

Dickens and his Christmas Collaborators: Brand Authorship, Apprenticeship and Career Development

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Author's Declaration

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Abstract

This thesis aims at scrutinizing the strategic arrangement of publishing relatively unknown authors under a highly marketable name - here, that of 'Dickens' - and its modus operandi, and to inquire into the effects of this practice of the publishing industry: on the contributors themselves, on the brand, and on the sellers and buyers of literature. The commercialization of literature in the nineteenth century, which turned readers into consumers and books into merchandise, enabled professional authorship to operate as a marketable 'brand' identity. This study will examine the conduct of readers, publishers and the literary market as a collective unit, in the context of their perception of a brand-identity. The thesis explores Charles Dickens' collaboration with other writers in the production of his periodicals *Household Words* (1850-1859) and *All the Year Round* (1859-1895), with particular focus on the collective authorship of the 'extra Christmas numbers'. Despite the presence of multiple authors behind such collaborative ventures, the name under which these works were identified, projected and marketed in the realm of literary commerce, was that of the celebrated 'Mr. Dickens'.

The central objective of this project is to analyse the significance and functioning of the practice of brand authorship in Dickens' multi-authored Christmas stories of the 1850s and 1860s, whereby - unnoticed, and often unrecognised, names engaged in professional collaboration with a celebrated author. One of the main questions that will be pursued here is whether this journalistic strategy was useful and advantageous for

Dickens' collaborators; did it enhance their career prospects, and could it be viewed as an effective career strategy for emerging writers? Or was collaboration with Dickens obstructive for their independent reputation-building and for cultivating their own distinctive identity? To respond to these inquiries, cases of a few selected authors have been examined which include Edmund Yates, George Augustus Sala, Amelia Blandford Edwards, Charles Collins and Eliza Lynn Linton.

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Introduction

I. Brand Affiliation and Dickens' Collaborative Christmas Numbers

Much of Dickens' short fiction was written in collaboration with other writers, most of which was first published in the weekly magazines *Household Words* and *All the Year Round*. Among his short fiction, most famous were his Christmas stories that were published in the December issues of his periodicals (in the extra Christmas numbers). Works such as *Mugby Junction*, *Mrs. Lirriper's Legacy*, *Somebody's Luggage*, *The Seven Poor Travellers*, *Dr Marigold's Prescriptions*, *The Wreck of the Golden Mary* and many others are narratives constituting multiple segments (like chapters of a novel) which were written in collaboration with authors including Edmund Yates, George Augustus Sala, Andrew Halliday, Hesba Stretton, Adelaide Anne Procter, Percy Fitzgerald, Eliza Lynn, Hesba Stretton and many others. These authors were published anonymously while the entire periodical and every writing in it including these collaborative works bore the stamp of 'Dickens'. The very title of the periodical in its entirety, was printed as '*Household Words..... Conducted by Charles Dickens*' and the same was the case for *All the Year Round*. Percy Fitzgerald, one of the regular contributors to Dickens' magazines, argues that this form of branding proved to be a very effective tool given the fact that *Household Words* needed to distinguish itself in a highly competitive mid-nineteenth century periodicals market and did so by the means of its conductor's name and fame. ¹ John M.L. Drew, in his book *Dickens the Journalist*, aptly sums up this practice by arguing that

¹ Percy H. Fitzgerald, *Memories of Charles Dickens: with an Account of 'Household Words' and All the Year Round and of the Contributors Thereto*. (New York, NY: AMS Press, 1913), p. 111.

despite the 'multi-authored' nature of the journals, they unwaveringly 'project a powerful single identity'.² Dickens exercised a strong control over his collaborators' creative freedom; to meet his standards, their writings often emulated Dickens' style. However, according to Drew, such aspects 'merely reflected the downside of having a strong and well-defined brand'; rather, they reinforced the pre-eminence of the brand-name to a certain extent.³ This is because, though working for the Dickensian brand might have been obstructive for developing an independent identity, and though an unfair credit attribution for its apprentices reflects badly on the brand organisation, it still emphasises how big and dominant Dickens had become by the 1850s, so much so that he was largely eclipsing others working with him. Hence, it was 'merely the downside' for the brand-organisation as a whole, but even this downside reflected the heights of its founder.⁴ The commercialization of literature in the nineteenth century which turned readers into customers and books into merchandise, enabled professional authorship to operate as a marketable 'brand' identity. In his book *Dickens: Abridged*, Peter Ackroyd claims amongst many other critics, that every article, published in the journals, 'had to bear the stamp of Charles Dickens' owing to Dickens' artistic and editorial authority and most importantly, because the public recognized his name and followed his brand.⁵ On the other hand, quite a few critics are skeptical of this view. John Drew argues that such orthodox assumptions lead

² John Drew, *Dickens the Journalist* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003) p.106

³ Drew, p.115

⁴ Considering the large number of writers which formed the staff of Dickens' periodicals, it would not be an exaggeration to call Dickens' brand a full-functioning 'organisation'.

⁵ Peter Ackroyd, *Dickens: Abridged*, Abridged edition (London: Vintage, 2002) p.592

to unwarranted conclusions, and needs more scrutiny. He asserts that it is difficult to establish the extent to which the journals, taken as a whole or randomly sampled, may reliably be taken to represent Dickens's own identity and views despite his strict artistic and editorial authority over content and contributors. Melissa Valiska Gregory in the introduction to the Hesperus press edition of *Somebody's Luggage*, criticized the exclusion of other contributor' stories from the 1867 Diamond Edition of Dickens' Christmas stories collection, arguing that other collaborators provide an aesthetic variety to the narrative through their distinctive voices; this again poses a challenge to the above assumption of lost identity under the 'Dickensian' label.⁶

Most of Dickens collaborative ventures lie in the realm of Christmas literature and Dickens, undoubtedly, is credited with having played an instrumental role in the proliferation and growth of a market for Christmas annuals. After getting banned by Oliver Cromwell in the mid-1640s, Christmas managed to revive - although very insignificantly - in the 1660s. However, by the nineteenth century, the interest in the festival dwindled again, and declined to a record low with the onset of the Industrial Revolution. Leigh Hunt labelled it an event 'scarcely worth a mention' and it was believed, even until the early 1840s, that Christmas would slowly die out in England.⁷ However, as is well known, this prospect dramatically changed after the publication of

⁶ Dickens et al., *Somebody's Luggage*, edited by Melissa Valiska Gregory (London: Hesperus Press Ltd, 2006) p. iv

⁷ J.A.R. Pimlott, *The Englishman's Christmas* (Hassocks: Harvester Press, 1978), p. 85.

Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* in 1843; this Christmas revival was going to be prodigiously successful, so much so that the attraction towards the festival would last forever. It was after being inspired by Washington Irving's Yuletide fiction, like 'The Legend of Sleepy Hollow' and 'Rip Van Winkle', that Dickens wrote *A Christmas Carol* which would not only save Christmas but would endow the festival with a high market-value in the Victorian publishing industry, especially in the periodical literature. When the discontinuation of Dickens' extremely popular Christmas Books that were published between 1843 and 1848 was widely lamented by his devoted readers, Dickens came up with the idea of providing a similar annual offering in the form of the 'extra Christmas numbers' of his journals.⁸ Commencing in the year 1850, these special numbers were to carry forward Dickens' annual Christmas tradition of underlining the importance of kindred and charity during this joyous occasion. Though aiming to yield the same moral impact as the Christmas Books, the inception as well as the production of these Christmas numbers was methodologically different from that of the former. Produced between 1850 and 1867, the Christmas Numbers of Dickens' journals, *Household Words* and *All the Year Round*, were "Extra" issues, published in addition to the regular weekly numbers, on various dates between 1 and 21 December. These Christmas Numbers initially covered 24 pages in double columns, which increased to thirty-six pages in 1852, and again to forty-eight pages when Dickens replaced *Household Words* with *All the Year Round* in 1859.

⁸ Initially, Dickens wrote five Christmas Books in the following order: *A Christmas Carol*, (Chapman and Hall, 19 December 1843); *The Chimes* (Bradbury and Evans 16 December 1844); *The Cricket on the Hearth*, 20 December 1845; *The Battle of Life*, 19 December 1846; *The Haunted Man* (19 December 1848, series concluded).

A shift from the book-form to periodical publication suggests an attempt on Dickens' part to make this redefined Yuletide fiction a part of something more permanent, organised and ongoing. Witnessing the goods that could come out of such seasonal commitment, a majority of editors and publishers of the time adopted Dickens' practice and commenced producing special Christmas numbers and Christmas Annuals for the December issues of their periodicals and magazines. Hence, the mode of publishing Christmas numbers was established in the Victorian publishing industry. It became customary for mainstream Victorian periodicals and publishing houses to print special issues devoted to the celebration of the renewed fascination with Christmas.

As Dickens had undertaken the arduous job of editing a weekly journal alongside producing timely instalments for his major novels, an endeavour to finish an entire Christmas number single-handedly would have proved futile. Realising that he needed more hands to accomplish this seasonal commitment, Dickens decided to write these Christmas numbers in collaboration with his periodical staff. These annual Christmas numbers are narratives comprised of multiple segments (like chapters of a novel) which were written in collaboration with others. The contributed segments were interpolated in the frame-narrative Dickens produced for each of these Christmas numbers. He usually wrote the opening chapter and the closing chapter of the whole narrative, composing a structural frame surrounding the contributed stories. The interpolated stories, however, were unrelated to their respective

frameworks composed by Dickens; and since these stories do not work towards a common thread or storyline and have their own individual plots, Dickens had to find a way to fit them all together and accommodate them coherently within a single narrative. He did this with the help of introducing a 'frame-tale' which could join or link these random narratives together and yield a well-connected and consistent narrative.

This thesis aims at scrutinizing the strategic arrangement of publishing relatively unknown authors under a highly marketable name - here, that of 'Dickens' - and its modus operandi, to inquire into the effects of this practice of journalistic industry on the contributors themselves, on the brand, and on the sellers and buyers of literature. To be more specific, this study will examine the attitude and outlook of readers, publishers and the literary market as a collective unit, in the context of their perception of a brand-name. How important is the presence of a brand to them when it comes to investing in literature and how did their attitude towards a literary work change accordingly. All of this will be analysed in the context of Dickens and his relatively obscure collaborators who contributed frequently to Dickens' "extra Christmas numbers" and other journalistic writings for *Household Words* and *All the Year Round*. Despite the presence of multiple authors behind such collaborative ventures, the name under which these works were identified, projected and marketed in the realm of literary commerce, was, of course, that of the celebrated 'Mr. Dickens'. The central objective of this thesis is to examine the advantages and disadvantages of the aforementioned working arrangement i.e. unnoticed, and often, unrecognised names engaging in professional collaboration with

the acclaimed author and his illustrious brand. Therefore, one of the main questions to be pursued here is whether this journalistic strategy was useful and advantageous for the collaborators. To what extent did this strategy enhance their career prospects, and could this present itself as an effective career route for emerging writers? Or whether this arrangement was rather obstructive for their independent reputation-building which could have precluded them from cultivating their own distinctive identity. Analysing these findings will help test the hypothesis that these contributors primarily gained attention because they were associated with Dickens and because their works were published in Dickens' periodicals, considering the consequential possibility that their independent or standalone works might not have received a similar amount of attention. Even contemporary researchers today choose to study these relatively unknown writers and their works most often because they engaged in authorial collaboration with Dickens, and hence their writings, being co-authored with Dickens, are seen as an important piece of literary history. Nevertheless, many scholars still chose to exclude these collaborators from their study of Dickens' co-authored works and are selective in their examination as they are often interested only in Dickens' writing. In *Dickens and the Short Story* (1982), Deborah A. Thomas excludes the work of Dickens's contributors altogether, although she emphasises the importance for modern critics of an awareness of the original publication format.⁹ Ruth Glancy's Everyman edition of the Christmas Stories (1996) excludes the work of contributors, but outlines in each case the full contents and structure of the

⁹ Deborah A. Thomas, *Dickens and the Short Story* (London: Batsford Academic and Educational Ltd, 1982), p.5

Number as it was published originally.¹⁰ More recently, Hesperus Press have released individual Christmas Numbers with the work of the contributors included.

