the comedy of this scene by the addition of specific geographical details, affective adjectives, and a medical representation of the man's death rather than a euphemistic one in which he 'converted hisself into sausages'. The newspaper demonstrates its topical knowledge and, at the same time, the anecdote loses the features of the fable with which Sam imbued it, including the ending in which it is declared that the sausage customer was 'never heerd on aarterwards', which is discredited by the *Advertiser*'s comments. As these remarks are placed at the end of the excerpt, the *Advertiser* is able to position itself as an authoritative voice, but by printing and then contradicting a fictional scene from *Pickwick* first, it can promote reader engagement with

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[46] This figure is an estimate, taken by searching 'sassage' and counting the number of times this scene appeared in the press during February 1837. The anecdote was originally printed in the eleventh number, which first circulated the same month. The search was undertaken on 28/01/2021 and allowances should be made for the fact that the British Newspaper Archive is in a constant state of expansion.

[47] 'The Patent Sausage Maker's "Felo de Se"', *Hampshire Advertiser*, Saturday 11 February 1837, p. 4 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000494/18370211/026/0004> [Accessed: 10/11/2020].

the situation using comedy that would have been unsuitable for a factual account. Put another way, the *Advertiser* makes use of the comedy as a hook for its readers, but because that comedy is fictional and the work of another author, the editor can also quickly distance themselves from it to avoid their serious reflections from being inflected with distasteful humour.

That the anecdote finishes abruptly only adds to the text's suitability for remediation. Pickwick and Sam arrive at their destination and the tale is never mentioned again. The result of Sam's acrobatic discourse with its puns, incongruity and absurd subject matter is not hearty or even nervous laughter, but silence. The third-person description of Pickwick's 'horror-stricken countenance' is the closest he comes to a response. The comedy is so ridiculous and grotesque that the scene seems to demand further comment, and yet there is none. This might seem only to add significance to the argument that Pickwick does not learn from his travels, yet it is not only Pickwick's response to anecdote that Dickens renders minimal. In fact, even Sam Weller, our most worldly and prolific teller of stories, can fall silent when listening to somebody else relate an anecdote. The most blatant example is when Sam is talking to the Cobbler about the reason for his imprisonment in the Fleet. However, unlike Pickwick, Sam asks a long series of precise questions, and shows outrage at the way the cobbler has been treated by the law. When the cobbler pursues a longer narrative about his sufferings, pausing at the end 'to ascertain what effect his story had produced on Sam', he finds that he has fallen asleep and yet another silence ensues.[48] Rogers alerts us to the peculiarities of this scene:

> Neither Pickwick nor Sam participates in Dickens' criticism of Chancery or shares his indignation at the suffering of its victims. The perversity of Chancery is set forth in greater detail in the case of the cobbler who shares a room with Sam in the Fleet. The cobbler's tale […] obviously anticipates the nature of Dickens' attack on Chancery in Bleak House; he is the victim of quarrelling relations, avaricious lawyers, deaf and sleeping judges, an indifferent Parliament, hopeless muddle and delay. Sam Weller's response to the problems depicted in Bleak House shows him to be a true Pickwickian: he is half asleep when the story begins and sound asleep before it ends.[49]

The act of falling asleep at crucial moments is definitively Pickwickian: we need only think of the Fat Boy and Pickwick's somniferous adventure in the wheelbarrow after drinking too much punch. However, for the usually alert Sam, the lack of attention to the Cobbler's social

[48] *Pickwick*, pp. 555–7.
[49] Rogers, p. 34.

commentary and his silence at the end of the anecdote seems quite uncharacteristic. Doubtless, if he were awake, he would have said something witty or worldly. By having him fall asleep, Sam is, intriguingly, elided.

For the meticulously descriptive Dickens, we need to understand these negligible or non-existent responses to comic anecdotes to be a deliberate and significant authorial decision. For Rogers, this decision is necessary to maintain Pickwick's innocence, and this is certainly a plausible argument. I would add that, where the events narrated in these anecdotes have only a soporific effect on their fictional hearers, perhaps the silences they prompt also reflect Dickens's sense that Pickwickian comment could never be sufficient or appropriate and that he wants us to take these tales more seriously. Laura Kasson Fiss has suggested that these silences 'read […] as an invitation to excerption' suggesting that '[p]erhaps Dickens wrote, as Leah Price argues George Eliot did, with an eye to excerption, viewing these extracts not merely as a sign of Sam's popularity but also as a way to harness newspaper excerption […]'.[50] The perpetuation of these patterns of silence in the serial when considered alongside the well-documented rootedness of Dickens's early writing in newspaper culture leaves little room for doubt that he was fully aware of excerpting as a phenomenon, and evidence from his letters shows that he even attempted to shape the process as *Pickwick* was being published by making use of his journalistic contacts (see Chapter 3). For this reason, we can begin to see the ways in which *Pickwick*'s periodical origins facilitated and shaped its periodical reception.

Additionally, the question of whether Dickens intentionally modified his writing to suit newspaper editors is less important than the indirect impact of those decisions on the shape of the newspapers' varied engagement with *Pickwick*. To return to the anecdote about the sausage maker, when Sam has concluded his story by saying that the customer was 'never heerd on arterwards', Dickens immediately resumes his narration to explain that Pickwick and Sam have arrived at their destination, and describes the tale as an 'affecting incident of private life', a style of phrase which is strikingly similar to the titles with which newspaper editors used to introduce articles in the press at this time, including remediated *Pickwick* anecdotes. Other hooks that Sam uses at the beginning of this anecdote also resemble newspaper headings: 'Celebrated Sausage Factory' or 'Mysterious Disappearance of a Respectable Tradesman' would not be out of place alongside these real nineteenth-century headings: 'Mysterious Disappearance', 'Co-partners in Crime', 'A Bargain' or 'The Wrongs of Ireland'. Modified noun or adjective phrases like these are used across the press as generic but intriguing

[50] Kasson Fiss, p. 231.

headings to encourage readers to pursue an article.[51] This was particularly common in 'Varieties' columns, where short, miscellaneous material was gathered in one or more tightly-printed columns. The *Durham Chronicle*'s name for its Varieties column 'Multum in Parvo', or 'a lot in a small space', summarises its role in the nineteenth-century press quite accurately.[52] Significantly, neither 'Affecting incident of Private Life' nor any other noun or adjective phrase in this anecdote that resembles a journalistic heading is pursued in any newspaper I have found. Most use the heading 'The Patent Sausage-Maker's Felo de Se' or emphasise the comedy with 'The Sausage Tragedy'.[53] However, other examples do show editors making frequent use of Dickens's noun and adjective phrase hooks. For example, when Pickwick hears another of Sam's anecdotes—the tale of Tony's coach overturning voters into the river, shortly after the political candidates opposing the voters told him to take care not to let it happen, and handed him a bribe—he describes it as 'a very miraculous circumstance'.[54] The following month, dozens of papers reprinted the anecdote, with the title 'A Miraculous Circumstance', a noun phrase suggested by the serial.[55] In its new context, the heading gleefully alludes to the widespread nature of electoral bribery at the time, which meant such an occurrence, while exaggerated in the anecdote, was anything but miraculous. The incorporation of noun and adjective phrases that could be used as headings is another feature of Dickens's comic anecdotes that prompts newspapers to interact with and re-shape the narrative, and that led to the anecdote form's particular interest for editors looking for material to include in their columns.

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[51] 'Mysterious Disappearance', *Bristol Mercury*, Saturday 05 August 1837, p. 1 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000034/18370805/001/0001> [Accessed: 10/11/2020]; 'Co-partners in Crime', *Bristol Mercury*, Saturday 05 August 1837, p. 1 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000034/18370805/001/0001> [Accessed: 10/11/2020].
'A Bargain', *Chester Chronicle*, Friday 04 November 1836, p. 5 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000342/18361104/015/0005> [Accessed 10/11/2020]; 'The Wrongs of Ireland', *Chester Chronicle*, Friday 04 November 1836, p. 5 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000342/18361104/015/0005> [Accessed 10/11/2020].
[52] See for example, 'Multum in Parvo', *Durham Chronicle*, Friday 09 December 1836, p. 4 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0001653/18361209/047/0004> [Accessed: 28/01/2022].
[53] See for example *Hampshire Advertiser* (as cited in footnote 46); 'The Sausage Tragedy', *Warwick and Warwickshire Advertiser*, Saturday 18 February 1837, p. 1 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0001670/18370218/008/0001> [Accessed: 10/11/2020].
[54] *Pickwick*, p. 152.
[55] See for example, 'Miraculous Circumstance', *Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette*, Thursday 25 August 1836, p. 4 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000360/18360825/014/0004> [Accessed: 10/11/2020]; '"Miraculous Circumstance"', *Morning Post*, Saturday 20 August 1836, p. 4 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000174/18360820/029/0004> [Accessed: 10/11/2020].

Just the act of reprinting Dickens's comic anecdotes—selecting them, trimming them, and recontextualising them—constitutes a more significant response to their content than the Pickwickians ever advance. My examples so far have also shown the subtle ways in which some publications used simple headings, comments or addenda to re-frame these comic anecdotes to render them more local and topical. For this reason, paratext was crucial to all these excerpts, and contributed to rendering editors' re-use of the serial unique. This variety shows *Pickwick* to have been a template which newspaper editors imbued with their individual agendas, in order to pursue the didactic potentialities of Dickens's comic anecdotes in localised and politically apposite ways. However it also unsettles the idea of paratext itself (in Gerard Genette's sense of the term) by suggesting a shift in the emphasis of his widely-used paradigms.

Genette's work draws attention to the text's edges as 'thresholds of interpretation', a phrase that has a clear application to the creative work achieved by newspaper editors at the edges of the excerpt as they pulled *Pickwick* in different directions without altering the substance of the text.[56] Nonetheless, applying his theory to newspaper literature is not always this straightforward, as Genette's sub-terminology for the various types of paratext relies upon understanding the book as the subject and the author as a point of orientation: the anthumous and posthumous, the peritext and epitext, and, most crucially the official and unofficial, all assume their definitions from the ways in which they appear in a book and interact with the author. Genette defines the official paratext as 'any paratextual message openly accepted by the author or publisher or both – a message for which the author or publisher cannot evade responsibility' and the unofficial paratext as 'most of the authorial epitext: interviews, conversations, and confidences, responsibility for which the author can always more or less disclaim with denials of the type "That's not exactly what I said" or "Those were off-the-cuff remarks" or "That wasn't intended for publication" […] Also and perhaps especially unofficial is what the author permits or asks a third party (an allographic preface-writer or an "authorized" commentator) to say'.[57] After drawing this distinction, Genette concludes that 'it is sometimes in one's interest to have certain things "known" without having (supposedly) said them oneself'.[58] Here, not only is the author central to our understanding of the paratext, but Genette suggests that the most 'unauthorized' of unofficial paratexts are statements over which the living author still has a little control; at the very least, they retain the ability to deny the truth of those statements or spin their meaning in strategic ways. Earlier in the book,

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[56] Gerard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).
[57] *Ibid.*, p. 10.
[58] *Ibid.*

Genette does mention that the sender of a paratextual message may be the author, the publisher, or a third party to whom a portion of the responsibility is delegated, but the author nonetheless remains the central figure (the 'delegating' subject) in his paratextual model.[59]

While understanding the edges of these excerpts as 'thresholds of interpretation' remains productive, what these journalistic remediations demand is a more capacious definition of the paratext, which accommodates the newspaper as well as the book and is alert to the creative role of editors as well as authors in paratextual curation. With this in mind, I now turn to another anecdote related to Pickwick by Sam and consider how four newspapers varied their approach to it, in order to re-purpose aspects of Dickens's comic formula in very different ways. Some chose to enhance or emphasise the comedy, whereas others foregrounded social issues instead of humour, but what this variety shows is that individual newspapers wielded considerable agency in their approach to the serial, curating paratext to make it work for them, as opposed to being led in the same direction by Dickens's cues.

In many of the examples in the press, the anecdote I am going to discuss was entitled the 'Twopenny Rope' (it is also labelled thus on the graph in Figure 7 above). I will be looking at versions of the scene which appeared in the *Chester Chronicle*, the *Kentish Gazette*, the *Northampton Mercury* and the *Staffordshire Advertiser*. All four of these provincial papers are notable for their detailed and opinionated responses to *Pickwick* as it was published each month, and they certainly discussed the 'Twopenny Rope' scene more comprehensively than many of the metropolitan daily contemporaries included in this survey, despite often being overlooked in discussions about reviews of Dickens's work.[60] They prove particularly rich resources here, because of the ways each imbues Dickens's comic anecdote with something of their own humour. The anecdote as it is reprinted in each of the four papers begins to show the ways that newspapers used excerpts to consolidate and shape their interpretative communities to forge dialogues with their readers based on a shared ideology.

To appreciate the complexity of the work achieved by these four newspapers when they reprinted the 'Twopenny Rope' scene, it helps to revisit it in the context of Dickens's serial. The scene takes place as the Pickwickians travel from Eatanswill to Bury St Edmunds, and immediately follows Dickens's description of August as Pickwick's coach flies across the countryside. Anecdote is used as a mechanism to avoid extensive banal reflections on the

[59] *Ibid*, p. 8.
[60] An exception to this is William F. Long's recent study, which is the latest in a series of survey articles in the *Dickensian* working to recover reviews and advertisements of *Pickwick* from the press. This article catalogues some excerpts which appeared following the publication of the first seven numbers. See William F. Long, '*Pickwick* in the Provinces', *Dickensian* 116.3 (2020) pp. 273–294.

passage of time and space, and the scene unfolds in two sections: in the first, Sam discusses some fragments of his history, and how his father deals with the provocations of 'Mother-in-Law' with his peculiar brand of 'philosophy'. In this scene, Pickwick's engagement with Sam's narrative is unusually enthusiastic; unlike his response to the other anecdotes he has heard, he even laughs. For a novel that is renowned for its comedy, there are a surprisingly small number of examples in the serial in which Dickens directly describes Pickwick as laughing. I have found only ten (not including homogeneous, collective laughter in scenes such as Christmas at Dingley Dell).[61] Additionally, Pickwick is often drunk when he laughs, or, as is the case here, reacting to a moment when his intellectual superiority seems secure (although this is by no means as self-evident to the reader):

> 'You are quite a philosopher, Sam,' said Mr. Pickwick.
>
> 'It runs in the family, I b'lieve, sir,' replied Mr. Weller. 'My father's wery much in that line now. If my mother-in-law blows him up, he whistles. She flies in a passion, and breaks his pipe; he steps out, and gets another. Then she screams wery loud, and falls into 'sterics; and he smokes wery comfortably till she comes to agin. That's philosophy, Sir, ain't it?'
>
> 'A very good substitute for it, at all events,' replied Mr. Pickwick, laughing. 'It must have been of great service to you, in the course of your rambling life, Sam.'[62]

The difference with the laughter here, is that it exposes Pickwick's naivety. While he is humoured by Sam's faulty representation of philosophy, the reader, in the very next sentence, sees only his radical misinterpretation of Sam's 'rambling life', the name he gives to Sam's poverty and period of homelessness.

Somewhat paradoxically then, Mr Pickwick's laughter actually creates a moment of silence, because it opens a void of misunderstanding to which the newspapers can respond more knowingly. This is arguably the reason why most newspaper editors remediate only the second anecdote in this scene, in which Sam elaborates on the time he spent in poverty, and describes

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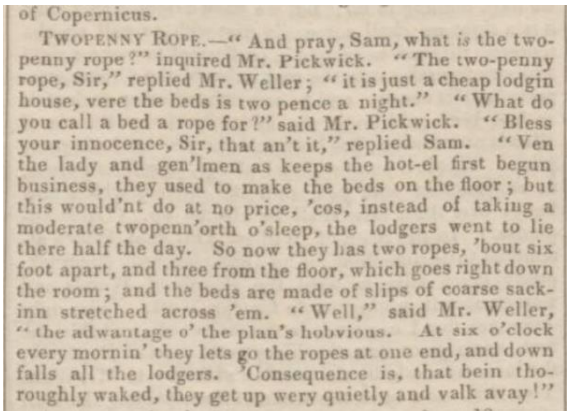
[61] As well as the laughter mentioned in the scene above, I have noted the following occasions when Mr Pickwick laughs: Chapter VIII, when drunk at Wardle's (p. 91); Chapter XVII, laughing at his ice-skating incident (p. 206); Chapter XIX, (p. 232); Chapter XX, laughing at Tony Weller's informal address to him, before Tony knows Sam is his manservant (p. 244); Chapter XXI, at the Old Man, when he talks of the 'romance' of the Inns of Court (p. 252); Chapter XXII, after getting lost while looking for his watch, and thinking he has found his room again (p. 276); Chapter XL, as he is taken to the Fleet and states that it will be a long time before Dodson and Fogg get their damages, (p. 511); Chapter XLIV, as Pickwick, Perker and Wardle laugh at Perker's refusal to advise them about Winkle and Arabella's elopement, because they have already made up their mind what to do (p. 680).
[62] *Pickwick*, p. 189.

the twopenny rope, a form of bed in a pauper lodging made from sacking and ropes that are let down on one side in the morning, so that the sleepers crash to the floor and do not take 'more than a modest two penn'orth of sleep'. This simultaneously comic and tragic description of suffering discredits Pickwick's ideas that Sam had quite a comfortable, philosophical, 'rambling life':

> 'Service, sir,' exclaimed Sam. 'You may say that. Arter I run away from the carrier, and afore I took up with the vaginer, I had unfurnished lodgin's for a fortnight.'
>
> 'Unfurnished lodgings?' said Mr. Pickwick.
>
> 'Yes—the dry arches of Waterloo Bridge. Fine sleeping-place—within ten minutes' walk of all the public offices—only if there is any objection to it, it is that the sitivation's raythe too airy. I see some queer sights there.'
>
> Ah, I suppose you did,' said Mr. Pickwick, with an air of considerable interest.
>
> 'Sights, sir,' resumed Mr. Weller, 'as 'ud penetrate your benevolent heart, and come out on the other side. You don't see the reg'lar wagrants there; trust 'em, they knows better than that. Young beggars, male and female, as hasn't made a rise in their profession, takes up their quarters there sometimes; but it's generally the worn-out, starving, houseless creeturs as roll themselves in the dark corners o' them lonesome places—poor creeturs as ain't up to the twopenny rope.'
>
> 'And pray, Sam, what is the twopenny rope?' inquired Mr. Pickwick.
>
> 'The twopenny rope, sir,' replied Mr. Weller, 'is just a cheap lodgin' house, where the beds is twopence a night.'
>
> 'What do they call a bed a rope for?' said Mr. Pickwick.
>
> 'Bless your innocence, sir, that ain't it,' replied Sam. 'Ven the lady and gen'l'm'n as keeps the hot-el first begun business, they used to make the beds on the floor; but this wouldn't do at no price, 'cos instead o' taking a moderate twopenn'orth o' sleep, the lodgers used to lie there half the day. So now they has two ropes, 'bout six foot apart, and three from the floor, which goes right down the room; and the beds are made of slips of coarse sacking, stretched across 'em.'
>
> 'Well,' said Mr. Pickwick.

> 'Well,' said Mr. Weller, 'the adwantage o' the plan's hobvious. At six o'clock every mornin' they let's go the ropes at one end, and down falls the lodgers. Consequence is, that being thoroughly waked, they get up wery quietly, and walk away!'
>
> 'Beg your pardon, sir,' said Sam, suddenly breaking off in his loquacious discourse. 'Is this Bury St. Edmunds?'[63]

Here again, Sam delivers the comic punchlines before his explanation. We hear about the euphemistic 'unfurnished lodgings' and 'twopenny rope' before Sam explains their meaning. This inversion of the anecdote is comic, but also offers another example of the mock politeness that characterises Sam's other anecdotes. The 'unfurnished lodgings' are said to be 'vithin ten minutes' walk of all the public offices', which further parodies the kind of language a true middle class 'rambler' such as Mr Pickwick might use when seeking accommodation. Dickens does incorporate a moment of true pathos in the middle of this scene, as Sam references 'the worn-out, starving, houseless creeturs as roll themselves in the dark corners o' them lonesome places', before throwing in the conundrum of the 'twopenny rope' as a new puzzle for the unworldly Mr Pickwick. Like the others, the anecdote finishes abruptly, as the pair arrive at Bury St. Edmunds, leaving no space for Pickwickian response, and plenty of space for reader response. Perhaps as a result of the clear beginning and ending, the below short passage taken from this excerpt was widely reprinted on its own, with the title 'Twopenny Rope', such as in this example:



of Copernicus.

TWOPENNY ROPE.—"And pray, Sam, what *is* the two-penny rope?" inquired Mr. Pickwick. "The two-penny rope, Sir," replied Mr. Weller; "it is just a cheap lodgin house, vere the beds is two pence a night." "What do you call a bed a rope for?" said Mr. Pickwick. "Bless your innocence, Sir, that an't it," replied Sam. "Ven the lady and gen'lmen as keeps the hot-el first begun business, they used to make the beds on the floor; but this would'nt do at no price, 'cos, instead of taking a moderate twopenn'orth o'sleep, the lodgers went to lie there half the day. So now they has two ropes, 'bout six foot apart, and three from the floor, which goes right down the room; and the beds are made of slips of coarse sack-inn stretched across 'em. "Well," said Mr. Weller, "the adwantage o' the plan's hobvious. At six o'clock every mornin' they lets go the ropes at one end, and down falls all the lodgers. 'Consequence is, that bein tho-roughly waked, they get up wery quietly and valk avay!"

Figure 8: 'Twopenny Rope', *Hereford Times*[64]

[63] *Ibid*, p. 189–90.
[64] 'Twopenny Rope', *Hereford Times*, Saturday 24 September 1836, p. 4 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000396/18360924/012/0004> [Accessed: 28/01/2022].

Pickwick's interruptions in this section of the anecdote are minimal; however, in several examples, including the above, when compared with Dickens's version, they are elided, increasing the space for reader response already left by Dickens.

The examples that I discuss here all take longer cuts from the scene, incorporating both sets of anecdotes and, in the case of the *Chester Chronicle* and the *Kentish Gazette*, the description of August that precedes them, meaning their excerpts start at the beginning of the chapter. Two of the publications, the *Chester Chronicle* and the *Northampton Mercury*, accompany their chosen cut with a series of instructions about how to read the comic scenes specifically. The *Chester Chronicle* does this by bookending the excerpt with the following comments:

> No. VI of this amusing publication appeared with the magazines on the 1st instant, and is not a whit less interesting than any of its predecessors, if it do not excel them
>
> […]
>
> This is a fair sample of the style of this work though there are occasional pathetic stories which, while they vary the emotions with which it is read, tend to give a rest to the rich drollery of both author and artist, who are worthy of each other.[65]

By surrounding the extract with its own opinions, the *Chronicle* takes advantage of the silences left by Dickens to steer us towards reading the passage as comedy rather than serious commentary or pathos. While the two are certainly not antithetical—either in *Pickwick*, or in this passage—there is a sense that Pickwickian silence can allow the press to emphasise or de-emphasise the comic or serious elements. The incentive is not to use these silences to run with the remarks about London's homeless, but to pull the scene away from anything too moralising by emphasising its innocuous comedy: this scene is 'a fair sample' of the work but there are others which are 'pathetic'. The *Northampton Mercury* takes a similar but more subtle approach to the scene, preceding its version of Sam's anecdotes with another remediated article taken from the *New Monthly Magazine* which grumbles about what the author terms the 'Anti-Punsters', or those who are incapable of understanding a joke. The author dramatically states:

> The man who would scruple to make a pun would not hesitate to commit a burglary […] The Anti-Punster is the incarnation of the spirit of intolerance. His aversion

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[65] 'The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club', *Chester Chronicle*, Friday 16 September 1836 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000342/18360916/010/0004> [Accessed: 21/10/2020].

> knows no cold medium. He has no mercy for the man who differs from him—on the point of a pun.[66]

This scene, making extensive use of hyperbole itself, and rounding up with a bathetic final clause, sets up the *Pickwick* extract that follows as something to be laughed at, and to be appreciated for its puns rather than its serious commentary about poverty in London. It cannot be assumed that every reader would have absorbed this newspaper's contents in a linear fashion, but this *mis-en-page* would have doubtless primed at least some readers to appreciate Sam's wordplay, while also signalling Pickwick's inability to understand these jokes as symptomatic of the 'Anti-Punster'. This in turn frames the newspaper and, by association, its community of readers, as being too knowing to miss Sam's joke, as Pickwick does. Unlike Malcolm Andrews' illustration of a scenario in which Dickens curates a circle of 'knowing' readers who understand his comic meaning, here the *Mercury*'s process of re-contextualisation steers the extract to serve its own interpretative community instead. It is by reading these micro-level assumptions of Dickens's comic agency that we can begin to understand *Pickwick*'s contingency and its rhetorical function in the press.

Some papers' reluctance to engage with *Pickwick*'s politics might be explained by the intensely political focus of the newspapers in the 1830s, in the wake of the Reform Act. As Kathryn Chittick has noted:

> During the events leading up to the Bill's passage in 1832 and after, it was a common complaint among reviewers that Literature seemed to have been strangled at the hands of Politics, which dominated all discussions, even in the leisurely reading of the quarterlies and monthlies. The transformation of Dickens from Parliamentary reporter to author coincides rather neatly with the gradual re-emergence of literary interest, as the Whig Parliament elected in the hectic atmosphere of the first Reform election proceeded to demonstrate that it could be just as uninspired as previous unreformed parliaments.[67]

As Chittick suggests, *Pickwick*'s publication coincided with a wish, among some newspaper editors, to reduce the frequency of political items in their columns and increase the number of literary pieces. This suggests that the *Northampton Mercury*'s strategy was part of a wider pattern in the press, in which newspaper editors emphasised Pickwick's comedy as an antidote to

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[66] 'A Scrap of Autobiography', *Northampton Mercury*, Saturday 08 October 1836, p. 4 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000317/183> [Accessed: 10/11/2020].
[67] Kathryn Chittick, 'The *Pickwick Papers* and the *Sun*', *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 39.3 (1984) pp. 328–335 (p. 329).

serious news, perhaps because, in light of the political backdrop of the 1830s, such an antidote was thought to be necessary or more marketable to readers. Nonetheless, the relationship between comedy and politics in *Pickwick* itself is complicated, and this meant that they rarely worked as discrete categories in the newspaper press. For example, the *Chester Chronicle* justified its inclusion of another *Pickwick* excerpt in September 1836 by stating that 'after the termination of the assizes, and the Parliamentary recess' they 'instinctively took up the fifth number of the Posthumous papers of the Pickwick Club, to relieve the depression of sprits which the spectacle of human nature in its darker shades, had created'.[68] The *Chronicle* then proceeded to include a lengthy excerpt from the Eatanswill Election chapter, which somewhat undermined its attempt to depart from a discussion of politics (although in *Pickwick* the subject is broached in a lighter manner). The interrelatedness of comedy and politics is a point to which I will return in Chapter 3, where I will discuss the more polemical use of Eatanswill, a scene which carried a strong, political topicality throughout Dickens's lifetime, despite (or arguably because of) the resonance of its comedy.

Two other papers using the twopenny rope scene, the *Staffordshire Advertiser* and the *Kentish Gazette*, took the re-purposing of comic anecdotes further, using them as part of specific local identity-shaping strategies and pushing the 'real life' applicability of *Pickwick* as far as possible in a way that reveals the limitations of Kincaid's 'rhetoric of laughter' model as a way of describing the creative agency of these remediations. For the *Advertiser*, the strategy is very simple: the editor simply uses the heading 'Metropolitan Retreats of the Vagrant Tribe' to make its point.[69] This takes the same passage in the opposite direction to the *Chester Chronicle*, emphasising the social issues outlined by Sam, as opposed to the comedy of the anecdote. In Dickens's version, Sam already makes it clear that the location of the poverty he describes is London, because of the reference to the Waterloo arches, but the sense of provincial-metropolitan rivalry is exacerbated by this heading, which pairs the reference to the metropole with a prominent reference to vagrancy. Again, the generic heading emphasises the topicality of the excerpt; if it weren't slightly too early in the century, this title might even seem to signpost a work of investigative journalism. It could certainly prefigure some serious news about the state of the London poor in the aftermath of the New Poor Law. It is also a way for this particular Staffordshire community to define itself against the metropole: demonstrating

[68] 'The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club', *Chester Chronicle*, Friday 02 September 1836, p. 4 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000342/18360902/011/0004> [Accessed: 10/11/2020].
[69] 'Metropolitan Retreats of the Vagrant Tribe', *Staffordshire Advertiser*, Saturday 10 December 1836, p. 4 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000252/18361210/019/0004> [Accessed: 10/11/2020].

an awareness of its problems, while perhaps also positioning itself as socially superior, as its detached title suggests.

It is the *Kentish Gazette* that represents the most continuous and insistent localisation of this scene and many others in the early numbers of *Pickwick*, as over several weeks of lengthy reviews and excerpts its editor sought to make Dickens's serial work for the propagation of local interest. The case of the *Kentish Gazette* is also worth noting, because unlike many reviews of *Pickwick* that appeared over a period of weeks, the *Gazette* linked its comments together using anaphoric references, to remind readers of its comments from the previous week. This extended the local narrative it created over a longer period of time. Advertisements notwithstanding, the *Gazette* also noticed *Pickwick* much earlier than many of the other publications in this study, with its first review published in response to the publication of the third number, instead of after Sam Weller's introduction in the fourth, as is more common. This review appeared on the 7th of June 1836, and the reviewer enthusiastically praised the serial's comedy, stating that the 'book was never intended for a sultry day's perusal', and that 'even the chilling easterly winds of this unseasonable season are scarcely sufficient to prevent exhaustion from over-excitement of the risible muscles'.[70] The review also highlights the 'well-drawn' characters and states that there is 'no lack of interest in the description, one event following closely on the heels of its precursor in admirable variety'.[71]

The *Gazette* revels in *Pickwick*'s comedy by using a little hyperbole of its own, and again we can see the combined appreciation of the text's comedy and verisimilitude, although this proves not to be without an ulterior motive, as the *Gazette* takes its praise of the serial further: '[t]o our general readers', it declares, 'the Pickwick papers will be doubly acceptable, from the scenes being laid in Kent, where, intermingled with narrations of laughable adventures, are beautiful graphic descriptions of the feudal grandeur of the county'.[72] Here the *Gazette* enthusiastically identifies its own communities with the provincial geographies and cultures Dickens was simultaneously introducing in each new number of *Pickwick*, in a way that nonetheless manipulates them to its own ends. Dickens's descriptions of settings in the early numbers of *Pickwick* are topographically specific and claim to follow Mr Pickwick's notebooks very closely, with Dickens as 'Boz' managing to find 'notes on […] four towns, Stroud, Rochester, Chatham, and Brompton'.[73] The *Gazette* is likely referring to a description of

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[70] 'The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club', *Kentish Gazette*, Tuesday 07 June 1836, p. 3 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/BL/0000235/18360607/004/0003> [Accessed: 10/11/2020].
[71] *Ibid.*
[72] *Ibid.*
[73] *Pickwick*, p. 14

Pickwick on Rochester bridge in the second number, which details the 'ancient castle […] telling us proudly of its old might and strength', 'the banks of the Medway, covered with cornfields and pastures, with here and there a windmill' and 'picturesque boats glid[ing] slowly down the stream'.[74] Interestingly, the *Gazette* writes this review without excerpting from the text, despite the fact that such a passage would have substantiated its claims and been easy to lift while still retaining its sense. This was possibly because the *Gazette* had limited column space, but equally the editors may have been concerned about drawing too much attention to Dickens's descriptions of their native Kent in the original serial, which are just as disposed to be scathing as they are to be 'beautiful', 'graphic' and 'feudal'.

In Dickens's serial, Kentish towns are ruthlessly satirised, and in Pickwick's list of what are supposedly their 'principle productions'—'soldiers, sailors, Jews, chalk, shrimps, officers, and dockyard men'—Dickens intermingles 'types' of people with commodities by defining them all as observable, immutable characteristics of the geography to which they belong.[75] In a later scene, the soldiers and officers based at Chatham become the focus of the mockery, as Dickens as narrator relates an anecdote in which a soldier drunkenly stabs a barmaid in the shoulder when she refuses to serve him more alcohol.[76] Unlike the *Staffordshire Advertiser*'s use of the heading 'Metropolitan Retreats of the Vagrant Tribe', Dickens's contradictory representations of Kent were not an attempt to present a metropolitan-provincial divide, or an urban-rural one, since the satire does not include comparisons with London, and Dickens positively describes both urban and rural Kentish landscapes. Instead, Dickens distinguishes the beauty of the Kentish landscape from the flaws he perceives in its people. By reporting the former rather than the latter, the *Gazette* forges a deeply contingent and opportunistic relationship with Dickens's *Pickwick*.

The *Gazette* continues its unusual, if selective attention to *Pickwick*'s regional relevance in a review printed on the 13th of September 1836, which is followed by a reprint of the twopenny rope scene. The author introduces the extract thus:

> The same bold masterly hand appears in the pages before us as delineated the soul-stirring events of a political contest, and the picturesque and romantic beauties of the fertile country of Kent […] It is on the roof of a stage-coach, commanding a

[74] *Ibid*, p. 52.
[75] *Ibid*, p. 14.
[76] *Ibid.*

> delightful prospect of fields of corn and orchards of ripe fruit, that the following dialogue takes place.[77]

This review balances effusive admiration of Dickens's 'bold masterly hand' with praise of the community in which the paper circulates, referring to its previous mention of the serial and adding to its enthusiasm. Interestingly, the scene in Dickens's version that the *Gazette* references here, is not set in Kent at all: the orchards and fruit form part of the prospect as the Pickwickians journey from Eatanswill (a fictional town probably based in Suffolk) to Bury St Edmunds, although the *Gazette* seems content to leave its slightly misleading wording in place.[78] The positive exposition shakes off its original Suffolk identity, taking on instead an implied Kentish relevance.

Coupled with an extract that relates stories of the gloom and poverty of London, the review makes it appear as if Dickens is once again praising the beauty of the Kentish countryside in his work, and perhaps even lamenting the more unsavoury conditions of the metropole. In this respect, the *Gazette* cleverly redeploys Dickens's work in the service of its own representational needs: decontextualizing scenes that fit its agenda, paraphrasing unrelated ones that do not, and ultimately using the credentials of Dickens's 'bold masterly hand' as a kind of evidence to strengthen the positive representation of the area in which the *Gazette* circulates. Those who had never encountered Dickens's *Pickwick* might have had something of a shock were they to read the original serial, with its military satire and reduction of Kentish towns to 'types' of inhabitants and commodities. This sharp contrast between the respective emphases of Dickens's *Pickwick* and its remediated version in the *Kentish Gazette* brings into relief the ways in which the malleability of the serial—with its inbuilt interactive hooks and moments of silence—facilitated interaction with the strong local agendas of individual newspapers.

All these examples begin to reveal several patterns. First, that Dickens's comic anecdotes had a precise albeit mutable formula, which opened up carefully curated moments of silence that newspaper editors exploited to re-purpose his comedy. In doing so, they don't just aim to persuade as Kincaid suggests: they also demonstrate a careful re-writing of Dickens's comedy to suit their own creative needs, sometimes emphasising comedy over social commentary and sometimes erasing or re-shaping Dickens's jokes to pay more attention to local identity and

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[77] 'Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club', *Kentish Gazette*, Tuesday 13 September 1836, p. 3 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/BL/0000235/18360913/004/0003> [Accessed: 20/01/2020].

[78] For details of the debate about Eatanswill's location, see Chapter 3, below.

shape their reading communities' responses. The complexity of these examples shows that we ought to be cautious when describing journalists' actions here as a remediation of the 'rhetoric of laughter' without some qualification. For Kincaid the 'rhetoric of laughter' is about the art of authorial persuasion and didacticism and the success of the rhetoric is measured according to how it develops our understanding of the novel. 'In Dickens', he argues, 'our laughter affects very strongly our notion of what the novel is, and the vision of that novel is partly defined by the nature, quantity, and control of our response'. In fact, in a fleeting comparison to the press, Kincaid refuses to describe Dickens 'as a calculating journalist, easily and cheaply manipulating the feelings of his readers, [since] the evidence for Dickens as a rhetorician, a man constantly aware of and in touch with his audience, is, as has often been recognized, very strong'.[79] Kincaid's focus on the novel means that he does not acknowledge the synergies between Dickens's comic rhetoric and the newspaper rhetoric that the examples discussed in this chapter amply reveal. These synergies enable the press to displace Dickens's own relationship with his audience, using *Pickwick* excerpts to cultivate their own interpretative communities instead. To avoid generalisation, however, we also need to identify more precisely which communities we mean, and also question how the circulation of these short anecdotes impacts our critical understanding of *Pickwick* as an integrated narrative, composed of serial parts shaped by Dickens and his publishers. These questions draw us away from the formula of the comic anecdote and towards the audiences who encountered it.

III. Seriality, Reception, Circulation

By establishing the strategies newspapers used to manipulate the rhetoric of laughter, we can begin to read new significance into *Pickwick*'s structure that moves beyond the patterns of reading and reflecting suggested by the formal lacunae of the serial form. This is because an analysis of the use of comic anecdotes in the press reveals both a common strategy (a preference for embedded comic scenes) and a heterogeneous reader response (as shown by the various use of paratext). For this reason, as Andrew Hobbs cautions us, despite the fact that evidence of the precise nature of local reading communities is often wanting, it is important, where possible, to delineate precisely the kinds of readers that are meant when we suggest they were encircled by, and formed part of the interpretative community of a local paper, a process that was partially facilitated by remediated literature and partially obscured by journalistic window-dressing. Hobbs argues that: 'Victorian journalists' memoirs and diaries, and my experience of modern-day journalism, suggest that the primary audience for journalists

[79] Kincaid, n.p.

was other journalists and close non-journalistic friends, and the ordinary reader was almost an afterthought'.[80]

Hobbs has also produced a diagram to indicate the proximity of groups of readers to their local newspapers:

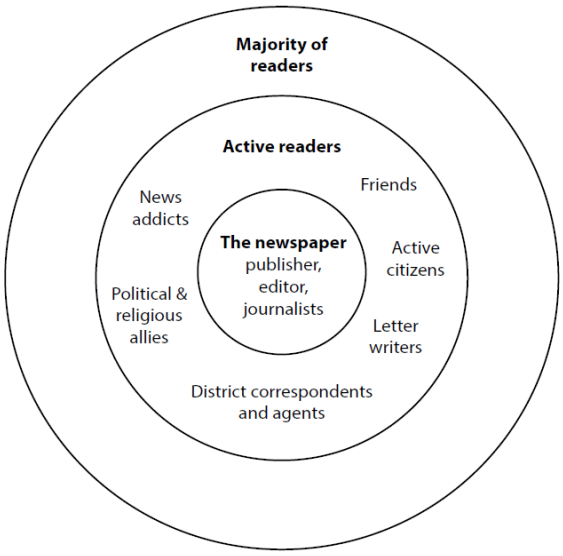

Figure 9: 'Readers and the closeness of their relationship with a local newspaper'[81]

Hobbs recognises the elusiveness of reader testimonies stemming from what he terms 'the majority of readers', because, by their very nature, such readers do not participate in demonstrative ways. Those testimonies that do survive belong to journalists, friends, news addicts and political activists who are more likely to, at least ostensibly, support the ethos of the newspaper. We therefore have few ways of concluding whether what journalists produced represented what the group Hobbs calls 'the majority of readers' wanted to read. Hobbs's study begins in 1855, the dawn of a very different era for the nineteenth-century newspaper, following the repeal of the Stamp Act. However, we can apply these patterns, to some extent, to the press of the 1830s also, because the majority of the very small amount of evidence of interaction between individual readers and their newspapers, on the subject of excerpts, comes from active readers.

