博士論文

論文題目

Between Voice and Text: Techniques of Narration in Charles Dickens's Early and Mid-Period Novels, 1836–50

（声と文字の交錯―ディケンズ前期中期小説（**1836–50**）に見られる語りの手法）

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Acknowledgements

It has been more than ten years since I first chose the topic for this dissertation. In these ten years, there were times that I could believe I would finish this; and there were times that I feared I might end up leaving this unfinished. Of course, the duration of the negative period felt almost unbearably long, while the positive self-affirmation rarely visited me. But now, I could come so far to write this acknowledgements, only because I am blessed to have had so many wonderful people around me.

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List of Illustrations

Introduction

G. K. Chesterton (1874–1936) once described Victorian England as "a world that encouraged anybody to be anything". The progressive spirit of the age found "its living expression" in its most celebrated writer, Charles Dickens (Chesterton [1906], 14). When that "living expression" finally died in 1870 at fifty-eight years old, however, John Ruskin (1819–1900) lamented how the death was "miserable": even though "he might have been writing blessed books till he was eighty", "the pestiferous demand of the mob" shortened his life (Ruskin, vol. 34, 517). The "mob" signifies Dickens's contemporary readers, and the "pestiferous demand" means their insatiable desire for his public readings in his own voice.

From 1858 to his death, Dickens had been entirely absorbed in this enterprise, rewriting some of his major novels and performing the scripts aloud in front of his audiences, collecting a staggering amount of money. His American tour from December 1867 to April 1868, for instance, netted him as much as 19,000 pounds from seventy-six performances (Hobsbaum, 271). Working-class and lower-middle-class readers were particularly delighted with these readings, for they could occupy the "shilling-seats" which were designed for as "good accommodation" as the seats of those "who were willing to pay higher sums" (Dolby, 3). Even those who were not equipped with sufficient literacy were able to appreciate the

Inimitable author, not in their original textual form but through the author's authentic voice.[1] Ironically, however, their applause ended up consuming the author; "he sometimes read as many as eight times in a week in five different towns" and the overwhelmingly busy schedule led to serious damage of his health (Bowen, 13). "Dickens's ordinary pulse of 72 rose to 112 at the end of the reading", yet "the exhausted Prospero", as Fred Kaplan described him, continued his touring in spite of his friends' repeated attempts at dissuasion (Kaplan, 547–48).

John Forster (1812–76), who was strongly opposed to such a gruelling schedule, looked back on those days in his biography *The Life of Charles Dickens* (1872–74). He found Dickens's excessive involvement with public entertainment to be like a "substitution of lower for higher aims: a change to commonplace from more elevated pursuits" (*Life*, vol. 3, 189). Forster took it for granted that writing original texts has a definite advantage over reading the previous texts aloud, and that Dickens should have prioritised his textual production over oral reading practices. Setting aside the question of priority, we can obviously see that it was really a "substitution". Dickens's personal voice could not coexist with his textual creation. The more he became absorbed in the reading project, the less he could write. During a period of twelve years, Dickens could only produce three novels [*Great Expectations* (1860–61), *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859), *Our Mutual Friend* (1864–65)—among these is only one full-length 20-instalment work], and left another uncompleted [*The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (1870)]: while in the same length of time without public readings, he had produced as many as eight

[1] The epithet "Inimitable" was first given to him by his childhood teacher, William Giles, a Baptist minister. On the publication of *Pickwick Papers*, Giles sent a silver snuff-box with an inscription to "the inimitable Boz". Dickens cherished the title and called or signed himself "Inimitable" on many occasions (Slater, 10).

novels. In this sense, we could agree with Ruskin's lamentation: people's insatiable appetite for his reciting voice suffocated his capacity to produce original narrative.

It is therefore natural that Dickens's repertories for public readings are mainly taken from his works in the early and middle period. His first recital was held in December 1853; it was a charitable enterprise aiming at spreading "education for the working-class and lower classes" (Smith, 115) and the materials were chosen on the grounds of their conformity to the season and the purpose—*Christmas Carol* (1843) and *The Cricket on the Hearth* (1845). From 1858 on, Dickens started reading for profit, and gradually expanded his repertories; first with scenes in *Pickwick Papers* (1836–37), *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1843–44) and *Dombey and Son* (1846–48)*;* then he devised an ambitious two-hour script of *David Copperfield* (1849–50); after that he completed the scripts of *Nicholas Nickleby* (1838–39) and then those of several other Christmas Stories. One of the most famous pieces, "Sikes and Nancy" from *Oliver Twist* (1837–39), was finished in the early autumn of 1868 for his Farewell reading tour (*Readings,* xxvii). A quick glance at these lists of works will confirm that all of them come from his earlier years (except for the short Christmas stories). The only exception is *Great Expectations*, which was published in 1861 and was prepared for reading during the same year, but Dickens never used the completed script in any of his performances, though nobody knows the reason.

As a result, Dickens's early and middle-period novels became the exclusive *topos* upon which his real voice intersects with his written texts. Furthermore, several other strata of voice and text were put over those same texts, as his reading tours went on. The actual scripts used in the performances are not direct extracts cut out from the long original novels: Dickens

tightened and shortened the long passages in the original texts, rewrote some of them, and deleted several parts containing social criticism that could bore the audiences. For instance, the storm scene of *David Copperfield* became about 1,900 words in the reading, while in the original novel it takes as long as 5,500 words; Mr. Peggotty was also "given more dialect phrasings" in the reading text (*Readings*, xxxv). In short, Dickens's texts were reproduced with an acute sense of the dynamics of hearing and speaking. When they were put into performance, another conflict between voice and text emerged. George Dolby, who served as a general manager for many of Dickens's performances, revealed what took place on his American tour: "Before the announcement of the Readings in Boston, an intimation had reached me that the 'pirates' had decided on sending shorthand writers to the Readings to 'take them down' as they progressed, with a view to their reproduction and sale … Messrs. Ticknor and Fields [Dickens's publisher] promptly anticipated such a proceeding by at once issuing the Readings (taken from Mr. Dickens's own reading books) in small volumes, and selling them at their store at such a price as made it impossible for the 'pirates' to get anything out of their publication" (Dolby, 177).

If Dickens's series of experiences with the public readings let us see several conflicts —or at least mutual interrelationships—between voice and writing, it necessarily leads us to consider the composition of his Victorian readership—particularly in the early Victorian period in which the original materials of his reading tours were produced. The age precisely coincides with the emergence of a new kind of reading public, whose class positions and levels of literacy were scattered and diverse. Richard Altick observes of this period that "never before in

English history had so many people read so much" (Altick [1957], 5). He further explains that the reading public was never "really a cohesive, homogeneous unit but a whole cluster of publics, as various as the society to which they belonged" (Altick [1973], 59). Concerning Dickens's relationship with that "cluster of publics", critics have frequently introduced an analogy with well-suited and reciprocal lovers. Kathleen Tillotson and John Butt actually defined his "lifelong love-affair" with his readers as "by far the most interesting love-affair of his life" (Tillotson and Butt, 75). And the public reading tours would be one of the few chances that allowed the two lovers to see each other in person.

However, it should not be overlooked that their relationship could become unstable once readers began to exert power over his texts—the power of their collective voice against his written text. After completing the serialisation of *Pickwick Papers*, and becoming "the superstar novelist of the Victorian reading public", Dickens was to see that some of his readers had already transformed themselves into imitators of his work (Brantlinger, 13). John Sutherland's summary is worth quoting in length:

> There being no copyright in ideas (or much else in the 1830s), there was a rather desperate attempt to crack the formula and identify the active ingredients in Boz's appeal. The result over the period 1839–40 was a shambling parade of novels in numbers, most marked by some particular emphasis which was hoped to be the key to Dickensian success. […] Other would-be Dickensians assumed that the spluttering consonantal alliteration in the titles of *Pickwick Papers* and *Nicholas Nickleby* were the easy way to public favour. So, in March 1839, the consumer could have chosen among: *Valentine Vox, the Ventriloquist; Will's Whim*, […] and *Paul Periwinkle or the Pressgang*. […] A main point of interest in the cascade of 1839–1840 serials and their clumsy attempts to reconstitute Dickens's recipe is the unconscious evidence they supply on how the contemporary book trade construed the Boz phenomenon. Take, for instance, the baggage of pseudo Dickensian elements in the following offering: *The Rector's Progress, or the Veritable amusing and interesting History of the Family Connexions, Characters, Doings and Delinquencies of Dr Daniel Tithegripe, by Clericus*. […] Still others, such as G. W. M. Reynolds with *Pickwick Abroad* (1838–9,

> published by Sherwood, illustrated by A. Crowquill) banked on unvarnished plagiarism to suborn the Dickens public. (Sutherland [2006], 90–91)

Although Sutherland saw only a "desperate attempt" in those imitators' attitudes, the nominal list of their works actually demonstrates their astute strategy, picking up on the crucial transition from oral to textual. They exploited the "spluttering consonantal alliteration" of *Pickwick Papers* and forcibly made it rhyme with their own titles. Such a focus on sound was not without reason. No matter how society had witnessed an explosive increase of the number of "readers", their literacy was by no means sufficient to allow them to read silently and individually. The general method of nineteenth-century education, the infamous monitory system, could barely allow unprivileged people—particularly the lower-middle and lower classes—to learn how to decipher and rebuild any given sequence of the alphabet (Vincent [1989], 77). Although several Victorian graphs recorded a rapid growth of "literate" people, those figures could only tell us the numbers of people who could sign their names in their marriage registers (Flint, 19).[2] The seemingly glorious growth of literacy and the incidental increase of public readers, therefore, contained within itself the shadow of illiteracy.

In short, there were abundant numbers of people who acknowledged themselves as knowing the letters of the alphabet, though who were not necessarily interested in the unity or structure of the overall text. Those "readers" more or less had to rely on orality to respond to novels. While some people read aloud a text, others were there to listen to that reading. This oral and public consumption of books displaces any one-to-one stable relationship between the

[2] The difficulty of calculating literary figures is paradigmatically shown in David Vincent's two books, both of which try to pin down the actual situations of education and people's literacy in 19th-century England and European countries: *Literacy and Popular Culture: England, 1750-1914* (1989) and *The Rise of Mass Literacy. Reading and Writing in Modern Europe* (2000).

author and his reader. Reading cannot always be developed in the realm of textuality: the supplement of orality can from time to time undermine the solidity of the written texts. Given this, it would be necessary to reconsider the readership of Dickensian works. It is often claimed that the sales numbers of Dickens's serialisation should be multiplied ten- or even twenty-fold in order to estimate the precise numbers of his "readers". Each copy of the text would give rise to various oral performances, engaging an audience who responded to the sounds rather than the words of the text. In fact, as Leslie Howsam concisely encapsulates, "scholars have found it notoriously difficult … to make explicit the connection between the transmitted text of the author's manuscript, and the received text of the reader's experience" (Howsam, 11).

This notorious difficulty is not limited to the circle of recent scholars and critics, but would also have been present in the undercurrent of the 19th-century reading experiences. Although John Sutherland tacitly assumes that the difference between the true Dickens works and the other poor imitations could be known by anybody competent to judge, I would rather suggest an opposite possibility: that Victorian people were often unable to detect such differences clearly. As long as they could hear and thereby "read" whatever sounded like a Dickensian text, they might be satisfied. The "public favour" was thus easily caught by the pseudo-Dickensians' awkward yet shrewd tactics of naming their texts by whatsoever sounded close to *Pickwick* and *Nickleby*.

As literary texts were disseminated, people's literacy and orality gathered together to unfold the written text. Interestingly, Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *The Stateman's Manual*

(1816)—which had been published twenty years before *Pickwick Papers*—already records his distress at such promiscuous ways of consuming literature:

> When I named this Essay a Sermon, I sought to prepare the inquirers after it for the absence of all the usual softenings suggested by worldly prudence, of all compromise between truth and courtesy. But not even as a Sermon would I have addressed the present Discourse to a promiscuous audience; and for this reason I likewise announced it in the title-page, as exclusively *ad clerum*; i.e. (in the old and wide sense of the word) to men of *clerkly* acquirements, of whatever profession. I would that the greater part of our publications could be thus *directed*, each to its appropriate class of Readers. But this cannot be! For among other odd burs and kecksies, the misgrowth of our luxuriant activity, we have now a READING PUBLIC. (Coleridge, vol. 6, 35–36) (original *italics*)

In the 1810s, Coleridge admonished that the "promiscuous audience" of the "Reading Public" had become so dangerous as to degrade the true meaning of "reading", which he insisted should be a "luxuriant activity", only to be allowed for those of "*clerkly* acquirements"—those who had sufficient literacy to read the texts in a supposedly correct way. Almost anticipating Dickens's predicament, whose readers could easily be attracted by a sea of imitation works, Coleridge wanted to limit the sphere of reading to a small circle of elite members.

His concern was shared by subsequent intellectuals. John Stuart Mill (1806–73) detected the incongruence between mass readers and proper ways of reading in 1838: "The world reads too much and too quickly to read well. When books were few, to get through one was a work of time and labour… But when almost every person who can spell can and will write, what is to be done?" (Mill, 16) Wilkie Collins argued in an essay called "The Unknown Public" (1858) in *Household Words* (1850–59) that:

> The Unknown Public is, in a literary sense, hardly beginning, as yet, to learn to read. The members of it are evidently, in the mass, from no fault of theirs, still ignorant of almost everything which is generally known and understood among readers whom

> circumstances have placed, socially and intellectually, in the rank above them […] The future of English fiction may rest with this Unknown Public, which is now waiting to be taught the difference between a good book and a bad. (W. Collins, 222)

It is interesting that Collins chooses to say that the "Unknown Public" had not even begun to learn how to read in a "literary sense". He insisted that those uneducated readers, who could not tell *Pickwick Papers* from *Periwinkle or the Pressgang,* and who could be easily deluded by whatever sounded like a Dickensian work, should be duly instructed how to read "literally" and to know what was "a good book".

Dickens, the "conductor" of *Household Words*, was of course well aware of these situations and knew that his oral readers could potentially exert a dangerous power. He wrote in a letter to Forster in 1840 that:

> I am glad you like that Kit number. I thought you would. I have altered that about the opera-going. Of course I had no intention to delude the *many-headed* into a false belief concerning opera nights, but merely to specify a class of senators. I needn't have done it, however, for God knows they're pretty well all alike. (*Letters*, vol. 2, 129) (my *italics*)

The letter refers to an episode of Kit and Barbara's "opera-going," which appears in chapter 38 of *The Old Curiosity Shop*. The narrator mentions popular hardships and sufferings in there, and hints about the privileged class's indifference to the realities of lower-class life. Dickens's original manuscript read "the people's health and comforts that may be whistled down by opera-going Senators on Wednesday nights" (Brennan, 294, n.1). Fearing that the word of "Senators" could give his readers a false impression that Kit's pastime was something related to a classical Roman heritage, Dickens decided to delete "by opera-going Senators", and the completed text came out without that part (though such a slight emendation, as he himself

admitted, may not have been necessary in the first place). Arranged in this way, the alteration seems to be a trifling scene of his daily life. However, the expression of "many-headed"—a deformed, single creature with thousands of heads—cannot be overlooked; as Garrett Stewart notes, it illuminates Dickens's self-image of being painfully exposed to the innumerable eyes of his readers (Stewart [1996], 7). Furthermore, though Stewart does not mention this, we should note that the expression of "many-headed" was not Dickens's original, but was probably taken from Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*, as otherwise the reference to "Senators" cannot be explained. Indeed, as Valerie L. Gager has extensively demonstrated, Dickens' corpus and letters have numerous allusions to Shakespeare's plays, among which those to *Coriolanus* comprise more than ten (excluding the passage under discussion [Gager, 270–71]).

When we return the allusion "many-headed" to its original Shakespearean context, a conflict between democracy and aristocracy as well as a dichotomy between voice and silence become noticeable. The hero Coriolanus refers to his people as "The beast /With many heads" (4.1.1–2). One of the citizens is angry with being called one of "the many-headed multitude" (2. 3. 14). Another thinks about the meaning of the insult: "We have been so called of many, not that our heads are some brown, some black, some abram, some bald, but that our wits are so diversely coloured. And truly I think if all our wits were to issue out of one skull, they would fly east, west, north, south, and their consent of one direct way should be at once to all the points o'th'compass" (2.3.15–20). Interestingly, the images connected to diversity—"the beast with many heads", "the many-headed multitude" and "one skull" filled with so many differing opinions—are all put on an ambivalent scale: while they certainly suggest an

enormous number of people and their accordingly incoherent ways of thinking, they on the other hand suggest that these proliferating "heads" are containable within a single entity. Indeed, the following dialogue among the citizens shows that their voices can potentially be collected and exchanged with the hero's bodily symbols:

> First Citizen: Once if he[Coriolanus] do require our voices, we ought not to deny him.
> Second Citizen: We may, sir, if we will.
> Third Citizen: We have power in ourselves to do it, but it is a power that we have no power to do. For if he shows us his wounds and tell us his deeds, we are to put our tongues into those wounds and speak for them.
> (2. 3. 1–7)

The citizens know that Coriolanus would require their voices—the "tongues" that can be duly "put into" his wounds and can speak for them—in order to become a consul and rule the republic. The heroic warrior and the citizens of Rome can get along together only when his bodily symbols are converted into their spoken consent (or vice versa). Yet the opening scene of the play ominously foreshadows the incongruity between the body and the voice. In Act 1, Menenius Agrippa compares the state of Rome to a human body and laments how it suffers malfunction: the belly (Roman Senators) speaks up and tries to govern the rest of body in orderly fashion, yet finds that "all the body members" (Citizens) rebel fiercely (1. 1. 80–92). And indeed, the subsequent development of the play vivifies how the "symbols" put upon Coriolanus's body cannot make peace with "the people's voices" (3. 3. 49). The disparity between his body and the "many-headed" Roman voice finally results in his ostracism from the city.

Unlike Coriolanus, Dickens did not have scars that need to be put into his readers' voices. Still, they had a remarkable affinity to each other in their will to control everything. A

good example can be seen in the birth of *Pickwick Papers*. The work was at first planned by a renowned illustrator, Robert Seymour (1798–1836), when Dickens was just a fledgling writer, known for his first work, *Sketches by Boz* (1833–36). When he was asked to put writings to the plates executed by the senior illustrator, however, the young writer resisted the original designs, dismissing Seymour's plan as "not novel" as it "has been already much used". He even proposed a "cavalier suggestion", saying that "it would be infinitely better for the plates to arise naturally out of the text" (E. Johnson, vol. 1, 86). This clearly reflects the youthful Dickens's determination that "he could not work in the grid set by Seymour and publishers" (Kinsley, xviii), and his strong belief that instead of him serving Seymour, Seymour should serve him. Such an obvious desire to control his works continued to be seen for the rest of his career (as will be shown in the following chapters). If so, it will not be surprising that the oral potentiality of his "many-headed" readers could easily become threatening to him. They could read in whatever way would satisfy themselves without even knowing the difference between true Dickensian works and their feeble imitations. Just like Coriolanus, who could neither maintain his pride nor make his wounds offer testimony of his deeds, Dickens was in danger of losing control of his textual world unless he took good care of his words and was very careful not to "delude the many-headed" into "a false belief".

In this context, Dickens's obsessive enthusiasm for public reading tours is rather easy to explain. In these performances, he showed his figure in front of his actual readers, let them hear his voice, and made them witness an authorised performance of his written words, that could function to check the ever-proliferating oral reproductions of his works. In fact, just after

one of his early readings, on June 11th 1858, he wrote to a friend, Daniel Maclise (1806–70): he was excited to see "a crowd so resolved into one creature" in front of him and moved to "weeping and cheering" at his own voice (*Letters*, vol. 8, 584). His early biographer, Mary Cowden Clarke (1809–98) remembered Dickens's own words: "There's nothing in the world equal to seeing the house rise at you, one sea of delightful faces, one hurrah of applause!" (Clarke, 324). Helen Small concisely summarises that "Dickens's Readings were conceived and promoted as occasions which would bring together readers from widely differing social backgrounds as one reading public" (Small, 266). These would have been a thrilling place to attend, where he could see his audience as a single creature which moves as one, crying and weeping at the same time, as easily as he wished they would. And through the reading, Dickens could try to retrieve his own texts from his readers' arbitrary appropriation.[3]

Whereas the reading tours trace Dickens's desire to singularise an authoritative oral version, it is interesting that the inside of his actual texts is suffused with many different styles. Mikhail Bahktin aptly points to the existence of numerous "voices" in the works of the English comic novelists (among whom Dickens is of course counted), and explains it in the well-known term of "heteroglossia":

> we find [in those novelists' works] a comic-parodic re-processing of almost all the levels of literary language, both conversationally and written, that were current at the time [...] an encyclopaedia of all strata and forms of literary language: depending on the subject being represented, the storyline parodically reproduces first the forms of parliamentary eloquence, newspaper articles, or the dry business language of the City, or the dealings of speculators, or the pedantic speech of scholars, or the high epic. (Bahktin, 301)

[3] In fact, Jon Mee notices Dickens's annoyance with various adaptations of his texts, and regards his public reading tours as his own way of establishing unique control (Mee, 84).

As Bahktin describes, Dickens's style enlivens "all strata and forms of literary language"; and yet he strenuously tries to enclose them within his single voice through repeatedly performing the public reading sessions. What is interesting is that such ambivalence of Dickens—on the one hand using heteroglossic voices in his text and on the other hand trying to singularise oral appropriation of that text—could be seen as a microcosm of his contemporary society's literary situation: numerous readers' voices were gathering around one written text to create innumerable heteroglossia versions, while the literary authors (as we saw in Coleridge, Mill and Collins) were warning of the dangerous potential of those oral readers and were searching for some way to admonish them not to misread their texts.

Alternatively, Dickens's ambivalence between multiple appropriations and one authoritative voice can be plausibly attributed to larger-scale technological changes in the Victorian period. The industrial revolution from around the 1830s triggered numerous innovations in the process of book production. The manufacture of paper was replaced by mechanical mass production; the speed of printing was miraculously accelerated by the introduction of the steam-engine. All of these brought about a huge flow from voice into print. People's voices and styles of handwriting, which used to be shared and appreciated within a small circle of acquaintances, were now standardised into print to circulate among a newly enlarged reading public. Those mass-produced texts were again to be multiplied, put into many people's oral performances and aural consumptions. If we compare the reciprocal dynamism between voice and writing to Dickens's textual world, a curious parallelism can be discerned. The "heteroglossia" of voices were combined by the Inimitable's hand to be infused into his

textual world. The material script then went through the printing machines, and became a commodity product to be distributed among the Victorian public, who would read in many different voices. And eventually those versions of oral reproduction were absorbed into the single authentic version provided by the real author. Dickens's novels and his performances thus faithfully reflected the actual conditions of reading in Victorian England. Taking all these into account, my dissertation will try to bring this internal textual dynamic into relation with external factors within the Victorian publishing world, such as the issues of copyright, audiences and ownership of books and ideas.

Part 1 (from chapters 1 to 3) takes up the formative years of the author, and considers how the technological innovations of the 1830s affected his styles of writing. Chapter 1 traces various developments in that decade by drawing on historical data and figures. Chapter 2 deals with *Pickwick Papers*, and argues that its opening scene stands on the threshold between voice and writing. It also pays close attention to the actual characters inside the text, and how their styles of writing reflect Victorian people's unstable categories of literacy. The latter half of the same chapter turns its focus to the nine interpolated tales and tries to show that those episodes, though normally criticised in terms of their disconnection from the main plot, are actually internalising the Victorian technological transition from voice to writing (and then to print) and are yet at the same time betraying the author's desire to go back to the previous period, in which a storyteller could still possess his story in his own voice. Chapter 3 looks at *Master Humphrey's Clock* (1840–41) and *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1840–41). Whilst the sheer popularity of the beautiful young heroine Nell resulted in establishing Dickens as a global

celebrity writer, the actual serialisation was first met by contemporary readers' rejection. The original framework of *Master Humphrey's Clock* was then changed and Dickens was forced to discard a peaceful narrative sphere of Master Humphrey, where a narrator can face his familiar audience and can read his manuscript aloud to them. The nostalgic world of the oral storyteller was replaced by the omniscient narrator's narrative, which is filled with rowdy characters (such as Daniel Quilp and Dick Swiveller) and their loud and disruptive voices. Through analysing the abrupt switch of narration, this chapter considers how *The Old Curiosity Shop* navigates its heroine through the annoying interventions of vicious characters towards some quiet destination outside the reach of Victorian readers' voices: ultimately only to be found in death.

Part 2 (chapters 4 to 6) considers how Dickens tried to possess his work, in particular how he considered his rights in the Victorian literary market-place. Chapter 4 collects and arranges Victorian arguments about copyright, which were unstably determined by competing sets of values. For authors insisting on ownership of their ideas, the Romantic emphasis on originality was very convenient. On the other hand, converting that property into money and commodifying the imagination were mercenary processes opposing that same ideal. The cheap products of literature paradoxically function as an embodiment of the progressive ideals of Victorian society and its Utilitarian slogans. However, the same set of values could not help prohibiting the authors from speaking up about protecting their copyrights. Utilitarianism and the acceleration of social innovation explicitly and implicitly required the authors to renounce their individual welfare for the sake of unprivileged people. Among these complex networks of

values in the Victorian period, Dickens had to search for a way to earn enough money from his narrative voice yet at the same time had to detach himself from numerous other Grub Street writers, whose main aim of writing was money. Chapter 4 overviews all these situations and confirms the difficulty of changing voice into profitable print. Chapter 5 then goes on to consider how Dickens's copyright was violated in America. Taking up his travelogue, *American Notes* (1842), which was based on his tour in the same year of its publication, this chapter first pays attention to his speeches made there—how he admonished his audience on the importance of international copyright and how American readers fought back by criticising him as a mercenary hypocrite. Whilst the historical background of the travelogue thus dramatises his bitter antagonism to his transatlantic audience, the actual text does not depict any of these unhappy incidents; instead, the readers who are allowed to enter *American Notes* are all delineated in socially or economically handicapped situations. Analyses of these points will illuminate Dickens's hidden desire to expel his actual American readers' voices from his text. Chapter 6 takes up *Martin Chuzzlewit*, in which the theme of copyright is manifested in the conflict between Pecksniff and the young hero, Martin. Pecksniff steals Martin's architectural design and uses it as his own. Starting from this episode, the chapter focuses on the curious point that Pecksniff's evil deed does not receive any punishment. Instead, it is rather Martin who is humiliated and made to suffer, seeing his design stolen without any power to speak up for his rights. Recognising the absence of textual justice in *Martin Chuzzlewit*, this chapter considers why the plot of Jonas's parricide cannot follow the whodunit steps. The enigmatic detective Nadgett and his abnormal mania for writing function

to frustrate such predictable development of story plot. All these analyses will show how *Martin Chuzzlewit* is unstably and perpetually moving between two opposite poles: that of construction and destruction, that of endless circulation of writing and the fecund power of voice. It reveals itself as an elusive text, which cannot be pinned down by any readers' simple interpretation.

Part 2 thus focuses on the author's social conflict with his 19th-century readers and his dilemma in commercialising his narrative voice. Part 3 (chapters 7 and 8) approaches the author's difficulties over transforming his voice into print. Chapter 7 treats the concept of life-writing, and considers how the genre inherently comprises a paradox of self-unification. Generally speaking, any work of autobiography cannot start without a tacit assumption that the autobiographer's self is stably established before the moment of writing—so that he/she can confidently look back over his/her own life and voice his/her theory of life. However, narrating about oneself cannot help creating various different strata within the autobiographer's "I" between the narrating and narrated self (/selves). If Dickens wrote his autobiographical text to possess and impress his "self", the actual production of the texts could reversely complicate the enterprise by splitting himself into many components. The conflict between the autobiographer's voice and his textual production, or more broadly, between unification and proliferation, would have to be aggravated; since Dickens had to expose the process of writing in front of Victorian readers' vigilant eyes and their reading voices, through serialising his work in 20 instalments. Chapter 8 analyses *David Copperfield* and clarifies how the apparently impeccable *Bildungsroman* narrative is comprised of several paradoxical points

concerning David's development of literacy. These let us see Dickens's conscious or unconscious desire to put his readers' presence away from the actual voice and writing of the narrator-protagonist.

As the chapter-by-chapter summary so far shows, my dissertation will exclusively investigate the early- and middle-period works of Dickens, which were later chosen by him as the repertory of his public reading tours. I hope that these works will amply demonstrate Dickens's acute sensitivity towards the growing mass of readers, who consumed or experienced his written words both orally and literally. I also hope that my analyses in the following chapters will illuminate how his early and middle-period novels are internalising people's reading voices as well as Victorian society's technological innovations that created such a mass of printed works. This goal will bring us back to reconsider the complaints by John Ruskin and John Forster. Both of them criticised later Dickens's excessive devotion to his reading voice, and lamented that he should have dedicated himself primarily to his textual production just as he had done so in his earlier years. If, however, Dickens's earlier works already internalise and weave people's voices into his written texts, his later enterprise should be regarded less in terms of a sudden shift towards orality than as continuous attempts to converge or stitch voice and writing together. And the close readings of those earlier novels should let us find another way to judge Charles Dickens's narrative "voice", or to consider why and how Dickens's narration navigates itself between orality and textuality. Based on this assumption, the following chapters will try to shed light on the two Charles Dickenses or their mutual intersections. One is Dickens as a historical phenomenon who became a human engine,

accelerating contemporary revolutions in printing technologies and book productions. The other is Dickens as an individual, who, witnessing those great changes and placing himself in the middle of them, could not help wishing to retrieve his texts from readers' arbitrary voices, and to repossess them as his own authentic utterances.

Chapter 1

Victorian Readers between Voice and Text:

The 1830s as a Period of Technological Transition

In 1836, a year before the completion of *Pickwick Papers*, John Stuart Mill declared that his living age would be "a reading age" (Mill, 16). Almost as if to corroborate this comment, Queen Victoria (1819–1901), who was known to be indefatigable in letter-writing and well-read in novels and philosophies, came to the throne in 1837.[4] Governed by such a monarch, the public were eager to improve themselves, through whatever reading matters were available. William St. Clair, who collected and analysed an exhaustive amount of data through the Romantic and Victorian periods, examined how reading skills gradually developed and resulted in completing Great Britain as a "nation of reading" by the end of the 19th century (St. Clair, 13). Mill's and St. Clair's comments, respectively describing the beginning and ending of the Victorian period, help us imagine the landscape in front of the young Charles Dickens, while composing his first major work, *Pickwick Papers*. The formative groups of readers were going to shape—if shapelessly—"the mass reading public" (Altick [1957], 81).

[4] Her love of reading and writing will be amply testified to by the voluminous quantity of letters contained in *Letters of Queen Victoria: a selection from Her Majesty's correspondence between the years 1837 and 1861*. 3 vols. About her reading experiences, see Christopher Hibbert's *Queen Victoria, A Personal History*.

In the light of the industrial revolution, the formation of such a readership was anything but surprising. Changes in book production gave birth to new technologies in paper making and mechanised printing (Weedon, 157). At the turn of the 19th century, the paper industry was going through one of the worst periods in its history. D. C. Coleman, comparing 1770 and 1800, reported that the imposed excise on paper was increased as much as eleven-fold, while the whole output of paper products had barely doubled (Coleman, 141–2). There thus emerged an urgent need for an effective means of paper manufacturing (Plant, 325–7), which was provided by the power of steam. In 1807, Henry and Sealy Fourdrinier "perfected their machine for making continuous paper" (*ODNB*, vol. 7, 518). Thanks to successive improvements, it became possible to produce over half of all paper in England mechanically by 1825 (Coleman, 206). Consulting Simon Eliot's minute enumeration of "Estimated UK paper production", we can detect a steady growth from around the late 1830s (Eliot, 111).

The supply of materials for paper making was also improved. A. S. Spicer observed that the problem of material shortage "had dogged eighteenth-century manufacturers" until it "had been eased by the 1830s" (Weedon, 64). In fact, taking the case of the metropolis, Pigot and Co.'s Directory of London "listed 86 London rag merchants in 1826–27", many of whom traded in the "major raw materials for paper" (Barnett, 53). Together with these growing quantities of paper-supplies, the duties on paper witnessed a great change. The tax, which was 3d. per pound in the early 1830s, was cut down by half to 1.5d. per pound in 1836 (Eliot, 147). Classification of types of paper was also very much simplified in the same year, from the

preceding state of "being divided between two types of quality; namely, first and second class" to a single standard (Ashworth, 250). This unified status ushered in a smooth flow of paper supplies for the nation, removing the cumbersome process of checking.

Furthermore, printing technology was no slower in its innovations. William Clowes (1779–1847), an ingenious printer at that time, first experimented with his steam-powered machine in 1823. A good example of his achievement may be seen in the book entitled *Historical and Descriptive Anecdotes of Steam Engines* (1829), which proudly announces on the back cover: "Printed with a Rolling Press Moved by A Steam-Engine, by William Clowes, Stamford-Street, London" (Stuart, ii). Within the short period of fifteen years, Clowes completed an almost perfect model, which was "capable of turning out a thousand sheets an hour" and had nineteen of them working at his office by 1839 (Altick [1957], 277). Noticing this glorious achievement, Charles Knight's article "The Market of Literature" praised its contribution to contemporary society in 1834. "What the printing press did for the instruction of the masses in the fifteenth century, the printing machine is doing for the nineteenth" (Knight [1834], 1).[5]

Five years after this observation, an article in *Quarterly Review* admired the superhuman efficacy of those machines, and remarked on their contribution to the formation of a mass readership:

Before the invention of printing almost the whole herd of mankind were in a state of

[5] It should be noted that Knight presents this phrase as a quote from *Penny Magazine*, though the precise number and date are not specified. He later clarified the above formulation as follows: "The Printing machine has had as great influence upon the spread of knowledge in the Nineteenth Century, as the invention of the printing itself in the Fifteenth Century" (Knight [1862], 132).

> moral degradation, nearly equal to that which we have thus described; for, although various manuscripts existed, yet the expense and trouble of obtaining them was, as we have endeavoured to show, so great, that few could possess them in any quantities, except sovereign princes, or persons of very great wealth. (Head, 18)

As this article observes, the formation of a mass reading public was inextricably linked to these successive technological innovations. The more the industry standardised print, the cheaper the texts became, and the larger the numbers of the readers who could make contact with those books.

Various data help us to situate the year of *Pickwick Papers*, 1837, in the very middle of the formation of this mass reading public. How, then, can we look into this assemblage of people, and analyse such a seemingly too amorphous group? What were their actual reading behaviours? Did they vary from one reader to another? Or rather, was there any uniform, idiosyncratic style of Victorian reading? To this question, a letter of Dickens's contemporary novelist and dramatist, Mary Russell Mitford (1787–1855), seems to provide a clue. She recommends *Pickwick Papers* to her friend as follows:

> So you have never heard of the "Pickwick Papers"! Well! They publish a number once a month … It is fun—London life—but without anything unpleasant: a lady might read it *aloud*; and it is so graphic, so individual, and so true, that you could curtsey to all the people as you meet them in the streets. I did not think there had been a place where English was spoken to which "Boz" had not penetrated. All the boys and girls talk his fun—the boys in the streets; and yet those who are of the highest taste like it the most. Sir Benjamin Brodie takes it to read in his carriage, between patient and patient; and Lord Denman studies Pickwick on the bench while the jury is deliberating. Do take some means to borrow the *Pickwick Papers*. (Mitford, vol. 3, 78) (original *italics*)

Mitford's words delineate the wide variety of the audiences which gather around the text of *Pickwick Papers*: the lady strolling with the book, the boys and girls talking about it in the streets, and the upper- or the upper-middle-class gentlemen using their leisure time to read it.

Predictably, “the reading public”, which was beginning to be formed around the text, was by no means a cohesive, unified group of people sharing much in common. The wide range in their class, economic and social status necessarily entailed varied responses. If we compare “the boys in the streets” and “Sir Benjamin Brodie” or “Lord Denman”, it is not hard to imagine that their respective “readings” were totally different. In the early Victorian period, there were not many workers who had enough time and money to read, no matter how enthusiastic they were. Even if they had resources, their literacy was not enough to allow them to read books as freely as we would imagine by the contemporary usage of the word, “reading”. All they knew were the individual letters of the alphabet as well as how to arrange those to form some words and phrases (Vincent [1989], 77). As its corollary, “the boys in the street” whom Miss Mitford would come across would, in all likelihood, never be literate enough to read *Pickwick Papers* by themselves. In spite of this, the 1830s were often defined as a transformative period in which a “potential working-class reading public” were actually coming into existence (James, 5–10).

How, then, could those boys read? Significantly, Mitford’s description mainly focuses on the working-class readers’ vocal capacity. Anywhere in the streets where “English was *spoken*”, one could find the sheer popularity of *Pickwick Papers*, of which fun they heatedly “*talk*”. The boys and girls in the street, therefore, would not literally read the novel but rather vocally experience it in their everyday lives. In fact, an interesting episode indicates their behaviour in reading. Edgar Johnson records how unprivileged workers could have access to contemporary printed matter: “Twenty men and women gathering in a locksmith’s

shop to listen to the newest number of the *Pickwick Papers*, borrowed from a circulating library at 2d. a day" (E. Johnson, vol. 1, 155). Amy Cruse introduces a similar episode: soon after the publication of the sixth number of *Dombey and Son*, Dickens came across a charwoman who could not read yet who claimed herself as a great admirer of his writings. Being asked how she could "have any knowledge of his story", the woman replied. "She lodged in the house of a man who kept a snuff shop, and on the first Monday in each month she, with such of the other lodgers in the house as could pay a small sum for the entertainment, took tea with the landlord. After tea he read aloud the month's instalment of *Dombey*, and to this reading all lodgers were admitted, without payment" (Cruse, 158). The readers in the streets, whose knowledge was insufficient for silent reading yet who still sought after anything readable, were experiencing written matter through their aural abilities. And contemporary writers, of course including Dickens, were fully aware of such combinations of voice and writing. Thomas Carlyle's words would attest to his own consciousness: "Books are written by martyr-men, not for rich men alone but for all men. If we consider it, every human being has, by the nature of the case, a *right* to <u>hear</u> what other wise human beings <u>have spoken</u> to him"(Carlyle, vol. 1, 212) (original *italics*, my underline). Whilst books were literally written and disseminated, the audiences could absorb them by their voice or through their ears.

Turning our focus to the middle-class readers, whose level of literacy should not have hindered their silent reading, we can also detect a twist of voice and text. Again in Ms. Mitford's words, "a lady might read" the text "*aloud*", and would not be ashamed if people

saw her having the book. Sir Benjamin Brodie reads the text in his carriage, probably hearing the rattles of its wheels. Lord Denman studies it on the bench in the court, probably when the jury were out considering their verdict. Their readings, which unanimously take place in some public space, are surely deviating from the conventional axiom—the model proposed by Ian Watt—that novel-reading requires silent meditation in a private room (Watt, 175–6).