In Harry Stone's view, Dickens's editorial involvement in these works justifies their reprinting. In his collection of collaborative multi-authored articles, *Charles Dickens' Uncollected Writings from Household Words 1850-1859*, he writes: 'my chief purpose in compiling this edition has not been to ascribe but to retrieve and make available' what hasn't yet been collected of Dickens.¹¹ This implies that his interest in these articles is primarily, if not solely, because they are partially written by Dickens. Also, when I refer to these contributors as 'obscure', the adjective is intended to function mainly in the context of the accessibility of their independent works today. Although in some cases referring to them as obscure also applies when describing their humble reputations in the nineteenth century (given that some of the contributors discussed in this thesis were relatively not well known even to the Victorian audience), the use of the term 'obscure' is largely aimed towards the difficulty in locating and accessing their works in the twenty-first century.

Dickens was quite controlling and authoritative when it came to collaborative endeavours. He set the framework for others to write, meaning they were obligated to produce a work pre-defined by Dickens. Drawing upon Dickens' editorial correspondence, Stone confirms that most articles in Dickens' periodicals 'bear the impress of his line-by-line attention and correction'. He writes in his introduction to

¹⁰Ruth F. Glancy, Dickens, *The Christmas Stories* (London: J.M. Dent, 1996).

¹¹Harry Stone, *Charles Dickens' Uncollected Writings from Household Words 1850-1859*, 1 (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1968), p. x

Uncollected Writings that Dickens's 'standards of style and excellence and his sense of *Household Words* as a personal voice' often compelled him 'to screw up and tighten' the merest trifles.¹² Stone has engaged in a careful evaluation of stylistic evidence, and his analysis reinforces the view that Dickens maintained close supervision over his magazine. He has also reproduced Dickens' detailed instructions to his collaborators for the 'extra Christmas numbers' which further set out and give us an insight into Dickens' expectations of composing a uniform and coherent whole, despite the complicated hierarchical structure of the multi-authored narratives.¹³ His strict demands perhaps made them suppress their own narrative voice and individual style. Owing to this pattern of working, they ended up imitating Dickens' style and techniques so as to make their stories more compatible and synchronized with his; the difference among these stories in authorship was often hard to spot, even for the most seasoned literary reviewers. Then one could imagine that it was highly unlikely for general readers to distinguish Dickens' stories from those of others. As these collaborators were always seen and read alongside the celebrated author, this project tries to investigate whether this eventuated in any discrimination against them. The thesis will examine whether this created more competition for them to be liked by their readers because their initial work (which is supposed to establish them in the industry) always appeared next to that of one of the most influential and acclaimed authors of the market. Ruth Glancy has done much of the crucial

¹² Ibid.

¹³ See Ruth F. Glancy, *Dickens, The Christmas Stories* (London: J.M. Dent, 1996). Glancy includes details of Dickens's instructions to contributors in many of her introductions to the individual Numbers throughout this edition. Also see, Ruth F. Glancy, 'Dickens and Christmas: His Framed-Tale Themes.' *Nineteenth Century Fiction* 35, no. 1 (1980), pp. 53–72 (p. 58).

information-gathering about the Christmas Numbers already. Glancy's annotated bibliography, *Dickens's Christmas Books, Christmas Stories, and Other Short Fiction: An Annotated Bibliography* (1985) provides a valuable resource to anyone studying this material, with information on each Number relating to Dickens's letters, contemporary reviews, critical studies, adaptations, and subsequent editions.¹⁴ Aine McNicholas argues in her doctoral thesis, 'Dickens by Numbers: the Christmas Numbers of *Household Words* and *All the Year Round*', that 'the Christmas Numbers are one of the most remarkable and overlooked bodies of work of the second half of the nineteenth century' and has compiled a rather helpful record of all the recurring themes and tropes in Dickens' Christmas Numbers between 1850 and 1867.¹⁵ In *Dickens and the Short Story* (1982), Deborah A. Thomas has examined how the Christmas Numbers demonstrate Dickens's desire to experiment with forms of narration and with collaboration, and his fascination with the idea of authorship as a type of public entertainment and with the notion of imaginative "fancy".¹⁶ Jerome H. Buckley, while reviewing Thomas's book, was unconvinced of the necessity of her study at all, suggesting that 'in many instances the short pieces that Thomas discusses are minor works that add little to our appreciation of Dickens's art.'¹⁷ Lillian Nayder has produced a significant challenge to Buckley's statement in *Unequal Partners: Charles Dickens, Wilkie*

¹⁴ Ruth F. Glancy, *Dickens's Christmas Books, Christmas Stories, and Other Short Fiction: An Annotated Bibliography* (New York: Garland Publishing Inc, 1985), pp.79-80

¹⁵ Aine McNicholas, 'Dickens by Numbers: the Christmas Numbers of *Household Words* and *All the Year Round*' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of York, 2015), p.237

¹⁶ Deborah A. Thomas, *Dickens and the Short Story* (London: Batsford Academic and Educational Ltd, 1982), p.134)

¹⁷ Jerome H. Buckley, review of *Dickens and the Short Story* by Deborah A. Thomas and other critical works, *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 38, no. 3 (1983), pp. 334-337 (p. 336).

Collins, and Victorian Authorship (2002), which looks at the Numbers that Dickens and Collins jointly authored, that she argues reflect the complicated relationship of literary collaboration between the mature novelist and his younger protégé.¹⁸

Collaborative Dickens: Authorship and Victorian Christmas Periodicals (2019), by Melisa Klimaszewski collectively examines all eighteen Christmas numbers of Dickens periodicals in chronological order. Most of the Christmas numbers have been separately and individually analyzed by scholars previously, but Klimaszewski brings these numbers all together in one place, which makes her book an important navigational volume for anyone studying Dickens' Christmas collaborations. The book discusses all the stories contributed to Dickens' extra Christmas numbers between 1850 and 1867, which makes it one of the most comprehensive textual studies of the corpus yet. The book takes the time to summarize all the plots before examining them, which is quite useful, considering the Christmas numbers are still considered quite obscure by scholars, precisely why Pete Orford writes that 'the relative obscurity of the Christmas numbers is the greatest justification for (Klimaszewski's) monograph.'¹⁹

While a few academic studies in the past have focused on differentiating and separating the portions written by Dickens from those of his collaborators, her book

¹⁸Lillian Nayder, *Unequal Partners: Charles Dickens, Wilkie Collins, and Victorian Authorship* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002), pp. xi-xii.

¹⁹Melisa. Klimaszewski, *Collaborative Dickens: Authorship and Victorian Christmas Periodicals* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2019), p. 9. Also see, Pete Orford, "'Collaborative Dickens: Authorship and Victorian Christmas Periodicals" by Melisa Klimaszewski (Review).' *Dickens Quarterly*, vol. 37, no. 3, (2020), pp. 296-298. *ProQuest*, <https://doi.org/10.1353/dqt.2020.0038>

contends that we need to adopt a more 'plural' and 'polyphonic' notion of authorship than is commonly applied to Dickens in order to fully understand and evaluate the Victorian Christmas periodicals, especially Dickens' Christmas number corpus. This has been studied by scholars previously. While examining *Household Words*, for example, Catherine Waters and John Drew have noted the difficulty of establishing a neat critical paradigm for the study of the nineteenth-century periodical, which, with its "heterogeneous and multi-vocal form resists the protocols of traditional literary analysis." Drew, at length, discusses the ambiguity of the genre and how the critic's methodology needs to be more inclusive allowing for a polyvocal understanding to foster.

Klimaszewski tries to restore the links between different interpolating stories and their respective frames within these multi-authored narratives. She has attempted to find common themes that are shared by interpolating stories and their connecting frame, and various tropes that keep recurring, not just within the same Christmas number, but throughout the entire corpus. Again, this is something that has been previously examined by Aine McNicholas on a substantial scale in her doctoral thesis, 'Dickens by Numbers'.²⁰ Despite stressing upon the polyvocal form of the Christmas numbers to gain a comprehensive understanding of such collaboration, Klimaszewski's analysis limits itself to the examination of the text itself and doesn't engage much in exploring the working relationship between Dickens and his contributors, with the sole exception of Wilkie Collins, which is the most documented and studied relationship within Dickens' collaborative

²⁰ Catherine Waters, *Commodity Culture in Dickens's "Household Words": The Social Life of Goods* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), p.6. Also see Drew, *Dickens the Journalist* p.2, and, McNicholas, 'Dickens by Numbers', pp.22-23

sphere. As discussed above, Lillian Nayder has devoted an entire monologue, *Unequal Partners*, to the working relationship between Dickens and Collins as literary collaborators.

Klimasewski also does not offer any insight into how the polyphonic character of the collaborative Christmas number operated in the wider Victorian periodical press and how such form contextualized with the nineteenth-century publishing industry. The book does not provide us with a historical context as to what prompted the beginning of Dickens' collaborative Christmas narratives. Neither does it substantially reflect on the nuances of the lengthy and laborious editorial process that every number went through, that determined the working arrangements between the writers, which is, arguably, significant for a proper understanding of the book's core argument i.e. its focus on plural authorial input for a holistic interpretation. Klimasewski's monograph studies the Christmas Number in its own right with its textual analysis being the primary objective. Whereas this thesis aims at examining the professional relationships and working circumstances that prevailed outside the text and which ended up shaping the production and reception of these numbers and its authors within the nineteenth-century periodical industry.

Central to this thesis is understanding the perception of Dickens as a major, celebrated and powerful brand. Readers' interests and decisions regarding what to buy and read or what is worth reading and buying might profoundly be influenced and biased by the presence or absence of a brand; the chapters that follow, explore these positive/negative quality-based presumptions and prejudgments. This examination is largely based on the critical reviews published by the leading newspapers and magazines of the time. In his review of *A House to Let*, published in the *Saturday Review*, 25

December, 1858, the critic James Fitzjames Stephen stated: 'His [Dickens'] influence over some departments of literature has been so marked, and his imitators are so numerous, that we may be excused for devoting to what is meant to be very trifling, and is intrinsically a very insignificant performance, what might otherwise be a disproportionate amount of attention. The four [interpolated] stories [written by Dickens' collaborators] contained in the *House to Let* are interesting only from the fact that they are samples of an important article of literary commerce.'²¹ Here, brand 'Dickens' is presented as aiding and expanding the readership of these obscure authors. The reviewer is ready to invest their time and money in something which they consider substandard just because it is buttressed by the label 'Dickens'.

It is useful to consider what defines a 'brand' from a modern marketing perspective and how that could be applied and related to Dickens back in the nineteenth-century publishing industry. Brands are too often examined through their component parts: the brand name, its logo, design, or packaging, advertising or sponsorship, image or name recognition, or very recently, in terms of financial brand valuation. However, Jean-Noel Kapferer, in his book, *Strategic Brand Management* (1992), defines a brand in more holistic terms: 'A brand is not a product; it is the product's essence, its meaning, and its direction, and it defines its identity in time and space. Its central concept is brand identity, not brand image.'²² Brand management however, begins much earlier, with a strategy and

²¹ Philip Collins, *Charles Dickens: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge, 2013), p.406

²² Jean-Noel Kapferer., *Strategic Brand Management* (London: Kogan Page, 1992) p. 11. Also see, Kapferer, 'Stealing Brand Equity: Measuring Perceptual Confusion between National Brands and "Copycat" Own Labels', *Marketing and Research Today*, 23 May 1995, pp. 96-103.

a consistent integrated vision. Kenneth Boulding was one of the earlier theorists drawing attention to the commercial importance of image, arguing that people do not react to reality, but to what they perceive as reality.²³ This raises an interesting philosophical point about "reality", which social theorists argue is socially constructed. While this issue was not explored in depth by Boulding, his contribution draws attention to cognitive psychology, in particular perception theory, to explain differing interpretations of the same stimulus. Building on this, we could describe brands as images in consumers' minds of functional and psychological attributes. The evolution of a more consumer-centered perspective perhaps suggests that brand is a consumer's idea of a product.

In her book, *Commodity Culture in Dickens's Household Words: The Social Life of Goods*, Catherine Waters argues that 'branding serves to differentiate a standardized product within a mass market' by endowing it with 'particular meanings and associations in order to direct consumer choice'. Waters affirms that Dickens' magazines, through affixing the name of their conductor on every page, implemented 'a form of branding' that 'capitalized on his reputation'. Such presentation 'resembles the rhetoric of authenticity established through stamps and seals used to verify patent protected products in advertisement'.²⁴ Defining and managing a brand from an identity perspective addresses the problem of all employees having to act in a coherent and consistent manner with each

²³ Kenneth E. Boulding, *The Image*, (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1956), Joseph W. Newman, *Motivation Research and Market Management* (Norwood: Plimpton Press, 1957). Also see, Karl E. Weick, *The Social Psychology of Organizing* (Boston, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1969), and, Pierre Wesley (1959), "Sharper Focus for the Corporate Image", *Harvard Business Review*, 36, 1, pp. 49-58

²⁴ Waters, *Commodity Culture*, p.21.

of the firm's proprietors, which is precisely what we observe in the case of Dickens and the contributors to his journals. Dickens stressed his aim of creating a coherent identity for his journal so that *Household Words*, despite the diversity of its writers and the plethora of distinctive subjects it entertains, would seem to speak with a single uniform voice that would assimilate the journal's character with a Dickensian vision of life.