If any evidence of readers engaging with their local paper is difficult to gather and synthesise, then assembling evidence of a particular genre of writing—the remediated excerpt—being discussed by individual readers proves particularly trying. Nonetheless, the evidence that exists

[80] Andrew Hobbs, *A Fleet Street in Every Town*, (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2018) p. 27.
[81] *Ibid.*, p. 63. CC BY 4.0.

does tell us some more about the interactive nature of newspaper excerpting. For example, in late 1836, the *Sheffield Independent* published a series of letters between the editor and a reader who signed themselves 'J.P', in which J.P. shared extracts from the commonplace book of a deceased friend. For example, in a letter published on 10th December, J.P. writes:

> Sir,—I enclose for you further extracts from the Common Place Book, as you encourage me to do so. The subject is MINUTE ANTIQUITIES.[82]

In this example, the letter is followed by extracts on a variety of subjects, from 'Bantam Fowl' and 'Pin Making' to (ironically) 'A Hint to Newspapers that Want Matter', so that this reader's submission of material acts as a kind of ready-made 'Varieties' column, that the newspaper simply typesets and transfers to its pages. In this way, the interaction between the *Independent* and its reader facilitates the newspaper's strategy for filling its columns. This interaction works in both directions, as J.P.'s letters and extracts are solicited by the *Independent*. In the correspondence column on 3rd December 1836, for example, the Editor writes: '[w]e can assure "J.P." for ourselves, and for hundreds of our readers, that we hope to have many more extracts from the Common Place Book of his deceased friend'.[83] Interestingly, here the opinions of the journalist and the 'Active Reader', J.P., are framed as representing those of the entire reading community. This is not to say that newspapers were not selective. The single specifically Pickwickian example of reader interaction of this nature that I have been able to find appears in the correspondence column of the *Canterbury Weekly Journal* in which the editor writes to a reader who has suggested reprinting a particular extract. The paper refuses the suggestion by replying that '[t]he extract from the Pickwick papers—"scene Marquis of Granby"—ran through the London and provincial papers, above a month ago'.[84] One example of this scene can be found across my thirty case studies, and was indeed published in January 1837. It appeared in a neighbouring paper, the *Kentish Gazette*, only eighteen days before the *Canterbury Weekly Journal* addressed its reader. This suggests that this editor was paying close attention to the extracts published by other newspapers, even scrutinising

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[82] 'To the Editor of the Sheffield Independent', *Sheffield Independent*, 10 December 1836, p. 4 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/BL/0000491/18361210/045/0004> [Accessed: 29/08/2020].
[83] 'To Correspondents', *Sheffield Independent*, 03 December 1836, p. 3 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000491/18361203/049/0003> [Accessed: 29/08/2020].
[84] 'To Corerspondents' [sic], *Canterbury Weekly Journal*, 04 February 1837, p. 4 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0001401/18370204/024/0004> [Accessed: 29/08/2020].

column-filler content to avoid printing a stale issue later on.[85] This sometimes meant rejecting readers' suggestions. This example also shows that the opinions and agendas of the 'majority of readers' were often represented by a few, 'active readers' who wrote letters or engaged in politics, and that both could ultimately be represented by the journalists writing the paper. The interactions between these different potential audiences are worth keeping in mind when we discuss the impact *Pickwick* excerpts may have had upon a newspaper's 'readers'.

The pursuit of freshness and topicality also meant that the extracts that pepper the papers within the first month of their publication can rarely be found when the next instalment of *Pickwick* has begun to circulate, and new material is available. The graph below records the number of appearances each of the scenes in Figures 6 and 7 made in my thirty newspaper case studies within one month, between one and two months and more than two months after they were published in Dickens's serial (searches were undertaken for the dates March 1836 to December 1837). The results show that 87% of extracts were reprinted in the press within one month of publication in Dickens's serial, compared to 8% which appeared in the second month, and just 5% which appeared afterwards. This clearly shows that newspaper editors were always looking for the next issue of *Pickwick* to appear, or for their contemporaries to cite fresh material they could copy on their own publication day.

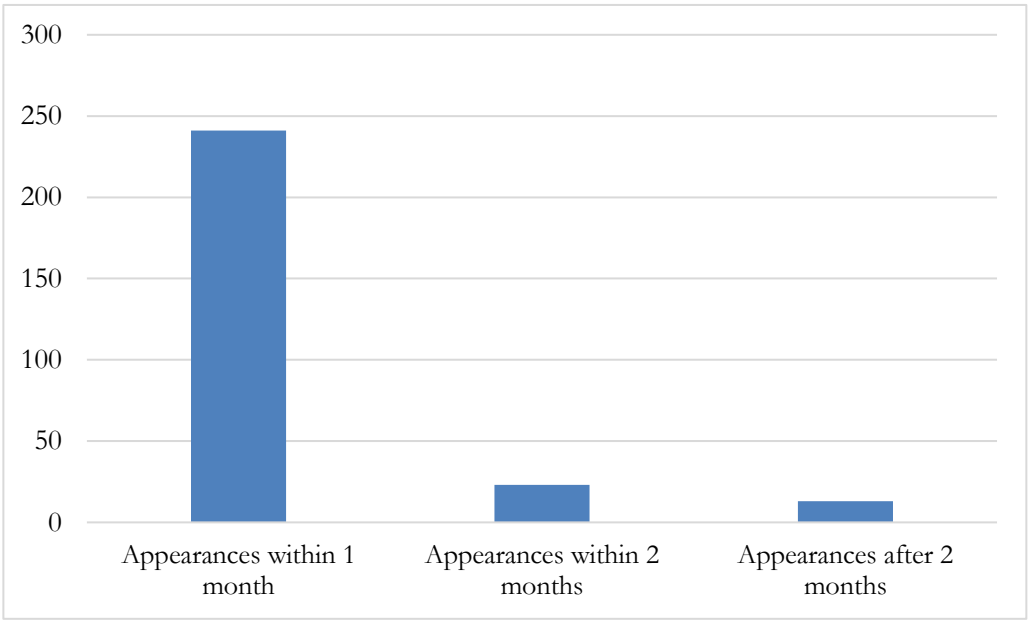

Figure 10: Time Between Publication and Reprinting

[85] 'The Pickwick Papers: by Boz', *Kentish Gazette*, Tuesday 17 January 1837, p. 2 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000235/18370117/010/0002> [Accessed: 30/01/2021].

The patterns of excerpting revealed by this database nonetheless leave a surprising gap. Across all 277 of these remediated extracts, just two are taken from an interpolated tale: both the 'Story of the Goblins who Stole a Sexton', which was reprinted in both the *Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette* and the *Sun* in January 1837.[86] This absence is worth pausing to consider for a moment, especially given the disproportionate amount of critical attention the reception histories of the interpolated tales have received more generally, compared to the comic anecdotes we find appearing many dozens of times across the press. From the 1960s onwards, several attempts were made to champion the literary quality of the interpolated tales using their interaction with *Pickwick*'s frame narrative and, ostensibly, its readers, as evidence for their importance. The most notable advocate of the interpolated tales is undoubtedly Robert Patten, who began an exchange of ideas with H. M. Levy Jr. and William Ruff on the subject in the late 1960s, and who has undertaken much painstaking and convincing analysis of Dickens's surviving manuscripts and letters to argue that many of the interpolated tales were written at the same time as the surrounding numbers, rather than being existing stories Dickens used during months when he was too busy to write something new.[87]

Patten further elevates the importance of the interpolated tales, by arguing that they are part of a deliberate strategy:

> Not only are the tales emphasized in Dickens' letters, but also they appear in the novel in places that by virtue of its serial form are especially prominent. The first number ends with the promise of a tale; five numbers do end with tales (IV, V, VI, X, and XVII) ; one begins with a tale (II) ; and two others have tales in the first chapter (III, VIII). The only tale that appears in the middle of a number is 'Prince Bladud,' unquestionably composed *seriatim*.[88]

Chapman and Hall were also implicated in this strategic decision, Patten argues: 'since [both] Dickens and his publishers were shrewd enough to have changed the organization of the

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[86] 'From the Pickwick Papers, Just Published', *Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette*, Thursday 12 January 1837, p. 4 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000360/18370112/011/0004> [Accessed: 29/01/2021]; 'The Pickwick Papers, No. X.', *Sun*, Monday 02 January 1837, p. 3 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0002194/18370102/018/0003> [Accessed: 28/01/2022].

[87] See for example: Robert L. Patten, 'The Interpolated Tales in Pickwick Papers', *Dickens Studies*, 1.2 (1965) pp. 86–89, the response to this paper is H. M. Levy Jr. and William Ruff, 'The Interpolated Tales in Pickwick Papers: A Further Note', *Dickens Studies*, 3.2 (1967), pp. 122–125. See also Robert L. Patten, 'The Unpropitious Muse: Pickwick's "Interpolated" Tales', *Dickens Studies Newsletter*, 1.1 (1970) pp. 7–10.

[88] Robert L. Patten, 'The Art of Pickwick's Interpolated Tales', p. 351.

numbers if beginning or ending with tales discouraged sales, we may conclude that they believed them well located'.[89]

Patten's analysis of the interpolated tales demonstrates their importance to the production of *Pickwick*. However, when we read them in the context of real reprinting patterns, in which they are conspicuously absent, Patten's suggestion that they were also important to the reception of the serial is somewhat complicated. Later in the article, while Patten remarks that the Pickwickians often do not respond to the stories that they hear, he nonetheless argues that the interpolated tales cement a discourse between 'literature and life' within and beyond the text, concluding that 'Pickwick is educated by experience and Sam's stories; the reader is educated by pictures, the interpolated stories, the novel as a whole, and his own experience'.[90] Patten's closing statement goes further, suggesting that 'Pickwick's tales provide one important means of advancing and commenting on its central action—the education of all Pickwickians, fictional and real'.[91] As well as suggesting that the interpolated tales had an educational impact on readers by bringing together the fictional and the real on the edges of the number, Patten notably separates them from 'Sam's stories', by which 'Pickwick is educated'. Conversely, the newspapers suggest that the opposite may have been the case because they show that the interpolated tales were less valued and reacted to considerably less frequently than the shorter anecdotes, related by Sam and others, that I have discussed in this chapter. While my dataset uses a small number of case studies, the frequent re-appearance of Eatanswill, even across these newspapers, shows it is likely that if the interpolated tales were popular among journalists and their readers, then more than two incidences would have been returned from the keyword searches, not least because there is only one Eatanswill election chapter, and there are nine interpolated tales. While the education of readers via the interpolated tales may have been Dickens's intention, then, the evidence gathered here does not suggest that this intention impacted the way the serial was received by the press and by real readers. Instead, this absence of the interpolated tales encourages a new understanding of *Pickwick*'s reception which, rather than focussing on authorial intent, is led by an acknowledgement of the serial's contingent meanings and fluctuating value as it circulated across different journalistic forums.

Dickens's unquestionably prominent placement of interpolated tales at the ends of the numbers also seems to have had little or no effect on their re-appearance in these newspapers.

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[89] *Ibid.*, p. 352.
[90] *Ibid.*, p. 365.
[91] *Ibid.*, p. 366.

Across the numbers of *Pickwick*, there are nineteen 'first chapters', nineteen 'last chapters' and nineteen 'middle chapters'.[92] As the graph below shows, extracts are most likely to be taken from the first or middle chapters and least likely to be taken from the last. This suggests little correlation between Dickens placing an interpolated tale on the edge of a number and the newspapers' notice of it, especially, as Patten notes, five numbers end with five of the nine interpolated tales. Nonetheless, this pattern does suggest that newspaper editors consulting the serial part as opposed to other newspapers for their material, might have scanned the number chronologically, and stopped when they found a scene they wanted to use, although further research would be necessary to be sure that this is truly a reason for the shape of the data in the graph below. Newspaper remediation is just one form of reader response, although in *Pickwick*'s case it is one of the few kinds of testimony available to us to assess the response to *Pickwick* quantitatively in this way. In this case it shows that rather than readers taking Dickens's cues as to which scenes they ought to find interesting and reflecting on each serial number virtually in unison during the gaps between numbers, they were more inclined to dig into the number more carefully, favouring a brand of comic anecdote regardless of where it appeared in the issues, if indeed they consulted the serial directly at all.

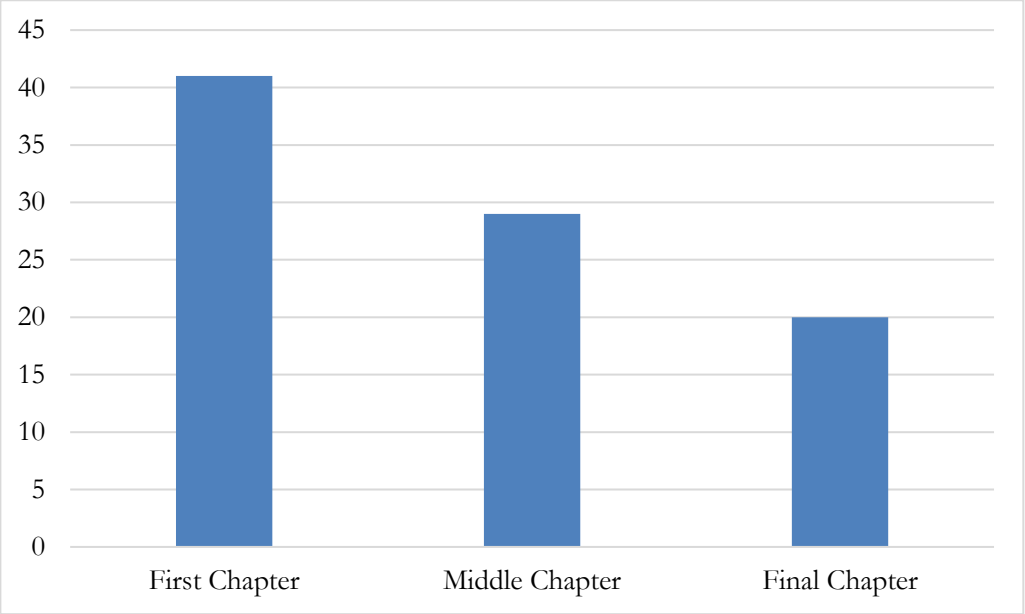

Figure 11: Placement of *Pickwick* Extracts in Dickens's Serial

Repeated spelling or grammatical errors between extracts show that editors were not returning to Dickens's serial each time, and sometimes newspapers also revealed their method of

[92] See Appendix B.

gathering material in reviews. For example, in an unusual review published on 31st May 1837, the *Taunton Courier* states:

> We could not wait for the arrival of this Number, to quote from it a capital bit of satire, on the ingenious methods which some of the lower order of the medical profession adopt to obtain a livelihood. We found the extract in one of our contemporaries, and transferred it about a fortnight ago. We have now got, after some unaccountable delay, the 14th Number before us, and find it as rich and racy as any of its predecessors, in the provocative [sic] to humorous entertainment. Mr. Pickwick, in his clandestine match-making, and Mr Weller, as his faithful and knowing squire in all fun, frolic and festivity, are again presented in the most striking relief, while the Author appears to flag as little in his zest of subject, as we can vouch for it his readers do in anxious interest and laughter loving gratification. Next week we shall try to find another extract; but it is very difficult to cut out from so well-woven a context.[93]

The most crucial point to note here is the newspaper's description of its process of finding the best content for its readers as quickly as possible, which involves a combination of consulting Dickens's serial and other newspapers. The claim that excerpting is difficult because *Pickwick*'s narrative is so well-integrated is unusual, but in this example may suggest the *Courier*'s keenness to find an excuse for the late notice of the serial. The delay in receiving the serial number for themselves led to the *Courier* reprinting from another newspaper, presumably because it saw the appeal of the scene about the 'ingenious methods […] of the lower order of the medical profession' and did not want to fall behind its contemporaries in noticing it. This review appeared on 31st May 1837, when the anecdote about the medicine bottle that Bob Sawyer and Ben Allen deliberately send to the wrong houses was widely reprinted (it appeared in six of the thirty newspapers discussed in this chapter). By 31st May, the new number of *Pickwick* would have been imminent, so the delay was a significant one, and shows once again that for the press, keeping up with the serial instalments was thought to be very important. Additionally, this review suggests that newspapers were just as concerned with their own serial rhythms as those of *Pickwick* itself. They might have had an entire month to notice *Pickwick*, but if their receipt of the number was delayed, there was potentially some fear that their competition would print an extract first, as the *Taunton Courier*'s apologetic piece shows. This in turn made it necessary to find *Pickwick* extracts in other newspapers.

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[93] 'The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club, No. XIV', *Taunton Courier*, Wednesday 31 May 1837, p. 6 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/BL/0000348/18370531/052/0006> [Accessed: 29/01/2021].

It would also be incorrect to suggest that newspapers simply missed the interpolated tales while working through possible material to use at speed, or because they never looked at the serial number. Indeed, there is some evidence that certain newspaper editors were aware of the interpolated tales, but decided to include other adjacent content instead. For example, my searches have revealed one instance of a newspaper choosing an anecdote just after an interpolated tale has concluded. This example appeared in the *Sun* in September 1837, and in Dickens's serial immediately follows the Tale of the Bagman's Uncle:

> 'I wonder what these ghosts of mail-coaches carry in their bags,' said the landlord, who had listened to the whole story with profound attention.
>
> 'The dead letters, of course,' said the bagman.
>
> 'Oh, ah! To be sure,' rejoined the landlord. 'I never thought of that.'[94]

Here, the landlord's question at the end of the interpolated tale creates an opportunity for another micronarrative, after which a silence opens, as following this final comment from the landlord, Dickens closes both the chapter and the serial part. Like others we have seen, the anecdote's capsularity seems to invite laughter that is never realised by the Pickwickians. The *Sun* may have taken this scene from another newspaper, but were known for their eclectic and lengthy notices of *Pickwick*.[95] Additionally, this reprint shows that at some point an editor must have decided to separate this anecdote from its interpolated tale.

Four further extracts are also taken from a moment just before an interpolated tale. In all cases, these are various cuts from the scene in which the leering old man chides the Pickwickians for their ignorance of the Inns of Court and tells them some short preliminary anecdotes, before beginning the interpolated tale proper, the 'Queer Client', which was not reprinted in any of the thirty case study papers. Two of these examples appeared in the *Morning Post* and the *Sun*, the same month that the scene was printed in Dickens's *Pickwick* (November 1836), one appeared in the *Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette* the following month (December 1836), the last appeared considerably later, also in the *Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette* (November 1837), because the review and excerpts were themselves reprinted from the *Quarterly Review*'s famous roundup of the entire serial, which also accounts for the newspaper

[94] *Sun*, Monday 04 September 1837, p. 4 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0002194/18370904/033/0004> [Accessed: 29/01/2021].
[95] *Chittick*.

noticing the scene twice.[96] Aside from the last example, which does not excerpt an anecdote, the other three examples all do, prioritising the stories that come before the interpolated tale, as opposed to the tale itself. This is arguably because these anecdotes have the qualities discussed in the examples in the previous sections: they are short and portable, with a clear beginning and end and a tripartite structure. They are also funny, with a referential framework with which many readers would have been familiar (in this case, the Inns of Court). The *Morning Post*, for example, reprints the gruesomely comic story of the man who refuses to believe working in the Inns to be lonely, but who isn't found for eighteen months after he dies and falls 'in his own letter-box'.[97]

Another possible reason for the choice of these stories is the extent to which Pickwickian silence is emphasised by the old man between each anecdote. In Dickens's serial, the chapter opens:

> Aha!' said the old man, a brief description of whose manner and appearance concluded the last chapter, 'aha! who was talking about the inns?'
>
> 'I was, Sir,' replied Mr. Pickwick—'I was observing what singular old places they are.'
>
> '*You*!' said the old man contemptuously. 'What do *you* know of the time when young men shut themselves up in those lonely rooms, and read and read, hour after hour, and night after night […][98]

As we have seen, the Pickwickians' silences or useless, phatic replies to many of the anecdotes in the book show that they scarcely ever respond with something intelligent, but this example is notable for the vehemence with which another character draws attention to their lack of knowledge. Particularly evident silences open up as a result, as the narrator remarks, '[t]here was something so odd in the old man's sudden energy, and the subject which had called it forth, that Mr. Pickwick was prepared with no observation in reply'.[99] A little later we are told that 'Mr. Pickwick eyed the old man with great curiosity, and the remainder of the company

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[96] 'A Quiet Tenant', *Morning Post*, Wednesday 02 November 1836, p. 3 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000174/18361102/012/0003> [Accessed: 29/01/2021]; 'The Pickwick Club', *Sun*, Tuesday 01 November 1836, p. 3 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0002194/18361101/053/0003> [Accessed: 29/01/2021]; 'Sensible Advice to a Ghost', *Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette*, Thursday 08 December 1836, p. 4 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000360/18361208/019/0004> [Accessed: 29/01/2021]; 'The Pickwick Papers', *Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette*, Thursday 09 November 1837, p. 4 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000360/18371109/017/0004> [Accessed: 29/01/2021].
[97] *Pickwick*, p .252.
[98] *Ibid.*, p. 251.
[99] *Ibid.*

smiled, and looked on in silence'.[100] The silences in this scene positively echo, making it very easy for newspaper editors to choose where they wish to end their extracts and very easy for those copying those extracts from other papers to pare back further or transport the individual stories—which easily retain their internal comedy—to their own columns.

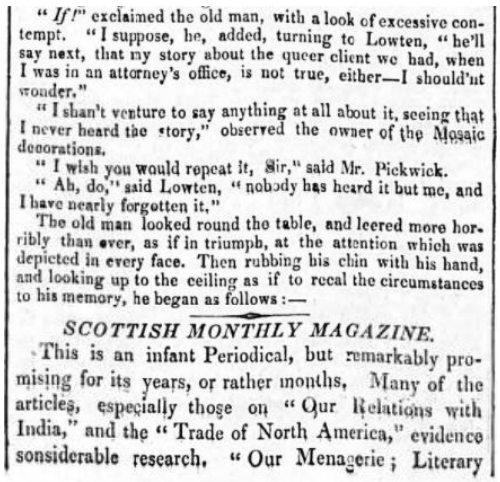
It remains very difficult to determine whether newspaper editors are truly referring to Dickens's serial and choosing to avoid the interpolated tales, or simply reprinting material from another newspaper, despite the fact that at some point in the chain, the serial must have been consulted. Nonetheless, the *Sun*'s reprint of the Inns of Court stories gives us a clear example of a paper deliberately avoiding an interpolated tale, in favour of reprinting the anecdotes that preceded it. The extract is unusually long and comes with a review, as Kathryn Chittick, who has described the singularity of this piece in detail, has also noted:

> By the November number, the *Sun* reviewer declared Sam Weller to be the favourite of all the Bozian characters (1 November 1836). But more interesting than the by now commonplace praise of Boz's 'comic genius' was the excerpt chosen to accompany the review. It was not of the usual anecdote length—in this respect Sam Weller was eminently quotable and therefore reviewable—but ran as a full newspaper column. The attention given to Pickwick was thus longer than that given to any other publication in this set of reviews, including *Blackwood's*, *Fraser's*, or to any of the works reviewed under 'Literature.' What is more notable is that Pickwick is here the only 'periodical' made up of 'contributions' written entirely by one author. The excerpt is taken from the episode in which the old man recounts melancholy tales of incidents and dramas of lives in the Inns of Court.[101]

Chittick is quite right to emphasise the unusual detail of the *Sun*'s reviews of *Pickwick*, and the length of their chosen extracts. In fact, this detail, and the fact that the *Sun* often uses cuts of scenes that are very different from other publications, suggest that they are often consulting the serial, rather than other newspapers. Her point about the difficulty newspapers had categorising *Pickwick* (here the *Sun* opts for 'magazine') can also be read as a reason why the comic anecdotes were favoured by editors: as a comparatively stable type of writing that was easily extrapolated and understood in the face of a generically hybrid serial with a complicated back story, in which even its author-editor was only partially invested. Nonetheless, Chittick's comment that the extract was 'not of the usual anecdote length' ignores the fact that the *Sun*'s

[100] *Ibid.*, p. 252.
[101] Chittick, p. 334.

extract includes all the anecdotes the old man relates before proceeding with the interpolated tale—including the moments of Pickwickian silence between them—before cutting off just as the interpolated tale is about to start. The other two publications included in this database which use extracts from this scene, the *Morning Post* and the *Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette*, choose one anecdote each and omit Dickens's record of the silences that appear between each anecdote. On the other hand, the *Sun* even goes so far as to cut off mid-sentence (see Figure 12, below).



"*If!*" exclaimed the old man, with a look of excessive contempt. "I suppose, he, added, turning to Lowten, "he'll say next, that my story about the queer client we had, when I was in an attorney's office, is not true, either—I should'nt wonder."

"I shan't venture to say anything at all about it, seeing that I never heard the story," observed the owner of the Mosaic decorations.

"I wish you would repeat it, Sir," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Ah, do," said Lowten, "nobody has heard it but me, and I have nearly forgotten it."

The old man looked round the table, and leered more horribly than ever, as if in triumph, at the attention which was depicted in every face. Then rubbing his chin with his hand, and looking up to the ceiling as if to recal the circumstances to his memory, he began as follows:—

SCOTTISH MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

This is an infant Periodical, but remarkably promising for its years, or rather months. Many of the articles, especially those on "Our Relations with India," and the "Trade of North America," evidence considerable research. "Our Menagerie; Literary

Figure 12: 'The Pickwick Club', *Sun*[102]

All this suggests that at least some newspaper editors are not simply missing interpolated tales through careless reading or copying content from one another, but that they are deliberately choosing the short comic anecdotes, rather than the lengthier (and often darker) interpolated tales. Again, this selectivity both prompts an acknowledgement of the evolving, contingent nature of Dickens's comedy, and deconstructs the relationship between *Pickwick*'s seriality and its reception trajectories by revealing alternative ways that the text was fragmented and re-purposed. This in turn has implications for our understanding of *Pickwick* as synecdochal or as carefully curated serial parts ultimately integrated into a single (albeit untidy) volume. On the one hand, as Patten has duly noted in 'Pickwick and the Development of Serial Fiction', *Pickwick*'s seriality led to a more extensive and consistent culture of press review and notice:

> [O]riginal serial fiction encouraged multiple reviews, which in turn stimulated more buyers. How could a reviewer do more than comment in a general way on the progress of the story, and excerpt a few choice passages, until the novel was

[102] 'The Pickwick Club', *Sun*, Tuesday 01 November 1836, p. 3 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/BL/0002194/18361201/019/0003> [Accessed: 28/01/2022].

> completed'? And so, month after month, journals commented briefly on Dickens's story, and month by month more people were drawn to buy the flimsy paper parts. It became topical matter, almost like news; people asked themselves, "What were the Pickwickians doing last month'?" and hastened to their booksellers to find out.[103]

As well as encouraging more buyers, the act of reviewing and excerpting the serial each month also shows newspapers mirroring the publishing rhythms of the serial. On the other hand, as the reprinting of comic anecdotes shows, we cannot use these patterns to imply that the reader response was entirely synchronous. Andrew Hobbs has noted in his criticism of Linda K. Hughes and Michael Lund's work on seriality that their reference to 'progress and pause' as a way of describing serial reading practices is problematic, as while it 'might fit a publishing schedule, reading schedules were often irregular: newspapers and magazines remained on reading room tables to be read until the next issue arrived, up to a month later; and exhausted mill workers are unlikely to have experienced the sixty-hour working week between serial instalments as a 'pause'.[104] In the case of *Pickwick*, this neat 'progress and pause' narrative is doubly disrupted, not only because of its status as a serial text which could be read at any point during the course of the month, but because of its re-appearance in excerpt form at various times and in various newspapers, which would in turn remain on reading room tables until the next issue arrived. This context—as well as the fact that newspaper editors preferred comic anecdotes, and do not seem to have paid any more attention to scenes because they were placed prominently by Dickens—shows that while reader responses were shaped to some extent by *Pickwick*'s seriality, ultimately these serial rhythms and even the text itself were left far behind.[105]

Newspapers' indifference to Dickens's structural decisions in *Pickwick* became particularly evident after serialisation had itself finished, and *Pickwick* was published as an integrated narrative. As we will see in Chapter 3, after this point, references to Pickwickian themes and tropes, such as Eatanswill, remained useful for many decades, but such references often did not quote Dickens's text accurately, or even include extracts at all. However, a close analysis of the extracts that appeared concurrently with Chapman and Hall's release of the serial numbers shows that, while *Pickwick*'s status as a serial text meant heightened and more

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[103] Robert L. Patten, 'Pickwick Papers and the Development of Serial Fiction', *Rice Institute Pamphlet – Rice University Studies*, 61.1 (1975) pp. 51–74 (p. 65).
[104] Hobbs, p. 112.
[105] As Laura Kasson Fiss has argued, *Pickwick* extracts proliferated in the press to such an extent that they created an 'alternate serial' with Sam Weller as the main protagonist. Her article also goes on to suggest that after '*Pickwick*'s final number in November 1837, links between newspaper excerpts and the serial rhythms of the original narrative were severed'. Kasson Fiss, p. 228; p. 232.

frequent press engagement, the nature of that engagement was heterogeneous even during serialisation because newspapers often used paratext to imbue extracts with their own agendas and at least partially prioritised their own serial rhythms. This process, which occurred between serial numbers, paved the way for the serial form facilitating its own later irrelevance, as Dickens's authorial decisions, such as the careful placement of important material at the edges of serial numbers and his construction of an integrated narrative with anaphoric and cataphoric references linking the serial parts, were left behind altogether.

IV. Conclusions

The widespread culture of excerpting in the press that flourished during *Pickwick*'s serialisation amounted to far more than an indiscriminate re-use of fiction as column filler material. As my analysis has shown, the remediation of *Pickwick* extracts in various metropolitan and provincial publications reveals the immense creativity and agency of newspaper editors, as they skilfully re-shaped the serial to meet their own agendas. Analysing these creative responses can enhance our understanding of Dickens's comedy, by drawing new attention to both its contingency and its inbuilt propensity to spark opinionated debate among periodicals with a variety of competing agendas. That *Pickwick*'s comedy was capable of evolving according to its newspaper context means that the act of remediation also served to release and re-purpose the pent-up comic energy that the Pickwickians themselves mostly left hanging over the narrative in the form of capacious post-anecdote silences, as they failed to process the potential relevance of the stories they were told.[106]

By offering an alternative way to map the serial's increasing fame across time and space, a focus on *Pickwick*'s comic anecdotes brings to the fore two underappreciated features that made the text so eminently remediable. The first of these features is the serial's structure. The comic anecdotes discussed in this chapter reveal a wealth of new fault lines in the text, which de-emphasise the importance of *Pickwick*'s serial instalments and the interpolated tales that resided along their edges – features that have, I argue, too long dominated discussions about *Pickwick*'s popular appeal. The second feature is *Pickwick*'s linguistic ambiguities—the pauses,

[106] Interestingly, in his work on George Eliot's *Felix Holt*, Evan Horowitz talks about a 'divorce between intention and action' in the novel that results in a 'massive amount of wasted energy'. Horowitz describes this process as a 'career-long interest' of Eliot's. It is worth noting here, firstly because, as we saw in the Introduction, Eliot was comparable to Dickens in terms of the frequency with which her work was excerpted, and secondly because *Pickwick*, can be understood as a novel of wasted (or at least, pent-up) energy, in which the Pickwickians' intention to educate themselves is never realised by their comprehension of the comic anecdotes that the press reprint. See Evan Cory Horowitz, 'George Eliot: The Conservative', *Victorian Studies*, 49.1 (2006), pp. 7–32 (p.18, 20).

silences and comic generalisations—that invited opinionated re-use and enabled comic anecdotes to serve specific rhetorical functions on the behalf of a variety of interpretative communities. Ultimately, as I have shown, these functions orbited around individual newspapers rather than Dickens himself.

This combination of structural fragmentation and linguistic ambiguity is significant because it draws long overdue attention to the comic anecdote as a crucial factor in Dickens's early success. The sheer volume of comic micronarratives in *Pickwick* seems to suggest that Dickens had an unusually acute understanding of the fact that remediability was key to the establishment of an authorial reputation, and that punctuating his anecdotes with encouraging silences might facilitate a positive response. The possibility that this cultivation of newspaper-friendly structure and linguistic ambiguity in *Pickwick* was a deliberate strategy deployed by Dickens to *collaborate* with the press is discussed further in Chapter 3. Here, it is sufficient to say that in the press at large, cultivating an anecdotal mode of writing certainly seems to have been a felicitous way to ensure *Pickwick*'s early, frequent, and lasting journalistic recognition during the course of its serial run.

This correlation between the anecdotal and the remediable should also turn our attention to the anecdote as a form and the ways in which its portability suggests generic cross currents that have profound implications for our reading of Dickens. The prominence of the anecdote throughout the serial, and its subsequent emphasis in the press as remediated excerpts, reveals an intertwining of literary fiction and journalism in *Pickwick* that is more complex than an assessment of the serial alone would allow. An anecdote might belong to either genre, and often, as we have seen, moved freely between the two, as a stable form which could easily be transported between serial fiction and serial newsprint while meeting the formal requirements of both media. This proximity between fiction and newsprint via the anecdotal brings *Pickwick* closer to a text like *Sketches by Boz* and emphasises the importance of the journalistic mode in facilitating Dickens's popular success even beyond the early sketches written explicitly for the newspapers.

The anecdotes discussed in this chapter also gained their rhetorical value in the journalistic realm as a result of newspaper editors' careful curation of paratext, such as the addition of new headings and preambles, techniques that emphasised the ideologies of the individual paper by strategic work at the edges of the excerpt. For some newspapers, however, such tactics simply weren't sufficient to ensure *Pickwick* fulfilled their particular political needs. Moving past the threshold of the reprinted text from context curation to *content* curation, in the next chapter I show that, when Dickens's meanings were not sufficiently malleable,

excerpting became adaptation. Adaptation, in turn, enabled some provincial publications to test their ideologies and articulate their role in the national debates about enfranchisement and the Great Reform Act that continued to rage as *Pickwick* was being published in 1836. However, as Chapter 1 has shown, even when journalistic intervention ceased at the threshold of the excerpt, each re-use of *Pickwick* was capable of highlighting its specific value to individual interpretative communities, and of showing how the process of remediation filled the silences of the serial with what is emerging as a very vocal politics of the press.

Chapter 2 'May I presume again Mr Dickums?': Adapting *Pickwick* in the Provincial Press

On 26th March 1836, a week before the serial's launch, the *Athenaeum* published its famous notice of *The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club*. This lengthy and effusive advertisement, widely attributed to Dickens's own hand, offered a detailed account of the geographical scope of the Pickwickians' travels and provided readers with a taste of the forthcoming narrative:

> The Pickwick Club, so renowned in the annals of Huggin-Lane, and so closely entwined with the thousand interesting associations connected with Lothbury and Cateaton-street, was founded in the year One Thousand Eight Hundred and Twenty-two, by Samuel Pickwick the great traveller – whose fondness for the useful arts prompted his celebrated journey to Birmingham in the depth of winter; and whose taste for the beauties of nature even led him to penetrate to the very borders of Wales in the height of summer […] The whole surface of Middlesex, a part of Surrey, a portion of Essex, and several square miles of Kent, were in their turns examined, and reported on. In a rapid steamer, they smoothly navigated the placid Thames; and in an open boat they fearlessly crossed the turbid Medway.[1]

Most striking about this early advertisement is the extent to which it foregrounds *Pickwick*'s provinciality. Following a brief mention of the London streets that are home to rival clubs, Dickens dispenses with the metropole almost entirely as an incentive to read the serial. Instead, he promises readers a fundamentally provincial, picaresque narrative which will focus on adventures in towns, cities and even entire counties outside London. Dickens represents these provincial destinations as beguiling and distant, with a journey to Birmingham or Kent wryly assuming the high stakes of a transnational expedition into hitherto uncharted territory, characterised by extreme climate and perilous situations. The Thames may be 'placid', but the Medway is 'turbid' and ripe for intrepid discovery.

In this way, the advertisement foregrounds the importance of *Pickwick*'s provincial settings even as it mockingly dismisses them as objects to be scrutinised by the middle-class metropolitan gentleman. A by-product of this joke is that the metropolitan-based *Athenaeum* represents London as something to be left behind, in a way that is incompatible with Dickens's enduring reputation as an essentially metropolitan author and the wealth of

[1] Charles Dickens, *The Pickwick Papers* (London: Penguin, 2000) n.p.

scholarship that has accordingly been produced with 'Dickens and London' or even 'Dickens's London' as its primary focus.[2] Additionally, the final shape of *Pickwick* itself is at odds with the provincial focus of this initial advertisement: the narrative's most significant moments of peripeteia—*Pickwick*'s accidental proposal, his trial, and his imprisonment in the Fleet—all take place in London.

While *Pickwick*'s pivotal chapters were ultimately set in the metropole, the *Athenaeum* advertisement nonetheless represents the first example of what would become an enduring engagement with *Pickwick*'s provinciality in the newspaper press. Like the interactive hooks incorporated into the comic anecdotes discussed in Chapter 1, *Pickwick*'s beguiling provinces became an invitation to potential remediators that cued in a creative and intensely political press response to the serial's non-metropolitan elements. For example, on 7th June 1836, the *Morning Chronicle*, another leading metropolitan title, published a glowing review of the first numbers of the serial, emphasising its provincial narratives in a way that quite clearly took its lead from the *Athenaeum's* framing of the serial:

> The idea of the present publication is a very happy one. It purports to contain the transactions of a club of originals—thorough cockneys, with knowledge and ideas confined within the boundaries of London, and profoundly ignorant of everything beyond. A noble thirst for knowledge, and a desire to gain information respecting the *terra incognita* which lies beyond the bounds of Camberwell, Hampstead, and Fulham, induce the club to send a mission of exploration to visit the distant region of the provinces and report the results of their discoveries.[3]

The *Chronicle* repeats and exaggerates the *Athenaeum*'s description of *Pickwick* as a narrative of journeying outwards, by clearly delineating known London parishes while simultaneously obscuring the provincial geographies beyond as a *'terra incognita*'. The *Chronicle*'s status as an influential London daily enabled it to revel in the joke all the more, casting the Pickwickian provinces into further oblivion.

What both these metropolitan notices of *Pickwick* belie is that the most sustained engagement with *Pickwick*'s provincial scenes, characters and issues can actually be found in the provincial papers themselves. By remediating the text, these publications inverted the idea of the

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[2] See for example: Julian Wolfreys, *Dickens's London: Perception, Subjectivity and Phenomenal Urban Multiplicity* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012); F. S. Schwarzbach, *Dickens and the City* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013).

[3] 'The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club, Edited by Boz', *The Morning Chronicle*, Tuesday 07 June 1836, p. 3 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/BL/0000082/18360607/009/0003> [Accessed 05/06/2019].

province as a passive object, subject to the discovery of the metropolitan gentleman. Instead, they strove to make this '*terra incognita*' known and relevant to their communities by imbuing Dickens's words and tropes with a local relevance and suggesting that the nuances of local politics would be recognisable to the metropolitan Pickwickian. Chapter 1 showed that reprinted *Pickwick* extracts, when strategically recontextualised by the press, often functioned rhetorically, becoming a valuable mechanism that local communities used to speak to and for themselves. However, this kind of engagement, with editorial possibility limited to the curation of paratext at the edge of the excerpt, was not always sufficient for the purposes of individual newspapers, some of which clearly felt that Dickens's writing did not fit the specifics of their individual agendas. This sometimes meant that excerpting gave way to adaptation. Such newspaper adaptations speak further to the opportunities furnished to newspaper editors by *Pickwick*'s peculiar structural flexibility and linguistic ambiguity—as identified in the previous chapter. They also represent an underappreciated form of Pickwickiana that deserves attention in its own right.

This chapter examines two Conservative newspapers in which adaptations of *Pickwick* were printed: the first was published in the *Coventry Standard* in two parts, on the 6th and 27th of January 1837, and the second in the *Hampshire Advertiser* on the 8th of April 1837.[4] While maintaining many recognisable scenes and characters, both pieces made significant departures from Dickens's *Pickwick* and deployed two notable strategies to politicise their remediations: firstly, each text was explicit and partisan in its reference to named political groups, figureheads, topical elections, or places of local importance to their communities, pairing *Pickwick* with these topical references either to build up a favourable representation of Conservative identity and policy, or to critique rival party ideology and behaviour. Secondly, both these pieces presented themselves, not as adaptations of Dickens's works, but as verbatim extracts lifted directly from *Pickwick* itself. The *Standard*'s adaptation offers itself as a part of the published serial with no attempts made to justify or explain its difference from

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[4] 'Pickwick Papers', *Coventry Standard*, Friday 06 January 1837, p. 2. <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000683/18370106/023/0002> [Accessed: 10/02/2019]. Subsequent references are given as 'Pickwick Papers' *Coventry Standard* (1), followed by the page number.
'Pickwick Papers. *(Continued.)*', *Coventry Standard*, Friday 27 January 1837, p. 2 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000683/18370127/015/0002> [Accessed 11/02/2019]. Subsequent references are given as 'Pickwick Papers', *Coventry Standard* (2), followed by the page number.
'The Pickwick Papers, No. 13.', *Hampshire Advertiser*, Saturday 8 April 1837, p. 4 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/BL/0000494/18370408/032/0004> [Accessed 17/06/2019]. Scanned copies of the pages containing these adaptations can be found in the Accompanying Materials.

Dickens's *Pickwick*. The *Advertiser*, on the other hand, frames its piece as an extra chapter that the publishers 'forgot' to include, presenting itself as heroically rescuing lost Dickens material even though *Pickwick*'s serialisation was at that point far from complete. These strategies both resulted in generically complex texts that could speak directly to the political issues of the provincial community, but ostensibly from the disinterested position of the metropolitan author. Both adaptations are short, well-disguised, and only easily located via a digital newspaper database, meaning that scholarship pre-dating digital repositories such as the British Newspaper Archive could not have spotted them easily. Even in this eminently searchable context, each piece emulates the stylistic mores of verbatim *Pickwick* extracts, and both are thus easily missed by a computer programme or a casual eye. This is perhaps why, until now, they have eluded critical notice.