Furthermore, even in private spaces such as the Victorian drawing room, reading was inseparably connected to voice. It was a middle-class custom that the head of the family reads a text to its other members around the hearth.[6] At one home, for instance, "the father's custom was to seclude himself for an hour or two studying each number of *Pickwick Papers* in order to be able to read it aloud to his large family afterwards, with some control over his laughter" (Ford, 8). While the family were waiting outside the room, they often overheard their father's "apoplectic struggles" and his "occasional shouts" to repress his bursts of laughter (Ford, 8). He reads and practices the book orally, and the family members also "read" the novel in his voice along with the other noises such as his chuckling laughter. These audible reading experiences, as it were, which were widely seen in many respectable middle-class households, clearly testify to the fact: Victorian reading did not always signify a process of silent meditation.[7] Instead, "reading" of *Pickwick Papers* in the nineteenth century was an act occurring between voice and text, and between the public and the private spheres. In accordance with each of the readers' literacy levels, the proportion of voice/text,

[6] For instance, John Ruskin remembers his father's regular reading to his family: see *Praeterita* (303).
[7] In fact, a Victorian dramatist and poet, Herman Charles Merivale, compared Dickens's writing to music: "At any day and hour, I defy anybody, however well-read in [Dickens], to take up a volume at random, and not hit upon some careless gem before unnoticed, "finding a spell unheard before" in the old humorous music" (Merivale, 190).

public/private should be adjusted.[8]

Victorian reading could not be enclosed within some quiet and solitary space, but was open to many different sounds and voices that can destabilise the written words. While technological innovations introduced the age of print, which had the power to put many manuscripts and people's transient oral recitals into standardised form, the readers of the same period also consumed those completed products by their voices and ears. If this is the case, then, how did contemporary writers react against such conversion of textuality into orality? Thomas Carlyle (1795–1881) left an interesting episode. He once "invested in a plan to construct a soundproof study at the top of his house", in order that his writing might not be interrupted by street noises (Picker, 6). His irritation with such distraction and his belief that a "soundproof study" would provide him with an ideal situation for writing illuminate his sense of dichotomy between voice and writing, or more accurately, their complementary relation. As he thought of the two forms of media colliding with each other, he tried to sever them apart and selected one of them while shutting the other out. This drive to separate writing from voice as well as to put them into mutual opposition is not limited to the case of Carlyle, but rather may be seen more generally even in our age, too. Walter Ong, for instance, argued about the dichotomy in terms of the replacement of voice by print: orality, which was primal and communal and, as such, a powerful remnant of the past, was overridden by the culture of

[8] Taking account of these circumstances, we would have to be careful about several critics' observations with regard to the Victorian readership. Though D. Suvin and R. K. Webb demonstrated that the readers at that time were mainly in the middle and the upper classes (Suvin, 11–40; Webb, 205–6), the interplay of "oral" and "literal" reading would suggest a much more complicated and profound situation at that time.

writing.[9] More recently, Jacques Derrida's discussion in *Of Grammatology* starts with taking up the traditional Western preoccupation with the binary opposition between voice (or speech) and writing (Derrida, 5−8). Given the long-standing belief that voice and text exist as un-amalgamable opposites, Carlyle's fascination with the soundproof room seems nothing but reasonable. In order to define himself as a man of letters in the age of print, he had to sever his body and his scene of writing from the noisy and amorphous powers of voice and sound.

However, we have to notice that Carlyle's attempt fell through miserably. He found himself unable to work in the soundproof room, "claiming the shock of stray sounds had become even worse than before" (Picker, 6). The more he tried to compose his text in a hermetically enclosed literary field, the more he had to recognise the power of voice soaking into his study. In Dickens, too, can we see a similar dilemma between sound and writing. He and his work, *Pickwick Papers*, comprise two opposite vectors, one of which takes full advantage of the progressive age of print, and the other of which strangely avoids acknowledging the arrival of such a literate new age. The stage of *Pickwick Papers* is "set in the near present, within a decade of the time of publication" (Altick [1991], 132). The advertisement of the first number on *Athenaeum* further clarifies its detailed setting: "The Pickwick Club … was founded in the year One Thousand Eight Hundred and Twenty-Two" (no. 439, 232). Certainly, this setting of near present/past seems at first quite common in terms of literary convention. Yet the topicality of that period soon checks such an easy assumption. Bulwer Lytton (1803–73) described of his age that its rapid "transition is visible"

[9] See Walter Ong's influential works such as *The Presence of the Word* (1967) and *Orality and Literacy: The Technologising the Word* (1982).

(Lytton [1833], 352). In 1832, Thomas Arnold (1795–1842) observed that changes in lifestyle over the previous thirty years would have taken over three centuries in any other period of time (Williams, 123). Therefore, *Pickwick Papers'*s setting in the near past should not simply be regarded as comparable to any ten-year gap.

One critical change from that decade is the introduction of the British railway system. Therefore, as James Kinsley points out, the novel's "calculated nostalgia" should be read quite specifically as a desire to "keep the railways out" (Kinsley, lv); and that should be connected with another powerful longing to exclude a "potential working-class reading public" (James, 5). The construction of the railways and growing numbers of readers are the two factors that cannot be argued separately. The price of books went down as the railway system improved the distribution system. The railway journey provided people with time to enjoy reading. The logistics enabled by the new technology helped to increase the number of readers, as well as to diversify their ways of reading, which thus became ungraspable by any simple statistics.

A letter written by Dickens in 1836 seems to attest to his secret hostility against such explosive increase of readers and reading materials. Just before embarking on *Pickwick Papers*, he first planned to write a work which was to be published in the three-decker form (and to be entitled *Gabriel Vardon, the Locksmith of London*) (*Letters*, vol. 1, 150).[10] Though this plan did not bear fruit until five years later, when he changed the plan and serialised the story with the different title *Barnaby Rudge* on his weekly magazine, *Master Humphrey's*

[10] Though the title is normally spelled "Gabriel Varden," not "Gabriel Vardon", I will here conform to Dickens's original spelling in his letter (May 9th, 1836).

Clock, his original plan at least suggests that he intended to sell the work at a fairly high price. While each number of *Master Humphrey's Clock* was sold at 3d., the average price of the three-decker novel was as expensive as 31s 6d., and it would have been far out of reach of a mass public readership (James, 5–10). These episodes, along with the setting of *Pickwick Papers* suggest Dickens's inclination to keep a distance from an amorphous reading public, at least as of 1837 (Aoki, 152–3). Or, put another way, the setting of 1822 might enable him to conceptualise a textual world in which the definition of reading is comparatively simple. Before the arrival of the railway and the sheer number of technological innovations, the types of readers were less varied, relatively restricted to those of the middle and upper classes, and their styles of reading were accordingly more stable, even monotonous, if compared to ten years later.

Yet, such a secret drive to eliminate a potentially expanding readership, however slight it may be, contradicts what he had done himself. Despite his original intention to publish his first work in the three-decker form, he selected a totally different format to put out the completed product of his succeeding work, *Pickwick Papers*. It was ground-breaking in adopting the new publication scheme of serialisation. Though serialisation itself had already become "common" by the second quarter of the eighteenth century, the contents of those publications were not original (Wiles, 75), but were merely reprinted editions of already well-sold works. In contrast, *Pickwick Papers* was newly written for monthly publication with "a view to subsequent consolidation in volumes" (Sutherland [1976], 21). The publishing firm was Chapman and Hall, and the printer was Bradbury and Evans, a "progressive firm with

modern equipment", which enabled the work to deploy the advanced technologies of its time to the full (Sutherland [1976], 21). All these situations were given "virtually by accident", but the eventual product was suited to the precise demands of the readers in that age (Patten [1978], 46). The price of each number was set at one shilling, while other "main Victorian metropolitan monthlies", such as *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, *Bentley's Miscellany*, and *The New Monthly Magazine*, were sold at almost two or three times the price, 2s 6d., 2s. 6d., and 3s 6d. respectively (Law, 16, Table 1.2.). These circumstances functioned to help *Pickwick Papers* stand out as a "sensational triumph" (Ford, 6). It was a work which was both facilitated by and enabling of the accessible price of books, prophesying and heralding the oncoming period of mass readership.

If accidentally and coincidentally, it is undeniable that *Pickwick Papers* became the very icon of the new reading age. And this led to the received representation of a crowd-pleasing writer, Charles Dickens. He was and has been generally considered as one of the most popular novelists in the Victorian period. George Henry Lewes (1817–78) alternately praised and criticized this: "there probably never was a writer of so vast a popularity whose genius was so little appreciated by the critics. […] Dickens delighted thousands, and his admirers were found in all classes, and in all countries … [showing] that he stirred the sympathy of masses … that he impressed a new direction on popular writing, and modified the Literature of his age" (Ford and Lane, 57). What Lewes juxtaposes here are the learned critics, who are in his words "fastidious" in judging literary works, and the "masses" of readers in "all classes", who are easily fascinated by the fantastic power of Dickens's world.

In short, various sets of two opposite vectors—embracing and shunning the mass readership, popularising and alienating his literary works to/from the contemporary readers, and even more subtle ambivalence among Dickens's admirers regarding his closeness and distance to/from his mass readers—are revolving around the writer, Charles Dickens, and his first major work of *Pickwick Papers*. How should we, then construe those two opposite images flickering over the profile of the young Charles Dickens? Given that the author and the work are both assisting and resisting the existence of mass readership, how does that fluctuation influence Dickens's way of writing? With this question in mind, the following chapter scrutinises the inner text, first paying attention to the frontispiece dramatising the moment in which the printed text of *Pickwick Papers* is unfolded by Sam Weller's voice.

Chapter 2

Pickwick Papers: Between Voice and Writing

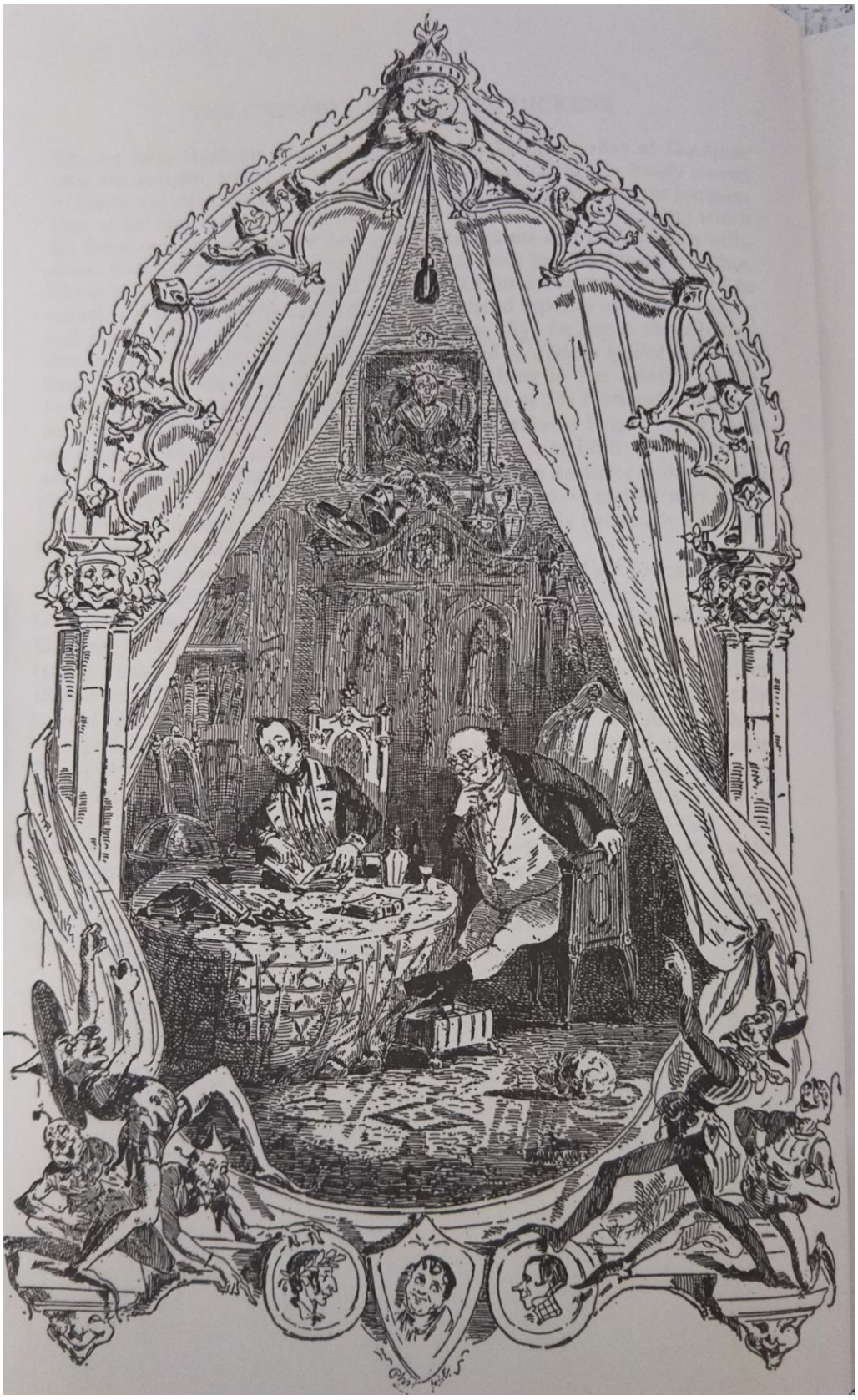
1) *Pickwick Papers* as Reflection of Victorian Readers' Diversity

In order "to construct a good plot", Aristotle (384–322 B.C.) claimed, "one must neither begin nor end haphazardly but make a proper use of the three parts—"a beginning, a middle and an end" (Aristotle, 16). *Pickwick Papers*, written by a young Dickens who had just started his literary career, boldly contradicts the classical rule, beginning and ending "haphazardly". G. K. Chesterton, remembering his first reading, confessed how he was confused, not knowing when the text really ends: "the point at which, as a fact, we find the printed matter terminates is not an end in any artistic sense of the word. Even as a boy I believed there were some more pages that were torn out of my copy, and I am looking for them still. The book might have been cut short anywhere else" (Chesterton [1906], 77–8).

Just like the startlingly abrupt ending, its beginning also undermines any principle of "good construction". The formal title of the work presents a curious chronological twist—*The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club Containing a Faithful Record of the Perambulations, Perils, Travels, Adventures and Sporting Transactions of the Corresponding Members*. The second word suggests that the textual world of *Pickwick Papers* is already closed before the actual novel opens its cover. The explanation for this "posthumous"-ness is given at the end of

the narrative. After finishing his long journey around England, Mr. Pickwick disbands his club to lead a settled life with the Wellers. In the meanwhile, the secretary of the club collects the whole series of his correspondences and the transactions of the club, and entrusts them to the editor Boz. He then collates and puts them out for public readers. Steven Marcus interprets these devices as making *Pickwick* "suffused with the sense of ending", for the text "has been ended before it begins" (Marcus [1987], 129). Robert Patten also points out that the novel is saturated with a sense of "past-ness" produced by a retrospective way of narrating (Patten [1995], 124). Jennifer Hayward calls attention to the narrative's "complex temporal involutions", "enforcing continuity", which she claims is exemplified in Dickens's own commentary to his readers at the end of number ten: "we shall keep perpetually going on beginning again, regularly" (Hayward, 2). As readers go through an apparently tautological condition of perpetual ending and beginning, their linear sense of chronology is always suspended—or more simply speaking, they cannot go through the text if they stick to such a simple assumption of progression.

This looseness of construction, which can be defined as one of the most striking features of *Pickwick Papers*, is rendered clearly visible in the frontispiece illustration. Robert Seymour drew a scene in which Sam Weller reads some text to Mr. Pickwick.



"Frontispiece" by Robert Seymour

(*PP*, ii)

As to the book which they are reading, we could suggest an interesting hypothesis. Given that *Pickwick Papers* is already finished before it begins, what Sam is reading could be their own text of *Pickwick Papers*. As soon as the frontispiece opens up the textual world, the completed work is in the hands of the character.[11]

Sam's reading puts the already loose text into an even more dispersed and unstable state. He probably reads aloud its contents to his master, and by this means the textuality of *Pickwick Papers* is gradually dissolved into his voice. Next to him, Mr. Pickwick keeps his good-natured silence and faithfully listens to his oral presentation. Here occurs "an apparent reversal of their respective roles in the novel" (Patten [1967], 355). Within the text, Mr. Pickwick and his fellows form "the Corresponding Society of the Pickwick Club", which is "requested to forward, from time to time, authenticated accounts of their journey and investigations; of their observations of character and manners; [...] to the Pickwick Club, stationed in London" (*PP*, 3). All of his adventures and experiences thus originate from his ethnographic ambition, which leads him to write down the voices and the sounds they come across. Sam Weller has nothing to do with the enterprise of writing, while accompanying and supporting (sometimes patronising) the immature gentlemen's journey. The frontispiece, however, overturns the subordination of voice to writing. Mr. Pickwick, who should have been the original writer of the papers, is made to be a passive listener of Sam's reading voice, witnessing that the world mainly consisting of his written texts is unfolded by the oral

[11] In fact, John Glavin noticed this possibility, and suggested that the frontispiece may function to subvert the hierarchy between the internal and the external textual worlds of the novel (Glavin, 2).

presentation of his servant.[12]

The interplay of voice and writing is obviously connected with broader processes of cultural and technological transformation in early Victorian England. It is well known that the young Dickens wore two hats as a fledgling writer and as a shorthand writer at court. In the latter, he "worked as a kind of written recording device for the human voice, for speech, for the English language" (Marcus [1987], 138). And *Pickwick Papers* was born in 1837, almost simultaneously with the introduction of a new form of shorthand, Pitman's phonography. As Ivan Kreilkamp clarifies, the method is clearly different from shorthand method "that had existed for centuries before" in that it "based itself directly on phonetics and the sounds of human speech" (Kreilkamp, 70). The founder of the new system, Sir Isaac Pitman (1813–97) commented that the direct connection between voice and writings was "found […] advantageous" in his *Manual of Phonography, or, Writing by Sound* (1855) (Pitman, 9). The system thus served to "revise the history of the English language by redefining voice as no longer as a potential threat to writing, but as a virtuous prisoner struggling to free himself from the bounds of print and the oppressive rule of linguistic law" (Kreilkamp, 77). Apart from the balance or unbalance between voice and writing, Dickens's two jobs would surely make him sensitive about his intermediate standpoint between two media. Through managing the see-saw between them, Dickens would have naturally internalised a way to combine the power of voice and that of the text. His words to G. H. Lewes provide their own eloquent testimony. Lewes

[12] Remembering the difficult relationship between Dickens and the illustrator Robert Seymour, the frontispiece may be taken as Seymour's hidden desire to unfold and dissolve the textuality of Dickens's writings by his pictorial power. As to their relationship in detail, see Jane R. Cohen's *Charles Dickens and his Original Illustrators* (45–61) and Angus Wilson's *The World of Charles Dickens* (116–17).

remembered that "Dickens once declared to me that every word said by his characters was distinctly *heard* by him" (Lewes, 149) (original *italics*). The writer was well aware of his position at the transformative junction between voice and writing.

Indeed, *Pickwick Papers* is written with voice. In the opening chapter, where the formation of the Pickwick Club is announced, Dickens's pen foregrounds the interlocking of the two media:

> Mr Pickwick's oration upon this occasion, together with the debate thereon, is entered on the Transactions of the Club. […] we transfer the entry of these pages. 'Mr Pickwick observed (*says the Secretary*) that fame was dear to the heart of every man. Poetic fame was dear to the heart of his friend Snodgrass, the fame of conquest was equally dear to his friend Tupman […]. He (*Mr Pickwick*) would not deny, that he was influenced by human passions, and human feelings, (*cheers*)—possibly by human weaknesses—(*loud cries of "No"*); but this he would say, that if ever the fire of self-importance broke out in his bosom the desire to benefit the human race in preference, effectually quenched it. The praise of mankind was his Swing; philanthropy was his insurance office (*Vehement cheering*). (*PP*, 3–4) (my *italics*)

The narrator here and there inserts annotations by using parentheses, many of which refer to the direct voices of the club members and their cheers. There exists an intersection of the opposite vectors, one from voice to writing and the other from writing to voice. Mr. Pickwick's oration is textualised and put into print by the editor of *Pickwick Papers*. The same editor, on the other hand, creates these spots of orality and thereby blends his own text with the power of voice. Hereafter *Pickwick Papers* flows through voice and writing, sometimes connecting them and sometimes vivifying the difference between them. Malcolm Andrews takes up the intermediary style as the defining factor of *Pickwick Paper*'s popularity. The "singular success" of the novel, he says, relies on Boz's "assertive presence in his writings, as he projects his impresario role, and the distinctive voice that sounds from the pages, even in silent reading"

(Andrews, 22).

Here, it is worthwhile to ask a simple question. How did Charles Dickens define his role as a narrator? Did he regard himself more as an oral storyteller or rather as a textual writer? Or, did he consciously move to and fro between the two different forms, resisting being incorporated into either of them? The seeming ambiguity of Dickens's position necessarily reminds us of the contemporary practice of oral readings. As has been shown in the previous chapter, the surging number of readers in the nineteenth century must not be simply understood as resulting in a standardised level of literacy. Jon Klancher, for instance, divides the readers at the end of the eighteenth century into four groups: "a newly self-conscious middle-class public, a nascent mass audience, a polemical radical readership, and the special institutional audience" (Klancher, 4). In the nineteenth century, the number of categories increased rapidly, probably to an extent that any clear differentiation between one category and another became next to impossible. The ways of reading were greatly diversified, all of which deployed readers' oral and textual abilities. In this light, Dickens's way of writing at the beginning of *Pickwick Papers* may beautifully represent the wide range of his readers. Or at least, his textual integration of voice would testify to his writerly consciousness to the unfathomable diversity of their ways of consumption.

Pickwick Papers expose characters and their writings to the assemblage of many different types of readers. To begin with, Mr. Pickwick is equipped with a degree of literacy duly compatible with his status as a middle-class gentleman. Ironically, however, this hinders him from understanding the other immature readers' condition of reading/writing. In the first

chapter, he forms his club and sets off on a journey to record the "characters and manners" of people all over England (*PP*, 3), believing that his notebook possesses the power to transcribe all the sounds he hears. Such innocence soon raises a collision. When Mr. Pickwick interviews a London cab driver, trying to find out his real working conditions, his textual ambition leads to a serious (or ridiculous) trouble:

> "Cab!" said Mr Pickwick.
> "Here you are, Sir,' shouted a strange specimen of the human race, in a sackcloth coat, apron of the same, who with a brass label and number round his neck, looked as if he were catalogued in some collection of rarities. [...]
> "Golden Cross," said Mr Pickwick.
> "Only a bob's vorth, Tommy,"—cried the driver, sulkily, for the information of his friend the waterman, as the cab drove off.
> "How old is that horse, my friend?" enquired Mr Pickwick, rubbing his nose with the shilling he had reserved for the fare.
> "Forty-two," replied the driver, eyeing him askant.
> "What!" ejaculated Mr Pickwick, laying his hand upon his note-book. The driver reiterated his former statement. Mr Pickwick looked very hard at the man's face, but his features were immovable, so he noted down the fact forthwith.
> "And how long do you keep him out at a time?" inquired Mr Pickwick, searching for further information.
> "Two or three veeks," replied the man.
> "Weeks!" said Mr Pickwick in astonishment – and out came the note-book again.
> "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."
> Mr Pickwick entered every word of this statement in his note-book, with the view of communicating it to the club, as a singular instance of the tenacity of life in horses, under trying circumstances. (*PP*, 6–7)

Mr Pickwick takes all of what the cab driver said at its face value, and tries to put it down without any omission. However, his notebook, which would be written in his learned, standard English, cannot rightly accommodate the colloquial cockney speeches of the cab driver, let alone comprehend his jokes and unreliable statements. Mr Pickwick's middle-class

values of literacy are too limited to describe the local people's real lives and voices.

The incongruence between the gentleman's too literate way of writing and the working people's active orality is further dramatised in the following scene. The cab driver, suspicious of some vicious intention in Mr Pickwick's assiduous note-taking, concludes that he must be an informer (*PP*, 8–9). Pickwick's desire to standardise others' wayward English usage is thus juxtaposed with the government's intervention into people's everyday lives. Through creating the good-natured, yet sometimes regulatory writing style of Mr. Pickwick, Dickens may have implied a message for his nineteenth-century readers. The Inimitable author's textuality can reveal the limitation of Pickwickian writing. Showing his difference from Mr. Pickwick and affinity to the actual nineteenth-century readers, the editor Boz frequently deploys the editorial "we" in the narrative thereafter, and builds up an imaginary continuity with mass readers in the public.[13]

Indeed, subsequent narrative further ridicules Mr. Pickwick's middle-class literacy in front of the popular audience. In chapter 11, Mr. Pickwick enjoys his afternoon walk in the village called Cobham, when his eyes happen to "fall upon a small broken stone, partially buried in the ground, in front of a cottage-door" (*PP*, 136). He notices some letters inscribed upon the stone. It runs as follows:

+
BILST
UM
PSHI
S. M.

[13] For Dickens's and Boz's tactful deployment of the editorial "we", see Robert Patten's *Charles Dickens and 'Boz': The Birth of the Industrial-Age Author* (64–65).

ARK

(*PP*, 137)

Mr. Pickwick gets excited, believing that it must come from an ancient age and that the sequence of alphabet must contain some archaeological truth if deciphered correctly. The correct reading, however, is given quite anticlimactically at the end of the chapter. One of the members of the Pickwick Club, who is jealous of Mr. Pickwick's popularity, goes to the village himself and meets the person who sold the stone. He confesses that the inscription is far from ancient, but is merely his own carving "in an idle mode", by which means he was trying to sign his name as "Bill Stumps, his mark" (*PP*, 148). He was not trained in any form of writing, as his usual life was "more accustomed to be guided by the sound of words than by the strict rules of orthography", so that he had "omitted the concluding 'L' of his Christian name" (*PP*, 148) and messed up those misspelt letters with random line breaks. He was, in short, writing by his voice.

Mr Pickwick is of course too learned and inexperienced to come to terms with such a vocal way of textual production. Never knowing its true origin, he writes "a Pamphlet, containing ninety-six pages of very small print" to show his "twenty-seven different readings of the inscription" (*PP*, 148). Thanks to its publication, he comes to be "elected as honorary member of seventeen native and foreign societies", which thus triggers a further proliferation of meanings (*PP*, 148). Here stands a stark contrast between pedantic middle-class transcription and working-class literacy, which still heavily relies on orality. Pickwick's productivity as a writer and his avidness as a reader only lead to piles of documents which are

written in a respectable academic English, yet are pointless and useless, unable to grasp the meaning of the situation.

There is no denying that Pickwick has acted at all times without any malicious intention. Still, his forcible textual intervention comes to invite retribution; as his own signature is twice used by the other characters in ways he could never dream of. In chapter 33, Sam Weller writes a Valentine Card to his sweetheart Mary, in consultation with his father. Tony Weller has been leading a hard life with his domineering wife and so is very much concerned by the prospect that his son might be led into a similarly miserable married life. Tony, while correcting his son's too poetical or emotional expressions, tries every possible way to rescue him from romantic illusion. Sam, on the other hand, knows better than his father how to evade such troubles. Coming to the ending line of the card, Sam's tactics become explicit:

> "Sign it—Veller," said the oldest surviving proprietor of that name.
> "Won't do," said Sam. "Never sign a walentine with your own name."
> "Sign it "Pickvick," then,'"said Mr Weller; "it's wery good name, and a easy one to spell."
> […] so he signed the letter –
> "Your love-sick Pickwick." (*PP*, 454)

Mr Pickwick is made to be the writer of Sam's Valentine card. Sam's unlearned writing subverts the respectable middle-class literacy of his master. And quite suggestively, the name of Pickwick is made to rhyme with "love-sick". While Mr Pickwick intervenes upon other people's utterance with his too literate style, Sam Weller exploits the same master's signature in his oral, rhyming idiom.

It is curious enough to see that Mr Pickwick, whose signature is counterfeited in his servant's love message, becomes involved in a real scandal. In chapter 34, he is summoned to court for the case of *Pickwick vs. Bardell*. Pickwick denies that he has ever proposed marriage to his landlady-widow, but the same lady asserts that he really did so. She accuses him of delinquency and has brought the matter to trial. Arriving at court, Pickwick notices that his own writings have been turned to evil account. Dodson and Fogg, the cunning lawyers of the widow, submit Pickwick's two short notes as the decisive evidence. His note which reads "Garraway's, twelve o'clock.—Dear Mrs. B.—Chops and Tomata [*sic*.] sauce. Yours, Pickwick" is claimed as his jargon. The lawyers insist that "Chops and Tomata sauce" must be Pickwick's loving nickname for Mrs. Bardell, and thus proves the love affair between the two (*PP*, 473–4). Furthermore, another message is intentionally misinterpreted: "Dear Mrs B. I shall not be at home till to-morrow. Slow coach." "Don't trouble yourself about the warming pan" (*PP*, 474). Though this message simply shows Pickwick's kind regard for the landlady so that she will not be disturbed by his late return, the "warming pan" is taken as having some sexual connotation. It is ironical that the shrewd lawyers' claims are somewhat parallel to Mr Pickwick's exultant claims about his archaeological discovery. Both of them read other people's writings and exploit the produced meaning so that it suits with their preconceptions. The only difference is that Mr Pickwick is not conscious of what he is doing, while the clever lawyers fully know their sordid tactics.

Various scenes of *Pickwick Papers* show that the meaning of any text can be manipulated according to readers' (and possibly writers') class and situations: their

relationship with written accounts can never be limited in the realm of literacy/textuality, and the seemingly infinite number of ways to blend voice and writing can undermine any solid, fixed meaning. If such was the case, then, do the writers have to succumb to their fate, and give up their texts to the various readers' wayward mis/readings? To this question, Tony Weller's letter-writing in chapter 52 may provide a possible answer. Trying to tell of his wife's death, Tony writes a letter to Sam:

> My dear Sammle,
> I am wery sorry to have the plessure of bein a Bear of ill news your Mother in law cort cold consekens of imprudently settin too long on the damp grass in the rain a hearin of a shepheard who warnt able to leave off till late at night owen to his having vound his-self up vith brandy and vater and not being able to stop his-self till he got a little sober which took a many hours […]. *By the vay your father says that if you vill come and see me Sammy he vill take it as a wery great favor for I am wery lonely* Samivel N. B. he vill have it spelt that vay vich I say ant right and as there is sich a many things to settle he is sure your guvner wont object of course he vill not Sammy for I knows him better so he sends his dooty in vhich I join and am Samivel infernally yours
> "Tony Veller" (*PP*, 729–30) (my *italics*)

The difficulty of reading this letter lies not only in its cockney spelling, but is also largely due to the inconsistency of the personal pronouns. As far as the italicised part is focused, the writer (Tony Weller) objectifies himself as "your father". The next "you" after the "if" is designating Sam, but the next personal pronoun "me" means Tony Weller. Here, Tony stops calling himself by the third-person pronoun. Soon after that "me", however, Tony again objectifies himself: "he vill take it". In this short sentence, Tony's self-designation is busily vacillating among "he", "I" and "your father". This continues until the very last part of the letter without any consistent rule, and results in destroying the comprehensibility of the contents. The only possible way to decipher this letter is given by Mary, who is reading it with

Sam: “Probably he got somebody to write it for him, and signed it himself afterwards” (*PP*, 730). As she rightly presumes, there are two writers. One is Tony Weller and the other is some unnamed person asked to write on his behalf. Tony, who dictates the contents of the letter, occasionally forgets the situation and switches his pronoun from he to I or vice versa. The shadow writer faithfully reproduces Tony’s confusion. The letter thus becomes a realm in which “oral” and “literal” writing curiously intersect. Tony’s self-consciousness floats between writer and speaker, while the shadow writer is simply scribbling whatever comes into his ears.

In order to find some meaning in such a chaotic blend of voice and writing, we have to deduce which part is written orally and which part literally. However, at the same time, there always remains a possibility that our deduction might not be correct, as there might never be any clear, correct answer/meaning in this confounded text. In this sense, we could say that Tony’s letter is highly defensive against the surrounding readers’ capricious misreading. The stone inscription of Bil Stumps and Mr Pickwick’s notes to Mrs Bardell are very vulnerable, because they are composed by writers who are preoccupied by their own way of writing. Without any knowledge about other possible types of readers and writers, those documents are easily reinterpreted in unexpected ways. In contrast, Tony Weller’s letter is immune to such readerly distortion, since it already internalises the interplay between oral/literal readings. The letter, through unstably swaying and changing its meaning all the time, is pre-empting and thereby resisting the surrounding readers’ ways of misreading.

Many writers and writings in *Pickwick Papers* go through diverse problems of

"readership", reflecting the author Dickens's own situation of writing in such a tumultuous age of transition. As Bradley Deane points out, Dickens produced *Pickwick Papers* "over two years during which the force of the mass market was growing increasingly palpable and the pressure to refine representations of authorship rose accordingly" (Deane, 44). The Inimitable author could not write like Mr Pickwick, the merely literate writer, nor like Bill Stumps, whose oral way of textual production can be simultaneously meaningless and meaningful. Still, he could not make his textual world like Tony's letter, since such linguistic chaos could put any kind of readability at risk. Avoiding all these routes, and yet recognising the varieties of literacy among his growing mass readership, Dickens had to develop his own narrative style, which could internalise the interplay of voice and writing. Indeed, many critics have noticed that what we now call a distinctively Dickensian style is the result of his exquisite blending of the two different media. Tammy Ho Lai Ming comments that "Dickens gave his characters' speech and his prose narratives a notably oral-, aural-, and performance-oriented style" (Ming, 73). Jane Smiley remarks that "[Dickens] had an ear for every sort of discourse, both written and oral. He did not always use an elevated literary style" (Smiley, 70). In fact, as will be shown in what follows, the nine interpolated tales in *Pickwick Papers* provide Dickens with good venues to try intermixing various different media, as well as to render the hybridity quite visible to his readers.

2) The Nine Interpolated Tales in *Pickwick Papers:* Multiple Strata of Voice and Writing

Pickwick Papers internalises a significant feature of its contemporary society—the emergence of a nineteenth-century reading public and their (too) diverse ways of reading. Seen in this light, the nine interpolated tales in the novel can be interpreted in an interesting way. These are inserted here and there, whenever the Pickwick members come across curious stories and manuscripts on their journey: "The Stroller's Tale", "The Story of the Convict's Return", "A Madman's Manuscript", "The Bagman's Story", "The Parish Clerk", "The Old Man's Tale about the Queer Client", "The Story of the Goblins who stole a Sexton", "The True Legend of Prince Bladud", and "The Story of the Bagman's Uncle".[14] The tales are largely unrelated to one another, and are inserted sporadically and abruptly without apparent reason. Consequently, they became the target of criticism debunking Dickens's improvisational, ad-hoc way of writing. G. K. Chesterton wrote that they are "irrelevant short stories, shamelessly" inserted "as into a scrapbook" (Chesterton [1911], 214). K. J. Fielding dismissed them as "lamentable" short stories (Fielding, 18), as they look totally disengaged from the main story line. Walter Dexter considered that they would have been cut and pasted from Dickens's other materials, so that he could hastily fill in a shortage of pages (Dexter and Ley, 49). In summary, as Steven Marcus succinctly described, these tales have been "notorious" among Dickens critics as some embarrassing disclosure of the young writer's immaturity (Marcus [1987], 145).

Robert Patten dared to argue against such a low evaluation through examining the

[14] "The Stroller's Tale" in chapter 3 (35–40); "The Story of the Convict's Return" in chapter 6 (74–81); "A Madman's Manuscript" in chapter 11 (139–47); "The Bagman's Story" in chapter 14 (178–91); "The Parish Clerk" in chapter 17 (227–35); "The Old Man's Tale about the Queer Client" in chapter 21 (284–92); "The Story of the Goblins who stole a Sexton" in chapter 29 (396–405); "The True Legend of Prince Bladud" in chapter 36 (507–11), and "The Story of the Bagman's Uncle" in chapter 49 (681–97).

working routine of Dickens. Patten demonstrated that those tales were actually well-rounded and pre-planned (Patten [1967], 349–66). Anny Sadrin also revalued the nine tales in terms of fragmentation and analysed how their inconsistency functions as a disjunctive paradigm of the world of *Pickwick Papers* (Sadrin, 22). Regardless of their differing attitudes, the critics have mainly been concerned with the connection between the main plot and the nine interpolated tales, rather than with the actual contents of the tales. Analysing them on their own, however, reveals an interesting intertwining of voice and writing. The tales provide Dickens with a narrative *topos*, in which he can try out his unique style of narration, presenting the two-fold vectors of voice to writing and that of writing to voice.

"The Stroller's Tale", the first of the interpolated stories, is situated at the beginning of chapter 3, where Mr. Pickwick and his friends come to know a person called Alfred Jingle. Jingle introduces them to a man called Jemmy, who looks uncouth and care-worn. Jingle describes Jemmy's life as follows: "Rum fellow—does the heavy business—no actor—strange man—all sorts of miseries—dismal Jemmy, we call him on the circuit" (*PP*, 34). As several critics have noted, Jingle's speech recalls Victorian shorthand, which would represent contemporary people's desire to bridge voice and writing, and thus to materialise otherwise intangible utterances.[15] Dismal Jemmy, who appears with the shorthand introduction, then begins to narrate a tale to the Pickwick members—which later becomes "The Stroller's Tale"—a tragedy about a low pantomime actor (*PP*, 35). The genre of pantomime, which often creates comical effects by the extensive use of puns (playing with words which are orally the

[15] See, for instance, Kreilkamp's *Voice and the Victorian Storyteller* (77) and Jeremy Tambling, *Dickens's Novels as Poetry* (78).

same yet literally different),[16] would again imply that the meaning of any text cannot be determined until its written words are properly connected to the readers' voices or oral performances. Furthermore, Jemmy says at the beginning of his tale: "I have thrown these few notes together, because the subject of them was well known to me for many years" and opens the "dirty roll of paper" in his hands (*PP*, 35). In doing so, he clarifies that a rough guideline is recorded in the note, whereas the detailed parts will be supplemented by his memory. The narrative is thus produced at the interface of voice and writing. It can change its detail every time it is retold so that the authorship of the tale is only tentatively and temporally secured. Throughout his narration, Jemmy repeatedly deploys a style of conversational intimacy with his audience. To the Pickwick members, he often impresses his presence as a speaker by phrases such as "I am going to relate", "I speak", "I saw", "I promised", "I heard", "I had leisure to observe" and so on (*PP*, 34–7). The accumulation of these expressions highlights his corporeality as a storyteller. Jemmy constructs his narrative through reliance on what Walter Benjamin called "aura"—an "unique existence" that connects itself to a particular time, and to "a particular place" (Benjamin, 103)[17].

It is interesting that "The Stroller's Tale", which thus sways between voice and writing, undergoes various strata of writing after Jemmy's original narration. When Jemmy takes out "a dirty roll of paper from his pocket", Mr. Snodgrass—a member of the Pickwick

[16] For discussion of Dickens's fascination with the pantomime and word-play, see Edwin M. Eigner, *The Dickens Pantomime*.

[17] For more details regarding the concept of "aura", see Walter Benjamin's "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility: Second Version" in *Walter Benjamin, Selected Writings Vol. 3*. Ed. Michael W. Jennings (101–33). Also see, "The Storyteller: Observations on the Works of Nikolai Leskov" (143–66).

club—takes "out his note-book" (*PP*, 34). Here, Jemmy's unstable record which is from time to time influenced by his oral improvisation is coming to be transformed, fixed and pinned down by Mr. Snodgrass's more respectable written transcription. The newer version is still more consolidated by "the Transactions of the Club", which are printed and circulated among the Pickwick society members. Boz further takes over the role of editor to arrange and publish the transaction in the form of the novel, *Pickwick Papers*. This sequence of textual transcriptions shows how the flexible tale, which has been freely enacted by the storyteller's aura, is gradually contained and fixed by the power of writing/print. Jemmy's absolute aura and his sole existence as a storyteller are thus enfolded within multiple writers' documents, and his eloquent voice is thickly embedded in those writers' records.