Stephen further writes: 'He [Dickens] at last reaches a kind of established level, on which he proceeds with hardly any variation. *You always know what you are to have for your money.* You can estimate with strange precision the kind and degree of satisfaction which you will derive from what is written...Mr. Dickens has long since reached this [exhausted] stage in his career.'²⁵ As suggested here, a brand is something whose quality has been already established and validated in the commercial market, something in whose efficacy consumers have developed a trust that their investment in its merchandise would not be a waste. Dickens, after years of arduous work, specifically after the success of *Pickwick Papers*, *Oliver Twist*, and especially his Christmas Books (which were highly significant in establishing Dickens as the leading figure in the Christmas market) finally earned such distinction. Douglas-Fairhurst's biography *Becoming Dickens* traces Dickens' career over the years analyzing exactly how Dickens reached this level of prominence and popularity in the publishing industry.²⁶ Commenting on the title of Dickens' periodical

²⁵ Collins, p.406.

²⁶ Robert Douglas-Fairhurst, *Becoming Dickens: The Invention of a Novelist* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard, Belknap, 2013), p.68.

Household Words, Percy Fitzgerald notes that nothing could be more internally familiar to the community than the conductor of *Household Words*: ‘the author [Dickens] himself’ was ‘a household word’, and ‘his writings household words’. Fitzgerald elaborates by asserting: ‘Dickens was a force, a power, a romantic figure. Anything by Dickens, a letter, a paper, an opinion, was sought out, talked over and devoured, and people were eager to know what he thought on any and every subject. *Household Words*, a mere two-penny journal, was to be found on every table and in every room, in the palace and the cottage.’²⁷

Dickens, even today, is a very powerful brand name that is highly marketable even two hundred years after his birth. During the bicentenary celebrations in 2012, huge profits were made, reinforcing how ardently the public invests in brand ‘Dickens’. According to Arifa Akbar, a literary correspondent who covered Dickens’ bicentenary in 2012 for *The Independent*: ‘Little has changed since 1868. The Dickens brand is as big and as powerful a cultural export as ever, beloved abroad and on the verge of making yet more skyscraper-shaped piles of cash for his bicentenary next year.....which is being globally marketed. The Dickens brand will be big business on the home front’.²⁸ There was a bewildering number of exhibitions, debates, films and plays launching throughout 2012, and an equally dazzling array for overseas audiences. The British Library, Museum of

²⁷ Fitzgerald, *Memories of Charles Dickens*, p.135

²⁸ ‘Great Expectations for Brand Dickens’, *The Independent*, 2 Dec 2011, <<http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/features/great-expectations-for-brand-dickens-6270459.html>>

London, and British Film Institute had begun very early that year by setting up all sorts of fairs based on Dickensian themes. The British Council ended up hosting events in 50 countries and 'Dickens 2012', the umbrella group co-ordinating festivities, received 'a rewarding return investment', as anticipated.²⁹

Whether it is the timelessness of his characters or the omnipresence of his narratives, Dickens transcends national and international boundaries. Grahame Smith argues in his book *Dickens, Money, and Society* (1968), that Dickens' fiction appeals to all age groups and all social classes across different cultures and countries; his quintessential depiction of Englishness and Victorian life intrigues readers worldwide and his voicing of social inequities allows the public to relate to his works.³⁰ Paul Schlicke further confirms the vast magnitude and extent of Dickens' celebrity, even posthumously, that never fails to create revenue for investors; 'it is testimony to Dickens's abiding relevance to the world which we have inherited', says Schlicke, pointing out the £3m expansion and redevelopment of the Charles Dickens Museum at 48 Doughty Street, London, during his bicentenary year. Schlicke writes: 'Celebrations for Dickens' two-hundredth birthday have been truly global in scope ranging from the pomp of royal reception to more humble readings and dramatizations by school children.' A great many events took place that year in London, central to his life and work, but also in distant corners of the world, 'from New Zealand to Iceland, China to Argentina, Istanbul to San Francisco and Kolkata to Berlin'. Schlicke gives detailed description of a wide range of educational and cultural events that

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Grahame Smith, *Dickens, Money, and Society* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1968), p. 75.

were coordinated by the British Council in over 50 countries worldwide to celebrate the bicentenary. There were all sorts of ‘exhibitions, publications, films, lectures, academic conferences, seminars, workshops, pub quizzes, guided tours, one man and one woman shows, educational projects, competitions, feasts, festivities’, and much else ‘all in the honour of an author who rose from humble Beginnings and who has been dead for one hundred and forty-two years.’³¹ This reinforces the extent and magnitude of Dickens’ impact as a brand that keeps on growing even in the twentieth-first century. This, in effect, arguably ensures a wide contemporary readership for Dickens’ collaborators today in their afterlife as well, given they co-authored the much-celebrated Christmas texts with the brand-author.

Studies by Juliet John, Robert Douglas Fairhurst and Grahame Smith scrutinize the factors leading to Dickens’ ascent to being, in a way, ‘The Most Popular Author in the World’.³² In *Dickens and Mass Culture*, John explores many important questions surrounding branding, commercial culture, mass reading publics, and celebrity, all of which are central to our understanding of Dickens as a literary enterprise. John notes: ‘Dickens himself uses the terms ‘mass’ and ‘masses’ prominently in his early writings on America, and on his first visit to the States, he is centrally concerned with mass culture understood as commercial market-driven culture’.³³

³¹ Paul Schlicke, “The Dickens Bicentenary.” *Dickens Quarterly*, vol. 29, no. 4, (2012), 378-89 (pp. 378-9). *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/45292613>. Accessed 7 Jun. 2022.

³² Juliet John, *Dickens and Mass Culture* (Oxford University Press, 2010) p.1

³³ Ibid. Also see, Wicke Jennifer. *Advertising Fictions: Literature Advertisement & Social Reading* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1988).

Dickens and Mass Culture investigates Dickens as an authorial brand in terms of print, public readings, film, theme parks, and the market. It could be said that Dickens was the first 'celebrity' author. He had to learn how to deal with the mob, the crowd, and the public, as he variously experienced his loving readers. Dickens' responses and attitude towards his obsessed fans clash and collide; the most famous example being recorded in his *American Notes*. Here, Dickens himself best records what it means to be a brand author and what leading the life of a celebrity involves. During his celebrated American Tour, Dickens writes to Forster from Boston, on January 28, 1842:

How can I tell you, what has happened since that first day (of my arrival)? How can I give you the faintest notion of my reception here; of the crowds that pour in and out the whole day; of the people that line the streets when I go out; of the cheering when I went to theatre; of the copies of verses, letters of congratulation, welcomes of all kinds, balls, dinners, assemblies without end? There is to be a public dinner to me here in Boston next Tuesday, and great dissatisfaction has been given to the many by the high price (three pounds sterling) of the tickets. There is to be a ball next Monday week at New York, and one hundred and fifty names appear on the list of the committee. There is to be a dinner in the same place, in the same week, to which I have had an invitation, with every known name in America appended to it. I have had deputations from the Far West, who have come from more than two thousand miles' distance: from the lakes, the rivers, the backwoods, the log houses, the cities, factories, villages, and towns. It is no nonsense and no common feeling... It is all heart. There never was and never will be such a triumph. ³⁴

As witnessed here, Dickens was at first elated by the ebullient crowd of passionate followers who wanted to get one glimpse of the celebrity author. However, after only one month from his arrival in America, Dickens became understandably frustrated by such treatment; he wrote to Forster, now explaining the perils and precariousness of being a celebrity:

I can do nothing that I want to do, go nowhere where I want to go, and see nothing that I want to see. If I turn into the street, I am followed by a multitude. If I stay at home, the house becomes,

³⁴ John Forster, *The Life of Charles Dickens*, 2 vols, 1 (New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1899), p. 225.

with callers, like a fair. If I visit a public institution with only one friend, the directors come down incontinently, waylay me in the yard, and address me in a long speech. I go to a party in the evening, and am so inclosed and hemmed about with people, stand where I will, that I am exhausted from want of air. I dine out, and have to talk about everything, to everybody. I go to church for quiet, and there is a violent rush to the neighbourhood of the pew I sit in, and the clergyman preaches *at* me. I take my seat in a railroad car, and the very conductor won't leave me alone. I get out at a station, and can't drink a glass of water without having a hundred people looking down my throat when I open my mouth to swallow. Conceive what all this is! Then by every post, letters on letters arrive, all about nothing, and all demanding an immediate answer. This man is offended because I won't live in his house; and that man is thoroughly disgusted because I won't go out more than four times in one evening. I have no rest or peace, and am in a perpetual worry.³⁵

In the above passage, though Dickens is trying to expose the dark side of this stardom, the description ends up emphasising even more, how exceptionally famous and popular the author really is and how successful that makes his brand. Dickens played an immense role in the marketing of his work and religiously engaged in the publicity and promotion of his productions, pretty much like the modern-day celebrities. He always remained in the public eye by the virtue of his constant travelling and official visits to other countries, his charity work, his participation in the private productions of some of his own theatrical endeavours, his associations with literary reviewers from various magazines and newspapers, and above all his scintillating public readings. Without the aid of artificial amplification, he held huge audiences (two thousand in Birmingham, three thousand seven hundred in Bradford) spellbound. Listeners fainted at his rendering of the murder of Nancy by Bill Sikes. It was a natural extension of his enthusiasm for amateur theatricals, but by now Dickens was the complete professional. He revised the extracts from his novels to make them dramatically more effective, rehearsed every nuance of his

³⁵ Ibid., p.229.

delivery, and supervised every detail of the staging and lighting. He made a good deal of money from these performances, but that was not his primary motive for undertaking them. He was addicted to the high that comes from thrilling and controlling an audience.... it was a way of maintaining his unique relationship with the public.³⁶

Dickens also used to organize and stage amateur theatrical performances of his plays within private settings and used to invite literary reviewers from various magazines and newspapers to see it. This added further to his mass media presence. Sometimes, he also encouraged his family members including his daughters and sister-in-law, to participate in these productions. One of the most famous examples of these productions is *The Frozen Deep* which was staged at his London home, and written in collaboration with Wilkie Collins. Owing to such involvements, Dickens and his works always remained in the social limelight and attracted the interest of national and international media, giving a well-intended boost to his marketability and circulation. Thus, Jane Smiley argues, it wouldn't be wrong to consider Dickens as the first celebrity. A celebrity is not just someone famous, but highly popular and able to sell themselves in such a way that everyone or everything associated with them becomes marketable. Becoming a celebrity or a brand couldn't have been possible before industrialization as mass production, fast transportation and communication are indispensable for establishing a direct contact between a celebrity/brand and his public.³⁷

³⁶ David Lodge, 'Dickens Our Contemporary', *The Atlantic*, May 2002, <<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2002/05/dickens-our-contemporary/302494/>>]

³⁷ John Forster and Jane Smiley, eds, *The Life of Charles Dickens: The Illustrated Edition* (New York, NY: Sterling Signature, 2011), p. 7.

Furthermore, the circulation of brand works is wider; thus, accessibility to a brand product is much higher as compared to the independent work of upcoming writers. Also, owing to a wider circulation, since a brand is commercially successful, it can afford to be relatively cheaper at its selling price as compared to independent works of new aspiring writers, resulting in even more consumers purchasing a brand product.³⁸ For example, the extra Christmas numbers of *Household Words* and *All the Year Round*, ranging from twenty-four to forty-eight pages, were priced at a mere 2d. By comparison, magazines such as *The Train* and *Temple Bar* (edited by two of Dickens' young men, Edmund Yates and George Augustus Sala; Yates also being the founder and proprietor of the former) were sixteen to twenty-four pages in length, that were priced at one shilling.³⁹ Also, to illustrate the difference between the sales and circulation figures, Dickens' extra Christmas numbers had a circulation of 300,000 per issue, whereas smaller publications such as *Temple Bar* sold around 13,000.⁴⁰

Resources, facilities and sponsorships provided by the brand/organization aid aspiring authors, who may not be that adept financially to carry out big overseas assignments, correspondence tours and other similar literary ventures on their own and

³⁸ Thomas Archer suggests that publications from relatively new and aspiring editors such as *The Train*, *Town Talk* and *The Comic Times* (all founded by the young Edmund Yates in mid to late 1850s) were 'prevented from becoming remunerative' by the 'lack of commercial experience'. See Thomas Archer, *The Highway of Letters and Its Echoes of Famous Footsteps* (London: Cassell, 1896) p. 491.