This chapter examines the hermeneutics, structure and context of these adaptations as a way to uncover a hitherto understudied relationship between the mediation of Conservative ideology, and the *re*mediation of *Pickwick* in the press. Both these adaptations resist the straightforward assignment of a generic category, and their re-working of *Pickwick* means that plagiarism—a controversial term that shadowed the examples discussed in Chapter 1, but that was relatively easily subsumed by the category of the verbatim excerpt—demands sustained attention here. Both texts are more complex to deal with than excerpts because their authors both stage, and then endeavour to erase, their textual interventions: presenting modified versions of recognisable Pickwickian tropes and scenes, before using attribution to Dickens to cover their tracks. For this reason, I use the term 'adaptation' here in Linda Hutcheon's sense of 'repetition with variation', but the term is intended as a starting point rather than the end of the discussion about the categorisation of these two pieces.[5]

Both pieces are particularly curious case studies capable of shaping wider conversations about originality and authorship in ways that that other remediations cannot, and this requires a more flexible approach to terminology. Both adaptations, I argue, combine elements of the contrasting narratives of 'literary creation' that Robert Macfarlane has termed *creatio* and *inventio*, whereby *creatio* is most closely associated with Romantic ideals of authorial genius, and *inventio* with the postmodern emphasis of repetition, bricolage, and indebtedness.[6] This combination enabled the authors of both adaptations to create palimpsestic texts that combined the authority of the 'genius author' with the intertextual freedom of the remediator.

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[5] Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation* (London: Routledge, 2012) p. 4.
[6] Robert Macfarlane, *Original Copy: Plagiarism and Originality in Nineteenth-Century Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

This complex negotiation between the formal features of the original and the resemblant enabled the very specific political role each assumed in the Conservative press. This role was twofold: first, each adaptation contributed to the composite Conservative ideology that the newspaper cultivated in its columns (which took shape in leaders, reports, reprinted news, and meeting minutes, as well as literature). Second, each balanced an acknowledgement of the strength of the local Conservative community represented by the papers in which they were published, with a sense of the place of that community in the national Conservative networks that were gaining traction at just the moment the adaptations were printed. By the time *Pickwick* was being published, the ideology of the Peelite Conservative movement had become urgently topical. As Britain approached the 1837 general election, Robert Peel's personal popularity continued to increase and there was a growing demand for a unified effort to protect British constitutional values in the face of continued efforts to implement the remaining promises of the Reform Act and the Whig Party's shift towards radical policy. From 1834 onwards, the newspaper press was notably at the heart of this composite, Peel-centred form of Conservatism. As Matthew Cragoe has argued, there was a 'symbiotic relationship between the [Conservative] associations and the press in the 1830s […] in which newspaper coverage turned the scattered opponents of the Whigs' increasingly radical reform program into a national movement, conscious of its own dimensions and armed with a standardized rhetoric available to both national and local politicians'.[7] It is the newspapers' desire for a variety of means to mediate this 'standardised rhetoric', I contend, that created the conditions for these two *Pickwick* adaptations to be produced. Conversely, to make necessary distinctions between Conservative groups and their opponents, this desire also resulted in the Conservative press deploying a confusing web of party terminology to describe their equally composite political nemeses.

Cragoe concludes that newspaper 'coverage of […] [Conservative Association] activity created a coherent narrative context within which local activism could be understood'.[8] As we will see in the next section, the *Pickwick* adaptations in the *Coventry Standard* and the *Hampshire Advertiser* served as similar narrative contexts for the perpetuation of Conservative ideologies. Specifically, both adaptations explored the place of the local in national Conservative networks by downplaying or even erasing Dickens's London geographies in favour of a provincial-centred understanding of *Pickwick*. The fact that these papers principally served communities outside the metropole was far from incidental to their treatment of *Pickwick*, as

[7] Matthew Cragoe, 'The Great Reform Act and the Modernization of British Politics: The Impact of Conservative Associations, 1835-1841', *Journal of British Studies*, 47 (2008) pp. 581–603, (p. 583, 586, 597).
[8] *Ibid.*, p. 602.

each privileged the precise, strategic delineation of non-metropolitan, local communities as crucial to the process of shaping national Conservative ideology. *Pickwick*'s thematic focus on moving between localities and its own easy mobility through a variety of journalistic forums also made it particularly suited to help situate locally specific political content in wider Conservative networks. This synecdochic function should prompt us to return to the serial itself in new ways, understanding it as an illustration of the recent 'spatial turn' media history has taken, where spatial/textual rootedness and spatial/textual mobility are understood to be entangled and mutually supportive.[9]

While these two examples clearly illustrate *Pickwick*'s political potential and the generic complexity of certain remediations, their value does not lie in their frequency. Nor does the available evidence suggest that *Pickwick* was co-opted in this way because readers, editors and journalists understood it to have singularly Conservative tendencies. While these adaptations form part of the broad tradition of remediation I discussed in the Introduction, this tradition was incredibly heterogeneous, and the adaptation of *Pickwick* by the periodical press was considerably less widespread than the reprinting of verbatim extracts. During the first year of *Pickwick*'s serialisation, I have only encountered these two examples. This means that their appearance in Conservative publications at around the same time, while fortuitous, must be treated as incidental, rather than part of a consistent tradition of aligning *Pickwick* with Conservative values. Likewise, my argument here is not to suggest that these changes to Dickens's text were a travesty of his own political position, because both Dickens himself and his writing had complicated political standpoints more characterizable by a suspicion of the institutions of government than by an allegiance to a party ideology.[10] For this reason, they made for all but unstable referents. Equally, as I will show in Chapter 3, Dickens's politics arguably have little impact upon our understanding of *Pickwick*'s political function anyway, since the text does not align itself with a particular partisanship. Instead, *Pickwick* presents us with examples of institutional corruption that the press then variously aligned with their own agendas. When the *Standard* and the *Advertiser* used *Pickwick* in this way, it was not to affect a political disbarment of Dickens's views, but instead to exploit *Pickwick* as a political template that could be—and frequently was—marshalled by groups across the political spectrum.

In this respect, I argue that the usefulness of these adaptations lies, to some extent, in their uniqueness. They enable us to address the important questions raised in Chapter 1 about the

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[9] Andrew Hobbs, *A Fleet Street in Every Town: The Provincial Press in England 1855-1900* (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2018) p. 13, p. 30.
[10] Paul Schlicke, *The Oxford Companion to Charles Dickens* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011) p. 463.

complexity of *Pickwick* remediations, particularly the ways in which they made use of Dickens's emerging credentials and authorial brand. At the same time, the opinions and agendas asserted in these examples became self-perpetuating, since as well as acting as a medium through which the political values of the individual papers in which they were printed might be understood, they became venues for the same papers to validate those opinions as part of a national ideology, by providing examples that show them to be shared, in this case by Dickens and his fictional characters. The usefulness of these adaptations is therefore precisely the small, contributory part they play in shaping wider political networks and the light they shed on the high political stakes of adaptation.

Across these adaptations, 'Whig', 'Radical' and 'Liberal' are all used variously—and not always straightforwardly—so some preliminary disambiguation is useful here. Both adaptations attempt to distinguish between moderate and Radical Whigs, in acknowledgement of the compound nature of Peel's Conservative following, which included some moderate Whigs. To make matters even more confusing, the *Coventry Standard* also uses the term 'Liberal' to describe Conservative opposition in general. This is perhaps a reflection of the fact that, in the 1830s, the various opponents of Conservative values began to assemble into what would ultimately become the 'Liberal Party'. However, the *Standard* also emphasised the Radical leanings of the 'Liberals' it described, itself a reflection of the Whig co-operation with the Radicals during and after the Reform crisis.[11] Because of this variety, for the most part, I explain and mirror the newspapers' use of terminology in each case. Where this becomes ambiguous, I use 'Whig' and 'Radical' severally in reference to the grassroots groups of each party, and 'Liberal' or 'Whig-Radical' to refer to the composite groups of Conservative opposition.

In the first section of this four-part chapter, 'Pickwick turns "Conserwative"' I offer an overview of the form and content of each of the *Pickwick* adaptations and the newspaper contexts in which they appeared. Each of the texts shapes, and is a product of, their local context and their political moment in ways that it is necessary to understand before turning to the question of genre. This section also shows that the timing of these adaptations fundamentally alters our understanding of the received critical narrative of *Pickwick*'s reception and adaptation, as both pre-date most extant theatrical adaptations and re-serialisations of Dickens's text, placing journalistic adaptations, with all their generic messiness, at the beginning of the textual history of the *Pickwick* phenomenon. In section II, 'Remediating an

[11] Professor John Parry, 'Lord John Russell, later Earl Russell', *History of Government* (2016) <https://history.blog.gov.uk/2016/03/16/lord-john-russell-later-earl-russell/> [Accessed: 25/08/2021].

Original' I examine the generic tensions to which the decision to present these adaptations as verbatim *Pickwick* extracts gives rise. Using Macfarlane's *creatio* and *inventio* polarities and other work by theorists of authorship and originality, I show that these adaptations' performance of their 'originality', paradoxically facilitates remediation and repetition. I also suggest that these adaptations act as a way to nuance debates about *Pickwick* and plagiarism, which remains a contradictory 'catch-all' category in Dickens studies that is directly challenged by the unusual relationship these texts forge with Dickens himself.

In section III 'The Case of the *Coventry Standard*' and section IV 'The Case of the *Hampshire Advertiser*', I examine how the generic complexity of these adaptations facilitated their ability to play a successful representational role in Conservative political debate. For the *Coventry Standard*, the focus is on the way the paper builds a relationship with Dickens, capitalising upon his emerging credentials as a popular author in ways that benefit their political purposes, while bizarrely also taking the opportunity to castigate him in the adaptation itself. *The Hampshire Advertiser,* on the other hand, disposes of Dickens fairly quickly, focussing its attention instead on how his characters might be used as vehicles to afford national political prominence to the local Conservative communities it represents.

I. Pickwick Turns 'Conserwative'

While often bringing up the rear in critical discussions—if indeed, they are mentioned at all—journalistic remediations of *Pickwick* were among the front-running products of the *Pickwick* phenomenon, and this is especially true of the two newspaper adaptations published by the *Coventry Standard* and the *Hampshire Advertiser*. Temporally speaking, both pieces pre-date what is widely credited as being the first spinoff serial—Edward Lloyd's the *Post-Humourous Notes of the Pickwickian Club* or the *Penny Pickwick*—which is estimated to have appeared in the April or May of 1837.[12] The *Standard*'s adaptation also preceded the first *Pickwick* stage adaptation, Edward Stirling's *The Pickwick Club: or, The Age We Live In!*, which was first performed in March 1837.[13] Additionally, both adaptations pre-date all other *Pickwick*-inspired texts listed in the 'Spinoff Serials', 'Club Satires' and 'Political Commentaries' categories that Eliot Engel lists in his comprehensive *Pickwick* bibliography, including Quiz's *Droll Discussions and Queer Proceedings of the Magnum Fundum Club* and Lloyd's *Posthumous Papers of the Cadgers' Club*.[14] In this

[12] Paul Schlicke, *The Oxford Companion to Charles Dickens* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011) pp. 457–8; Elliot Engel, *Pickwick Papers: An Annotated Bibliography* (New York; London: Garland Publishing, 1990) pp. 58–63.
[13] Engel, p. 58; H. Philip Bolton, *Dickens Dramatized* (London: Mansell, 1987) p. 75; Adam Abraham, *Plagiarising the Victorian Novel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019) p. 25.
[14] Engel, pp. 64–66.

context, these two newspaper pieces augment our understanding of the timeline of the *Pickwick* Phenomenon, balancing research that has hitherto focussed on lengthy prose sequels and theatrical adaptations, by acknowledging these more ephemeral works as the starting point for discussions of *Pickwick*'s cultural impact. Speculating about who may have written these pieces is difficult: they may have been produced by an editor, or submitted by a reader with an eye for the comic synergies between *Pickwick* and their newspaper's political stance. In either case, authorial identity is largely subsumed by the tone of the paper and the fact that no names are given.

The *Coventry Standard's* adaptation was the first to appear in 1837: published first on the 6th of January, and followed up by a second instalment on the 27th of January, when the venture seems to have concluded (see Accompanying Materials). The first piece describes a detour Pickwick and Tupman make to an unnamed town to visit the local magistrate and observe borough justice in action. In doing so, it lifts or paraphrases sections from the borough trial scene from the ninth number of Dickens's serial, in which Pickwick and his friends are arrested for causing a disturbance in Ipswich and carted off to the offices of Mr Nupkins on a charge of conspiring to duel.[15] In the *Standard*'s version, a new character, 'Sammers' (based on Sam Weller) is introduced, and it is Sammers who is on trial, instead of the Pickwickians, for being found in a wheelbarrow under the influence of liquor. This is an intertextual nod to *Pickwick*'s seventh number, in which Mr Pickwick, having imbibed too much cold punch, falls asleep in a wheelbarrow on Captain Boldwig's land and is carted off to the pound. During the course of his testimony in the *Standard*'s adapted version of the episode, Sammers—framed as a 'Liberal' with a taste for the company of Radicals—repeatedly undermines his own party by accident, as he tells his side of the story before the magistrate. Sammers is ultimately found guilty of the charge and fined. In the next instalment of the *Standard*'s adaptation, the Pickwickians head to the nearby fictional town of Ragford to try to exculpate Sammers, but Pickwick and Tupman quarrel when the latter questions Sammers' innocence. En route, they are bizarrely met by the real Sam Weller, and discouraged from this mission, as Sammers is proven to be a rascal (and a Liberal). In this instalment, Pickwick also declares his weariness of the Reform Act and entreats Sam not to mention it. Becoming increasingly derivative and lacking in direction in its final paragraphs, the narrative fizzles out without any clear resolution.

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[15] *Coventry Standard* (1), p.2; *Coventry Standard* (2), p.2; Charles Dickens, *The Pickwick Papers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) pp. 302–319.

The *Standard* also presented its adaptations as excerpts lifted directly from Dickens's text by using the standard *mis-en-page* of the reprinted extract explored in the previous chapter. The excerpt is introduced with the title 'The Pickwick Papers' which acts as an attribution by emphasising a 'source text', and this is followed by a generic, news-like subtitle: 'Serious consequences of being "under the influence of Liquor"'.[16] This is comparable to the format of many of the examples discussed in Chapter 1, in a similar vein to 'The Particulars of Pie-Making' or 'A Miraculous Circumstance' where headings sound grave and news-like, (the *Standard*'s even tells us the situation is serious) but often prove to be an additional joke when read in the context of the piece that follows. On the surface, then, the *Standard*'s piece is presenting itself as a reprint: some snippeted words of wisdom, taken from a popular work by an author to whom it is worth listening. However, the author of this piece thereafter wastes no time in launching into adapted material, which, as we will see, is specifically designed to juxtapose the conservative values expounded in other parts of the paper by imbuing *Pickwick* with unattractive Liberal characters and their anti-social behaviour.

The *Hampshire Advertiser* is even less subtle in its utilisation of *Pickwick* as a vehicle to convey its Conservative political stance (see Accompanying Materials). Its short piece details a conversation between Sam Weller and his father which takes place at a fictional inn: 'The Flying Dungprongs' that the author locates in Havant, Portsmouth. Closely following the idiosyncratic speech patterns of Dickens's characters, in the scene, Tony Weller encourages Sam to think carefully about politics and to 'be a Conserwative'. Again, the Reform Act features as a problem, this time posited as an obstacle to constitutional values, and Tony also drops the names of politicians local to Hampshire and West Sussex familiarly into the conversation, as though they are well-recognised even by metropolitan coachmen with a passing interest in politics.[17] The *Advertiser* was also more overt in its attempts to disguise its *Pickwick* adaptation as an unedited Dickens excerpt. The piece appeared in the paper's 'Literary Notices' Column, but unlike the *Standard*'s adaptation, it was preceded by a short panegyrical review to further disguise the fact that the text was more a template than a source, and had been boldly reworked:

> Boz maintains his high renown, and has given us in this number an excellent display of the lofty manners and high breeding of a Bath bone-polisher, which he has ably contrasted with the idiomatic wit of that prince of attendants, Sammy Weller, the

[16] *Coventry Standard* (1), p. 2.
[17] *Hampshire Advertiser*, p. 4.

> younger. By some strange mistake, however, the publishers have omitted the article which has most pleased us, and which we subjoin for the benefit of our readers.[18]

By the time we reach the somewhat unconvincing reason for printing the adaptation, in which the *Advertiser* contends that the publishers apparently 'forgot' to include a section of Dickens's original serial—a section that nonetheless the *Advertiser* ostensibly has access to—the reader has been led through a heading ('The Pickwick Papers No.13') and a brief verdict on the serial so far, including information on the most recent number, both of which are consistent with common conventions of excerpting and reviewing. As newspaper reviews often reproduced large portions of the texts under discussion, there were also practical precedents for the inclusion of lengthy extracts that further masked the status of the piece as an adaptation. Guided through the familiar features of a newspaper review, readers would have perhaps more easily reached the conclusion that this was a piece lifted directly from Dickens's work. Indeed, a reader skimming through the review to get to the extract, or reading quickly, might not even have noticed the tenuous claim to the publishers' forgetfulness at all. Conversely, if we interpret the tone of this introduction as comic rather than clumsy, it is possible that the *Advertiser* included its explanatory provenance for the excerpt as a deliberately unconvincing joke, an additional layer of meaning that makes the relationship this piece has with Dickens and *Pickwick* even more complex.

The editorial voice in the introduction is also that of a reader rather than a creator, talking about the section that 'most pleased us', and supposing sympathy for its value judgements by referring to 'our readers'. There are some strategic references too, to scenes in Dickens's *Pickwick*. For example, the reference to the 'Bath bone-polisher' refers to the hoity footman who invites Sam Weller for dinner and who appeared in the March 1837 number of *Pickwick*.[19] Extracts from this scene were widely reprinted by the press during April, the same month that the *Advertiser*'s piece appeared.[20] Again, this serves to bring the adaptation into line with contemporary trends in excerpting and validate the piece as part of the same pattern. Even more significantly, in the column adjacent to the *Pickwick* adaptation, in the *Advertiser*'s 'Selections' column, two real remediated extracts from the *Pickwick Papers* were printed: the cat pie episode, and a tale in which Sam Weller suggests that poverty and oysters always seem to go together. As we saw in Chapter 1, these comic anecdotes were among the most widely

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[18] *Ibid.*
[19] *Pickwick*, pp. 464–474.
[20] See for example, 'Mr Weller and the Bath Footman', *Kentish Gazette*, Tuesday 18 April 1837, p. 1 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000235/18370418/001/0001> [Accessed: 09/05/2020].

remediated during *Pickwick*'s publication. The *Advertiser*, then, was familiar with, and making use of, the standard mode of circulating extracts, and was able to use the conventions of this mode to its own political advantage when attempting to add credence to its Conservative rendering of *Pickwick*.

The *Standard* and the *Advertiser* shared many of the core ideologies of the Conservative movement during the 1830s and this is reflected in how they were utilising *Pickwick* in 1837. Both in the adaptations and in their wider contexts, these papers were concerned with the upholding of the pillars of the British Constitution (understood as the Crown, the Church of England, and Parliament); promoting the work of other (chiefly provincial) Conservative groups via reprinted articles; reporting the movements and successes of key Conservative figureheads, particularly Peel; and emphasising the place of their local Conservative communities in national networks (an aim that underpinned their entire process of content curation). The *Coventry Standard* (known as the *Coventry Mercury* before 1836) is particularly notable in this regard, because its purchase by a group of Conservatives, as part of a change in proprietorship and political vision, took place as *Pickwick* was being published.[21] This meant that its ideologies were fresh and sharp when the *Pickwick* adaptation was printed just six months later. In its inaugural editorial in August 1836, for example, the *Standard* described its new political alignments in explicit terms:

> We therefore erect the STANDARD of loyalty and patriotism in the City of Coventry, resolved most zealously, faithfully, and boldly to defend the British Constitution in Church and State: our Political creed is contained in Magna Charta:—the laws, the liberties, the institutions of our Country; in hallowed union with the Divine sublimities of the Christian religion.[22]

In line with its early declaration of Conservative values, the issue containing the *Pickwick* adaptation the following January was also peppered with references to Conservative Association meetings and the comings and goings of Robert Peel. Its political loyalties are newly configured and evident on every page. As an older publication, the political affiliations of the *Hampshire Advertiser* are a little more difficult to pinpoint. By 1846, the Newspaper Press Directory was describing the paper as 'Tory (Old.)', where the *Standard* was still dubbed specifically 'Conservative' in the same year.[23] However, in 1837, like the *Standard*, the *Advertiser*

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[21] Benjamin Poole, *The History of Coventry* (Coventry: D. Lewin, 1852) pp. 133–4.
[22] 'Coventry Standard', *Coventry Standard*, Friday 05 August 1836, p. 2 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/BL/0000683/18360805/020/0002> [Accessed 17/06/2019].
[23] Charles Mitchell, *The Newspaper Press Directory* (London: Charles Mitchell, 1847) p. 173, p. 238.

was publishing articles in staunch support of the Conservative cause and Peel specifically, as well as aligning itself with similar ideologies to those the *Standard* supported, particularly the protection of Constitution, Church and State in their current forms. These loyalties are evident in the shape taken by the adaptations of *Pickwick* both papers published, but their odd generic hybridity also means they are able, to some extent, to avoid the clatter of vested interest, because the opinions each piece advances are ostensibly mediated through Dickens's fictional characters, and by association, through Dickens himself.

Despite their complicated attempts at disguising their status as adaptations, it is less clear as to whether—in the context of the extensive tradition of recycling extracts *between* newspapers—these pieces were understood by the wider press to be real verbatim excerpts from *Pickwick*. I have not been able to find any instances of the *Standard*'s piece being reprinted elsewhere—which would seem to indicate either that the piece was not deemed interesting enough for republication, or that the press did not fall for the ruse. The *Advertiser*'s piece was reprinted once, in the Conservative *Londonderry Standard* on the 19th of April, making a transnational journey to Ireland, where it was also attributed to Dickens, following the usual conventions of the remediated excerpt, and triumphantly headed 'Mr. Weller, a Conservative'.[24] However, it is difficult to reach any solid conclusions about the role of these adaptations in the wider press from a single reprint, especially as the most widely circulated *Pickwick* extracts appeared in up to fifty newspapers following their publication in Dickens's serial. Nor would extensive reprinting of either of these adaptations automatically suggest that their disguise was intended or taken seriously. However, from a circulation perspective, the jump from Hampshire to Londonderry, with no intervening stopping points, is very unusual, and it seems likely that developments in the British Newspaper Archive's software will, in due course, reveal more examples of newspapers copying this adaptation from one another, in ways that caused it to edge towards the west coast of England before crossing into Ireland. The repetition of these adaptations in the press is of course only one measure of their influence. As I show in the next section, it is in the ways that each exploited the formal features of the excerpt to invent a very specific relationship with Dickens, which in turn enabled them to forge meaningful connections with their wider political communities.

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[24] 'Mr. Weller, a Conservative', *Londonderry Standard*, Wednesday 19 April 1837, p. 4 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0001318/18370419/030/0004> [Accessed: 28/06/2019]. The *Londonderry Standard* makes its Conservative stance clear in its inaugural editorial. See 'The Standard', *Londonderry Standard*, Wednesday 30 November 1836, p. 2 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/BL/0001318/18361130/006/0002> [Accessed: 07/05/2020].

II. Remediating an Original

The careful editorial structuring I outlined in the section above meant that the *Pickwick* adaptations in the *Coventry Standard* and the *Hampshire Advertiser* managed to claim to be writing attributable to an individual author (Dickens) while they were in reality remediated texts pieced together from various sources. What we can witness in these adaptations, therefore, is a tension between the two opposite narratives of 'literary creation' that Robert Macfarlane has termed *creatio* and *inventio*. For Macfarlane, while '[*c*]*reatio* exalts the individual author to the highest level, *inventio* abstracts the author into language, and erodes his or her powers of agency and intention'.[25] For Macfarlane, literary movements can be broadly positioned as favouring *creatio* or *inventio* depending on the extent to which they value authorial genius or indebtedness.[26] However, these *Pickwick* adaptations do not so much slot into this discourse as unsettle it, because they bring—or seem to bring—the extreme characteristics of the opposing narratives of *creatio* and *inventio* into simultaneous use. The authors of these pieces frame their texts as an 'original' belonging to Dickens, yet the works they actually produce are palimpsests of various sources. They abstract the author into language and yet continue to assert his agency; stage the text as a reprinted item in the bricolage of the newspaper, yet undertake significant textual interventions that often leave the substance and sense of Dickens's text far behind.

Creatio and *inventio* also map respectively onto discussions of originality and resemblance (whereby *inventio* or resemblance at its most extreme is plagiarism), and this is particularly crucial to our understanding of the legitimacy of the cultural products of the *Pickwick* phenomenon, including adaptations. As Macfarlane explains: 'literary resemblance is held to be suggestive of unoriginality, and unoriginality reveals in the writer both an intellectual servility and an imaginative infertility', pointing out that the 'inescapably dialogic nature of language use' nonetheless precludes the idea of a truly 'original' work (or *creatio par excellence*).[27] In the case of these adaptations, the writers attempted to disguise their supposedly 'unoriginal thought' (the adaptation) as 'original thought' (a verbatim reprint of Dickens's work), obscuring the dialogic nature of language in a way that is nonetheless proof of the existence of such a dialogue. Put another way, this disguising of adaptation as reprint, or 'unoriginal thought' as 'original' thought, is in itself a creative act that ultimately served the political purposes of these publications by playing on Dickens's status as sole creator (and his emerging

[25] Macfarlane, p. 6.
[26] *Ibid.*
[27] *Ibid.*, p. 8.

authorial reputation) to add credibility to their political points. If the authorial voice extolling the merits of the Conservatives in Portsmouth is a voice which belongs to the community of the newspaper, that is one thing, but if it is the voice of an author with no immediate local interest, whose words are merely copied, but nonetheless support the ideology of the copyist, their credence is arguably greater.

In this respect, it might reasonably be assumed that *creatio* is a narrative that these *Pickwick* adaptations, which derive so much meaning from their relationship to a predecessor, might reject. In reality, it is precisely *creatio*'s reliance on a claim to authorial uniqueness (that tends to dissolve when examined closely) that enables these remediators to wield what Paul Saint-Amour has termed the 'originality effect' to their advantage:

> The originality effect, a hyperamnesia that fetishizes an elite pantheon of "originals," can only occur alongside an amnesia about the precursors and contemporaries of those same originals: the great individuals loom largely because others are blotted out, forgotten. Yes, originality happens as an effect, but, viewed up close, it dissolves into its constituent pixels; like the televisual image, it is a composite to which we habitually impute a naive and spontaneous holism.[28]

To understand Dickens's *Pickwick* as 'original' would therefore necessitate a kind of strategic forgetfulness of the predecessors to whom he was indebted – it is perhaps from an impulse to avoid this amnesia, that the influence of Henry Fielding, Tobias Smolett, Theodore Hook and a host of others upon *Pickwick*'s composition has been well documented.[29] For Saint-Amour, because the act of searching for a discrete 'original' only results in pixilation, 'originality' is better viewed as a process (of erasure) than as a product. Some of this theory is borne out when applied to these adaptations, due to their reliance on prior texts in their creation of meaning, and yet there is a kind of 'amnesia' at work too, although here it is tactical, rather than naïve.

The *Hampshire Advertiser*'s piece especially is marked by several layers of strategic forgetfulness in a way that seeks to place the newspaper in a privileged position in relation to Dickens. Its status as an adaptation disguised as an excerpt erases the scaffolding of the process of remediation, but the text itself is also presented as a 'forgotten' scene, which effects a similar

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[28] Paul Saint-Amour, *The Copyrights: Intellectual Property and the Literary Imagination* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011) p. 10.
[29] See for example the famous Athenaeum review (discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, below): 'Unsigned review of Pickwick Papers Nos. I – IX, the Athenaeum'; *Charles Dickens: The Critical Heritage*, ed by Philip Collins (London: Routledge, 1996) n.p.

erasure of the *Advertiser*'s textual intervention while also aggrandising the paper's status, by claiming it has privileged access to lost Dickens material. Each of these adaptations deftly engages with 'originality' as a process to be manipulated by a strategic amnesia, but nonetheless presents it to its readers as a product of the intellect of the individual author. Likewise, each adaptation credits *Pickwick* as a holism of which its adaptation is a constituent part rather than a paratext, burying the evidence of intervention and adaptation.

While it is tempting to frame these adaptations as a type of plagiarism, this would be to miss their complexity and risk shutting down and de-historicising their affect. Plagiarism is often used as a catch-all term to accommodate the messy heterogeneity of all the textual products of the *Pickwick* phenomenon that Dickens did not explicitly endorse. This has led some Dickens scholars to attempt to construct an uncomplicated 'either-or' distinction between the adaptation and the plagiarism as two discrete categories or products. For example, Lloyd's *Penny Pickwick* is among several *Pickwick*-themed texts filed twice in the recent *Oxford Companion to Charles Dickens*: once in the section 'Adaptations' and once under the more accusatory heading 'Plagiarisms of Dickens'.[30] However, because Dickens's role in these adaptations and other products of the *Pickwick* phenomenon functions on multiple levels, his endorsement or otherwise of a piece is rarely the clearest measure of plagiarism. This, Adam Abraham has readily acknowledged, using Peter Shaw's definition of a plagiarism as an 'extensive, unacknowledged use of a contemporary's work – with the intent to deceive', in order to caution us that it 'is not clear the degree to which deception was intended in works that are Pickwick-branded'.[31]

Shaw's definition of plagiarism neatly illustrates that the newspaper adaptations under discussion here are no more 'plagiarisms' than they are 'originals'; this is because he understands plagiarism to be a process definable by the intent to deceive, rather than a product. What we see in these adaptations, is the 'plagiarism effect' wielding the 'originality effect' so that it might work in reverse, because the deception of these pieces lies not in the newspaper trying to pass off *Pickwick* as their own, but in trying to pass off an adapted version of *Pickwick*, as Dickens's *Pickwick*. If we were to categorise these adaptations according to their relationship with Dickens, 'literary forgery', with its emphasis on passing off a counterfeit work as belonging to an author, might be a more accurate term.[32] More important than

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[30] *Oxford Companion*, pp. 4–5, pp. 457–460.
[31] Peter Shaw, 'Plagiary', *The American Scholar*, 51.3 (1982) pp. 325–337 (p. 328); Adam Abraham, 'Plagiarising *Pickwick*: Imitations of Immortality', *Dickens Quarterly*, 32.1 (2015) pp. 5–18 (p. 6).
[32] Terry Eagleton, 'Faking it: the art of literary forgery', *The Guardian* (2002) <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2002/jun/06/londonreviewofbooks> [Accessed: 25/08/2021].

categorisation here, is the way that each of the opposite narratives of *creatio* and *inventio* facilitates the perpetuation of the other, because the emphasis that each of these adaptations places on authorship and originality paradoxically facilitates remediation and repetition. These strategies also reveal a bizarre thread of influence whereby the morally dubious use of Dickens's authorial brand was marshalled in support of a political narrative that extolled Conservativism and respect for British constitutional values as a form of moral uprightness. What the carefully curated shape of these texts contributed to the Conservative self-fashioning of the communities of each of these papers as a result, are questions I address in the following sections.

III. The Case of the *Coventry Standard*

In order to fully understand the political effect of these adaptations, it is necessary to examine the relationship between their content and that of Dickens's serial: to what extent were Dickens's words and tropes used, and how was their use curated so as to shape their political impact? To generate its desired effect, the *Coventry Standard*'s adaptation, published in two instalments in January 1837, used a combination of paraphrased material, allusion to scenes from Dickens's serial, quotation from other texts, thinly veiled local place names, Conservative ideology and fresh dialogue and characters. This composite strategy was remarkably complex when compared to the excerpts discussed in the previous chapter. As we have seen, the piece opens with Pickwick's decision to go with Tupman to visit the local magistrate and observe borough justice in action, and scenes ensue which owe a great deal to the Nupkins trial in the ninth number of Dickens's *Pickwick*. The first thing to note about the *Standard*'s version, is that there are several changes to the names of the characters: Nupkins becomes 'Rapkins', Grummer becomes a constable simply known as 'No.6' (although his defining rhetorical quirk—referring to the magistrate as 'your Wash-up'—is retained, which makes him easily recognisable). The accused, Sammers, a 'vagabond' caught under the influence of liquor, is introduced as 'an elderly man, dressed in a suit of rusty black'. Perhaps unsurprisingly, large chunks of this character's testimony bear a strong resemblance to Sam Weller's in Dickens's version, even though his appearance more closely anticipates the antiquated rustiness of Mr Tulkinghorn's attire in *Bleak House*. At the end of the piece, Sammers is charged twenty shillings and taken away to be locked up until he can find security. The most intriguing of all these character shifts is Mr Jinks—the magistrate's long-suffering clerk—who in this version becomes the much haughtier and more outspoken, 'Mr Dickums'.[33]

[33] *Coventry Standard* (1), p .2.

While resoundingly Pickwickian, then, the *Standard*'s new plot—with Pickwick and Tupman observing the workings of borough justice, rather than being caught up in it themselves—is also reminiscent of *Sketches by Boz*, since in this version, the Pickwickians are not wrongly accused innocents, comically dragged off to the magistrate, but flaneurs witnessing events from the sidelines. Moving the Pickwickians to the position of marginalised observers, rather than maintaining them at the heart of the action, allows the author of the *Standard*'s piece more room for creative experimentation, which chiefly manifests itself in the introduction of Sammers' character, who is revealed to be the piece's profligate Liberal and becomes a political focal point as a result. However, the attempt the author of this piece makes to balance recognisably Pickwickian elements with the introduction of political commentary relevant to the *Standard's* readers results in an odd tension evident in the piece's opening:

> After breakfast, the illustrious Pickwick and his friend Tupman resolved to suspend their search for a day or two, that they might recover from their physical fatigue. But his philosophic mind being active as ever, he proposed to his disciple that they should occupy themselves in observing how justice was administered in the modern Borough where they then found themselves.[34]

Because this opening is torn between providing its readers with context and maintaining the illusion that it is an extract lifted verbatim from a larger whole, it reads as both grammatically clumsy and stylistically contradictory. At a first glance, this opening appears to be little more than a bad forgery, but beyond the question of categorisation it also evinces precisely the kind of tug of war between *creatio* and *inventio* discussed in the previous section. We are introduced to 'the illustrious Pickwick and his friend Tupman' almost as if for the first time, yet in an unresolved anaphoric reference, we are also told they are suspending a search. What the search entails is never revealed, although it is possible that the author had a scene from the fourth number in mind, during which Pickwick and Wardle chase pell-mell after the 'spinster aunt' when they find she has eloped with Jingle.[35] This contradiction acts as an index to the piece's creativity, because it shows its author to be balancing the formal requirements of the synecdochic excerpt and the standalone adaptation to lend credence to the political commentary that comes later in the piece. Also key to this opening is its strategic emphasis of topicality, which is supported by its title (referring to a work currently being serialised) and its news-like subtitle ('Serious Consequences of Being Under the Influence of Liquor') which also signifies the immediate relevance of the adaptation. The piece's setting is immediately

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[34] *Ibid.*
[35] *Pickwick*, pp. 99–107.

characterised as a 'modern borough', zeroing in on its status as an electoral constituency with the adjective 'modern' strongly implying that this is a scene set after the 1832 Reform Act has been passed; this fact is confirmed in the second instalment of the adaptation, where Reform is explicitly discussed.

The political focus continues to develop throughout the piece, with the *Standard* using anti-Liberal and anti-Reform commentary to demonstrate its political position, and as a favourable contrast to the Conservative ideology discussed in other parts of the paper. A particularly blatant example occurs when Sammers attempts to vindicate himself from the charge of intoxication:

> Sir, it is entirely a false fabrication of that man (I wish I knew his name) to say I was tossicated. I was overcome by my feelings it is true ; I had been at the Pig and Whistle : I went there to attend not a Free-and-easy meeting, but a meeting of Liberals, which is much the same thing. I called for a pot of porter, just to prop me up a little after the fatigue of ascending the hill, when what should a fellow do who sat on my right but puff off all the *froth* smack into the face of an honourable friend who was on my sinny-stir side. This roused my irritation so much that I called him a *Scoundrel*—the President interfered and said I must not be so *liberal* in my expressions. This completely overcame me and I retired and sat down on the barrow to recover the nequanimity and composity of my helevated sitivation as a Professor of Liberality.[36]

The attack on Liberalism here is somewhat haphazard, but nonetheless serves its political purpose, resounding like hammer blows throughout the passage. The author's wordplay repeatedly juxtaposes moral values and moral degeneracy: an excess of Liberal sentimental feeling is aligned with intoxication, a 'meeting of Liberals' is apparently synonymous with a dissolute 'free-and-easy'. 'Froth' is italicised, so as to draw a parallel between froth-blowing and the insubstantial nature of Sammers' political rhetoric.[37] Crucially, in the 1830s, 'froth' also played a specifically political role in some anti-Whig and anti-Radical cartoons. For example, as Christina Parolin has noted in *Radical Spaces*, in John Doyle's 1831 print 'John Gilpin!!!', which depicts William IV's lack of power during the Reform Act debates, the King has two beer bottles on his waist, one of which is labelled 'Birmingham Froth' in reference to Thomas

[36] *Coventry Standard* (1), p. 2.
[37] 'froth, *n.*', *OED* <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/74981> [Accessed: 24/02/2019].

Atwood's Radical Birmingham Political Union.[38] Similarly, Robert Seymour's 1832 print 'Penny Patent Knowledge Mill'—which satirises the proceedings of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge—depicts a machine in which 'froth' is imputed by figures that Brian Maidment has identified as Edward Maltby, the Bishop of Chichester, and Lord John Russell, a leading supporter of the Reform Act.[39] Maltby and Russell can be seen besprinkling the 'froth' with 'Whig Liberalism' and 'Whig Theology' and a caption has Russell exclaim: 'a small quantity of this will do, and don't you put in too much of that'. The 'froth' is passed through the machine which processes it into pages of 'twaddle', and this in turn is used to attempt to monopolise the market of cheap unstamped publications.[40] The use of terminology in this caricature is particularly complex, but key is the fact that Russell tries to limit the 'Whig-Liberal' garnish colouring the cheap print, and that his penny publication competes with the 'unstamped' market. These factors combine to tacitly align the caricature with both the spread of unstamped radical papers which proliferated until checked by the 1836 Stamp Act, and the increased radicalisation of the Whig Party during the years surrounding the Reform Act.[41] The bottom line here is that 'froth' would not have been a simple signifier for empty rhetoric in the *Pickwick* adaptation, but a term with a series of rich, polemical layers. It has a distinctly anti-Liberal tenure rooted in high-profile visual culture, and it had come to be associated with key decisions about the franchise and Reform. Finally, it was associated with a particular brand of cheap, unstamped publication ostensibly quite unlike the middle-class, Conservative *Coventry Standard*.

The author of the adaptation then includes another clanging pun, dubbing Sammers' insult of 'scoundrel' a 'liberal' expression, and again aligning rudeness and rowdiness with Liberalism. Sammers' somewhat overbaked soliloquy then rounds up with another technique designed to undermine his authority: an exaggerated rendering of the cockney accent, in which the equanimity, composure and elevated situation of the Liberal becomes the 'nequanimity', 'composity' and 'helevated sitivation' of the 'Professor of Liberality'. The pun on 'professor' once again reduces Sammers' claims to frothy rhetoric rather than deeds, and that rhetoric, as we are led to believe, by the small sample we hear from Sammers himself, is ill-informed, intoxicated and riddled with malapropisms. Whether we view this as an effective 'forgery' or

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[38] Christina Parolin, *Radical Spaces: Venues of Popular Politics in London* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 2010) p. 233; John Doyle, 'John Gilpin!!!', *National Portrait Gallery* (1831) <https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait/mw206646/John-Gilpin> [Accessed: 25/08/2021].
[39] Brian Maidment, *Robert Seymour and Nineteenth-Century Print Culture* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2021) n.p.
[40] Robert Seymour, 'Patent Penny Knowledge Mill', *Science Museum Group* (1832) <https://collection.sciencemuseumgroup.org.uk/objects/co64778/etching-patent-penny-knowledge-mill-print> [Accessed: 25/08/2021].
[41] Parry, n.p.

not depends on whether the linguistic excess in this speech is understood as clumsy hyperbole or a careful imitation of Dickens's own delight in idiosyncratic character tics. What is clear is that Sammers' speech is a complete inversion of Sam Weller's idiolect in Dickens's *Pickwick*: instead of a humorous marker of quick wit and worldliness it instead becomes a discordant aural affirmation of Sammers' lack of education and political dishonesty. Some parallels to Dickens's *Pickwick* nonetheless remain: for example, the magistrate—here re-named 'Rapkins'—is incompetent, and the piece retains Dickens's attack on the workings of the borough; however, these Dickensian elements take on a new and partisan specificity to serve a distinctly anti-Liberal cause. This scene might be crudely-managed and none-too-subtle, and yet the piece's balancing of the stylistic requirements of the verbatim reprint, with the creative licence of the adaptation means it cleverly capitalises upon the popularity of Dickens's *Pickwick*. *Pickwick* in turn proves to be particularly malleable, providing detailed 'writing prompts' in the form of characters, speech patterns and scenes that are easily shaped for the *Standard* to articulate its Conservative partisanship.