Turning our focus to the next tale, we can also see a similar multi-layered structure of voice and writing. "The Convict's Return" is given when Mr. Pickwick visits Mr. Wardle's house and asks an old clergyman to tell him a story. Seeing his hesitation, Mr. Wardle encourages him: "you did make some notes, I think, about John Edmunds, did you not?" (*PP*, 73) The tale "about John Edmunds" again foregrounds the interface of voice and writing. And as in the case of Jemmy, the old clergyman often emphasises his presence as a storyteller by talking to his audience, using phrases including "when I first came here", "Heaven forgive me the supposition", "shall I tell you" and so on (*PP*, 74–5). Curiously however, the tone changes as the story proceeds. In the final three pages (out of the seven pages for the whole tale), the "I" expressions totally disappear and the narrative slides into third-person objective narration. The paragraph in which the convict achieves a reunion with his father provides an example in

point:

> He had not observed that a man was lying on the bank beside him; his garments rustled as he turned round to steal a look at the newcomer; and Edmunds raised his head. The man had moved into a sitting posture. His body was much bent, and his face was wrinkled and yellow. His dress denoted him an inmate of the workhouse: he had the appearance of being very old, but it looked more the effect of dissipation or disease, than length of years. He was staring hard at the stranger, and though his eyes were lustreless and heavy at first, they appeared to glow with an unnatural and alarmed expression after they had been fixed upon him for a short time, until they seemed to be staring from their sockets. (*PP*, 80)

There is no shadow of the corporeal storyteller who stands close to his listeners. Rather, what we find here is the figure of an omnipotent narrator, who can exist ubiquitously and who can freely and narrowly record what takes place.

This switch in tone should be understood in relation to the latent conflict between voice and writing. The tale, which is given by combining the clergyman's improvisational memory (voice) and his rough notes (writing), is presumably recorded by some member of the Pickwick Club. Then it comes to be arranged by the secretary of the Club, and thereafter edited by Boz. Such a thickly-layered palimpsest predictably brings about the gradual disappearance of the clergyman's original voice and "aura". In this sense, this tale may vivify the dynamic process through which a storyteller's voice is fixed and erased in the textual tradition. While the storyteller's "I" expressions are withdrawn from the textual surface, the third-person narrator works to solidify and confine the outline of the story. However, at the same time, it should also be noted that the vestige of transition suggests the insufficient power of print. The power of "standardisation" is not effective enough to obliterate all the "I" expressions of the clergyman and thus the see-saw game between voice and writing remains

to be experienced by readers. The texture of the early half and that of the latter half are entirely different from each other. In this aspect, the second tale could trace many changes in Victorian society and its underlying struggles: how its narrator's unique aura is diminished in such an innovative world; how the power of textualisation swallows and standardises the differences between one storyteller and the others; yet also how those storytellers continue to surface into the text through insinuating their inerasable voices.

The first and the second tales in *Pickwick Papers* let us see step-by-step how transient speech is transformed into printed matter and how the completed text betrays the remnants of the former voices. The following tales show more clearly the precarious see-saw balance between voice and writing. The third tale, "The Madman's Manuscript", is put in the middle of chapter 11. The old clergyman at Mr. Wardle's says that he has a "little manuscript", and consigns it to the Pickwick members. About its background, he clarifies that he "found it on the death of [his] friend", who was "a medical man, engaged in [his] County Lunatic Asylum" (*PP*, 134). He also adds that he "can hardly believe that the manuscript is genuine, though it certainly is not in my friend's hand" (*PP*, 134). The tale is, as the title says, written by a madman who would have been a patient at the county asylum. It begins with his remembering the "day when [he] was afraid of being mad", proceeds to narrate how he comes to inherit a huge amount of money, how he marries a woman who does not love him, and how he notices that he is falling into the familial disgrace of madness (*PP*, 140). The narrative also reveals that he has killed his wife, and afterwards tried to murder her brother, too. With these circumstances, the credibility of the written texts and the origin of the narrative voice are

called into question. The manuscript records its delirious writer's wild passion, while it calmly organises his life from the very beginning to that moment of writing. If he could have written such a proper memoir, his symptoms would not be so serious as he insists they are. The obvious paradox of a consistent text narrated by a delirious voice should again be considered along with the thick-layered structure of *Pickwick Papers*. This story cannot surface in *Pickwick Papers* without going through the hands of multiple other editors/agents: the medical man at the County Lunatic Asylum, the old clergyman at Mr. Wardle's, Mr. Snodgrass (who would have been transcribing the contents), the secretary of the Pickwick Club (who is in charge of its "Transactions") and Boz the editor of *Pickwick Papers*. Though none of these editors reveal their intervention with regard to the original manuscript, it is reasonable to assume that the various different hands of editing would generate the standardised printed version of the "Madman's manuscript", which becomes eventually consistent and clearly understandable.

The scheme of "textual tradition" through which a story gradually and properly takes shape can also be seen in the subsequent tales. The fourth, "The Bagman's Story" (chapter 14) is told by one of the bagmen who encounters the Pickwick members. It is about a man called Tom Smart, who happens to find a magical chair at an inn. The narrative shows how this piece of furniture tells Tom's fortune and enables him to declare his love to the landlady. The narrator bagman admits that there are quite a few people who doubt any possibility of the existence of a talking chair, yet he still believes in its truth as his uncle directly knows Tom Smart, and has heard the story from the person himself. Meanwhile an oral tradition develops

around the chair, an alternative account undergoing textual transformations among Mr. Snodgrass's notebook, the Transactions of the Club and the final text of *Pickwick Papers*.

A quite similar structure emerges in the case of the sixth tale, "The Old Man's Tale about the Queer Client" (chapter 21), narrated to Mr. Pickwick at a lawyers' gathering, about a man, who lost his wife and child when he was in the debtor's prison. Hating his parents and his wife's parents, who would not help them notwithstanding their affluence, the "queer client" swears revenge on them and carries it out over a long period of years. As to how and when the story-teller comes into knowledge of these events, he flatly says: "It matters little […] where and how, I picked up this brief history. If I were to relate it in the order in which it reached me, I should commence in the middle, and when I had arrived at the conclusion, go back for a beginning. It is enough for me to say that some of its circumstances passed before my own eyes; for the remainder I know them to have happened, and there are some persons yet living, who will remember them but too well" (*PP*, 284). As his words explicitly show, there is no written version of this tale and all its contents are organised in the memory of the story-teller. And his blatant manifestation of editorship clearly follows the model of oral tradition. There is no definitive original version, but the story is enacted and re-enacted every time the narrator evokes its contents and disseminates it to other potential story-tellers. One of these multiple versions is eventually introduced into the densely textualised world of *Pickwick Papers*.

Pickwick Papers is thus embedded within a thick strata of textuality and oral tradition through which people's voices are gradually changed. The eighth tale, "The True Legend of Prince Bladud" (chapter 36), seems to show Dickens's personal animus against such an

endless tradition from one version to another. When Mr. Pickwick tries to have a rest from his turbulent law-suits, he visits Bath. At an inn there, he happens to discover "a couple of sheets of writing paper in the inkstand drawer". These begin:

> "Less than two hundred years agone, on one of the public baths in this city, there appeared an inscription in honour of its mighty founder, the renowned Prince Bladud. That inscription is now erased.
> "For many hundred years before that time, there had been handed down from age to age, an old legend, that the illustrious Prince being afflicted with leprosy, […] consorted moodily, with husbandmen and pigs. Among the herd (so said the legend) …" (*PP*, 507)

While the inscription about Prince Bladud is erased, the legend of the same prince is orally handed down. Upon these strata of voice over writing, another layer is piled up. The writer of this manuscript, having finished a brief summary about Prince Bladud, suddenly dismisses its credibility by saying: "This *was* the legend. Listen to the true one" (*PP*, 507) (original *italics*), which is then revealed in a rhetorically elaborate tone: "A great many centuries since, there flourished in great state the famous and renowned Lud Hudibras, king of Britain. He was a mighty monarch. …" (*PP*, 508). After having finished reading it, Mr. Pickwick folds up the manuscript, "yawns several times", replaces it into the inkstand drawer "with a countenance expressive of the utmost weariness" (*PP*, 511). Even though the manuscript emphatically claims its true authenticity, Mr. Pickwick does not get excited at all, and regards it as just another version among numerous others. What is noteworthy is his unusual weariness. His character has often been described with adjectives like "eccentric" "benevolent", "middle-class", "unsophisticated", "hot-headed", but "essentially amicable", "easily angered", and "easily led" (Kramer, 87). In contrast to his "hot-headed"-ness, the reaction to the "true"

version of Prince Bladud seems very suggestive: his "weariness" is potent enough to disrupt the generally-accepted image of the benevolent English gentleman.

What has changed inside Mr. Pickwick by the time he reaches the eighth tale? As we have seen, when he faces the "ancient" stone inscription of Bil Stumps, he is full of innocence to believe that his middle-class literacy is able to decipher all the texts in the world. However, such erroneous enthusiasm for reading only leads to absurd interpretations, and triggers innumerable meaningless articles about the stone, which are then consumed in the self-satisfied ways of the Pickwickians. Although Mr. Pickwick would not be fully aware of what he has done, he had to receive almost the same treatment from Dodson and Fogg in *Bardell vs. Pickwick* (chapter 34). He tries to escape from this law-suit and comes across the old manuscript of Prince Bladud in Bath. Arranged in this order, Mr. Pickwick's disdain for the manuscript can be juxtaposed with his gradual disillusion toward literacy, or more blatantly, toward the possibility of reading itself. As the meaning of any text could be arbitrarily given, and as those meanings are proliferating out of the textual producer's control, any reading could comprise the possibility of distortion—both intentional and unintentional. Learning of this danger, Mr. Pickwick loses his usual impulsiveness, and does not get excited to see the manuscript of the legend. The writers'/story-tellers' ambitions to hold authority, and the surrounding readers' avid appetites to consume all of those different versions, are enough to make Mr. Pickwick fully "wearied" and disgusted.

And in the tired middle-aged gentleman, we may see some reflection of the young Charles Dickens. While he wrote *Pickwick Papers* in the form of serial publication, the

situation around him was rapidly changing. Its readers increased day by day, as new technologies and logistics changed concepts of time and space.[18] Some of the readers consumed the text through oral presentation, some of them read it silently, and some of them experienced the same text through combining both kinds of readings. And the nine interpolated tales in *Pickwick Papers*, each of which exemplifies processes through which people's voices are gradually consolidated into print matter, seem to function as some narrative *topoi* where Dickens could reproduce the contemporary situation of reading. If this is the case, and if the eighth tale presents Mr. Pickwick's "weariness" in such a society, we could see Dickens's own fatigue behind it. Just like Mr. Pickwick himself, Dickens would be weary of the endless textual production around him, and tired of the varieties of readers whose arbitrary readings bring out unintended and unexpected meanings from his writings.

Indeed, Mr. Pickwick's way of life in the ending seems to corroborate Dickens's own feeling. Undergoing the law-suit against Mrs. Bardell, in which his words to the lady are maliciously misinterpreted and distorted, the wearied middle-aged man attains a sort of maturity. After being imprisoned for a while and freed from there, he begins to fulfil fatherly duties to his surrounding characters. Finding that Sam Weller has been in love with Mary, he persuades Sam's father that he should consent to their marriage and support their new life financially. He even proposes that their master-servant relationship should be dissolved so that Sam can have a happy home with Mary (though Sam declines this offer and avows his

[18] Wolfgang Schivelbusch points out that the railway entailed "annihilation of time and space" in early 19th century England, and so dramatically transformed contemporary people's sense of time and space (Schivelbusch, 33).

life-long fidelity to his master) (chapter 56). He also works for settling the marriage-matter of Mr. Winkle, who has secretly wedded Arabella without permission, and arranges the father's visit to enable the three persons' reunion (chapter 56). Mr. Pickwick further shows his paternal attachment to Mr. Snodgrass who has been courting Mr. Wardle's daughter, Emily; he asks Mr. Wardle to let Emily be married not from her home but from his house (chapter 57). He thus lets his club members begin a settled married life as a surrogate father. They no longer journey around England to record news and incidents for the "Transactions of the Pickwick Club", and instead settle in their prudent, down-to-earth way of life. And such a turn from nomadic habits can surely be found in the case of Mr. Pickwick himself. In the final chapter, he announces that he will disband the Pickwick Club and retire "to some quiet, pretty neighbourhood in the vicinity of London" (*PP*, 796). He says that he has already found a suitable house and furnished it, which would attain its perfection through having the newly-wed Wellers resident in it. Though it is a matter of fact that Mr. Pickwick remains single until the end of the story, his new house surely becomes a comfortable family haven by adding a happy, hilarious couple in there. And more significantly, the final line of *Pickwick Papers* stresses Mr. Pickwick's virtual marital bond to Sam: he "is invariably attended by the faithful Sam"; "between Sam and his master there exists a steady and reciprocal attachment, which nothing but death will sever" (*PP*, 801).

It is important that the final destination of Mr. Pickwick's long journey appears to represent a harmonious combination of voice and writing. He employs "his leisure hours in arranging the memoranda which he afterwards presented to the secretary of the once famous

club, or in hearing Sam Weller read aloud, with such remarks as suggested themselves to his mind, which never failed to afford Mr. Pickwick great amusement" (*PP*, 801). No longer producing innumerable articles based on his trips, he reviews his past writings—the records composed in his immature period in which he believed that he could write down whatever sounds and voices he encountered. Looking back at all those writings, Mr. Pickwick arranges the memoranda, and those documents become *Pickwick Papers*. Next to him, Sam Weller sits and reads aloud the texts, inserting his improvisational and wayward comments.

In short, the domestic sphere of Mr. Pickwick and Sam Weller seems to embody an ideal space of narrative; as has been shown in the analysis of Tony Weller's writing, Sam and his wife Mary well know how to come to terms with the promiscuous blend of voice and writing. That couple accompany Mr. Pickwick, whose excessive innocence and too straightforward literacy were once exploited by his surrounding readers. And in their home, which is duly protected from the busy vicissitudes of the mass readership and printing culture, Mr. Pickwick holds all the memoranda which were used for making *Pickwick Papers*, and listens happily to his faithful servant, Sam, who reads aloud them and puts comments and thoughts that exactly match his own feelings. The whole text of *Pickwick Papers*, which navigates itself through the nine interpolated tales and finally reaches the destination of Mr. Pickwick's home, can be taken as reflecting Dickens's own ideal for the space of creating narratives. Writing in the whirlpool of various different ways of readings, and probably feeling the potential threat of endless proliferation of different versions, Dickens would produce the new home in which the storyteller, the reader, and the writer can feel at ease and can witness

how his texts and oral performances are peacefully consumed. My next chapter on *Master Humphrey's Clock* and *The Old Curiosity Shop* will show how the young author's inclination for finding a narrative home is going to get intensified and complicated.

Chapter 3

Whence the Voice Sounds?

Master Humphrey's Clock and *The Old Curiosity Shop*

On 2nd, December 1844, six years after the completion of *Pickwick Papers*, Dickens collected his close friends at John Forster's house. The members were his younger brother, Frederick Dickens (1820–68) and his friends, Daniel Maclise, Thomas Carlyle, Douglas Jerrold (1803–57) etc. In front of them, Dickens read aloud the final form of *The Chimes* (1844) that waited for its publication. Maclise recorded that the reading was wonderful and some of the audience were even moved to tears (*Life*, vol. 2, 174–5). The familiar gathering, which reminds us of Mr. Pickwick's reading with Sam at his house, seems to well embody Dickens's penchant for a domestic sphere of narrative, in which the author can see his readers' faces and confirm their responses. In fact, the two novels, *Master Humphrey's Clock* (1840) and *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1840–41), also let us see the formation of an exclusive space of narration. These works were serialised in the weekly journal, "*Master Humphrey's Clock"*.[19] As will be shown in what follows, the narrators and protagonists of these works are all holding some kind of story-telling club to read aloud to their intimate friends and acquaintances.

[19] In order to avoid confusion, I will refer to the journal called Master Humphrey's Clock as "*Master Humphrey's Clock"*. As to the actual contents of the narrator Humphrey's stories, I will refer as *Master Humphrey's Clock* without quotation marks. Although the assemblage of his short stories may not be categorised in the genre of "novel", this chapter will consistently call it a "novel" for the sake of simplification.

The domestic sphere developed in these novels, which limits its members and which consists of those members' reading voices and handwritten notes, marks a notable contrast with the actual nineteenth-century situation which Dickens described as filled with "many-headed" readers (as was quoted and discussed in the Introduction). Curiously, moreover, *Master Humphrey's Clock* and *The Old Curiosity Shop* respectively present a very complicated structure of narrative. Section 1 focuses on *Master Humphrey's Clock* and analyses its complex Chinese-box narrative; the narrator rejects ordinary people's access to his house, where he has a story-telling club with his close friends and acquaintances. Section 2 examines *The Old Curiosity Shop*, focusing on the itinerary of Nell and her grandfather's pilgrimage. They seem to hate places filled with deafening sounds, and finally reach a quiet ruin. There, Nell meets several old men who later turn out to be related by blood or be sharing many experiences with Master Humphrey. Through analysing these two novels and scrutinising the entangling relationship between them, this chapter tries to clarify Dickens's continuous desire to have, control and protect his own comfortable sphere of narration.

1) *Master Humphrey's Clock*

To begin with, it should be noted that *Master Humphrey's Clock* was born simultaneously with Dickens's decision to change his style of writing. When he was finishing the serialisation of *Oliver Twist* in July 1839, he wrote to Forster to announce his idea for a new journal called "*Master Humphrey's Clock"* and the novel of the same name, *Master Humphrey's Clock*:

> The best general idea of the plan of the new work might be given perhaps by reference to the *Tatler*, *Spectator*, and Goldsmith's *Bee* […]. I should propose to start, as the *Spectator* does, with some pleasant fiction relative to the origin of the publication; to introduce a little club or knot of characters, and to carry their personal histories and proceedings through the work […]. (*Letters*, vol. 1, 563–4)

The new project had the advantage that it would enable Dickens to reduce his busy working routine. From the beginning of his career, he was exposed to a constant pressure of serialisation and financial insecurity. Within a less than five-year period from 1835 to 1839, he completed *Sketches by Boz, Pickwick Papers*, *Nicholas Nickleby* and *Oliver Twist* without any break, yet his financial gains were far less than his publishers: (taking the example of *Pickwick Papers*, he received from Chapman and Hall "the sum of £3000 in addition to the stipulated payments [£14 for each monthly instalment]", in the meanwhile "the publishers themselves making a clear profit of £14,000 by the sales in numbers only" [Kitton, 40]). It should not therefore be surprising that Dickens was tempted to begin a new periodical on his own in order to increase his share of the profits at the expense of his publishers. He wrote to his "friend and solicitor, Thomas Mitton" that "if the new periodical were to run for two years and sell 50,000 copies, he would gain £11,000 against Chapman and Hall's £5,000" (Brennan, xv). Furthermore, Dickens intended to ask other writers to participate in and contribute articles to the new project, when it had established itself (*Letters*, vol. 1, 570). In this way, the new journal "*Master Humphrey's Clock*" was originally planned as something that would decrease his workload and would also alleviate his financial concerns.

On top of all these factors, the project shows Dickens's hope to construct a homogeneous community of readers and writers. If it had been launched smoothly (though

unfortunately it was not), it should have become a precursor of *Household Words* (1850–59), which introduced many different writers and took up a variety of topics; the contributors (who were to be selected and whose writings were to be edited by Dickens) were to form a sort of unified group, in which Dickens could take hold of the initiative. The readers, who were to gather around those writers' products, would have been forming another community as continuous subscribers.

In the above quotation, Dickens mentions the names of the *Tatler* (1709–11), *Spectator* (1711–12) and *Bee* (1759)—the most representative magazines of the previous century—and says that he wants his new journal to be designed to follow their formats. According to Q. D. Leavis, these old magazines were exerting some representative function in defining the "eighteenth-century public" which was still, to some extent, Leavis mentioned as "homogeneous" compared to the promiscuous mass of nineteenth-century readers (Q. D. Leavis, 132). Jon Klancher actually corroborated this, by calling attention to their "letters to the editor" section, claiming that such a framework of reciprocal intercourse between readers and writers (or editors) could sustain itself only on the tacit assumption that "readers might exchange their roles with writers"(Klancher, 21–2). A "Letters to the editor" section implies that readers could be potential writers and writers could be readers of those writings in turn. Such an assumption of continuity between readers and writers, or an imagined continuity between them, were at least to some extent, shared among the readers in the eighteenth century.

Of course, it is too simplistic to assume that the eighteenth-century reading was truly

monolithic and in some kind of perfect order. In fact, James van Horn Melton claims that the eighteenth-century reading public were already numerous and diverse enough to disrupt the illusion of any uniformity among people: since "the existence of the Enlightenment public sphere" "rested on a capitalised literary market that made books more accessible" to many people (Melton, 116). There lies an inherent difficulty of overviewing what "the (reading) public" was like in any one century. Still, Q. D. Leavis's and Jon Klancher's differentiation of eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century reading publics leads us to an assumption: many nineteenth-century intellectuals, who more or less felt endangered by the explosive increase of readers in their society, would have thought in the same way as the two critics. Just like any of us looking back to our near past and lamenting what we have lost, nineteenth-century people would invent their previous century as an era that was clearly different from theirs. They would yearn and feel nostalgia for the lost if perhaps never existent eighteenth century.

This assumption can be corroborated by an episode in Elizabeth Gaskell's novella, "My Lady Ludlow", which was published in 1858 in Dickens's *Household Words*. The old female narrator, Margaret Dawson, looks back to her youthful days and remembers Lady Ludlow. She is a reactionary eighteenth-century woman of rank, who opposes any sort of revolutionary reformation, and categorically denies the necessity of education for working-class people. She never hires any servant until she can be certain that the candidate can neither read nor write. She regards literacy as something to be monopolised by gentlemen and gentlewomen, and frequently makes her young companions—who are all of good descent yet are from poor families—read "Mr. Addison's *Spectator*" aloud for her (Gaskell, 29). This

would demonstrate there existed some consensus among Gaskell and her nineteenth-century readers that Lady Ludlow's conservative views about reading and writing would not collide with her regular reading of the *Spectator*.

Therefore, it is very interesting that Dickens dared to reproduce the omnibus format of the *Spectator* and the *Tatler*, and to introduce the corner of "letters to the editor" in "*Master Humphrey's Clock*". Even more suggestively, that corner is designed to highlight how the narrative world excludes the majority of readers in the public which it appears to address. The old narrator Humphrey says that he receives a letter from one of his readers, which ironically reveals that the writer is a mere snob. The man claims himself to be "a devilish gentlemanly fellow", and says he knows all the particulars of the London celebrities. As such a significant person, the letter-writer shows no hesitation in demanding membership in the narrative club of Master Humphrey: "excuse me if I proffer my claim to be elected to one of the vacant chairs in that old room of yours. Don't reject me without full consideration" (*MHC*, 30). Quite predictably, Master Humphrey flatly refuses the letter-writer: "Master Humphrey informs this gentleman that his application […] is rejected" (*MHC*, 32). The letter-writer, who wanted to sit on the "vacant chairs" of Master Humphrey's drawing room, and who wanted to hear directly what was narrated there, is thus spurned by the exclusive narrator.

Let us then turn our focus to the whole structure of *Master Humphrey's Clock*. First of all, the novel takes a form of frame narrative: the outer consists of a "little club" held at Master Humphrey's house; the inner are provided by the stories told at its meetings. Master Humphrey presents himself as "a mis-shapen, deformed, old man" (*MHC*, 7), who has been

leading a "lonely, solitary life" along with his long cherished clock (*MHC*, 5). While continuing this quiet life, he comes to know three other men, who share his "secluded habits" (*MHC*, 11). The four of them curiously hide themselves from the eyes of the public, gathering on "one night in every week" and beguile their night time with the members' stories (*MHC*, 11). Those are based on the "piles of dusty papers"—manuscripts written by the club members and put in the clock case in advance of their gathering (*MHC*, 11). In every session, Master Humphrey takes any one of those manuscripts out of the case, and reads it aloud to the others. In this respect, the framework obviously foregrounds the existence of familiar narrative circle, like the one we have seen in the previous chapter. Just like Mr. Pickwick, who finally resides with his faithful servants, Master Humphrey and three of his friends create their own narrative club, and share their stories, which, by whomever they are written, are always recited in the old man's voice—and the stories thereby assume some homogeneous colour. Master Humphrey, the head of the club, can be assured that the oral and textual productions in the club are always under his control. The contributors of the stories—the club members—silently and quietly listen to his voice.

Moreover, it is worthwhile to note that *Master Humphrey's Clock* seems to exaggerate the homogeneity among members. One of the primary members, Jack Redburn, is described as Master Humphrey's "librarian, secretary, steward, and first minister". His identity undergoes further ramifications: "He is something of a musician, something of an author, something of an actor, something of a painter, very much of a carpenter, and an extraordinary gardener" (*MHC*, 39). He is, in a word, amalgam of creative spirits, in which respect he

resembles the narrator/creator Master Humphrey. Apart from this, the identity of Jack Redburn is quite obscure. Master Humphrey says he cannot but "be puzzled to say how old he is". Even though he "has been an inmate of Master Humphrey's house for these eight years past", he insists that he does not know anything concrete about the friend (*MHC*, 39–40).

A similar vagueness can be seen in the case of the second member, Owen Miles. All that is said about him is that "he was once a very rich merchant, but receiving a severe shock in the death of his wife, he retired from business to a quiet unostentatious life" (*MHC*, 41). Except for this, the age and appearance of this gentleman are all unspecified throughout the narrative. Such obscurity is shared with the case of the most prominent member, whose name Master Humphrey does not even know:

> I formed an acquaintance with a deaf gentleman, which ripened into intimacy and close companionship. To this hour, I am ignorant of his name. It is his humour to conceal it, or he has a reason and purpose for so doing. In either case, I feel that he has a right to require a return of the trust he has reposed; and as he has never sought to discover my secret, I have never sought to penetrate his. (*MHC*, 10)

Always sunk in deep thought, the "deaf gentleman" seems to have lost someone dear to him recently. He appears to be "unused to his solitude", seen weeping as he looks at the hearth fire (*MHC*, 36). A similar bereavement can be found in Master Humphrey, too, as he says he has his own secret. At the beginning of his narrative, he tells that he often hears the "light step of some lovely girl" in his house (*MHC*, 5). In that haunted house, he begins to narrate a story about a young girl to his club members, which later grows to be the story of little Nell. Given all these points, it would be reasonable to assume that Master Humphrey himself is one of those old men who look back on their past and brood upon what and whom they have lost. All

the members of the club are the double of the other members in some sense. Their true identities are always obscure. They all are leading melancholic lives in their solitude, quite apart from the buzz of constant activity in the nineteenth-century public sphere. In this quiet circle, the narrator Master Humphrey recites the stories in his voice, holding manuscripts in his hands.

It is therefore understandable that the very first passage of *Master Humphrey's Clock* discloses the narrator's strong desire to preserve the privacy of the club: "the reader must not expect to know where I live" (*MHC*, 5). The first thing the old narrator does is to enclose his narrative sphere. Even more interesting is that Dickens supports such an attitude in the preface: "The author would fain to hope that there are not many who would disturb Master Humphrey and his friends in their seclusion" (*Preface* [1840], 607). Both the fictional narrator and the real author want the place of narration to remain undetected. At the same time, however, Dickens makes Master Humphrey express a paradoxical invitation toward numerous numbers of people:

> At present, it is true, my abode may be a question of little or no import to anybody, but I should carry my readers with me, as I hope to do, and there should spring up, between them and me, feelings of homely affection and regard attaching something of interest to matters ever so slightly connected with my fortunes or my speculations, even my place of residence might one day have a kind of charm for them. Bearing this possible contingency in mind, I wish them to understand in the outset, that they must never expect to know it. (*MHC*, 5)

While on the one hand the narrator detaches his readers from his "abode", he on the other hand asks them to have some "homely affection", dreaming of some day when "his residence might have a kind of charm for them" (*MHC*, 5). In this self-contradictory desire, we may find

evidence of the narrator's (and Dickens's) will to convert his amorphous, invisible readers into some intimate (yet fictionally familiar) friends. In fact, such a desire is frequently expressed by Dickens, as can be seen early as his advertisement for *Master Humphrey's Clock* — written a month before the actual commencement of the novel and the journal. He writes that "Mr. Humphrey hopes (and is almost tempted to believe) that all degrees of readers … may find something agreeable in the face of the old clock. That when they have made its acquaintance its voice may sound cheerfully in their ears, and be suggestive of none but pleasant thoughts. That they may come to have favourite and familiar associations connected with its name, and to look for it as a welcome friend" (Address by Dickens [1840], xi). When they can begin to have "familiar associations" and can regard the clock and its narrator as a "welcome friend", the "voice" of the narrative will ring pleasantly in their ears.

Here, it is worth remembering the "devilish gentlemanly fellow", who sent a letter to Master Humphrey for admission as a new club member. What is significant is that the letter is not an actual, real letter sent from a nineteenth-century reader, but is one fictionally invented by Humphrey (and by Dickens). Needless to say, the novel designs the letter in such a way that any actual reader can well be aware of its fictionality. Through the touch of elaboration, Dickens seems to manipulate the voice of his "many-headed" readers and to show how he feels towards them. By counterfeiting their voice, by creating the negative figure of an implied reader, Dickens seems to be telling us that those snobbish and coarse people, who boast about their knowledge, cannot be permitted admission to the sphere of his narration; readers should not behave in such a crude way if they wish to be accepted into Master Humphrey's narrative

club.

The peace thus sustained there, moreover, seems to be strengthened by the existence of the deaf gentleman. It is paradoxical that the narrative circle of Master Humphrey, which largely relies on the means of oral presentation, has a member who is deaf. How could he participate in the club in the first place? He overcomes this handicap by a unique power of reading. Master Humphrey explains his ability as follows:

> I nodded my head to show that I understood what he would say, for I had already gathered from a certain fixed expression in his face and from the attention with which he watched me while I spoke, that his sense of hearing was destroyed. […] He produced a little set of tablets and a pencil to facilitate our conversation, on that our first acquaintance, and I well remember how awkward and constrained I was in writing down my share of the dialogue, and how easily he guessed my meaning before I had written half of what I had to say. (*MHC*, 36–7)

Having lost his sense of speaking and hearing, the deaf gentleman can only write and read. In the first meeting, they communicate through the intermediate form of writing and speaking. Eventually, however, they achieve their own way of interaction, free from such a cumbersome device. Master Humphrey says that it is difficult to explain how, yet remarks that "he has long since ceased to be deaf to me" (*MHC*, 37). This obviously suggests that the deaf gentleman reads Master Humphrey's lips. In this sense, he can be defined as his most ideal "reader". The narrator does not have to write down what he wants to say. He can face his reader, can give his text in his own voice, and can share the pleasure of story-telling, set free from any complicated phenomenon of mass printing and expanding readership.

Moreover, the club has yet another mode of existence in contrast to its contemporary society. It is closed within itself, as a realm into which the lower class of the servants is never

permitted. The class consciousness becomes more explicit when Master Humphrey actually accepts a new member, Mr. Pickwick. Even though Dickens finished writing *Pickwick Papers* three years before the commencement of *Master Humphrey's Clock*, the popularity of the good-natured gentleman and his hilarious servant had not faded at all. It is commonly said that that is why Dickens, noticing the declining sales of "Master Humphrey's Clock", rather abruptly reincarnated the two figures to get back readers' interest (Hayward, 59). Of course it is undeniable that the insertion of the previous characters cannot be accounted for without relation to the author's marketing tactics; however, it is at the same time inappropriate to explain all authorial decisions in terms of money and sales. In fact, as Jonathan H. Grossman rightly observed, Dickens's usage of Pickwick and the Wellers was not like any ad-hoc and hasty introduction of the past characters. The atmosphere of Master Humphrey's club is far less disrupted but rather more purely refined by their appearance (Grossman, 93).

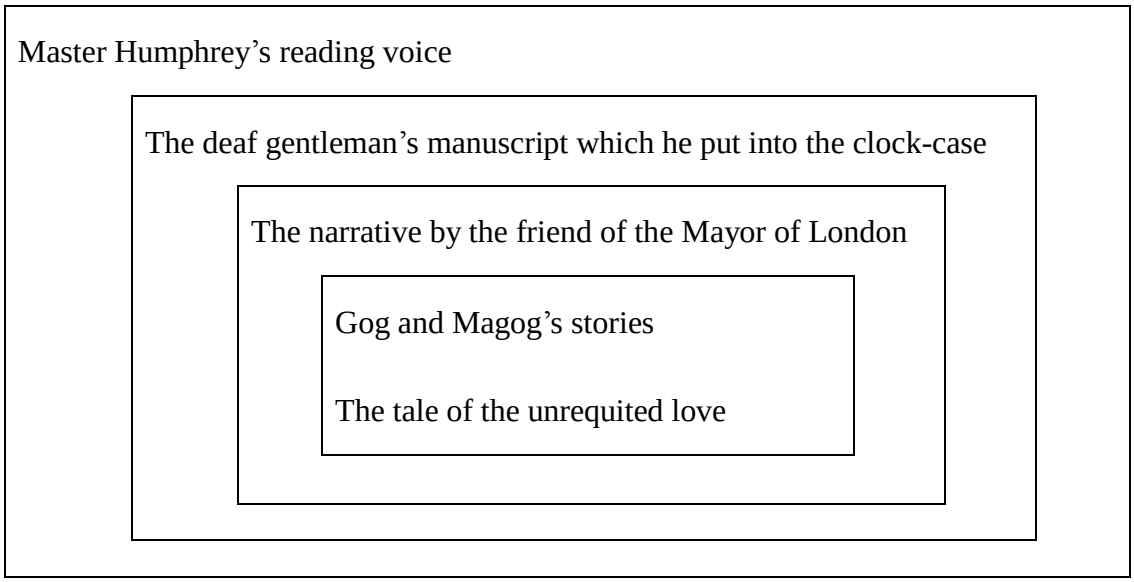
As Mr. Pickwick comes in as a new member, Sam Weller becomes acquainted with the housekeeper at the Humphrey's. Interestingly, the servants decide to hold a club of their own. The members are the housekeeper, the barber who is a close friend of her, Sam Weller and Tony Weller. They name their club "Sam Weller's Watch", imitating yet differentiating themselves from "Master Humphrey's Clock". What they narrate in their club is also very different from the topics at their masters'. One of the stories, for instance, is told by Sam in his idiosyncratic London Cockney: "'Here's the story,' said Sam. 'Vunce upon a time there wos a young hair-dresser as opened a wery smart little shop vith four wax dummies in the winder'" (*MHC*, 95). While their masters' club has grander topics such as "the Giant Chronicles" or "A

Confession Found in a Prison in the Time of Charles the Second", which are of course narrated in standardised English, the servants select humble themes such as the history of the merchants or the hair-dressers, and discuss them in their cockney English. All of these factors eloquently tell that in the world of *Master Humphrey's Clock*, any space of narrative is strictly classified, and none of these will be allowed to intermingle with the others. The topic, the language, and the audience are all clearly demarcated and separated, protecting the "homogeneity" of each of the clubs. Based on these observations and looking back to the words of Master Humphrey in the very beginning, it is difficult not to be convinced of his antagonism against nineteenth-century mass readers: "Readers must not expect to know where I live".

Let us then, proceed to examine what stories are narrated in the clock club. The first one, "The Giant Chronicles" has a complex frame narrative, and develops an interesting interplay between voice and writing. The very outer frame is Master Humphrey's voice. He recites the manuscript at his hand, which has been written by the deaf gentleman. The actual contents are told not from his own perspective but from that of another man; the narrator, in the introductory part, explains that he has found his long-separated friend, and learned that he became the Lord Mayor of London. On the night before the inauguration, the narrator visits him. The Mayor is very upset at this reunion, fearing that his old friend might reveal his poverty in the past. He makes him go home with an invitation to the next day's party. The narrator attends the event, though he feels deeply dejected to know that his pure intentions cannot be understood by the Mayor. With that bitter feeling, the narrator falls asleep in an

obscure corner of the ballroom. Waking up in the middle of the night, he finds that the party has ended, leaving him alone in the grand house. And he is surprised to discover that the statues of the Giants put at the entrance to the Guildhall—Gog and Magog—come to life, and begin their exchange of narrative (which seems to be their favourite pastime). The younger Giant takes the first turn, and his story comes to form a yet deeper frame. It is about an unrequited love in the period of Queen Elizabeth. A young man falls in love with his master's daughter. Before he has any opportunity to confess his feelings, the girl is seduced by another man and elopes with him. The master becomes desperate and passes away, making the young man give assurances that he will surely take revenge on that daughter's husband. Having led a single life for a long time, he finally discovers his enemy and fulfils the mission. Satisfied with the outcome, he chooses death.

Coming to the end, the story is re-embedded in these multiple frames. Having finished narrating this story, the younger Giant and the older Giant return to being the original stone statues. The friend of the Mayor comes out from his hiding place and sums up his tale. The deaf gentleman here closes his narrative. Master Humphrey, who has been reading the story aloud, puts the documents back into the clock-case. The complicated structure of Chinese-box narrative is visualised in the below diagram:



What is striking here is that the figures of "narrating" and those of the "narrated" show a strange resemblance to one another. The analogy between Master Humphrey and the deaf gentleman has been already discussed. In the yet deeper level, it is significant to notice that the act of story-telling by the two Giants duplicates that of Master Humphrey's club. And at the deepest level, there is the man who has lost his sweetheart and who has been forced to lead a solitary life. It seems like that he again overlaps with the image of the club members. They lost their cherished people long ago, and have led their lives all alone with those people's images in their hearts.

In this way, those who are narrating and those who are narrated converge, and are conflated together. It means that the readers have to read to and fro among these frameworks with extremely scanty information about the club. And it is not at all surprising that the actual readers in the nineteenth century were not quite satisfied with such an exclusive framework. As Edgar Johnson sums up, "the public had flocked to *Master Humphrey* under the impression

that it was another Dickens novel. With the second number the sales fell off alarmingly; by the third their decline was disastrous" (E. Johnson, vol. 1, 298). What his readers wanted was neither a pastiche of eighteenth-century-style journalism nor a satirical feature of "letters to the editor"; instead, they wanted the long serialisation of a new novel.

Noticing the unpopularity, Dickens's first tactics was to dispatch Pickwick and Sam Weller to Humphrey's club, yet he only found that that was not enough. He then hurriedly enlarged one of the episodes in the old men's club into the whole long narrative of Nell and her grandfather. This is how the framework of "*Master Humphrey's Clock*" comes to wrap the two novels of *Master Humphrey's Clock* and *The Old Curiosity Shop,* and thereby how the precarious see-saw game between them emerged. The former work should have functioned as the outer frame of the latter, but in fact the latter outgrew the former in terms of its textual quantity and also its commercial success. To put this another way, *Master Humphrey's Clock,* which already contains a complex frame structure within itself, is involved in another difficult relationship of framing and being-framed with *The Old Curiosity Shop*. Also, the two novels show different illustrations for the same figure of Master Humphrey, putting the analogy between the "narrators" and the "narrated" into further confusion. The following section goes on to investigate this relationship along with Nell's pilgrimage from noise to silence.