³⁹ 'Advertisements & Notices', *Daily News*, 27 April 1892, *British Library Newspapers*, p. 1. link.gale.com/apps/doc/BA3203245692/BNCN?u=leedsuni&sid=bookmark-BNCN&id=e1f39eb8. Accessed 16 June 2022.

⁴⁰ Sandra Kemp, Charlotte Mitchell, and David Trotter, 'Temple Bar: A London Magazine for Town and Country Readers', in *The Oxford Companion to Edwardian Fiction*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

who might not enjoy a high public profile so as to gain access to exclusive information and interviews that could prove instrumental for a valuable piece of writing. For example, much of Sala's fame is attributed to his *A Journey Due North* - travel writing and sketches of life and manners in Russia produced after he was sent (fully-equipped) by Dickens as a special correspondent at the end of the Crimean War.⁴¹ Dickens asked his sub-editor William Henry Wills to make sure that Sala was fully taken care of while he was on the special correspondence trip in Russia, and that he 'can have money from you while he is at work, *as he wants it*'. Dickens further wrote to Wills that 'when we come, on the completion of "Due North," to close our accounts, I shall arrange all things with (Sala) for his advantage.'⁴²

In addition to the sponsorships, the opportunity to expand one's business contacts and be recommended to contemporary publishers by a leading brand author was another of the several benefits of working for Dickens (as we will further explore in chapter two). Dickens also provided official letters of introduction and recommendation for his young apprentices to be sent to fellow editors and publishers of the day. For example, Dickens instructed his sub-editor Wills to officially write to Sampson and Low, one of the most well-known publishers during the 1850s, recommending a minor contributor's work for publication. Dickens writes, 'I should very much like to help Miss Power to publish her

⁴¹ Catherine Waters, "'Much of Sala, and but Little of Russia": "A Journey Due North", Household Words, and the Birth of a Special Correspondent', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 42 (4). (2009) pp. 305-323. p.305

⁴² Rudolf C. Lehmann, and William H. Wills. *Charles Dickens As Editor: Being Letters Written by Him to William Henry Wills, His Sub-Editor; Selected and Ed. by R. C. Lehmann* (New York, NY: Kraus, 1971), p. 225.

"Pictures from Egypt", if I could. As well as I can make out, it will form a good octavo volume about 6/- or 7/-. Will you mind asking Sampson Low if he would treat for it? He can see the MS. of course, and I shall have it on Monday. I would give him a good title for it, if he bought it. Miss Power wants to set her mind at rest about the book as soon as she can. *Of course, Low may know that I am interested in it.*⁴³ By emphasizing that he is interested in the book, Dickens is using his status and influence to sway the publishers into agreeing to publish an obscure beginner's work. This not only proliferated the business contacts of Dickens' minor contributors, who otherwise might not have been able to make them for themselves, but also significantly increased their chances of getting accepted for publication. Publishers were far more likely to be influenced and convinced by a letter of recommendation from Dickens than had they been independently approached by such minor writers. Being professionally affiliated to Dickens presented such obscure authors in a better light and made them more appealing for publishers.

The practice of anonymous publication is instrumental in understanding the practical effects of such collaborative endeavours on the reception of such obscure contributors in terms of the credit placement and authorial attribution. Philip Collins in *Charles Dickens: The Critical Heritage* notes the following regarding the literary review of *A House to Let* that was published in the *Saturday Review*, 25 December, 1858, by critic James Fitzjames Stephen: '*A House to Let* was the *Household Words* Extra Christmas

⁴³ Ibid.

Number, 1858. As usual, all items were anonymous, and the reviewer may be forgiven for not distinguishing between Mr Dickens and 'his imitators'; few reviewers did, or could.'⁴⁴

However, the negatives of anonymous writing could not be ignored. Sala wrote in his personal account *Things I Have Seen and People I Have Known*: 'The entire journal was anonymous. This had evil consequences to us, the "young men." When an attractive article appeared in *Household Words*, which might have been the work either of one of my colleagues or of myself, people used to say that "Dickens was at his best that week," whereas in many cases in that particular number he had not written a single line....Now this, judged by the present standard of literary ethics, was decidedly unfair to the rising authors who served their Chief with So much enthusiastic loyalty.'⁴⁵

Anonymous authorship could be beneficial to some extent when it came to dealing with the prejudgment of some brand-driven readers who could have skipped reading their stories and would have just read Dickens'. Cluelessness regarding which story is written by which author allowed an unbiased opinion to be formed about their works as the readers read them all and read them without any presumptions with a neutral mind. Overall, this settlement had both fostering as well as thwarting effects on new writers, as P.D. Edwards ruminates that like many other contributors, Sala later lamented that the need to conform to the Dickensian style of the magazine, and the fact that all his

⁴⁴ Collins, p.405

⁴⁵ George Augustus Sala, *Things I Have Seen And People I Have Known* (London: Cassell and Co., 1894), p. 81. <[http://www.forgottenbooks.com/readbook_text/Things I Have Seen and People I Have Known v1_1000515_043/101](http://www.forgottenbooks.com/readbook_text/Things_I_Have_Seen_and_People_I_Have_Known_v1_1000515_043/101)> [accessed 20 April 2016]

contributions were anonymous, 'retarded' the growth of his reputation.⁴⁶ But in reality, much of his writing for *Household Words* was widely recognized and admired, and it opened the way for him to become, within ten or twelve years, one of the two or three best-known journalists in England.⁴⁷

The following chapters form case studies of selected Christmas collaborators - Amelia Blanford Edwards, George Augustus Sala, Edmund Yates, Eliza Lynn Linton, and Charles Collins - that examine their apprenticeship under Dickens and the impact it had on their careers, analysing the pros and cons of their working arrangements and the professional relationship they shared with their mentor. A study of the available personal accounts and autobiographies of these authors gives an indication of the opportunities they came across as one of Dickens' collaborators and whether they thought they benefitted from this apprenticeship at all as regards achieving a respectable standing in contemporary literary circles or gaining financial stability and professional prospects.

The examination helps gain an insight into how much of their accomplishment could be attributed to or could be said to have been aided by this strategic arrangement. For example, Sala rose to fame after *A Journey Due North* was published under Dickens in *Household Words*: 'When Dickens sent George Augustus Sala as a special correspondent to Russia just after the end of the Crimean War, he launched him in what was to become

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Peter David Edwards, *Dickens's 'Young Men': George Augustus Sala, Edmund Yates, and the World of Victorian Journalism* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1997), p. 5.

his best-known role as a journalist.’⁴⁸ These case studies have been simultaneously intertwined with Dickens’ own perspective and attitude towards this arrangement – advantages and disadvantages for the brand/patron himself – best recorded in his personal and professional correspondences.

This study will examine how brand-names play with the minds of readers/consumers and shape their sensibility, inclinations and choices in the emporium of literature. It will further demonstrate how the nineteenth-century literary market used this strategy to its own advantage by publicizing new and obscure - and thus relatively cheap and amenable – authors under an esteemed and established identity. The study develops our knowledge of Dickens’ short fiction, especially the collaborative texts that have been largely unattended to and unresearched. For such an immensely documented author, in whom the public invests so much, and who has been vigorously researched, it is odd that his short fiction, predominantly his Christmas stories which form a significant part of his productions, is not well-known. This thesis aims to familiarize readers with these obscure and under-researched authors. I trace their career development, as well as their composition patterns and literary make-up under the rubric of Dickens, examining the prospects available for such upcoming writers when working for a successful brand.

Chapter 1 begins by examining the design of a typical ‘framed’ Christmas number produced by Dickens with his collaborators within *Household Words* and *All the Year*

⁴⁸Waters, *Commodity Culture*, p.1

Round. Considering Dickens' eclipsing presence as an apparent reason for the exclusion of other collaborators' stories from later reprints (the Diamond edition (1867) and all subsequent editions of the Collected Works), the chapter endeavours to look into structural reasons for this exclusion after a thorough textual analysis and a study of frame-design for the selected framed-Christmas numbers. This chapter then assesses the value and importance of the collaborators' stories to the overall narrative, examining their dispensability and their relationship with their respective frame-story, composed by Dickens. With regular omissions and exclusions, the identity and perception of these Christmas titles have been re-defined and reshaped as exclusively Dickensian compositions. The findings from this chapter will assist in scrutinizing the impact of such aspects on the professional success and literary standing of these lesser-known authors in later chapters. The observations gained from this chapter will also help towards developing more central concerns of the thesis, such as how the reality of being disregarded and eventually becoming 'dispensable' - despite being affiliated to Dickens - reflects upon the power-dynamics of collaborative authorship in the mid-nineteenth century.

Chapter 2 focusses on the case studies of Edmund Yates and George Augustus Sala, two of Dickens' most well-known 'young men'. The chapter attempts to explore the concept of literary apprenticeship under Dickens' editorship. The issue of stylistic and thematic imitation brings in the enquiry into the real function of the 'young men' hired for *Household Words* and *All the Year Round*. The sales figures, circulation figures, frequency of reprints (inclusive of translated versions) and reception including reviews, criticism,

ratings, commentaries etc. as regards the collaborative and standalone works are compared and contrasted. Perhaps one of the most important details in terms of recording Dickens' impact on Edmund Yates as one of his Christmas collaborators would be examining the fact that Yates framed a few of the later Christmas numbers for Dickens' magazine. *All the Year Round* resumed publishing extra Christmas Numbers in 1871 following Dickens' death in 1870. These numbers continued to adhere to Dickens' frame-tale design. It is little known that Edmund Yates provided the frame for the first three Christmas numbers of the recommenced series all of which are examined in this chapter. Some of these Christmas Annuals have been very difficult to locate and access.

Chapter 3 focuses on the chronological literary development of the most prolific Christmas collaborators for the *All the Year Round* - Amelia Blandford Edwards and Charles Allston Collins - through an analysis of their contributions to the Christmas numbers. The case studies themselves focus on the trajectory of the authors' critical and commercial success before, during and after their apprenticeship years under Dickens. This involves an analysis of the cause and effect relationship: an observation of how the collaborators' reception-quality and publication-rates fluctuate under the influence of their 'elite connection'. For this, critical reviews, composition history, proliferation of business contacts, and most prominently, career expansion in terms of employment offers and the frequency of reprints, have been examined.

The stories contributed by them to Dickens' Christmas numbers are compared to selected writings produced by them outside this collaborative setting within the same timeframe. These independent writings are selected on the basis of the degree of their readership and recognition – the works which reached a wider audience, and hence, whose reception has been relatively better recorded and reviewed, made ideal texts to be compared against the highly popular Christmas numbers. This assessment is made in the direct context of their literary apprenticeship under Dickens. It could be argued that Dickens' amenable protégées constantly showed changing and modifying patterns of writing and composition owing to the influence and expectations of their mentor. In order to observe such customisations in their literary styles, it proved best to take a work each from the earlier phases of their careers and one towards the end of the 1860s or post the conception of *All the Year Round's* Christmas numbers. Studying these representative samples provides an opportunity to compare their writing across its three phases: that is, works before, during, and after their collaboration with Charles Dickens.

Chapter 4 examines the Christmas stories contributed by Eliza Lynn Linton to Dickens' *Household Words*. Like most of the other Christmas collaborators, Linton's writing was also influenced by Dickens, but Linton's case becomes more interesting when we find that Dickens, in addition to exerting a literary influence on her, also borrowed certain elements from this Christmas collaborator's early pieces for his own compositions. Hence a comparative analysis is made between these two authors' selected works. Some of Linton's independent Christmas stories are explored in relation to the open-ended

nature of the periodical form in order to establish and demonstrate that Linton was the first writer in Dickens' Christmas number corpus to have penned an open-ended plot and perhaps to have commenced the pattern of such open-ended stories corresponding to the periodical form in the Christmas numbers of *Household Words* and *All the Year Round*.