And yet the relationship this piece has with Dickens himself is still oddly fraught. Let us return for a moment to the *Standard*'s version of Mr Jinks, 'Mr. Dickums', whose character seems to exist as a means of demonstrating the sly self-consciousness of the piece as an adaptation but without wholly dispelling the illusion of Dickens's authorship. To understand the alterations that have taken place here, it is helpful to place Dickens's *Pickwick* alongside the *Standard*'s adaptation. In both cases, the quotations start as the magistrate's respective examinations of Sam and Sammers begin:

Coventry Standard	**Dickens's *Pickwick Papers***
"What's yore name, fellor?" "Sammers," replied the person at the bar. "Very well known at Ragford, I 'spose," said Mr. R., sinking again into his chair of state. This was a good joke to Messrs. 6 and 7, who went into fits of laughter for five minutes. "Put down his name, Mr. Dickums," said the Magistrate to his Clerk. "'Two M's, Master Dickey, that's a dirty dear," said Sammers. Here No.7 laughed again, whereupon Mr. D. threatened to suspend him. It's a dangerous thing laughing at the wrong man in these cases Mr. Rapkins—"May I presume again Mr. Dickums?" Clerk—"Yes you may resume the examination, but I will not allow him to laugh at me." "Where do you live now?" said the Magistrate. "Ware-hever I can," replied Sammers.	'What's your name, fellow?' thundered Mr. Nupkins. 'Veller,' replied Sam. 'A very good name for the Newgate Calendar,' said Mr. Nupkins. This was a joke; so Jinks, Grummer, Dubbley, all the specials, and Muzzle, went into fits of laughter of five minutes' duration. 'Put down his name, Mr. Jinks,' said the magistrate. 'Two L's, old feller,' said Sam. Here an unfortunate special laughed again, whereupon the magistrate threatened to commit him instantly. It is a dangerous thing to laugh at the wrong man, in these cases. 'Where do you live?' said the magistrate. 'Vere ever I can,' replied Sam.

The first point to note here is that the *Standard* replaces Dickens's metropolitan joke about the Newgate Calendar—a collation of sensational accounts of crimes and executions connected with Newgate Prison—with a reference to 'Ragford', which persists as a place name, as we will see, in the second part of this adaptation. 'Ragford' is arguably a pun on 'Radford', a ward in north-west Coventry which remained part of the electoral constituency of the City of Coventry until it was incorporated into the county of Warwickshire in 1842.[42] The effect of this name swap is a veiled localisation of Dickens's narrative, increasing the scene's relevance to its local readers but also placing its political narratives in a specifically provincial context. Additionally, this scene adds yet another layer to the *Standard*'s balancing of the narratives of *creatio* and *inventio*. Not only is the adaptation presented as an original written by Dickens to

[42] Margaret Escott, 'Coventry', *History of Parliament Online* <https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1820-1832/constituencies/coventry> [Accessed: 25/08/2021].

erase evidence of remediation, but—in a way that strangely risks undermining that erasure—a version of the very same Dickens appears *in* the adaptation so that the *Standard* can satirise the author too. This seems a peculiar choice given the obvious benefits of maintaining Dickens's credentials intact, particularly given that it is from his pen that the convenient critique of Liberalism personified in Sammers is supposed to have originated. Be that as it may, for the Dickens scholar, this decision acts as further insight into the motivations behind this piece. Mr Dickums takes on a haughtiness in this adaptation that is never possessed by the more deferential Mr Jinks: it is Mr Dickums, rather than the magistrate, who threatens action against the unfortunate special constable when he laughs in the wrong place, and his comment about not wishing to be laughed at lends a very different inflection to the narrator's line common to both versions: that it is 'a dangerous thing to laugh at the wrong man'. For the *Standard*, the result is a bitter tone that seems to suggest that Dickens makes jokes about others but will not permit them to be made about himself. The other effect of renaming Mr Jinks 'Mr Dickums' is that it generates a humorous sense of the *Standard*'s complete awareness of the potential impact of trading on Dickens's popularity. In the narrative itself, 'presume' is simply a malapropism for 'resume', and yet one cannot help but notice that the author's cheeky: 'May I presume again Mr Dickums?' is also playing with ideas of ownership and authorial identity, generating an imagined dialogue with the author that affects to ask permission to adapt, whilst using the formal features of the remediated extract to deny that either dialogue or adaptation has taken place at all.

Despite there being no suggestion in the first instalment that this adaptation is part of a sequence, the *Standard* did of course 'presume again', in its 27th of January sequel entitled 'Pickwick Papers *(Continued.)*'. Here, the narrative from the 6th of January continues along merrily, as if extracted from the next section of Dickens's own work.[43] While still containing some of the none-too-subtle political references that characterised the first piece, the continuation is much less adventurous. As we have seen, in the piece, Pickwick feels that Sammers is unjustly accused, and travels with the more dubious Tupman and the real Sam Weller to the nearby borough of Ragford—which is now revealed as the place where Sammers is living—to investigate the case further. Sam then fills them in on Sammers' story and corroborates the accusations of the special constable from the previous instalment, arguing that his protest against his state of drunkenness was little more than 'wot the perlite vorld calls *frothy* declymation'. As the return of the italicised reference to 'froth' intimates, this second instalment also contains many of the same anti-Liberal lines as its predecessor. For example,

[43] *Coventry Standard* (2), p. 2.

Sam describes the local anger at Sammers' choice of profession: 'latterly', he states, 'he's turned Lamp-lighter—now that's vot makes people so angry like, 'cos, say they, it's such an awful example to be set by a man who freekently places himself in a elewated sitivation, an whose petickler duty it is to enlighten the public'.[44] Read literally, the main problem here is of course the fatal combination of drunkenness and lamp-lighting, but the mirroring in language choices between this passage which states that Sammers is 'elewated' and that it is his duty to 'enlighten', also chimes with the description of his 'nequanimity', 'composity' and 'helevated sitivation' from the previous number. Those who had not encountered the previous instalment might have missed the political satire that forms one aspect of this pun. Nonetheless, it is clearly a continuation in the same vein of satire, an argument that is also supported by Sam's intriguing description of Ragford:

> "Wery ancient Burrow, this Ragford, Sir, used to send one member to Parl'ment before that 'ere Reform Bill."
>
> "Silence, Sam, about your Reform Bill," said Mr. Pickwick, "those that made it are tired of it, and want another already."[45]

Here, Ragford becomes the abode of degenerate Liberals like Sammers, whimsical purveyors of a Reform Bill with which they are not satisfied. Coupled with the fact that, as we have seen, Ragford as a setting only arises from the erasure of Dickens's metropolitan reference, this demonstrates that the *Standard* aims at both a political and topographical relevance in which the impact of national legislation is re-cast through the lens of localities more likely to chime with the paper's readership. And yet this decision, analysed closely, is not politically straightforward either, because the real ward of Radford, like the rest of Coventry, had remained largely unaltered by the 1832 Reform Act. Coventry continued to send two members to Parliament from 1832 until 1885, when its representation was reduced to one.[46] Nonetheless, notably, from 1835 until 1847, Coventry was represented by the Whig Edward Ellice and the Radical William Williams.[47] For this reason, this narrative about the fictional Ragford's disenfranchisement arguably functions less as a lamentation about the fate of Coventry following the Reform Act, than a critique of the impact of representation and

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[44] *Ibid.*
[45] *Ibid.*
[46] Escott, 'Coventry', *History of Parliament Online*.
[47] Margaret Escott, 'ELLICE, Edward (1783-1863)', *History of Parliament Online* <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1820-1832/member/ellice-edward-1783-1863> [Accessed: 25/08/2021].

governance by Reform-Act supporting (and increasingly Radical) Whigs, that was emblematised by Ellice and Williams' political power in Coventry.

Yet even this is not the final political stab delivered by the piece. Despite Sam confirming Sammers' reputation as a drunk (and a Liberal) the Pickwickians continue to walk to Ragford while Sam amuses them with another anecdote about an un-named 'yung-un' 'who first tried chimbley sweeping but didn't find it comfortable, so's since gone into the scavenger compartment and manages all the dirty vork very dextrously'. Like Sammers' vocation as a 'lamplighter', this literal 'dirty work' then takes on a political inflection as Sam continues his description and the instalment draws to a close:

> he's a great cow'rd—that's not like me—you know how despertley I fought ven they carried you two off in the sedan afore Justice Nupkins, at Hipswich. Howsever this chap can talk very big—vots he do tother night but call a hole and corner meetin' at the Hanker—takes the chair 'cos nobody else vou'd—carries a write o'censure on a Gen'l'min vot vouldn't do as he'd bid him—names a deppertation to persent it—gits to the wery door at the head on'em—and there his courage fail'd.

At this point, the author begins to throw in scenes from Dickens's *Pickwick*, including a sentence referring to Mr Pickwick's intoxication in the wheelbarrow as well as the Pickwickians being carted off to Nupkins in the sedan chair, despite the obvious damage that such references might do to the illusion of authorship because of their proximity to the *Standard*'s versions of the same scenes.[48] Conversely, these parallels also show that the author of the adaptation had a detailed knowledge of the content of Dickens's serial which they then used to formulate their own piece. This knowledge of trends in popular literature also extended further than *Pickwick* itself, as to illustrate the 'yung-un's' cowardice, the piece closes with Sam singing one of the verses of the racist song 'Jump Jim Crowe', uniting two of the most popular texts of the period in a new piece. Ironically, a rendition of the song also formed the conclusion for one of the theatrical adaptations which appeared in April 1837: 'The Peregrinations of Pickwick; or Boz-i-an-a'.[49] This suggests that adaptations of *Pickwick* were as much about uniting it with other popular texts as reformulating it.

The specifics of the political references in this final passage are very obscure but a potential clue can be found in the reference Sam makes to the 'Hanker', which is arguably a cockney

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[48] *Pickwick*, p. 298.
[49] See 'Adelphi Theatre', *Morning Chronicle*, Tuesday 04 April 1837, p. 2 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000082/18370404/007/0002> [Accessed 09/05/2020].

rendering of 'Crown and Anchor' a famous tavern and Radical meeting place in London. I have been unable to find any evidence in the press which chimes with details of a real gathering at the Crown and Anchor, but this reference seems to be a final attempt to render the internal squabbling—and cowardice—of Radical groups in terms that would have been explicit for a contemporary audience.[50] By bringing in a metropolitan reference, this section of the adaptation also serves to reposition the Pickwickian province: the Pickwickians visit Radford to observe borough justice, but by the time we reach the end of the adaptation, the province has been recast as a standpoint from which to look back at the metropole, and to critique the increasingly radical nature of the Whigs, as they began to make the transition to the composite party that this adaptation is already referring to as 'Liberal'.

This inversion of the Pickwickian perspective not only renders national political concerns about enfranchisement and radicalisation through a specifically local lens, but also repositions the non-metropolitan local community that the paper ostensibly represents as carrying the interpretative agency. This strategy is maintained through the *Standard*'s broader political agenda, in which the two *Pickwick* adaptations form only a part of a much larger network of strategically-marshalled political content. Unlike the adaptation's distinctly anti-Liberal tone, the rest of the paper offsets the negative focus on rival parties with a more serious representation of the merits of Conservatism. In both the issues in question, on the same page as the *Pickwick* piracies, the *Standard* includes a lengthy section entitled 'Conservative Record', offering articles aimed at updating its readers about the latest developments in the Conservative cause. Dealing with dinners, manifestations, publications and news from Conservative Associations and Co-operatives, article after article is spun out in the interests of promoting the Conservative cause, referencing local and regional Conservative communities as diverse as Wakefield, Nottinghamshire and Worcester. Across these two issues, there is a single reference to the metropolitan borough Marylebone, but the paper's broad focus is on Conservative groups outside London, especially those in the Midlands and the North. There is also considerable focus on Conservative communities in Scotland (where Robert Peel was touring at that point) and Ireland.[51] For the *Standard*, these are not simply observable communities to be taken in by the gaze of the metropolitan gentleman, but groups with a measurable political agency. For example, in the Conservative Record for the 27th January, which appears on the same page as the *Pickwick* adaptation, tremendous emphasis is placed upon the fact that the *Standard* has insufficient space to detail all the Conservative

[50] Parolin, *Radical Spaces*. See especially pp.105-146.
[51] 'Conservative Record', *Coventry Standard* (1), p. 2.; 'Conservative Record', *Coventry Standard* (2), p. 2.

manifestations taking place across the country. Prefacing a short report of a dinner in Kidderminster, the paper states that: '[a]mple reports of Conservative manifestations crowd upon us at such a rapid rate, that we find it uttterly [sic] impossible to give insertion to anything like the quantity that our kind friends supply us with, or that our own inclinations would prompt us to publish, could we at all find room'.

The *Standard*'s gossip column or 'notabilia' section, too, dedicates a large proportion of its space to Conservative news, and dominating this column in both issues are articles on the movements of Robert Peel. In the 6th of January issue, for example, there is a report of a petition to deliver an address to Peel during his forthcoming visit to Edinburgh; another article claims a similar petition for his Glasgow visit has already received many hundreds of signatures, and that Peel is popular amongst all classes in Glasgow.[52] Yet another article—this time in the issue of the *Standard* in which the second *Pickwick* instalment appears on the 27th of January—relates the success of the Edinburgh visit and Peel's donation of two hundred guineas to an Edinburgh town.[53] The *Standard* also dedicates space to the Church Rates debate, adopting a position generally consistent with the avowed stance of the Conservatives on the issue, as outlined in a speech given by Peel in March 1837.[54] Even in 'Poets' Corner', readers are not free from the relentless Conservative editorialising. In the 27th of January issue, the poem of choice, lifted from the *Northampton Herald* and entitled 'A Sportsman's Day', appears at a first glance to be a fairly innocuous poem about a bored, frustrated sportsman who is unable to go out hunting because of the poor weather, but includes a line in which dinner guests 'talk of speeches made by P.' To be certain its meaning is understood, this reference is footnoted to confirm that the poet means Peel's recent speech in Glasgow.[55] The poem also contains a stab at the Whigs for good measure, when the bored sportsman wishes to fall into oblivion and sleep away the inclement weather:

> Then on the sofa let me doze,
> With Bulwer's novels at my nose,
> Or *Whig* addresses used to steep
> The senses in oblivious sleep.[56]

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[52] 'Notabilia', *Coventry Standard* (1), p. 2.
[53] *Ibid.*
[54] 'Mr Sibree and the Church Rates' and 'Dissenters and Church Rates', *Coventry Standard* (2), p. 2. For a transcription of Peel's comments on Church Rates when the Whig government proposed for the settlement of the question in 1837, see *The Opinions of the Right Hon. Sir Robert Peel, Expressed in Parliament and in Public* (London: Arthur Hall, Virtue & Co., 1850) pp. 111–12.
[55] 'A Sportsman's Day', *Coventry Standard* (2), p. 2.
[56] *Ibid.*

Here, the reference to Whig author Edward Bulwer-Lytton compounds the suggestion that Whigism has a somniferous influence. Additionally, Edward's brother, Henry Bulwer, served as the Whig candidate for Coventry between 1830 and 1834, so this line would have resonated particularly with Coventry Conservatives. As we saw in Chapter 1, when tracing reprinted extracts, it is not unusual to find that remediated and original material has been placed strategically, for reasons as diverse as filling up columns, maintaining a recognisable daily or weekly format, or cementing the publication's political stance. However, the *Standard*'s case demands particular attention because of the number of communities and audiences it involves in its presentation of its very clearly articulated political identity.

The *Pickwick* adaptation therefore finds itself at the very heart of just the kind of Conservative network that Matthew Cragoe describes, as part of a 'standardized rhetoric' but also maintains the capacity to shape it. The *Standard* uses its adaptations to show that it has a clear comprehension of its position in a national network of Conservatives, but also to stake a claim to local currency by maintaining a sense of place. This balance is achieved through addressing borough-level corruption through the representation of Rapkins's mode of administering justice; through localising the unrest generated by troublemaking, Liberal supporters like Sammers; and by replacing Dickens's metropolitan reference to Newgate with an entirely new, fictional locality 'Ragford', loosely based on a town where the *Standard* would have circulated. Rather than just another Pickwickian *terra incognita*, Coventry becomes the new viewing platform from which to observe the dissolute character of Liberal communities, which can then be contrasted with the prosperity of Conservative communities in other parts of the paper. Supplemented by original and remediated articles about local and regional Conservative associations and events and a clear awareness of the movements of the Conservative's party's metropolitan representatives, as well as the impact wrought by legislation issuing from the metropole upon regional and local communities, the *Standard*'s mediation between local concerns and a national, shared, Conservative political agenda, begins to come into focus.

In this respect, the *Standard*'s engagement with a 'politics of the local' should not be conflated with the idea of 'local interest'—which is often understood as the antithesis to serious reporting of national significance and continues to be used as a catch-all term to describe provincial newspaper content—because the paper so evidently connects itself to national networks of Conservatism. Indeed, the *Standard* makes a forceful attempt to differentiate itself from the 'local interest' label. In the 27th of January issue, the *Standard* published a piece entitled 'Middlesex Reform Dinner', which it sarcastically describes as a 'great Whig-Radical display'—again, emphasising the radical leanings of the Whig Party—contrasting its own carefully constructed Conservative networks with a more deprecating understanding of 'local'

politics. The author notes that: 'scarcely ever, indeed, has there been a more wretched failure in the case of a festival, got up with no other purpose than to prove the local ascendancy of a particular set of principles'.[57] Given the reams of articles in the *Standard* itself that are dedicated to the praise of Conservative versions of just such local and regional events, this reporting may seem ragingly hypocritical. However, the *Standard* aims at a subtle difference here. For the *Standard*, the 'local ascendancy of a particular set of principles' is only effective insofar as local and regional efforts at purveying those principles come together as part of a wider network of political solidarity, a network that the *Standard* takes pains to showcase and reinforce in its columns. On the other hand, because the Reform Dinner gathering is described as being genuinely only a local event, the *Standard* views it as both insular and delusional: the politics it celebrates cannot make the same claims to a national network and is therefore less successful.

With this in mind, the *Standard* takes up an influential position: it is a central medium in which local and regional political successes are collected, strategically displaying both their numerousness and the strength of national networks of Conservative solidarity. Its role is that of both a mediator (as it discusses in its pages the impact of national legislation arising from the metropole on local, non-metropolitan communities) and a synecdoche (as it represents these local communities individually and brings them together to construct broader national networks underpinned by a shared politics). In the context of all this serious reporting and calculated political identity-shaping, the ludicrousness of the frothy Liberals introduced in the *Pickwick* adaptation becomes even more pronounced. They are outnumbered in the adaptation itself on a fictional level, reduced to an alcohol swilling bunch in a small-town pub, deprived, by their own Reform Act, of a representative to pass on their ideas to a national audience. They are also outnumbered in respect to the paper's stylistic choices: rendered even more ridiculous by their proximity to many carefully placed tales of 'real' Conservative success.

And yet the networked political power of these adaptations as they interact with articles across their respective issues of the *Standard* lies foremost in their internal complexity. Their status as adaptations, posing as remediated extracts, trades on Dickens's name and reputation, and yet also repudiates both. They are works where Mr Dickens, a rising star who deliberately avoids a partisan engagement with politics in *Pickwick*, becomes the haughty and semi-ludicrous 'Mr Dickums': a parochial scribe writing at the command of others, who is—on both a textual and

[57] 'Middlesex Reform Dinner', *Coventry Standard* (2), p. 2.

extratextual level—powerless to stop, if not almost implicated in, the political remediation of his own work.

IV. The Case of the *Hampshire Advertiser*

While motivated by the same political ideologies as the *Coventry Standard*, the *Hampshire Advertiser*'s approach to *Pickwick* varied in terms of its specific regional priorities. As we have seen, the *Standard* situated itself as a mediator of sterling examples of Conservative achievement, which it paired with the vitriolic anti-Liberal satire in its *Pickwick* adaptation. Conversely, in the *Advertiser*, the *Pickwick* adaptation itself became a tool to demonstrate the political prominence of local Conservative communities on the national stage. To set this up, the *Advertiser* presented its readers with two unlikely revelations before launching into its *Pickwick* adaptation: first, that they had 'found' a scene from *Dickens's Pickwick* that the publishers had overlooked and published it in its pages on behalf of its readers, and second, that this scene was not only set in Portsmouth, but happened to take the form of a dialogue in which two of Dickens's most popular characters, Sam and Tony Weller, sit down to discuss the benefits of Conservatism, with reference to some local figures.

Similarly to the examples in the *Standard*, this approach adds another strategic layer to the generic complexity of the *Advertiser*'s adaptation, where ostensibly centralising the author's words actually facilitates the process of de-centralising them in favour of adaptation. This lends a slightly different inflection to Gerard Genette's comment about the author's control over the paratexts of their work, discussed in Chapter 1, that 'it is sometimes in one's interest to have certain things "known" without having (supposedly) said them oneself'. In this example, Dickens stops being a wielder of paratextual agency and actually becomes a kind of paratext himself that the newspaper deploys to shape the reception of their remediation. At the same time, the author of the piece tries to create the illusion that the control *is* actually Dickens's own. Contrary to Genette's paradigms, on this occasion it is the press, rather than Dickens, who is using the power of the paratext to voice an opinion. And yet, this combination of using Dickens as a creative object while still pretending he is an authorial subject, means that the *Advertiser* nonetheless remains distanced from that opinion, which it casts back to the author and his creations.

With this in mind, then, from the *Advertiser*'s perspective, what better way to 'have certain things "known" without having (supposedly) said them oneself', than to make them known through the medium of immensely popular fictional characters whose opinions are, themselves, ostensibly mediated through a popular writer whose ongoing serial commands the

ear of the public? To maintain this delicate strategy, the *Advertiser*, like the *Standard*, opens with exposition which attempts to balance the formal requirements of the extract with the room for creative license afforded by the adaptation:

> The elder Mr. Weller had been for some time ruminating in the easy arm chair, which stands on the right hand side of the fire place, in the little back parlour of "The Three Flying Dungprongs," an hostelry of some repute in the market town of Havant, in Hampshire.[58]

At a first glance, this may appear to be the same kind of over-contextualisation that characterised the opening of the *Coventry Standard* piece. And yet here, the context actually serves to add to the authenticity of the adaptation, since where readers of the *Advertiser* would have been familiar with Havant and perhaps even the hostelry upon which the 'Three Flying Dungprongs' was based, not every reader of Dickens would have had the same local knowledge. This opening therefore serves as the sort of introduction Dickens might have made to readers unfamiliar with south Hampshire localities, not dissimilar to his description of the White Hart in the eighth number of *Pickwick*.[59] Nonetheless, the exposition also immediately offers a point of identification for readers on both a local and regional level, going from hostelry, to town, to county in a single sentence. The *Advertiser*'s circulation, according to the *Newspaper Press Directory*, included 'the district of Southampton, Portsmouth, the Isle of Wight, New Forest […] Poole, Winchester […] Basingstoke, Chichester […] [and] Arundel'.[60] Viewed in the context of the discussion that follows, this opening gives the impression that Portsmouth was of sufficient political interest to Dickens for him to include it in this forgotten scene and perhaps even emblematic of Conservative values.

The conversation between Sam and his father opens with some wordplay stemming from the Wellers' cockney accents, as Tony asks: 'why don't you pay attention to politics?', (Polly Tics) to which Sam replies, 'Why I never heard of the lady afore'. The use of this kind of wordplay is reminiscent of a scene in Dickens's *Pickwick* in which there is confusion over the spelling of Sam's surname at the Bardell v. Pickwick trial, and this in turn shows this author's close attention to and subtle understanding of the nature of Dickens's comedy. The tone soon takes a turn for the political, as was the case in the *Standard*'s adaptation, and upon correcting Sam, Tony Weller launches into the following political lecture:

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[58] 'The Pickwick Papers No.13', *Hampshire Advertiser*, p. 4.
[59] *Pickwick*, p. 271.
[60] *Newspaper Press Directory*, p. 238.

> Samuel, my boy, Samuel, I don't mean a voman ; I have oftener than once given you good caution against them frail wessels of destruction, and you have had the botherations of your mother-in-law afore your eyes this many a long day for your comfort. No, Sammy, I means that grand discovery invented by Mr Hume or somebody else, for the regulation of society […] Take the right side, Sammy ; be a gen'l'man and a Conserwative, Sammy ' awoid Destructioners and all them sort of fellers, Sammy. Afore that wery expensive economical Reform Bill came into hoperation, we always used to drown them 'ere noisy Radicals." "Drown 'em?" interrogated Mr Samuel. "Yes, drown 'em, Sammy, in heavy wet to be sure, first of all stuffin' out their lanky chitlins with plenty of beef and puddin' and then they would go home quietly enough, and sweat in their grease 'til next 'lection. Now them supplies be stop't short by that same Reform Hact, and the Radicals, every man Jack on 'em is got so lean and hungry as a bear a'ter a winter's paw suckin' and is just like a sheep's head besides, all jaw.[61]

Here, the over-contextualisation we saw in the *Coventry Standard*'s adaptation makes another appearance, attempting to cement the piece's status as a Dickens extract through anaphoric references to earlier scenes in Dickens's serial. Mr Weller takes on an instructive role in Dickens's *Pickwick* by cautioning Sam against marrying, although beyond the occasional comic insight, it is most often Sam necessarily explaining matters to his father. In this adaptation however, Tony is afforded a little more authority than he is in Dickens's *Pickwick*. The reference to Hume—most likely the Radical politician Joseph Hume—and the knowledge Tony seems to have about politicians local to Hampshire and West Sussex, which materialises later in the piece, mean that here this role is extended in order that his character may be used as a political tool, although it remains underpinned by a quintessential comedy wrought through misunderstandings and the cockney accent.[62] Using Tony Weller's character to praise the Conservatives and attack Radicals also perpetuates the *Advertiser*'s opinions in a way that twice distances them from the opinions voiced in the adaptation: firstly because the opinions are voiced in a piece of fiction and secondly because that fiction is stylised as having been written by somebody else. The reference to Joseph Hume—similarly to the *Standard*'s use of the frothy Sammers—also emphasises that it is the coalition between the Whigs and the Radicals, particularly in the matter of Reform, that is understood as the danger here. Hume famously encouraged mutual support between the two factions and was a driving force behind

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[61] 'The Pickwick Papers No.13', *Hampshire Advertiser*, p. 4.
[62] V. E. Chancellor, 'Hume, Joseph', *ODNB* (2016) <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/14148> [Accessed 09/05/2020].

the passage of the final Act. That he is credited with the 'invention' of politics here is perhaps a wry comment on its recent firm presence in the public consciousness as a result of the Reform debate.[63]

The paradoxical reference to the 'wery expensive economical Reform Bill' leads the piece into less local territory, as does the extended metaphor about 'drowning Radicals' which is presented as a more general election strategy. The anecdote emphasises both 'treating' and bribery as widespread strategies for currying favour, but renders it as a tendency specific to Radicals. The greasy beef and pudding and 'heavy wet' (malt liquor) is also reminiscent of Dickens's own nod to election greed in 'Eatanswill' (see Chapter 3).[64] The 'we' seems to suggest that this tendency is encouraged by Conservative supporters, as a way of revealing inevitable Radical corruption. Like Sammers and the Liberals, in the *Advertiser*, the Radicals or 'destructioners' are affiliated with drunkenness, as readers are presented with the rather horrible image of their bodies, overstuffed with greasy food, sinking beneath a flood of alcohol. The suggestion that the Reform Act has 'stopped the supplies' is more obscure, but may gesture to the supplementary legislation proceeding through Parliament during the 1836 and 1837 Sessions, which aimed at reducing bribery and corruption. It may also refer to the Radicals disenfranchised by the Reform Act, who, rather than attending hustings to gorge themselves on food and drink, are instead ravenous for political power, the sheep simile 'all jaw' referring simultaneously to their sunken features, and propensity to rhetorise.

This characterisation of the opposition stops short of a grassroots Tory attack, and is recognisably in line with Conservative ideologies, because of the way in which the piece deals with the 'moderate' Whigs. Tony describes to Sam how the Radicals attempted to seduce 'two or three of the old lot of barkers, Whigs, they calls 'em, but 'twas no go Sammy ; they was too wide awake for 'em, and wou'dn't come for'ard at all, any how'.[65] This sentence, in direct contrast to the grotesque representation of the Radicals themselves, implicitly acknowledges the Conservatives as a composite group, comprised of Tories and moderate Whigs, but united by a shared support of Constitution, Church and State, and a shared dislike for the impact they feel Reform has had upon the stability of these institutions.[66] Following this piece of clarification, Tony then launches into a tale of an apparently local politician, referred to as 'Sir George the Chinaman', who is temporarily reeled in by the Radicals: 'They pitches all sorts o' queer garbage into him, and makes him believe the constitution wanted mendin' and that he

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[63] *Ibid.*
[64] 'wet, *n.*', *OED* (2019) <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/227968> [Accessed: 29/06/2019].
[65] 'The Pickwick Papers No.13', *Hampshire Advertiser*, p. 4.
[66] Cragoe, p. 586.

was a capital hand at that 'ere sort of tinkerin". As Tony narrates, Sir George stops short when asked to take down the established Church (a pillar of the Constitution) and becomes 'very sorry for what he had done'.[67] To whom Sir George refers is difficult to ascertain with certainty; Sir George Cockburn, the Lord Admiral of the Navy was running as a member for Portsmouth at the time, but as he was one of the Conservative representatives and there is no evidence to suggest he ever swayed towards Radical sympathies, this link seems unlikely.[68]

Concluding the extract after this cautionary tale, Mr Weller reiterates his central message to Sam:

> "No, Sammy," concluded Mr. Weller, rather out of breath at his long harangue ; "be a Conserwative, Sammy 'stick to your colours, and King and Constitution, Sammy; always act as that 'ere Chichester man down here says, Sammy. 'Do that what's right and you'll always be respected.'"[69]

Here Conservatism is presented not only as a political pathway, but a moral obligation: to be a part of this movement is not only to do what is strategically political, but to do what is 'right'. Tony becomes almost poetical in these final lines with the alliterative 'Conservative', 'Colours', 'King' and 'Constitution' resounding like political propaganda, advancing the kind of rhetoric that linked local Conservative communities to a national movement, but at the same time zeroing in on a local example to illustrate the importance of his point. It is only through the medium of adapted fiction posing as a reprinted extract that this does not resound with the clatter of vested interest: if Dickens wrote this piece, as the *Advertiser* would have us believe, then positive words about Conservatism are simply being borrowed from a likeminded source to prove their point, *not* invented by the *Advertiser* to be used as a political tool. In this respect, Tony Weller's modified character places him as an outsider – a Londoner who nonetheless has some clear local knowledge. This balances the *Advertiser*'s need for a character who is both objective and informed, and who could act as proof both of the validity of the paper's political sympathies and the benefits of their manifestation in local communities relevant to the *Advertiser*'s readership. And yet crucially Tony is also familiar, he is recognisably the Tony Weller that appears in Dickens's serial, although, unlike Sammers, here, his accent, malapropisms and tendency to become involved in misunderstandings seem to make him more trustworthy, and as having an uncomplicated sense of right and wrong which leads him

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[67] 'The Pickwick Papers No.13', *Hampshire Advertiser*, p. 4.
[68] F. W. S. Craig (ed.), *The Parliaments of England, from 1715-1847* (Chichester: Political Reference Publications, 1973) p. 133.
[69] 'The Pickwick Papers No.13', *Hampshire Advertiser*, p. 4.

seamlessly to the Conservatives. It is this combination of familiarity and adaptability that makes *Pickwick*'s scenes and characters so suited to transmit political messages in this way. In these final lines, the *Advertiser* uses its literary creation as a tool to expound its political and local loyalties, and the ways in which both are linked. It is probable that the reference to the 'Chichester man' refers to the long-standing, Whig first member for Chichester, Lord Arthur Lennox, who became a Conservative in 1837 when re-elected for a final term.[70] At this point, Lord Lennox would have been a prime example, not only of the traction the Conservative movement was gathering, but of the composite nature of the party. For his name to be known by Pickwickian characters gives an inflated sense of the standing of the local area and local politicians in the Conservative movement nationwide.

As in the case of the *Coventry Standard*, the *Advertiser*'s strategic political self-fashioning not only underpins the *Pickwick* adaptation, but is also expressed at various points in the rest of the issue. For example, the first page offers a brief announcement of a Conservative dinner that took place in Ipswich, at which the Conservative candidates for the area were both present.[71] It also includes an article from the *Ulster Times* that mounts an attack on Daniel O'Connell.[72] Other pieces are simply dedicated to adding a local focus to the *Advertiser*'s pages. For example, there are two reviews in the 'Literary Notices' section of the paper: one introduces the *Pickwick* adaptation, and the other is a review of a Chichester Magazine, the *West Sussex and East Hampshire Literary and Philosophical Miscellany*.[73] At the beginning of the review, the names of the magazine's printers in Chichester, Portsmouth, Southampton and London are given (in that order), and a sample poem from the number is also reprinted. The poem selected is not political; however, the fact that the entire 'Literary Notices' column is dedicated to pieces of provincial relevance sets an emphatically local tone that also resonates through the issue's more political sections. In the 'Varieties' column too, another locally relevant piece entitled 'Puritan names of a Sussex jury in Cromwell's time', is printed.[74] All these articles show the *Pickwick* adaptation to be part of a consistent attempt to exploit print mobilities to maintain a 'sense of place' and local identity throughout the issue.

Unlike the *Standard*, the *Advertiser* focussed less on collecting news from other local Conservative groups and newspapers from further afield, and attended instead to the provincial identities of its circulation area, and the ways the politics of this circulation area

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[70] Collin Rallings and Michael Thrasher, *British Electoral Facts, 1832-2006* (Abingdon; New York: Routledge, 2016).
[71] 'A Conservative Dinner', *Hampshire Advertiser*, p. 1.
[72] 'O'Connell's Latest', *Hampshire Advertiser*, p. 4.
[73] 'The Chichester Magazine', *Hampshire Advertiser*, p. 4.
[74] 'A Sussex Jury in Cromwell's Time', *Hampshire Advertiser*, p. 4.

might appear to others on a national and international stage. This goal manifests itself strongly in an editorial that was printed in the *Portsmouth, Portsea and Gosport Herald*, a supplement of the *Hampshire Advertiser* that appeared halfway through the issue containing our adaptation. The editorial details the two Conservative members who are being nominated as representatives for Portsmouth: Sir George Cockburn and Lord Fitzharris, and emblematises the publication's sustained intertwining of local and national politics and identities through the force of shared Conservative values. The piece begins with a bold declaration:

> It is with sincere pleasure, we hail the dawn of better days for Portsmouth. The nominees of the old Corporation, Carter and Baring, have too long disgraced this Borough and its representatives ; through thick and thin have they supported the Whig-Radical O'Connell and the Melbourne Ministry, nor can they shew us one good act they ever did for the benefit of the Borough.[75]

The article goes on to produce potted panegyrics to both Cockburn: 'whose name is coupled with many a brilliant exploit in defence of our common country ; one, too, who once fought our battle with the late self-serving Corporation' and Fitzharris: 'son of that highly respected nobleman, the Earl of Malmesbury, governor of the Isle of Wight […] a native of our own County, of brilliant talents, ready to embark them in defence of our religion, constitution, and laws, and the independence and welfare of the Borough', before concluding with a final decisive articulation of the benefits of electing the two politicians:

> By returning Sir George Cockburn and Lord Fitzharris to represent us in Parliament, we shall do our part to rid the country of the present revolutionary party who are doing all in their power to overthrow our best institutions and make our name "a bye word [sic] amongst the nations of the earth".[76]

Like the *Standard*, this piece also repeatedly emphasises Whig-Radical collaboration as at the heart of the political problem. At the same time, it posits a different sort of coalition by oscillating rapidly between the local and national benefits of the two Conservative politicians it supports: Cockburn defended the country as Lord Admiral, but also defended the borough under the old Corporation; Fitzharris is a local name, ready to defend the welfare, and, crucially, the autonomy of the borough, but also poised to protect the religion, constitution, and laws of the country. The current members for Portsmouth on the other hand, are held in such high contempt, because they have not only 'supported the Whig-Radical O'Connell and

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[75] 'Portsmouth, Saturday Evening, April 8th', *Hampshire Advertiser*, p. 3.
[76] *Ibid.*

the Melbourne Ministry' but 'disgraced' the Borough, failing on both a national and a local level, where they ought to have succeeded in mediating the political requirements of both. The piece's final lines decisively bring together the local and the national once more, this time in a synecdochal sense, by suggesting that the politics of the borough or region have a direct impact on the legislation of the whole country and therefore that by returning these men as representatives of the borough, the *Advertiser* can safely say: 'we shall do our part'.

For the *Advertiser*, it is expected that strong borough politics and politicians will become a force with which to protect the national institutions and values at the heart of the Conservative cause. When local campaigning does not translate into both borough-level and national political action, it is the subject of derision, as it is in the *Coventry Standard*'s article about the 'great Whig-Radical display' discussed above, that was 'got up with no other purpose than to prove the local ascendancy of a particular set of principles', a set of principles that, as we are asked to believe, have no national traction. This interpretation of politics, as starting and finishing in the provincial borough, but nonetheless necessarily having an impact on the configuration of national institutions, affords these newspapers—at least, theoretically—an enormous amount of power to shape the politics of the future that moves far beyond the cultivation of a 'local colour'. At the same time, each paper also has a considerable responsibility to fulfil, since their pages must not only show the effectiveness of their own mediation between national and local politics, but demonstrate that their clearly articulated Conservative values are both locally held, and shared. These goals motivate not only articles written *by* the *Advertiser* like the editorial above, but pieces such as the *Pickwick* adaptations, disguised as remediated extracts, that are ostensibly written by others. In the context of the *Advertiser*'s own adaptation, then, where Sam and Tony Weller—as 'thorough Cockneys' rather than locals themselves—sit and discuss Conservative values, with recourse to local examples, such values and local examples become common knowledge rather than a feeble 'local ascendency of a particular set of principles'. For this reason, it is the *Pickwick* adaptations' reversal of the serial's early idea that the provinces are an observable object, to be made knowable by the metropolitan gentleman, that ensures they fit with the agenda of the rest of the paper. They deconstruct the picaresque trajectory that enables the Pickwickians to travel from London in search of provincial communities in Dickens's serial, to demonstrate ways that provincial communities can emblematise and shape the core values of national Conservative policy.

V. Conclusions

The Pickwick adaptations published in the *Coventry Standard* and the *Hampshire Advertiser* in 1837 place literature at the very heart of the provincial, Conservative identity-shaping strategies propounded by the press in the years following the 1832 Reform Act. Highly localised in their exposition, while also operating holistically, these adaptations formed a crucial part of the bricolage of the press response to shifts in national politics, as they took shape in local, non-metropolitan communities. What these adaptations reveal specifically is a subtle distinction the provincial press makes between mere local colour, and local politics as a constitution of the national. Whereas these adaptations make a clear effort to provide both local examples and contribute to cementing the paper's stance on nationwide political movements and debates—whether that manifested itself as an extolling of the merits of Conservatism or an attack of the shortcomings of opposition political groups—local political gatherings without a contribution to make to a national movement, are the subject of derision. What these pieces help reveal, in short, is that in the wake of a growing, nationwide Conservative movement, local politics needed to chime with the politics of adjacent localities and the national movement in order to be taken seriously.

It could be argued that the editorials, accounts of Conservative Association meetings and letters from correspondents surrounding these adaptations reinforce this sense of networked local identity equally well if not more effectively than generically complex literary adaptations are able to. However, it is precisely the generic complexity of these adaptations that renders them so versatile, and enables them to be marshalled to the Conservative cause in ways not available to the editorial or account. Each piece enables contradictory narratives of *creatio* and *inventio* to exist simultaneously: they emphasise Dickens's authorial agency but create a bespoke political text that, in its partisanship, is distinctly un-Dickensian. They speak to the political issues of their provincial communities in very specific ways, but ostensibly from the disinterested position of the metropolitan author. They proclaim a set of Conservative values, or show their distaste for the opposition just as other genres of article do, but, because they are stylised as remediated extracts, lifted from a pre-existing, likeminded source, they exert the power, to return to Genette, of having 'certain things "known" without having (supposedly) said them oneself'. To be able to write something and have it appear as another's writing in more-or-less veiled ways created the conditions whereby an assertion of a text's 'originality' might paradoxically facilitate remediation and repetition. Finally, these adaptations reveal a hitherto underappreciated link between the mediation of political ideology and the remediation of popular literature that, in *Pickwick*'s case, persisted in the press for the rest of Dickens's lifetime, with the text's resurgence corresponding to moments in the century when

discourses about Reform and the franchise resumed their heatedness and urgency, as we will see in Chapter 3. Even standing alone, these adaptations contribute to expanding our sense of the complex ways that *Pickwick* was used by the press, in this case offering an insight into the political priorities of two local, Conservative communities, and the measures they took to articulate them.