2) *The Old Curiosity Shop*

Despite its commercial success and sheer popularity among readers, critics have long ranked

The Old Curiosity Shop very low in Dickens's corpus. Oscar Wilde (1854–1900) commented on its excessive sentimentalism that "one must have a heart of stone to read the death of little Nell without dissolving into tears of … laughter" (Pearson, 208). Algernon Swinburne (1837–1909) attacked Nell's almost abnormal purity, which made her "a monster as inhuman as a baby with two heads" (Swinburne [1902], 22). The whole structure of the work has also been a target of criticism. The three chapters in the beginning are narrated by an elderly and reclusive cripple whose name is unrevealed, yet who may reasonably be assumed to be Master Humphrey (for the opening part was written while Dickens was still pursuing the initial format of "*Master Humphrey's Clock*"). At the end of the third chapter, however, the sheer decline of sales made him change the format: the old narrator suddenly bids farewell to the readers "for the convenience of the narrative" (*OCS*, 28) and gives over control to a transparent, omniscient third-person narrator. As a result, there is left an unnatural switch in the narration of *The Old Curiosity Shop*. This brief summary would reinforce the image of Dickens as an improvisational, even hopelessly amateur, writer. In fact, John Lucas described this novel as "more of a muddle" than *Nicholas Nickleby* (Lucas, 73), while Steven Marcus harshly commented that "*The Old Curiosity Shop* is Dickens's least successful novel, a work in which he seems to have lost much of his intellectual control" (Marcus [1965], 129). Elizabeth Brennan attributed these critical trends to "a miscellany within a miscellany" character of the work (Brennan, xii).

However, reviewing the chapters around the narrative switch, we can find an interesting fact. It is obviously related to a shift of sound volume in *The Old Curiosity Shop*. In

the first chapter, the old narrator talks about his night walk. It is noticeable that he is so much connected with silence. He likes this time, since "the glare and hurry of broad noon are not adapted to" his idle pursuit (*OCS*, 2). He wonders how "the dwellers in narrow ways" could bear to hear the varieties of people's different footsteps, and thinks that such a life would be like "to lie, dead but conscious, in a noisy churchyard" (*OCS*, 2). On one of his night walks which carefully shuns the noise of daytime and any encounter with numerous people, Master Humphrey is arrested by an inquiry in a "soft sweet voice that struck him very pleasantly" (*OCS*, 3). It is so soft that the old man cannot understand its purport, yet gradually finds out that the speaker, little Nell, has lost her way and asks him to direct her. He then navigates her, deliberately taking "the most intricate" ways, rather than "the most frequented" ones (*OCS*, 4). The long walk through the quiet streets brings them to Nell's residence, and the narrator sees her grandfather, Mr. Trent, who comes out of the "very dark and silent" house (*OCS*, 4).

By degrees, uncomfortable noise sneaks into this silent world. In the second chapter, Nell's brother Fred and his friend Dick Swiveller break into the old curiosity shop and disturb its peace. Dick is particularly noisy, speaking about meaningless things incessantly with so many quotes from contemporary popular songs. As the silence in Nell's house is thus gradually eroded away, the third chapter introduces the prototype of many later Dickensian antihero/monsters, Quilp. Every time he appears in the text hereafter, he shows his extraordinary violence while making uncomfortable noise. In chapter 6, for instance, he proposes to Nell asking if she has any interest in becoming the second Mrs. Quilp. Soon after this obnoxious speech, Quilp goes on to beat Kit and Tom Scott with a thick stick and to hurl

abuse towards the boys, while Nell is stunned without any words. Even when he sleeps soundly, he "gasps and growls with his mouth wide open", which makes Nell "transfixed with terror" (*OCS*, 96). In later chapters, the connection between his violence and noise becomes even more vivid. Leading a bachelor life at his counting-house, he entertains himself with "vocal exercise" which is more like "a chant than a song". He has the figure-head of some old ship which looks like Kit, and commits an atrocity with a "roar" and "shriek of laughter" towards it (*OCS*, 459). When he spends some time alone, he again amuses himself by a little "screeching, or howling" (*OCS*, 503).

It is suggestive, therefore, that the old narrator (who is supposed to be Master Humphrey) bids farewell to the readers and disappears from the textual sphere, as soon as Quilp appears into the text (chapter 3). The old narrator's penchant for silence and quietude cannot coexist with the noisy world which is filled with inhuman roars of Quilp. Even more suggestively, Quilp is described as having "a head and face" that are "large enough for the body of a giant" while his actual physique is that of a dwarf (*OCS*, 22). Such a disproportion overlaps with the figure of the "many-headed" monster, who has thousands of heads attached to one body. Considered in this way, it is not surprising that Nell's pilgrimage always avoids loud noises, and tries to find solace in silence. Lyn Pykett compares her mendicant journey to those frequently depicted in Wordsworth's poems, arguing that Nell and her grandfather pursue a Romantic ideal that allows them a quiet life in the countryside with a few familiar friends (Pykett, 62).

Yet, however, their retreat from London goes through many encounters with people,

who do not accord with such Romantic ideals. Tom Short and Codlin, the Punch-and-Judy show people, and Mrs. Jarley, the chairwoman of the wax-dolls exhibition, are all working at giving puppets and lifeless dolls their pseudo-voices. As their life cannot subsist away from populous places, Nell and her grandfather cannot stay long with them. They particularly hate the noise and bustle of cities and industrial towns, and try to navigate their way to quieter venues. In the middle of their journey, "when the noise and dirt and vapour of the manufacturing town, reeking with lean misery and hungry wretchedness, hemmed them in on every side," Nell and her grandfather "yearned for the fresh solitudes of wood, hillside, and field", which would accept them quietly and gently (*OCS*, 334). Fortunately, they finally reach their destination through the help of the schoolmaster. The silence of the place, the small, old and grey church, is repeatedly exaggerated by a variety of words: when they first settle in, "their hearts [are] too quiet and glad for loud expression" and they discuss their future plan "in whisper" (*OCS*, 388). Nell wanders around the churchyard, "at that silent hour, when her grandfather is sleeping peacefully in his bed, and every sound is hushed" (*OCS*, 388). The surrounding people never disturb them, just speaking "softly together of the beautiful girl and looking round the churchyard with a sigh" (*OCS*, 393). Nell likes "the silent building and the peaceful beauty of the spot", which seems like a "tranquil place of rest, nothing evil enters" (*OCS*, 401). She comes to know a kind old sexton, and finds out that he works with his friend who is "deaf" (*OCS*, 403).

In the meanwhile, the people who threatened Nell's peace experience various difficulties in exerting their usual powers of orality. Dick Swiveller, for instance, becomes

delirious with high fever, and is reduced to babbling meaninglessly, paying for his loud intrusion into Nell and her grandfather's house. Sam Brass loses all means to express himself for his "name is erased and blotted out from the roll of attorneys" (*OCS*, 548). Among these people, Quilp's fate is most effective in highlighting such a punishment of silencing. When he notices that his sinister plot involving Kit has been exposed, he attempts to flee at midnight. In complete darkness, he tries to find his way relying on the sounds of the pursuers' voice and noises, but when the sound stops, he falls into water as if fatally led by the silence:

> He stood listening intently, but the noise was not renewed […] and next moment was fighting with the cold, dark water. For all its bubbling up and rushing in his ears, he could hear the knocking at the gate again—could hear a shout that followed it—could recognise the voice. For all his struggling and plashing, he could understand that they had lost their way, and had wandered back to the point from which they started; that they were all but looking on, while he was drowned; that they were close at hand, but could not make an effort to save him; that he himself had shut and barred them out. He answered the shout—with a yell, which seemed to make the hundred fires that danced before his eyes tremble and flicker, as if a gust of wind had stirred them. It was of no avail. The strong tide filled his throat, and bore him on, upon its rapid current. (*OCS*, 509–10)

The villain who suffuses the text of *The Old Curiosity Shop* with his inhuman noise is led to death and his voice loses its sound. He can hear other people calling him, yet cannot hear himself trying to answer them. The cold, dark water fills his throat and cleanses his voice out from the text.

Just after his death, Nell is liberated from all sufferings and put to a quiet rest. Quite interestingly, the old people around her try to console her last days by reading books aloud. When Nell's illness becomes serious, the three old men—Mr. Trent, the schoolmaster, the bachelor—gather at her bedside and alternately recite narratives to beguile her:

> Sometimes—weeks had crept on, then—the child, exhausted, though with little

> fatigue, would pass whole evenings on a couch beside the fire. At such times, the schoolmaster would bring in books, and read to her aloud; and seldom an evening passed, but the bachelor came in, and took his turn of reading. The old man sat and listened, with little understanding for the words, but with his eyes fixed upon the child,—and if she smiled or brightened with the story, he would say it was a good one, and conceive a fondness for the very book. (*OCS*, 409–10)

The old men are reading in the dreadful fear of losing her. This circle, in which they spend nights in the melancholic mood of bereavement (or the presentiment of it), certainly resembles that of Master Humphrey. Almost confirming the analogy, the bachelor is given another similar characteristic:

> *The bachelor*, among his various occupations, found in the old church a constant source of interest and amusement. Taking that pride in it which men conceive for the wonders of their own little world, he had made its history his study; *and many a summer day within its walls, and many a winter's night beside the parsonage fire, had found the bachelor still poring over and adding to his goodly store of tale and legend*. (*OCS*, 400) (my *italics*)

The bachelor, who collects "tale and legend", and muses over them at night-time, seems to overlap with the club members of Master Humphrey. It also turns out that he is a long-separated brother of Mr. Garland, an episode which is duplicated in the relationship between Master Humphrey (the single gentleman) and Mr. Trent.

All the characters, regardless of whether one is narrating or being narrated, share something in common with Master Humphrey, and—whether consciously or not—form a homogeneous assemblage. In this way, Master Humphrey's image has been projected onto various characters in the world of *The Old Curiosity Shop*. Even when the figure of the old crippled narrator becomes invisible and the third-person narrative assumes command, the narrator Humphrey takes diverse incarnations in that world and insinuates his presence here and there. Noticing this quiet ubiquity of the old narrator and of his comfortable story-telling

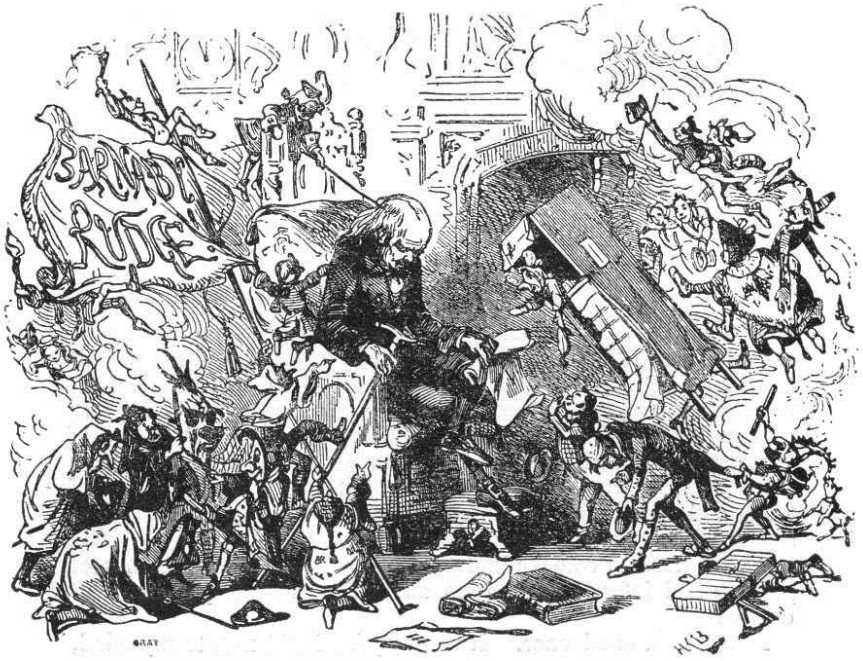
club, we can see how strong Dickens's aspiration for such a domestic sphere of narrative was. The "many-headed readers" in the nineteenth century did not allow Dickens to pursue his original plan for "*Master Humphrey's Clock*", and *Master Humphrey's Clock*. The sharp fall in sales urged him to discard the quiet narrative world of *Master Humphrey's Clock* and to connect it almost forcibly to *The Old Curiosity Shop*, which is filled with violent shrieks and loud voices. Within *The Old Curiosity Shop*, the heroine Nell wanders around, fearing all the intrusive noises and bustles of the city before Dickens finally gives her a peaceful place of rest, and consoles her by the reading voices of the old men.

Given this, it is worthwhile reconsidering the relationship between *Master Humphrey's Clock* and *The Old Curiosity Shop*. One critic has described *The Old Curiosity Shop* as being born like a "butterfly from the chrysalis of *Master Humphrey's Clock*" (McMaster, 95), yet it is significant that the "chrysalis" does not finish its function at the moment of the birth of the "butterfly". When the serialisation of *The Old Curiosity Shop* is completed in "*Master Humphrey Clock*", the journal again foregrounds the figure of Master Humphrey and makes him put the novel's massive text back into his clock case. The narrator, who once appeared to vanish from the world of the third-person narrator, reappears and swallows up the whole series of the story. In this way, the fragile "chrysalis" and the old storyteller of *Master Humphrey's Clock* return to wrap up its outgrown butterfly, *The Old Curiosity Shop*. Moreover, the illustrations of Master Humphrey offer differing interpretations of the two textual worlds. In the opening number of *Master Humphrey's Clock*, readers are given an illustration of the narrator:

"Master Humphrey Walking Abroad" by Phiz

(*MHC*, 8)

The figure of a feeble old man with a stick clearly corresponds to the narrator's account of himself as a "mis-shapen old man", and the subsequent illustrations preserve this image of the narrator. For instance, when he resurfaces in the narrative and puts back the manuscript of *The Old Curiosity Shop*, he looks just the same:



"Master Humphrey's Visionary Friends" by Phiz

(*MHC*, 107)

In the world of *Master Humphrey's Clock*, which functions as the frame-narrative of *The Old Curiosity Shop*, we therefore can say that the narrator is consistently illustrated as an old man with a stick.

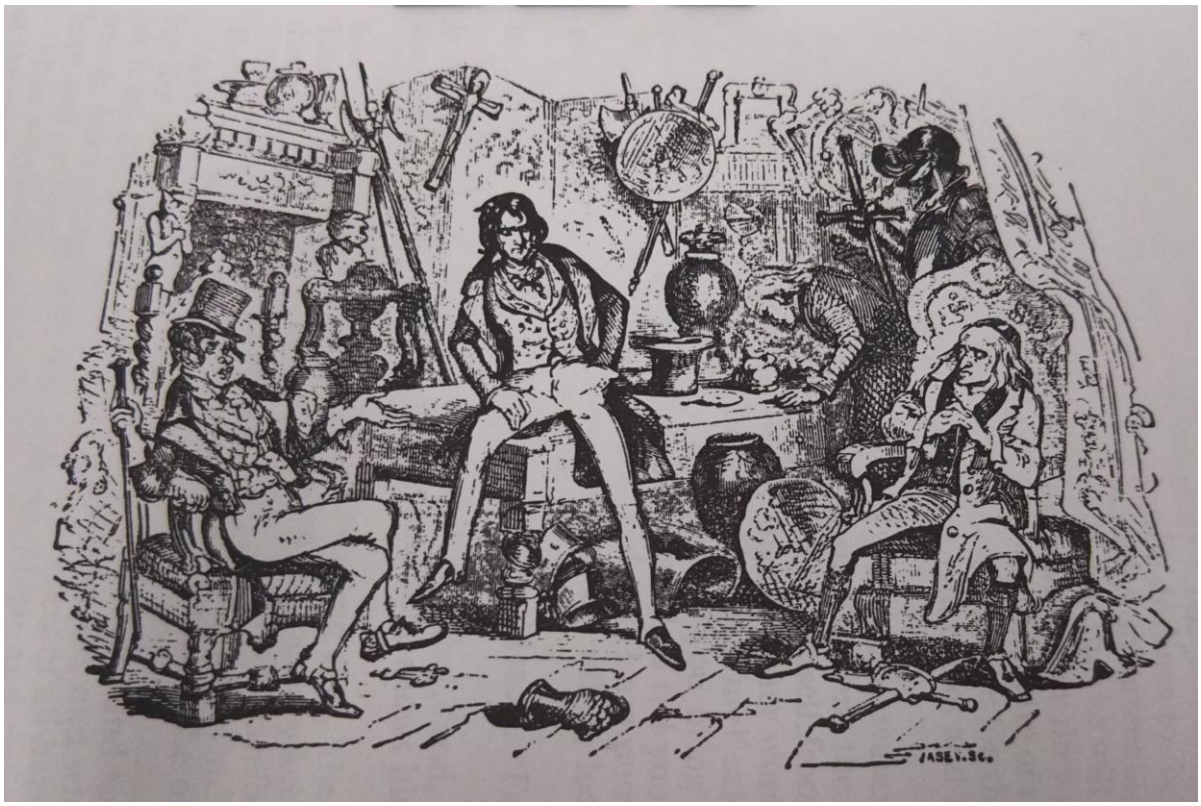
When Master Humphrey returns the manuscript into the clock-case, however, he gives an extremely strange confession. He reveals that he is not narrating Nell's story objectively but rather that he has been actively involved with her experience:

> You [the members of Master Humphrey's story club] will one and all forgive me, I [Master Humphrey] returned, if, for the greater convenience of the story, and for its better introduction, *that adventure was fictitious*. I had my share indeed – no light or trivial one – in the pages we have read, but it was not the share I feigned to have at first. The younger brother, the single gentleman, the nameless actor in this little drama, stands before you now. (*MHC*, 105) (my *italics* and underline)

Let us organise the italicised and underlined parts in order. As to the former, "that adventure" signifies Master Humphrey's nocturnal wandering around London, in which he happens to

come across Nell. This section is from chapters 1 to 3 in the text, corresponding to the part given in his own voice. This is then dismissed as fiction, as something merely invented for the sake of the story's convenience. The truth is, he continues, given in the part of the underlining. He states that his youthful figure was "the younger brother" of Nell's grandfather, who is called "the single gentleman" without any real name in the narration of the third-person narrative.

This strange confession puts the figure of Master Humphrey into confusion. First, let us look at his figure when he visits the old curiosity shop to see Nell and her grandfather, and unexpectedly discovers Fred Trent and Dick Swiveller:



"Mr. Swiveller Seeks to Gain Attention" by Phiz

(*OCS*, 21)

Though it is a little hard to see, the narrator is shown in the background, as the old man

stooping to look into something on the desk. It would be reasonable to conclude that this figure does not contradict the ones we have seen so far. Notwithstanding this, his confession in the later part denies the reality of this episode. Instead, the single gentleman, whose identity with Master Humphrey is manifestly claimed, is depicted as follows (a man in the middle trying to unwrap his scarf):

"Taken by Single Gentleman" by Phiz

(*OCS*, 256)

He is depicted as a robust middle-aged man. As Rosemary Mundehenk rightly points out, the image of a "gruff, choleric, irascible" man is in no way like the quiet, retiring small cripple in the above illustrations (Mundehenk, 655). In short, the figures of Master Humphrey are taking different incarnations between *Master Humphrey's Clock* and *The Old Curiosity Shop*.

Dickens and his illustrators kept in close and continuous contact during the serialisation. As Jane Cohen points out, he "exerted unprecedented authority over the actual execution of the illustration" so that the completed images would conform to his text (Cohen, 5). How should we then, construe this strange contradiction regarding the image of Master Humphrey? Mundehenk attributes this problem to Dickens's carelessness (Mundehenk, 655). While the author had been working to such a formidably busy schedule, putting so many small changes here and there, he became unable to settle all the minute details. Although this explanation at first seems plausible, a careful consideration soon raises counter-evidence. We must not forget that Master Humphrey's confession comes after the completion of *The Old Curiosity Shop*. If Dickens was really confused with his own text, he could have used the capstone number in a much more effective way, as a convenient cleaning space, in which he could settle several contradictions up until that point. Nonetheless, what Dickens really did is the exact opposite. He makes his narrator add a strange, unnecessary fact, and makes his narrative even more badly confused. Without that confession, the contradiction would not have emerged in the first place, and the illustration style of Master Humphrey could have been consistent. Given all these factors, there is no logical necessity for Dickens (and for Master Humphrey) to discard his own figure nor to choose an utterly different character as his youthful self.

In addition, the illustration presented on page 88 illuminates an analogy between two figures. Examining it closely, we can find that Master Humphrey, who looms in the backdrop, looks like Mr. Trent (Nell's grandfather), who sits down in the front. Indeed, these two figures

appear so identical that it leads us to remember Freud's concept of the uncanny, which proposed that one feels uncanny-ness not because he/she comes across an alien figure, but because he/she discovers something which is really close (or too close) to oneself (Freud, 246-50). That striking resemblance or the fact of double-ness suffices to frighten and overwhelm him or her. The more the other's image is close to oneself, the more the double or the doppelganger becomes threatening. In the light of this analysis, the analogy between Mr. Trent and Master Humphrey seems to be very significant. There exists an uncanny closeness between the one who is narrating (Master Humphrey) and the one who is narrated (Mr. Trent). And out of fear of his uncanny double, Master Humphrey may try to discard this part of the encounter as mere fiction, and to claim his true self instead as an utterly different figure, that of the single gentleman. The narrator escapes from his dark double by the denial of his past experience and by attaching his image to an utterly different picture. In summary, the two textual worlds of *Master Humphrey's Clock* and *The Old Curiosity Shop* show an ambivalent attitude. While many old characters seem to duplicate the experiences of Master Humphrey, Master Humphrey himself strangely confuses his own image and does not allow his readers to singularise his figure.

In order to consider such a paradoxical attitude, I would like to quote an interesting passage in *The Old Curiosity Shop*, which seems to carry much of the third-person narrator's and thus Dickens's enthusiasm:

> As he [the bachelor] was not one of those rough spirits who would strip fair Truth of every little shadowy vestment in which time and teeming fancies love to array her—and some of which become her pleasantly enough, serving, like the waters of her

> well, to add new graces to the charms they half conceal and half suggest, and to awaken interest and pursuit rather than languor and indifference—as, unlike this stern and obdurate class, he loved to see the goddess crowned with those garlands of wild flowers which tradition wreathes for her gentle wearing, and which are often freshest in their homeliest shapes,—he trod with a light step and bore with a light hand upon the dust of centuries, unwilling to demolish any of the airy shrines that had been raised above it, if one good feeling or affection of the human heart were hiding thereabouts (*OCS*, 400).

As Audrey Jaffe points out, "the bachelor's storytelling principle resembles Humphrey's […]. The bachelor valorises narrative that softens and idealises its object, surrounding it with fictions, and truth lies in the ameliorated story rather than the germ of fact at its core" (Jaffe, 68). It would be reasonable to assume that the bachelor's and Master Humphrey's principles of narration are corroborated by that of Dickens. The above passage continues for a number of lines without any stop, witnessing Dickens's energy holding his pen. They obviously express detestation of that "stern and obdurate class" of people, and want their tales and stories to remain in an obscure recess. The bachelor (and Master Humphrey as well as Dickens) do not care about the strict truth of their narratives and stories, and cherish the small circle in which the members can share the "good feeling of the human heart". There, the narratives are unfolded is in the "homeliest shapes", decorated with "garlands of wild flowers". The house where the familiar members can gather, would bear some sacred colour so that it becomes "the airy shrines" prohibiting easy access from outside. However much the external readers want permission to join Master Humphrey's story-telling club, we cannot even grasp what the figure of the narrator is like. The only people who can see his face and hear his voice are the legitimate consumers of the tale.

In the meanwhile, *The Old Curiosity Shop* navigates its heroine and her journey

towards the final destination that assures silent rest. Escaping from the overwhelming sounds of bustling towns and its people, the little girl finds her haven in the solemn, quiet church. The old people who are more or less evocative of the image of Master Humphrey, gather around her and form a sort of narrative club, through reading stories to one another in their soft, gentle voices. Examined in this way, we can notice the continuity between *The Old Curiosity Shop* and *Master Humphrey's Clock*. The latter novel does not replace the former one, but does continuously pursue the same ideal. Though actual nineteenth-century readers' disapproval ostensibly forced Dickens to dismiss the original scheme of *Master Humphrey's Clock*, the next novel, *The Old Curiosity Shop* secretly lets the old people's narrative club resurrect itself around little Nell. Furthermore, the silhouette of the same narrator is not consistent in the two textual worlds. It is not very clear why such a confusion takes place, yet it is at least certain that the actual readers can never grasp the clear contours of Master Humphrey. In this way, Master Humphrey's narrative club is put away from the "many-headed" readers' reach. His abode, which is filled with members who share many of their characteristics with the others, functions as a shield against the inquisitive eyes and ears of the general public. The narrative home, which is designed not to be intruded upon by any of the Victorian mass readers, secures a quiet, enclosed space in the great metropolis of London. While the readers know that the original manuscripts of *Master Humphrey's Clock* and *The Old Curiosity Shop* are stored at Master Humphrey's home, what they can actually buy and read is the mass-produced print of the text, which neither reveals the author's clear silhouette nor emits the vibrancy of his voice.

And such a dichotomy between the original and the copies is built up, consolidated,

and further strengthened by the existence and experience of the mass readership. The larger the number of copies circulating in society, the more the original manuscript at Master Humphrey's home becomes valuable. And looking at Dickens's subsequent novels, we can find the binary opposition between such a comfortable club and the actual nineteenth-century situation of reading in a somewhat more complex form. In the following three chapters (Part 2), I would like to take up the two works, *American Notes* and *Martin Chuzzlewit*, which were produced while Dickens was preoccupied with the problem of international copyright, and with how he could possess his text and communicate his authority to readers.

Chapter 4

Dickens's Journey to the New World:

How to Invent a Patent-able Voice

In Part 1, I attempted to shed light on an interesting twist in early Dickens. While he successively tried innovative means of narrative production and gained a huge popularity among the newly emerging mass readership, his literary products seem to resist the progression of his age. Mr. Pickwick ends up leading a domestic life with Sam Weller and Mary Weller, where he orally and literally looks back to his past writings. Master Humphrey shuts himself up in a quiet drawing room, which strictly selects and limits its inmates to the familiar, congenial members. Nell Trent finally discovers her peaceful rest in an equally tranquil church where the old people gather around her and read stories to one another. While Dickens built his narrative up in such a nostalgic place, the numbers of his actual readers became larger and larger. Finishing *The Old Curiosity Shop* and serialising another work, *Barnaby Rudge*, Dickens decided to say farewell to the old crippled narrator. Then he chose to confront an entirely different world: America and American readers. He asked Chapman and Hall to permit him a "year of subsidised freedom" on the condition that he would write a travelogue (which later materialised as *American Notes*) (*Letters*, vol. 2, ix). The publisher agreed to subsidise him with £150 per month during his tour, and also £200 for "each monthly

instalment of his next work as well as a significant percentage of its profits, which he would use to pay back the subsidy" (Nayder, 108). He thus stopped using the mask of Master Humphrey, daring to expose his own figure to his numerous foreign readers, and to write something about the place in his own name.

Indeed, the American tour marks a significant turning point in Dickens's creative career. He took time off for the first time in the six years since he became a professional writer, and used the time to experience an entirely new continent. Interestingly, however, the spatial distance from his home country and from his previous usual routine did not change his penchant for a Master-Humphrey-like retreat. As soon as he landed at Boston, he made a speech at a banquet in his honour, addressing his audiences as follows: "you give me no chance of playing at company, or holding you at a distance, but flock about me like a host of *brothers*, and make this place like *home*" (*Speeches*, 18) (my *italics*). Dickens then goes on to say that he wants to "express his thoughts in the most *homely* fashion", feeling at ease as if he was "on his own *hearth*" "in his *plainest garb*" (*Speeches*, 19) (my *italics*). He also says that "we are old friends in the spirit, and have been in close communion for a long time" through the serialisation of several of his novels (*Speeches*, 19). And it was a natural course of events that he thought up coming across the Ocean to "see [his] friends" (*Speeches*, 21). The next speech at Hartford also invents a "homely" community. "It is something", Dickens insists, that he could "be no stranger in a strange place; to feel, sitting at a board for the first time, the ease and affection of an old guest, and to be at once on such intimate terms with the family to have a *homely*, genuine interest in its every member" (*Speeches*, 23) (my *italics*). In the following

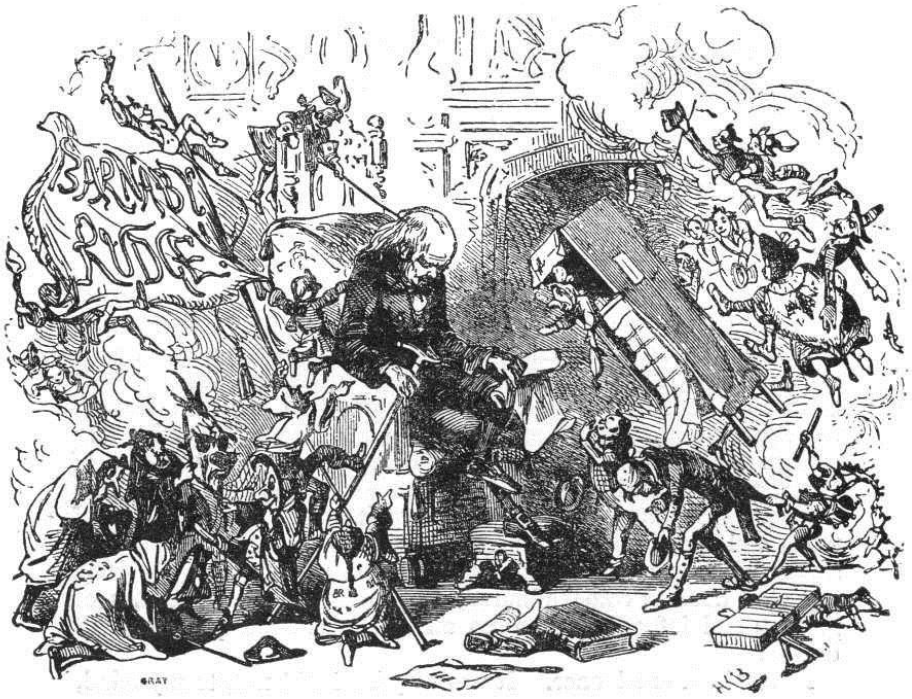
place, New York, Dickens further persists in asserting that the familial bondage will not disappear even when he leaves America for England. Instead, he "shall often hear [their] words of welcome in [his] quiet room, oftenest when it is most quiet, and shall see [their] faces in the winter evening fire" (*Speeches*, 28). These quotations show how often Dickens uses the metaphor of "home" and "family" in addressing his American readers; this would reflect his desire to transform his readers into fictional family members, on the grounds that he and they have long been in touch while he was serialising novels. In this sense, Dickens's departure from Master Humphrey's drawing room cannot symbolise his true detachment from his ideal of the domestic sphere of narration.

On the other hand, it cannot be overlooked that a letter to a real friend discloses a very contradictory profile of the same author. In less than ten days after the above New York speech, Dickens complained to Daniel Maclise: "How cheerfully would I turn from this land of freedom and spittoons—of crowds and noise, and endless rush of strangers" (*Letters*, vol. 3, 94). Far from feeling at ease with American readers, Dickens discovered himself quite isolated in the "endless rush of strangers". About a month after this letter, he wrote to W. C. Macready (1793–1873): "I love and honour very many of the people here—but '*the Mass*' (to use our monarchical term) are miserably dependent in great things, and miserably independent in small ones. […] The Nation is a body without a head; and the arms and legs are occupied in quarrelling with the trunk and each other, and exchanging bruises at random" (*Letters*, vol. 3, 176) (original *italics*, my underline). As Juliet John claims, Dickens here calls for "intellectual and cultural leadership" in America (John, 84). Under the guidance of those good leaders, the

people should be collected as a single body or a single "Mass" in his "monarchical term". Andrew Sanders aptly points out that these letters indicate Dickens's disappointment in finding true America. Even though "he had sought a socially homogeneous and egalitarian alternative to historical England", what he actually found was a "divided, violent, noisy, pushily confident nation which was not to his taste" (Sanders, 117). His original intention to construct some fictional community with American people, and transform the members to his "family" demonstrates his tacit support for a centralised, patriarchal hierarchy. Just like the monarch (who governed England), and like Master Humphrey (who administers his reading club and its members' manuscripts), Dickens wanted to have a "socially homogeneous" and thus unify-able "Mass" as his audience. That was of course, a never-to-be-realised dream. As Fred Kaplan rightly notes, such a utopia "exempt from the rough-and-tumble vicissitudes of human nature and ordinary society" has never existed anywhere (Kaplan, 125).

Furthermore, what Dickens required of his American readers illuminates how his "home" involves logical contradiction. In his Hartford Speech, Dickens says that "speak[ing] of his own books" is not an easy task for any author, but he would dare to do so as "labours of love", believing that it could be "the happy means of bringing" author and his readers together. However, the real content of "the labours of love" made the American readers unhappy (*Speeches*, 23). What Dickens "whisper[ed] in" readers' ears were the "two words", International Copyright, which he declared he would never "omit any opportunity" to refer as long as he was in America (*Speeches*, 25). Firmly denying that he took up the theme in any "sordid sense", he insisted that American people should repent what they had done to Walter

Scott. The “great man” could have lived longer to “add new creatures of his fancy” to the crowds of his memorable characters, if there had only been literary justice between the two countries. Dickens further imagined a deathbed scene for him; the dying Scott, “surrounded by his family”, “listened, for the last time, to the rippling of the river he had so well loved, over its stony bed”. Around him were his fictional characters, who “hang down their heads in shame and sorrow that […] they had brought him not one friendly hand to help to raise him from that sad, sad bed”, nor “brought him from that land in which his own language was spoken, and in every house and hut of which his own books were read in his own tongue, one grateful dollar-piece to buy a garland for his grave” (*Speeches*, 25). It is very noticeable that Dickens here presented his ideal place of narration as a familiar, domestic circle. Walter Scott, the patriarch of the Abbotsford mansion, was put in the centre of his real and fictional families; “wan, crushed both in mind and body by his honourable struggle” he spent his last hours, with his imaginative characters, “Waverley, Ravenswood, Jeannie Deans, Rob Roy, Caleb Balderstone, Dominie Sampson” “hovering around” (*Speeches*, 25). The passage invokes an image of comfortable circle, a feature that can also be found in the following illustration titled “Master Humphrey’s visionary friends”. In the centre, Humphrey sits in his armchair and puts his head down while his fictional characters are swarming around him.



"Master Humphrey and His Visionary Friends" by Phiz

(*MHC*, 107)[20]

Recognising the analogy between Master Humphrey and the dying Walter Scott, we would necessarily notice Dickens's paradox concerning his home of narrative. Even though he repeatedly claimed that his American readers were like his family, he requested the same family to pay a certain amount of copyright fee, so as to be admitted as a proper member of the domestic circle. In other words, Dickens's narrative home was built on precarious ground: he showed his willingness to invite many foreign readers to enter his place of creating narration; at the same time, he could not help saying that warm attachment to his writing was not sufficient as an entrance pass.

Such a dilemma seemed to entail another consequence. Dickens on the one hand called for the safeguarding of an author's legitimate profit, but on the other hand tried to show

[20] Though this illustration is already presented on page 87, I will again show this to highlight the analogy between Master Humphrey and Dickens's description of Walter Scott.

that the protection was not related to his real family and his own money. In the Hartford speech, he says: if only for himself, he would rather have his "children coming after him, trudged in the mud, and knew by the general feeling of society that their father was beloved, and had been of some use," than "ride in their carriages and know by their banker's books" that they were rich (*Speeches*, 25). He further says that he has to advocate the importance of copyright not for the sake of his own profit, but for the sake of justice and for other great writers like Scott. Yet it goes without saying that such logic can hardly sound persuasive. No matter how strongly Dickens denied his selfish motive, once America entered into agreement with Britain, an enormous amount of money would be brought to him so that his posterity would never ever have to be "trudging in the mud"(*Speeches*, 25).

In fact, Dickens energetically campaigned for prolonging the duration of domestic copyright. William Wordsworth (1770–1850), also campaigning on this issue, wrote to Thomas Noon Talfourd (1795–1854) in 1838 (who was a central figure of the copyright campaign in Britain and to whom *Pickwick Papers* was dedicated) that any author should be admitted "the right in perpetuity, that descends to his heirs, and is transferable to those to whom he or they may assign it" (Wordsworth, 557). The 1842 British Copyright Act actually prolonged its duration from the thitherto twenty-eight years to forty-two years. An article in *Blackwood's Magazine* praised the extension as stimulating the writer to produce good works in "the hope of transmitting his fortune to his children" and in "the desire of founding a family" (Alison, 109). Mary Poovey points out that these hopes and desires illuminate the "dynastic ambition" in authors' minds, while the excuse of "for the sake of posterity" can

obscure their obvious claim of self-interest (Poovey [1988], 114). In Dickens's speech, we can soon find out the "dynastic ambition" that is thinly disguised by his claim for others. Although he insists that his American friends are close to him, it is but too obvious that he differentiates them from his own family as those who will be paid and those who have to pay. In fact, his next speech at New York suddenly allows him to discard the persona of an unselfish campaigner. He flatly admits that he came to America to assert "[his] right", "[his] right in reason, truth, and justice" (*Speeches*, 28).

Dickens's American tour and his copyright campaign functioned to bring out his conservative, class-conscious profile, which was apparently colliding with his own statements. Unfortunately, mid-nineteenth century America was one of the worst places to disclose such a profile. Andrew Jackson, who served as President from 1829–1837, insisted that the ideal state should be as invisible as possible, making itself "felt, not in its power, but in its beneficence; not in its control, but in its protection, not in binding the States more closely to the center, but leaving each to move unobstructed in its proper orbit" (Jackson, 1153). The absence of centralised governance influenced the contemporary American market in literature. American law did not allow any copyright to foreign authors. The nation was "notorious in the international sphere as a significant contributor to the 'piracy' of foreign literary products" (Khan, "Does Copyright Piracy Pay?"). The American government never intervened in foreign-literature business, letting its publishers "move unobstructed in" their convenient orbit at that time. In this milieu, American publishers decided to pay a small amount of money to foreign authors and by that to monopolise all the credits and rights concerning their works.

Once the advance sheets were sold, no additional money would be received, even when those works turned out to be highly successful and profitable. A 1867 article in *New York Tribune* looked back to 1830s and 40s and described the situation in the following dialogue: to foreign authors, the publishers said "[L]et us take [your book] first and we will give you so many dollars", "We make money off the product of your brain", though you "[have] no right to consent to its subsequent publication" since you renounced your authorial right with the first determined amount of money (*New York Tribune*, 96). As soon as the English books touched the American shore, the writers were required to sell away their authorial privileges, and were thus removed from their central position of control over their writing.

In this way, what Master Humphrey indulged in his drawing room—the stable possession of his literary products—could never be reproduced in nineteenth-century America. The publishers justified their way of business on the grounds of democracy. For instance, a Philadelphia publisher, Henry Carey, denied the necessity of international copyright and "claimed that words and ideas were common property," so no amount of money whatsoever should be charged (McParland, 45). Likewise, other publishers denounced copyright fees for serving only to benefit elite individuals; for the sake of many unprivileged, poor people, who aspired to learning and reading, the cost of books should be kept at its lowest possible level. One of them, a weekly magazine, the *New World*, even introduced the term of "revolution" and clarified its own function as the proud promoter of democracy:

> The community … owes us a debt of gratitude for reducing the process of works of light literature to the means of the poorest classes. We have begun a great literary revolution, which will result in enlightening the understanding of *the masses*. It is truly democratic—

> utterly subversive of that intellectual aristocracy which has hitherto controlled the energies of the nation. (*New World*, 111) (my *italics*)

Interestingly, the *New World* describes its people as the "masses", while Dickens applied the singular form of the "mass" to the same group. This seems to encapsulate their difference in conceptualising what "authorship" should be like. Dickens, who had tried to build up a centralised structure of narrative in which the author can retain his authority (like that of Master Humphrey and the proud patriarch of the Abbotsford Mansion), needed to regard his audience as a singular, collective mass. The American journal, which was raising the banner of democracy, naturally exaggerated the diversity of their people, for whose benefit no single author should attempt to monopolise his or her literary products.