II. With and Without Dickens: The Critical Reception of Dickens' Christmas Collaborators and the Rise of Christmas Annuals in the Victorian Periodical Press

Charles Collins, in his story 'To be Taken at the Dinner Table', contributed to *All the Year Round's* 1865 Christmas number *Dr Marigold's Prescriptions*, brings up the experience of 'occupy[ing] an ignoble space' and says: 'we come in at the bottom of a column, or occupy the very last lines of the periodical in which we appear.'⁴⁹ Though Collins is referring to the immediate topic concerning writers of conundrums and rebus puzzles upon which his story focuses and which held a minor, and often unnoticeable space in Victorian periodicals, the implication of his statement could be extended to the position and experience of Dickens' collaborators when featuring alongside the celebrity author. This is not in regard to the physical space that their contributions were given in the pages of Dickens' periodicals; however, it could be indicative of their reception by Victorian reviewers and literary critics. A great majority of the reviews of Dickens' collaborative Christmas numbers that appeared in nineteenth-century newspapers and periodicals

⁴⁹ Charles Allston Collins, "To be Taken at the Dinner-Table" in *Doctor Marigold's Prescriptions*, *All the Year Round*, 7 December 1865, pp.587-591 (p.587), in *Dickens Journals Online* <<http://www.djo.org.uk/all-the-year-round/volume-xiv/page-587.html>>

showed least interest in the contributions by Dickens' collaborators. The interpolated stories contributed by them seem to have been touched upon with a reluctance as if fulfilling an obligation of at least mentioning them for the sake of printing a 'comprehensive' review. The typical format of these reviews followed a generous discussion of Dickens' contribution which would mostly incorporate a warm approval of his composition along with a lengthy abstract from his portions of the collection, and it is towards the end that we often find one or two sentences referring to the interpolated stories, and on rare occasions, to their authors.

For example, the review in *The Leader* [December 6, 1856] spent all its space admiring the central plot of *Household Words*' 1855 Christmas number and giving excerpts from Dickens' frame, but for the interpolated stories, the reviewer just adds a line towards the end, stating: 'of the incidental stories we have no space to speak; and indeed there is no occasion.'⁵⁰ *The Reader* [Dec 17, 1864] published a review of *Mrs Lirriper's Legacy*, the 1864 Christmas number of *All the Year Round*, which assertively emphasised that Dickens' 'framework is doubtless the main attraction', whereas 'of the stories which arise out of Mrs Lirriper's visit to France [the interpolated stories]', it expressed: 'we can hardly speak in terms of praise.'⁵¹ Of 'the half-dozen tales which appear[ed] in the Christmas number' in addition to Dickens' tale in *Somebody's Luggage* (1862), all that the

⁵⁰ 'The "Household Words" Christmas Number', *The Leader*, 6 December 1856, p.105, *19th Century British Library Newspapers* <<https://www.gale.com/intl/c/british-library-newspapers-part-i>>

⁵¹ 'Christmas Stories', *The Reader*, 17 December 1864, pg. 765 *19th Century British Periodicals*, London, England, 'Christmas Stories'; *Derby Mercury*, December 17 1864, p.765, *19th Century British Library Newspapers* <<https://www.gale.com/intl/c/british-library-newspapers-part-i>>

reviewer could say was: 'they are mostly good, but we are mainly concerned for our waiter friend, in as much as 'Somebody' comes back again and looks for his luggage, which has been sold.' ⁵² That 'somebody's' story, of course, forms the main frame-tale of the collection and was penned by Dickens. Like most reviews, the *Derby Mercury* also devoted three quarters of its review to long excerpts from Dickens' sections and the remainder praises 'Mr. Charles Dickens' for 'hit[ting] upon a humorous and exceedingly ingenious plot.' ⁵³ *The Examiner*, while reviewing *The Wreck of the Golden Mary* (1856), summed up the interpolated stories in one sentence: 'The three or four tales told as Beguilement in the Boats are all good, but.....make a *comparatively* faint impression on the mind'. ⁵⁴ A review of *Doctor Marigolds' Prescriptions'* (1865) by E.S. Dallas published in *The Times* stated: 'Of the separate tales now published we do not propose to speak...they are a well-selected batch of short stories, which, however, call for no special remark. The interest of the critic and of the reader will rest upon Mr. Dickens's introductory narrative....a witty and pleasing [frame] chapter in which Mr Dickens attempts to carry off the absurdity and the dead weight of the chapters which his joint stock company have added to his.'⁵⁵ Here the reviewer not only implies that the sections by Dickens' collaborators are not solicited or welcomed by readers but further widens the gap between peerless Dickens and his

⁵² 'Christmas Literature', *Derby Mercury*, December 24 1862, p.118, *19th Century British Library Newspapers*, <<https://www.gale.com/intl/c/british-library-newspapers-part-i>>

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ 'The Wreck of the Golden Mary', *The Examiner*, December 20th 1856, p.804, *19th Century British Periodicals* <<https://www.gale.com/intl/c/british-library-newspapers-part-i>>

⁵⁵ Collins, pg.415

apparently mediocre collaborators by suggesting that Dickens has to go an extra mile to keep the standards of his Christmas annual intact. The reviewer goes on to write a scathing criticism of the interpolated stories and their authors:

The Irish Legend which comes second in *Dr Marigold's Prescriptions*, and which is "not to be taken at bedtime", might we believe be taken with perfect impunity, at that or any other hour in even the most haunted house. The narrative of the composer of popular conundrums like popular conundrums in general, is very deadly; and if any man is capable of spending his life in producing rebuses, it is possibly the gentleman who has devoted so much of his valuable time to composing chapter three in *Dr Marigold's Prescriptions*. The stories of a Quakeress, of a detective policeman, and of a murdered man's ghost follow. They are very poor and very stupid and are only fit for perusal in a railway train at that critical period when all the daily papers have been exhausted and no book or periodical of any kind is to be had within a hundred miles. *Dr Marigold's Prescriptions* is to be had for a moderate sum. *Mr. Dickens is definitely worth it all*; but we very much doubt whether his assistants are worth the paper on which their efforts of genius have been printed. ⁵⁶

Some critics even went on to suggest that Dickens had made a mistake in switching from his old practice of producing single-authored Christmas Books (the Christmas Books) to multi-authored and collaborative Christmas ventures (the extra Christmas numbers). As the season's literature had become synonymous with Dickens' name and identity, for a few, sharing his Christmas productions with others meant that the delights of Dickensian Christmas would be stripped of its purity and may thus appear less valuable to the ardently devoted readers who awaited Dickens' Christmas compositions every year. Given the impact and market created by Dickens' Christmas books earlier, his Christmas numbers unsurprisingly proved very popular and reached sales of a massive 300,000 per issue. To understand the scope of these figures and to get a relative outlook - *The Times*, Britain's leading and most well-known newspaper in the 1850s, had a circulation of around

⁵⁶ Ibid.

40,000.⁵⁷ Victorian critic Charles Kent stated in *The Sun* in 1866:

As reasonably welcome as either plum-pudding let us say, or as mince-pies – and, just as inevitable for many years past, on the annual coming round of December – have been the successive Christmas numbers of Mr Dickens’ periodical. He has so far spoilt us in their regard, that we have long since come to look forward to them every succeeding twelvemonth almost as indispensable seasonal matter of course. It would be difficult to think, somehow, of celebrating Christmas without, for example, dangling a pendant bunch of mistletoe overhead, or without wreathing green branches and red berries about the pannellings of our home-rooms, as without according once more a welcome, not merely upon our hearths, but within our hearts, to some new tales or series of tales more or less appropriate to the season – to the holy-days and the holly-nights of Christmas-tide – tales told by our Great Novelist at regular intervals.’⁵⁸

However, when these Christmas collaborators contributed to the Christmas numbers of other Victorian periodicals, the reviewers engaged with them substantially and gave them equal attention and space as compared to the other contributors of that number. Dickens undoubtedly commenced and popularised the practice of publishing extra Christmas numbers in the periodical industry and the market for this seasonal product expanded remarkably during the mid-nineteenth century.

In December 1865, the *Belfast Morning News* stated that ‘the publication of “an extra double number at Christmas” has become a recognised custom on the part of all or nearly all the weekly periodicals.’⁵⁹ With the increase in the demand for issues exclusively devoted to Yuletide fiction, not only the readers, but also the publishers of Victorian periodicals looked up to Dickens’ Christmas numbers as a model and the editors tried to adopt his approach to the making of their own Christmas story collections. This naturally

⁵⁷ D. J. R. Bruckner, ‘How the Earlier Media Achieved Critical Mass’, *The New York Times*, 20 November 1995. p.5. The circulation of *The Times* rose from 5,000 in 1815 to 50,000 in the 1850s.

⁵⁸ Collins, p.419

⁵⁹ ‘Doctor Marigold’s Prescriptions’, *Belfast Morning News*, December 11, 1865, p.4.

19th Century British Library Newspapers <<https://www.gale.com/intl/c/british-library-newspapers-part-i>>

created more job opportunities for Dickens' Christmas collaborators, given the fact that they had been a part of the highly successful 'original' scheme with the master himself. They were deemed experienced in composing Dickensian themes and designs for Christmas annuals and thus, a safe choice for composing Yuletide stories for the periodicals relatively new to the business. For their contributions to other periodicals, Dickens' collaborators not only maintained the same thematic features and characteristic styles as they used under Dickens' editorship, but some of his collaborators even went on to adopt and imitate his frame-tale technique to formulate their own Christmas numbers, produced for the periodicals they edited later in their careers. This deepened Dickens' impact on this practice of producing special Christmas annuals and exerted his influence directly on the genre production and design.

Edmund Yates, for example, one of Dickens' most well-known 'young men', constructed multiple Christmas numbers for *Tinsley's Magazine* and *The Welcome Guest* in his capacity as the periodicals' editor during the 1860s using Dickens' frame-tale technique.⁶⁰ Yates was clearly following his mentor's approach because not only were various unrelated tales put together using a connecting frame device, but the frame was written by Yates himself, which he considered to be his job as the editor. Yates' adoption of this method begins to seem more like an imitation when we find that even the thematic scenarios - that could potentially form a functional connecting frame and gather different

⁶⁰Yates edited *Tinsley's Magazine* from its inception in August 1867 to ca. July 1869. He conceived and edited the following multi-authored framed Christmas numbers for the periodical: *Storm-bound* (1867); *A Stable for Nightmares* (1868) and *Thirteen at Table* (1869).

characters to tell each other stories - are highly similar and resemble situations from Dickensian Christmas frames. For instance, the frame-tale used in *Storm-bound* (1867), which was the first Christmas annual of *Tinsley's Magazine* formulated and edited by Yates, brings a bunch of characters together by holding them stranded on a maritime station amidst a snow-storm, waiting for the storm to be over; this naturally leads to communal storytelling as a way to pass the time and to introduce multiple interpolated stories into the frame. The frame-tale wraps up after including ten interpolated stories related by the stranded passengers as everyone gets ready to depart after the storm has cleared up. The thematic design and the setting is utilitarian and modelled on the frame of Dickens' *The Holly Tree Inn* (1855) where the narrator finds himself in an identical situation and is accidentally snowed in at an inn; as a result, he seeks the company of the staff staying at the inn with him and asks them to tell tales while waiting for the snow-storm to clear. Yates used this thematic scenario not once but twice for composing a Christmas frame. Yates' *Snow-bound*, the 1861 Christmas number for *The Welcome Guest*, is another framed narrative that uses the same set of themes as the title suggests. Yates too, like other editors of the time, invited Dickens' collaborators and his former colleagues to contribute stories to his Christmas Annuals. Akin to Dickens' pattern of authorial distribution and compositional structure, the interpolated contributions were framed by an introduction and conclusion written by Yates himself.⁶¹ *Storm-bound* was followed

⁶¹ *Storm-bound* (1867) consisted of the following ten interpolated stories: 'The Queen's Messenger's Story' By the Author of *Guy Livingstone* [George Alfred Lawrence]; 'The Solicitor's Story' By Shirley Brooks; 'The Story of Suzette' By the Author of *Archie Lovell* [Annie Edwards]; 'The Story of a Man in a Hurry' By George Augustus Sala; 'The Story of Salome' By the Author of *Barbara's History* [Amelia B. Edwards]; 'The Story of the Yellow Bandanna' By Charles Allston Collins; "'The Detrimental's" Story'; 'The Stewardess's Story.' By 'Aunt Anastasia';

by similar Christmas Annuals by Yates and Tinsley; *A Stable for Nightmares* (1868) and *Thirteen at Table* (1869) are also framed narratives and employ the frame-tale technique to assemble discrete tales under the same title.⁶² Hence, it is apparent that Yates assumed the role of Dickens when he became an editor of Christmas annuals.⁶³ This marks a significant influence on the professional development of Yates as a writer as well as a periodical editor. We will explore Yates' framed Christmas numbers in comparison to those of Dickens in much greater detail in Chapter Two.