Chapter 3 Recursive Remediation: Evoking Eatanswill in the Age of Reform

On 31st May 1867, Chapman and Hall released the *Pickwick* volume of their Charles Dickens Edition. As well as a distinct new aesthetic, with its red cloth binding and the author's flamboyant signature picked out in gold, this edition came with a slightly revised preface which departed from those printed in its predecessors—the 1847 Cheap Edition and the 1858 Library Edition—in some notable ways. In the 1847 edition, following an account of *Pickwick*'s origins, as well as an explanation of his use of the pseudonym 'Boz', Dickens had turned to address the extent to which he felt society had changed since *Pickwick*'s serialisation concluded a decade before:

> I have found it curious and interesting, looking over the sheets of this reprint, to mark what important social improvements have taken place about us, almost imperceptibly, even since they were originally written. The license of Counsel, and the degree to which Juries are ingeniously bewildered, are yet susceptible of moderation; while an improvement in the mode of conducting Parliamentary Elections (especially for counties) is still within the bounds of possibility. But legal reforms have pared the claws of Messrs. Dodson and Fogg; a spirit of self-respect, mutual forbearance, education, and co-operation, for such good ends, has diffused itself among their clerks; places far apart are brought together, to the present convenience and advantage of the Public, and to the certain destruction, in time, of a host of petty jealousies, blindnesses, and prejudices, by which the Public alone have always been the sufferers; the laws relating to imprisonment for debt are altered; and the Fleet Prison is pulled down![1]

At first glance, Dickens seems effusive in his praise of societal developments. He commends legal reforms apparently wrought by the improved character of legal clerks, itself brought about by educational reform. He hints at the alterations to transport and technology that have meant 'places far apart are brought together', marking a significant step away from the complicated traveling arrangements of the Pickwickians, who moved about the country during the twilight years of the stagecoach era. These technological developments, Dickens argues, have also yielded a more abstract form of progress in the form of public morality, by bringing

[1] Charles Dickens, 'The Pickwick Papers', ed by J. Kinsley, in *The Clarendon Dickens*. ed by J. Butt, K. M. Tillotson and J. Kinsley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986) p. 883.

about the 'certain destruction […] of a host of petty jealousies, blindnesses, and prejudices'. It is the concrete progress emblematised by changes to the built environment that represents, for Dickens, the most significant development of all, and he concludes by marvelling at the demolition of the Fleet Prison: the building around which a significant portion of *Picknick*'s central action revolved.

For Dickens to talk in unequivocal terms about societal progress is unusual, and looking at the passage more closely reveals some of the characteristic moments of anti-establishment suspicion and criticism we would expect to find in his writing: the law, for example, is apparently 'still susceptible of moderation'. However, Dickens is at his most pessimistic when he discusses parliamentary and electoral reform. Whereas elsewhere in this passage, he acknowledges that at least some improvement has occurred, here Dickens is only prepared to admit that such an improvement is 'still within the bounds of possibility'. This pessimism becomes particularly intriguing when the 1847 Cheap Edition preface is compared to the later versions: although the sentence discussing elections remained unchanged for the 1858 Library Edition, for the 1867 Charles Dickens Edition, Dickens made a notable substitution, indicated in italics below:

> **1847 Cheap Edition and 1858 Library Edition:**
>
> The license of Counsel, and the degree to which Juries are ingeniously bewildered, are yet susceptible of moderation; while an improvement in the mode of conducting Parliamentary Elections (*especially for counties*) is still within the bounds of possibility.[2]
>
> **1867 Charles Dickens Edition:**
>
> The license of Counsel, and the degree to which Juries are ingeniously bewildered, are yet susceptible of moderation; while an improvement in the mode of conducting Parliamentary Elections (*and even parliaments too, perhaps*) is still within the bounds of possibility.[3]

By altering the comments in parentheses, Dickens subtly upscales his concerns about the country's electoral policy even while he claims that change is still within the realm of possibility. Whereas in 1847, he targets his anxiety at local elections specifically, by 1867, he is levelling his criticism at parliamentary elections in general, and, tentatively, at Parliament as an institution also.

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[2] *Ibid.*, p. 883. My italics.
[3] *Ibid.* My italics.

As has been well-documented elsewhere, Dickens's revisions in other sections of the preface were fairly extensive, and the changing ways in which he represented Robert Seymour's involvement in the *Pickwick* project are particularly noteworthy in this regard.[4] Under these circumstances, we might expect a paragraph dedicated to changes in society, such as the one quoted above, to have given rise to a similar amount of editing between prefaces, whereby Dickens substitutes discussion of old institutions and issues for those that are most topical. Surprisingly, besides correcting a typographical error, the above is the only change Dickens makes to this entire paragraph between all three editions. This creates an interesting disjunction between Dickens's words and his actions. On the one hand, the largely unchanged content of this paragraph suggests he remained convinced that society had changed or even progressed since *Pickwick*'s publication, and yet Dickens conveyed this sentiment in 1867 using the same examples he included in 1847: the demolition of the Fleet Prison, for example, was by then over twenty years past. On the other hand, the one part of the paragraph that does change to move with the times does so because Dickens is even less convinced by 1867 of the country's ability to reform its electoral policy than he was in 1847. His anxiety in the 1847 preface reflects his concern that local elections are corrupt, but by 1867, that anxiety has assumed a national urgency.

Whether we find Dickens's comments convincing or not, the alteration he made to his stance on electoral and parliamentary reform in the Charles Dickens Edition takes on an additional significance because of its publication context: it is no coincidence that the *Pickwick* volume of the series was first published on the 31st of May 1867, less than three months before the second Reform Act was given Royal Assent on the 15th of August. At this point, the debate about the implications of extending the franchise beyond the provisions of the 1832 Great Reform Act had already been consistently in the public eye for some months.[5] Dickens's revision of this section of the preface is arguably an acknowledgement of what he understood to be society's shift away from the concerns about rotten boroughs and local bribery and corruption which plagued the political discourse of the 1830s and 1840s, and towards a second, national, wrangling about the form and implications of a second Reform Act that would not only re-shape elections but 'even parliaments too, perhaps'. As we saw in Chapter

[4] See for example: David Parker, 'The "Pickwick" Prefaces', *Dickens Studies Annual*, 43 (2012) pp. 67–79; Robert Patten, *Charles Dickens and "Boz": The Birth of the Industrial-Age Author* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

[5] Advertisements began to appear in the papers in late March, announcing that publication of the *Pickwick* volume of the Charles Dickens Edition would take place on 31st May, see for example: 'Mr. Dickens's Works', *Globe*, Friday 31 May 1867, p. 1 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0001652/18670531/022/0001> [Accessed: 26/03/2021].

2, the relationship between the local and the national regarding electoral reform—in the newspaper press especially—is not so linear as Dickens's preface seems to suggest. Dickens's edits, I would contend, are also a reflection of his concern that any optimism about the progress of electoral reform could quickly be proven naive or erroneous by a government decision. Solidifying that optimism in print at such a changeable time for British politics certainly seemed unadvisable, especially as the Charles Dickens Edition was a pet project for Dickens and part of his self-conscious fashioning of a posthumous reputation.[6] However, Dickens's uncertain discussions of electoral reform are also self-referential, implying that the serial's own representations of electoral corruption and parliamentary process still have some applicability, even thirty years later.

Dickens was not alone in his acknowledgement that strategic textual intervention could enable *Pickwick* to move between different contexts while still retaining its relevance and sense, even many years after its first publication. Indeed, the newspaper press continued to recognise and exploit *Pickwick*'s enduring political application throughout Dickens's lifetime. Much like Dickens's own intermittent engagement with political affairs, that of the papers was not consistent, but ebbed and flowed across decades and was shaped by both context and the political issues of the moment. Recent studies have tended to subordinate these rich narratives of contingent remediation to emphasise the implications of *Pickwick*'s momentariness, or its status as a static 'snapshot' of a particular moment in the 1830s. Yet what Dickens's preface above inadvertently illustrates is *Pickwick*'s suitability for remediation *over time* as well as across a variety of publications at a given moment. With even the lightest of editorial touches—however contradictory those may now seem—*Pickwick* could retain its currency. In fact, for the present-day scholar it is precisely those contradictions that act as an index to Dickens's potential motivations. The same can be said for the continued use of *Pickwick* in the press after 1837. To understand the excerpts and adaptations that were printed in the press during *Pickwick*'s serialisation—as discussed in Chapters 1 and 2—as the sum total of the journalistic remediations to which *Pickwick* gave rise, is to take but a partial view of the phenomenon.

This chapter examines the remarkable adaptability and enduring journalistic circulation of one of *Pickwick*'s most politically engaged strands—the Eatanswill Election—demonstrating that Eatanswill's recursive use in political discussion across Dickens's lifetime belies the idea of a

[6] Parker has argued that the luxurious design of the Charles Dickens Edition was 'prompted by his growing sense of mortality'. Parker, 'Pickwick Prefaces', p. 68.

transient 'Pickwick moment'.[7] As its characteristically apposite name suggests, at Eatanswill, the Pickwickians encounter the very worst of borough electoral practice: eating and drinking to excess, inaudible political speeches, bribery and violence. They also meet the rival journalists: Pott and Slurk, the respective editors of the *Eatanswill Gazette* and the *Eatanswill Independent* who hurl insults at one another via the pages of their respective publications and engage in some slapstick pugilism later in the serial when they encounter one another at a coaching inn by accident. Eatanswill had an intensely political presence in the newspaper press: beginning in 1836 in the form of remediated excerpts like those discussed in Chapter 1 but developing in new ways post-serialisation. Using Database 3, which collates over five hundred examples of Eatanswill's remediation in the press between 1836 and 1870, I show that when *Pickwick*'s serialisation ceased (and with it the production of new material to excerpt each month) so too did its remediation in excerpt form. In the same way that some newspapers turned to adaptation when verbatim *Pickwick* excerpts did not provide the creative license they needed to make their political points, after November 1837, newspaper editors shifted away from the excerpt, breaking Eatanswill into individual tropes, scenes, and half-remembered quotations that were then repeatedly grafted onto new texts to enhance their political message.[8] This change was also accompanied by a partial shift in the newspaper's agency as remediator; in many of the examples discussed in this chapter, the press frequently recorded examples of Eatanswill remediations—in transcribed political speeches, letters to the editor, and reports of countless penny public readings, lectures and entertainments—rather than producing them themselves. They became repositories for, rather than inventors of, new Pickwickian meaning, capturing traces of otherwise ephemeral reception events.

In other examples, the newspaper remained the primary creative agent, fragmenting the Eatanswill scene into individual tropes with which to imbue a new text. For example, in 1853, the *Illustrated London News* published an article on the committee rooms of the House of Commons entitled 'Parliamentary Election Committees', taking readers into committee rooms where provincial election results are being contested, in a similar style to that of *Sketches by Boz*:

[7] Eatanswill is a provincial and politically corrupt borough that the Pickwickians first visit in the midst of a contested election in the fifth number of the serial. In the eighteenth number the equally corrupt rival Eatanswill journalists, Pott and Slurk make a second appearance. Eatanswill was frequently evoked in discussions about provincial journalism. These are all recorded in Database 3. For the purposes of this chapter however, I focus on Eatanswill evocations that deal with electoral politics, although, as the database shows, the two are not necessarily mutually exclusive categories.

[8] See also, Michael Hancher, 'Grafting A Christmas Carol', *Studies in English Literature*, 48.4 (2008) pp. 813–827. Hancher makes use of the term to discuss the 'engrafting' of quoted mottoes onto the text of the *Parley's Penny Library* version of *A Christmas Carol.*

> That group of whiskered, ferocious, and powerful-looking blackguards are the bludgeon-men from Eatanswill who led that gallant attack upon the Blue band and colour-men, and who finished up by breaking the windows of the White Hart on the day of the election. They are here to tell the committee who supplied them so profusely with beer at the election, and who engaged their valuable services for the sitting member; and perhaps out of their replies the astute counsel for the petitioners may obtain another link in his chain of "agency." Here, also, are the low beer-shopkeepers of Eatanswill, whose kitchens, it was discovered, were wanted as committee-rooms about two o'clock in the afternoon of the day of polling.[9]

In this example, Eatanswill becomes a free-moving and self-referential trope that functions in a way that is largely independent from its source text. The Eatanswill referenced here is remarkably distant from Dickens's *Pickwick*, in which neither 'low beer shopkeepers' nor, crucially, window-breaking at the White Hart Inn are subjects for discussion, and yet this does not matter. Eatanswill's usefulness here does not lie in its proximity to Dickens's version of the text but the fact that its mere name means it is loaded with various meanings that the *Illustrated London News* can draw forth or de-emphasise according to its specific political purposes. *Pickwick*'s initial popularity, as I will show in what follows, meant that Eatanswill as a concept became a malleable form of common knowledge. Here it is used to emphasise violence at provincial elections, and the local tendency to alcohol-based bribery, heightening the irony of these shady provincial figures marching into committee rooms in the House of Commons to demand an election result be overturned. Eatanswill also serves as a meaningful placeholder for a real local geography in order that the *Illustrated London News* can avoid any libellous commentary. Pieces such as this appeared across the nineteenth century, and yet are neither excerpts (since when direct quotations are used, they are often very short or paraphrased rather than comprising the sum total of the remediation) or adaptations (as they are not new, *Pickwick*-themed pieces of fiction). For the purposes of this project, and to distinguish this form of remediation from excerpting and adaptation, I am terming these examples 'evocations'. Mapping the appearance of these evocations across Dickens's lifetime enables us to appreciate for the first time how a newspaper-driven engagement with *Pickwick* endured and changed across decades. This in turn nuances our understanding of *Pickwick*'s momentariness and its often-asserted 'topicality'. Such evocations also provide a new measure of reader engagement with literary texts that has yet to be fully appreciated.

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[9] 'Parliamentary Election Committees', *Illustrated London News*, Saturday 12 March 1853, p. 2 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/BL/0001578/18530312/006/0002> [Accessed: 03/09/2021].

As my opening example shows, Dickens himself seemed mostly convinced that *Pickwick* was an epochal text. He failed to effect a long-term re-launch of some of *Pickwick*'s characters just five years after its serialisation ceased, as part of *Master Humphrey's Clock*, and in 1849 he affirmed his own sense of *Pickwick*'s momentariness, declaring in an often-quoted letter that the 'world would not take another Pickwick from me, now; but we can be cheerful and merry, I hope, notwithstanding, and with a little more purpose in us'".[10] Dickens scholars, too, continue to be pre-occupied with the way *Pickwick* emblematises a fleeting moment at the juncture of the Romantic and Victorian periods. David Parker, for example, has dedicated portions of several studies to pairing *Pickwick*'s themes with real historical moments and debates, including landowning disputes alluded to in many of *Pickwick*'s sporting chapters.[11] David Bevington and others have gone further by analysing the relationship between *Pickwick*'s seriality and seasonality, mapping a month-by-month topicality that ties *Pickwick* even more firmly to its cultural moment.[12] Malcolm Andrews has even argued that the serial's topicality was so fleeting that 'the *Pickwick* moment was passing even as [Dickens] was writing the *Papers* from month to month in the mid-1830s' and that 'Dickens's shrewd navigation month after month through this period of cultural transition is somewhat masked nowadays by seeing the project as *Pickwick* the single volume'.[13] For Andrews, *Pickwick*'s seriality and its operation at a 'period of cultural transition' means that the text becomes a monument to a particular moment, as the stream of context and culture develops away from and beyond it.[14]

Instead, what these evocations of Eatanswill show is how an evolution in the form of remediation—from excerpt to evocation—enabled *Pickwick*'s political usefulness to endure. This evolution occurred for two reasons: firstly, because the newspapers lost interest in excerpting when Dickens stopped printing new material. This is because, as we saw in Chapter 1, they were most interested in publishing extracts from the most recent number of ongoing serials. With *Pickwick* finished, there was fresher literature to turn to for material: *Oliver Twist*, for example, made an appearance on the literary scene before *Pickwick* had concluded, and was excerpted fairly widely, as I showed in the Introduction. Secondly, in many of the evocations

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[10] 'To Dudley Costello, 25 April 1849', *Pilgrim Edition of the Letters of Charles Dickens*, 5 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981). For a fuller account of Dickens's attempt to introduce Pickwickian characters into *Master Humphrey's Clock*, see Carrie Sickmann Han, 'Pickwick's Other Papers: Continually Reading Dickens', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 44 (2016) pp. 19–41 (p. 23).

[11] David Parker, 'The Topicality of *Pickwick Papers*', *The Dickensian* 105.4 (2009) pp. 202–212; David Parker, 'Pickwick and Reform', *Dickens Studies Annual* (2013) pp. 1–21.

[12] David Bevington, 'Seasonal Relevance in The Pickwick Papers', *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 16.3 (1961) pp. 219–230.

[13] Malcolm Andrews, 'The Passing of the Pickwick Moment', *Charles Dickens as an Agent of Change*, Joachim Frenk and Lena Steveka, (Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 2019) pp. 100–110 (p. 109).

[14] Ann Rigney, *The Afterlives of Walter Scott: Memory on the Move* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012) p. 14.

that appeared post-serialisation—such as in opinion pieces, political speeches and electoral reports—including verbatim sections from *Pickwick*'s Eatanswill chapters would have been both impractical and at times counterintuitive to the political opinions being asserted by their authors, whereas the occasional (and often erroneous) quotation, or paraphrased references to particular scenes left Dickens's already unspecific political tropes even more susceptible to taking on the meanings ascribed to them by the journalists and readers making use of them.

In the first section of this four-part chapter, 'Losing Eatanswill', I re-appraise Dickens's version of the Eatanswill election with a view to investigating its political potentialities. That Eatanswill became such a useful and enduring form of political analogy so long after its initial publication owes a great deal to its construction. Despite its obvious relevance to the ongoing party conflicts played out in contested elections across the country during the 1830s, Dickens performed considerable linguistic feats to avoid using his literary platform to take sides and carefully avoided any resemblance between his settings and characters and those of real places and politicians. Even in his later prefaces, when his established authority and celebrity would perhaps have permitted a clear statement of his original political intentions via the same form of performative hindsight he used to edit his narrative about *Pickwick*'s origins, Dickens remained vaguely 'anti-establishment' rather than party political on this point. Nonetheless, newspaper editors and the politicians and readers for whom they provided a platform, had no such reservations. In fact, as I will show, it was precisely the lack of specificity and partisanship in the Eatanswill election scene that increased its widespread potential for re-use as party-specific journalistic analogy, extracts and political ammunition.

Section two, 'Locating Eatanswill' draws on early uses of Eatanswill excerpts during *Pickwick*'s serialisation as context for the evocations that are discussed more widely in section three. Dickens's crafting of the Eatanswill scene, and his avoidance of identifiable people, places and parties, led to its being tied to ongoing anxieties about electoral Reform from its earliest days. The importance of this connection is yet to be fully realised but, I argue, proved instrumental in determining *Pickwick*'s path to popular and commercial success. This section argues that while press notice of the serial increased for the fourth number, following the introduction of Sam Weller (the event most often associated with *Pickwick*'s moment of peripeteia), the publishing of the fifth number, which included the first Eatanswill chapter, was arguably more important for securing widespread monthly notice from the local press as well as inaugurating a tactical use of Eatanswill which remained virtually unabated for the rest of Dickens's lifetime. I conclude by arguing that *Pickwick*'s success was more closely aligned with its political usefulness than Dickens scholars have yet allowed.

In my third section, 'Dislocating Eatanswill', and fourth 'Transporting Eatanswill', I will demonstrate how the political re-use of *Pickwick* during its serialisation facilitated its fragmentation and the intensifying of its political evocation during the ensuing decades. After a significant lull in the 1840s, where *Pickwick* was less frequently noticed, renewed discussion about Reform prompted by Lord John Russell in 1852, followed by multiple fruitless attempts to pass a variety of new Reform Bills in the 1850s and 1860s, led to peculiarly rich and inventive uses of the Eatanswill trope within the popular press and the broader political world as a way of making sense of ongoing debates. The section will begin with some quantitative analysis of the Eatanswill evocations, mapping the context and genres of writing in which the term 'Eatanswill' was used throughout the remainder of Dickens's lifetime and charting the political ebb and flow of the term's deployment in relation to Reform discourse. I will then use this data, alongside a more careful close analysis of representative examples, to explore how patterns of Eatanswill evocations mapped onto public anxiety about significant political events, as well as showing how Eatanswill became part of a network of political associations independent from its source text.

I. Losing Eatanswill

In the *Pickwick* preface that opens this chapter, Dickens characterises his attitude towards reform much as critics have subsequently represented it: marking his opinions as anti-establishment, rather than aligning them with the ideologies of a particular political group. In his chapter for *A Companion to Charles Dickens*, Hugh Cunningham has neatly summarised this distinction, suggesting that while Dickens 'was also well known as a critic of existing structures of power, puncturing the pomposity and self-delusion of politicians and other officeholders […] examined closely, and case by case, it becomes less and less easy to see him straightforwardly as a reformer'. This is because, Cunningham argues, there were 'others with a claim to the title of reformer who had much clearer diagnoses for and solutions to British ills than did Dickens. Dickens stood on shifting and uncomfortable ground amongst such reformers, his responses to situations often seeming to attract the label of "conservative" as much as "radical."'[15] Crucially, Dickens's brand of reform (with a distinctly lower-case 'r') is difficult to delineate because it is held to be incompatible with party politics, and lacks specific ideological solutions to social problems. *Bleak House* is a prime example of this reticence towards suggesting answers: its unifying thread is its extended, vitriolic criticism of the British

[15] Hugh Cunningham, 'Dickens as Reformer', *A Companion to Dickens*, ed by David Paroissien (Blackwell: Massachusetts; London, 2008) pp. 159–173 (p. 159).

legal system, and yet no solution to the corruption is posited, and Dickens is only able to bring the legal narrative to a definitive close when the estate of Jarndyce and Jarndyce is—in a conveniently timely fashion—absorbed by costs. It is perhaps for this reason, that the phrase 'Dickens and reform' is less frequently taken to mean 'Dickens and electoral reform' or 'Dickens and the Reform Acts', than it is his advocation for urban, institutional improvements via a variety of personal 'reform projects'. As to any overtly political engagement with the politics of the Reform Act, David Vincent and others have argued that, if anything, Dickens's experience of Reform politics as a parliamentary reporter in the 1830s led to a strategic flight from a partisan approach to the subject:

> The Reform Bill and its aftermath had […] long-term effects on Dickens's engagement with social reform. In the first instance, his close encounter left him with a lifelong distaste for Parliament as an institution. Whilst he welcomed the defeat of the Tories, he had little respect for the personnel or practices of the Palace of Westminster, before or after the epochal events of 1832. His subsequent national fame gave him opportunity to mix with the ruling elite, but although he formed occasional friendships, most notably with the Whig politician Lord John Russell, and engaged with specific pieces of legislation, he showed no desire to identify with any party.[16]

The difficulty of pigeonholing Dickens's politics in party terms, which has resulted in his repeated designation as 'anti-establishment', means it is tempting to categorise *Pickwick* in the same way. *Pickwick* not only focuses on criticising the effectiveness of political establishments rather than the wrongs of specific parties, but also, if we turn to the Eatanswill election passages specifically, it becomes clear that Dickens makes an extraordinary effort to avoid rendering his characters, settings and dialogue in any way that might make them individually recognisable. Even the seemingly opposing colours of the warring political parties at Eatanswill cannot help us to identify them. Perplexingly, 'Blue' and 'Buff' are both Whig colours and no character is easily identifiable as a real contemporary politician.

We must take care to remember that Dickens's political life is not necessarily synonymous with the political lives of his texts, and we encounter two problems if we read the lack of partisanship in the Eatanswill chapter as Dickens shying away from party political engagement. The first is that Dickens's intentions are only part of the story, and to fully

[16] David Vincent, 'Social Reform', *The Oxford Handbook of Charles Dickens*, ed by John Jordan, Robert L. Patten and Catherine Waters (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006) n.p.

understand the nature of Eatanswill's politics, we need to shift our thinking away from its origins and towards its richly partisan reception trajectories when remediated by its active readers (as understood by Andrew Hobbs, and discussed in Chapter 1, above). Secondly, even when we consult Dickens's intentions, the contortions he performs to avoid specificity in the Eatanswill scene are often so hyperbolic and teasing as to appear playful rather than fearful, and suggest that he is working with, rather than against, the reception of his texts in the press. What I am proposing here is not that a more detailed or a different reading of Eatanswill can necessarily help us to shed fresh light on the mystery of Dickens's politics, but that it is actually more enlightening to move away from making this mystery our goal in interpreting the scene. If Dickens avoids political specificity in the Eatanswill election chapter, he does so in a way that encourages his readers to imbue the work with that specificity themselves. This is one reason, I would argue, for his work's status and ubiquity in popular culture.

With this in mind, let us turn to the Eatanswill election chapter itself, to think about how and for what reasons Dickens fashions the narrative so that political ambiguity becomes an invitation to political participation. Even the chapter heading, which begins '*Some* Account of Eatanswill' indicates a deliberate incompleteness in the reporting, and in almost every sentence of the chapter, readers are assailed by obscurity, fragmented information and arrested speech, all of which contribute to keeping the precise politics of the rival Eatanswill parties open to conjecture. The chaos begins the moment the Pickwickians step outside on the morning of the hustings:

> A crowd of idlers were assembled in the road, looking at a hoarse man in the balcony, who was apparently talking himself very red in the face in Mr. Slumkey's behalf; but the force and point of whose arguments were somewhat impaired by the perpetual beating of four large drums which Mr. Fizkin's committee had stationed at the street corner. There was a busy little man beside him, though, who took off his hat at intervals and motioned to the people to cheer, which they regularly did, most enthusiastically; and as the red-faced gentleman went on talking till he was redder in the face than ever, it seemed to answer his purpose quite as well as if anybody had heard him.[17]

While exerting a kind of calm superiority over the carnage of the scene he describes, Dickens's dry but convoluted narration ultimately contributes to the effect of the cacophony, because like the banging of the drums and the cheering of the ignorant crowd, it keeps us from hearing

[17] Charles Dickens, *The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) p. 144.

the words of the red-faced gentleman (whose complexion makes him emblematic of the gastronomical vices of 'Eat-and-Swill'). Dickens carries this level of noise with him throughout the rest of the chapter, sidestepping the need to include monologue or dialogue on three further occasions, simply by saying that the speech of his characters was impossible to hear. First, the mayor's speech on the hustings is interrupted by a cry from the crowd that he may 'never desert the nail and sarspan business, as he got his money by', which occasions laughter and bell-ringing that 'rendered the remainder of his speech inaudible'.[18] When Fizkin is later being praised by his seconder, the 'Slumkeyites groaned, so long, and so loudly, that both he and the seconder might have sung comic songs in lieu of speaking without anybody's being a bit the wiser'.[19] Finally, as Fizkin begins to speak, the Slumkeyites strike up a brass band to drown out every word.[20] For Dickens to use a crowd as a set piece in his fiction is not unusual, but while normally a narrative voice cuts across the noise to direct our reading of the scene—the Jacob's Island chapter in *Oliver Twist* is a good example—here, both the noise of the crowd and Dickens's narrative voice are united in drowning out any possibility of readers elucidating specific political messages from the speech of his characters.

As well as the impossibility of hearing anything noteworthy, Dickens introduces another obstruction, at the commencement of the violence, by having Mr Pickwick (our main source of information) black out and lose all his sensory capabilities at once, courtesy of his wayward hat and the clashing processions of the rival parties:

> Mr. Pickwick's hat was knocked over his eyes, nose, and mouth, by one poke of a Buff flag staff, very early in the proceedings. He describes himself as being surrounded on every side, when he could catch a glimpse of the scene, by angry and ferocious countenances, by a vast cloud of dust, and by a dense crowd of combatants. He represents himself as being forced from the carriage by some unseen power, and being personally engaged in a pugilistic encounter; but with whom, or how, or why, he is wholly unable to state.[21]

Easily missed in this passage is the fact that the usually peaceable and reflective Pickwick actually engages in the electoral violence himself, in a 'pugilistic encounter' mentioned in passing, although the particulars are notably absent, as Dickens retreats into editorial reportage. With the exception of the 'Buff flag staff' with which Pickwick is unceremoniously

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 156.
[19] *Ibid.*, p. 157.
[20] *Ibid.*
[21] *Ibid.*, p. 155.

poked, the density of the crowd and the cloud of dust reveal but unclear glimpses of the action: there are 'countenences', 'combatants' and 'unseen powers' but again, a paragraph passes with no speech or specifics.

When the strategy of claiming that nothing could be seen or heard risks becoming too repetitive, Dickens reports the speech of the politicians as part of the narration, rather than allowing his characters to speak for themselves. Even on these occasions, what is reported is not political ideology, but empty rhetoric that could reasonably belong to any party. The candidates, 'though differing in every other respect', are said to have 'afforded a beautiful tribute to the merit and high worth of the electors of Eatanswill' and both said 'that the trade, the manufactures, the commerce, the prosperity, of Eatanswill, would ever be dearer to their hearts than any earthly object'.[22] Of course we can read the emptiness of this rhetoric as part of the joke, and yet, even adjacent work by Dickens does not go to these lengths to obscure political detail. For example, in their discussion of one of the more political tales in *Sketches by Boz*: 'The Election for Beadle', William F. Long and Paul Schlicke have revealed some moments which hint at cause loyalty, if not party loyalty. 'The post of beadle', they argue, 'was not, in fact, generally an elective office […] It is perhaps an indication that Dickens sought a vehicle with which to satirize the post-Reform-Bill elections of 1832–33 and 1835 that he made it so in the "Parish" sketch'. Long and Schlicke go on to suggest that 'Boz's commentary, although uniformly sardonic, celebrates the victory of reform', evidencing this claim by suggesting that the advocates of the 'new Beadle system' (who represent reformers) ultimately win the election.[23] While this is ambiguous, it is ultimately a step towards partisanship Dickens might easily have taken with Eatanswill, when in reality he moves further into the realm of political ambiguity than he did for the 'Election for Beadle' sketch. This suggests that something more deliberate was going on.

The idea that Dickens's ambiguous treatment of party politics in this chapter was part of a strategy is further substantiated by the fact that it is not simply key political information about the Eatanswill parties that he loses in a cacophony of drums and roundabout narration. By extending his joke to the realm of his fictional editorial persona, 'Boz', Dickens actually manages to tactically lose Eatanswill itself. At the chapter's opening, while Dickens the author is revelling in ambiguity, Boz the editor laments the limitations of his sources:

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[22] *Ibid.*, p. 158.
[23] William F. Long and Paul Schlicke, 'Bung Against Spruggins: Reform in "Our Parish"', *Dickens Quarterly*, 34.1 (2017) pp. 5–13.

> We will frankly acknowledge, that up to the period of our being first immersed in the voluminous papers of the Pickwick club, we had never heard of Eatanswill; we will with equal candour admit, that we have in vain searched for proof of the actual existence of such a place at the present day […]. We have traced every name in schedules A and B, without meeting with that of Eatanswill; we have minutely examined every corner of the Pocket County Maps issued for the benefit of society by our distinguished publishers, and the same result has attended our investigation. We are therefore led to believe, that Mr. Pickwick, with that anxious desire to abstain from giving offence to any, and with those delicate feelings for which all who knew him well know he was so eminently remarkable, purposely substituted a fictitious designation, for the real name of the place in which his observations were made.[24]

An invitation elaborately disguised as an apology, this meandering editorial is Dickens at his most self-indulgent, as in line after line of facetious exasperation he plays with the idea that he has scrutinised his sources, without encountering the 'name of Eatanswill'. The distinction made here is key: it is only the name 'Eatanswill' that Boz cannot find as he peruses the County Maps. It is not that Eatanswill itself is unrecognisable, but that it is instead a 'fictitious designation' for a real place, which might be found, somewhere, with the right information. One clue is provided, in a similarly tortuous manner, as to Eatanswill's whereabouts, as 'Boz' reveals that in 'Mr. Pickwick's note-book, we can just trace an entry of the fact, that the places of himself and followers were booked by the Norwich coach; but this entry was afterwards lined through, as if for the purpose of concealing even the direction in which the borough is situated'.[25] Geographically, this narrows matters to some extent but, as we shall see, for decades, this morsel of information did not prevent newspaper editors from claiming that Eatanswill was in quite the opposite direction. More important than Eatanswill's true origins was its applicability to their representational needs. As Boz the editor strove to argue that Eatanswill was nowhere, Dickens the author urged his readers to consider that it might be anywhere, or everywhere.

Also curious is the way that, in the midst of this rambling opening to the chapter, Dickens not only links the fictional Pickwickian narrative to his fictional editorial persona, but further associates that editorial persona with his real publishers and other real texts being published at the time. Dickens refers to a pocket county map series, which draws our eye from town-level to county-level, perhaps evoking in readers the thorny issue of recently re-drawn county lines,

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[24] *Pickwick*, pp. 142–3.
[25] *Ibid*, p. 143.

following the passage of the Reform Act. This is supported by his references to 'Schedules A and B', an allusion to the list of boroughs that were to be completely or partially disenfranchised, which accompanied the Reform Act legislation when the bill was engrossed.[26] Additionally, it evokes a real title, *Sidney Hall's County Maps*, which was being printed at intervals by Chapman and Hall at the same time as *Pickwick*. The two were also often advertised in adjacent positions in the newspaper press, as Figure 13 shows:

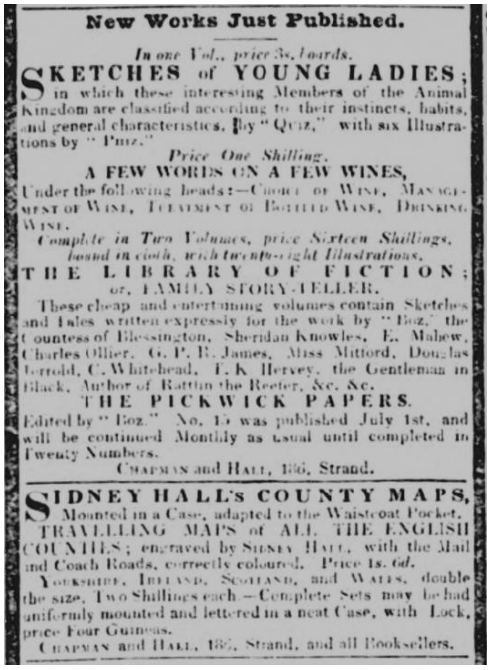

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Figure 13: Advertisement for new works by Chapman and Hall[27]

This is an early, if subtle indication that Dickens was remarkably well acquainted with *Pickwick*'s position as part of a wider newspaper context, and amused by what newspaper editors might do with his work. In fact, there is clear evidence that, for Dickens, Eatanswill's political ambiguity was part of a game for his readers that he genuinely enjoyed observing as it played out in the press. In a letter to Chapman and Hall written on the 6th of August 1836, mere days after the Eatanswill number was published, Dickens writes delightedly: 'I see honorable mention of myself, and Mr. Pickwick's politics, in Fraser this month. They consider Mr. P a decided Whig'.[28] According to the Pilgrim editors, Dickens is referring to William Maginn's outspoken review in *Fraser's Magazine* of Grant Berkeley's novel *Berkeley Castle*. The

[26] Philip Salmon, 'The English Reform Legislation', *History of Parliament: the House of Commons 1820-1832*, D.R. Fisher (ed.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009). The BNA did not return a single newspaper that ran with this reference to Schedules A and B until 1869.

[27] 'New Works Just Published', *Cambridge Chronicle and Journal*, Saturday 08 July 1837, p. 3 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000421/18370708/046/0003> [Accessed: 28/03/2021].

[28] 'To Messrs Chapman and Hall, [?6 August 1836]', *Pilgrim Edition of the Letters of Charles Dickens*, 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965) p. 161.

review contained a section about Dickens's politics, which declared that 'Mr. Pickwick was a Whig, and that was only right; but Boz is just as much a Whig as he is a giraffe'.[29] Infuriatingly, even in this letter, Dickens closely guards the secrets of the politics of the Eatanswill parties, refusing to verify even in a letter to his publishers whether *Fraser's Magazine* have interpreted the scene correctly or not, if indeed, there is a 'correct interpretation' to be had. It is more likely that there is no answer at all, and that Dickens crafted this scene to stimulate amusing political wrangling among the very journalists upon whom Eatanswill's narrative style is based. If this is the case, then it contributes to a broader sense that remediation was a two-way street, and that the Pickwickian silences in the comic anecdotes discussed in Chapter 1 were placed deliberately by Dickens, with a view to interaction with newspaper editors. If we understand this to have been the case, then attending to *Pickwick* remediations in the press reveals a hitherto underappreciated and mutually beneficial discourse between *Pickwick*'s production and reception contexts, which was ultimately catalysed by political potentialities deliberately imbued by the author and exploited by the newspaper editor.

More convincing evidence for this last claim can be found in another letter, written less than two weeks later, when Dickens was preparing to leave London as the prorogation of Parliament drew near. The letter is directed to Thomas Fraser, then a sub-editor at the *Morning Chronicle*—for whom Dickens was yet a reporter—and promises to return to town 'in any case of pressing emergency', during his six-week holiday to Denham, anticipating that it will be an uneventful time journalistically. In exchange for this favour and almost as an afterthought, Dickens appends the following postscript to the letter: 'I should think in the Vacation you might give an occasional Extract from Pickwick.—The other papers have done so, even in the Session'.[30] Dickens notes that even when Parliament is sitting and the press filled with the latest political reports from both houses—which often precluded the extensive notice of literature—other newspapers have found space for extracts.[31] With space often a problem, the fact that Dickens suggested that his literature still be included, and that many newspapers' did in fact make space for it, suggests early synergies between Dickens's literature and parliamentary politics that the press would continue to exploit across his lifetime. Crucially, this example clearly shows that Dickens was courting a press response to the individual numbers of *Pickwick* (here reprinted extracts specifically) and perhaps even that he became

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[29] *Ibid.*
[30] 'To Thomas Fraser [?18 August 1836], *Pilgrim Edition of the Letters of Charles Dickens*, 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965) p. 166.
[31] Katherine Chittick, 'Pickwick Papers and the Sun, 1833-1836', *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 39.3 (1984) pp. 328–335 (p. 329).

particularly impatient for such a response during the same month that the Eatanswill election chapter of the serial was published, a chapter which, as we have seen, invites interaction and political speculation. It is, I would argue, Dickens's consistent efforts to 'lose' the specifics about Eatanswill that encourage newspaper editors to find them. How they did so, is the subject of the next section.

II. Locating Eatanswill

When in August 1836 Dickens requested that his colleague at the *Morning Chronicle* include some extracts from *Pickwick*, he little knew that, on that very day, the *Chronicle* had in fact printed an anecdote from the Eatanswill chapter. It was tucked away in an obscure corner, rather than emblazoned with commentary in the literary reviews section, which is perhaps why Dickens had missed it.[32] The *Chronicle* was far from alone in its notice. Indeed, if Dickens's politically ambiguous rendering of Eatanswill was newspaper bait, and his letter to Fraser impatience to see it snapped up, then the *Morning Chronicle*'s engagement with the chapter and that of other newspapers during the first month of publication more than realised that aim. Parliament might have been on the point of proroguing by the time Dickens wrote his letter to Fraser, but the summer months had been marked by discussion about amendments to electoral policy that was still fresh in the public consciousness.

While at a first glance they are as ambiguous and placeless as Dickens endeavoured to make Eatanswill, such extracts in fact marked the start of decades of a specific and highly partisan engagement with Eatanswill politics in the press. Eatanswill became steeped in this rich context, and whereas the adaptations I discussed in Chapter 2 forged their political engagements by producing fictional re-renderings of Dickens's text, the early Eatanswill extracts published verbatim by the press relied entirely on what I will call a 'politics of adjacency' to make meaning, drawing significance from neighbouring articles and paratextual commentary that waxed political in explicit terms. It was this politics of adjacency which meant Eatanswill moved from being nowhere to being everywhere. This is not to say that newspapers were motivated by a search for the 'original' Eatanswill, as they were when the matter was taken up by local historians and Dickens scholars in the early-twentieth century, but that the 'types' of scenes, characters and corrupt practices Dickens set out in his version of *Pickwick* were made whole by the partisan backdrops against which they were set in the

[32] 'A Contested Election', *Morning Chronicle*, Thursday 18th August 1836, p. 3 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000082/18360818/011/0003> [Accessed: 30/11/2018].

press. The early, persistent association of lengthy Eatanswill excerpts with Reform politics in the 1830s, I contend, ultimately enabled its ability to circulate independently in the form of fragmented evocations in later years because its political potentialities had already been well established in a newspaper context. David Parker has suggested that '[t]he reform [Dickens] dwelled upon in the 1847 preface is central to the meaning of *Pickwick*, however much Dickens neglected to speak of it in 1837', and yet looking closely at both Dickens's crafting of Eatanswill and its use in the press shows Dickens's engagement with Reform politics to have been both more self-aware and to have begun much earlier than ten years after serialisation had ended.[33] Understanding these foundations is crucial to making sense of the later and longer-lasting proliferation of Eatanswill evocations in the post-serialisation decades.