Concerning Dickens's contemporary intellectuals and what they considered about the situation, we can find an interesting passage in Charles Lyell's travel-writing. In 1849, he paid his second visit to North America and was surprised to see how foreign books (particularly English novels) were made in a gigantic mass-productive factory. His travelogue, *A Second Visit to the United States of North America* (1849), closely records his visit to one of the biggest publishing companies, the Harpers:

> We were taken by our literary friend, Mr. Cogswell, over the printing and publishing establishment of the Harpers, the largest in America. […] They give employment to three hundred men, manufacture their own types and paper, and have a "book-bindery" under the same roof; for, in order to get out, with the utmost despatch, the reprints of foreign works not entitled to copyright, they require to be independent of all aid from other trades. […] In 1845, the Harpers sold two millions of volumes, some of them, it is true, being only styled numbers, but these often contain a reprint of an entire English novel, originally published in two or three volumes, at the cost of a guinea and a half, the same being sold here for one or two shillings. Several of Bulwer's tales are among these, 40,000 copies of his "Last of the Barons" having just issued from this house. It may, indeed, be strictly said of English writers in general, that they are better known in America than in Europe. Of the best English works of fiction, published at thirty-one shillings in England, and for about

> six-pence here, it is estimated that about ten times as many copies are sold in the United States as in Great Britain; nor need we wonder at this, when we consider that day labourers in an American village often purchase a novel by Scott, Bulwer or Dickens. (Lyell, 336–37)

Lyell further admitted that the large number of readers became gradually mature and some of them now entered on deeper subjects such as "history, divinity"; he also admitted that "persons in a much higher station in England" were still "debarred from a similar intellectual treat by considerations of economy" (Lyell, 337). Still, he could not help finding "the mischievous tendency of the indiscriminate reading of popular works by the multitude, when the higher classes and clergy can exert little or no control in the selection of the books read" (Lyell, 339–40). Just like Dickens, who compared the nation to a headless body, Lyell here unconsciously took it for granted that these groups of people should be educated in their reading by some authoritative, well-learnt readers/leaders. But the reality was otherwise: Lyell witnessed that readers were enthralled by whatever foreign literature had gripping plots, and were unaware of the poor quality of translation. They just did not care whether "the style of the original loses half its charms in an imperfect translation" (Lyell, 340). For instance, a brilliant passage in "Le vieux dragon" was nearly "destroyed by 'defense' being translated 'defence' instead of 'barrier', with other blunders equally unpardonable." (Lyell, 340)

Yet even with regard to that "unpardonable" situation, the American publishers prepared their own justification. Their importance lay less in the quality than in the quantity of products. In the "democratic" world opposing the centralised monopoly of literary properties, the publishers had to bet their life on the incessant and numerous circulation of their copies, whose prices needed to be kept in the lowest line. Furthermore, such a business ethic was also

inevitable in a severe economic recession. As James J. Barnes neatly investigated, the American book trade in the mid-nineteenth-century was so much influenced by the depression of 1837–43 that "[p]rices for books and periodicals fell lower and lower, till proprietors began to wonder if it would not be cheaper to suspend business altogether" (Barnes, 1). 1837—the year of *Pickwick Papers*'s birth—turned out to be a year of panic, when American banknotes became almost worthless. The situation seemed to have subsided in 1838, yet another crisis followed in 1839. "Major banks failed, companies went bankrupt, and even States of the Union defaulted on their debts" (Barnes, 2). In such a situation, the publishers could not afford to care about decorum. They had to survive this recession by printing as many copies as possible without paying copyright charges, and let them circulate into the market so that the numerous readers were provided with cheap materials. In fact, an article in the *Athenaeum* (1843) estimated that the break-even point for making profit should be placed at about 2000 copies sold ("Foreign Correspondence", 509–11). The actual numbers of sales of the contemporary novels and journals back up this estimate. One of the famous weekly magazines, *The New World*, launched its business in October 1839, with its "first printing of 15,000" sold. "During the course of 1841 the average weekly circulation was somewhat under 20,000, although the special Leviathan issues might reach as high as 30,000" (Barnes, 10).

Moreover, those journals also published many British authors' works labelling them as "supplement" to their regular issues. One of them, the *New World*'s edition of Bulwer Lytton's *Zanoni* (1842) "had sold 26,000 copies within a few weeks of its appearance". Even a "volume of Bulwer's poems, *Eva* (1842), provided *Brother Jonathan* [another weekly journal

in America] with a sale of 16,500". And of course, Dickens's *American Notes* was not omitted from their list of publications, bringing the *New World* "over 50,000 customers" (Barnes, 11–12). The range of cheap republication covered not only novels but also intellectual journals, educational works and conduct books—according to the above *Athenaeum* article, Daniel O'Connell's "Memoir of Ireland" (1843), Thomas Arnold's "Lectures on History" (1843), Mrs Ellis's "Wives of England" (1843), the latest number of the *Edinburgh Review* were all sold at "25 cents". And "[t]he whole parts of *Martin Chuzzlewit*" were waiting to be published by Harpers, with "fourteen well executed plates, for 44 cents, less than the cost of two numbers in England" ("Foreign Correspondence", 510−11). Given these figures, it was natural that several proposals for international copyright bill were successively rejected in the American Congress. A legislator, Henry Clay, who was one of the chief promoters of the transatlantic copyright agreement, contributed to present the bills five times—1837, 1838, 1840, 1842 and 1843 (Barnes, 66). To the 1837 proposal, a petition from several British and Irish authors, such as Harriet Martineau (1802–76), William Wordsworth and Maria Edgeworth (1768–1849), was attached. Unfortunately yet all too predictably, these efforts turned out to be fruitless and the final agreement between the two countries had to wait until the Chance Act in 1891. Until then, American low-price reprints of British novels had been exported back to Britain and had disturbed the business of London publishers as well as the British authors' domestic copyright (Suthersanen, 46).

The "democratic" American publishers did not fail to register Dickens's conservative and class-conscious profile that flickered in his debate of copyright campaign. For instance,

New World admonished him as follows:

> Has Mr. Dickens yet to learn that to the very absence of such a law as he advocates, he is mainly indebted for his widespread popularity in this country. To that class of his readers—the dwellers in log cabins, in our back settlements—whose good opinion, he says, is dearer to him than gold, his name would hardly have been known had an international copy-right law been in existence. (*New World*, Feb. 1842, 18)

The writer of this article shrewdly quotes Dickens's own comparison of poor readers to "gold". In so doing, it tries to disclose Dickens's internal paradox: the author claims his right to wring income from his poor readers while he says he cherishes their good opinion as something worth more than "gold". Other contemporary Americans also attack Dickens by quoting the author's own words. According to Robert McParland, "James Gordon Bennett, publisher of the *New York Herald*, described Dickens as 'a scoundrel'" (McParland, 69). This reminds us of a memorable figure in *Martin Chuzzlewit*, Pecksniff, who is repeatedly characterised by the same epithet. Ironically, he is the figure stealing and infringing on the young Martin's copyright (this will be argued about in detail in Chapter 6). McParland also gives another example of "Colonel James Watson Webb of the *New York Courier and Enquirer*," who "decided that Dickens had come to America for 'pecuniary considerations'" (McParland, 69). The expression was probably borrowed from *The Old Curiosity Shop*, in which Richard Swiveller secretly set his heart upon the little Nell and decided to marry her in the hope of inheriting Mr. Trent's great amount of legacy. In short, the American publishers condemned Dickens and justified their deeds through comparing the author to those who steal and infringe on other people's profits and rights: what the author tries to do is just the thing he accuses

others of doing.

In fact, the American publishers' counterstatement had a point: Dickens had done much the same thing as his publisher adversaries. To see their analogy, let us first focus on the business tactics of the American publishers. Dickens wrote to Henry Brougham, complaining that "any wretched halfpenny newspaper [in America] can print" foreign authors' works "at its pleasure" and place them "side by side with productions which disgust" their "common sense" (*Letters*, vol. 3, 145). As McParland summarises, Dickens's works were actually put next to various different kinds of texts, such as city thrillers like "Eugene Sue's *The Mysteries of Paris* (1842–43), or politically partisan texts like Epes Sargent's *Life and Public Services of Henry Clay* (1844), or domestic texts like Frederika Bremer's *The Home: or, Family Cares and Family Joys* (1843)" (McParland, 52). Newspapers put all those kinds of writings promiscuously alongside their "news of the day, notes on fashion, and political commentary" (*Ibid.*). Dickens's texts were mutilated or compressed into whatever size the publishers found convenient for their business, and juxtaposed with the most remote and different kinds of works. Of course, Dickens was not the only person who was victimised: "The bookselling firm of Peck and Newton in New Haven, Conn., […] had the novel idea of taking three British periodicals, *Metropolitan Magazine*, *Blackwood's Magazine* and the *Quarterly Review*, and combining parts of each into" their weekly reprint (Barnes, 32). Contributors to these magazines, regardless of whether they liked the idea or not, had to resign themselves to be reprinted and sold together with the other contributors' articles.

Furthermore, their bibliographical formats were ruthlessly ruined. One of the salient

aspects of nineteenth-century American magazines was their inordinate size of paper called "mammoth". According to James Barnes, "they had reached the absurd dimensions of five feet eight inches long by four feet four inches wide" by 1841, with their "surface area" of "3,500 square inches", and with their "subscribers" confronting "forty-eight columns" on one page (if we could call it page). The publishers found that the size would let them get the highest profit margin. An 1825 Postal Act enacted that "newspapers were charged only one cent for distances under one hundred miles and 1.5 cents for greater distances", one mammoth paper could be qualified and dispatched for "this low postage" (Barnes, 18). In order to earn as much money as possible, the companies—particularly the *New World* and *Brother Jonathan*—printed even the whole of the foreign authors' novels into one, two or three unstitched papers, folded them multiple times, and dispatched those sheets to their readers under the title of "supplement" to their ordinary weekly numbers. In this way, the British novels at that time, Bulwer Lytton's *Zanoni* or Dickens's *American Notes* for instance, were either mutilated or spread out in those publishers' convenient ways. They even lost their stable definition as literary works. Instead, they were labelled as "letters" in the post office and called "newspapers" or even "supplement" of ordinary newspapers in the publishers' business category (Barnes, 18).

It is curious but significant that those tactics deployed by American publishers echo Dickens's own strategies. From *Pickwick Papers*, he had adopted a ground-breaking style of publication—serialising his work while he himself was yet unsure how to settle the ending. The successive publication in part enabled lowering the price of fiction. Compared to the conventional novels in three-decker style (half a guinea for each volume), that had cost almost

as much as sixty pounds of today for the whole work, the Dickens method of serialisation made it possible to publish one instalment for one shilling, and the progressive payment enabled less privileged people to become his readers. Dickens considered how his fiction could be divided up in order to be priced moderately and appropriately enough for the general public. He prioritised the popular pricing over the autonomy of his fictional world: he dared to cut and sell his uncompleted work to the readers, and opened it up to their responses and comments while he was still in the process of writing. Moreover, he launched several new journals, in which his works and various different kinds of articles by other writers were put together—some on politics, some on public health and some on people's entertainment. In the light of all these factors, what Dickens did as an innovative entrepreneur seems fairly at odds with the image of Master Humphrey's drawing room.

In this way, his American tour and the copyright campaign functioned to highlight the internal paradox of Charles Dickens: as a nineteenth-century writer, he made many efforts to increase the availability of literature; yet at the same time, he could not help dreaming of a quiet narrative sphere, safely enclosed and suffused with his familiar, comfortable readers; yet again as a nineteenth-century writer, he had to commercialise this dreamy sphere in order to sustain his and his real family's life by his pen. Such a complex dilemma cannot be or should not be considered only within the context of Charles Dickens. Firstly, it is worth scrutinising how the word of "copyright" went through historical changes. The Oxford English Dictionary says that the word was put into general practice after the Statute of Queen Anne in 1710. However, the eighteenth-century term of copyright was used in a very different meaning from

that it is in the twenty-first century. According to John Feather, copyright from the Statute of Queen Anne to the 1842 New Copyright Act could only prevent people from printing and distributing books without permission from the copyright holders (Feather, 146), who were not necessarily the authors, but were frequently the publishers who bought the rights to books. Therefore, what was at stake lay in the field of commerce, not in the field of creativity; the law only prohibited "copying—multiplying and distributing (any work)—with the aim of profiting" (Teilmann, 29). If a person copied the whole contents of some book and gave it to his/her friend, that was not regarded as violating copyright (as long as the person did not receive money or valuable things). This was why many imitative works of *Pickwick Papers* were free from prosecution for copyright infringement. The borderline of legal/illegal was decided according to whether anyone took the substantial—or even the whole—amount of the original text literally, printed it without permission, and let it be published for profit. Creating some character whose appearance and behaviour are so much like Mr. Pickwick and giving him a different name were all possible in the context of nineteenth-century British copyright. Authors' unique ideas or subtle way of using words could not be protected under such laws: the publishers' claim for the book as a material/product and the writers' claim for a very substantial length of words were the things to be regarded. The copyright law at that time could thus highlight the difference between what could be easily defined by law and what could not be done so—the individual authors' unique voice.

In other words, the nineteenth-century debate of copyright revolved around a problem: what is literature? If lawful possession of the literary text could only take place in the

materialised, quantitative field, does it follow that literature is more dependent on the physicality of words and phrases than on the metaphysical essence put behind such materiality? How could the author's true voice be protected if it was inevitably lost in the mass reproduction of literary works? Or, do these issues become problems because of some unconscious preoccupation with Romantic idealism—authors' originality should be more highly regarded rather than the products of industrialised literary market? Considering the literary context of nineteenth-century England, we can realise that Dickens and his contemporary writers were swinging upon a precarious scale, between the growing industrialisation of literature and the opposite Romantic ideal.

Although Victorian society witnessed the unprecedented mechanisation of literature, the tacit assumption that artists should be estranged from society was still potent enough. Or, as Clifford Siskin and Martha Woodmansee suggested, the age of mass printing urged its authors to reclassify their writing in an increasingly narrow and specific—extremely Romantic—way (Siskin, 153; Woodmansee, 425–28). In the mass market of books that gave birth to innumerable hack writers, genuine literary authors (or at least those who acknowledged themselves as so) felt an imminent necessity to distinguish themselves. Thomas Carlyle, for instance, imagined a heroic literary figure whose artistic value could not rightly be understood by his contemporaries: "He, with his copy-rights and copy-wrongs, in his squalid garret, in his rusty coat; ruling (for this is what he does) from his grace, after death, whole nations and generations who would, or would not, give him bread while living" (Carlyle [1901], 177–78). The poor yet proud figure who could rule the whole nation seems to have a curious resonance

with Dickens's depiction of the dying Walter Scott. Such an image of a proud genius as an unrequited castaway was repeatedly dramatised on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, too. An American poet called Thomas Bailey Aldrich published a poem, "The Flight of the Goddess" (1885) that reads "A man should live in a garret aloof/ And few friends, and go poorly clad" in order to "keep the goddess constant and glad" and to create marvellous works (Aldrich, 89). The popularity of this poem could be inferred by the appearance of a mock homage by another author, "The Goddess" (1888) in one of the contemporary successful magazines, *The Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine*. Interestingly, this specifically debunks the Romantic ideal of the heroic artist. The poet claims that although he "found a garret" to situate himself alone in misery, and waited patiently for the Goddess to come, he learned that she will never come "till the end of time". Thus he again "stood in the busy throng", and found delight in the company of his "fellow beings" (Karl, 332). The conflict between these two poems illuminates a subtle yet difficult balance between the single, genius author and the throng of mass people. A talented person's misery and poverty can become a meaningful process of his/her life only when he/she is recognised and worshipped by the number of people who used to be, as it turned out, too stupid and unlearned to judge his/her artistic value. To put it more blatantly, the mechanisation of literary business and the ideal of romantic genius were never two separate, irreconcilable factors, but they have developed interactively (Pettitt, 9). Just like Victor Frankenstein, who was shutting himself up in a dark garret and devoting himself to the technical creation of a human being, the Romantic ideal and the technological advancement were relying on each other.

In fact, Victorian mechanical inventors were often compared to, or argued together with, literary authors—they were said to be quite similar in their work: conceiving ideas, putting them into practice to make something and submitting the products for people's convenience and pleasure. Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792–1822) declared that "All the authors of revolutions in opinion are … necessarily poets as they are inventors" (P. B. Shelley, 115). Carlyle connected these two types of figure in his anonymously-published article in *Edinburgh Review*—"Signs of the Times" (1829) (Carlyle[1971], 73). It compared the Fausts and the Watts (the inventors of the Victorian age) to Homer and Shakespeare. His later lecture on "Hero and Hero-worship" also received the connection as something given and obvious: "an inventor was needed to do that, *a poet*; he has articulated the dim struggling that dwelt in his own and many hearts" (Carlyle [1901], 207). Claire Pettitt sums these trends up as follows: "by the end of the 1830s, analogies between mechanical inventors and literary inventors were commonplace, particularly in the debates that raged throughout the century about the ownership of all kinds of invention" (Pettitt, 5). And this is why the debates of patent and that of copyright were treated almost as a pair. Sir Robert Peel, for instance, wrote to William Wordsworth in 1838 that if the extended duration of copyright protection were admitted in Parliament, the same or something similar should be admitted in the case of Patents (Wordsworth, 558).

Victorian authors had to confront various different sets of values, which were apparently conflicting with one another: the ideal of Romanticism, the popularisation of literature, and the age of mechanics and utilitarianism. The concept of copyright can be

situated at the intersection of those conflicting values. Authors had to materialise and commercialise their product. Yet the image of money-monger could not go well with the Romantic ideal. And if works of art should be utilised for people's happiness, authors' individual profit was to be disregarded for their greater good. It is no coincidence, therefore, that Dickens and other writers had to disclose their own vested interest in claiming their copyright. For instance, Wordsworth was adamant about extending its duration down to authors' posterity. His idea seems to be resonant with the following idea of hereditary monopoly of property advocated by Edmund Burke (1729–97):

> The people of England well know, that the idea of inheritance furnishes a sure principle of conservation, and a sure principle of improvement, whatever advantages are obtained by a state proceeding on these maxims, are locked fast in a kind of mortmain for ever. (Burke, 120)

Interestingly, this Burkean ideal of aristocratic hierarchy is in sharp contrast to what Wordsworth experimented with *Lyrical Ballads*—"how far the language of conversation in the middle and lower classes of society is adapted to the purposes of poetic pleasure" (Wordsworth, 738). Similarly, the Burkean concept of property does not fit well with the Dickensian style of publication. As the serial publication requires its authors to disseminate their incomplete works to innumerable consumers, the completed material cannot remain in the producers' hands as something that can be locked away fast and safe. Despite the apparent relinquishment of authority, it is an unmovable fact that Dickens strongly insisted on the necessity of copyright protection for a long period of time. Wordsworth and Dickens both were more like Burke in their perception of authors' inalienable rights, and that makes their

popularisation of literature somewhat contradictory. In fact, recent critics have notified that Romanticism and conservatism were not two separate notions. Carl Woodring, for instance, clarified how the traditional connection between "Romanticism" and "liberalism and revolt" had become a "focus of attack" since the time of "Bubbitt and Hulme". As growing number of critics have reconsidered the apparent (or ostensible) linkage between Romanticism and liberalism, many "social scientists, with large obligations to Europeans and especially German thought, currently associate Romanticism with conservatism, reaction, or the totalitarian State"(Woodring, 26).

If the unstable position of Romanticism could be discerned as early as from the period of T. E. Hulme (1883−1917), it is not strange that something uneasy was inherently haunting the Victorian authors who tried to balance their conception of Romanticism and their position as a professional writer. Remembering Thomas Carlyle, we can notice his "hero-worship" argument is negotiating with various different sets of values to keep a precarious standpoint among them. On the one hand Carlyle rejected the Victorian Mechanical Age and claimed that the true artists need to "write over" technological changes. Their "wondrous art of writing" should be clearly distinguished from the mass product of printing, which was given the neologism of "Ready-Writing" (Carlyle [1901], 188). Yet Carlyle could not avoid committing an overt self-paradox because he had published his own lecture in print. Probably feeling some necessity to justify his own deed, he tries to explain this away in the following terms:

> Literature is our parliament too. Printing, which comes necessarily out of writing, I say often, is equivalent to democracy: invent writing, democracy is inevitable. Writing brings printing; brings universal everyday extempore printing, as we see at present. Whoever can

> speak, speaking now to the whole nation, becomes a power, a branch of government, with inalienable weight in law-making, in all acts of authority. It matters not what rank he has, what revenues or garnitures: the requisite thing is, that he have a tongue which others will listen to; this and nothing more is requisite. (Carlyle [1901], 265)

In the early part, Carlyle tries to show how print technology and its culture were "necessarily" brought about as an "inevitable" consequence of writing. While admitting that printing has now became a necessary accompaniment to writing, Carlyle still attempts to re-evoke a Romantic figure who needs nothing but his tongue to speak up his idea—a powerful man, whose eloquent voice can move people's hearts regardless of his birth and rank. The forcible combination of democracy (parliamentary model) and conservative Romanticism clearly echoes what we have seen in Dickens's copyright discussion.

Furthermore, the above (printed) lecture by Carlyle lets us see an ambivalent definition of "voice". While he applied the democratic, parliamentary model to literature, he rather posited an aristocratic or even tyrannical model which assigns to the heroic person's voice "power" to make laws in "all acts of authority". On the other hand, that "voice" is stripped of its true authenticity. While any speech is essentially evanescent and its speaker's physicality should limit the numbers of audience, the Carlylean hero's "voice" is defined as "a branch of government" which can be heard by the people of the "whole nation". Such paradox revolving around Carlyle's commodification or materialization of "voice" seems arguably related with the difficulty in keeping balance between British liberalism and cultural commodities. As David Aram Kaiser clearly summarises, British liberalism "has to place culture according to its dual orientation towards preserving the autonomy of the individual and preserving the unity of the political state, without which the state would not have the power to

preserve individual freedom" (Kaiser, 25−26). Voice, or Romantic imagination (out of which "culture" would come into its existence) alternately wrings its freedom from the unified mass of the State and at the same time dedicates itself to the unification of the same state.

In this context, it is worthwhile to check *Sartor Resartus* (1833–34) and how it characterises its hero's "voice".

> On the whole, Professor Teufelsdröckh is not a cultivated writer. Of his sentences perhaps not more than nine-tenths stand straight on their legs; […] a few even sprawl out helplessly on all sides quite broken-bracketed and dismembered. Nevertheless in almost his very worst moods, there lies in him a singular attraction. A wild tone pervades the whole utterance of the man, like its keynotes and regulator. […] now sinking in cadences, not without melodious heartiness, though sometimes abrupt enough, into the common pitch, when we hear it only as a monotonous hum; of which hum the true character is extremely difficult to fix. (*Sartor Resartus*, 24)[21]

Teufelsdröckh's defect in writing can be summarised as his lack of solid construction. What makes up for this is his "vocal" attractions: hums, keynotes and regulators abound in his lines. Clearly, Carlyle tries to show that Teufelsdröckh's true talent lies exactly in those features. The more difficult they are to fix, the more wonderful their value becomes. At the same time, it should not be forgotten that *Sartor Resartus* acknowledges itself as an "edited" text. Indeed, the editor even uses a whole chapter to write about the difficulties in deciphering Teufelsdröckh's unruly arrangement of words. Readers and audience lack the true tone and hum of Teufelsdröckh. All the "broken-bracketed and dismembered" sentences have already been rearranged before they go through the printing machine to the readers.

To sum up, the Carlylean voice internalises various different sets of values: it is the

[21] Thomas Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus*. Oxford World's Classics: Oxford, 2008 (Hereafter referred to as *SR*).

reservoir of Romantic talent; it has the power to cancel all the deficits in writing and suffuse the lines with undefinable attraction; and it is something that can be (or has to be) edited and rectified in order to be read by the mass of readers. And presumably, all those colliding features of voice were not attributed to Carlyle's manipulation as an individual author, but rather were engaged with much larger framework of the Victorian society or its liberalism. This recognition leads us to the matter of Victorian copyright. The debate in the nineteenth century around claiming authorial right for literary products is no mere question of money. It also leads authors to consider how they could invent a patent-able voice within/through their fiction. Claiming the copyright of their own works could be regarded as their recognition that their "voices" were some commodity that could be sold and patented. Yet in the same argument, those authors could not help claiming that what was sellable and patentable was not enough to know the authentic talent of a literary genius.

Charles Dickens, of course, was never free from the vexed problem of how voice could be copyrighted. His American experience would function to make him be even more self-conscious of his situation—living and writing in the mass market of literature, he had to materialise and commercialise his own voice. Although Mr. Pickwick's retirement and Master Humphrey's seclusion from society seem both to derive directly from the Romantic model of isolation, in which the narrator/author can narrate in his own voice and can keep his original manuscript at hand, those ideals cannot but be debunked on the American tour. Dickens could not make his living unless he sold his voice to his readers. If, then, Dickens's American tour, his antagonism against the American press, and his campaign for international copyright all

revolve around such dilemmas, how do *American Notes* and *Martin Chuzzlewit* dramatise them? The following two chapters will go on to scrutinise the two texts and try to find answers to these questions.

Chapter 5

American Notes for General Circulation:

An Inaudible Voice in the Loquacious Text

As has been shown in the previous chapter, Dickens's American speeches reflected the author's desire to protect his authority. Before analysing how these voices are represented in the travelogue of *American Notes*, I would first like to look at an interesting tactic used by the Victorian politician, William Gladstone (1809–98). Whenever he made a speech in front of a large audience, he would use a literary way of manipulating his voice:

> [In speaking to his mass audiences,] Gladstone might speak so softly as to be audible only to those seated in the first several rows; upon making a mistake, he would lean over to the reporters in the audience to tell them the "correct" version for the newspaper audience. In an even more obvious favouring of the literate publics, during his whistle-stop tours, Gladstone occasionally ran so late as to have no time to deliver his address, yet by leaving it with the journalists, he could ensure that the newspaper audience was able to read the speech the following morning. (Hampton, 29)

Though Gladstone's voice was said to be a "deep, melodious baritone, wielded with incomparable yet unconscious skill", and was "capable of every variety of inflexion" (Bebbington, 186), he dared to render it almost inaudible and tried to mystify what he actually said to his audiences. The adroit politician made up a fictional voice in the realm of textuality with the compliance of the British journalists. Thus manipulating his oral existence by literary tactics, Gladstone adeptly navigated himself through Victorian society. Dickens, on the other

hand, was not very good at adjusting the volume of his voice in front of American audiences; and his outspoken criticism towards them received a harsh return from the American press.

Unfortunately, moreover, it seems that Dickens was not tactful in textually controlling his vocal experience. The fictional worlds of *American Notes* and *Martin Chuzzlewit* do not mention a word about the topic of international copyright. Unlike Gladstone, Dickens could choose either one or the other end of two extremes: a loud criticism of his opponents or a complete textual silence as if nothing had happened. The effect of the latter tactic could never escape people's attention. In fact, many critics have tried to construe what lies behind it. The initial questioner was James Spedding (1808–81), who contributed a review of *American Notes* to the *Edinburgh Review*. He remarked that "a man may read the volumes through without knowing that the question of International Copyright has ever been raised on either side of the Atlantic". The critic also reminded his readers of the unhappy outcome of Dickens's campaign: "Nor must it forgotten that in this, the primary object of his visit, he decidedly failed" (Spedding, 500–501). Spedding, though not explicitly, suggested the possibility that the experience was too miserable for Dickens to put it into writing. Thirty years after this review, John Forster also referred to this point:

> There was nothing in its personal details or in those relating to international copyright, available for his *Notes*; from which they were excluded by the two rules he observed in that book, the first to be altogether silent as to the copyright discussion, and the second to abstain from all mention of individuals. (*Life,* vol. 1, 311)

About the reason why Dickens decided to be "altogether silent", Forster said nothing. Through being silent upon Dickens's silence, Forster might try to conceal the Inimitable author's fiasco.

The failure of his copyright campaign and his consequent inability to put the experience into words are not in accord with the accepted image of the Victorian novelist. Even more curiously, many of the later critics still continue to invest in such an accepted image of Dickens. Alexander Welsh, for example, examines Dickens's silence in terms of his own anxiety: if he had written what happened, his readers could have regarded him as a selfish hypocrite, only preoccupied with his mercenary rights (Welsh, 36–7). In order to keep his image as a democratic, affectionate writer, the author had no choice but to omit any mention of his copyright campaign. Gerhald Joseph certainly admits that reading the author's repression could reflect the critics' own desire to construct and protect the image of the suffering author, yet he still follows the track of Welsh, implying that the silence of Dickens tempts us to think about what lurks behind the unspeakable and indescribable (Joseph, 260–61).

While this textual vacuum has long been under critical scrutiny, what seemed to suffuse the vacuum instead did not catch much attention. It would, however, be unfair to judge Dickens's silence only through what he did *not* write. Indeed, a close analysis of what he *did* write in place of the absent American readers—a small number of reading people who are allowed to be on the textual surface—will show us an interesting twist between voice and text. In order to clarify this and to consider what it could mean, the following discussion is divided into three sections. In the first, I will investigate how *American Notes* deprives its people and places of their individual significance. In the next, I will then analyse the position of readers, who are more or less put in a handicapped, repressed situation in *American Notes*. Exploring the scenes of their reading and examining how they are related to the whole textual development, the

final section will conclude that Dickens's words always imply that there are many things he has not narrated, and those things should be kept away from American (and maybe some of the British) readers, who dared to violate his textual authority.

1) Faceless People, Characterless Places

American Notes consists of 13 chapters. It starts by describing Dickens's life on board *The Britannia*, proceeds with his safe landing at Boston, and then itemises visits to see Hartford, New York, Philadelphia, and Pittsburgh via the Great Plains. It is interesting that Dickens's style of description is very different from those of his previous novels. His usual Inimitable-ness in delineating each person's unforgettable profile is totally absent. First of all, the author himself states in the passage which was prepared as a textual introduction (yet which was withdrawn just before the publication): "It comprehends no small talk concerning individuals, and no violation of the social confidences of private life. The very prevalent practice of kidnapping live ladies and gentlemen, forcing them into cabinets, and labelling and ticketing them whether they will or no, for the gratification of the idle and the curious, is not to my taste. Therefore I avoided it" (*Life*, vol. 2, 34). Inside the text, he also claims that he has laid down a rule for his guidance that to "abstain from all mention of individuals" (*AN*, 121). And indeed, *American Notes* only introduces nameless, anonymous people in the public sphere. They are described in a faceless state. Dickens dares not illuminate any characteristic of persons, and even seems trying to standardise the difference among many people.

In vol. 1, chapter 5, he visits an insane asylum in Hartford, and questions "within [himself] whether [he] should have known the attendance from the patients, but for the few words which passed between the former, and the Doctor, in reference to the persons in charge" (*AN*, 74). In vol. 2, chapter 3, while he is heading to Cincinnati, he looks around him, noting that "[t]he people are all alike, too. There is no diversity of character. They travel about on the same errands, say and do the same things in exactly the same manner, and follow in the same dull cheerless round. All down the long table, there is scarcely a man who is in anything different from his neighbour" (*AN*, 158). Such facelessness or uniformity among people is consistently seen throughout the whole text. Patricia Ingham summarises it as follows: *American Notes* treats "the citizens of the United States" not as "multifarious individuals" but as "groups of sub-species of the genus human beings" (Ingham, xix).

Furthermore, these faceless, typical people are moving around places that are again comparable to one another. Touring through various different towns in the States, Dickens visits quite similar institutions such as asylums, hospitals and prisons. In Boston, he visits the Perkins Institution for the Blind and the State Hospital for the Insane. In a suburb town of Boston, Lowell, he visits a factory where all the workers are girls, as well as their affiliated hospital which is very "like that institution at Boston" (*AN*, 67). In Hartford, he visits the Insane Asylum and the institution for the Deaf and Dumb, both of which are "admirably conducted", as are the factories and the hospitals in Lowell. In New York, he visits a famous prison called the Tomb, as well as a Lunatic Asylum on Long Island. In Philadelphia, the Eastern Penitentiary surprises him by its strict prison discipline. As the listing shows, all these places put their inhabitants in a

subordinate condition, standardising their difference as "inmates" or "prisoners"; readers of *American Notes*, therefore, tend to forget about where those institutions are situated, and the spaces become undifferentiated. Even the countryside has no characteristics. Moving from Boston to Lowell by railway, Dickens writes that "character of the scenery is always the same": the passengers "now catch hasty glimpses of a distant town, with its clean white houses and their cool piazzas, its prim New England church and school-house; when whir-r-r-r! almost before [they] have seen them, comes the same dark screen: the stunted trees, the stumps, the logs, the stagnant water—all so like the last that you seem to have been transported back again by magic" (*AN*, 64).

If the travelogue of *American Notes* refuses to describe any difference among American people and places, was there any necessity that made Dickens choose to do so? Why does he —intentionally or unintentionally— have to discard his usual avidity to write characteristic individuality and his meticulous way of describing the background locations? To these problems, the formal title of the text may provide an interesting clue. Though we normally use the most shortened *American Notes*, it has a few more significant words: *American Notes for General Circulation*. More than this, Dickens was going to add more lines taken from *Old Bailey Report*, though he withdrew it at the last minute of publication. The longest early version ran like this: "*American Notes for General Circulation* / In a reply to a question from the bench, the Solicitor of the Bank observed, that this kind of note circulated most extensively, in those parts of the world where they were stolen and forged" (*Life*, vol. 2, 30). The phrases of *Old Bailey Report* sarcastically describe the unreliability of American banknotes (as

was shown in the previous chapter, the American economy was on the verge of default at that time). It is clear enough that Dickens's intention to put this in the end of his title was a "critique of pirate publishers" in America (McGill, 118). As Meredith McGill rightly notes, the original title implies that his text of "American Notes" may be "stolen and forged" in some parts of the world; yet showing his full consciousness of such a situation and putting the word of "general" in front of "circulation", Dickens could at the same time hint that those "stolen" texts may be some "general" version while some more authentic, private one is withheld from the reach of readers.

In this way, the title disseminates a cynical message towards its readers: they can do whatever they like to the notes yet what they possess may be as useless or valueless as the American banknotes. Just as currency or banknotes cannot have any meaning on their own, always necessitating exchange with something else, so readers of *American Notes* cannot fully utilise the text by purchasing the printed text and possessing its materiality. Furthermore, the variety of meaning in the term of notes could reinforce the challenging stance of Dickens. "Notes" primarily means some informal memorandum; in other cases, "notes" can also mean something musical and fragrant, that does not have any solid shape. If *American "Notes"* is represented by combining those various different notes, it necessarily requires readers to read the text taking full advantage of their five senses. They have to be aware not only of verbal notes but also of whatever subtle "notes" may be contained in the text; yet they still have to be aware of the fact that even those transient notes are no more reliable than American banknotes. And many nineteenth-century American readers and publishers may never be able to read the

true, actual "notes" of Charles Dickens.

Indeed, Dickens's unusual style of narration constitutes a good piece of evidence for this analysis. He repeatedly warns his readers that he may not be a reliable narrator of America. In the early chapters, Dickens represents his own bewilderment in not knowing how to interpret American English, which is apparently akin to his mother tongue yet is very different in usage. In vol. 1, chapter 2, he first comes across an unfamiliar usage of "right away" at his hotel in Boston. When he orders dinner to be served "as quick as possible", a waiter asks "right away?" to him. Thinking that the "right away" means the location of his meal, Dickens replies that he would rather want it "in this private room" (*AN*, 23). The reply confuses the waiter, until another man interposes between them to explain that "right away" means "directly". In American English, right away could mean not only spatial but also temporal (non-) distance (*AN*, 23–4). In chapter 2, vol. 2, he again demonstrates how the word of "fix", which is normally used as signifying "repair" in Britain, can be used in various different ways in America. He writes:

> It is the *Caleb Quotem* of the American vocabulary. You call upon a gentleman in a country town, and his help informs you that he is "fixing himself" just now, but will be down directly: by which you are to understand that he is dressing. You inquire, on board a steamboat, of a fellow-passenger, whether breakfast will be ready soon, that he tells you he should think so, for when he was last below, they were "fixing the tables": in other words, laying the cloth. You beg a porter to collect your luggage, and he entreats you not to be uneasy, for he'll "fix it presently": and if you complain of indisposition, you are advised to have recourse to Doctor so and so, who will "fix you" in no time. (*AN*, 145) (my *italics*)

Interestingly, all of these episodes more or less show that Dickens could not grasp the right "notes" of American English although he could hear each of those words correctly. Dickens takes the same oral "notes" of English in such a different way from American readers. Alternately, American readers may not be qualified to grasp the right "notes" of Dickens's

textual language.

American Notes suggests the existence of discrepancy among various different "notes": between Dickens and American people's oral "notes", and between what is for general circulation and what is to be withheld. In so doing, the text incessantly warns its readers not to take its written words at their apparent face value. In fact, the very beginning passage seems to teach the readers that they should never be so ignorant and naïve as to believe in everything they read. The first chapter begins with the cabin on the vessel of *Britannia*, where Dickens and his wife have to spend "at least four months preceding" (*AN*, 1). Unfortunately, the couple are bitterly disappointed, for it turns out to be a "small snug chamber" which "would contain at least one little sofa" and which "his lady, with a modest yet most magnificent sense of its limited dimensions, had from the first opined would not hold more than two enormous portmanteaus in some odd corner out of sight" (*AN*, 1). Dickens then laughs at himself for having believed in the images of "those chaste and pretty, not to say gorgeous little bowers, sketched by a masterly hand, in the highly varnished lithographic plan hanging up in the agent's counting-house in the city of London" (*AN*, 2). What he hilariously (or rather hysterically) ridicules is the huge gap between the actual state of his cabin and the grandeur of the "state room" which the advertisement of *Britannia* proudly depicts. He writes that such a room of state "could be anything but a pleasant fiction and cheerful jest of the captain's," or the great fictional work presented by "the imaginative artist" creating the advertisement (*AN*, 2).

The opening page, in this way, shows how words and images can betray reality. As soon as learning the lesson, Dickens starts to adjust his writing to a hyperbolic, grandiloquent style.

"In less than two minutes after coming" upon his cabin, he becomes fully reconciled with the reality; he comes to think that the room is "the pleasantest and most facetious and capital contrivance possible; and that to have had it one inch larger, would have been quite a disagreeable and deplorable state of things" (*AN*, 3). Almost taking charge of promoting and advertising *Britannia* on behalf of the agent, his text continues praising its benefits with so many superlatives, and finally reaches resignation to feel that "the state-room [has] grown pretty fast" and "it [has] expanded into something quite bulky and almost boasted a bay-window to view the sea from" (*AN*, 5). Of course, all these descriptions sound quite ironical. What he actually felt is not verbalised in the text of *American Notes*, only to be deduced through what he chose not to say. The textual surface of *American Notes* should be taken as something like sales-pitch talk from which the readers should subtract substantial amount of phony praise and thereby should deduce whatever truth is contained in the text—if there is any such truth inside.