Likewise, *Unwin's Christmas Annual* issued in 1886 by T. Fisher Unwin was another of the several publications which adopted Dickens' approach and used an identical structure and similar themes for its Christmas frame-tales. For instance, *Unwin's Christmas Annual* for 1886, entitled *The Broken Shaft*, is formed of seven stories, together with an introductory chapter setting up a framing narrative, which is returned to at the end of each subsequent tale.⁶⁴ This connecting narrative concerns a group of

'A Story of the Hills' by E. Lynn Linton; 'How a Man was Dressed to Death.' By Andrew Halliday; 'The Manager's Story' By J. Palgrave Simpson; The 'Introduction' and the 'Conclusion' that formed the frame of the number was written by the its editor Edmund Yates.

⁶² Edmund Yates et al., 'Storm-Bound', *Tinsley's Magazine*, (London: Tinsley Bros., 1867)

⁶³ Edmund Yates et al., 'A Stable for Nightmares', *Tinsley's Magazine*, (London: Tinsley Bros., 1868). Also see, Edmund Yates et al., 'Thirteen at Table', *Tinsley's Magazine*, (London: Tinsley Bros., 1869)

⁶⁴ Henry Norman et al., 'The Broken Shaft: Tales of Mid-Ocean', *Unwin's Christmas Annual*, (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1885). As well as being an entertaining collection of late-Victorian short fiction in its own right, the annual represents the original publication of three classic supernatural stories – 'The Upper Birth' by F. Marion Crawford, 'Markheim' by Robert Louis Stevenson and 'Marjory' by F. Anstey. The other stories in the collection are: 'The Action to the World' by Walter Herries Pollock, 'My Fascinating Friend' by William Archer, 'Riley, M.P.' by Tighe Hopkins and 'Love and Lightning' by Henry Norman. A charming literary-historical feature is the caricatured versions of the writers, who figure as themselves in the framing

travellers on a transatlantic crossing. When their ship the 'Bavaria' suffers a 'broken shaft', they are forced to remain becalmed mid-ocean, telling stories to pass the time. The series of stories are connected in narrative form by the editor, Henry Norman, who also contributes the first and the last stories of the narrative. This frame setting is almost identical to Dickens' *The Wreck of the Golden Mary*, which formed the 1855 Christmas number of *Household Words*, and remains one of the most successful Christmas numbers that ever appeared in the periodical.⁶⁵ The frame in this narrative features the wreck of a ship named the 'Golden Mary' which leaves the passengers aboard stranded in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean and they tell each other stories to stay calm and hopeful.

Like Yates, several other Christmas collaborators of Dickens went on to edit and write for several different publications, and to formulate their extra Christmas issues. For example, George Augustus Sala edited the magazines *Temple Bar* (early 1860s) and *Bow Bells* (late 1860s), both of which issued special Christmas Numbers designed by him; William Moy Thomas and John Hollingshead jointly edited the periodical *Weekly Mail* in

narratives. Crawford is referred to as 'the Novelist', Stevenson as 'the Romancer', Pollock as 'the Editor' and Archer as 'the Critic'.

⁶⁵ This particular number was both commercially and critically the most successful Christmas number of *Household Words*. See 'The "Household Words" Christmas Number', *The Leader*, December 6, 1856, p.1171, *19th Century British Library Newspapers*; 'The Wreck of the Golden Mary' in 'The Literary Examiner', *The Examiner*, December 20, 1856, p.804, *19th Century British Library Newspapers*; Dickens himself considered this particular issue to be 'the prettiest Christmas no.' that the '[*Household Words*] has ever had'. He even claimed that '[he] never wrote anything more easily, or [he] think[s] with greater and stronger belief'. More importantly though, Dickens found 'the Narrative too strong (speaking as a reader of it; not as its writer) to be broken by the [interpolated] stories'. Charles Dickens, *The Pilgrim Edition: The Letters of Charles Dickens*, 12 vols, 8 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965) p. 222.

the mid-1850s and composed its Yuletide narratives; and the magazine *Belgravia* – which had M. E. Braddon as its official editor - was largely shaped by the above names who were frequent contributors; Yates and Sala often shared its editorial duties; they and a number of Dickens' other young men such as Hollingshead, Blanchard Jerrold, William Moy Thomas, and Sydney Blanchard regularly composed the *Belgravia Christmas Annuals* and implemented the Dickensian mode of composing those Christmas issues. Even for the standard issues, *Belgravia* generally followed the example of Dickens' editorial system and his pattern of conducting his periodicals (the very reason why it hired several of Dickens' young men as permanent staff).

Even some publishers who did not run a periodical or a magazine at the time, like Arrowsmith and Routledge amongst others, started to publish Christmas Annuals following Dickens' method.⁶⁶ Seeing the benefits of investing in this mode of literature and the overwhelming market for multi-authored and collaborative Christmas issues, they issued annual volume publications themed on Christmas instead of more frequent periodical issues. These annuals featured collections of similar Christmas stories by multiple contributors, and they largely employed Dickens' Christmas collaborators.

⁶⁶ See *Routledge's Christmas Annual* and *Arrowsmith's Christmas Annual* at *Hathi Trust* <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/hvd.32044036330041> Also see, Troy J. Bassett, 'Periodical: *Arrowsmith's Christmas Annual*', in *At the Circulating Library: A Database of Victorian Fiction*, [accessed (15 June 2022)], Also see, Chester W. Topp, *Victorian Yellowbacks and Paperbacks*, Volume 8 (Denver: Hermitage Antiquarian Bookshop, 2005)

Hence, it can be seen how Dickens' idea and innovative scheme of publishing exclusive Christmas issues trailblazed and prompted a wide sector of the Victorian publishing industry to follow in his footsteps. This was further aided by the fact that his Christmas apprentices went on to participate extensively in Christmas Numbers of other contemporary publications and thus spread Dickens' model whilst expanding his original scheme into a much broader practice of nineteenth-century print culture. A revived interest in the festival and a consequently strong market for this mode of fiction also jointly established the customary practice of printing special issues devoted exclusively to the celebration of Christmas.

Coming back to the augmented employment scope for Dickens' collaborators, as far as the Victorian reviews are concerned, they were received relatively well and given far more attention than they did when they were co-collaborators alongside Dickens. The reviews of *Routledge's Christmas Annuals*, published between 1867 and 1880, form good examples for studying this difference. Most of the main contributors to Dickens' Christmas numbers were later employed by Edmund Routledge (amongst other Victorian publishers) for the task of producing Christmas fiction for his brand. Major Dickensian collaborators, including Amelia Blandford Edwards, Andrew Halliday, Hesba Stetton, Edmund Yates, George Augustus Sala, and Eliza Lynn Linton were employed by Routledge to contribute to *Routledge's Christmas Annual* from the 1860s onwards. The reviews and critical reception of these authors changed dramatically when they featured independently

of Dickens. *The Yorkshire Gazette*, for example, opened its review of the 1867 collection by stating: "Routledge's Christmas Annual for 1867 is a very entertaining volume of Christmas literature. The authors comprise the best and most popular ones of the day."⁶⁷ The stories featuring in Routledge's first Christmas Annual (1866) were described by *The Racing Times* to 'have an indescribable charm'; after naming and recommending the contributors of the collection individually, the review states that the stories are written in 'these celebrated authors' best style', precisely what makes the collection successful.⁶⁸ Authors who until now were not even worth 'speak[ing] of' suddenly became 'celebrated' when they were placed in a different publishing context i.e. without Dickens. Also, when the reviewer suggests that the collection exhibits their 'best style', it gives the impression that these authors must have cultivated their own independent style, at least to the extent that it had become recognizable by reviewers as distinctive and personal, rather than being mere emulations of the Dickensian school. Thus, it could be said that the standalone compositions of such contributors, published independently of Dickens, yielded more positive reviews and reactions when compared to those of their collaborative appearances with the illustrious literary giant. Moreover, such variations in the reception are concerned with the workings of the same genre and mode of publication i.e. the Christmas Annuals, so the fluctuations in reviews cannot be attributed to a change

⁶⁷ 'Routledge's Christmas Annual', *The Yorkshire Gazette*, 17 November 1866, p. 2

⁶⁸ 'Routledge's Christmas Annual', *The Racing Times* Monday, 12 November 1866, p. 5

of genre, which one might consider could affect the contributors' ability to adapt and the quality of their compositions. Hence, the only major difference that remains between the two categories of compositions which form the subject of these opposing appraisals is the presence or absence of Dickens' participation in the collective authorship.

III. Collective Authorship and Misplaced Attribution

As established above, Charles Dickens' *Household Words* and *All the Year Round*, sticking with the norm of the Victorian periodical industry, published all its contributors anonymously while the entire periodical and every piece of writing in it bore the stamp of 'Dickens'.⁶⁹ In addition to being the title of the periodical, this imprimatur - '*Household Words.....Conducted by Charles Dickens*'- was even affixed to the header of the print template for the periodical, hence appearing on every single leaf of the thirty-six-page-weekly. Such being the case, *Household Words*, despite being 'multi-authored' projected 'a powerful single identity into the public sphere, to access and influence the minds of a mass readership'.⁷⁰ This mononymous projection and practice had 'evil consequences' - as George Augustus Sala, one of Dickens' 'young men' and contributors to *Household Words* claims - for the new and upcoming young writers who were trying to establish themselves in the demanding Victorian literary market. Sala recalled in his memoir *Things*

⁶⁹ Drew, *Dickens the Journalist*, p.106. Also see Peter D. Edwards, *Dickens's 'Young Men': George Augustus Sala, Edmund Yates and the World of Victorian Journalism* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2016).

⁷⁰ Drew, *Dickens the Journalist*, p.106.

I Have Seen and People I Have Known (1894): 'When an attractive article appeared in *Household Words*, which might have been the work either of one of my colleagues or of myself, people used to say that "Dickens was at his best that week," whereas in many cases in that particular number he had not written a single line.'⁷¹ John Hollingshead writes that 'All Dickens' 'young men' were supposed to be imitators of the master, and the master was always credited with their best productions.'⁷²

This suggests that the 'mononymous'⁷³ fashion in which the periodical was presented, marketed and identified, may have hampered the career development of its unknown contributors, as the illustrious 'name and fame' of its editor, according to Elizabeth Barrett Browning, largely 'swallow[ed] up every sort of minor reputation in the shadow of its path'.⁷⁴ Barrett Browning wrote that writing anything in collaboration with the celebrity author 'must be highly unsatisfactory', as Dickens's stature eclipsed anyone who would engage in joint authorship with him: 'I shouldn't like, for my part (and if I were a fish), to herd with crocodiles.' Despite this many aspiring young authors with minor reputations still chose to engage in authorial collaborations with Dickens and took pride in being a contributor to his illustrious journals.

⁷¹ Sala, *Things I Have Seen and People I Have Known*. p.80

⁷² John Hollingshead, and Malcolm Morley. *My Lifetime*. (London: Lampson Low, Marston, 1895), p.123

⁷³ Douglas Jerrold, a prolific and well-known author of the day, termed *Household Words* 'mononymous' when he found out about Dickens's policy of anonymous publication. See Richard Kelly, *Douglas Jerrold*. (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1972) p.96

⁷⁴ Elizabeth B Browning, and Frederick G. Kenyon. *The Letters of Elizabeth Barrett Browning* (New York: Macmillan and Co., 1897) p.112. One of the reasons for this, as Barrett Browning states, was that 'the *Household Words* pay' rather well 'and that's a consideration.' We shall explore this in greater detail later.

Several incidents of misattribution in *Household Words* can be found. Misattributions were not limited to the first appearance of articles where critics and commentators, reviewing the latest issues of the journal, often assumed them to be by Dickens but also extended to reprints and volume collections. Some examples are as follows. Six of Sala's *Household Words* contributions were reprinted in whole or part in *Harper's* without acknowledging the author at all: his 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, and Musketry' (1851) was simply credited to *Household Words*, and "What Christmas Is in the Company of John Doe" was credited to Dickens. Outside England, even those few special articles, which became popular enough, such that their authorship did not pose any confusion in English literary circles, were wrongly attributed to Dickens.⁷⁵ For example, in France, Sala's "The Key of the Street" was translated and published as 'by Charles Dickens' in a volume entitled *Nouveaux contes de Charles Dickens* in 1853. Sala was quite disappointed when in '1853 or 1854' he 'purchased at M. Dentu's bookstall in the Palais Royal, Paris' a work in French "purporting to be the *Nouveaux Contes de Charles Dickens*, translated by M. Amedee Pichot ... and among the ten or twelve essays and stories in this collection I recognised translations of my own 'Key of the Street', and I think, of another

⁷⁵ Sala, *Things I Have Seen and People I Have Known*. pp.80-81

article of my writing".⁷⁶ Sala believed that he 'materially suffered from this systematic suppression of [his] name'.