At this point it is helpful to turn to the *Morning Chronicle* as an example of how the politicisation of Eatanswill excerpts in the 1830s set the stage for the huge number of evocations that appeared later, such as that which appeared in the *Illustrated London News* article I discussed earlier. The scene the *Chronicle* decided to excerpt in August is an exchange between Pickwick and Sam, in which Pickwick shows his naivety about electoral corruption and Sam illustrates its proliferation with some comic tales. This scene was very popular in August, and was often printed with the generic heading 'A Contested Election' (See Databases 2 and 3). Like the examples in Chapter 1, its status as an anecdote added to its appeal because the scene had a clear beginning and end and *Pickwick*'s lack of response meant it was more portable (see Figure 14 below). It is also important to note that this particular cut re-doubled the generality and placelessness with which, as we have seen, Dickens had already imbued the chapter. The section does not mention Eatanswill, the electors, or any character or location besides Sam and Pickwick by name, so that these election bribes and malpractices might be taking place in any location and between any rival parties. Taken alone, the question 'where is Eatanswill?' looms larger than even Dickens's chapter allows; the hint of the 'Norwich coach' certainly disappears.

[33] It is important to note that David Parker was in the process of writing a book entitled *Dickens and Reform* before his death in 2013. The article cited here was an edited chapter draft published posthumously in the *Dickens Studies Annual*. It seems likely that the book would have cemented the relationship between *Pickwick* and the Reform Act in new ways. See, David Parker, 'Pickwick and Reform: Origins', *Dickens Studies Annual*, 2014, 45 (2014) pp. 1–21.

A CONTESTED ELECTION.—"Well, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, as his valet appeared at his bed-room door, just as he was concluding his toilet, "All alive to-day, I suppose?"—"Reg'lar game, sir," replied Mr. Weller; "our people's a collecting down at the Town's Arms, and the're hollering themselves hoarse already."—"Ah!" said Mr. Pickwick. "Do they seem devoted to their party, Sam?"—"Never see such devotion in my life, sir."—"Energetic, eh?" said Mr. Pickwick. "Uncommon," replied Sam. "I never seed men eat and drink so much afore. I wonder they an't afeered of bustin."—"That's a mistaken kindness of the gentry here," said Mr. Pickwick. "Werry likely," replied Sam, briefly. "Fine, fre-h, hearty fellows they seem," said Mr. Pickwick, as he glanced from the window. "Werry fresh," replied Sam; "me and the two waiters at the Peacock has been a pumpin' over the independent voters as supped there last night."—"Pumping over independent voters?" replied Mr. Pickwick. "Yes," said his attendant, "every man slept where he fell down; we dragged 'em out one by one this morning, and put 'em under the pump, and they're in reg'lar fine order now. Shilling a head the committee paid for that 'ere job." "Can such things be!" exclaimed the astonished Mr. Pickwick. "Lord bless your heart, sir," said Sam, "why, where was you half baptized?—that's nothing—that an't."—"Nothing?" said Mr. Pickwick. "Nothing at all," replied the attendant. "The night afore the last 'lection here, the opposite party bribed the barmaid at the Town's Arms to hocus the brandy and water of fourteen unpolled electors as was a stoppin' in the house." "What do you mean by hocussing brandy and water?" inquired Mr. Pickwick. "Puttin' laudanum in it," replied Sam. "Blest if she did'nt send 'em all to sleep till twelve hours after the 'lection was over! They took one man up to the booth on a truck fast asleep by way of experiment; but it was no go—they wouldn't poll him, so they brought him back and put him to bed again."—*Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club*, No. I.

Figure 14: 'A Contested Election', *Morning Chronicle*[34]

What is crucial about this early example is that it became politically partisan only by dint of adjacent matter. In this case, zooming out from the extract itself reveals that the preceding article, taken from the *Bury Post*, is about a real 'contested election' due to take place in Great Yarmouth, because the Tory representative for the borough planned to retire.[35] The *Bury Post* did not directly quote the speech offered by the councillor when he stepped down, but described it as 'abounding in assertions and accusations prejudicial to the Liberal interest, which are without foundation, and are put forth with the view of serving the purposes of the Tories, who always have been, and ever will be, opposed to the welfare and freedom of the people'.[36] The article concluded that '[w]e may, before long, be involved in all the bustle and excitement of a hotly contested election. The Liberals are prepared for it, come when it may, and as for the event, barring heavy bribery, the Tories have not a chance'.[37] After clearly identifying location, parties and electors, this article then leads directly into the considerably less specific *Pickwick* extract that follows, headed 'A Contested Election'. Eatanswill acts as a sort of template, upon which some of the aggression and political specificity of the *Bury Post* article is imprinted. This link also cuts both ways, as *Pickwick* is altered by but also alters the *Bury Post*'s piece. Where no direct dialogue is cited in the article, since the councillor's speech is not quoted, the dialogue of the *Pickwick* extract supplements that silence with its own comments about bribery at elections. In this way, the fictional extract becomes a form of evidence that supports the claims of the preceding article: Tory bribery is inevitable, and that

[34] 'A Contested Election', *Morning Chronicle*, p. 3.
[35] 'Yarmouth, August 15th', *Morning Chronicle*, p. 3.
[36] *Ibid.*
[37] *Ibid.*

inevitability is played out in the subsequent excerpt, which projects towards a future contested election.

For the *Chronicle*, at stake here is the perpetuation of its own political opinion; at this time it was a Whig, pro-Reform paper and, with John Easthope as editor, both outspoken and styling itself as the political nemesis to *The Times*.[38] Networks of themed articles and careful linking strategies partially mobilised by extracts can therefore also be traced across the rest of the paper. Indeed, to regard this issue as a whole, we can see that the links established between the *Pickwick* 'Contested Election' extract and the preceding article about the real contested election are part of a much wider and more intricate network, offering us some clues as to why the Eatanswill episode was such a popular choice for editors and their scissors in August. Searching the words 'election' and 'bribery' in this issue of the *Chronicle* reveals at least one article dealing directly with or containing a section about electoral bribery on every single page, with the exception of the first page which is dedicated to shipping intelligence and advertisements. On the same page as the *Pickwick* and *Bury Post* extracts is a letter to Daniel O'Connell. Generally admiring of the politician, it contains a section praising O'Connell's entreaty to the public not to drink in the run up to the election for Clare, so that the votes he received would be from sober voters, an instruction which was, allegedly, miraculously followed by his supporters.[39] On the fourth page, under 'Assize Intelligence' is a short account of a case at the Bristol Assizes concerning a Tory politician who stood accused of election bribery, in contravention of the Municipal Corporations Act, because it was alleged he offered work hauling stones to a voter provided he voted for two Tory candidates instead of two Liberals.[40] This article was also reprinted next to the same Eatanswill election extract in another Liberal paper, the *Suffolk Chronicle*, on the 27th of August 1836.[41] Finally, on page two is the 'Imperial Parliament' section, in which it is stated that the County Election Polls Bill and the Bribery at Elections Bill had both been passed the previous day.[42]

It is at this point that the topical motivations behind this network of bribery-themed articles becomes clear. The County Election Polls Bill originally aimed at 'the more convenient Division of Counties into Polling Districts for the Election of Members of Parliament and for

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[38] Kery Chez, 'Morning Chronicle (1770-1862)', *DNCJ*, Laurel Brake and Marysa Demoor (eds) (Gent: Academia Press, 2009) pp. 426–27.
[39] 'Mr. O'Connell's Advice to the Irish Peasantry', *Morning Chronicle*, p. 3.
[40] 'Western Circuit', *Morning Chronicle*, p. 4.
[41] 'A Contested Election', *Suffolk Chronicle*, Saturday 27 August 1836, p. 1 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0001325/18360827/015/0001> [Accessed: 28/03/2021].
[42] 'Imperial Parliament', *Morning Chronicle*, p. 2.

Taking the Poll in One day'.[43] After some debate, it had been passed by the House of Lords with amendments, to which the Commons would agree on the 19th of August, and the bill would receive Royal Assent on the 20th of August, just before the summer prorogation of Parliament. The Bribery at Elections Bill had been passed fifty to one by the House of Commons on the 17th of August and sent to the Lords.[44] As Norman Gash notes, the division of counties into polling districts was one of four points that the Reform Act left to be dealt with by subsequent legislation, which meant that in the 1836 parliamentary session, these points and others were at the heart of political discussion.[45] Debate about both bills and a confusing web of other borough-based electoral policy reforms had been raging throughout August, and it had also become a favourite joke among newspaper editors to compare political scenes from *Pickwick* (such as Pickwick's parliamentary-style address to the club) to real parliamentary rhetoric.[46] In this edition of the *Morning Chronicle*, readers were thus encountering bribery at elections on every page, and by the time they reached the *Pickwick* extract on page three, it would have gained all kinds of specific associations. These associations, multiplied across the early *Pickwick* excerpts, ultimately enabled Eatanswill to function as a capsular, independently circulating reference in later articles about electoral politics during the 1850s and 1860s, when these accumulated associations and layers of meaning could be strategically evoked independently from one another and from the larger context of Dickens's serial.

Eatanswill's politics were also easily modifiable in this way because the temporality of the serial was up for debate as well as the politics of its scenes and characters. This meant it could be manipulated by parties that wished to show the Reform Act had or had not worked. *Pickwick*'s action begins on the 12th of May 1827, and, as David Bevington has pointed out, paying attention to the changing seasons, named dates, and the succession of adverbs that mark the passage of time—such as 'the next day'—leaves us with three very different and contradictory timelines: two of which, in the early numbers, leave us in the 'recent past' and one which places us firmly in the present, down to the month of publication.[47] It is this

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[43] *Journals of the House of Commons*, 91 (London: House of Commons, 1836) p. 547.
[44] *Ibid.*, p. 830.
[45] Norman Gash, *Politics in the Age of Peel* (New York: Norton, 1971) p. 67.
[46] See for example, 'The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club', *Northampton Mercury*, Saturday 16 April 1836, p. 3 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000317/18360416/021/0004> [Accessed: 01/06/2021]. For a more detailed account of the relationship between Pickwick and Parliament see, Caroline Vellenga-Berman, 'Snoring for the million: Pickwick and the Parliamentary Papers', *Nineteenth Century Contexts*, 40.5 (2018) pp. 433–453. Vellenga-Berman argues that '*Pickwick* […] parodies both the energies of a modernizing Parliament and its overreach – betraying the People even as it courts them through experiments in publication. We might thus read *The Pickwick Papers* as a comic riposte to the *Parliamentary Papers*' (p. 434).
[47] Bevington, pp. 219–220.

multiple timeline which meant that the Conservative *Kentish Gazette* could convincingly introduce Eatanswill as a 'keen satire[…] upon the scenes of our modern elections' at the same time as the Whig, pro-Reform *Kendal Mercury* was sarcastically describing it as a 'most laughable sketch of the proceedings of a contested election in the glorious days when boroughs were unreformed'.[48] A decade later in 1847, the Chartist *Northern Star*, one of the last papers I have been able to find that uses a long extract from *Pickwick* to make its point, described Eatanswill as 'what elections were before Chartism came into existence'.[49] All three of these assertions could technically be true, purely because *Pickwick*'s complicated structure allows it.

More than politics are at stake in Eatanswill's widespread re-use during this first month of publication if we also read the proliferation of extracts as key to understanding the narrative of *Pickwick*'s rise to financial and popular success. This narrative, as it is usually told, is based on sales figures and the extent of the monthly print run: both of which reflect an uninspiring debut (Robert Patten has described the sales as 'anemic') followed by a spike in popularity after Sam Weller's introduction to the serial, the event that is often understood to have saved *Pickwick* from failure.[50] And yet, if we use the proliferation of extracts in the press during the first five numbers as another index to the serial's rise to success, this narrative can be nuanced slightly – both in a way that demands Sam share some of the credit with Eatanswill, and which in turn explains Eatanswill's survival in the form of political evocations throughout the rest of Dickens's lifetime.

Figure 15 below details the number of *Pickwick* extracts that appeared in the newspapers that the British Newspaper Archive has digitised so far. It is not an exhaustive count, given that the BNA includes just shy of ten percent of the British Library's print and microfilm collection, but it does offer some sense of the development of the press notice of the serial during the shaky first few months of publication. The first extracts began to appear in early April, about a week after the first number was published in late-March, and the BNA's dataset returns forty-five extracts in April, six each in May and June, thirteen in July and forty-five again in August (the month following Eatanswill's appearance). These figures do seem fairly

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[48] 'The Pickwick Papers', *Kentish Gazette*, Tuesday 16 August 1836, pp. 2–3, <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/BL/0000235/18360816/002/0003> [Accessed: 23/03/2021]; 'Picture of a Contested Election', *Kendal Mercury*, 27th August 1836, p. 4 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000429/18360827/023/0004> [Accessed: 14/08/2019].
[49] 'Eatanswill Election', *Northern Star*, Saturday 31 July 1847, p. 4 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000091/18470731/014/0004> [Accessed: 28.03.2021].
[50] See Robert Patten, *Charles Dickens and "Boz"*, p. 103.

erratic, even accounting for the fragmentary nature of the BNA, but this is largely because looking at the quantitative statistics alone is deceptive. In the graph below I have picked out one particular extract in red—labelled 'Cabman's Horse'—which requires further explanation to correct what otherwise looks like an uncomplicated reception narrative marked by an understandably high level of interest in the first number, which remained unmatched until the fifth.

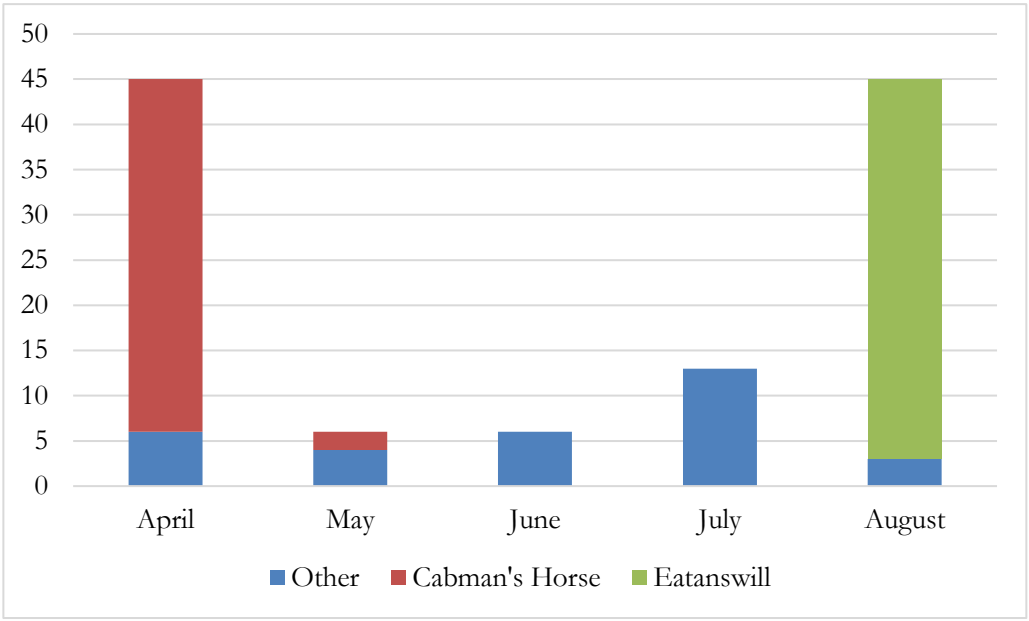

Figure 15: *Pickwick* Excerpts, Nos 1-5[51]

The 'Cabman's Horse' refers to a short scene from the *Pickwick Papers* which appeared in the first number. It consists of a London cabman who introduces the naïve Mr. Pickwick to his forty-two-year-old horse while he eagerly makes notes:

> 'He lives at Pentonwil when he's at home,' observed the driver, coolly, 'but we seldom takes him home, on account of his veakness.'
>
> 'On account of his weakness;' reiterated the perplexed Mr. Pickwick.
>
> 'He always falls down when he's took out o' the cab,' continued the driver, 'but when he's in it, we bears him up werry tight, and takes him in werry short, so as he can't werry well fall down, and we've got a pair o' precious large wheels on; so ven he *does* move, they run after him, and he must go on—he can't help it.'[52]

[51] This data was collected on the 27th of March 2021. To view the data, please see the 'Figure 15' tab in Database 3.
[52] *Pickwick*, p. 7.

It is worth noting that this scene has many of the appealing features discussed in Chapter 1 which made it particularly suited to remediation: at exactly one hundred words, it is portable; as an anecdote to which Mr. Pickwick can make no coherent response in his perplexed state, it is capsular; and it also carries a certain topical humour, as London cabmen were notorious for the poor treatment of their horses in the early-nineteenth century. Additionally, although appearing three months before Sam's introduction to the serial, it is related by a witty cockney character (the cabman) which perhaps also accounts for its interest for the press. Some of these features or a combination of them led to a wave of reprints during April: I have located no fewer than thirty-nine.[53]

At first glance this fact would seem to suggest that *Pickwick*'s novelty led to a widespread initial journalistic engagement with the serial, but we must temper this hypothesis by attending closely to the presentation of the reprint. All thirty-nine examples of this extract use an identical heading: 'A Cabman's Description of his Horse', and none include any commentary or review. This suggests that, rather than a flurry of newspaper editors rushing to report on the newly-published serial because it looked likely to be a hit, most publications using this extract simply found the content in the pages of one of their contemporaries. Three of the reprints I have found are also typographically identical, because they are published in papers belonging to Alaric Watts' empire of Conservative papers, all of which used partly-printed sheets.[54] Furthermore, almost all the reprints include the same attribution at the top of the article—'*from the Pickwick Papers*', and by the time the extract has travelled to Ireland at the end of April, it is mistakenly attributed as 'Pickwick (American Paper)'. The fictional serial has become a real American newspaper or periodical. All this suggests that we should proceed with caution before interpreting this proliferation of Cabman's Horse extracts as widespread interest in *Pickwick* the serial, as knowledge of what precisely *Pickwick* was at this stage was by no means an established fact. This is reflected in the low number of excerpts that appeared in May and June, which dovetails more closely with the narrative of *Pickwick*'s poor sales, reduced print run and Chapman and Hall's failed attempts to find a suitable new illustrator following Seymour's death.

Nonetheless, by the time we reach the Eatanswill number in August, *Pickwick* had been widely-reviewed across Britain, with more extracts being attributed to Dickens, 'Boz' and

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[53] See for example, 'A Cabman's Description of his Horse', *Brighton Gazette*, Thursday 14 April 1836, p. 4 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000938/18360414/043/0004> [Accessed: 01/06/2021] and 'A Cabman's Description of his Horse', *Bristol Mercury*, Saturday 16 April 1836, p. 4 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000034/18360416/018/0004> [Accessed: 01/06/2021].

[54] With thanks to Andrew Hobbs for kindly sharing his research about Alaric Watts.

Chapman and Hall as the publishers. While there is of course still evidence of newspapers reprinting between themselves, there is also more variation in the ways that the Eatanswill scenes were re-presented when compared with the Cabman's Horse anecdote: different scenes are selected, a variety of titles are appended, and newspapers included their own preambles, which often lead Eatanswill in politically partisan directions, as we saw in the examples from the *Morning Chronicle*, the *Kendal Mercury* and the *Kentish Gazette*. We may therefore more safely assume that, at this point in *Pickwick*'s serial run, a proliferation of extracts correlates more accurately to journalistic interest in the serial. For this reason, more emphasis can be placed upon the idea that such excerpts served to flesh out the signifying power of 'Eatanswill' as a political concept, which in turn led to its widespread evocation in later decades.

While this was by no means as evident in 1837, what was certain by August was that journalistic interest in *Pickwick* saw a notable increase and it did so because Eatanswill politics captured the attention of the press. This is not to suggest that Sam Weller played no role in the serial's success and that critics have hitherto been looking in the wrong places for the trigger of *Pickwick*'s rise to fame: for one thing, the graph above shows a smaller, but nonetheless notable increase in the number of extracts published in July 1836 (the month of Sam Weller's introduction to the serial). That said, it would be counterintuitive to suggest that the newspaper press simply responded sluggishly to the revelation of Sam Weller, since the process of excerpting fiction was, as we have seen, marked by a sense of urgency, with newspapers like the *Taunton Courier* finding it necessary to apologise to its readers if its notice of the serial was late, and the *Canterbury Journal* rejecting readers' suggestions if the extracts came from older numbers (see Chapter 1, above). My point here is that Sam's introduction was not the only, nor even the most important factor in securing *Pickwick* the initial, widespread notice in the press that would endure during its serialisation. And yet, despite the ways Dickens's authorial decisions and the Reform backdrop of the 1830s meant that the Eatanswill scene lent itself to political excerpting during these first few months of publication, it was over a decade after *Pickwick*'s serialisation ended in November 1837 that Eatanswill's politics were at their most intense. Conversely, this longer history was a direct result of these foundations in the tradition of excerpting and a politics of adjacency which repeatedly allied the scene with Reform debates. Equipped with these early political associations, by the 1850s, rather than halting at the edges of the excerpt, or relying on Dickens's own gaps to ensure that Eatanswill scenes became fully enmeshed with partisan contexts, both journalists and readers began to leave Dickens's text far behind.

III. Dislocating Eatanswill

In 1854, the *Oxford University and City Herald* took up the terms of Dickens's preface to the *Pickwick Papers*, disagreeing with the author's assessment of the book's relevance to contemporary society:

> The talented author of the *Pickwick Papers*, in his preface to the recent edition of that work, expressed the satisfaction afforded him by the fact that many of the abuses which were the object of the genial satire of these pages are now numbered among the things that were. Unfortunately, there are follies therein held up to ridicule which still flourish in all their pristine ugliness, and among them we regret to number Eatanswill editorialism.[55]

The *Herald* went on to complain bitterly about the unprofessional bickering of a series of newspapers, including *The Times*, the *Athenaeum*, the *Critic* and the *Advertiser*, which was reminiscent, in its view, of the Pott-Slurk rivalry of Eatanswill. Ironically, while Eatanswill is generally understood to be a provincial town, the publications listed by the *Herald* here are all London-based periodicals, an indication of the extent to which Eatanswill's geographical malleability enabled it to assume either side of a metropolitan-provincial rivalry. Indeed, by 1870, the *Birmingham Daily Post* and others had printed an article jeering at Tory editorialism, declaring: '[c]learly Eatanswill still exists—only it has deserted "the provinces," and gone to London'.[56] Most crucially, the *Herald*'s article and many others like it show that, even decades after its initial publication, *Pickwick*'s readers were still staking a claim to the novel's topicality, even if it meant contradicting Dickens's own claims about its obsolescence in his prefaces. That Eatanswill was evoked as topical following its serialisation is not just an indication of its enduring relevance in general terms. In fact, following its publication in volume form in late 1837, references to Eatanswill in the press dropped off and remained low throughout the 1840s. Most notably, verbatim excerpts disappeared almost entirely. It was not until the early 1850s that the number of mentions began to rise again, although they took on a new format.

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[55] 'Summary of the Week', *Oxford University and City Herald*, Saturday 18 November 1854, p. 11 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000993/18541118/041/0011> [Accessed: 01/06/2021].

[56] See *Birmingham Daily Post*, Wednesday 22 June 1870, p. 5 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000033/18700622/009/0005> [Accessed: 01/06/2021]. For further examples see: 'Split in the Camp', *Western Daily Press*, Thursday 23 June 1870, p. 3 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000264/18700623/012/0003> [Accessed: 01/06/2021] and 'How These Tories Love One Another', *Leeds Times*, Saturday 25 June 1870, p. 7 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000336/18700625/026/0007> [Accessed: 01/06/2021].

The next two sections suggest two reasons for Eatanswill's return to the public consciousness in the 1850s and 1860s: the first is that its suitability as a trope to be re-shaped and recontextualised across a variety of political contexts (as well as the political associations it had accumulated while being excerpted in the 1830s) meant that it became an ideal political tool to be used in renewing discussions about Reform. It is no coincidence that Lord John Russell's first attempt to introduce a new Reform Bill to the House took place in 1852, after which point, evocations of Eatanswill in the press slowly, if erratically, began to increase once again, and political articles that explicitly evoked the scene to illustrate arguments about current Reform discourse began to appear more frequently in the press. The second, related reason for Eatanswill's resurgence in the columns of the press in the 1850s is because it was at this point that it began to be used extensively in public readings. A favourite for entertainments, elocution class performances, penny readings, and Mechanics' Institute meetings, Eatanswill became a popular choice for these programmes in a way that is not unconnected to its political remediation in the service of Reform debates. As we will see, the reports of these public readings published in the press show Eatanswill to have been repeatedly re-rendered in both local and politically specific ways. Mapping Eatanswill's parallel, thematic use across these different forums emphasises the multimedia aspect of its remediation and *Pickwick*'s particular malleability.

Post-serialisation, Eatanswill often became dislocated from the text of *Pickwick*, travelling as an independent and self-referential trope with a variety of associations that its political users could emphasise, de-emphasise, re-shape or abandon, according to context. Even when Eatanswill was quoted directly, it was evoked by the line rather than by the paragraph in the style of the excerpts we saw in the previous section and Chapter 1: political users were more selective or cited inaccurately. Understanding Eatanswill's remediation and its patterns of emphasis can give us a clearer understanding of the priorities of the communities using it. Eatanswill, like the Reform discourse of the 1850s and 1860s, operated at the nexus of discussions about politics and local geography, and as such, when it shadowed the fraught progress towards the Second Reform Act, once again came to emblematise anxieties about the relationship between constituency boundaries, local governance, corruption and enfranchisement. Analysing this complex role in turn re-shapes our understanding of literature's relationship with political debate, and how that might be characterised when a trope is, to some extent, divorced from its source text.

The graph below (Figure 16) synthesises the findings displayed in Database 3, with the blue line indicating the total number of references to Eatanswill across the British press between 1838 and 1870. While it is important to approach data such as this with the eternal caveat that

we are dealing with trends and patterns rather than numerical absolutes, the data made available by the BNA to date nonetheless incorporates sufficient scope and variety to afford us some cautious speculation, which can be substantiated when paired with the close reading of individual Eatanswill evocations. The red line in the graph below indicates the proportion of evocations that deployed Eatanswill in a discussion of electoral politics (either British or overseas), while the green line shows the proportion of those that appeared in reports about public readings for which Eatanswill was part of the programme. Public readings are an essential source of evidence here, because all 118 of the examples I have been able to find from the 1850s and 1860s show that readers chose to perform the Eatanswill election scene specifically, as opposed to the rivalry of the two Eatanswill editors, Winkle's dalliance with Mrs Pott or any other Eatanswill chapter. That the emphasis is invariably political, at a time when electoral politics was a source of particular interest, further contributes to the sense that Eatanswill's recital at these events was often motivated by its perceived relevance to these debates.

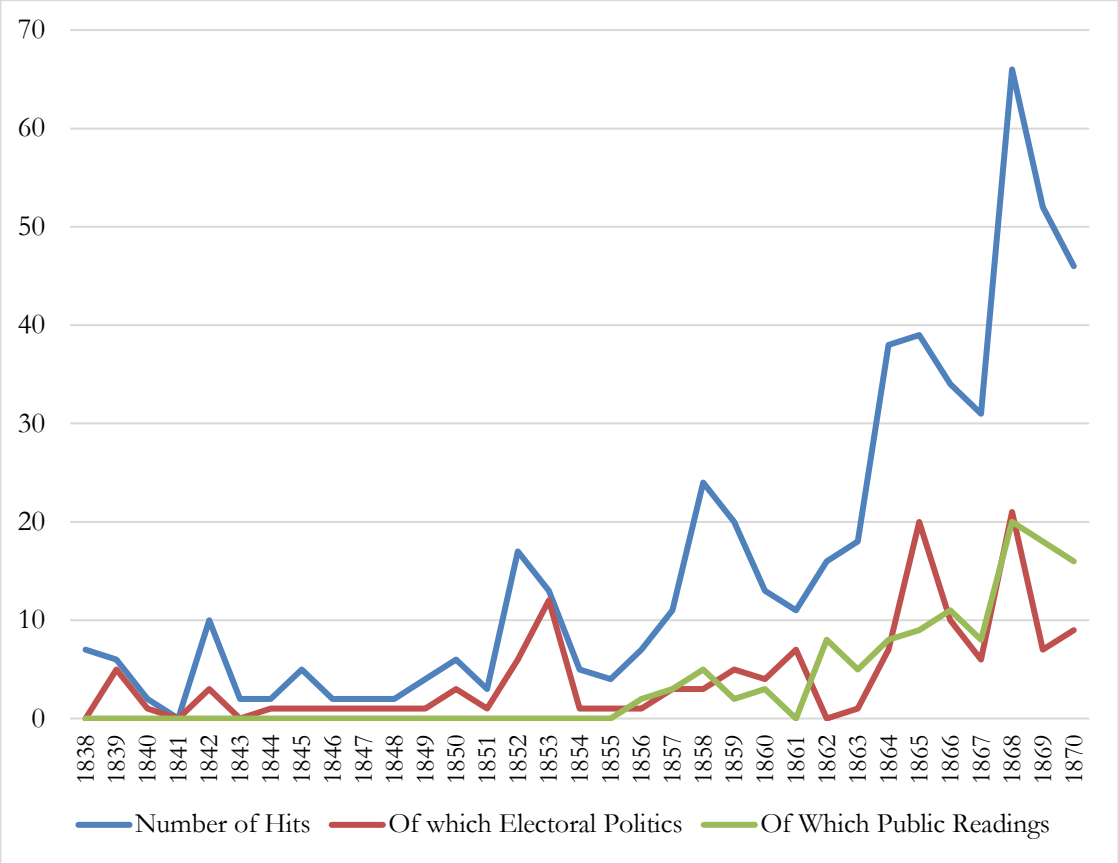

Figure 16: Eatanswill Evocations, 1838-1870

The fact that the number of newspaper titles increased across the nineteenth century means that any upward trends in newspaper data need to be regarded cautiously. However, it is nonetheless telling that fifty-six percent of all political evocations of Eatanswill and seventy-six

percent of all the public reading reports catalogued in Database 3 were printed between 1864 and 1870, the years immediately preceding and following the Second Reform Act (which took some two years to roll out completely). There is also a notable spike in political evocations in 1852 and 1853, precisely the time when Russell proposed his first bill to Parliament. The mentions plummet again in 1854, when the Crimean War took greater precedence in the press.[57] Another spike took place in 1865, when the General Election made discussion about reforming the franchise particularly topical—and Palmerston's death led to the re-appointment of Russell as Prime Minister.[58] Finally, there was another spike in 1868 and 1869, the years after the second Act was passed, when the first post-Reform general election saw William Gladstone returned as Prime Minister. These hints of correlation, while not alone definitive proof of a relationship between Eatanswill evocations and Reform debates, demonstrate the importance of further investigation.

Across these decades, Dickens's antagonistically unpartisan approach to politics in his version of the Eatanswill scene often facilitated the detachment of the Eatanswill trope from the text of *Pickwick*, as it encouraged local papers and the communities they reported to adopt it as a creative analogy to articulate local political problems. The map below is a visualisation of the real places with which Eatanswill was compared—favourably or otherwise—in the context of electoral politics between 1836 and 1870. It is worth noting that, once again, the majority of these comparisons were drawn after 1852, supporting the sense that renewed Reform debates facilitated the return of the trope to the public consciousness. This map also demands that we re-locate some of the agency for imbuing Eatanswill with meaning away from Dickens himself and towards those formulating the scene's newspaper remediation: readers, politicians, or simply those who understood and exploited the pun inherent in the name. Early-twentieth-century scholarship produced by the first members of the Dickens Fellowship aimed to map Eatanswill to a discrete 'origin' suggested by Dickens's text, and Sudbury, Ipswich and Bury St Edmunds have been proposed as the most likely 'originals', due to Dickens's experience of attending violent elections in these areas shortly before *Pickwick* was written, and his

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[57] For example, in 1854, the *Illustrated London News* published an article about Lord John Russell's postponement of the second Reform Bill, a decision it attributes to the Crimean War. The article states that the 'Anglo-Saxon mind likes to do one thing at a time, in order that the one thing may be done effectually. The heart of the people is in the War. They are desirous of devoting their whole energies to it. They are willing to pay for, and are ready to fight in it. They are determined, if conviction and courage can accomplish great ends, to make it "short and sharp." Their thoughts are in the Baltic, with Sir Charles Napier and his gallant blue-jackets, and not in Sudbury, St. Albans, or "Eatanswill," with pettifogging lawyers and venal potwalloppers'. See, 'The Postponement of the Reform Bill', *Illustrated London News*, Saturday 15 April 1854, p. 1 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/BL/0001578/18540415/006/0001> [Accessed: 30/01/2022].

[58] John Prest, 'Russell, John [formerly Lord John Russell], first Earl Russell', *ODNB* (2009) <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/24325> [Accessed: 01/06/2021].

belaboured reference to the 'Norwich coach' (which would have passed through these areas before terminating in Norfolk).[59] Versions of this theory have been largely accepted in recent scholarship also, if, indeed, Eatanswill is discussed at all.[60] What this map shows is that nineteenth-century newspapers took quite the opposite approach to that of twentieth-century Dickens scholars in their understanding of Eatanswill's potential to create meaning. For these local communities, Dickens's 'original' location for Eatanswill was far less important than its representational value for current, local debates. There are articles which bring Eatanswill corruption into dialogue with places as distant from one another as Dundee, Falmouth, Bridgnorth, Portsmouth and Scarborough, and in fact, many of the places to which Eatanswill is most frequently compared in the papers catalogued in this database are in quite the opposite direction to the Suffolk localities scholars have more lately settled upon as the 'real' Eatanswill.[61]

[59] See for example: Frederick G. Jackson, 'Letter to the Editor: The Original of Eatanswill', *Dickensian*, 3.5 (1907) p. 133; J. W. T. Ley, 'Is Sudbury Eatanswill?', *Dickensian*, 3.5 (1907) pp. 117–118; and J. G., 'Eatanswill?', *Dickensian* 58.337 (1962) pp. 110–111.

[60] There are few recent articles that take Eatanswill as their main subject, for the most recent, see: Taeko Sakai, 'Forty-Five Green Parasols at the Eatanswill Election', *Dickensian* 116.3 (2021) pp. 261–272.

[61] See for example a comparison to Portsmouth: 'Sir James Dalrymple Horn Elphinstone' *Hampshire Telegraph*, Saturday 04 June 1864, p. 4 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000069/18640604/010/0004> [Accessed: 01/06/2021]; For a comparison to Nottingham see: 'Mr. Trevelyan Among the "Mechanics"', *Newcastle Journal*, Thursday 12 January 1865, p. 2 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000242/18650112/008/0002> [Accessed: 01/06/2021].

Figure 17: Eatanswill's Geographies, 1836-1870[62]

Let us take Wakefield as an example to begin to consider what value the Eatanswill trope had for local communities during these fraught political decades. Wakefield had been enfranchised in 1832 with the Great Reform Act, but, less than two decades later, already seemed to be in danger as a result of accusations of widespread electoral corruption.[63] In 1859, the *Leeds Times*, operating from an industrial centre which had also seen its representation increase in 1832, wrote a scathing article about corruption in the neighbouring borough, to which its paper would have circulated:

> Who has not read Charles Dickens' inimitable sketch of the immaculate purity of election in the borough of Eatanswill? It strikes us that our very own town Wakefield is likely to furnish a rather startling though instructive illustration of the way in which Parliamentary elections may be won in small boroughs. If she escapes

[62] Key: Black=4 references; Dark Red=3; Light Red=2; Orange=1. Please see 'Figure 17 Data' tab in Database 3 for more details.
[63] Gash, p. 67.

> disenfranchisement it certainly will not be for lack of evidence of political corruption'.[64]

In a way that would have been unusual during its serialisation, Eatanswill is attributed to Dickens using his full name, as if the author's authority might lend additional credence to the *Times*'s point. Additionally, despite the reference to Wakefield as 'our very own town', there is also something of condescension in the *Times*'s tone here, which emphasises both the smallness of the borough as well as Wakefield as a 'type' of constituency that was both particularly susceptible to corruption and separate from city constituencies like Leeds. The small boroughs were a particular point of contention in the years running up to the second Reform Act, a point to which I will return. However, it is not always the case that journalists used the Eatanswill template to point fingers at the local politics of neighbouring constituencies. Instead, communities can often be found describing their own areas *as* Eatanswill, because local pride is outweighed by internal party conflicts. This was the case in another piece about Wakefield, published much closer to the passing of the Second Reform Act and printed in the local, Liberal *Wakefield Free Press* following the 1865 General Election, when tensions about bribery and corruption were understandably running high. The author explains the nature of the contest between the Liberal candidate William Leatham and the Conservative candidate John Hay, including a comparison between the respective meetings of the two parties (where allegedly Leatham 'gave every person an opportunity of knowing his opinions', and Hay by contrast refused to allow journalists, except a reporter from the Conservative organ, to watch the proceedings).[65] The article then closes with a protracted comparison of the proceedings to Eatanswill:

> Many events in the present contest have reminded us of the famous contest at Eatanswill, as described by Mr. Dickens. There have been the Buffs and the Blues in Wakefield, as well as Eatanswill, and we have undoubtedly an Eatanswill Gazette, advocating Blue principles, and undoubtedly an editor worthy of the renowned Mr. Pott, who could write in language more forcible than polite. We do not say that the Blues in our town gave "45 green parasols at 7s. 6d a piece" to secure the husbands and brothers of the recipients, nor do we say that they had 33 voters locked up in the coach house of the head inn, or that a local Sam Weller had been "pumpin' over the independent voters as supped there," at "a shillin' a head;" or that there was "half so strange a circumstance as happened to his own father at

[64] 'Purity of Election. Eatanswill to Wit', *Leeds Times*, Saturday 30 July 1859, p. 5 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000336/18590730/019/0005> [Accessed: 01/06/2021].
[65] Fell-Smith and Stephan, n.p.

> an election time," when the coach was upset and tumbled into the canal, but still there were features which much resembled these. The result has been shown that Wakefield is not the Conservative borough it was boasted to be, and we have this day the honour of announcing the return of a Liberal member once more.[66]

Key here is the fact that the paper takes Dickens's template of the 'Buffs and the Blues' as well as the circumstances of Eatanswill corruption, and applies them to the Conservative portion of the borough specifically. Its use of quotation is also singular: on the one hand, it is seemingly half in jest, borrowing something of Dickens's sketch-like comedy by using the negative parliamentary style that appears in works such as 'The Election for Beadle' from *Sketches by Boz*. On the other hand, the author also introduces very specific phrases from the text that include precise amounts of money and numbers of voters, conjuring the very images of corruption and bribery that the rhetoric claims to negate, while the references to 'a local Sam Weller' and the replacement of the White Hart inn with 'the coach house of the head inn' serves to erase the geographical markers of Dickens's Eatanswill. The comparison is so protracted that the qualifying simile 'but still there were features which much resembled these' means almost nothing by the time it arrives. Similarly to its use in the *Illustrated London News*, here, the Eatanswill concept becomes a uniquely flexible vehicle that enables a Liberal paper to accuse a Conservative candidate of corruption without launching specific, substantiated charges; Eatanswill evocations even enable the writer to use detailed statistics that have no local bearing, although they seem to, rhetorically.

This strategy is of particular use for this Wakefield paper, because Leatham himself was subject to a damaging investigation in 1859 for similarly Eatanswillian practices.[67] In fact, during 1859, Wakefield was compared to Eatanswill again when the *Sun* reported on the irony of a speech given by the Liberal representative for Birmingham, and leading Radical Reformist, John Bright, in Huddersfield, in which he urged Reform that would assure 'greater purity of election' and defended Leatham (his father-in-law) from the recent accusations of Wakefield's corruption. The *Sun* dryly declared that '[a]fter this, it would be preposterous to say that there is any exaggeration whatever, or over-colouring, or caricature, either in Boz's

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[66] 'Return of Mr. Leatham', *Wakefield Free Press*, Saturday 15 July 1865, p. 2 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0002893/18650715/006/0002> [Accessed: 01/06/2021].

[67] As Charlotte Fell-Smith has noted: 'At the general election of 1859, after a contest of exceptional severity, he was returned by three votes, but was unseated on petition. Both Leatham and the defeated candidate were prosecuted for bribery, but the action was eventually dropped'. See, Charlotte Fell-Smith and Megan A. Stephan, 'Leatham, William Henry', *ODNB* <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/16251> [Accessed: 01/06/2021].