That narration goes on to assign increasingly fictional colours to the real world, until it appears like something out of a fairy-tale: inanimate things have strange animation and animate human beings become quite flat. Dickens writes about *Britannia*'s leaving the British shore as a process of gradually losing touch with reality: "They change with the wandering fancy; assume the semblance of things left far away; put on the well-remembered aspect of favourite places dearly loved; and even people them with shadows" (*AN*, 11). Reconceptualising his surrounding world in his remembrance, he further remarks how people lose their liveliness because of severe sea-sickness. "Two passengers' wives lay already in silent agonies on the sofa; and one lady's maid (*my* lady's) was a mere bundle" (*AN*, 11) (my *italics*). While humans become like

marionettes without strings, collapsing to the floor as "a mere bundle" of clothes, inanimate objects by contrast become vividly alive. Dickens gets up to find himself feeling giddy, sees "the water-jug" in his cabin "is plunging and leaping like a lively dolphin" and finally comprehends that "the state-room is standing on its head" (*AN*, 12). This preposterous world may at first remind us of what J. H. Miller called the "literary strategy" of *Sketches by Boz*, that renders "inanimate objects" which "stand for the people of whose lives these objects are the signs" (Miller, J. H.[1971], 12), though we would have to distinguish the usual Dickensian strategy from the depictions here. While Dickens normally uses inanimate objects in a metonymic way, in order to exaggerate whatever characteristics animate beings have within them, *American Notes*, is fundamentally lacking in distinctive characters. People are deprived of their individuality, places are cut off from their unique locality: upon the universal, floating stage, everything necessarily becomes fairy-tale like subjects or objects.

Given all these factors, it is not surprising that the same text does not mention a word about international copyright. As the copyright campaign was related to Dickens's most personal side, the topic could not find a place in the text of *American Notes*. These experiences were omitted from the text, not because they were too painful to be verbalised, but probably because they were too real, too individual, and too direct to be included in *American Notes*. And interestingly, the textual omission itself can become an eloquent message to American readers/publishers: what is provided for "general circulation" is merely words which are like advertisements, and the real notes, subtle sounds and true voice of Dickens's American experiences are always somewhere distant. Almost corroborating this observation, the actual

readers and publishers, whom Dickens met in America are not allowed to enter *American Notes*. Although Dickens had several banquets held in his honour, made speeches there (in Boston, Hartford, and New York for instance) and encountered his readers in person, he dared not describe any of those experiences. In short, what is thoroughly erased from the textual surface is not only the topic of international copyright, but also the figures of those readers who had ignored its existence.

2) Disabled Readers

Instead of those absent American audiences, what type of readers are present? Vol. 1, chapter 2 shows us an interesting reading scene. Dickens visits "the Perkins Institution and Massachusetts Asylum for the Blind" in nearby Boston (*AN*, 29) and meets a girl called Laura Bridgman (1829–99), who is blind, mute, and deaf. Dickens explains how she had lost those senses in her infancy, how she had lived in total darkness, until she first noticed the existence of language and discovered the delight of learning. Thence, Dickens writes, "the first experiments were made" by her superintendents to using "raised letters" (*AN*, 34). Laura touches the sequence of those letters, then touches the objects which the letters designate, and gradually develops her ability to read. Having fully grasped the system, she then starts learning finger language, in which every letter of the alphabet is assigned different types of finger movements. Dickens writes about her final achievement: "wonderful as is the rapidity with which she *writes* her thoughts upon the air, still more so is the ease and accuracy with which she *reads* the words thus *written* by another;

grasping their hands in hers, and following every movement of their fingers, as letter after letter conveys their meaning to her mind" (*AN*, 37) (my *italics*). As these words show, Laura's style of conversation is synonymous with her act of reading—both of which take place at the level of her body or the air surrounding her body. She reads other people's mute voices written in the air, and enables her replying voice to be read by the others through her finger movements. And for her, reading and speaking require labour, since she has to face her text and has to concentrate on the movement of that text so as not to miss a letter. It is an intent way of reading, nothing like the speedy, greedy skimming of the newspaper-readers or the consumers of pirated cheap books. Furthermore, the limited accessibility of her readable materials also presents some boundary. She can never dream of violating any writer's legitimate creativity, since what she can read is strictly confined to the texts prepared by her attendants. Just like the deaf gentleman in *Master Humphrey's Clock*, Laura Bridgman's reading is enclosed within a quiet and small sphere of familiar members.

The deaf and mute Laura, who is unable to commodify Dickens's literary works, is allowed to enter *American Notes* as an exemplary reader. Indeed, the following passage can be read as a form of Dickens's sermon to his non-disabled readers:

> Ye who have eyes and see not, and have ears and hear not; ye who are as the hypocrites of sad countenances, and disfigure your faces that ye may seem unto men to fast; learn healthy cheerfulness and mild contentment, from the deaf, dumb, and blind! Self-elected saints with gloomy brows, this sightless, voiceless child may teach you lessons you will do well to follow. (*AN*, 44–5)

Saying goodbye to this "voiceless" reader, Dickens goes to Lowell, a riverside town nearby Boston, and visits a factory in which many girls are working. He is not only amazed by their

total orderliness, but also by “three facts” which are allowed for them. One is “a joint-stock piano”; the second is the “circulating libraries” to which nearly all the girls are subscribing; and the third is the fact that “they have got up among themselves a periodical called THE LOWELL OFFERING”—“a repository of original articles, written exclusively by females actively employed in the mills”—“which is duly printed, published, and sold” (*AN*, 68–9). Dickens actually buys a copy, and feels delighted to know that “many of its tales are of the Mills and of those who work in them” (*AN*, 69). Looking at the girls’ self-sufficient supply and demand of literature, we would again remember the drawing room of Master Humphrey—or more precisely, his servants’ reading circle held in the lower room. What they read is provided by themselves, what they write is about themselves, and their consumption is limited within the congenial members of their own society.

The only exception is their access to the “circulating libraries”. Yet this accessibility would rather be pleasing for Dickens. Frances Trollope (1779–1863), for instance, denounced the popular American Newspapers as catering to “the lowest common denominator in the nation’s literary taste”, yet exceptionally showed liking for Mary Carroll, who was the female proprietor of the New Orleans circulating library (Kaser, 63), praising her as “possess[ing] great intellectual endowments, and much information”, and as having manners of ease and gracefulness (Trollope, 29). Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826) would have agreed with this evaluation. While he stated that “a great obstacle to good education” in America “is the inordinate passion prevalent for novels” (Jefferson, 247), he highly valued the redemptive power of the circulating libraries, as is shown in his letter to John Wyche (d. 1848): “I have often

thought that nothing would do more extensive good than the establishment of a small circulating library in every county, to consist of a few well-chosen books, to be lent to the people of the country" (Jefferson, vol. 5, 448). Many circulating libraries could organise their stocks according to their own principles, and could—or at least were considered to—regulate the addictive, dangerous reading of ignorant readers. British circulating libraries similarly reinforced Victorian concepts of respectability by careful selections, and they vied with the mass-production and mass-selling market of literature (Griest, 15–20). What those circulating libraries mainly treated were the three-decker novels, whose prices and tastes were categorically restricted within middle-class life.

In this way, *American Notes* successively introduces readers who could in no way endanger Dickens's presence—whether as an oral speaker advocating the importance of copyright, or as a textual writer who wanted to receive the appropriate money and respect from his readers. In vol. 1, chapter 6, Dickens visits a prison in New York and is surprised with its strict discipline. The prisoners are all put in a cell, not even allowed exercise. Dickens asks his usher to let him see one of those cells:

> The fastenings jar and rattle, and one of the doors turns slowly on its hinges. Let us look in. A small bare cell into which the light enters through a high chink in the wall. There is a rude means of washing, a table, and a bedstead. Upon the latter, sits a man of sixty; reading. He looks up for a moment; gives an impatient dogged shake; and fixes his eyes upon his book again. As we withdraw our heads, the door closes on him, and is fastened as before. (*AN*, 84)

What the prisoner reads, how he reads, and how he moves, are all watched by the supervisor. And that scene of regulated reading is written down by Dickens. The book to read has to be chosen by others. Furthermore, there is one more reader appears in vol. 2, chapter 4, who is

exceptionally assigned many pages. On a steamship from Cincinnati to Louisville, Dickens notices an individual standing out from "the usual dreary crowd of passengers" (*AN*, 165). He is a "Pitchlynn, a chief of the Choctaw tribe of Indians"; conversing with him, Dickens knows that he has read many books. Unlike the crowd of passengers which is treated as a mass as the whole, the Indian's appearance is neatly depicted, and so is his reading experience: "Scott's poetry" appears "to have left a strong impression on his mind"; especially "the opening of *The Lady of the Lake* and the great battle scene in *Marmion*" (*AN*, 165). Even more exceptional with him is that Dickens judges him as understanding "all he had read […] correctly" (*AN*, 165). Unfortunately, however, the future of the perceptible reader is never bright. "There were but two thousand of the Choctaws left, he said, and their number was decreasing every day. A few of his brother chiefs had been obliged to become civilised, and to make themselves acquainted with what the whites knew, for it was their only chance of existence" (*AN*, 166). Dickens assumes a sad (yet politically informed) future for the dwindling tribe. Hearing about a "chamber of the British Museum, wherein are preserved household memorials of a race that ceased to be, thousands of years ago", the Indian chief seems to have "a reference in his mind to the gradual fading away of his own tribe" (*AN*, 166).

Significantly and tellingly, these are all the readers appearing in *American Notes* and they are unanimously put in physically, politically and socially subordinated situations. The places where those readers are presented—Boston, Hartford and New York—coincide with the places where Dickens gave speeches, pleading for an international copyright law (Houtchens, 18). Furthermore, the subordinate readers are more or less exposed to other people's gaze. Laura

Bridgman's amazing ability to read and write becomes a sort of sightseeing spot at that time, and many people came to visit her (Bourrier, 38–9). In front of those audiences, Laura's body functions as a convenient site where the acts of reading, writing, speaking and even thinking are vividly visualised: "when left alone, she occupies and apparently amuses herself, and seems quite contented; and so strong seems to be the natural tendency to put on the garb of language, that she often soliloquises in the *finger language*, slow and tedious as it is" (*AN*, 40) (original *italics*). It is also "very remarkable," that "she, uses her finger alphabet in her sleep. And it has been ascertained that when her slumber is broken, and is much disturbed by dreams, she expresses her thoughts in an irregular and confused manner on her fingers just as we should murmur and mutter them indistinctly, in the like circumstances" (*AN*, 41). On Dickens's request that he "should like to see her write", "the teacher who [sat] beside her, bade her, in their language, sign her name upon a slip of paper, twice or thrice." "In doing so", he "observes" that she keeps "her left hand always touching, and following up, her right, in which of course, she" holds the pen (*AN*, 41). She works as an intent reader of her own writing; her body thus integrates both of these readerly and writerly selves, and puts the integration into the sightseeing people's eyes.

In this sense, Laura's body becomes a venue upon which two contrastive ideas of reading are intersecting. On the one hand, her intent way of reading seems to present a significant antithesis to the mass readers in the consumer/capitalist society of nineteenth-century America. On the other hand, however, she makes her body into a visible commodity for those readers/consumers, and materialises her evanescent, elusive thought in

front of them. Through letting these two opposite "readings" intersect upon herself, Laura seems to duplicate what Dickens the novelist suffered himself: he could not help claiming his copyright money while pursuing the ideal of a domestic reading circle. If Laura and Dickens are reflecting each other's dilemma, the destiny of Laura seems quite ironical. By drawing so much attention to herself, Laura becomes conceited and regards anybody who cannot take good care of her with "contempt", and even makes some of them "serve her purposes" like servants (*AN*, 39). Such a typical image of the spoilt child in the consumer society could be read as Dickens's self-discipline — not to fall heavily on the market demands of nineteenth-century Victorian society.

3) Unutterable Voices

In relation to the commodification of readers' bodies, moreover, the following scene rewards analysis. On the Canal-Boat across the Alleghany Mountains, Pittsburgh, Dickens is at a loss about "the sleeping arrangements" (*AN*, 147). He goes down from the deck to find "suspended on either side of the cabin, three long tiers of hanging book-shelves, designed apparently for volumes of the small octavo size. Looking with greater attention at these contrivances (wondering to find such literary preparations in such a place)", he notices "on each shelf a sort of microscopic sheet and blanket", which enables him to envision "the passengers" as "the library", and that they are to be "arranged, edge-wise, on these shelves, till morning" (*AN*, 147). The people on board, and their most vulnerable selves in sleep, become like books arranged on the

shelves. No more detailed description is given about their individual characters, and they are instead compared to closed books waiting to be read.

If *American Notes* suggests that any person could be commodified as some text to be read, the message becomes most obvious in the chapter on Slavery (vol. 2, chapter 9). In order to show its ugliness, Dickens introduces a long list of "specimens of the advertisements in the public papers", by which the white people try to take back their runaway slaves. The list begins as follows:

> "Ran away, Negress Caroline. Had on a collar with one prong turned down."
> "Ran away, a black woman, Betsy. Had an iron bar on her right leg."
> "Ran away, the negro Manuel. Much marked with irons."
> "Ran away, the negress Fanny. Had on an iron band about her neck."
> "Ran away, a negro boy about twelve years old. Had round his neck a chain dog-collar with "De Lampert" engraved on it."
> "Ran away, the negro Hown. Has a ring of iron on his left foot. Also, Grise, *his wife*, having a ring and chain on the left leg."
> "Ran away, a negro boy named James. Said boy was ironed when he left me."
> "Committed to jail, a man who calls his name John. He has a clog of iron on his right foot which will weigh four or five pounds."
> "Detained at the police jail, the negro wench, Myra. Has several marks of LASHING, and has irons on her feet."
> "Ran away, a negro woman and two children. A few days before she went off, I burnt her with a hot iron, on the left side of her face. I tried to make the letter M."
>
> (*AN*, 232–3) (original *italics*)

The list continues in this vein for almost three pages long, fully revealing how black slaves are commodified. This part is significant as it implies the linkage among the readers, slaves and sellable commodities; and this part is also significant as it is not written by Dickens himself, but is "largely composed of extracts from W. W. Weld's *American Slavery as It Is: Testimony of a Thousand Witnesses* (New York, 1839) and newspaper cuttings (collected by Edward Chapman)" (House, xiv). What is more noticeable is that Dickens does not quote the title of

Weld's book, let alone the original newspapers from which Weld extracted many of his contents. In other words, what Dickens does here is nothing but the duplication of what the American press did with his books: taking other people's writing without their permission, mutilating them and using them for his own purpose. The papers, which ignored and ridiculed Dickens's opinions on international copyright, were squeezed into Dickens's writings and were deprived of their original characters; what were cut out and used are only the columns of advertisement, which never look different among many papers. Just like the faceless, characterless people and places, those advertisements never show any difference between the newspapers.

To conclude, it is not possible to regard *American Notes* as showing Dickens's timidity, trying to evade the traumatic failure of his international copyright campaign. Instead, the text lets its readers notice that what they are reading lacks something very real and authentic. And even more ironically, readers can notice this fact only through reading the textual surface of *American Notes*. The real figures of American readers are all kept away from the text; the few readers who are allowed to enter are always put in some subordinate situation under other people's strict surveillance. The individuals and places are presented in featureless, indistinctive ways so that they can be commodified to be read and written by other people. Dickens apparently renounces his duty as an author: he dares not describe each individual person or each place's striking difference; instead, what he gives for American readers' general circulation is like the discourse of advertisements. In this way, *American Notes* defends its authentic note from the mass readers' gaze, and reminds its readers that they are reading an unreadable text. And if the American readers cannot reach and possess Dickens's authentic "notes" on America in their reading

experiences, it may be conversely themselves—not the author Dickens—who could be commodified, put on the narrow book shelves indiscriminately, and put into general circulation to be read, written and consumed; their reading experience and their reading figures could become something like a column of advertisements littered with superficial, shallow clichés.

In this way, the travelogue of *American Notes* seems to cut through to a new horizon in Dickens's writing career. Instead of shielding himself in some familiar and comfortable corner of Master Humphrey's drawing room, Dickens uses a different tactic to hide his figure and voice from the inquisitive eyes (and ears) of readers. The following chapter will then go on to scrutinise *Martin Chuzzlewit*, whose protagonist's experiences in America largely draw on *American Notes*, and will consider what strategy is put in practice in his writing about "copyright". What kinds of readers are introduced and how are their reading experiences linked with the narrative development? These problems will be analysed in relation to the dichotomy between voice and writing inside the text.

Chapter 6

Martin Chuzzlewit: A Text in Dialogue with Itself

The previous chapter tried to show how *American Notes* mystifies its true "note". The secretive spirit, as it were, is surely inherited by Dickens' following work. In fact, *Martin Chuzzlewit* shows a certain feature of crime fiction or detective story, always mystifying who the murderer is or how the culprit is driven to the crime. From Archibald C. Coolidge to Sylvère Monod, the prevalence of secrecy around the enigmatic character, Nadgett, has been repeatedly analysed (Coolidge, 53; Monod, 92). Jonas Chuzzlewit, who is persecuted by Nadgett for murdering his father Anthony Chuzzlewit, has also attracted much attention: Swinburne writes that he "has his place of eminence for ever among the most memorable types of living and breaking wickedness that ever were stamped and branded with immorality by the indignant genius of a great and unrelenting master" (Swinburne [1913], 29–30). Likewise, J. Hillis Miller focuses upon Jonas, for "no character in Dickens except, perhaps, Quilp, is more purely and undilutedly a sadist" (J. H. Miller [1958], 127–28).

In spite of such remarkable characterisation of the sleuth and the murderer, the label of detective novel or crime fiction cannot wholly wrap up the world of *Martin Chuzzlewit*. The central murder, the parricide, turns out not to have actually happened in the first place. Although Jonas surely attempted to kill his father by poison, Anthony notices this and avoids

taking the offered medicine; thus frustrating the easy consummation of crime plot, the old father passes away on the same day by chance—or probably because of deep grief for having raised his son in such a wrong way.

If the attempted murder is followed less by a whodunit plot than by the repentance of the miserly father, it is not surprising that other parts of the novel seem to have many allegorical features, and appear to direct the reader towards some sort of moral discovery. *Martin Chuzzlewit* prepares a happy denouement in which the villain Pecksniff is duly punished and the quarrel between the young and the old Chuzzlewits is resolved. The villain seems to have existed less as an actual individual than as a prototype of hypocrisy (Welsh, 29); his punishment would not only mean the removal of an erroneous individual from the textual sphere, but rather represents a recovery (or discovery) of morality in the whole text. Thomas Pinch is also too good to be true, existing less as an actual corporeal figure than as a perfect embodiment of the good and virtuous. The naming of Pecksniff's daughters—Mercy and Charity—seems to underscore the allegorical features of the text, too. At the same time, however, those characters seem to withhold something in their depths. Pecksniff is never merely a disgusting villain. He does have his own irresistible attraction. G. K. Chesterton rightly described him as "laughable" and "lovable" (Chesterton [1906], 148). Thomas Pinch can sometimes irritate readers by his too blind innocence. In a similar light, the denouement seems to contain something uneasy; the final chapter dares not spare much space for the young hero, Martin Chuzzlewit, let alone for his marital life with Mary Graham. What is instead delineated is the bondage between Mary and Thomas Pinch. The child born between Martin

and Mary is named Tom, and called “her child” not “their child” (*MC*, 837). The text seems to be trying to ignore the existence of the reformed titular hero, Martin. And it goes without saying that such an unstable ending functions to undermine any easy, allegorical reading of the same novel.

The above summary would suffice to show the protean potential of the novel. Whenever the text reveals an aspect of some certain genre, there emerges another type of fiction, which parodies the previous conventions. While following those aspects in turn, readers cannot help finding themselves in a seemingly endless displacement of genres. Or, to put this in another way, an endless movement and a further endless mystification within that movement may be the most prominent and important features of *Martin Chuzzlewit*. Given the ever-changing possibilities, it seems reasonable that many critics could not find any structural unity in this novel. Edgar Johnson points out that the American section, which seems almost abruptly inserted in the middle of the novel, is “digressive” without being tightly tethered to the other parts (E. Johnson, vol. 1, 469). Barbara Johnson similarly sees a “formal failure”, claiming that what takes place in the novel and what triggers those events are not organically interrelated (B. Johnson, 101).

That lack of unity seems to be well represented in one character, Sarah Gamp. However, she did not become the target of harsh criticism; on the contrary, her characterisation was and has been unanimously praised by many critics who discuss *Martin Chuzzlewit*. George Gissing (1857–1903) described her as “at once universal and typical; a marvel of humorous presentment; vital in the highest degree attainable by this art of fiction” (Gissing,

100–1). E. W. F. Tomlin wrote that "many more know of Mr. Pickwick and Mrs Gamp than have read through *Pickwick Papers* and *Martin Chuzzlewit*" (Tomlin, 238). Sylvère Monod summarised her attraction as "better remembered … than the book in which she figures so strikingly" (Monod, 56). These comments agree in admitting that the existence of Mrs Gamp is so "universal and typical" even to the extent that her presence outgrows the whole text of *Martin Chuzzlewit*. She is too free and too striking to be duly circumscribed within its boundaries. It is telling therefore, that "Mrs Gamp" was one of the most popular characters in the repertoire in Dickens's public reading tours. Phillip Collins shows that the number of "Mrs Gamp" readings—amounting to 60—was more than twice as many as that of the well-known "Sikes and Nancy", coming in at a mere 28 (P. Collins, xxvii). Indeed, Dickens's oral presentation of the old, shrewd nurse was applauded so much so that it could almost paradoxically demonstrate the novel's incapability of situating her within its own text. Charles Kent (1823–1902), the manager of Dickens's public reading tours, even described her as the "real heroine of *Martin Chuzzlewit*" (Kent, 144).

The popularity of the reading of "Mrs. Gamp" attests to how her character is familiar with oral presentation. Whenever she appears in the text, she demonstrates her unparalleled quality as a speaker. In chapter 19, Mrs Gamp shows up for the first time as she is summoned to watch the body of Anthony Chuzzlewit. As soon as she turns up, her speech suffuses the text and hides any other characters' existence from readers' eyes:

> If it wasn't for the nerve a little sip of liquor gives me (I never was able to do more than taste it), I never could go through with what I sometimes has to do. "Mrs. Harris," I says, at the very last case as ever I acted in, which it was but a young person; "Mrs. Harris," I

> says, “leave the bottle on the chimley-piece, and don’t ask me to take none, but let me put my lips to it when I am so dispoged, and then I will do what I’m engaged to do, according to the best of my ability.” “Mrs. Gamp,” she says, in answer, “if ever there was a sober creetur to be got at eighteenpence a day for working people, and three and six for gentlefolks—night watching,” said Mrs. Gamp, with emphasis, “being a extra charge—you are that inwallable person.” “Mrs. Harris,” I says to her, “don’t name the charge, for if I could afford to lay all my feller creeturs out for nothink, I would gladly do it; sich is the love I bears ’em. But what I always says to them as has the management of matters, Mrs. Harris:” here she kept her eye on Mr. Pecksniff: “be they gents or be they ladies, is, don’t ask me whether I won’t take none, or whether I will, but leave the bottle on the chimley-piece, and let me put my lips to it when I am so dispoged.” (*MC*, 316−7)

Whenever Mrs. Gamp speaks, she never fails to refer to her dialogue with Mrs. Harris. However, no one in the novel has actually seen that person, and it is likely that the existence of Mrs. Harris is invented by Mrs Gamp as a convenient tool to render her speech more powerful and realistic. In other words, Mrs Gamp’s superabundant energy and vitality find an outlet in creating another woman. Such supposed dialogue with Mrs Harris enables Mrs Gamp to continue speaking without allowing any other person to intervene in her speech. She does not need to communicate with others, nor does she require any other person’s agreement/disagreement with her words. Mrs Gamp thus makes her single voice into a discursive space which is filled with the two women’s voices. And her attraction lies in her ability to freely move around the space, sometimes assuming the voice of Mrs. Gamp and sometimes that of Mrs. Harris.

If that voice of Mrs. Gamp has become even more popular than the novel itself, this may point us to an interesting inversion of voice and writing. Mrs. Gamp is one of the many characters in *Martin Chuzzlewit*, who are conjured up by the third-person narrator. From the very first chapter, this narrator dwells on the notion of “inheritance”, following the lineage of the Chuzzlewit family back to the genesis of all humans, Adam and Eve. The narrator

successively recounts the existences of "one Chuzzlewit coming over with William the Conqueror", one "Chuzzlewit in the Gunpowder Plot", and "one Diggory Chuzzlewit" having "perpetually [dined] with Duke Humphrey" (*MC*, 1–2). Though this supposedly illustrious lineage increases with one Chuzzlewit after another, it is still obvious that the narrator draws so many different Chuzzlewits less to show their diversity than to highlight their unchanging selfishness. The family tree and the continuing inheritance of the name ("Chuzzlewit") well represent the ever-lasting and ever-repeating aspects of human nature.

In fact, Dickens's preface in 1850 clearly admits that the main theme of this story is "to exhibit in a variety of aspects the commonest of all vices," "Selfishness" (*Preface*, 717). The textual world and the third-person narrator of *Martin Chuzzlewit* introduce various different puppets so that all of them function to impress how deplorably human nature is propagated in many individuals. If the differences among characters and the numerousness of Chuzzlewits are to support the unified theme of the author/narrator, it would be reasonable to assume that all those characters' movements and experiences are to be subordinated to the third-person narrator's (the author Dickens's) grand design. And if so, each voice of those characters is supposed to be under the third-person narrator's control, as well as the pen of Dickens.

The hierarchical structure of voice/text is reinforced by the format of part-serial or monthly serialisation. As the style of part-issue required Dickens to create twenty monthly sections, consisting of thirty-two pages, writing the novel in serial form is like accumulating the same-size block piece by piece to create a large structure. Indeed, Rosemary Bodenheimer

summarises the structural constraints of the serial publication as follows: "his way of writing novels in monthly numbers, requiring the regular production of a precise number of chapters and pages within a ritualised time frame, was just one example of a characteristic negotiation between highly ordered frames and their potentially explosive contents. … Dickens takes detailed control over the practical housing of a complex human situation" (Bodenheimer, 127–28).

However, Mrs Gamp's voice cannot be controlled. She is more popular and her presence seems larger than the completed novel. Even her abode seems to endorse this disruptive feature. The furniture is too large, or her room is too small to accommodate all of them, and the space seems to be curiously distorted:

> Mrs Gamp's apartment was not a spacious one, but, to a contented mind a closet is a palace. … If it were not exactly that, to restless intellects, it at least comprised as much accommodation as any person, not sanguine to insanity, could have looked for in a room of its dimensions. For only keep the bedstead always in your mind; as you were safe. That was the grand secret. Remembering the bedstead, you might even stoop to look under the little round table for anything you had dropped, without hurting yourself much against the chest of drawers, or qualifying as a patient of Saint Bartholomew, by falling into the fire. (*MC*, 747)

Just like some fictitious room in a virtual-reality space, there is an absolute secret to go through Mrs. Gamp's abode. Unless keeping this in mind, any visitor can lose their life (by "falling into the fire") or lose their mind (by being carried to Saint Bartholomew's Hospital).

Even if readers could run away from such a dangerous location, they are to come across similar distorted places and architecture in *Martin Chuzzlewit.* Taking an example of the neighbourhood of Mrs. Todgers's boarding house, readers are warned:

You groped your way for an hour through the lanes and bye-ways, and court-yards, and

> passages; and you never once emerged upon anything that might be reasonably called a street. A kind of resigned distraction came over the stranger as he trod those devious mazes, and, giving himself up for lost, went in and out and round about, and quietly turned back again when he came to a dead wall or was stopped by an iron railing, and felt that the means of escape might possibly present themselves in their own good time, but that to anticipate them was hopeless. (*MC*, 127)

Just like the case of Mrs. Gamp's room, we come to a conclusion that "Todgers's was in a labyrinth, whereof the mystery was known but to a chosen few" (*MC*, 127). When young Martin and Mark Tapley come back to England from America, they first settle in a room of a cheap tavern whose structure could never be more preposterous:

> It had more corners in it than the brain of an obstinate man; was full of mad closets, into which nothing could be put that was not specially invented and made for that purpose; had mysterious shelvings and bulk-heads, and indications of staircases in the ceiling. (*MC*, 549)

Steven Connor aptly interpreted the deformity of these buildings in terms of the difference between the visual and the oral: "Dickens's novel attempts to affiliate itself with the crowded, incoherent, acoustic space which is embodied for the ear, rather than the rational, apparent space which is presented to the eye. *Martin Chuzzlewit* … posits for itself an organising aesthetic of unbuilding" (Connor, 180).

Given that the world of *Martin Chuzzlewit* presents many "acoustic" spaces that could accommodate the disruptive richness of Mrs Gamp's voice, and given that this protrudes from the circumscription by the third-person narrator, we may be led to see a fundamental conflict between the characters' voices and the author's textual structure. Leslie Fiedler simply dubs this novel as "messy" without ever sorting out characters and episodes (Fiedler, 47); Robert Polhemus also gives it the label of "hodge-podge" (Polhemus, 90). However, it would be

necessary to notice that Dickens's own experience of voice and writing is closely connected with those disjunctive or disintegrating forms of architecture. Compared to *American Notes*, which completely purges the motif of copyright from its textual world, *Martin Chuzzlewit* does introduce this theme, though not in a direct way. Before setting forth to America, the young protagonist Martin has temporarily worked as an apprentice at Pecksniff's architectural office, and finishes a design for a grammar school. After having a bitter experience in America and returning to England, he visits the "deformed" inn which was shown above. From its landlord, Martin is told that an architect is coming to "lay the first stone of a new and public building". To his surprise, "the celebrated architect" is no one but Pecksniff (*MC*, 473). Watching the ceremony from a window of the inn, Martin becomes infuriated:

> "Why? What's the matter, sir?" cried Mark.
> "Matter! This is *my* building!"
> "Your building, sir!" said Mark.
> "My grammar-school. I invented it. I did it all. He has only put four windows in, the villain, and spoilt it!"
> Mark could hardly believe it at first, but being assured that it was really so, actually held him to prevent his interference foolishly, until his temporary heat was passed.
> (*MC*, 553) (original *italics*)

Although Martin's rage is quite understandable in the light of modern concepts of copyright, it is ironical to note that "a strictly legal analysis of the competing claims to the architectural work in question between master and apprentice would, in the nineteenth century, have supported Pecksniff's claim to ownership" (Joseph, 266). And it is even more ironical that Martin has to bear the humiliating situation in the room of the "deformed" building, while Pecksniff self-complacently puts down the first foundation stone of the grammar school. The supposedly righteous person (the protagonist) is entrapped in the deformity and the villain is

allowed to keep his reputation as a celebrated architect, as a founder of "grammatical", firm structure.

It is not difficult to see Dickens's own copyright experience at the back of this episode, though it neither is appropriate to say that it merely reflects Dickens's grudge against the piracy of American publishers/readers. Instead, *Martin Chuzzlewit* alternately draws and smears any clear boundary. It sets up and then frustrates the balance of stable structures, it foregrounds and then problematises many supposedly axiomatic hierarchies between good and bad, producer and product, character and author, voice and text. Just like Mrs Gamp's house, where the bedstead seems even larger than the whole room, her voice can surpass the boundary of the third-person narrator's design. Along with this precarious balance, Charles Dickens was assiduously piling up one monthly number after another, each of which consisted of the exact same number of pages. Yet on the other hand, the same author lets the villain steal the young protagonist's building design and lets him further ruin it by the unnecessary addition of four windows. No designer, no creator, no textual writer can control the whole of his product. No matter how hard they try to possess their creation and to pursue their pure intention, the real world is too free and rich to allow such a theoretical assumption.

The difficulty of pinning down *Martin Chuzzlewit* (in terms of its genre and its characteristics) can be attributed to these points: it never assigns itself to either side of the two opposite factors: it moves between the structure and its disruption, between the characters' fecund voices and the narrator's will to draw some line around them, between authorial intention and its collapse. Therefore, it is almost the normal corollary of *Martin Chuzzelwit*

that any easy consummation of crime plot or elucidation of mystery cannot take place. There never is an answer in the novel, nor a means to access to reach the truth. And those impossibilities are reflected in the frustrated circulation of writing around the detective character, Nadgett. Whenever he appears in the text, he is always writing something mysterious:

> He carried bits of sealing-wax and a hieroglyphical old copper seal in his pocket, and often secretly indited letters in corner boxes of the trysting-places before mentioned; but they never appeared to go to anybody, for he would put them into a secret place in his coat, and deliver them to himself weeks afterwards, very much to his own surprise, quite yellow. (*MC*, 448)

Nadgett exists less as a corporeal individual than as an engine, in which written accounts are endlessly produced and self-satisfactorily circulated. It is highly predictable, therefore, that as the embodiment of writing, Nadgett, shows antipathy to voice or vocal recital. Required to show what he has found out about Jonas, he refuses to give an oral report:

> "I wish you wouldn't be so fond of making notes, my excellent friend," said Tigg Montague with a ghastly smile. "I wish you would consent to give me their purport by word of mouth."
> "I don't like word of mouth," said Mr. Nadgett gravely. "We never know who's listening."
> Mr. Montague was going to retort, when Nadgett handed him the paper, and said, with quiet exultation in his tone, "We'll begin at the beginning, and take that one first, if you please, sir." …
> "Number Two," said Mr. Nadgett, handing him another, and receiving back the first. "Read Number Two, sir, if you please. There is more interest as you go on." …
> These documents were all in Mr. Nadgett's writing, and were apparently a series of memoranda, jotted down from time to time upon the backs of old letters, or any scrap of paper that came first to hand. Loose straggling scrawls they were, and of very uninviting exterior; but they had weighty purpose in them, if the chairman's face were any index to the character of their contents. (*MC*, 592–3)

Nadgett refuses to recite what he has written, makes Montague read his memoranda, and watches how he betrays his feelings. The writer strictly regulates the consumption of his

written products, and never allows any person to see and read his text without his supervision. Indeed, the actual contents of Nadgett's writing are never once revealed in *Martin Chuzzlewit*, and the unspecified large number of novel readers are kept away from his texts.

However, at the same time, it has to be said that the novel readers are rather lucky for being thus excluded. It deserves special attention that Nadgett's writings have fatal power; whoever reads what he has written is doomed to tragic death. In the above-quoted scene, Montague Tigg, the employer of Nadgett, is the only person who reads the notes. He is later murdered by Jonas. That Jonas, on the other hand, becomes another reader of Nadgett's writing. Fearing that his crime may be divulged, Jonas tries to leave England. Just when he is going to get on board the ship, Nadgett comes to stop him. As he does not like to speak up himself, he again jots down something and sends the message through Thomas Pinch, who has just happened to be there (*MC*, 628). Jonas alone can read the actual contents, though Tom the mail carrier and we readers are all excluded. And it is Jonas who later kills himself in deep despair. Considered in this way, whatever Nadgett writes is literally closed and buried deep in the text of *Martin Chuzzlewit*, put far out of the knowledge of readers; the persons who could read could read only within the writer's presence; yet they both passed away, keeping what they have read secret.

It would be no coincidence, therefore, that Tom—the only person who actually touches Nadgett's writing—is destitute of any proper ability of reading. Although many episodes and scenes are introduced to impress Tom's love for reading, it is just like an innocent child's love for picture books. When he makes a trip to Salisbury, for instance, he stops in

front of a book shop and gives an envious look at the books presented in the window:

> But what were even gold and silver, precious stones and clockwork, to the bookshops, whence a pleasant smell of paper freshly pressed came issuing forth … That whiff of russia leather, too, and all those rows on rows of volumes neatly ranged within: what happiness did they suggest! And in the window were the spick-and-span new works from London, with the title-pages, and sometimes even the first page of the first chapter, laid wide open: tempting unwary men to begin to read the book, and then, in the impossibility of turning over, to rush blindly in, and buy it! … What a heart-breaking shop it was! (*MC*, 71)

Though he is eager to read, he is not allowed to open the book and read through what takes place in there. His distance from the books is not reduced, even after he quits his job with Pecksniff. He goes to London to find a new position, but what becomes clear is his lack of reading and writing skills. Even though he tries to write an advertisement and put it on some newspaper, he cannot conceive a good way of expressing himself. As he is at a loss as to how to write, John Westlock visits him to reveal that there is a mysterious person who wants to hire him. Tom is required to put a room in order by arranging innumerable books scattered here and there. Surrounded by many books yet unable to see what is inside (for his work is just to arrange the books, not read them), Tom is physically close to the texts while mentally (and literally) excluded from the joy of reading. When he dares to open some of the books, in fact, his attention is always distracted by some sound outside, suspecting that his unknown employer (therefore their true owner) comes to visit him. In this way, *Martin Chuzzlewit* never explicates its mystery to readers. The detective Nadgett is the embodiment of secrecy, refusing to show his knowledge on the textual surface. The virtuoso of goodness, Thomas Pinch, is incapable of detecting any kind of truth.

And Jonas Chuzzlewit, the supposed murderer, also has his curious experience with

words and texts:

> The education of Mr. Jonas had been conducted from his cradle on the strictest principles of the main chance. The very first word he learnt to spell was "gain," and the second (when he got into two syllables), "money." (*MC*, 119)

Through entering the world of reading/writing, Jonas is ushered into the life of a greedy miser and is eventually led to contemplate parricide for money. Just like the ominous potentiality of Nadgett's scribbles, Jonas's involvement with writing brings about atrocity. It is therefore suitable that his murder plot is revealed only in the writing of Nadgett. Or rather, it may be a matter of consequence that his parricide did not actually happen, but was only conceived and planned. For Jonas or for *Martin Chuzzlewit*, any greedy plot or violence may less be actually and physically carried out than conceived, scribbled and written out in the domain of reading/writing. At the same time, it is ironical that once the persecuting letter of Nadgett is dispatched to the recipient Jonas, many deaths occur. Jonas commits the actual murder of Montague Tigg. This is again detected by Nadgett. The cornered Jonas commits suicide in desperation.

In this sense, Nadgett's letters and letter-writing contribute to produce unnecessary deaths just like young Jonas's fatal introduction to the world of writing determined his tragic future.[22] Here, we would be able to find the origins of *Bleak House* (1852–53) in *Martin Chuzzlewit*; *Bleak House* shows the endless movement of written accounts that reach nowhere and people are repeatedly hurt and led to their doom through becoming involved with them.

[22] Carol H. MacKay analyses how the letters in *Martin Chuzzlewit* function to illuminate "the convoluted relationship between the private and public selves of the writer", and shows how the characters' lives and death, and their stable demarcation of self are not assured beforehand but are developed along with the deed of letter-writing (MacKay, 737).

The will of Jarndyce functions as a pivot of all plot developments; the characters are willingly or unwillingly urged to search for its latest version. However, what is eventually revealed is that all those struggles for the decisive document and pursuit of the original writing result in exhausting the whole legacy of Jarndyce. Whatever the contents of the latest will are, it can bring nothing to anyone. On the other hand, *Martin Chuzzlewit* does not go so far as to nullify the whole meaning of writing. Nadgett's letters and the endless circulation around him come to some certain halt when his letter is actually delivered to its recipient, Jonas. Though the contents are not exposed to readers' eyes, it can be inferred that Jonas is denounced as a murderer in them. And the purport of its message—the punishment of the criminal—is fulfilled in the form of Jonas's suicide.