John Hollingshead's much celebrated article 'The City of Unlimited Paper' (1857) was attributed to 'the powerful hand of Dickens' by the *Daily Telegraph*.⁷⁷ Richard H. Horne's 'London Sparrows' (1851) was credited to Dickens by *Harper's*. Amelia Edwards recalls in her personal letters (which I will discuss further in Chapter 3), that many of her stories that were contributed to Dickens' Christmas numbers were reprinted in America under Dickens' name. Edwards' ghost stories, written for various Christmas Annuals during the 1860s, substantially borrowed thematic ideas from Dickens, and her plot designs often resembled those of Dickens' Christmas contributions; hence, it is not difficult to see why reviewers and publishers in America mistook her Christmas stories to be the work of Dickens. A development of her works' thematic aspects akin to Dickens' treatment of ghost stories is easily traceable, as we will demonstrate in greater detail in Chapter Three. 'A Child's Hymn' in Harriet Parr's 'Poor Dick's Story' in *The Wreck of the Golden Mary* was attributed to Dickens and remained so for quite some time until Dickens was approached by the editor and publisher Henry Allon, who sought Dickens' permission to republish the hymn in his *New Congregational Hymn Book* (1857), upon which Dickens directed his

⁷⁶ Sala, *Things I Have Seen and People I Have Known*. pp.79-81

⁷⁷ Hollingshead, *My Lifetime*. p.122

attention to Miss Parr as the actual author. 'A Suburban Romance' by W.H. Wills was credited to Dickens when it was included by Alice and Phoebe Cary in their *Josephine Gallery* in 1859. Similarly, Wills' 'A Curious Dance round a Curious Tree' was credited to Dickens while it was issued twice as a promotional pamphlet by St. Luke's Hospital for Lunatics in 1860 and printed in the *First Editions of Writings of Charles Dickens*.⁷⁸ "My Wonderful Adventures in Skitzland" was included in *Choice Stories from Dickens' Household Words*, published in Auburn, N.Y., 1854. "Drooping Buds", acknowledged to H.W., was issued in 1852 as a promotional pamphlet by the Hospital for Sick Children, Great Ormond St.⁷⁹

The articles which contributors produced in collaboration with Dickens were even more prone to a misplacement of authorial credit. Out of the four 'collaborative' (or so they were recorded in *Household Words Office Book*) articles written jointly between Richard H. Horne and Dickens, only one - 'One Man in a Dockyard' - is an actual collaboration i.e. co-authored, but the others, including 'Cain in the Fields' and 'The Great Exhibition and The Little One', were authored by Horne alone with Dickens merely revising them and adding a few phrases here and there in his capacity as the editor.⁸⁰ Out of the

⁷⁸ *Harper's Magazine*, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1850-1870). Full volumes available online at *Hathi Trust Digital Library*, <<https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000505748>>

⁷⁹ John C. Eckel, *The First Editions of the Writings of Charles Dickens*, (New York, NY: Inman, 1932) p.73

⁸⁰ See Anne Lohrli, *Household Words: A weekly journal 1850-1859 conducted by Charles Dickens: table of contents, list of contributors and their contributions, based on the Household Words Office Book in the Morris L. Parish Collection of Victorian novelists*, Princeton University Library (Toronto and Buffalo, NY: University of Toronto Press, 1973). Also see Stone, *Charles Dickens' Uncollected Writings from Household Words*, p.275

eighteen articles that are considered to be jointly produced between Wills and Dickens, the majority of them just were just lightly revised by Dickens and could not be deemed as actual collaborations; yet Dickens was credited with equal authorship of these articles alongside Wills.⁸¹ Besides this, even some of the articles which Wills wrote individually and which the *Household Words* Office Book evidently records as solely by Wills, like 'A Plated Article', were republished as Dickens' writing in his later volume collections, with no acknowledgment of its joint authorship. One other such article entitled 'Chips', listed as solely by Wills in the *Household Words* Office Book, was published in F.G. Kitton's *The Minor Writings of Charles Dickens* (1900) (compiled with the help of Charles Dickens the younger).⁸²

Some other collaborative cases in *Household Words* experienced a similar lack of acknowledgment and this seems to have affected the collaborative parties in accordance with their status and position on the *Household Words* staff and in general as professional authors. Just as Wills was often neglected and forgotten when his collaborations were reprinted in Dickens' collections, Wills reprinted many articles under his own name in his collection *Old Leaves: Gathered from Household Words* (1860), which were actually produced in collaboration with some of the even more obscure and infrequent contributors to the journal. For example, 'Railway Waifs and Strays' (1850) was jointly written by Christopher Hill and Wills, and 'The Tyrant of Minnigissengen' (1851) was co-

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Frederic G. Kitton, *The Minor Writings of Charles Dickens: A Bibliography and Sketch*. (London: Elliot Stock, 1900) p.81

authored with James Knox, yet Wills did not mention their names anywhere in his collection, let alone crediting them with an equal share in the authorship. This shows that an authorial hierarchy existed within *Household Words* and *All the Year Round*, such that the names of the editor and the sub-editor carried more weight than that of other contributors. Even though Wills was subordinate to Dickens, he was ranked much higher than other co-authors in terms of authorial desirability by publishers when it came to reprinting their works from the periodicals in volume forms. Success as a professional writer in the publishing market is often measured by the extent to which the reprints of their work are in demand. This is one of the vital elements of career growth as a professional author.

Nigel Cross in his book, *The Common Writer: Life in Nineteenth-Century Grub Street* (1985) argues that publishers aim to sell books and 'books teeming with accounts of unknown or forgotten writers are unlikely to be profitable'. The chances of a minor writer being 'able to place a volume of memoirs depends almost entirely on the inclusion of a substantial number of new anecdotes about more famous writers.' Hence, we often find that 'obscure reputations' hardly ever secure 'reprint series' because 'reprints are subject to the same pressures' of the literary marketplace that 'excluded such writers from the received version of English literature in the first place.' Therefore, even the 'worst work of the literary giants remains in print', whereas 'the best work of their humble

contemporaries was pulped for waste paper long ago.⁸³ Hence it is understandable why so many of these young contributors to Dickens' journals thought it profitable to convert this valuable experience of working with the great Charles Dickens into publishable memoirs. Writers like James Payn, Percy Fitzgerald, Edmund Yates, Sala, and Hollingshead, amongst others, thoroughly capitalized on their association with Dickens and turned their professional engagement and interactions with the author into highly solicited accounts, recollections and autobiographies. To take one example, after Dickens's death, Fitzgerald published *The History of Pickwick, Bozland, Pickwickian Manners and Customs*, and other volumes of Dickensiana, including an anthology, *Pickwickian Wit and Humour*.⁸⁴ He delivered lectures on Dickens that were published in 1864 and, moreover, dedicated his novel *Never Forgotten* to Dickens. He wrote a laudatory life of "the Master" *Life of Charles Dickens*, I and II, and also *Memories of Charles Dickens*. Fitzgerald used Dickens as literary capital for more than twenty periodical articles; one of which gave offence to Georgina Hogarth; another brought a public reprimand from Dickens's son Henry.⁸⁵ He executed busts of Dickens, founded the Boz Club, and was first president of the Dickens Fellowship.

The two chief reasons for above misattributions were the mode of anonymous

⁸³ Nigel Cross, *The Common Writer: Life in Nineteenth-Century Grub Street*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) pp.1-2. Nigel Cross goes on to give the example of a common and 'insignificant' George Hodder who was able to publish his memoirs because of his connection with Dickens and Thackeray as the public and the publisher wanted intimate glimpses of great writers, not an account of George Hodder's own writing career.

⁸⁴ See Percy Hetherington Fitzgerald, *History Of Pickwick* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1891).

⁸⁵ Arthur A. Adrian, *Georgina Hogarth and the Dickens Circle* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957) p.338.

publishing and the practice of imitating Dickens pursued by many of his collaborators. As for the debate surrounding anonymous publishing, Dickens presented conflicting thoughts and reasons to maintain anonymity in his periodicals. At first, he stressed his aim of creating a coherent identity for his journal, so that *Household Words*, despite the diversity of its writers and the plethora of distinctive subjects it entertains, would seem to speak with a single uniform voice. However, in his correspondence, he expresses how *Household Words*, largely because of its anonymity, allowed him to run a periodical without being 'forced to put [him]self into it, in [his] old shape', without having to 'write it all' as was the case with *Master Humphrey's Clock* - the only previous journal which Dickens truly regarded as his own. He was at liberty to create the journal's character and control the style of its contents to his satisfaction because he was the 'only' contributor writing the entire journal. This changed with *Household Words*, where despite using other hands to share the burden of filling columns, he was able to assimilate the journal's character with a Dickensian vision of life, which in a way, made it seem to have been written by Dickens alone, thus fulfilling both his purposes.

The issue of stylistic and thematic imitation brings forward the enquiry into the real function of the 'young men' hired by *Household Words*. Dickens' 'young men' included George Augustus Sala, Edmund Yates, Blanchard Jerrold, Sydney Blanchard, William Moy Thomas, Walter Thornbury, John Hollingshead, James Payn, Percy Fitzgerald,

and Andrew Halliday.⁸⁶ Sala wrote in his *Life and Adventures of George Augustus Sala* that ‘Dickens's young men were, to a certain extent, *constrained* to imitate the diction of their chief, and I fell in with the trick as deftly as perhaps my colleagues did.’⁸⁷ This statement suggests that a team of especially devoted and amenable obscure authors were recruited, who were specifically expected to produce articles which extended the Dickensian vision and treatment of life. Thus, uniform and consistent issues for the journal could be produced, which exhibited a similar authorial style throughout, without Dickens having to ‘write it all’.

A combination of anonymity and imitation thus makes it understandable why works by other authors were so frequently attributed to Dickens. It was not just Dickens’ ‘young men’ who emulated him, but to meet Dickens’ standards, many other young and aspiring *Household Words* contributors, men and women, often ended up imitating Dickens’ style and techniques so as to make their writings more compatible with his general approach and interests, sometimes suppressing their own individual style and narrative voice which further made it difficult to distinguish them from Dickens. Moreover, as is well-recorded by John Drew, Anne Lohrli, Harry Stone, and P.D. Edwards, Dickens was a thorough editor who painstakingly revised most of the submitted manuscripts himself and couldn’t help adding phrases or supplying titles that reinforced

⁸⁶ Edwards, *Dickens’s ‘Young Men’*, p.1.

⁸⁷ Sala, *Things I Have Seen and People I Have Known*, p.81.

Dickensian humour and fancy.⁸⁸ According to Sala, 'These thoroughly Dickensian touches, added purely by his own autocratic will' might have done 'a great deal of good to the productions of his young men; but, at the same time, the frequency of Dickensian tropes, illustrations, and metaphors, interpolated in the articles of his disciples, led to their being taunted with being slavish imitators of their leader', and their work being misattributed.⁸⁹ John Hollingshead wrote in his autobiographical recollection *My Lifetime* (1895) that 'All Dickens's "young men" were supposed to be imitators of the master, and the master was always credited with their best productions.'⁹⁰ This interestingly suggests that the collaborators were caught in a double (or even triple) bind. As Peter Blake asserts, if the contributors 'failed to imitate' Dickens' style, their work would be subject to revision; if they copied him, then their contributions would be passed off as the editor's own.⁹¹ They met with a similar treatment from reviewers and the public as well; that is to say, when they did not give into the temptation of imitating Dickens, most critics complained that the 'collaborative' Christmas numbers failed to achieve a coherent and uniform voice; and when they did try to emulate him to achieve that uniformity, they were termed 'slavish imitators'.⁹²

⁸⁸ Stone, *Charles Dickens' Uncollected Writings from Household Words*, pp. vii-x. Also see Lohrli Anne, "'Household Words" and Its "Office Book"', *The Princeton University Library Chronicle*, 26, (1964), pp.27-47, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26402926>

⁸⁹ Sala, *Things I Have Seen and People I Have Known*. p.79.

⁹⁰ John Hollingshead, *My Lifetime* (London: S. Low, Marston, 1895) p.96.

⁹¹ Peter Blake, 'Charles Dickens, George Augustus Sala and *Household Words*', *Dickens Quarterly*, 26, Mar. (2009) p.24.