Eatanswill or in Tom Taylor's Flamborough'.[68] At key moments across six politically turbulent years, Eatanswill was evoked to express political unrest in Wakefield by a metropolitan paper discussing the comings and goings of a Radical parliamentary figurehead; by a county paper produced in a neighbouring, newly enfranchised, industrial city, to express weary condescension; and by a local publication for the community of Wakefield itself to place the blame for corruption on another party. Eatanswill's appeal is its widespread application as analogy: it is a concept that is specific enough to colour political discussions, but vague enough for those discussions to be diverse or even contradictory. As Dickens's text is broken into ever smaller pieces, each of which it is possible for political users to modify and re-shape, the potential for those pieces to map—quite literally—onto local political debates multiplies also.

Drawing threads from these individual examples reveals more about the specific anxieties of the political users of Eatanswill, which, in many of the examples catalogued here, crystalise around two specific issues that were widely debated from 1852 onwards. The first was the question of re-distribution and disenfranchisement, or to what extent a new Reform Act should physically re-map the political landscape. The second, related problem was debate about the implications of the proposed five- or six-pound franchise, which came to be bound up with the question of bribery and corruption. Robert Saunders has noted that small boroughs with low numbers of electors were a constant source of anxiety for politicians and for the public in the 1850s. There was a concern that the small boroughs, if disenfranchised or carelessly redistributed by new Reform legislation, might upset the balance of power between northern, industrial towns and the southern, landed, agricultural counties. As a result, it was a move that the prime-minister and one of Reform's most sustained advocates across the second half of the nineteenth-century, Lord John Russell, initially wished to avoid.[69] This plan was thwarted by the continued problem of bribery and corruption within smaller boroughs which culminated, as Saunders argues, in a particularly bad case at St Albans in 1851, the impact of which, 'the acknowledgement that it was far from unique, and the fact that, even with a £5 or £6 franchise, many boroughs would still have embarrassingly few electors, made redistribution almost impossible to omit in any reform bill'.[70] As a result, Russell's initial proposal in 1852 suggested that sixty-seven boroughs should be redistributed to neighbouring

[68] *Sun*, Friday 09 September 1859, p. 6 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0002194/18590909/046/0006> [Accessed: 01/06/2021].
[69] Robert Saunders, 'Lord John Russell and Parliamentary Reform, 1848-67' *The English Historical Review*, 120.489 (2005) pp. 1289–1315
[70] *Ibid.*, p. 1307.

constituencies, although he did not name them in his speech.[71] This led to speculation in the press in the ensuing days.

This growing anxiety about the relationship between constituency boundaries, enfranchisement and electoral corruption was very quickly reflected in the use of Eatanswill by and in the press, because it still seemed to emblematise precisely the kind of small, violent and uneducated borough at the heart of growing concerns about electoral corruption. For example, in February 1852, just days after Russell's announcement, the *Evening Mail* published the first in a series of articles about Reform, which listed the sixty-seven boroughs it felt were in danger. The article also warned of the risks of incorporating smaller boroughs into neighbouring constituencies, suggesting that Russell's proposal had led to a delighted flurry of politicians seeking to expand their spheres of influence:

> This will account for the tender inquiries which many gentlemen have had addressed to them from strangers. "What is your county, Sir?" "Do you happen to know Chard?" "What sort of a place is Alton?" "Is Pickering to be annexed to Whitby or to Malton?" "Is Eatanswill in your district, or will Beer-Alston be again enfranchised?"[72]

In March 1853, this alignment of Eatanswill with corrupt small boroughs continued in the *Field*, which stated that the electoral '[c]ommittees have gone to work in earnest, and day after day up comes a chairman to the bar of the House, and, at the Speaker's invitation, announces to the Commons that the member for Mudfog, or both the members for Eatanswill are unseated, bribery having been practised at their return'.[73] Even by the 1865 General Election year over a decade later, these concerns had not dissipated, and following the opening of Parliament that year, the *Preston Chronicle* wrote: '[a]spirants for parliamentary honours exploit a profound anxiety for the prosperity of some petty town. And favoured candidates for the honour of representing such boroughs as Eatanswill are ready to shake hands with any number of parents, and to kiss any number of children'.[74] In these examples, Eatanswill not

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[71] Saunders, pp. 1307–1309; 'Parliamentary Representation', *Hansard API*, 9th February 1852, vol.119 cc. 252–317 <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1852/feb/09/parliamentary-representation> [Accessed: 01/06/2021].
[72] 'The New Reform Illustrated', *Evening Mail*, Friday 13 February 1852, p. 8 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0001316/18520213/048/0008> [Accessed: 01/06/2021].
[73] 'News of the Week', *Field*, Saturday 05 March 1853, p. 3 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0002446/18530305/019/0003> [Accessed: 01/06/2021].
[74] 'The Opening of Parliament', *Preston Chronicle*, Saturday 11 February 1865, p. 4 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000099/18650211/013/0004> [Accessed: 01/06/2021].

only functions as a fictional comparison for real boroughs by colouring or supplementing local examples with Dickens's caricature, but acts as a means of articulating the link between corruption and redistribution that even those unfamiliar with *Pickwick* could comprehend. Put another way, 'Eat-an-swill' alongside the conveniently-named Dorset borough 'Bere-Alston'—which was both redistributed in 1832 and susceptible to Eatanswillian puns—became bywords for boroughs plagued by bribery.[75]

Also noteworthy is the *Preston Chronicle*'s decision to evoke a scene from the Eatanswill procession during which Samuel Slumkey (the Blue candidate) reluctantly shakes hands with 'twenty washed men' and kisses and pats 'six children in arms' on the head. The scene appears thus in Dickens's serial:

> 'He has come out,' said little Mr. Perker, greatly excited; the more so as their position did not enable them to see what was going forward.
>
> Another cheer, much louder.
>
> 'He has shaken hands with the men,' cried the little agent.
>
> Another cheer, far more vehement.
>
> 'He has patted the babies on the head,' said Mr. Perker, trembling with anxiety.
>
> A roar of applause that rent the air.
>
> 'He has kissed one of 'em!' exclaimed the delighted little man.
>
> A second roar.
>
> 'He has kissed another,' gasped the excited manager.
>
> A third roar.
>
> 'He's kissing 'em all!' screamed the enthusiastic little gentleman, and hailed by the deafening shouts of the multitude, the procession moved on.[76]

In the 1850s and 1860s, this particular scene was seized upon repeatedly for its potential to argue for or against the enfranchisement of certain marginalised groups, but it was fragmented and heavily paraphrased rather than quoted. For example, in March 1865, the Conservative

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[75] 'Bere Alston', *The History of Parliament: the House of Commons 1820-1832* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).
[76] *Pickwick*, pp. 154–5.

Chester Courant scornfully reported a visit paid by John Russell's son, Lord Amberley, to some working class families, after which he allegedly revised his opinion of the six-pound franchise as proposed in Edward Baines' Reform Bill. The *Courant* mocks the visit as patronising, stating that: '[t]he most spiteful and unscrupulous caricaturist would scarcely have ventured on such a parody of what an aristocrat means by "familiar relations with the working classes." The candidates for Eatanswill who shook hands with the twenty artisans washed for the purpose, and kissed the same number of plebeian babies, might as well have talked about the knowledge they had gained of the labouring population'.[77] In Dickens's version, the men, women and children lined up for Slumkey to greet are only described as 'washed', but in this revision, the *Courant* more clearly identifies them as a procession of working class families: 'plebeians' and 'artisans'. These small alterations render Dickens's Eatanswill more specific, which in turn enables the scene to reflect the *Courant*'s fear that the franchise might be extended too far too quickly (a stance which it also adopted in its editorial line at this time).

This scene from the Eatanswill election chapter even became a means to engage with the question of women's suffrage, which the more radical proponents of electoral Reform brought into discussions during this time. For example, an 1866 editorial for the *Fife Herald* took direct issue with John Stuart Mill's call for universal suffrage, arguing that the bribery commissions in every town reveal men influenced by their wives, who determine how they should cast their votes:

> When the candidate for the suffrages of the Electors of Eatanswill took, from the arms of the twelve smiling mothers, the twelve washed babies and kissed them, he was making a bid for the heart of the fair sex of Eatanswill and trying through ingratiating himself with the wives of that notable town, to obtain the votes of their lords and masters. And the good policy of the plan adopted, in fiction, by the would-be member for Eatanswill is made clear by the reports of the bribery commissions in every town where corruption is enquired into. We Britons are a domestic and rather hen-pecked race; and a great many of us record our votes just as the wives of our bosoms bid us. Women have, in a way, and to a certain extent, the franchise already; and as they now possess it, they can exercise it in a much more feminine and proper manner, than if they had to struggle to "be early at the poll," or went to election

[77] 'The Political Icarus', *Chester Courant*, Wednesday 29 March 1865, p. 5 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000391/18650329/083/0005> [Accessed: 01/06/2021].

> meetings, and tried to understand whether the honourable members had broken their pledges or not'.[78]

The article goes on to suggest that women are more susceptible to bribery than men, another reason why they ought not to be enfranchised, and on the whole is bizarrely contradictory. On the one hand, it is deemed suitable, even 'feminine' that a woman should influence her husband's vote, but on the other it is suggested that they would struggle to verify the truthfulness of the pledges of the 'honourable members,' were they enfranchised. Notable here too is that all trace of the Eatanswill women and children's 'working classness' has disappeared from this evocation of the procession scene. It is the babies, rather than the men who are 'washed' (in fact, the men are omitted from the scene completely), and the mothers are described as 'smiling'. The ludicrousness of the scene is toned down considerably, and the author emphasises femininity, respectability and motherhood. Also noteworthy is the fact that the author does not choose the scene in the same chapter in which Perker describes how the Blues furnished the Eatanswill women with green parasols to encourage the votes of their husbands and brothers. Although the fit would have been a more seamless one, perhaps unlike the admiration of their children, the parasol gifts bore a more worrying resemblance to the kinds of bribery and 'treating' the article criticises.[79] The scene also does not emphasise female domesticity as much as the procession scene. This evocation reinforces the sense that, by the mid-nineteenth century, Eatanswill's remediation trajectories became more dislocated, evoked as half-remembered tropes, short, paraphrased quotations, and modified ideas, rather than the result of newspaper editors consulting the text in detail. This shift underscores the fact that *Pickwick*'s enduring suitability for remediation was secured as a result of Eatanswill's aptness for formal fragmentation, which in turn enabled it to be grafted onto new texts. It is to this formal fragmentation that we can look as a way to unsettle epochal readings of *Pickwick*.

Understanding the stakes of Eatanswill's fragmentation also supports the increasing number of studies that are sceptical of measuring the success of Dickens's reception through the lens of 'fidelity criticism', since the similarity of these evocations to Dickens's *Pickwick* is not a measure of their successful translation to political scenarios in the press.[80] That said, the connection between these evocations, *Pickwick* the text, and its author is a complex one and

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[78] 'The Election Commissions and the Franchise for Women', *Fife Herald*, Thursday 27 September 1866, p. 2 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000447/18660927/011/0002> [Accessed: 01/06/2021].
[79] *Pickwick*, p. 146.
[80] Mary Hammond, *Charles Dickens's* Great Expectations*: A Cultural Life* (Abingdon; New York: Ashgate, 2019) pp. 7–8.

should not be understood as having disappeared completely during the remediation process. It is particularly important not to lose sight of this residual author-text connection because, similarly to the adaptations discussed in Chapter 2, journalists often wielded Dickens's name alongside that of Eatanswill as a means of adding credence to their political arguments. This can be seen in an article printed in the Conservative, anti-Russell *Morning Herald* entitled 'Mr. Charles Dickens and the Representative System', in which anxieties about the relationship between borough governance, extending the franchise, and bribery are all brought into dialogue with Dickens's name and supposed ideologies. The article was also reprinted in two other Conservative publications, the *Leamington Spa Courier* and the *Cardiff and Methyr Guardian*, on the 7th of August 1852.[81] The author writes a comparative piece about the Election for Eatanswill, and Dickens's *Household Words* piece 'Our Honorable Friend' [sic]. 'Our Honorable Friend' is another election-based text which manages to extend across several pages without directly espousing a particular political affiliation.[82] This prompts the *Herald* to attempt to establish that Dickens's politics mirror its own leanings by a careful deconstruction of the texts and Dickens's possible motivations:

> Nothing can be more clear than that our novelist holds our present electoral system in great contempt. Perhaps we ought to say, a *part* of our present electoral system; for it is evident that the two descriptions of Eatanswill and Verbosity apply to one section only of our constituencies—those of our *boroughs*. Our county elections, our university elections, even our city elections may plead exemption […]. If we did not know him to be a "Liberal" in politics, we should suppose him to be aiming at some change which might improve the quality of our constituencies, though it also reduced their numerical strength. Clearly, the logical result of Mr. D.'s representations is, that the franchise goes *too low*—that it is in the hands of the myriads who do not know how to use it […]. In a word, the drift of Mr. Dickens's sketches, so far as we can detect it, is exactly in the opposite direction to Lord John Russell's late scheme. The evil he depicts is one which Lord John's measure would obviously only exaggerate.

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[81] See 'Mr Charles Dickens and the Representative System', *Leamington Spa Courier*, Saturday 07 August 1852, p. 4 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000249/18520807/021/0004> [Accessed: 01/06/2021]; and 'The Member for Verbosity', *Cardiff and Methyr Guardian, Glamorgan, Monmouth, and Brecon Gazette*, Saturday 07 August 1852, p. 4 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000914/18520807/028/0002> [Accessed: 01/06/2021].

[82] Charles Dickens, 'Our Honorable Friend,' *Household Words*, 5.123 (1852) <https://www.djo.org.uk/household-words/volume-v/page-453.html> [Accessed: 01/06/2021].

> Either the novelist mistakes the disease, or the statesman must have mistaken the remedy'.[83]

As with the texts cited above, it is the 'boroughs' which prove the contentious point here and the *Herald* is careful to distinguish the borough election from those of counties, universities and cities, in this case to scrutinise Russell's proposed redistribution policy. For this reason, despite being published over a decade before 'Our Honorable Friend', Eatanswill is still deemed to be a topical emblem, dragged into the present as another representative example of borough corruption, although interestingly it is not excerpted, as the more recent text is in other parts of the article. Particularly significant in this example is how the *Herald*'s journalist deals with the difficulty of disposing with Dickens's own politics, which it avows to be 'Liberal'. Its solution is to take pains to frame its article as investigative criticism: acting as though it is mining Dickens's text for hidden meanings that support its own agenda to mute the clatter of vested interest in its ultimate conclusions. The result is that Dickens's position is somewhat paradoxical: on the one hand it is of course impossible for the *Herald* to claim that the fifteen-year-old Eatanswill is discrediting Russell's Reform policy directly, and the absence of extracts also distances Eatanswill from Dickens sufficiently to create new synergies between the text and the politics of the moment. On the other hand, the text can only be lent a political meaning by filling gaps that Dickens originally left in the text himself, as we saw in the first section, and the text is also attributed to Dickens, who is cited as a political authority.

Also affecting our perception of Dickens's position in relation to many of these Eatanswill texts is the question of authorial intention. In the *Herald*'s example, the Wakefield articles, and in the vast number of other examples that brought Eatanswill into dialogue with different geographies on the map in Figure 17, it is clear that it is not, at this stage, motivation to uncover (or invent) Dickens's 'original' intentions that is driving these evocations, but the potential to claim *an* intention or a meaning that supports a local agenda. There is a sense, at this point, that while Pickwickian tropes can move independently from the text, those using Eatanswill find citing the title of the serial and, crucially, Dickens's name, to be useful to them in advancing their arguments. It is therefore worth taking a moment to pause and consider this relationship with attribution in a little more detail, particularly in light of its implications for our understanding of Dickens and celebrity culture. The graph below (Figure 18) shows how each of the references to Eatanswill in Database 3 attributes that reference to its source. There are two references to page and chapter number, but generally this level of precision is

[83] 'Mr Charles Dickens and the Representative System', *Leamington Spa Courier*, p. 4.

uncommon. Immediately after serialisation ceases, references to Dickens as 'Boz' and to Chapman and Hall as the publishers of the serial disappear almost completely, with the extracts. However, from about 1855, references to the title of the serial and to Dickens himself begin to increase.

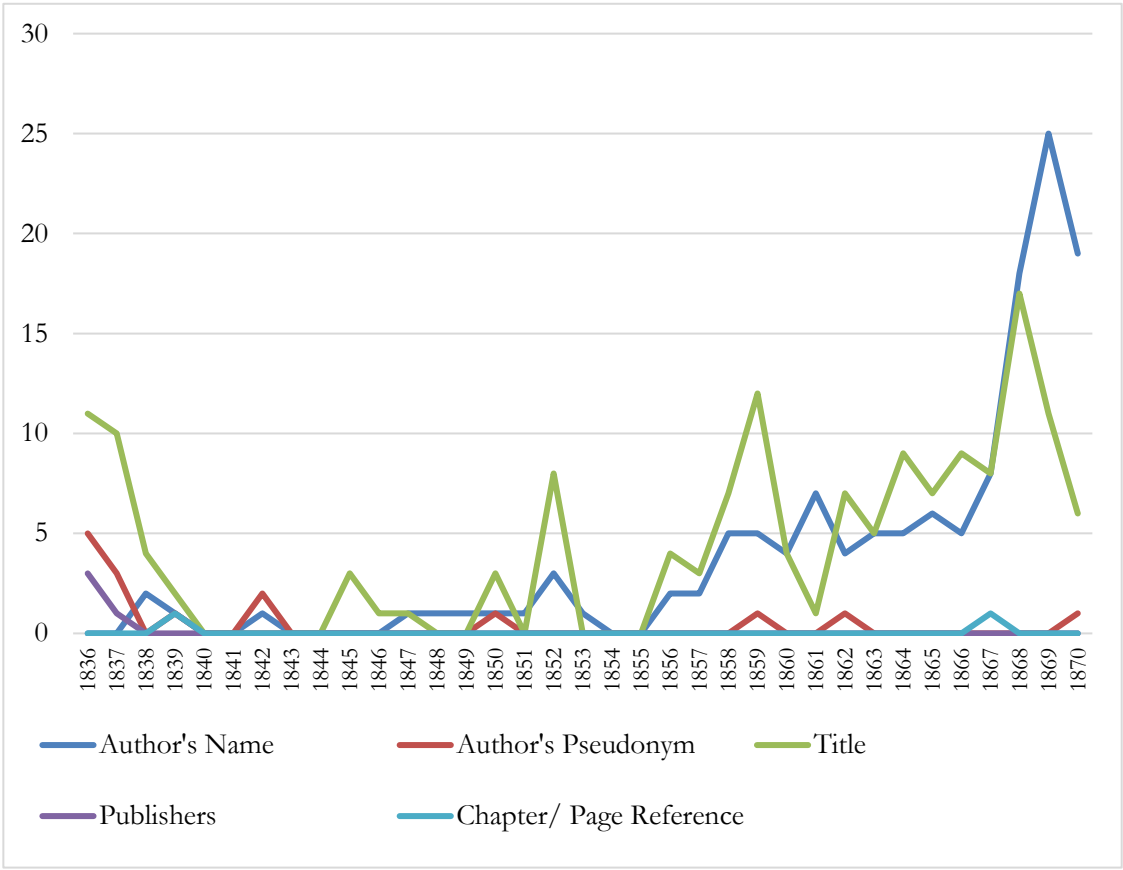

Figure 18: Attributions

It is not just an enhanced sense of *Pickwick*'s representational value for the press that is to be gained from an analysis of these political evocations across the ebb and flow of the Reform debates, but a clearer picture of how authors and their texts interacted over time. Dickens became as much a tool in these evocations as did the Eatanswill trope. In fact, such evocations in many ways substantiate and refract what we already know about the relationship between Dickens's celebrity status, his politics, and what Juliet John has memorably termed his 'mass cultural awareness'. John argues that that '[i]n his lifetime, his reading tours, public speaking engagements, journals, travels, and acting projects, made Dickens a celebrity, the most visible author of the nineteenth century. This visibility meant the duplication of his image in newspapers, advertisements, and on commodities, and the ubiquitousness of the idea

of Dickens in Victorian mass culture'.[84] John concludes that 'Dickens's mass cultural awareness […] is integrally related to his mass cultural longevity'.[85] This argument has an obvious applicability to the Eatanswill evocations. In such examples, Dickens's 'mass cultural awareness' manifests itself as his acknowledgement in his construction of the Eatanswill scene and in his letters, that the deliberate obfuscation of party politics could act as newspaper bait which would in turn facilitate short and long-term circulation (mass cultural longevity). However, what the Eatanswill evocations specifically contribute to our reading of the relationship John outlines above is a clearer sense of how Dickens's celebrity status could be used as a tool to add credence to an individual newspaper's interpretation of a real political crisis. For a newspaper like the *Herald*, which used Eatanswill to argue that Dickens believed the franchise went 'too low', it is a combination of Dickens's original fashioning of the Eatanswill scene and the fact of his still being presented as Eatanswill's author, that means that evoking the scene is useful. In this way, Dickens's mass cultural awareness did not simply facilitate the mass cultural longevity of Eatanswill, but afforded later users considerable creative freedom in shaping it.

IV. Transporting Eatanswill

During the course of Dickens's lifetime, later users of Eatanswill increasingly both dislocated Eatanswill the trope from *Pickwick* the text and re-emphasised Dickens as Eatanswill's author. These two shifts were also accompanied by a third, more indirect change, whereby as well as writing articles which made use of Eatanswill tropes, newspapers also produced written reports of Eatanswill remediations in oral culture that can help us to better understand how the development of the relationship between Dickens, the text of *Pickwick*, and its readers was affected by its Reform contexts across the mid-century decades. This third shift also urges us to return our attention to the trans-media aspect of remediation, and Eatanswill's suitability as a trope for moving between different forums as well as political partisanships. The medium which is perhaps most frequently cited as emblematic of Dickens's control over the reception of his works is his public reading tours, with their carefully curated performance copies, and the figure of the author, front and centre, commanding the attentions of a spellbound audience. However, my database records newspaper reports of over one-hundred other public readings where Eatanswill was not only recited by others, but curated, adapted and often vehemently politicised by its readers, those listening to the readings, and the journalists who

[84] Juliet John, *Dickens and Mass Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010) p. 15.
[85] *Ibid.*, p. 16.

reported the proceedings in a written form. Crucially, all the public readers captured by Database 3 chose to recite a passage from the Eatanswill Election chapter specifically, as opposed to Pott and Slurk's later spat about provincial journalism. Additionally, while public readings of *Pickwick* were taking place as early as 1844, Eatanswill seems to have been absent from programmes reported in the press until 1856.[86] This suggests that its re-appearance was due at least in part to its renewed political resonance for its audiences. With the exception of one entertainment given by a Coralie Montgomery, reported in the *Durham Chronicle* in 1858, all the public readings uncovered in the archive were given by men, and it is often the case at these events that men performed the readings, and women the musical numbers.[87]

Reviewing the interpretation of these oral events in written form across different publications also gives us a sense of the journalistic priorities of individual papers listening to the same content in different geographical areas. As well as many individual fundraisers, penny readings, and Mechanics' Institute meetings, two readers also made circuits around various parts of Britain giving the same selection of readings across multiple nights. The most prolific of these regular readers was William Grossmith, whose performances are recorded in adverts and reports forty-seven times across Database 3 between 1856 and 1870 and are almost always popularly attended and well-reviewed. Beginning with a Pickwick-focussed itinerary entitled 'Pickings from Pickwick' in the 1850s, Grossmith diversified as Dickens published more writing, ultimately performing a wider-ranging programme entitled 'A Night with Charles Dickens' which centralised the author rather than the work. There are occasions where the recitations were more miscellaneous, such as at one event at the Gold Street Lecture Hall in Northampton, where Grossmith also read some of Samuel Lover's poetry and an extract from George Eliot's *Adam Bede*.[88] Notably, Eatanswill survived all these changes to the programme, and was delivered consistently at his events for over a decade. The significance of Grossmith's readings for our purposes here, is that several of the reports contain detailed information about both the speaker and the audience's response to the politics of the Eatanswill election at various points during the 1850s and 1860s.

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[86] For example, at an elocution society meeting in 1844 which included some political content (including the recitation of Lord Palmerston's 1842 Corn Laws speech) a Mr. Kederer and Mr. Rowton recited Sam Weller's Valentine and the Election for Beadle respectively. See 'London Elocution Society', *Morning Advertiser*, Wednesday 11 December 1844, p. 2 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0001427/18441211/029/0002> [Accessed: 01/06/2021].

[87] 'Miss Coralie Montgomery's Popular Entertainment', *Durham Chronicle*, Friday 10 September 1858, p. 5 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0001653/18580910/105/0005> [Accessed: 01/06/2021].

[88] 'Readings at the Lecture Hall, Gold Street', *Northampton Mercury*, Saturday 26 November 1864, p. 6 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000317/18641126/022/0006> [Accessed: 01/06/2021].

Nonetheless, in some of his earliest readings, there is evidence that Grossmith shied away from an emphasis of Eatanswill's topicality, and in 1857, at a performance in Reading, the *Reading Mercury* reported Grossmith's emphasis of Eatanswill's nostalgia:

> The sketch of the Eat-an-swill Election was deemed especially appropriate and the imitation of the conventional styles of oratory prevailing on the hustings, on such occasions, elicited roars of laughter; although the lecturer remarked that the picture must be regarded rather as a reminiscence of the past, since happily, the "good old times" of bribery and corruption were past.[89]

Despite his relegation of Eatanswill to a past memory, by the 1860s Grossmith had completely changed his mind. For example, at a reading for the Cheltenham Working Men's Club in 1866, the *Cheltenham Chronicle* reported that: '[t]he extraordinary proceedings at Eatanswill election were next told, with all their corruptions, prefaced by stating his [Grossmith's] belief that such corrupt practices were equally applicable to many places at the present day'.[90] This change of opinion can be explained by the fact that the country had recently emerged from a General Election, and that Grossmith perhaps felt emphasising the relevance of the scene would increase its interest for the audience. The Chair for the event, a Mr. Monro, thought so too, but executed his claim for Eatanswill's topicality in a way that irritated the attendees. The *Chronicle* recorded the situation in its transcription of the vote of thanks:

> Mr. Monro said that it was his pleasing duty to propose a vote of thanks to Mr. Grossmith, for the very pleasing entertainment he had given them that evening. The extraordinary proceedings at the "Eatanswill Election," was alluded to by Mr. Monro, who stated that he only regretted that they (Mr Monro did not state who) had not the pleasure of his instruction four or five months earlier. (Confusion.) He hoped that the gentleman who had been reading intended nothing personal, though he did say, or rather intimated that there were other places if only they could be found out. (Voices: "No politics.)' [sic].[91]

While the allusion to local politics is particularly unwelcome here, the vehemence of the audience's response attests to its topical resonance. When Monro pairs Eatanswill with recent

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[89] 'Newbury', *Reading Mercury*, Saturday 28 March 1857, p. 4 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000369/18570328/013/0004> [Accessed: 01/06/2021].
[90] 'The Working Men's Club', *Cheltenham Chronicle*, Tuesday 09 January 1866, p. 5 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000312/18660109/019/0005> [Accessed: 01/06/2021].
[91] *Ibid.*

local happenings at the general election, he subtly shifts the genre of Grossmith's recitations from an 'entertainment' to a rather more patronising 'instruction', capitalising on Grossmith's own assertion of Eatanswill's topicality by tying it more closely to contexts with which he knew the audience would be familiar. When reported in the press, too, the journalist renders the situation yet more antagonistically by adding in parentheses that 'Mr Monroe did not state who' would benefit from political instruction, strongly implying that sections of the working-class audience might derive a valuable lesson from Eatanswill's poor example. Whether welcomed by its audience or not, it is clear that in this example, Eatanswill is responsible for starting some fraught discussions about local politics, and does so as a result of manipulating the trope at multiple levels.

Reports of public reading events from 1868 and early 1869 reveal several more examples of such comparisons between Eatanswill politics and local topicality taking place on multiple levels, following the passage of the second Reform Act. These examples, too, take on a particularly political tone as a result of a recent general election. For example, the *Windsor and Eton Express* reported an event in which a Mr. Phillips read the Eatanswill scene, about which the journalist remarked: 'it need hardly be said, that before an audience who had recent election reminiscences vividly impressed upon their minds, the recitation proved more than usually enjoyable'.[92] Again, at a penny reading in North Wingfield, the *Derbyshire Times and Chesterfield Chronicle* remarked that '[t]he Chairman's reading of Mr. Pickwick's election experiences caused much amusement, and many of the descriptions were evidently considered very appropriate to the contest from which we have just emerged'.[93]

The significance of all these examples is not simply the way they reveal literature to be a crucial tool for articulating political debate, but how they ask us to re-evaluate our understanding of what 'the *Pickwick* moment' truly was. Especially into the late 1860s, Eatanswill remediations reflect its continued engagement with local politics in a way that is quite at odds with Dickens's shifting claims for the relevance of *Pickwick* in the 1867 preface, with which I opened this chapter. Dickens saw electoral discussions as moving away from 'counties' or local governance to 'parliaments' and national governance. Yet as the country drew closer to legislating the second Reform Act and especially in the first years after it was passed, Eatanswill evocations persisted in their focus on borough-level jurisdiction, local

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[92] 'Mr. P. B. Phillips's Readings', *Windsor and Eton Express*, Saturday 06 February 1869, p. 4 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000413/18690206/042/0004> [Accessed: 01/06/2021].
[93] 'Penny Readings', *Derbyshire Times and Chesterfield Chronicle*, Saturday 27 February 1869, p. 3 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000228/18690227/008/0003> [Accessed: 01/06/2021].

parties and geographies, and, most crucially, the idea that local-level governance was capable of re-shaping the national political landscape. Eatanswill acted as a cautionary emblem on a local level (because it represented precisely the kind of borough at risk of redistribution or disenfranchisement because of corrupt practices) and a national level (because such redistribution or disenfranchisement was understood to have a significant impact on the shape of the national political and economic landscape). For these reasons, it was unable to pass into obsolescence.

For some public performers of the Eatanswill scene, simply acknowledging the similarities between Eatanswill and local geographies did not go far enough, and the temptation to exaggerate and adapt the scene became irresistible in light of the fraught political landscape alongside which it was being performed. For example, at another penny reading in North Brixton in 1868, the *South London Chronicle* reported a version of the scene which included exuberant audience participation resembling modern pantomime:

> Mr. Crossman, as usual kept his audience in a state of hilarity by his rendering of "The Election," from "Pickwick," the company joining, conamore, in the "hear, hears," and "hurrahs," during the delivery of the electioneering speeches by the rival candidates from the Eatanswill hustings.[94]

That the audience would be encouraged to re-enact a scene of comical election violence at a penny reading, and at such a volatile time for British politics, certainly seems a bold choice, especially given that even Dickens himself deemed it necessary to test his controversial 'Sikes and Nancy' reading on a small, trusted audience before performing it to the public for fear of a riot.[95] And yet, here the emphasis is on interactivity and shared laughter rather than the creation of a static audience that passively receives content, with audience members invited to improvise and re-interpret the scene. Sometimes this kind of audience improvisation meant that the public readings of Eatanswill even gave rise to remediations of their own, which appeared back in the press in written form. One such example appeared following the Grantham Penny Readings series, which was described in the *Grantham Journal* as designed to 'lead the working classes, for whom they were first originated, to have a taste for learning and

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[94] 'North Brixton Penny Readings', *South London Chronicle*, Saturday 28 November 1868, p. 3 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000443/18681128/020/0003> [Accessed: 01/06/2021].

[95] Helen Small, 'A pulse of 124: Charles Dickens and a pathology of the mid-Victorian reading public', *The Practice and Representation of Reading in England*, James Raven, et al (eds) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) pp. 263–290 (p. 271).

knowledge'.[96] This is followed by a metrically tidy poem, which describes each of the texts that has been read in the series, such as in the section below:

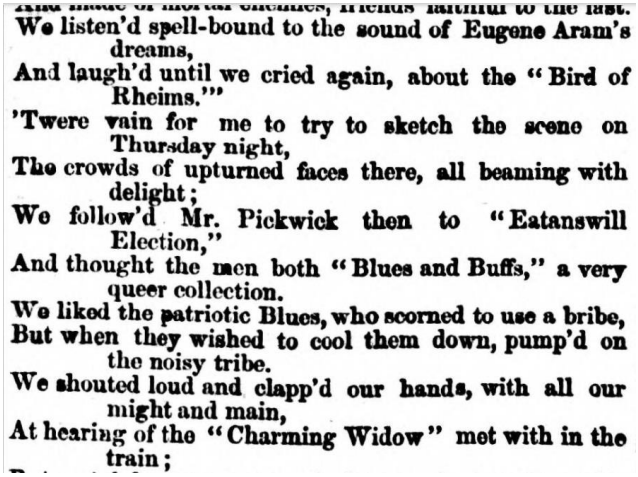
We listen'd spell-bound to the sound of Eugene Aram's
dreams,
And laugh'd until we cried again, about the "Bird of
Rheims.'"
'Twere vain for me to try to sketch the scene on
Thursday night,
The crowds of upturned faces there, all beaming with
delight;
We follow'd Mr. Pickwick then to "Eatanswill
Election,"
And thought the men both "Blues and Buffs," a very
queer collection.
We liked the patriotic Blues, who scorned to use a bribe,
But when they wished to cool them down, pump'd on
the noisy tribe.
We shouted loud and clapp'd our hands, with all our
might and main,
At hearing of the "Charming Widow" met with in the
train;

Figure 19: Excerpt from 'Grantham "Penny Readings"', *Grantham Journal*

The poem is narrated from the perspective of a listener speaking on behalf of the rest of the company present at the readings, and the result is that the audience, which is repeatedly homogenised as 'we', becomes a slightly saccharine reflection of the compliant working-class described by the preceding prose article. Particularly noteworthy is the fact that the character of the Eatanswill 'Blues' is embellished beyond the descriptions present in the serial, and they are conveniently admired by this placid working-class audience as being both patriotic and scornful of bribery and corruption. This is a complete inversion of Dickens's narrative, in which the Blue candidate's representative, Mr Perker, quietly takes aside undecided electors in the final hours of the voting for a private discussion, after which they 'went in a body to the poll' and voted in their favour.[97]

It also was not just the audience that improvised Eatanswill as they applied the narration of the scene to their own circumstances. At a meeting of the Ebley Local Improvement Society reported in the *Stroud Journal*, the chairman is described as having 'greatly amused the company by reading from Dickens's "Pickwick" the graphic description of an election scene at Eatanswill, some parts of which he jocosely localized'.[98] This strategy functions as part of the same tradition of localisation, which took place in the press in the written mode. Like

[96] 'The Grantham "Penny Readings"', *Grantham Journal*, Saturday 18 March 1865, p. 2 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000400/18650318/008/0002> [Accessed: 01/06/2021].
[97] *Pickwick*, p. 159.
[98] 'Ebley Mental Improvement Society', *Stroud Journal*, Saturday 04 April 1868, p. 8 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0002221/18680404/089/0008> [Accessed: 01/06/2021].

Grossmith, another public reader, a Reverend Bellew, also made public reading circuits, but travelled in both Britain and America. Bellew also adapted Eatanswill, with mixed success, as can be seen from this poor review of one of his entertainments at the Bath Assembly Rooms:

> Since Mr. Bellew's last appearance here, he has become less of a reader and more of an actor—we cannot help adding, an actor of the second class. As a reader, pure and simple, he used to be unsurpassed, perhaps not even equalled. But plain level reading we never get from him now. He is so full of effect of every kind that he wearies and even offends […]. He was good […] in his description of the Eatanswill election, wherein he introduced much matter not to be found in the original Pickwick.[99]

The precise material that Bellew introduced into this scene is not delineated here, but there is evidence to show that, when giving readings in America, he was mocked for his odd performances of Shakespeare's plays in which he read dialogues at a table—apparently with little differentiation between the different voices—and was accompanied by a *tableau vivant* in the background.[100] This suggests that the performance may have been partway between a reading and a theatrical. It was a generic blurring about which some of Bellew's audiences were sceptical, but nonetheless illustrates Eatanswill's fluctuating position in these remediations, which sit at rich and sometimes perplexing seams between genres and shift between the written and the spoken mode, accumulating political meaning with each new iteration. Even if the speakers themselves did not make material changes to the substance of the text, sometimes events at which Eatanswill was read created a bizarre indistinction between the author and the public reader. One review of Grossmith's reading published in the *Nottingham Journal* in 1859, for example, stated: 'Mr. Grossmith combines the keen wit of Jerrold, the genial and flowing humour of Hood, the felicity of expression and pathos of sentiment of Thackeray, and a skill in mimicry and the histrionic art which is fully equal to Dickens himself'.[101] In this account, Grossmith is almost the author, rather than the remediator of the scenes he performs, and the compliments he receives in this review are

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[99] 'Mr Bellew's Readings', *Bath Chronicle and Weekly Gazette*, Thursday 27 January 1870, p. 8 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000187/18700127/045/0008> [Accessed: 01/06/2021].

[100] According to the *Philadelphia Telegraph*, which excerpted a scornful article from the *Saturday Review* of a recent performance of Shakespeare in America in 1870, Bellew 'read *Hamlet* from a table, with the assistance of silent figures who gesticulated on a stage above him. He has now mounted to the stage and reads *Macbeth* with the assistance only of a chorus, and while calling himself a reader, he largely appropriates the province of the actor. See '"Macbeth" in a New Style', *The Daily Evening Telegraph, Philadelphia*, Tuesday 19 April 1870, p. 6 <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83025925/1870-04-19/ed-1/seq-6/> [Accessed: 08/11/2021].

[101] 'Pickings from Pickwick', *Nottingham Journal*, Friday 25 March 1859, p. 5 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0002131/18590325/053/0005> [Accessed: 01/06/2021].

themselves reminiscent of the *Athenaeum*'s famous early assessment of *Pickwick*, which detailed its sense of Dickens's own influences in 1837. 'The Pickwick Papers', the review stated, 'are made up of two pounds of Smollett, three ounces of Sterne, a handful of Hook, a dash of a grammatical Pierce Egan—incidents at pleasure, served with an original *sauce piquante*'.[102] The entertainment he performs might be entitled 'A Night with Charles Dickens', but it is Grossmith's creative talent rather than Dickens's own that is credited in the report of the reading. Rather than uncomplicated deference or irreverent borrowing, like the adaptations discussed in Chapter 2, the newspapers and public readers managing these examples strategically used Dickens's name to combine aspects of the narratives of *creatio* and *inventio* in their use of Eatanswill. They maintained authorial credentials where to do so might prove beneficial, but also retained the power to intervene, fragment and remediate the text to suit their particular politics.

V. Conclusions

The nature and proliferation of Eatanswill remediations in the newspaper press were dependent upon two factors. The first was Dickens's construction of the Eatanswill election chapter, which encouraged journalists and readers to speculate about its geographies, the partisanships of its rival parties and the specific legislative concerns it represented. The second was the political background that formed part of its publication context: initially in the 1830s as Parliament delivered the supplementary legislation that was not implemented with the Great Reform Act in 1832, and again in the 1850s and 1860s, as the country moved towards the second landmark Act. This background generated unrest and debate that in turn created the demand for material that could make sense of and clearly articulate present concerns, a role that Eatanswill amply fulfilled for several decades. That Eatanswill's characters, scenes and political incidents could resonate as effectively in the 1860s as they did in the 1830s meant that the very fact of the scene's long-term circulation, as well as the politics of its content, acted as a means of illustrating the slow progress of Reform legislation over time, even as it seemed to represent the most up-to-date discussions, as journalists repeatedly aligned it with current geographies, ideologies and events.

In this respect, rather than reinforcing the idea of a fleeting 'Pickwick moment' these Eatanswill remediations are crucial to deepening our understanding of *Pickwick*'s multimedia endurance in popular culture. Fears held by journalists, active readers, and public speakers

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[102] 'Unsigned review of Pickwick Papers Nos. I – IX, the Athenaeum' *Charles Dickens: The Critical Heritage*, ed by Philip Collins (London: Routledge, 1996) n.p.

about the stagnation or disintegration of existing electoral practices and geographies, played out in the increasing formal fragmentation of the Eatanswill scene, while conversely, their visions for its constitution or reconstitution were written into the new texts into which those fragments were incorporated. That fluctuations in Eatanswill's appearance across different temporal and spatial contexts directly mapped onto the ebb and flow of the Reform debates in turn enables us, for the first time, to credit *Pickwick*'s political utility with at least some of its popularity. The attractiveness of the 'Pickwick moment' as an umbrella concept lies in its ability to organise and flatten the serial's tendency to miscelleneity and internal contradiction. However, it was precisely this miscelleneity and the serial's ability to accommodate contradictory remediations that facilitated its recursive use as part of a vibrant, opinionated nineteenth-century electoral discourse. *Pickwick*'s suitability for this re-use *as literature* should in turn encourage us to question the extent to which such political discourses turned to fiction as representational fuel in the press.