Writing always looms as something threatening and fatal in the world of *Martin Chuzzlewit*; yet the book does not posit voice as something cleansing and saving. Mrs. Gamp's presence offers a strong testimony, showing the disruptive power of voice. Jonas's intensive fear against any noise also suggests how voice and sound can be fearful and destructive. After reading Nadgett's letter and making his mind up to kill Montague Tigg, Jonas tries to set up his alibi feigning fatigue and bids his wife Mercy to keep the house as quiet as possible (*MC*, 713). It is ironical that the room to which Jonas retires is "a blotched, stained, mouldering room, like a vault," yet its silence is disturbed by the water-pipes running through the room, which makes clicking and gurgling sounds as if they are choking (*MC*, 718). Thus showing his strong inclination for silence, Jonas goes out to execute his murder plot. After committing the atrocity, he comes back to the room. It is worthwhile to quote the scene in length to show that how

Jonas is haunted and scared by every little sound around him:

> It was but five o'clock. He had time enough to reach his own house unobserved …
>
> The passage-way was empty when his murderer's face looked into it. He stole on to the door on tiptoe, as if he dreaded to disturb his own imaginary rest.
>
> He listened. Not a sound. …
>
> The raging thirst, the fire that burnt within him, as he lay beneath the clothes; the augmented horror of the room, when they shut it out from his view; the agony of listening, in which he paid enforced regard to every sound, and thought the most unlikely one the prelude to that knocking which should bring the news; … and lying down and burying himself once more beneath the blankets, heard his own heart beating Murder, Murder, Murder, in the bed. What words can paint tremendous truths like these! …
>
> And whatsoever guard he kept upon himself, he could not help listening, and showing that he listened. Whether he attended to their [his household's] talk, or tried to think of other things, or talked himself, or held his peace, or resolutely counted the dull tickings of a clock at his back, he always lapsed, as if a spell were on him, into eager listening: for he knew it must come, and his present punishment, and torture, and distraction, was, to listen for its coming.
>
> Hush! (*MC*, 727–29)

In this passage, Dickens eloquently and beautifully delineates the psychology of a criminal, or that of a person suffering intense anxiety. Even though Jonas reaches home safely and finds himself in the complete silence for which he has been badly thirsting, he cannot help trying to listen to something. Then he hears his own voice, and "his own heart beating Murder, Murder, Murder, Murder". Even listening to his family's voice, or listening to his own talking, he cannot help regarding them as something divulging his crime. Just like Nadgett's writings, which are circulating around the writer himself, Jonas's own voice is resonating within himself until it gnaws his body up.

Here we would find a clear difference from the previous works. *Martin Chuzzlewit* no longer permits the idealistic construction of a Master Humphrey's drawing room within its textual space. The buildings are tilted, deformed, and infused with some strange anima, not to be fixed and stabilised. There is no peaceful, quiet home or club within which the protagonist

can say whatever he wants and can be assured that his words are rightly accepted. In this sense, the view from the top of Mrs. Todgers's boarding house becomes very suggestive:

> After the first glance, there were slight features in the midst of this crowd of objects, which sprung out from the mass without any reason, as it were, and took hold of the attention whether the spectator would or no. Thus, the revolving chimney-pots on one great stack of buildings seemed to be turning gravely to each other every now and then, and whispering the result of their separate observation of what was going on below. Others, of a crook-backed shape, appeared to be maliciously holding themselves askew, that they might shut the prospect out and baffle Todgers's. The man who was mending a pen at an upper window over the way, became of paramount importance in the scene, and made a blank in it, ridiculously disproportionate in its extent, when he retired. The gambols of a piece of cloth upon the dyer's pole had far more interest for the moment than all the changing motion of the crowd. Yet even while the looker-on felt angry with himself for this, and wondered how it was, the tumult swelled into a roar; the host of objects seemed to thicken and expand a hundredfold, and after gazing round him, quite scared, he turned into Todgers's again, much more rapidly than he came out; and ten to one he told M. Todgers afterwards that if he hadn't done so, he would certainly have come into the street by the shortest cut; that is to say, head-foremost. (*MC*, 130–31)

This passage has long been put under critical focus. Dorothy van Ghent's well known essay argues that the observer is "seized with suicidal nausea at the momentary vision of a world in which significance has been replaced by naked and aggressive existence" (Van Ghent, 425–26). J. Hillis Miller analyses the same passage and presents his different view: "the observer … knows that there is a spiritual life other than his own present somewhere, but he does not know exactly where it is, and is forced to attribute life indiscriminately to everything he sees" (J. H. Miller [1958], 116). The two critics, though differently, are both paying attention to the psychology of viewer/observer on the roof-top.

Remembering the difficulty of reaching Mrs. Todgers's house, however, we would at least notice that whoever the observer is, and whatever his or her mentality is, they are one of the chosen few who could make their way to the boarding house. When we turn our focus to a

less extraordinary person, or when we search for somebody other than the viewer in this curious scene, "the man who was mending a pen at an upper window over the way" catches our attention. He is buried in the labyrinthine metropolis of London, within many inanimate articles and buildings which assert their own strange animation. However, in spite of such nobody-ness of the person, it is said that he "became of paramount importance in the scene, and made a blank in it, ridiculously disproportionate in its extent, when he retired". His existence functions as a pivotal point without which all the strange inanimate characters and buildings can lose their meanings/ existences/ locations. Suggestively, this vitally important person is absorbed in the work of "mending his pen"—which would not be a very banal choice easily conceived as part of anybody's daily activities. The mender may signify Dickens himself; in the deformed neighbourhood of Mrs. Todgers, where anybody can lose his/her way and where any structural stability can be put into confusion, the author tries to mend and repair his pen so that he could proceed to compose his text. Dickens may split himself both into the observer and the observed—looking at the world from the top of Todgers's boarding house, and finding his own figure within the labyrinthine world of the text.

Martin Chuzzlewit does not propose any clear-cut dichotomy between voice and writing. As Mrs. Gamp's voice which is alternately back and forth from her own to that of Mrs. Harris, as Nadgett's writing and Jonas's voice which come round and round within themselves, the narrator builds up the text and creates many characters and buildings that unbuild the built-up texts. And within the endless self-circulation, the author seems to be thinking about how to take care of his pen. On the basis of this self-reflectivity, the following Part 3 (chapters

7 and 8) will go on to analyse *David Copperfield,* the work in which Dickens explicitly adopted the format of autobiography and in which the narrator-protagonist thinks about his own "voice" and "writing".

Chapter 7

Turning One's Voice into Print:

The Difficulty of Victorian Auto/biography

Before considering the actual text of *David Copperfield*, this chapter considers how the genre of autobiography—particularly those written by men or women of letters—develops along with the author/autobiographer's difficulty in putting his or her voice into print. A character in *The Old Curiosity Shop* seems to provide a good starting point for this discussion. When Kit is first introduced in the text, his coarse and unrefined manner of speech is described with his strange posture: "The lad had a remarkable manner of standing sideways as he spoke, and thrusting his head forward over his shoulder, as if he could not get at his voice without that accompanying action" (*OCS*, 7). Whenever Kit utters a word, he has to twist his body in an odd way, desperately trying to catch his own voice. However hard he tries, he could not achieve it, only finding himself contorting his body even more desperately.

The awkward struggle to capture one's own voice seems to reflect the predicament of the author, Charles Dickens. It is a well-known fact that Dickens repeatedly fictionalised his past in many of his novelistic works. The imagery of Warren's blacking factory, for instance, emerges here and there rather too often, making some critics convinced of his trauma, while others are inclined to assume that he adopts a comical and self-performative attitude to deal

with the suffering.[23] In spite of those multiple cases of fictional episodes, however, it is worth noticing that he could not succeed in textualising his past in his own voice. He once tried to keep a diary from New Year's Day of 1838; an entry on 14th January 1838 reads that he "say[s] what rises to [his] lips—[his] mental lips at least—without reserve" (*Letters,* vol. 1, 631); but the unmediated presentation of his mental voice soon stopped in a few days, and extremely dry records of his working routine began to follow: "Saturday, July 7, 1838. Finished Oliver [*Oliver Twist*] for the Month [monthly serialisation on *Bentley's Miscellany*], at half past eleven." "Tuesday, June 10, 1838. Began Nickleby [*Nicholas Nickleby*] Number 5." The entry sometimes runs like an account book:

Wednesday, July 18, 1838

Evening Party at Thomson's

Monday, October 29, 1838

	£.	S.	D.
Hatfield expenses on Saturday	1..	12..	0.
Fares to Leamington 17/- each	1..	14..	0.
Coach to Stage-Coach office	..	2..	6.
Coachmen, Guard, Porter	..	14..	-.
Lunches	..	6..	-.

Started from Coach office near Hungerford Street, with Browne --- Agreeable ride, but cold --- Leamington, Copps's Hotel --- Excellent Inn.

Tuesday, October 30, 1838

	£.	S.	D.
Bill at Leamington	2..	19..	0
Book of Kenilworth Castle, and visit		6..	-
Expenses at Warwick Castle		6..	6

[23] John Forster's *Life* and Angus Wilson's *The World of Charles Dickens* can be given as two examples which claim Dickens's traumatic memory of Warren's blacking factory. Michael Slater's *Charles Dickens: A Life Defined by Writing* and Robert Douglas-Fairhurst's *Becoming Dickens* point to the possibility that Dickens self-performatively uses the motif of "blacking" and "black" in his fictional works (Slater, 581; Douglas-Fairhurst, 38). Toru Sasaki's "Dickens and the Blacking Factory Revisited" investigates several examples in his fiction to show how the elements of "isolation," "black," and "cripple" show up in various types of combinations and in different atmospheres (Sasaki, 413−16).

Turnpikes		1..	6
Horses and postboy	1..	13..	0

Away to Kenilworth --- delightful --- beautiful beyond expression --- Mem: What a Summer resort! --- three months --- lie about the ruins --- books --- thinking --- seriously turn this over for next year.

Warwick --- fine pictures.

Stratford --- Shakespeare --- the birth-place, visitors, scribblers, old Woman, --- qy. whether she knows what Shakespeare did & c.

Wednesday, October 31, 1838

Bill at Stratford	2..	10..	0
Fares & coachman to Birmingham	..	12..	-
Mulled Wine at Birmingham	..	4..	-
2 Porters	..	2..	-
Fares to Shrewsbury	1..	16..	0
Lunch	..	2..	-
Coachman	..	5..	-
Theatre	..	4..	-

(*Letters*, vol. 1, 634)

Then these entries become even more indifferent, remarking "Wednesday, September 10th, 1839. Work. Thursday September 12th, 1839. Work" etc. Such meagre records or sporadic efforts not to stop writing the diary are seen until September 30th 1839, when Dickens gave up recording anything altogether (*Letters*, vol. 1, 643).

After this failure to articulate his mental voice, he started writing his autobiography over a period of years, probably between 1845 and 1849 (Burgis, xvi–xx). Though the MS has not survived, Forster quoted a large part of it in *The Life of Charles Dickens* with Dickens's own comment that he wrote it "without blotting, as when writing fiction; but straight on, as when writing ordinary letters" (*Life*, vol. 1, 40, n. 4). Again, however, the flow of the author's spontaneous, unchecked voice could not continue for long, and Dickens soon gave up writing it. The "straight-on" presentation of his past was cut to pieces, some of which were introduced into *David Copperfield* and some of which were dispersedly quoted in Forster's biography.

From that time to his death, Dickens never really resumed his "straightforward" attempt to textualise his past. Whereas he continued weaving his personal experiences into his fictional world, he declined the numerous offers from his readers and journalists for his autobiographical narrative (Carr, 449–51).

Given Dickens had difficulty in presenting his past in his own voice, it seems fairly understandable that he chose instead to create an autobiographical hero, David Copperfield, whose initials are the reverse of his own. Thus differentiating his created hero from himself, Dickens made David write his (in this case, this "his" can mean both Dickens's and David's yet cannot be singularised into either of them) autobiography. Still, however, David feels some uneasiness in handling his text in his own voice. Chapter 1, curiously named "I am born", opens with the famous sentence, "Whether I shall turn out to be the hero of my own life, or that station will be held anybody else, these pages must show" (*DC*, 1). The new-born "I", neither knowing whether he can take control of his own life nor being assured of what course it will take, seems to share the same existential horizon with his readers/audiences and thereby lets them feel his presence as remarkably near. While the non-omnipotent narrator, David, exposes his uninformed state, he reveals that what shows the greatest knowledge of its true "hero" is the written text (these oncoming pages). In this sense, the autobiographer's vocal presence in front of his readers/audiences is curiously overwhelmed and alienated by the textual presence of *David Copperfield*, which should be woven by the same narrator's hand. The beginning lines of the autobiographical text strangely dramatise the alienating and colliding relationship between David's voice and the text of his life.

Thomas Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* (1836), though it appears very different from *David Copperfield* at first sight, shows an interesting resemblance. Adam Smyth defines it as a "generic-hybrid" text, mixing "elements of fiction, essay, philosophical commentary" of a German Professor, Teufelsdröchk (Smyth, 196). However, it is not narrated in his first-person voice; instead, an English editor (unnamed) appears and spends almost all of the first four chapters of Book I to explain why he thought it worthwhile to edit the text of *Sartor Resartus* and to disseminate the complete product to the English reading public. While ruminating on the professor's philosophy of Clothes, the editor finds himself not fully convinced of its contents and decides to send a letter to the professor's office in Germany, requesting his biographical accounts; hoping that will enable him to understand the whole of Teufelsdröchk. As its result, he receives six paper bags containing multiple fragments of the German professor's autobiography, of which Book II mainly consists. Many critics have identified the editor as Carlyle's persona (Harrold, xxx), yet it is also important to note that the autobiographer Teufelsdröchk has much in common with Carlyle himself in his spiritual conversion from "the everlasting no"(*SR*, Chapter 7) to "the everlasting yea" (*SR*, Chapter 9) toward the existence of God and heaven (Levine, 24−25). Teufelsdröchk's exposition assimilates some of Carlyle's own experiences: in particular, his knowledge of German philosophy (Martin, 309; Barros, 46). In short, *Sartor Resartus* is constructed by collecting multiple personas of Carlyle: his own autobiographical history and experiences, his attempt to textualise the past, and his editorial interruption towards his own writings. This complex structure revolving around the autobiographer's self and the actual author's identity clearly

reminds us of *David Copperfield,* in which David's experiences internalise many significant parts of Dickens's past.

And just like *David Copperfield, Sartor Resartus* illuminates an interesting relationship between the autobiographer's voice and the printed form of his text. The English editor's work is not only translating the German writing of Teufelsdröchk, but also organizing his disorganised flow of thought. The editor laments that difficulty of this work. First of all, Teufelsdröchk's handwriting is far from easily intelligible: the editor says that "of his sentences, perhaps not more than nine-tenths stand straight on their legs; the remainder are in quite angular attitudes, buttressed up by props (of parentheses and dashes) and ever, with this or the other tagrag hanging from them; a few even sprawl out helplessly on all sides quite broken-backed and dismembered" (*SR,* 24). The professor's writing resists conforming to the ordinary rules of punctuation, almost reflecting his free and imaginative way of thinking. The text, which never can be standardised in any way, seems to be trying to create a work of art on its own; changing the textual sphere into a canvass and drawing its own lines freely in an unorthodox way. That independence from standardised print, however, does not help the English editor in any way. Even more painfully for him, Teufelsdröchk's original writing utterly lacks any order. He complains that the professor has "one scarcely pardonable fault"—"a total want of arrangement" of his materials. His text consists of "multifarious sections and subdivisions" that, without any careful selection or "firm line of demarcation", result in building up the "labyrinthine combination" of a "Historical-Descriptive" part and a "Philosophical-Speculative" part (*SR,* 26). Yet in spite of (or rather because of) the

disorganisation, the editor admits that the professor is "eloquent" (*SR*, 32) and his writing contains "singular attraction" since "a wild tone pervades the whole utterance of the man" (*SR*, 24). The editor, who describes Teufelsdröchk's writing as some "stream of oratory" (*SR*, 32), obviously detects some power coming from his orality.

Although the complete text is almost in a state of "chaos" (*SR*, 61), the professor's presence can be felt in there as "shooting to and fro, gathering, clutching, piercing the Why to the far-distant Wherefore" (*SR*, 62). And the professor ponders his existential problem in a monologue style: "Who am I; What is this ME? A *Voice*, a Motion, an Appearance;—some embodied, visualised Idea in the Eternal Mind?" (*SR*, 42) (my *italics*). On the other hand, the editor, who has to confront and "decipher" the eloquent professor's vocal text, defines his role as "endeavouring to evolve printed Creation" from the original documents (*SR*, 62). He also refers to the function and the contribution of "print" to the whole society: "He who first shortened the labour of Copyists by device of *Movable Types* was disbanding hired Armies, cashiering most Kings and Senates, and creating a whole new Democratic world; he had invented the Art of Printing" (*SR*, 31) (original *italics*).

If we dare to present a somewhat schematic dichotomy, the relationship between Teufelsdröchk and the editor can be compared to that of voice and print. The German professor's free voice, which is never regulated by any simple rule, saturates his original German writing. Yet the English readers cannot have access to that, primarily because it is written in German, and secondly (or more significantly) because it is next to impossible to read the text of a "universal medley of high and low, of hot, cold, moist and dry," which lacks

any “connection” or any “recognizable coherence” (*SR*, 61–2). This is why the Editor is there to translate, organise and arrange all those mixtures into standardised print, and to provide the English readers with a completed product. In other words, if Teufelsdröchk’s hardly accessible voice/text is analogous to the orations of “Kings and Senates”, the editor stands as an ambassador of democratic society, transforming the voice into stable text, which can be made into sellable product by “movable types” and other printing technologies.

The editor repeatedly claims that he belongs to the same realm as his readers. He consistently uses the pronoun of “we”, exaggerating the continuity between himself and his readers, and assuming that his and their judgements should almost always correspond each other. In Book I, chapter 6, “Aprons”, which the editor complains of as “one of the most unsatisfactory sections in the whole volume”, he invites his readers to share his difficulty in understanding Teufelsdröchk’s words: “What, for example, are we to make of such sentences as the following?” (*SR*, 34) In the course of displaying the professor’s disquisition on the function of the Apron, the Editor successively inserts his comments and entices his readers to take his judgement as their own: “has it often been the lot of our readers to read such stuff as we shall now quote?”; “Such passages fill us who love the man, and partly esteem him, with a very mixed feeling” etc. (*SR*, 35) Behind all these scenes and expressions, it is not difficult to detect a familiar structure of singularity versus the mass. The general public are torn between their admiration and hostility directed towards one who is much superior to them, existing as if transcendentally exempt from all rules and regulations. And the social spokesman, the editor, moves and bridges the gap between them, sometimes defending the superiority of the

individual and sometimes encouraging the mass to be resistant.

At the same time, however, *Sartor Resartus* posits a question about the simple dichotomy between the genius of voice and democracy of print. Interestingly, Teufelsdröchk's powerful utterance and his uninterrupted stream of oration are sometimes compared to, or juxtaposed with mechanical products. His fragmentary autobiography is written along with his "Metaphysico-theological Disquisition", "Detached Thoughts on the Steam-Engine."(*SR*, 60) The editor does not reveal much about Teufelsdröchk's opinions on the issue, but it is interesting that the professor's past experiences are interwoven with the paradigmatic invention of the mechanical age. Similarly, his education in youth develops within a similar milieu. Almost all the subjects that the young Teufelsdröchk learned (Hebrew, Greek, Latin and History) were taught "mechanically" (*SR*, 81), though he certainly felt repelled by such a way of education. In short, the text of *Sartor Resartus* or the editorial interruption of the English editor demarcates the limit of Teufelsdröchk's myth of Romantic genius. No matter how his voice/handwriting claims its independence from the ordinary mass of people, it still cannot exist without the "mechanisms" of nineteenth century society.

Furthermore, when we combine this problem with the genre of autobiography, it is noticeable that the conflict between Romantic voice and technological invention (print) becomes even more complicated. Any text of autobiography (whether fictional or not) is an attempt to create one's own life as a linguistic construction. It goes without saying that many critics have tried to consider what paradox or theoretical impossibility intervenes in the writer's transformation of his real "voice" into (printable) text. Phillip Lejeune, in his analysis

of French autobiographies, claimed that there is established "le pacte autobiographique", a pact signed as soon as the readers see the title page and learn the autobiographer's name. The premise is that the text should be based on truth and the writer would not tell a lie about his life (Lejeune, 8–21). In other words, the autobiographer and his readers have to be in complicity to assume that the text provides some true information regarding the writing person. Of course, recent critics have made various attempts to doubt the validity of his analysis, as it took it for granted that there is a concept of "truth" and stable entities like the "autobiographer" and "his readers" that stand transcendentally outside the textual construction. Paul de Man, among others, clearly formulated how the autobiographer who signs the pact and the contents of that pact—the text of autobiography—have to be determined by "mutual reflective substitution" (De Man [1984], 70). He further clarifies this interdependent relationship between the autobiographer's voice and his text by the metaphors of "key" and "lock":

> Rhetoric functions as a key to the discovery of the self, and it functions with such ease that one may well begin to wonder whether the lock indeed shapes the key or whether it is not the other way round, that a lock (and a secret room or box behind it) had to be invented in order to give a function to the key. (De Man [1979], 173)

If we summarise his analyses, the formation of the self in the autobiographical text is endlessly postponed in the perpetual reflexivity of signifier and signified.

Autobiography thus contains a paradox that, while in attempting to textualise one's own voice and past, it cannot help problematising the stability of the self who should originally have control of that voice. Added to this paradox, or related to this paradox, the

genre has another problem. Even though the text supposedly proclaims the individuality of the autobiographer, it could function in an opposite manner to define the contours of the society to which the autobiographer belongs. In the course of itemizing some certain factors that are indispensable for describing an individual—how he or she was born, brought up, educated and went through various significant stages of life—it is hard to exclude how he or she is determined, influenced and circumscribed by his or her community or the mass assemblage of his or her contemporaries. Indeed, as Avrom Fleishman aptly points out, "an autobiography […] is representative of the period or culture in which it was produced" (Fleishman, 46). If we collect massive numbers of autobiographical texts (whether they are artistically evaluated or not) that are written at approximately the same time, what we would detect is not so much how each of them is different from the rest as some uniformity and shared ideology/unconsciousness inscribed within them. Writing autobiography can, in this sense, be not a means of establishing the autobiographer's autonomous identity, but revealing it as no more than as a movable type or one of the bits and pieces forming the society of the period. In short, the stability of the autobiographer's self and the contents which are written out by the autobiography are at odds with each other. Demonstrating one's oneness or originality can result in showing the very opposite picture.

And it is not a coincidence that the genre of autobiography/biography saw an explosive rise in the Victorian period. The maturation of printing technology ushered in an era in which many people could publish their own/ or their close relatives' lives. Leslie Stephen's grand project of the *Dictionary of National Biography*, which was coincidentally or

predestinedly completed in 1900, became a testimony to the extent to which the Victorian period was preoccupied with textualising people's lives. Two years before the coronation of Queen Victoria, a writer of *Gentleman's Magazine* stated that they were living in "an age of biography" ("Review of *Wilmot's Lives of the Sacred Poets*", 499)—one which was not only witnessing an outpouring of great people's biographies, but also those of the hidden lives of unknown people. Juliette Atkinson mentions that there is a category called "domestic biography" that "occupied a significant portion of the biographical market", which was penned by "mourning siblings, parents, children and spouses" for deceased family members (Atkinson, 4). *The Publisher's Circular* roughly counted that 363 biographies and histories appeared in 1880 alone (*J. of the Statistical Society,* 96). Autobiographies were no less fashionable. Indeed, Leslie Stephen's essay in the *Cornhill Magazine* in 1881 insists that the writing of autobiography should be "considered as a duty by all eminent men" (Stephen, 410). Anthony Trollope's *Autobiography* was published posthumously in 1883, Ruskin's *Praeterita* was written during 1885–1889, and Samuel Smiles's *Autobiography* came out in 1905. Working-class people, who would not be counted as "eminent" by Leslie Stephen, were also very enthusiastic in writing their life-histories. John Burnett's survey on 1820–1920 illuminates how a large number of otherwise unknown people tried to assert their presences by writing their own lives or their close families' biographies (Burnett, 11–12). In this way, shortly after the technological innovation in the democratic device of print, there came an era that let a large number of people demonstrate their "oneness" or their individuality through presenting the textual "I".

Creating the textual "I" and offering its narrative to the mass readership in nineteenth century society, however, required negotiating a precarious balance. While the textualisation of one's own or one's close people's histories should fundamentally be an attempt to approach and pin down the auto/biographical subject's "I", commodifying one's history and disseminating that linguistic construction toward the public inevitably alienates the "produced" I from the uncommodifiable, original "I" (if any such being exists). Similarly, while writing auto/biographies should be an attempt to record the subject's outstanding qualities or something that makes him (or her) different from the mass of other people, the complete product can lead to the very opposite result. As Juliette Atkinson summarises, Victorian readers' primary purpose with biographies is to learn and imitate something of their subjects' lives (Atkinson, 24–25). As she indicates, the heroine of Mary Shelley's *Falkner* (1837) and the hero's father in Bulwer Lytton's *The Caxtons* (1849) explicitly profess that biographies are teaching how to live well through showing good examples (M. Shelley, 39; Lytton [1874], 233). In other words, completing an auto/biography in the nineteenth century may not be presenting the subject's self as an absolutely unique and original existence, but showing that the textualised self is something "imitable" and "copiable" by others. Auto/biography, particularly in the 19th century, thus hides a contradiction within itself: claiming one's own unique oneness and showing that this oneness can be copied and reproduced massively.

To summarise, any auto/biographical attempt in the nineteenth century would have to sway between Romantic self-expression and mechanical production. And indeed, this oscillation has been clearly projected onto the artistic evaluation of auto/biographies. Toward

the end of the Victorian period, a writer in *Blackwood's Magazine* lamented that the innumerable auto/biographical works were but "useless repetition and provoking redundancy", simply repeating some fixed, clichéd patterns (Shand, 499). Lytton Strachey (1880–1932) sarcastically criticised the "those-two-fat-volume" style of Victorian biographies for manifesting nineteenth century people's "*custom* to commemorate the dead", and wearing "the same air of slow, funereal barbarism" (Strachey, 6) (my *italics*). Virginia Woolf (1882–1941) further posited the binary opposition between art and non-art. In the beginning of her essay titled "The Art of Biography" (1939), she first asks the question: "Is biography an art?" (Woolf, 181). Although the same essay does not provide any concrete definition for the word of "art", she lambasts that "the majority of Victorian biographies are like the wax figures now preserved in Westminster Abbey, that were carried in funeral processions through the street" (Woolf, 182). Since auto/biographers cannot but be restricted by the "facts", and are unable to commit themselves to free imagination, they cannot be regarded as "artists". They are instead "craftsmen" (Woolf, 187). At the same time, Woolf's essay, which (perhaps unsurprisingly) brings out her elitism and Romantic idealism for "artists", contains an interesting repetition of one word—invention. She frequently draws a boundary between "artists" who can compose suitable situations and experiences for their protagonists and (auto)/"biographers" who have to take their materials from the unmovable historical facts (Woolf, 184–87). Even though she declares that art should be clearly separated from any form of physical labour, her art still comes into existence through "invention"—a word evocative of the mechanical innovation of the industrial revolution.

Any work of auto/biography inherently comprises a double bind between presenting one's life and voice in its original state, and subsequently transforming it into print text that can be copied, reproduced and distributed to the public. This was more acutely felt by Victorian writers and readers who actually witnessed the rapid reformation of print technology. This may be why Carlyle employs two different personas in his *Sartor Resartus*—the professor Teufelsdröchk and the Editor who translates, edits and makes a printable version of the professor's writings. Thus dividing his personas between the free, unchained flight of imagination and the promotor of social innovation, Carlyle may try to balance his Romantic ideal and the inevitable intervention of mechanism/industrialisation. Yet still, he could not unify the two divided values within his text, and so appears to betray his difficulty in handling this double bind. If this is the case, how do David Copperfield and Charles Dickens confront the problem? How does the young (or baby) protagonist's voice of narration—"I am born"—that makes readers feel the narrator's presence close come to terms with his own printed text—the pages that prophesise and decide his future success? How does the author Charles Dickens, who so much liked the name of "Inimitable Boz" and who so much suffered from the imitations of hack writers, deal with the autobiographical text and process the transformation of his unique voice into a printable, mass-reproducible text? The following chapter will go on to consider these problems.

Chapter 8

Among Voice, Sound, Writing and Print: David Copperfield's Wonder-ful Literacy

As has been shown in the previous chapter, many Victorians—particularly those who were well-known in public — whether willingly or unwillingly became involved with auto/biographical projects. Naturally, Dickens received many requests from his contemporary journalists for detailed information about his past. Yet for some reason, he declined almost all of them; even when he acquiesced to give some information, it was only a bare outline of his experiences—birth, marriage, moving etc. which could be used for any other person's biography (Carr, 451). Even to one of his closest friends, Wilkie Collins (1824–89), Dickens could not help hesitating to recount his past. Writing to Collins in 1856, Dickens provided a brief account of his life, though it was again merely an assemblage of very basic data without any record of his feelings: the letter begins with his complaints that he "[has] never seen anything about [himself] in Print, which has much correctness in it". He then tries to itemise what has happened in the course of his life that can be told "without fear of being wrong". It runs as follows: "That I was born at Portsmouth on the 7th of February 1812. That my father was born in the Navy Pay office… That I began, without any interest or introduction of any kind, to write fugitive pieces for the old Monthly Magazine, when I was in the Gallery for the

Mirror of Parliament... That I married the daughter of a Writer to the Signet in Edinburgh who was the great friend and assistant of Scott… And That here I am." However, even these itemisations of facts did not let him feel comfortable, as he could not help adding a strange remark at the end: "This is the first time I ever set down even these particulars, and glancing them over, I feel like a wild beast in a caravan describing himself in his keeper's absence" (*Letters*, vol. 8, 130–31). Of course, what he said to Collins was not true. He had tried more than once to write about his life though he could not finish any one of those attempts; he strangely kept the fact to himself. Even though Collins was undoubtedly his bosom friend, Dickens could not be candid. Writing a few things about his past in a simplistic form cost him so much conflict. He had to write furtively, fearing the supervising eyes of his "keeper" though no one can clearly tell what he meant by the figure. More significantly, he described himself as a "wild beast", which should be unable to deal with words and languages. In short, whenever Dickens applied himself to autobiographical enterprise, he had to feel himself quite restricted and under surveillance, destitute of his usual fluency.

Whatever the reason may be, it is undeniable that Dickens could not make himself reconciled with the form of autobiography. He began to write one, only to leave it unfinished; some of its fragments were later incorporated into the world of *David Copperfield*. Many Dickens critics have paid much attention to these parts, for they seem to show how much David's narrative is imbued with the author's own memory. On the other hand, it is certain that the unfinished autobiography has been relatively left undiscussed on its own terms. The text, however, presents a curious twist of memory and oblivion. Even though any

autobiographical writing should be originating with its writer's drive to recollect his past, that of Dickens repeatedly foregrounds his incapability of remembering. His memory regarding the days at Warren's blacking factory is surprisingly elusive. He writes about the proprietor of the factory, a Jonathan Warren, who was "living at 30, Hungerford Stairs, or Market, Strand (for [he] forgot which it was called then)" (*Life*, vol. 1, 50). Concerning his own age during the days of the labour, he writes that he is "not clear whether [he] was six or seven" (*Life*, vol. 1, 51). Furthermore, remembering how he spent the days in the factory, what comes to his mind is, so to speak, the memory of oblivion: the hard and monotonous days of working gradually encroached upon his memory, and some of the "old readings" of his favourite books were "fast perishing out of [his] mind" (*Life*, vol. 1, 58). In the meantime, he was made to work near the window, "cover[ing] the pots of paste-blacking" with a piece of oil-paper, and was exposed to the eyes of people walking outside. He writes that it was painfully humiliating and he could not help wondering how his father "could bear it". Yet at the same time, Dickens for some reason attaches an almost unnecessary piece of information, or more accurately speaking, the record of his oblivion: he had "attained great dexterity in tying up the pots", but he "forgot how many" he could do "in five minutes" (*Life*, vol. 1, 67). In this way, the traumatic experience in the factory is always verbalised less with compulsively recurring memories than with a vague sense of oblivion.

And more interestingly, the mature autobiographer, Dickens, looks back to those past events and says that he "often forgets in dreams" that he has "a dear wife and children; even that I am a man" (*Life*, vol. 1, 53). Whenever he tries to recollect a past event, he also brings

to mind things he cannot precisely remember and while being engaged with the process of memory and oblivion, he tends to forget who he is and how old he is. For such an aspect of Dickens, the following words would be an apt summary: "[n]o words can express the secret agony of [his] soul" (*Life*, vol. 1, 53). His autobiography, that remembers unretrievable pieces of the past, thus verbalises that one of his most significant experiences in youth is too painful to be articulated. Dickens's unfinished autobiography internalises the perpetually swinging see-saw between memory and oblivion, describable and left undescribed.

Considered along with this analysis, it seems almost natural that *David Copperfield* contain some difficulty with regard to the hero's literacy. In spite of the fact that the narrator David finally establishes himself as a man of letters, and the way that the text apparently conforms to the format of a typical *Bildungsroman*,[24] his literacy does not follow the course of straightforward development. Or more precisely, David's linear progression is always put into question by his own words or experiences. His unstably swaying literacy emerges as soon as the text opens. The title of the first chapter, "I am born", encapsulates the existential problem regarding the hero. David is already literate enough to describe his own birth, or to put it in the other way round, he can be truly born only when he gets literate enough to record the event. A. D. Nuttall beautifully analyses that this "I am born" constantly goes back and forth or negotiates between two opposite poles: one of them is an exclusively formalist account that "all is art" and nothing can exist without some creative effort to put things into

[24] Many critics have analysed the Bildungsroman format of *David Copperfield*. See, for instance, Wu Di's argument which set three milestones from the "infant listener" to "mature writer" via "young reader" and claimed that David's course of life goes through these three steps in order (Di, 178).

material form. The other pole inverts the relationship between art and life; where something, once it has been named, can acquire its own physicality whose solid existence may surpass the elusive existence of "language" (Nuttall, 27–9). In other words, the title of the first chapter of *David Copperfield* seems to confront the difficulty or dilemma of describing one's own experience from birth to the present in language. The past "self" should exist as early as its physical body has entered into this world, yet its existence can only be expressed by language. And that language cannot grasp the early self who should have lived without the scope of linguistic conception—though Dickens surely disrupts that limit by the assertion, "I am born". In fact, Dickens wrote an interesting letter to a memoir writer, Mrs. Howitt, who wanted to know about the connection between Dickens and David Copperfield: "Do you care to know that I was a great writer at 8 years old or so—was an actor and speaker from a baby?" (*Letters*, vol. 9, 119)

Such self-presentation as a speaking baby reminds us of *David Copperfield*'s "I am born". Yet the decisive difference between them is the gap between the speaking baby/actor and the great writer. Whereas the above quoted letter obviously admits that even the infant prodigy needed eight years to be a great "writer", the beginning paragraph of *David Copperfield* can be read that the writing baby (or even the completed product of the writer) and the speaking baby are simultaneously coming into the world:

> Whether I shall turn out to be the hero of my own life, or whether that station will be held by anybody else, these pages must show. To begin my life with the beginning of my life, I record that I was born (as I have been informed and believe) on a Friday, at twelve o'clock at night. It was remarked that the clock began to strike, and I began to cry, simultaneously.
>
> In consideration of the day and hour of my birth, it was declared by the day and by some

> sage women in the neighbourhood who had taken a lively interest in me several months before there was any possibility of our becoming personally acquainted, first, that I was destined to be unlucky in life; and secondly, that I was privileged to see ghosts and spirits; both these gifts inevitably attaching, as they believed, to all unlucky infants of either gender born towards the small hours on a Friday night. (*DC,* 1)

The first sentence says that the whole text of *David Copperfield* appear to have been written by the just new-born narrator "I", who already knows the fortune of how the "I" grows up. Thus overturning the simple chronology concerning the narrator-protagonist, the narrative goes on to problematise the linear progression between sound, voice and written language. Generally speaking, babies are considered to go through these three points step by step—first, they are born crying, neither knowing how to change their wailing into meaningful voice nor knowing how to get meaning from the surrounding people's words. Gradually, young children learn the ways to adjust the shape of their mouth and the position of the tongue so that they can make appropriate sounds and be understood by others. As part of the process, children also learn how to construe surrounding noises, some dangerous, others more familiar and comforting, and how to understand different sounds differently. Then finally, if we can borrow the term from Lacan, the babies enter the mirror stage, they understand not only themselves but also all around them through "names" (Lacan, 75−81). Such linear progression from sound to voice and to some structured language is, however, inapplicable to the model of David Copperfield's growth. His first cry in this world coincides with the clock striking 12 o'clock midnight on Friday, and the simultaneity of his cry and the clock is used by the "sage" women as a significant omen for telling his fortune. Yet the linguistic interpretation of the sound and the cry—that David is destined to see ghosts and spirits in the future—is already taken over by

the same David's own writing ("these pages") that knows everything about whether the interpretation was right or wrong. In short, the beginning paragraphs of *David Copperfield* jokingly yet at the same time squarely debunk the assumption of a linear linguistic development.

Given this, it is not surprising that the given "name" of David Copperfield always slips away from the protagonist's experiences. In spite of the obviousness that his name is presented as the book title, the titular name is frequently distorted or arbitrarily changed by his surrounding characters. S. D. Powell points out that David seems to be passively rejecting his own name through accepting all those different variants (Powell, 48). Joseph Bottum defines David as "a victim of naming" and sees his text as a pilgrimage to regain his own autonomy and to achieve his self-realisation (Bottum, 447). A. E. Dyson similarly points out the strangeness with which David's vulnerability towards others' naming acts is exposed to the readers (Dyson, 119). Indeed, he is first given his name from his same-name father, David Copperfield, who has already passed away when the baby David comes into the world. When he meets his second father, Edward Murdstone, the stepfather talks about David in his presence by using the alias of "Brooks of Sheffield", so that the immature David does not notice that the person is himself. When he is sent away to a boarding school, Salem House, his best friend Steerforth gives him the name of Daisy, saying that he is pretty and small like the flower. Even when David flees from his abusive stepfather and asks Miss Betsy for help, the great aunt changes his name to Trotwood; it is curious that David is given this as his first name even though that is originally Betsy's last name. On the one hand, this means that Trotwood,

which used to function as a sort of collective noun, becomes a proper noun only for specifying David; yet on the other hand, it is too weak to be in one-to-one relationship with David, since the name of "Trotwood" cannot singularise and pin down David among a group of people. He has to share the name with Betsy Trotwood and whoever has the same family name. In this sense again, David's relationship with names and naming is problematic.

If the baby David is speaking about himself from the moment he is born, and if he is not stably assimilated into the naming/language system, it would be easily understandable that his literacy sways back and forth between maturity and immaturity. The first scene of the young David's reading is in chapter 2. When his mother is away visiting someone in the neighbourhood (it later turns out that the person is Mr. Murdstone), David reads a book about "crocodiles" for Peggotty, but his "perspicuous" reading only gives the poor servant a "cloudy impression" that the reptiles are "a sort of vegetables" (*DC*, 16). Dickens critics identified this as an actual children's book in the Victorian period (Tambling [2004], 945, n. 5). It was the one written by Thomas Day (1748–89), *The History of Sandford and Merton* (1783). The passages about crocodiles in the book (Day, 103–5) clearly correspond to those in *David Copperfield*. Of course what is truly interesting is not such identification itself but the difference between the two texts. *The History of Sandford and Merton* is, like many other children's books in that age, didactic in showing the growth of the two boys, Harry Sandford and Tommy Merton; all the episodes show how the pampered son of a gentry family, Tommy, is brought up to be a respectable gentleman through spending time with the honest and gentle son of a yeoman farmer Harry. As Tommy's intractable character is gradually reformed, he

gets increasingly familiar with reading and writing. Even though the six-year-old Tommy was almost illiterate, he begins to read under the guidance of their mentor, Mr. Barlow, and finds much pleasure in learning through books.

Probably because the linear growth of the two boys is too explicit, the book became an easy target of parody. Almost 100 years after its original publication (and about 20 years after *David Copperfield*), there came out a book called *The New History of Sandford and Merton* (1872). The book exhaustively deconstructs the lesson of the original book, making both Harry and Tommy cunning and obnoxious children; it also degrades Mr. Barlow from gentle mentor to an uncaring and piquant person. When the two boys ask him what "crocodiles" look like and what they eat, Mr Barlow replies that the animals like to eat something that is burningly hot, so anybody who is cool enough will be safe from them (Burnard, 41). It is of course useless to take these ridiculous episodes seriously, but it is still interesting that the young David's reading of the original text seems to fulfil the same function as this. David apparently tries to be virtuous, and studies the book to be a good "reader"—possibly a good novelist in the future. However, his reading never functions to realise its lesson. Instead, Peggotty's wrong conception that the crocodiles are a "sort of vegetables" seems to ridicule the didacticism of the original book; the obvious lesson that a person can be more informed and right-minded through reading books is completely confounded in David's reading.

David's seeming immaturity in reading thus frustrates any simple process of instruction and comprehension. Similarly, his early writing to Peggotty results less in the

mutual understanding of each other's intention than in awful confusion. On his way to the boarding school, Salem House, he writes the first letter to Peggotty trying to convey the message of his coachman, Mr. Barkis. His letter runs as follows:

> "My dear Peggotty. I have come here safe. Barkis is willing. My love to mama. Yours affectionately. P. S. He says he particularly wants you to know—*Barkis is willing*."
> (*DC*, 65) (original *italics*)

The message of "Barkis is willing" is of course trying to say that the coachman cares for Peggotty, though the young David cannot understand what the words truly mean. He transcribes the message as it is and sends that to Peggotty, although she cannot understand who Barkis could be nor what his "willingness" could mean, either. In this sense, David cannot "read" between the lines of Barkis's message though his short letter inadvertently fills itself with terms of love—"my love to mama" "my dear Peggotty" "yours affectionately" (*DC*, 65).

We can easily find another scene in which David fulfils the same role as an innocent yet ignorant messenger. Before his mother decides to remarry, Murdstone invites David on a horseback ride. When they reach a town called Lowestoft, two other gentlemen join them. The three men, in the presence of David, daringly talk about how Murdstone's plan to court Mrs Copperfield is going on; in order not to let David know what they are talking, they call David by the alias of "Brooks of Sheffield" (*DC*, 23). As Richard Lettis rightly points out, Brooks is a common family name which is frequently used as an alias (Lettis, 75). Sheffield is a place famous for its production of knives and metal cutleries. Therefore, "Brooks of Sheffield" can be an apt sign to point to a person who is keenly observant. However, what is ironical is that the boy is not sharp enough to live up to this incisive name, without knowing its ulterior

meaning. He only comes back home to report what has happened to his mother, innocently asking whether she knows the person called "Brooks of Sheffield". Even more ironically, his mother replies "no" to this question, even though she should have known her son better than anyone else (*DC*, 24). And after the sad "no", David is separated from his dear mother forever.

David's experiences with reading, writing, names and naming always present a twisted situation: what is truly intended is not correctly read by David, what should really be written cannot be put by David, yet his immature reading and writing and his strange estrangement from his given name eloquently reveal and prophesise the truth about him. What makes this even more entangling is that David's level of "reading" always vacillates back and forth. As we have seen in the above, the episodes of "Brooks of Sheffield" and that of "Barkis is willing" gather together to show David's innocent and immature way of confronting words and phrases. He does not know how to read between or behind the lines, always taking things at their face value. However, an episode which is inserted between the two scenes presents a strikingly different profile of the same protagonist. Coming back from a fortnight's visit at Yarmouth, David sadly learns that he has got a new father, Mr. Murdstone, with whom he enters the following dialogue:

> "David," he said, making his lips thin, by pressing them together, "if I have an obstinate horse or dog to deal with, what do you think I do?"
> "I don't know."
> "I beat him."
> I had answered in a kind of breathless whisper, but I felt, in my silence, that my breath was shorter now.
> "I make him wince, and smart. I say to myself, 'I'll conquer that fellow;' and if it were to cost him all the blood he had, I should do it. What is that upon your face?"
> "Dirt," I said.
> He knew it was the mark of tears as well as I. But if he had asked the question twenty times, each time with twenty blows, I believe my baby heart would have burst before I

would have told him so. (*DC*, 46)

As soon as Murdstone uses the metaphor of "obstinate horse or dog", David realises that they are signifying no one but himself, an "obstinate" son trying to resist his stepfather. He also knows all too well that Murdstone can be so harsh and cruel to the poor horses and dogs in order to make them obedient, yet he still answers "I don't know", almost trying to show his sign of rebellion. Furthermore, being asked what is on his face, David replies that it is "dirt", while he well knows that Murdstone knows that it is the "mark of tears" (*DC*, 46). In this way, the first tense dialogue between father and son illuminates the sudden maturity of David. He can detect what is hidden behind Murdstone's apparent words. He knows how to come to terms with those metaphors, and how to answer when he wants to hide his weakness and vulnerability.

However, soon after this dialogue, David meets Barkis and feels at a loss, as he is unable to construe the obvious message of "Barkis is willing". He then writes an innocent letter to Peggotty. If David's ability to "read" his surrounding persons' words and messages is strangely swaying back and forth between maturity and immaturity, his ability of "reading" actual books seems to be in accord with this movement. Remembering the case of the crocodile book, David's reading is not good enough to let Peggotty be sure what the creature is like. Soon after this, however, he has a second father and becomes isolated in the household. He finds that his only solace is reading books which are left by his true, first father.

> My father had left in a little room up-stairs, to which I had access (for it adjoined my own) a small collection of books which nobody else in our house ever troubled. From that blessed little room, Roderick Random, Peregrine Pickle, Humphrey Clinker, Tom Jones, The Vicar of Wakefield, Don Quixote, Gil Blas, and Robinson Crusoe, came out, a

> glorious host, to keep me company. … whatever harm was in some of them was not there for me … It is astonishing to me now, how I found time, in the midst of my porings and blunderings over heavier themes [in his lessons with Murdstone], to read these books as I did. (DC, 55–6)

It is truly astonishing that the young David, who previously could not read even the children's book satisfactorily, can now read all of these long novels—as they once belonged to his father, they are unlikely to be abridged versions. Even though he does not have much time, even though he is not informed of how to read, he voluntarily makes his way to find these novels and gets pleasure through reading them—only omitting harmful parts which should not be read by such a young boy. The explanation seems to be too good to be true, particularly when we scrutinise, for instance, a passage from *Tom Jones* (1749) that introduces Miss Allworthy.

> This lady was now somewhat past the age of thirty, an area at which, in the opinion of the malicious, the title of old maid may with no impropriety be assumed. She was of that species of women whom you commend rather for good qualities than beauty, and who are generally called, by their own sex, very good sort of women—as good a sort of woman, madam, as you would wish to know. Indeed, she was so far from regretting want of beauty, that she never mentioned that perfection, if it can be called one, without contempt; and would often thank God she was not as handsome as Miss Such-a-one, whom perhaps beauty had led into errors which she might have otherwise avoided. Miss Bridget Allworthy (for that was the name of this lady) very rightly conceived the charms of person in a woman to be no better than snares for herself, as well as for others; and yet so discreet was she in her conduct, that her prudence was as much on the guard as if she had all the snares to apprehend which were ever laid for her whole sex. (H. Fielding, 38)

Here, the narrator tries to convey that Miss Allworthy is not a beautiful woman, that she herself knows it, and that she probably regrets that to some extent, yet that she is too proud and prudent to admit it openly. These pieces of information, however, are not always clearly and directly expressed. In order to read through the textual world of *Tom Jones* (and those of the other books which David claims to have finished), it is absolutely necessary to read between the lines, to infer what is implied behind the lines, or sometimes to see what is truly meant is

the opposite of what is written.

Despite such difficulties, David never mentions any trouble in reading and enjoying these books. The image of young David Copperfield thus switches on and off between the innocent boy in front of the crocodile book and the mature boy who is capable of handling the dialogue with his new stepfather and of reading these great eighteenth century novels. And David, who is sometimes capable and sometimes incapable of dealing with euphemistic expressions, goes through another interesting experience. In the scene of "Brooks of Sheffield", Mr. Murdstone first introduces David as "Davy" to his two friends. One of them asks "Davy who?", and adds to say "Jones?" (*DC*, 23). Davy Jones is said to be a sea demon who drags sailors and shipmen deep into the sea; and "(sent to) Davy Jones' Locker" is an idiomatic phrase started to be used probably in the early eighteenth century, meaning the bottom of the sea or the state of being drowned in its deep waters. It is not difficult to find that expression in eighteenth and nineteenth century literary works. Daniel Defoe's *The Four Years Voyages of Captain George Roberts* (1726) has an obvious usage of the same expression (Defoe, 89); Tobias Smollett's *The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle* (1751) describes Davy Jones as the "fiend that presides over all the evil spirits of the deep" sea (Smollett, 83). Since these eighteenth century writers, many writers—on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean—such as Washington Irving (1783–1859), Edgar Allan Poe (1809–49), Robert Louis Stevenson (1850–94) and J. M. Barrie (1860–1937) used the same expression.[25]

[25] Washington Irving, "Adventures of the Black Fisherman" 1825) (249) Edgar Allan Poe, *King Pest* (1835) (250), Robert Louis Stevenson, *Treasure Island* (1881–1882), Chapter 20 (122) and Chapter 22 (132), J. M. Barrie, *Peter and Wendy* (1911), Chapter 15 (125).

Predictably enough, Dickens is counted among them. In addition to the above quoted scene, there is another obvious reference to the name of "Davy Jones" in *Bleak House*. On her former husband's work ethic, Mrs. Badger recalls that he said everybody should work fiercely and desperately "as if Davy Jones is after you" (*BH*, 229). Given that Dickens is familiar with the expression, and that he makes his young David being called "Davy Jones", it cannot be a coincidence that the same David has a curious experience with a "locker" and "seafaring people" soon after the scene. Shortly after the Davy Jones address, David visits his nurse's birthplace, Yarmouth, and meets the Peggottys. As their humble house does not have enough chairs, David finds himself seated on a "locker" with a pretty blue-eyed girl, Em'ly. She has lived through and is going to experience many more tragic maritime histories. She does not know the place of her parents' grave, except that it is at the bottom of the deep sea. Ham and Steerforth, who fall in love with her are both eventually sent to Davy Jones' Locker. The only person who survives such a doom is David himself, who literally experiences "Davy Jones" locker with her.

In this way, David's relationship with words and language is always twisting and entangling, never to be clearly defined or formulated. His literacy or skills of deciphering surrounding words and letters do not develop in chronological order. He is literate as soon as he is given life in this world. He is smart enough to read all the great eighteenth-century novels left in his father's library. On the other hand, he is immature and innocent in facing the book of crocodiles, the alias of "Brooks of Sheffield" and "Barkis is willing". And he can survive toward the end of the text, through taking the euphemistic expression of Davy Jones' Locker in

quite a literal way. Notwithstanding all this, the text of *David Copperfield* claims itself to be the hero's autobiography. If many autobiographical fictions are written as their authors' struggle to find out and consolidate their own fixed self as some linguistic product, *David Copperfield* seems, uniquely, to go toward the very opposite direction. The hero's autobiography disrupts any such organic "whole". Why David can narrate to his readers, how he has acquired his speaking/writing ability, and at what point he looks back to his young days and determines to write his autobiography are all unanswerable questions in the world of *David Copperfield*.

Among the multiple vibrations of the different and inconsistent Davids, the contours of his fixed self and clear itinerary of how he has been arriving to the present "I" are blurred. Indeed, it is curious that whenever Dickens tries to create his autobiographical protagonist, he inevitably entangles the character's linguistic development both in the literal and oral realms. *Great Expectations* begins with presenting a forlorn orphan boy, Pirrip (Pip). The palindromic name, which can read the same both forward and backward, seems to prophesise that the protagonist's relationship with language cannot develop straightforwardly. Just like *David Copperfield, Great Expectations* ostensibly delineates the orphan Pip's passage into maturity. Along with his physical, spiritual, social and economic development, the text seems to impress the steady improvement of his literacy. In chapter 1, Pip stands in front of his parents' gravestone, trying to visualise what they would look like in their life:

> As I never saw my father or my mother, and never saw any likeness of either of them (for their days were long before the days of photographs), my first fancies regarding what they were like were unreasonably derived from their tombstones. The

> shape of the letters on my father's, gave me an odd idea that he was a square, stout, dark man, with curly black hair. From the character and turn of the inscription, "Also Georgiana Wife of the Above," I drew a childish conclusion that my mother was freckled and sickly. (*GE*, 1)

The young Pip is too immature to read letters of the alphabet as symbols, taking too much meaning from the images. Soon after this scene, the helpless boy Pip is captured by Magwitch, who later becomes his secret benefactor, claims himself as Pip's "second father", and is eventually delighted to see mature Pip's room with "books … mounting up, on their shelves, by hundreds" as showing his gentlemanly status (*GE*, 304–5). His position on the social ladder is thus tightly linked with his ability of reading.

When we turn our focus to his writing, he first practices alphabets and tries to write a letter to Joe that runs as follows: "MI DEER JO i OPE U R KRWITE WELL i OPE i SHAL SON B HABELL 4 2 TEEDGE U JO AN THEN WE SHORL B SO GLODD AN WEN i M PRENGTD 2 U JO WOT LARX AN BLEVE ME INF XN PIP" (*GE*, 40). It is just too obvious that the irregular sizes of alphabet letters corresponds with the intonation and pitch of Pip's voice. His spellings, too,—such as "ope" instead of "hope" and "Habell" instead of "able"—all reflect his working class pronunciation. The way of putting B for "be" and 4 for "for" also show that his writing owes much more to something oral rather than to something literal. Furthermore, this letter offers multiple possibilities of reading when it falls on its recipient's hands. The ending words, INF XN PIP should mean "In affection, Pip", but if the recipient puts a momentary breath between INF and XN like the written text does, it can be read as "inf-ection" and becomes an ominous prophecy for what comes in the following chapters (Stewart [1990], 194). Whichever choice is correct, it is possible to say that Pip's first letter

heavily relies on orality, and changes its meaning whenever a different reader recites the contents. Even more interesting is that the recipient Joe is not equipped with sufficient literacy to make up for Pip's poor writing. As he cannot read, Pip has to read out what he wrote perspicuously, yet the readers of *Great Expectations* can never find out how and in what way the young Pip intones the part.

The immaturity of Pip as a writer can function to vivify the growth of the protagonist. The letter presented in *Great Expectations* necessarily illuminates the stark contrast between Pip as young oral writer and Pip as mature narrator. On the other hand, however, this letter can be a piece of evidence to demonstrate a contradiction within the latter. From his first letter, it is reasonable to assume that the young Pip's spoken English has many features of working-class accents or dialects, such as the omission of h, unnecessary addition of h, etc. In fact, Joe, whom he has been living together with, speaks in that way—he omits "h" when it is necessary and adds "h" when it is unnecessary; his "v" is always pronounced "w" (velvets for "welwets" etc.). Curiously, however, the speech of Joe and of the young Pip are textualised quite differently throughout *Great Expectations*. Taking the example of Pip's first visit to Satis House, we will be able to see the oddity. Returning home and being questioned what he did with Miss Havisham, Pip tells many lies to his sister and Pumblechuck. He says he saw Miss Havisham "sitting in a black velvet coach" and saw four immensely large dogs fighting for "veal-cutlets out of a silver basket" (*GE*, 62–3). Of course all these details are false; Pip could not help vexing the adults, for he felt distressed by Estella's haughty and cold attitudes. Only to Joe, does he confess what he has done, prompting surprise:

> "But not all of it? Why sure you don't mean to say, Pip, that there was no black welwet co—eh?" For, I stood shaking my head. "But at least there was dogs, Pip? Come, Pip," said Joe, persuasively, "if there warn't no weal-cutlets, at least there was dogs?"
> "No, Joe." (*GE*, 65)

Being asked why he had to tell such lies, Pip complains: "I wish you hadn't taught me to call Knaves at cards Jacks" (*GE*, 65).

Even though Pip learnt the name of cards from Joe, and called Knaves Jacks, his speech consistently articulates all words in the received pronunciation: veal cutlets, black velvet coach and so on. The rule is kept all through the chapters, and Pip's speech never once betrays any deviation. On the other hand, Joe's (and Magwitch's) speech conforms to a totally different rule, not losing any chance to show their working-class accents. Given all these factors, and given that Pip's first letter to Joe is the only place where the young boy's actual words seem to surface on the textual realm, we can easily conclude that all of Pip's other speeches shown in parentheses in *Great Expectations* are not the direct record of his past voice, but already edited and standardised by the narrator, Pip. The mature Pip's textual intervention towards his young voice can at first suggest the superiority of standardised writing to unstable voice. However, at the same time, the inerasable existence of the young Pip's "oral" writing, as it were, conversely checks the mature Pip's skill as a writer. Even though the mature narrator apparently claims that he narrates and reproduces what happened in the past faithfully and truthfully, the oral letter of the young Pip discloses the trace of his consistent manipulation of his own past words. In this sense, the young Pip's writing conveys a more real picture of the past than the mature Pip's narrating text does; and thus the assumption of a linear progression

of Pip's writing skill has to be doubted. In short, the narrator-protagonist's *Bildungsroman* plot from an illiterate forlorn boy to a well-educated literary man is secretly yet surely put into question in *Great Expectations*.

If the young Pip's oral letter resists and undermines the mature Pip's completed text in print, we can notice a similar precarious balance in *David Copperfield*. Its full title encapsulates its ambivalence towards the mass-productive, standardising power of print: *The Personal History, Adventures, Experience, and Observation of David Copperfield the Younger of Blunderstone Rookery (Which He Never Meant to be Published on Any Account)*. The part put in the parenthesis tries to give some reason for its inadvertent exposure to the eyes of Victorian readers. In spite of our natural reaction that David could never have written such a long text only intending it to be kept to himself, he claims that he never dreams of publicizing it to anyone. Several parts inside *David Copperfield* corroborate this denial. He clarifies that "this manuscript [of his writing] is intended for no eyes but mine" (*DC*, 606), and does not explain about his profession as a novelist. He does not reveal how long he has been working on the book of *David Copperfield*, and how he can find time to look back to his past and put his experience into words. In fact, David's written history rarely presents scenes in which the novelist David is committed to some work of writing. Mary Poovey, pointing to the invisibility of David's actual writing process, interprets it as David's/ his text's/ Dickens's secret desire to separate his profession of writing from the base market logic of ordinary life (Poovey [1988], 99−101). Convincing and powerful as her analysis is, we can point to another simple possibility, taking the full title into account. David never had any need to explicate about his

career, for he never intended to publicise and justify himself. Even though any autobiography should generically require its readers' commitment to the text to realise the completion of the autobiographer's whole self, *David Copperfield* strenuously denies any readers' intrusion every time a new monthly part comes out and every time its full title is presented on the front page.

David Copperfield thus discloses its internal paradox: the completed product (the books of *David Copperfield*) seems to exist as the linguistic definition of David's self, yet the same book records his self-reflexive attempt to disrupt that construction. Although readers buy and read *David Copperfield* as a published product, the front page and the full title deny the autobiographer David's active involvement with the publication procedure. Behind all those paradoxes, we would necessarily see the image of Dickens. Writing in the Victorian age, he had no choice but to write in the whirlpool of mass-printing culture, yet he could not help trying to reverse its progress through presenting what is inexpressible by standardised print. Publishing works successively to earn his living, Dickens tried to separate his elusive essence from the Victorian realm of mass readers. And being always involved with language and words, Dickens could never be unaware of how that verbal system itself could change what it described. It may not be a coincidence that Dickens spent his life always changing his abode, moving around various houses and villas on the continent, and complaining about his inability to stay in one place. Through constantly moving, he may have resisted being pinned down by anyone around him. In fact, Dickens once wrote to Forster that he "wishes [Forster] could see [him] without [his] knowing it" (*Letters*, vol. 4, 194). Similarly, he said several times that he

wanted to be seen while he himself did not notice that he was being looked at. He might think that the moment he was free from self-consciousness, the moment he was not aware of his ambivalence among various opposite values, his clear contours could be identified. But his autobiographical work, *David Copperfield*, seems to present a strong counter-evidence to such an assumption. The attraction of the masterpiece lies neither in the clarity nor in the logical consistency of David's self. The blurring of the figure of the autobiographer and the strange twist in his acquisition of literacy eloquently show the author's struggle in putting his voice into words and print. That conflict contributed to create *David Copperfield* as *David Copperfield*, and to create Dickens's true Dickensian-ness.

Conclusion

"Too chatty, too close to his reader, too much of a confidential agent, too quick to turn the cheap trick" (Mee, 4). As Jon Mee succinctly summarises, these words were and may still be the typical criticisms of Charles Dickens the writer. As he was and has remained so popular among general readers, as he seemed to be too much pandering to them, as his texts seem to flow too orally, his "greatness" has been put into question. In fact, the well-known argument by F. R. Leavis labeled Dickens's un-greatness just in terms of these factors:

> That Dickens was a great genius and is permanently among the classics is certain. But the genius was that of a great entertainer, and he had for the most part no profounder responsibility as a creative artist than this description suggests. Praising him magnificently in *Soliloquies in England*, Santayana, in concluding, says: "In every English-speaking home, in the four quarters of the globe, parents and children would do well to read Dickens aloud of a winter's evening." This note is right and significant. The adult mind doesn't as a rule find in Dickens a challenge to an unusual and sustained seriousness. (F. R. Leavis [1948], 30)

It is a matter of fact that Leavis's criticism has now become somewhat outdated, though the stark contrast he proposed between the serious art novels and the mere entertaining works seems still potent enough. Leavis claims that Dickens's suitability for oral reading conclusively demonstrates his un-greatness. This comment reminds us of the words by John Ruskin, which lamented Dickens's excessive devotion to oral reading as something destructive to his authentic genius (Ruskin, vol. 34, 517). Just like these two "great" critics who have assumed some irreconcilability between oral accessibility and literary quality, we may still—

even unconsciously—be preoccupied with this axiom. Anything which is easy and amusing enough to be read aloud and anything which does not necessitate silent, meditative reading tends to be dismissed as light literature deserving no serious treatment.

Leavis later changed his opinion and together with Q. D. Leavis published a book called *Dickens the Novelist*, with its first page claiming that he "was one of the greatest of creative writers" (F. R. Leavis [1970], xiv). However, this shift does not mean Leavis's unconditional acceptance of Dickensian works, but rather does attest to his tenacious habit of separating what is "great" from what is not. The opening chapter takes up *Dombey and Son* as the "first major novel", marking a watershed in Dickens's creative career, for it is "a providently conceived whole, presenting a major theme" (F. R. Leavis [1970], 2). The Leavises further claim that "there is a kind of strength that, while it is profoundly Dickensian, cannot be thought of as characterizing Dickens's work in general" (F. R. Leavis [1970], 2). They also praised the scene of Mrs Dombey's death as something "not ordinarily Dickensian" (F. R. Leavis [1970], 2). Though they do not clearly define what they mean by the epithet of "Dickensian", it is telling that the book only takes up the novels written after *Dombey and Son* —*David Copperfield*, *Bleak House*, *Hard Times*, *Little Dorrit*, and *Great Expectations*. The focus on middle and later Dickens can easily be understood by the following words in the preface: "the change from the author of *Pickwick* to the author of *Dombey* is as decisive as impressive" (F. R. Leavis [1970], 2). In short, the Leavises' design of the book inadvertently brings out their tacit assumption that early and hilarious Dickens—which is often considered as "ordinarily" and typically Dickensian—is different from a more mature and serious Dickens,

who produced several "great" novels.

In accordance with this differentiation, many influential Dickens studies in the late twentieth-century have been directed towards his later novels. Lionel Trilling's "*Little Dorrit*" (1953) defined "the three great novels" of Dickens as *Little Dorrit*, *Bleak House* and *Our Mutual Friend* (Trilling, 577). Kathleen Tillottson took up *Dombey and Son* and praised how it neatly integrated the narrative with its social criticism (Tillotson [1968], 174–8). J. H. Miller's *Charles Dickens* (1958) took up six novels—three early novels and three later ones—*Pickwick Papers*, *Oliver Twist*, *Martin Chuzzlewit*, *Bleak House*, *Great Expectations* and *Our Mutual Friend*; yet his argument on *Bleak House* became by far the most well-known. Many critics have acclaimed that essay as one of the most beautiful works of interpretation, while the studies of the earlier novels were rather dimmed by the shining success of the later chapters. Steven Marcus's book, *Dickens: from Pickwick to Dombey* (1965) would be one of the few that dealt exclusively with his early- and middle-period novels, yet the introduction ironically revealed the author's opposite intention: "Originally I had planned to encompass Dickens's entire life, and to place strongest emphasis upon the later novels. But as I continued to study his earlier works it became clear to me that such an undertaking could not be adequately realised within the scope of a single volume" (Marcus [1965], 9).

After these works, the whole critical trend shifted from close reading of each literary work towards cultural studies. Dickens scholarship witnessed the publications of various excellent books focused on specific themes. Those arguments, too, tend to elevate the later, darker Dickens novels, probably because they achieve more profound and extensive analyses

of the contemporary society. Eve Sedgwick's *Between Men* (1985) reads *Our Mutual Friend,* explicating the homosocial relationship among the main male characters. D. A. Miller's *The Novel and the Police* (1989) takes up *Bleak House* to make clear how novels and people's act of reading them fulfilled a regulatory function in Victorian society. Mary Poovey's *Making a Social Body* (1995) also deals with *Our Mutual Friend*, explicating the interrelationship among class, gender, economics, imperialism and race. Furthermore, more recent analyses put focus on Dickens's later enthusiasm for public readings, and interpret it in relation to Victorian theatre and other popular entertainments. Malcom Andrew's *Charles Dickens and His Performing Selves* (2006) analyses how Dickens's readings contribute to shaping his peculiar relationship with readers, which is not the familiar model between novelist and reader but a more liquid, innovative model between novelist-as-reader and reader-as-listener. Juliet John's *Dickens and Mass Culture* (2010) investigates Dickens' popularity as an author as well as a reader in terms of cultural commodification and mass consumption in the Victorian period. Sean Grass's *Charles Dickens's Our Mutual Friend: A Publishing History* (2014) closely investigates how Dickens negotiated with his publishers and through what processes his written words came into the Victorian market. Carolyn W. de la L. Oulton's *Dickens and the Myth of the Reader* (2017) scrutinises the public persona of Dickens's published texts as well as his private letters, clarifying how he mythologised the figure of the writer in those writings.

Although his later novels have been analysed from various perspectives, it is curiously rare to find a book that exclusively deals with his earlier texts. Kathryn Chittick's *Dickens and the 1830s* (1990) is one of the few examples that put focus on Dickens's

formative years, 1830s. Chittick explains how significant the decade was for the author, since Dickens was "forced to halt and consider where his future direction as a writer was to lie" by "1841" (Chittick, xi). She further explicates that the decade witnessed his works "moved from the 'Magazine' columns to the 'Literature' columns" (Ibid.). Robert Douglas-Fairhurst's *Becoming Dickens* (2011) can be another example that pays a close and formal attention to Dickens's earlier years. Douglas-Fairhurst clarifies his book as an attempt to "unlearn much of what we know about [Dickens's] career", and "to read his life backwards as well as forwards" (Fairhurst, 4–5). In order to visualise what Charles Dickens "might have" or "could have" been if the coincidences in the 19th century had not established him as the successful novelist, Fairhurst meticulously analyses the earlier works that betray the young author's uncertainty for his future. Although Chittick and Fairhurst both succeed in presenting a convincing illustration of young Dickens, they develop their arguments by illuminating early Dickens's originality or difference from his later, established status of a Victorian successful novelist.

Summarising Dickens studies in this way, we would see that his novels can be divided into two different groups; those in his early and early-middle period, written before he had safely consolidated his position as a novelist; these works tend to be written without any plan beforehand, and thereby easily let us trace his last-minutes changes or improvisational style of creation. On the other hand, those in his later years have been considered as showing his maturity, overcoming previous defects and accomplishing darker and deeper artistry. In short, Dickens studies—whether with their collective consciousness or not—have seemed to attribute "too much chattiness" to Dickens in his youth and thereby may try to explain away the label of

“too much popularity”. The more stark the contrast made between the two Dickenses, the more it would seem easy to detect a straight path of growth from the early, oral Dickens to the later, sober and more textual (or bookish, as it were) Dickens. Or, the history of Dickens studies itself presents strong evidence that we in this post(-post)-modern century, are still trapped in a framework of binary opposition, classifying what is great and what is not, what is textual and what is oral, and which will be the better of the two.

My dissertation has reconsidered Dickens’s early- and middle-period novels, on the one hand for illuminating how those novels can be connected to his later years in their treatment of voice and text, and on the other hand for seeing how our continuous preoccupation with “greatness” has made it hard to see the dynamic relationship between Dickens’s voice or vocal technique and his background society. The aim of this dissertation was, therefore, of course not to add every single work of Charles Dickens to the list of “greatest English novels ever written”. Rather, I paid close attention to the aspect of what makes Dickens’ works so much suffused with sounds (and sometimes noise)—that Leavis first criticised by labelling Dickens as merely a “great entertainer”. In tracing all those voices and noises, I tried to shed light on the connection between Dickens’s “Dickensian” style and the whole history of Victorian England.

Chapter 1 thus examined the historical contexts of Victorian England. Although the sociological survey affirms an unprecedented surge in literacy rates around this time, various episodes and data rather corroborate the opposite picture: how those “literate” people’s literacy was different from each other. Victorian novelists—among them Charles Dickens—

were fully aware of the dynamic intersection of voice and text in contemporary reading experiences. Chapter 2 took up early Dickens's representative work, *Pickwick Papers* and analysed how it internalises the conflict of voice and writing. The same chapter reconsidered the nine interpolated tales in *Pickwick Papers* which are traditionally regarded as unnecessary and disrupting the integrity of the novel. My analyses reversely illuminated how those tales function as decisive *topoi* in the whole narrative, in which the multiple strata of voice, writing and print are overlaid. In summary, *Pickwick Papers* is a text that sways between two opposite poles: it seems to assert its own tight and firm control over its textuality towards its readers. Yet at the same time, implying the possibility that such materiality can be disentangled by an emphasis on oral modes of consumption, that same novel seems to suggest how fragile the apparently firm structure of the novel can be.

Chapter 3 analysed such a perpetual tightening and loosening of textuality in *Master Humphrey's Clock* and *The Old Curiosity Shop*. Although the creative processes of these two novels are inextricably connected, there lie many seams and scars in their narratives due to various hectic changes in Dickens's plan. Chapter 3 implemented a review of all these disjunctions and revealed the striking similarity between those who are narrated and those who are narrating. Moreover, the silhouette of the main narrator, Master Humphrey, is not uniformly presented to Victorian readers; instead various almost subliminal contradictions are scattered through the text, which may look too trivial to catch any reader's eye, yet which still seem to claim how its narrator's true figure and voice are un-reachable. And almost anticipating the base-minded readers who would wickedly point out those apparent mistakes

of the author, the two novels repeatedly mention that they are not written for those who could not truly understand and share their interests. In this sense, *Master Humphrey's Clock* and *The Old Curiosity Shop* self-reflectively internalise the processes by which they are consumed: whether Dickens was conscious or not, his works were obviously developed through converging the author's act of writing and the readers' acts of reading (aloud).

Chapter 4 dug deeper into such a problematic relationship among the Victorian authors, their creative works, and their readers' and consumers' behaviours, mainly in terms of copyright. Dickens went over to America to make speeches to advocate the importance of international copyright. While he exaggerated the strong ties with his American readers, he at the same time required them to pay a certain amount of fee to be admitted to his intimate circle. In fact, the American publishers harshly reacted against his initiative, justifying their acts of piracy in the name of democracy, as providing literary products at the lowest cost to the largest number of people. Closely tracing the interchange of criticisms between Dickens and his American audience, chapter 4 clarified how the American tour made Dickens realise his own paradoxical standpoint as a literary author: in order to survive in the nineteenth-century literary market, Dickens introduced various new styles of publication—part issues and serialisation on journals etc.—even renouncing the right to monopolise his own creative process. Yet he could not help criticising American publishers who were apparently working with the similar sales policies.

The unstable balance between Dickens's narrative voice and his position in the contemporary literary market was further considered in the following chapters. Chapter 5 took

up his travelogue, *American Notes for General Circulation*, and considered how the word of "notes" in the title can contain various different meanings. The textual existence of the travelogue functions to imply the existence of some other, not so "general" "notes", which can only be heard by a limited number of admitted people. Chapter 6 dealt with *Martin Chuzzlewit*, whose American chapters also drew on the author's actual tour there. Although these episodes were often dismissed as something unnecessary to the main story plot, and put the whole structure of the novel into confusion, chapter 6 considered the possibility that such a structural weakness/looseness is self-consciously created and developed in the world of *Martin Chuzzlewit*.

Chapter 7 and 8 finally analysed Dickens's multiple attempts of autobiography—putting his own voice into print. Chapter 7 provided an overview of how the Victorian period witnessed an immense increase of autobiographical writings, and how these were related to contemporary individualism, and its attempt to assert its own unique one-ness that could be distinguished from the masses of other people. On the other hand, however, the genre compelled its writers to face dilemmas at various different levels. Writing about oneself seems to be an act of unifying one's own self as some tangible whole, but that same writing can reversely multiply the self into numerous different facets: the writing "I" (ever proliferating as the pages increase), the written "I" (also proliferating). To these existential difficulties, the commercial necessities would add another problem: whether putting those manuscripts of autobiography into market—commodifying one's own one-ness as some sellable text, making many copies of that text, and distributing them for money—could be recognised as a

legitimate way to assert one's "uniqueness" or not. Chapter 7 confirms Dickens's as well as other contemporary authors' sensitivity to these problems, particularly using Thomas Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* as a representative exemplar.

Chapter 8 took up *David Copperfield*, and illuminated how the apparently conventional format of *Bildungsroman* is checked as early as in the opening chapter. His impressive present-tense narration, "I am born", vividly foregrounds a scene where the narrator is orally reciting his own birth in front of his audience. Yet at the same time, the narrator goes on to say that "whether I shall turn out to be the hero of my own life, or whether that station will be held by anybody else, these pages must show." (*DC*, 1) Here emerges an entangling relationship between the narrator David's voice and his own writings: the narrator, who has already learnt how to speak and explain about his birth at the very moment of coming into existence, is not potent enough to know about his own future, which should be already recorded in "these pages", seemingly held at his hand. In this way, the beginning lines illuminate a strange alienation between the omnipotent narrator and his own written products. In this sense, the text of *David Copperfield*, in spite of its apparent façade of narrating the protagonist's history of growth, doubts the status of its own textuality. When and how the narrator acquired literacy is not clarified. How the text of *David Copperfield* came to be written and precisely when the author could take so much time in writing about his life remain uncertain.

Looking back to all these chapter-by-chapter summaries, we would be able to see various different binary oppositions among which Dickens and his novels may be situated.

Writing in the whirlpool of the Victorian literary market-place, he could not help noticing a complicated interplay of voice and writing. His literary works were consumed in multiple ways: sometimes by oral recitals and sometimes by silent readings. And he had to balance himself between two opposite desires: firstly, to gain legitimate income from his literary products through commodifying his narrative voice, making them into books to be sold to his invisible mass of readers; secondly, to retain his creative works under his sole control, and consume them with his intimate friends in his own authentic voice. The early works thus betray his penchant for a homely narrative sphere, in which the narrator can possess his works orally and literally. *American Notes* and *Martin Chuzzlewit* show the same author's more subtle strategy to manipulate his voice and text, which no longer indulge in the pleasant dream of narrative seclusion. Instead, through implying that the completed products lack something which should have really been there, those texts frustrate any simple reading or readers' confidence that they really possess Dickens's true words. The texts alternately tighten and loosen their own textual knots. This perpetual fluctuation between structure and disruption can also be seen in *David Copperfield*. By clarifying the contrast between voice and text, yet implying a conflictive relationship between the narrator's presence and his written products, the autobiographical narrative deviates from many other works in the same genre. David's voice is highly conscious of its own fictitiousness as is shown in the famously paradoxical statement, "I am born".

The existential paradox of the narrator-protagonist, David Copperfield, lets us realise a more fundamental problem that is inherent in every literary narration. We consciously or

unconsciously have avoided defining to what sphere the words of "narrator", "narrating", "narration", and "narrative" truly belong. We can never find a satisfactory answer concerning whether those words belong to the oral or literal realm. The OED defines the word *narrate* as follows:

> (1) a. to relate, to give an account of, tell as a narrative: b. to speak the commentary of;
> (2) to set forth or allege in a legal document;
> (3) to give an account, recount a story. (*OED*, 2nd Edition)

A story can both be orally and literally narrated either by a corporeal, present narrator or by a writer-narrator whose figure is absent from readers. Even though literary criticism or any attempt at composing literature cannot take place without the act of narration, readers and critics have never really questioned its ambivalent and opaque location between orality and textuality. We have never really questioned why such an ambivalence should take place, having accepted the unclearness between orality and textuality as something natural and given. The same can be pointed out as for the standpoint of any narrator. We naturally say we both hear and read the narrator's voice without clarifying the boundary between orality and literacy. Indeed, Arthur A. Berger's definition of "narrator" itself highlights the issue: "A narrator is someone who tells a story. The word comes from the Latin *narratus*, which means *made known*. A narrator makes something—a story—known, whether one created by another or by the narrator him or herself, as in the case of a storyteller" (Berger, 7). And Dickens was a writer who experienced such ambiguity in various ways. As a Victorian author, he had to write within a period of rapid technological transition that swallowed people's voices into print. As an author who tried to possess and control his creative property, he also had to be aware of the

plethora of contemporary reading voices, which could undermine the authority of his writings. And as a dead author, he had to go through numerous critics' interpretations—which are explicitly and implicitly concerned with his oral readability.

In conclusion, I hope that my dissertation could show Dickens's narratives are not presented as the fixed sequences of print letters, but are more loose, dynamic and ever-continuing interactions among the author's voice, readers' voices, and print letters. It should, therefore, not be surprising that later Dickens was so much absorbed in the enterprise of public reading. Dickens the reader was not the murderer of Dickens the writer. Dickens's writings in his early years already contained Dickens the reader inside, or they could never have been produced in the first place. In this sense, Dickens's true Dickensian narration would let us see why the literary terms of "narrative" and "narration" are unstably swinging between textual and oral spheres. The act of narration cannot exist apart from a complicated social network, or without the acute self-consciousness of its audience. It can only anticipate its own manner of consumption: whoever listens to, reads, or experiences the narrative can interpret the contents in whatever ways they like; and along with every single different and unpredictable way of consumption, "narration" remains ultimately indeterminate.

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