Eatanswill's relevance to the newspaper press as a political tool may have been more enduring than critics have allowed, but it was not endless. By the late 1860s—albeit concurrently with many of the rich, politically topical examples with which this chapter has dealt—we see the emphasis of Eatanswill's enduring political relevance beginning to give way to journalists' growing assertion that the Pickwickians have had their day. This sentiment can hardly have been clearer in an article published in 1868 about contemporary journalism, which anticipates the obituary-style articles that would appear after Dickens's death in 1870, and in which Eatanswill's journalists are cited:

> Mr. Pott and Mr. Slurk, the editors of Eatanswill, are admirable creations of a novelist's fancy; but they are nothing more. The sketches were bold caricatures even when "Pickwick" first appeared; and to read them now-a-days is like gazing at a drawing by Rowlandson or Gilray [sic]—you recognise the satiric genius of the artist, but perceive that the manners, customs, and costumes are out of date.[103]

This verdict disconnects Eatanswill from the politics of the present moment, but also endeavours to unwrite its 1830s topicality by suggesting that even its relevance at the moment of publication was tenuous. The mention of Gillray and Rowlandson—late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century caricaturists—ties the piece even more closely to past epoques, and also contributes to the sense that there is something un-Victorian as well as uncontemporary

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[103] 'Curiosities of Literature', *Southern Reporter and Cork Commercial Courier*, Friday 11 December 1868, p. 4 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000876/18681211/069/0004> [Accessed: 01/06/2021].

about *Pickwick*. Bound up in this question of relevance was a renewed attention to the question of Eatanswill's 'origin' and the authorial intentions behind it. Most notably, on two occasions in 1869, and for the first time since publication, those remediating Eatanswill began to trace it to Norfolk based on the Norwich clue left in Dickens's text. This is reported as happening at one of Bellew's public readings, which was given in Norfolk, and his reference to the Norwich coach was reported by the *Norfolk News* as a 'stroke of genius' inspired by the author, deployed 'in order to give them [the audience] an idea of the locality of Eatanswill'. The second occasion is reported in the *London Daily News* in an article about Norwich's continued corruption:

> Several cities and boroughs of the kingdom have, we believe, at different times disputed the honour of being the original from which the sketch in the "Pickwick Paper" of Eatanswill at election time was derived. Mr. Dickens affects to have searched the columns of Schedules A and B in the Reform Act, and groped into every corner of the Pocket County Maps without finding any town with a name at all resembling that of Eatanswill. He is therefore driven to the conclusion that Mr. Pickwick, in his great tenderness, had substituted a fictitious for a real designation, a conclusion strengthened by the fact that an entry in the transactions of the Pickwick Club, carefully yet imperfectly effaced, represents that great man and his companions in the Pickwickian Commission of Inquiry as having taken their places from London in the Norwich coach. More than a generation has passed since the Pickwick Papers were published, and the electoral corruption of Norwich is again a subject of public investigation. The interval has not been innocently passed, for in 1859, the two members then representing that City were unseated for bribery'.[104]

The precision with which this piece centralises Dickens's words before launching into a discussion of a particular set of local political issues demonstrates a first step towards the kind of critical search for Dickens's 'original' Eatanswill that would characterise the granular twentieth-century discussions of the scene. For example, J. W. T. Lay's early *Dickensian* article concluded that Eatanswill was more likely to be in Sudbury rather than Ipswich, Bury St Edmunds or Norwich, because these latter three localities are all named places or coach stops in *Pickwick*. Eatanswill, on the other hand, is a destination somewhere between these named places.[105] Put another way, Eatanswill cannot be both Bury St Edmunds and the stop the

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[104] *London Daily News*, Friday 02 April 1869, p. 4 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000051/18690402/013/0004> [Accessed: 01/06/2021].
[105] See Ley, 'Is Sudbury Eatanswill?', pp. 117–18.

Pickwickians make before Bury Saint Edmunds. For readers between the 1830s and 1860s, these minutiae were less important than Eatanswill's representational power. However, after Dickens's death, the shifting attitude towards his texts as objects of cultural memory, and the ebbing away of the heated discussions about Reform that punctuated his lifetime meant that the need to urge Eatanswill's continued relevance became less imperative than the question of what the Inimitable himself had meant by his words.

Conclusions

> Bury him privately—as he desired;
> No ostentation was by him required;
> Too great for pomp to show all he deserv'd
> For ev'ry Briton's heart this is reserv'd

Even creative remediation has its limits, and Dickens's death in 1870 certainly tested those limits—and at times the patience of the newspapers recording the public outpouring that followed his passing—to their full extent. Sympathies came in the form of obituary articles (several of which were reprinted multiple times between publications), letters to the editor debating the manner in which Dickens ought to be remembered, and dozens of poems which evoked favourite characters and incidents from his work, signalling to readers that while the author himself may have departed, the potential for his fiction to circulate in journalistic settings remained very much alive. Nonetheless, newspaper editors' tolerance of effusive obituaries was not boundless. The epigraph above, for example, was published by the *Birmingham Post* about two weeks after Dickens's death. It formed part of a plea from the editor directed at budding writers of elegiac verse to kindly stop sending in poems about Dickens because '[i]n all cases […] the intention so far exceeds the execution that it is an act of kindness to the writers, as well as to the memory of the great novelist' that they remain unpublished.[1] This wish to protect the dignity of the amateur obituary-writers notwithstanding, the *Post* found it irresistible to quote the verse above as a sample of one of these terrible poems, 'by no means the worst of the compositions referred to'.

What the sarcasm of this example indirectly demonstrates is how Dickens's death triggered an effort among newspapers to negotiate new tensions between the continued creative value of re-imagining his texts and the need to protect the author's posthumous reputation. Dickens's death led to a distinct shift in the nature of journalistic remediation, and this shift in turn casts the particular features and stakes of the phenomenon examined throughout this project into sharp relief. During his lifetime, as this project has clearly shown, Dickens himself was as much a tool for the press as *Pickwick* itself and both were employed in a vivid engagement with the minutiae of Reform legislation. Conversely, following his death, a firm feeling among the papers that Dickens's characters and ideas must continue to live—simply because they had

[1] 'Notices to Correspondents', *Birmingham Post* (1870) <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000033/18700622/010/0005> [Accessed: 20/09/2021].

done so in independent and topical ways for so long—began to wrestle with the implications of the loss of Dickens himself. This led to an urge to memorialise and solidify his narratives, which itself competed with the impulse to explore their various political potentialities.

For example, on the one hand, an article printed by both the *Sheffield Independent* and the *Derbyshire Courier* in June 1870 asked of its readers: 'Are not Mark Tapley, and Mr. Pickwick, and Bob Sawyer, and the rest, men we have known all our days? We speak of them and think of them rather as having real vitality than as being the mere creations of the pen of the keeness [sic] observers and most faithful describers that ever lived; but we must make the most of them now, for there can be no more additions to their ranks'.[2] For this writer, the characters Dickens has already written into existence have a life independent of the whim of their 'mere creator' and 'describer'. Like the remediations discussed throughout this project, posthumous uses of Dickens's characters to some extent continued to be understood as the products of a narrative of *inventio*, re-made and modified by their environment even as living human beings are. Obituary verse often took a similar approach, such as a poem published in the *Waterford Standard* in June 1870, which contained no fewer than thirty-four references to Dickens's human characters, four to animal characters, and innumerable allusions to his representations of social and cultural issues as diverse as crime, poverty and religion, in the form of encoded references to scenes that only a reader familiar with the text—or at least, thanks to decades of newspaper evocations, with the 'idea' of the text—would understand.[3] For example, a line which exclaims that 'pettifogging lawyers thrive on thieves', is a veiled reference to Pickwick's final altercation with Dodson and Fogg, during which he cries similar insults over the balustrades as they hurry away with his money. This poet's emphasising of *Pickwick*'s enduring topicality is also reinforced by the inclusion of explicit statements about the longevity of Dickens's works, such as in this stanza, with its facetious echoes of Shakespeare's 'Sonnet 18':

> Sunshine and shadow o'er a smiling land—
> In Pickwick, Fat-Boy, Tony Veller, Sam,
> Mark Tapley, Captain Cuttle, and the throng
> Of mirth-inspiring creatures of his brain,

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[2] 'Death of Mr Charles Dickens', *Derbyshire Courier*, Saturday 11 June 1870, p. 2 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000395/18700611/084/0002> [Accessed: 02/10/2021]; 'Death of Mr Charles Dickens', *Sheffield Independent*, Saturday 11 June 1870, p. 11 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000181/18700611/068/0011> [Accessed: 02/10/2021].

[3] 'In Memoriam', *Waterford Standard*, Wednesday 29 June 1870, p. 4 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0001677/18700629/040/0003> [Accessed: 02/10/2021].

> Realities by old acquaintance grown,
> Shall cheer and teach, as long as language lasts

For both these writers, it is not only important to name characters as shadowy figures of a Dickensian past, to be regarded with nostalgia and a sigh, but to emphasise that their relevance extends as far into the future as it is possible to look, in this case 'as long as language lasts'. The potential for endurance inherent in Dickens's characters is seen as fuel which sustains the cultural memory of their author, but also firmly situates them as constructs that transcend their moment, remaining portable, applicable, remediable, even when the author himself is lost. Also noteworthy is the fact that in these obituaries, the fragmentary circulation of Pickwickian tropes and characters has loosened into a more intertextual approach to the Dickens oeuvre. The authors group comic characters from *Pickwick*, *Martin Chuzzlewit*, and *Dombey and Son* as a category, and other stanzas perform similar synthesising work, uniting the Artful Dodger, Uriah Heep, Bumble and Sairey Gamp under a category of 'vice and crime' 'exciting scorn or laughter' and to be 'held […] up as warnings to the world'. The acknowledgement of these intertextual synergies enables the curation of new, quintessentially Dickensian 'texts' capable of exerting a meaningful influence upon their communities of readers. This almost postmodern delight in repetition and intertextual cross-currents is of course familiar to us now—the BBC's 2015 series 'Dickensian' being the most recent case in point—but here reflects an extension of the transhistorical, fundamentally journalistic urge to creatively remediate Dickens's texts which shaped their political role in the papers during his lifetime.

On the other hand, Dickens's death also caused the enduring remediability of his texts to begin to sit uneasily with a newspaper press that was equally concerned with solidifying the author's memory. It is for this reason that even as they acknowledged the more portable, intertextual understanding of Dickens's texts with which this project has dealt, newspaper obituaries also began to shut this discourse down by imbuing their articles with the now-familiar narratives of Dickens's authorial genius, celebrity and unaided trajectory to success.[4] For example, in a version of Dickens's life story that travelled widely across the press, the *Northern Whig* tells us that the *Sketches by Boz* 'at once attracted marked attention', as well as 'The Village Coquettes' which called 'the especial notice of the eminent publishers, Messrs. Chapman and Hall, at whose instigation Mr. Dickens wrote the "Posthumous Memoirs of the

[4] These assumptions about Dickens's career have been most famously and comprehensively debunked by Robert Patten. See, *Charles Dickens and "Boz": the Birth of the Industrial-Age Author* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

Pickwick Club." This work at once raised the author to the highest rank in the literary profession'.[5] In a more extreme re-rendering of the same life story, the *Liverpool Daily Post* stated that *Pickwick* 'was treated by "Boz" in a manner at once so easy, so graphic, and natural, and with such a flow of genuine humour, that the author found himself raised, almost at a single step, to the highest rank among living novelists'.[6] In these obituaries, even Dickens's comedy is flattened into a single 'easy' and 'natural' flow that utterly belies the varied, plural spread of comic anecdotes. The multiple narratives that might be afforded by the circulation of Dickens's works are subsumed by a single thread about the authoritative author. This is not to say that *Pickwick* moved in a linear fashion from anthumous relevance to posthumous relic; as we saw in Chapter 3, by 1870, creative Eatanswill remediations engaging in various ways with the aftermath of the Second Reform Act coexisted with a new pre-occupation with Dickens's long-ago 'original' intentions for the scene. However, the remediations discussed in this project do revise our prior understanding of *Pickwick*'s chronology in some significant ways. First, by re-ordering the timeline of the *Pickwick* phenomenon to foreground newspaper excerpts and adaptations that kept pace even with the earliest serial instalments of the text; and second, by showing the necessity of expanding the *Pickwick* moment into a phenomenon that spanned decades rather than a fleeting twenty numbers.

This project has made clear the importance of the newspaper to both *Pickwick*'s commercial success and its political meaning. As Chapter 3 showed, ultimately *Pickwick*'s journey towards economic viability was sustained by the level of press attention it attained, and even Dickens himself was keen to secure newspaper notice of the serial to facilitate the otherwise uncertain success of the early numbers. Conversely, what the obituary remediations of *Pickwick* often show is the press actually contributing to the erasure of the role they had played in shaping the reception of Dickens's texts by their repeated insistence that his success was both instantaneous and the product of nascent genius. In these examples, *Pickwick* the text is understood as something less mutable, a product of a narrative of *creatio* rather than *inventio*.

Understanding these competing urges to politicise and memorialise *Pickwick* in 1870 is crucial for the claims made throughout this thesis. They show the extent to which the remediations discussed here were shaped by journalists' ability to assume or manipulate the voice of the living author, which in turn enabled them to lend credence to their own creative pieces. We

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[5] 'Death of Mr. Dickens', *Northern Whig*, Friday 10 June 1870, p. 3 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000434/18700610/061/0003> [Accessed: 02/10/2021].
[6] 'Death of Mr. Charles Dickens', *Liverpool Daily Post*, Friday 10 June 1870, p. 4 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000197/18700610/127/0004> [Accessed: 02/10/2021].

might think, for example, of the *Leamington Spa Courier*'s article, discussed in Chapter 3, which attempted to approximate Dickens's views on the electoral system by using his sketches about Eatanswill and Verbosity in a way that was favourable to the paper's own political agenda. Additionally, these competing impulses once again clearly demonstrate that the urge to politicise *Pickwick* was itself contingent, re-emphasising the importance of understanding the Reform debates as a crucial catalyst for the nature and proliferation of *Pickwick* in the papers. In many ways, then, the posthumous response to *Pickwick* enables us to demarcate the thirty-year period explored during this project as a distinct, intensely political slice of *Pickwick*'s larger reception history, the significance of which only swims into view as a result of the digital methods that this project has employed.

In this respect, this thesis makes three core contributions to Dickens studies, literary studies and media history. First, its analysis of *Pickwick* has served as a case study for the ways in which newspapers played a key role in deriving meaning from popular fiction, politicising key scenes long after their publication, and encouraging interpretations specific to their various agendas. Second, it has argued that those meanings can themselves be analysed as evidence of patterns of political debate at particular moments and in specific journalistic contexts. In so doing, it has asserted both *Pickwick*'s indebtedness to newspaper networks in its *mediation* of political meaning, and the extent to which newspapers owed the variety and the precision of their own political rhetoric to their ability to *re*mediate Pickwickian words and tropes in granular, individualised ways. Third, the project has implemented a consistent method to collect and analyse data about these patterns of mediation and remediation, producing both a methodological framework and data that is reusable in adjacent studies. With more than 1,200 individual records of newspaper remediations of *Pickwick*, each of which includes at least twenty individual datapoints, each of the databases presented as accompanying material to this research can be searched for specific occurrences of individual scenes and characters from the serial, as well as collating previously unanthologised reviews from smaller, short-lived or lesser-known papers that have only recently been digitised. Viewed collectively, the databases enable us to hold up a mirror to nineteenth-century politics as it was debated via the medium of popular literature, and offer the opportunity for a depth and scope of analysis that would have been unavailable to their pre-digital antecedents. Unlike its hard-copy predecessors—such as the often-used *Critical Heritage*—my databases move beyond the literary quarterlies, place reader testimonies from metropolitan and provincial papers on an equivalent footing, and urge thinking about excerpts, evocations and adaptations as of equal value to conventional reviews.

At the same time as this project has shown the ways that the press wrought both actual links with *Pickwick* and imagined ones with Dickens, it also deepens our understanding of journalistic remediation as a process capable of deconstructing even the most solid and historically rooted connections forged between author, text and context. For example, our reading of Dickens as a London author of serial literature produced in regular, measurable instalments—that are, famously in *Pickwick*'s case, only de-railed in extreme circumstances—completely dissolves the moment we turn to this far messier journalistic phenomenon, via which *Pickwick* was co-opted and fragmented by both metropolitan and provincial communities in innumerable new contexts.[7] As we have seen, some remediations can even begin to unsettle the distinctions between these categories altogether, by unwriting Dickens's metropolitan perspective and replacing it with a provincial one, or using *Pickwick* to mediate between different geographical vantage points. The network of remediation that this project has uncovered offers a literature-centred means of understanding the construction and ideologies of individual papers and their interpretative communities, as well as the interaction of those communities with others. That this narrative is becoming more apparent in a digital age (where it is more easily recoverable), and at precisely the moment when, as we have seen, media historians such as Andrew Hobbs are examining the interaction of print mobilities and print localities, is far from incidental. Indeed, *Pickwick*'s ability to fragment, adhere to and ultimately to represent various ideologies at given moments while also enduring across time, maps directly onto this shift in the study of print geographies.

Restoring this more fractured narrative of *Pickwick*'s political and cultural impact—with its accentuation of the role of the press as a creative agent in shaping that impact—also clearly demonstrates that literary remediations are not simply an inevitable node in the communications circuit. *Pickwick* does not circulate so extensively simply because it has been published and must be noticed, but because it fulfils a rhetorical function. Understanding this naturally raises questions as to what might be gained by conducting similar research with other nineteenth-century texts, and how such research might re-affirm or alter our thinking about their political impacts. As the case studies presented in the Introduction show, the contemporary designation of a work as a popular text does not necessarily translate to its having been widely remediated in the nineteenth-century press, since journalistic remediation is a phenomenon which comes with its own contingent set of structural and topical requirements. However, remediation can be said to be capable of *facilitating* a text's popularity,

[7] The July 1837 number of *Pickwick* was postponed by a month following the sudden death of Dickens's sister-in-law, Mary Hogarth.

as in *Pickwick*'s case where it met with even Dickens's endorsement. Analysing this process of facilitation using a larger sample of texts and genres might also offer an alternative understanding of how 'popularity' works: one that can be read alongside an analysis of sales figures and the reviewing culture of the large literary quarterlies but that supplements these modes of measuring popularity with a focus on textual reiteration and cultural transmission in a journalistic context. This complex dimension to the relationship between the popular and the remediable would benefit from some more comprehensive critical attention.

A feature common to all journalistic remediations is that they unlock new ways of reading the structure of their source texts. Newspapers either reinforce existing fault lines or thematic patterns, such as the formal lacunae of the monthly serial, or move away from the emphases left by the author to pursue their own motives, such as in their avoidance of *Pickwick*'s interpolated tales in favour of the shorter anecdotes. Tracing these fault lines across more texts, authors and genres, and tying them to corresponding shifts in politics and culture has the potential to enable structural paradigms to emerge. In this respect, my method might enable us to consider how the subjection of literary texts to the strategic forces of the hundreds of journalistic communities that excerpted, adapted and evoked them over time, shaped their reception trajectories and their perceived rhetorical value.

The databases underpinning this project are a logical first step in the process of synthesising the scattered evidence of remediation provided by the British Newspaper Archive into a web-driven search tool, powered by relational databases that can be replicated for all Dickens's texts as well as those of other nineteenth-century authors, and expanded as the BNA's own digitisation process develops. Database 1 demonstrates how this might be achieved with even very targeted searches aimed at selected authors, while Databases 2 and 3 clearly show what using a similar method for individual texts or even individual scenes can reveal about their political impact at given moments or across time. More broadly, this approach to newspaper data offers alternative ways to explore the cultures of review surrounding key popular texts. In the Introduction to this project, I asserted the importance of grouping the various uses to which *Pickwick* was put in the press under the umbrella term of remediation, a grouping that this thesis has shown to be beneficial, in part because of the slippage between the excerpt, the adaptation and the evocation, and partly because many of these Pickwickian texts could, despite their varied formats, be understood as underappreciated forms of review. By applying this understanding to other texts, my method would enable an approach that better appreciates the rich intersections between the traditional review, the excerpt and the adaptation, as well as similarities in approach across metropolitan and provincial publications. Keeping pace with digitisation efforts, such a project could potentially unlock a wealth of

testimony that has only recently been made available in a digitised form. As well as the lesser-known provincial papers that this project has identified as an evident area of neglect, there are even large metropolitan dailies for which this project was unable to account. For example, in 2021, when my own case studies were finalised, the BNA began digitising thousands of pages from the *Morning Herald* as part of its open access initiative – the *Herald* was liberal in its use of reprinted extracts and is doubtless a treasure trove of literary remediations in its own right.

In terms of authors, considering her own susceptibility to re-use in various forms, George Eliot would also be a logical next step for further study. Leah Price has taught us that Eliot's tendency to embed reproducible anecdotal snippets in her writing made her eminently suited to anthologisation and gift-book citation.[8] Similarly, the extensive, consistent reprinting of such scenes from *Adam Bede* in the press—especially the anecdotes of Mrs Poyser, as I outlined in the Introduction—suggests this to be a potentially fruitful route for further investigation. Like *Pickwick*, Eliot's work specifically raises questions about the value of the anecdote as a form common to both the literary text and the newspaper, because for both authors it so often facilitated the transferring of content from one type of print to the other. Price's memorable argument that Eliot courted excerpting in her use of anecdotes and witticisms, chimes with Dickens's similar practice, whereby the strategic incorporation of interactive hooks prompted a press response.[9] We might think, for example, about the sheer volume of messy, journalistic paperwork present in a text like *Middlemarch* – from Casaubon's interminable notes on world mythology to Mr Brooke's propensity to collect snippets about topics in which he never becomes wholly invested. This proliferation of poorly-organised paperwork is complemented by Eliot's own tendency to launch into reasoned, highly polished, standalone anecdotes and maxims – micronarratives that proved ripe for remediation. These examples also suggest the existence of a broader trend of tacit co-operation between authors and journalists that both complicates narratives of ownership and blurs the boundaries between the literary and the journalistic, as each genre contributes to and derives something from the other. For the author, the immediate gain is publicity or credence; for a newspaper, a portable text capable of authoritatively mediating opinions in common with their rhetorical stance. An investigation into these trends also has the potential to unsettle hierarchies of form by emphasising the nineteenth-century novel's indebtedness to the press for both the shape of its published form and its commercial success. In this respect, expanding the parameters of this project to include other texts and authors doesn't just have the potential to reveal new

[8] Leah Price, *The Anthology and the Rise of the Novel: from Richardson to George Eliot* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).
[9] *Ibid.*, p. 133.

interactions between the popular and remediable, but also between the literary and the journalistic, interactions that have a reflexive bearing on our understanding of the popular.

Also crucial of course is that Eliot—like many other Victorian novelists that have been identified in recent work by Helen Kingstone and Ruth Livesey—sets several of her novels in the 'recent past' of the 1820s and 1830s, with *Middlemarch* and *Felix Holt* engaging directly with the politics of the first Reform Act while being published at about the time of the second.[10] For this reason, analysing the mode of journalistic remediation examined in this project as it applied to thematically and temporally adjacent texts clearly has the potential to augment our understanding of the ways that Reform politics specifically took shape coextensively in the nineteenth-century literary and journalistic imaginations. To take *Felix Holt* as a specific point of comparison: setting the novel at the time of the Great Reform Act and publishing it as the second was being debated imbues it with a temporal and political fluidity comparable to *Pickwick*'s Eatanswill. As for *Pickwick*, this was reflected in the press engagement with the novel following its publication, which consistently aligned old electoral policy with current anxieties about the franchise.[11] It was similarly felt that the text lent itself to claims from different political groups, and in 1866, a review of *Felix Holt* published by the *Pall Mall Gazette*, clearly exemplifies this idea:

> If I am a Radical, I like Felix Holt; I thoroughly believe in him; I delight in the way in which he conquers the love of Esther, and I think her renunciation of fortune for his sake a gain to herself. If I am a Conservative, I don't like Felix Holt very much; I doubt him; I am uneasy at the success of his particular way of wooing, and am not quite sure, in spite of George Eliot herself, whether he is a fit husband for Esther after all. It is true that no author of merit could consent to draw character with an eye to the reconciliation of our little differences of political prejudice; but that is one thing, while the drawing of a character which is to please or otherwise just as the politics of the reader and not his intelligence varies, is another thing.[12]

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[10] Helen Kingstone, *Victorian Narratives of the Recent Past Memory, History, Fiction* (Cham: Palgrave, 2017); Ruth Livesey, *Writing the Stagecoach Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

[11] See for example, 'Felix Holt', *Greenock Telegraph and Clyde Shipping Gazette*, Thursday 24 June 1869, p. 1 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000472/18690624/003/0001> [Accessed : 03/10/2021]; 'Felix Holt, The Radical', *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, Saturday 16 June 1866, p. 8 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0001060/18660616/158/0008> [Accessed: 03/10/2021]. G. H. Lewes also wrote that 'it is a great pity that [Felix Holt] isn't quite ready for publication just in the thick of the great reform discussion, so many good quotable 'bits' would be furnished to M.P.s.' Cited in Leah Price, p. 5.

[12] 'Felix Holt', *Pall Mall Gazette*, Thursday 05 July 1866, p. 12 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/BL/0000098/18660705/015/0011> [Accessed: 03/10/2021].

The authorial strategy that the *Gazette* describes here is ultimately a less evasive variation of the kind of political malleability that Dickens built into *Pickwick*'s Eatanswill scenes. Eliot does not refuse to engage with named parties, but does seem, to this reader, to incorporate material with which different political groups could identify – seemingly simultaneously and without contradiction. This in turn maps onto the newspaper engagement with *Felix Holt*'s politics after its initial publication, the trigger for which was arguably an understanding that Eliot aimed not to reconcile political difference, but to encourage plural responses. These parallels in the authorial construction and journalistic reception of Dickens and Eliot's writing suggest that newspapers' careful and often polemical weaving of *Pickwick* into a rhetoric of Reform was not an incidental outcome of its circulation in the press but a single example of a more extensive, enduring, journalistic discourse about the franchise and electoral politics in which literature played a significant role. In the Introduction, I noted that during the nineteenth century, it would have been difficult to pick a newspaper without encountering remediated literature in some form. *Pickwick* has shown the extent to which that literary presence in the newspaper press both shaped and was shaped by political thinking. It is for this reason that such literature acts as an index now, one that enables us to come closer to understanding political thought in the press at given moments and across time. What the parallels between the treatment of Dickens and Eliot's work additionally prompt are two interrelated questions that might be used to guide a multi-author study into this practice: first, what did it mean to have politics so embedded in the literary-journalistic reading experience? And second, what did it mean to have popular fiction so embedded in newspaper politics?

The fragmentation and re-use of circulating literary texts offer a surprisingly consistent mode of registering levels of political anxiety at given moments and across time, as well as an alternative way to understand the perceived stakes of constitutional reform for nineteenth-century journalists and the communities of active readers they served. We might even speculate that Victorian novels and newspapers returned so frequently to the Reform Act years of the recent past as a means of rationalising their political anxieties in later, politically tumultuous moments. In her reading of the nineteenth-century democratic imagination, Isobel Armstrong argues that hermeneutic analyses of nineteenth-century literary texts which address the 'machinery of franchise and ballot' are 'deeply limited' because of the way such readings favour conservativism and hegemony by default.[13] However, the repeated circulation of the same scenes and tropes from literary texts in newspapers with a variety of partisanships—and

[13] Isobel Armstrong, *Novel Politics: Democratic Imaginations in Nineteenth-Century Fictions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

their direct or indirect engagement with Reform politics—shows just how frequently any kind of political 'default' position was discarded by editors who chose material precisely because it emblematised their own ideologies. Further, as *Pickwick* clearly shows, it was often a text's disinclination towards political partisanship, rather than a tendency towards hegemonical polemic that encouraged a variety of interpretations among newspapers, which in turn reflects back onto and diversifies our potential interpretations of the source text itself. What this project has enabled, then, is a more politically nuanced form of hermeneutic analysis than could otherwise be pursued by reading the internal politics of a text separately from its wider remediation contexts. This way of reading is both alert to the contingency of journalistic reception and, in *Pickwick*'s case, uses that contingency to pursue an understanding of literature's plural response to changes in the 'machinery of franchise and ballot' in popular culture, that is less limited than Armstrong allows.

As the efforts required to create stable, parameterised datasets for this project evidently show, *Pickwick*'s presence in the press represents a single piece of a much larger picture, albeit a piece that serves as a rich, clear illustration of the benefits of broadening the scope of our research into this journalistic phenomenon. The uses of *Pickwick* and its literary neighbours in the newspapers that this project has catalogued and analysed show that there are very likely to be hundreds if not thousands of fragments of remediated literature in the newspaper press that as yet remain undiscovered, including unsung and perhaps surprisingly polemical reviews, excerpts, creative adaptations and evocations. Each of these has the potential to bolster, unsettle, or even cut across our existing understanding of a text's reception history and its political or cultural impact. Each too has the potential to call our attention to the phenomenon of remediated literature in the newspaper press as a vital means of advancing our thinking in literary studies, reception studies and media history.

Appendix A Newspaper Details for Database 2

The below is an itemised list of the newspapers consulted for Database 2, with their publication frequencies and details of any duplications, omissions and special issues between March 1836 and December 1837.

Brighton Gazette
Published weekly on Thursday
Every number, no duplications

Brighton Patriot
Published weekly on Tuesday
Every number, no duplications

Bristol Mercury
Published weekly on Saturday
Every number, no duplications

Cambridge Chronicle and Journal
Published weekly on Friday until Friday 06 January 1837, then published weekly on Saturday (first Saturday number is 14 January 1837)
Every number has a duplicate (one colour and one black-and-white copy) only one issue per publication date is represented in the database

Carlisle Journal
Published weekly on Saturday
Every Number, no duplications

Chester Chronicle
Published weekly on Friday
Every number, no duplications

Coventry Standard

Published weekly on Friday

Began publication on 05 August 1836

Missing first page of 09 September 1836, no duplications

Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette

Published weekly on Thursday

Every number, no duplications

Durham Chronicle

Published weekly on Friday until week beginning 12 September 1836, when there is one Saturday issue, the journal then becomes bi-weekly from week beginning 19 September 1836 and is published on Wednesday and Saturday until week beginning 07 November 1836, where the publication returns to Friday alone.

Every number, no duplications. However, when publication becomes bi-weekly on 19 September, there is no acknowledgement of why this has happened in the previous Saturday issue, which means there might be an issue missing on Wednesday 14 September.

Evening Chronicle

Published tri-weekly on Monday, Wednesday and Friday

Every number, no duplications

Exeter and Plymouth Gazette

Published weekly on Saturday

Missing 09 December 1837, no duplications

Hampshire Advertiser

Published weekly on Saturday

Missing 02 January 1836, 21 May 1836, 30 December 1837, no duplications

Hereford Times

Published weekly on Saturday

Every number, no duplications, extra issue on Sunday 06 November

Kentish Gazette

Published weekly on Tuesday

Every number, no duplications

Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser

Published weekly on Saturday

Missing 30 April 1836, no duplications

Morning Chronicle

Published daily except Sundays

Missing 07 June 1837, 31 December 1837

Morning Post

Published daily except Sundays

Missing 09 February-30 March (inclusive) and 11 April, no duplications

Newcastle Journal

Published weekly on Saturday

Every number, no duplications

Norfolk Chronicle

Published weekly on Saturday

Every number, no duplications, one issue in July 1837 published on Friday 07 instead of Saturday 08

Northampton Mercury

Published weekly on Saturday

Missing 31 December 1836, no duplications.

Nottingham Journal

Published weekly on Friday

Every number, no duplications

Oxford University and City Herald

Published weekly on Saturday

Missing 08 July 1837, 28 October 1837, no duplications.

Reading Mercury

Published weekly on Monday until January 1837, when publication moves to Saturday

Missing 15 February 1836, 4 April 1836, 2 May 1836, 4 November 1837

Two issues in first week of January 1837 (Monday and Saturday) as publication schedule changes

Royal Cornwall Gazette

Published weekly on Friday

Missing 6 May 1836, no duplications

Sheffield Independent

Published weekly on Saturday

Every number, no duplications

Shrewsbury Chronicle

Published weekly on Friday

Every number, no duplications

Staffordshire Advertiser

Published weekly on Saturday

Missing 14 January 1837 and 17 June 1837, no duplications, extra issues on Friday 14 and Monday 17 July 1837

Sun (London)

Published daily, except Sunday

Every number, no duplications, Sunday issue on 15 January 1837

The Suffolk Chronicle; or Weekly General Advertiser and County Express

Published weekly on Saturday

Every number, no duplications

Warwick and Warwickshire Advertiser

Published weekly on Saturday

Missing 18 June 1836, no duplications

Yorkshire Gazette

Published weekly on Saturday

Missing 20 August 1836, but after the Saturday issue on 27 August, there is an issue on Tuesday 30 August and Saturday 3 September, which may have made up for the missed issue, no duplications

Appendix B Location of Excerpted Scenes in *Pickwick*

Tag (for Searching)	Hits	Number	Chapter	Place	Month Published	Appearances within 1 month	Appearances within 2 months	Appearances after 2 months
anecdote after interpolated tale	1	XVII	XLIX	Last Chapter	September 1837	1	0	0
anecdote before interpolated tale	4	VIII	XXI	First Chapter	November 1836	2	1	1
bardell v pickwick	10	XII	XXXIV	Middle Chapter	March 1837	8	2	0
bath assembly rooms	4	XIII	XXXV	First Chapter	April 1837	4	0	0
bath footman	6	XIII	XXXV	First Chapter	April 1837	6	2	0
bath footman soiree	4	XIII	XXXVII	Last Chapter	April 1837	3	0	0
birmingham	2	XVIII	LII	Last Chapter	October 1837	1	1	0

bob sawyer leaves his patients	3	XVIII	L	First Chapter	October 1837	3	0	0
boots	5	IV	X	Middle Chapter	July 1836	5	0	0
brick lane temperance	2	XII	XXXIII	First Chapter	March 1837	2	0	0
Cabman's horse	10	I	II	Last Chapter	April 1836	10	0	0
card party	1	III	VI	First Chapter	June 1836	1	0	0
christmas	2	X	XXVIII	Middle Chapter	January 1837	2	0	0
coachmen and romance	6	XVIII	LII	Last Chapter	October 1837	5	1	0
cobbler in the fleet	10	XVI	XLIV	First Chapter	August 1837	10	0	0
crumpets	4	XVI	XLIV	First Chapter	August 1837	4	0	0

dodson and fogg collect money	1	XIX-XX	LIII	First Chapter	November 1837	1	0	0
dodson and fogg first meeting	1	VII	XX	Last Chapter	October 1836	1	0	0
eatanswill editors	6	XVIII	LI	Middle Chapter	October 1837	6	0	0
eatanswill election	19	V	XIII	Middle Chapter	August 1836	17	1	1
fleet prisoner's death	1	XVI	XLIV	First Chapter	August 1837	1	0	0
fleet smangle and mivins	1	XV	XLI	First Chapter	July 1837	1	0	0
gout	7	VII	XX	Last Chapter	October 1836	6	1	0
inns of court	1	XIV	XL	Last Chapter	May 1837	1	0	0
insolvent debtors court	2	XV	XLIII	Last Chapter	July 1837	2	0	0
interpolated tale	1	X	XXVIX	Last Chapter	January 1837	2	0	0

ipswich magistrate	3	IX	XXV	Middle Chapter	December 1836	3	0	0
ipswich magistrate and miss witherfield	1	IX	XXIV	First Chapter	December 1836	1	0	0
ivy green	1	III	VI	First Chapter	June 1836	0	0	1
jingle and the spinster aunt	1	IV	VIX	First Chapter	July 1836	1	0	0
license touters	1	IV	X	Middle Chapter	July 1836	1	0	0
lowton and attachments	2	XIX-XX	LIII	First Chapter	November 1837	2	0	0
marquis of granby	1	X	XXVII	First Chapter	January 1837	1	0	0
medicine bottle	6	XIV	XXXVII I	First Chapter	May 1837	5	1	0

meeting bob sawyer and ben allen	2	XI	XXX	First Chapter	February 1837	2	0	0
meeting tony	1	VII	XX	Last Chapter	October 1836	1	0	0
mr stiggins	2	XII	XXXIII	First Chapter	March 1837	1	0	0
mrs leo hunter's dejeuner	2	VI	XV	First Chapter	September 1836	2	0	0
never mind	5	VIX	XXIV	First Chapter	December 1836	5	0	0
novel courtship	4	XIII	XXXV	First Chapter	April 1837	4	0	0
peter magnus proposal	8	IX	XXIV	First Chapter	December 1836	6	2	0
pickwick addresses club	4	I	I	First Chapter	April 1836	2	1	1
pickwick obtains his own room	1	XV	XLII	Middle Chapter	July 1837	1	0	0

pickwick visits arabella	2	XIV	XXXIX	Middle Chapter	May 1837	2	0	0
pickwick visits poor side of the fleet	1	XV	XLII	Middle Chapter	July 1837	0	0	1
Pickwick's first tour of the fleet	3	XV	XLI	First Chapter	July 1837	2	1	0
pocket watch	5	X	XXVIII	Middle Chapter	January 1837	5	0	0
post boys and donkeys	2	XVIII	LI	Middle Chapter	October 1837	2	0	0
poverty and oysters	4	VIII	XXII	Middle Chapter	November 1836	2	1	1
poverty and oysters; turnpike keepers	2	VIII	XXII	Middle Chapter	November 1836	2	0	0
sam and groom	2	XIV	XXXVIX	Middle Chapter	May 1837	2	0	0
sam and mary	1	XVIII	LII	Last Chapter	October 1837	1	0	0

sam and mary first meeting	2	IX	XXV	Middle Chapter	December 1836	2	0	0
sam and the fat boy	1	X	XXVIII	Middle Chapter	January 1837	1	0	0
sam and the servants	1	IX	XXV	Middle Chapter	December 1836	1	0	0
sam and tony discuss trotter	1	VIII	XXIII	Last Chapter	November 1836	1	0	0
sam visits mother-in-law	2	X	XXVII	First Chapter	January 1837	2	0	0
sam vows to stay	5	XIX-XX	LVI	First Chapter	November 1837	5	0	0
sam, tony and temperence tea party	2	XII	XXXIII	First Chapter	March 1837	3	0	0
sausage maker	6	XI	XXXI	Middle Chapter	February 1837	6	0	0

shooting rooks	1	III	VII	Middle Chapter	June 1836	0	0	1
sitting up	3	XIII	XXXVI	Middle Chapter	April 1837	3	0	0
solomon pell and wilkins flasher	2	XIX-XX	LV	First Chapter	November 1837	2	0	0
solomon pell first meeting	1	XV	XLIII	Last Chapter	July 1837	1	0	0
stiggins in the fleet	1	XVI	XLV	Middle Chapter	August 1837	1	0	0
tears	5	XVI	XLIV	First Chapter	August 1837	0	4	1
tony and sam's arrest	1	XV	XLIII	Last Chapter	July 1837	1	0	0
tony tells sam about the shepherd	1	VIII	XXII	Middle Chapter	November 1836	1	0	0
tupman and the spinster aunt	1	II	IV	Middle Chapter	May 1836	1	0	0

turnpikes	6	VIII	XXII	Middle Chapter	November 1836	4	1	1
twopenny rope	11	VI	XVI	Last Chapter	September 1836	9	1	1
valentine	4	XII	XXXIII	First Chapter	March 1837	4	0	0
veal pie	13	VII	XIX	Middle Chapter	October 1836	11	1	1
waiter	1	XVIII	L	First Chapter	October 1837	1	0	0
weller and stiggins fleet visit	1	XVI	XLV	Middle Chapter	August 1837	1	0	0
wellerism charity boy alphabet	2	X	XXVII	First Chapter	January 1837	2	0	1
wellerism gentleman with dropsy	1	XVI	XLIV	First Chapter	August 1837	1	0	0

wellerism hawk	1	XVII	XLVII	First Chapter	September 1837	1	0	0
wellerism king richard	2	IX	XXV	Middle Chapter	December 1836	2	0	0
wellerism lighthouse	2	XV	XLIII	Last Chapter	July 1837	2	0	0
wellerism only assisted nature	1	XVII	XLVII	First Chapter	September 1837	0	1	0
wellerism parrot	1	XIII	XXXV	First Chapter	April 1837	1	0	0
wellerism pension list	2	XVIII	LI	Middle Chapter	October 1837	2	0	0
wellerism poker	1	VIII	XXIII	Last Chapter	November 1836	0	0	1
white horse cellar	2	XIII	XXXV	First Chapter	April 1837	2	0	0
winkle and the horse	1	II	V	Last Chapter	May 1836	1	0	0

winkle bob sawyer and ben allen	2	XIV	XXXVII I	First Chapter	May 1837	2	0	0
winkle locked out	1	XIII	XXXVII	Last Chapter	April 1837	1	0	0
winkle marries arabella	1	XVII	XLVII	First Chapter	September 1837	1	0	0
winkle skates	1	XI	XXX	First Chapter	February 1837	1	0	0

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