One thing that was unusually common about most of Dickens' young men - especially the younger and least established ones who had little or no experience and were just starting out in the literary market - was that they exclusively devoted their inceptive years to Dickens' periodical and seldom wrote for any other magazines or newspapers during that initial phase. For example, Sala observes in his memoir, that 'during the years of [his] close affiliation to Mr. Dickens's periodical [he] scarcely ever wrote an article for any other paper or magazine. About half a dozen, perhaps, would be the aggregate of [his] extraneous contributions to the periodical press' in almost a decade.⁹³ Dickens was not directly responsible for this; it appears that it was the young men's choice to give their undivided attention to *Household Words* while appearing anonymously.

Though scores of articles by a multitude of obscure contributors to *Household Words* were reprinted several times (owing to the magazine's high popularity), their authors were seldom acknowledged. *Harper's Magazine* in America, for example, republished abundant material from the issues of *Household Words* and many writers from Dickens' staff thus appeared in *Harper's* multiple times, yet always remained anonymous. If the articles were not attributed to Dickens, the reprints, both in Britain and overseas, attributed them either to *Household Words*, the magazine itself, or avoided any kind of author-acknowledgment altogether. Therefore, though works by *Household Words'* young contributors were published world-wide and remained in print for decades

⁹² Sala, *Things I Have Seen and People I Have Known* p.81-82

⁹³ Ibid.

(all thanks to being a part of an illustrious, best-selling, well-circulated and much-requested periodical) the staff, ironically, still remained largely anonymous and unknown. This suggests that years of work for *Household Words* yielded less credit and recognition than might be expected in terms of developing one's career prospects as an upcoming professional author.

When Wilkie Collins brought up the issue of authorial misattribution with Dickens in 1856, Dickens, in his defence, observed to Wills in a letter that 'such a confusion of authorship... would be a far greater service than a dis-service to him. This I clearly see.'⁹⁴ When we reconsider the example of Dickens' periodicals' 'extra Christmas Numbers', which were collaboratively produced between Dickens and half a dozen different *Household Words* contributors every year, as demonstrated above, critics specifically undermined the parts written by the other contributors whilst applauding Dickens' portion in that collaboration. This happened on occasions where such 'confusion of authorship' was eliminated or resolved as a result of critics managing to get information on the authorship of different stories via their internal connections. Owing to this discovery, the collaborators were repeatedly compared to Dickens' brilliance and mastery of composition and were deemed as inferior to the great celebrity author. This suggest that the reviewers who value authorial status often make prejudgments and presumptions about quality which makes it difficult for new or upcoming authors to compete with the established ones and to be approved by readers without discrimination. The state of being unaware or uninformed

⁹⁴ Cited in Charles Dickens, *The Letters of Charles Dickens: The Pilgrim Edition*, edited by Madeleine House, Graham Storey, 6, (Oxford: OUP Oxford, 1988) p.451.

regarding authorship may allow for an unbiased opinion to be formed about the material as it could be read with a neutral mind. Perhaps this is why Dickens regarded 'such a confusion of authorship' to be a far greater service than a dis- service' to him.

Furthermore, Dickens had a policy under which the writers for his periodicals had 'the power of reclaiming their papers' and republishing them 'after a certain time' without the proprietors seeking claim to any share in the copyright.⁹⁵ This right was extended to established and unknown authors alike. Dickens was one of the very few editors in the Victorian periodical press who encouraged his young staff to collect their articles (published in his journals over the years) and print them in volume form under their own names as monographs. Following his advice, many of his young men did publish multiple volumes of their articles collected from *Household Words* and *All the Year Round*. There are several examples to demonstrate this. John Hollingshead collected many of his contributions to *Household Words* in volumes entitled *Bow Bells* (1859), *Odd Journeys In and Out of London* (1860), *Rubbing the Gilt off* (1860), *Underground London* (1862), and *Rough Diamonds* (1862). Sidney Blanchard published *The Ganges and the Seine* (1862), a collection of articles from *Household Words* and *All the Year Round*, together with some previously unpublished material; and *Yesterday and To-day in India* (1867), a collection of articles mainly from *All the Year Round*. William Blanchard Jerrold contributed to *All the Year Round*, reprinting various of his contributions in *The Cupboard Papers* (1881) and in

⁹⁵ Ibid. p.39.

other books. His father Douglas Jerrold, also a writer, declined to write for *HW* because of Dickens's policy of anonymous publication. Walter Thornbury reprinted a selection of the articles first printed in *All the Year Round* as multiple volume collections: *Old Stories Re-told* (1870), *A Tour round England* (1870), *In Turkish Life and Character* (1860), *Tales for the Marines* (1865), and *Criss-Cross Journeys* (1873). Charles Collins collected his series of travel sketches from *All the Year Round* in multiple volumes: *A New Sentimental Journey* (1859); *The Eye-Witness* (1860), and *Cruise Upon Wheels* (1862). Finally, Amelia Edwards collected all the ghost stories that she contributed to Dickens' Christmas numbers over the years and published them in the following volumes: *Miss Carew* (1865) and *Monsieur Maurice* (1873).⁹⁶

The freedom of contributors to claim copyright and republish their works that had appeared in Dickens' periodicals partly makes up for the damage done by authorial misattributions. Doubts and debates surrounding any writings that had been misattributed, suffered from a lack of acknowledgment, or whose authorship became an issue of confusion and argument, must have been resolved upon the appearance of such monographic volumes, which placed proper credit with their rightful authors.

⁹⁶ Visit *Internet Archive* at <https://archive.org/>; Entering above titles in the 'search' column would provide access to full texts and publication details for all the above volumes. Amelia Ann Blanford Edwards, *Miss Carew* (London: Hurst and Blackett 1865); Amelia Ann Blanford Edwards, *Monsieur Maurice* (London: Hurst and Blackett 1873); Charles Allston Collins, *A Cruise Upon Wheels: The Chronicle of Some Autumn Wanderings among the Deserted Post-Roads of France* (Routledge, Warne and Routledge, 1862); Charles Allston Collins, *The Eye-Witness and His Evidence About Many Wonderful Things* (London: S. Low, Son and Co, 1860); Charles Allston Collins, *A New Sentimental Journey: In Five Parts* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1859)

Chapter I - Independence and Exclusion: The Framed Christmas

Numbers of *Household Words*

Dickens' annual Christmas numbers are narratives constituting multiple segments which were written in collaboration with other authors who regularly contributed to his magazines. The segments contributed by these collaborators were interpolated in the frame-narrative that Dickens produced for these Christmas numbers. He usually wrote the opening chapter and the closing chapter of the whole narrative, composing a structural frame surrounding the contributed stories. These interpolated stories, however, are unrelated to the frameworks composed by Dickens; and since these stories do not work towards a common thread or storyline and have their own individual plots, Dickens had to find a way to fit them all together and accommodate them coherently within a single narrative. He did this by introducing a 'frame-tale' which could join or link these random narratives together and yield a well-connected and consistent narrative.

The tradition of using framed-tales as a method for storytelling by bringing discrete tales together can be traced back to 1st millennium BC India, where some of the earliest framed-narratives like *Panchatantra*, *Singhasan-Battisi*, *Hitopadesha* and *Baital-Pachisi* originated; owing to their ancient origin, their respective years of composition remain unconfirmed. However, surviving texts from *Panchatantra* date back up to 300 BCE, but

the stories themselves are claimed to be much older.⁹⁷ Through centuries, this form spread towards the west, grew popular and inspired famous framed-collections such as *One Thousand and One Nights*, often known as the *Arabian Nights* in English, which was composed around the 9th century.⁹⁸ Moving even further west, classics like Giovanni Boccaccio's *The Decameron* (1348-1353) and Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (1387-1400) were produced, and gradually, the framed-tale technique became a useful narrative tool for many authors of western literature.

Dickens read *Arabian Nights* as a child and his stories often borrow thematic features from this classical text. From longer works like *David Copperfield* to Christmas stories like 'A Christmas Tree' or 'The Ghost in Master B's Room', the thematic influence of *Arabian Nights* is clearly visible. However, the feature of this classic which inspired Dickens the most was not a thematic one but a technical one; it was the framed-tale technique which Dickens found most fascinating and which he heavily borrowed and incorporated in works such as *The Pickwick Papers*, *Nicholas Nickleby*, *The Old Curiosity Shop*, and *Master Humphrey's Clock* amongst others. The annual Christmas numbers of his periodicals also followed this pattern of arranging and accommodating all contributed stories using a common connecting frame-tale.

⁹⁷ Patrick Olivelle, *Pañcatantra: The Book of India's Folk Wisdom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. xii-xiii

⁹⁸ Dwight Reynolds, "The Thousand and One Nights: A History of the Text and its Reception", *The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature: Arabic Literature in the Post-Classical Period*, (2006), pp. 270-291, (p.270)

However, following the first appearance of these collaborative Christmas numbers in the 1850s and 1860s, most of the reprints and later editions - till recently - have deliberately excluded the sections by other writers and have only printed the portions written by Dickens, thus, reducing these diverse and multi-authored collections down to a creation authored solely and exclusively by Dickens. Melissa Valiska Gregory, in the introduction to the Hesperus press edition of *Somebody's Luggage* (2006), criticized the exclusion of others' stories from the 1867 Diamond Edition of Dickens' Christmas stories collection, arguing that the other collaborators provide an aesthetic variety to the narrative through their distinctive voices.⁹⁹ In the preface to the 1867 Diamond collection – the first edition to collect and publish Dickens' Christmas stories separately – Dickens claimed that these stories, though originally constructed as part of larger collaborative narratives, were composed by him in a manner which made them fit for independent publication, subject to a few minor amendments.¹⁰⁰ These amendments were purely technical and structural as there was no need to make any thematic revisions.

The reason why the need to include others' stories in the collected Christmas numbers might have diminished over time is the lack of any direct relationship between these stories and the central plot staged by the framework produced by Dickens. The contributions from other writers consist of tales set in the past - accounts and experiences

⁹⁹ Dickens et al., *Somebody's Luggage*, p. iv

¹⁰⁰ Charles Dickens, *The Uncommercial Traveller, and Additional Christmas Stories*, The Diamond Edition. (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1867) pp. i-iii

from the tellers' bygone days - events and characters which could be very well made-up just for the sake of telling a story. Every character from the main narrative framework is asked to tell a story in the introduction for each Christmas number so as to open a passage for the accommodation of collaborators' stories. As a result, these tales occasionally appear to be mere fillers for volumizing the 'real and current' framework. This might be explained by the fact that these contributions - mostly unconnected in terms of their content and subject-matter - do not often share any consequential interdependence with the main narrative told by the framework as their episodes do not hold any 'immediate' value or utilitarian function towards the progression and unfolding of the actual story and its events. Therefore, considering the issue of exclusion, in this chapter I will examine the importance of the interpolated stories to the overall plot of Dickens' Christmas numbers published in *Household Words*. Are these stories really needed for a proper comprehension of the narrative's meaning or are they merely optional and dispensable accounts whose absence would not make any difference to the fulfilment of the storyline? It could be said that, originally, the interpolated stories were intended to form the main substance of the Christmas numbers and the framework was merely a tool designed for holding those stories together. However, this somehow ended up backfiring for those stories when it came to republication.

A chronological study of these multi-authored texts in terms of the employment of a connecting framework, its design as well as the relationship it shares with the interpolated stories could help us observe a shifting centre of significance within these annual Christmas numbers. As we already know that the interpolated stories do not share

any thematic connection with the frame, our inquiry as regards assessing the value of these stories to the overall framed Christmas narratives shall concentrate on the technical and structural elements which could give an indication towards the dispensability of the interpolated tales by Dickens' collaborators. In other words, does Dickens' frame have any sort of technical or constructional reliance on the contributed stories which could make us question their absence from the collected works and doubt their dispensability?

All this will be scrutinized through examining the development of the narrative frame which led to a dramatic change in its relationship with the interpolated stories. Such evolving frame-design and Dickens' purpose behind doing so will be clear when we compare earlier Christmas frames of *Household Words* to the later frames in the order of their appearance in the journal. The chapter aims to see the collaborative practice from Dickens' point of view. As mentioned previously, he certainly expressed the wish to keep the sections contributed by him, independent and adaptable for solo publications. Hence, I try to assess how Dickens modified his approach to participating in Christmas collaborations over time. To do this, we need to look into the methodology that was used for 'framing' the number. Due to the limited space of the chapter, we will only be analysing the first three 'framed' Christmas numbers (appearing consecutively in 1854, 1855 and 1856) of *Household Words* in the context of all the aforementioned aspects and inquiries. Also, while investigating the reasons for the exclusion of the collaborators' interpolated tales, our main concern will not be to look into the more obvious reason for this exclusion which we have already mentioned towards the beginning – the overshadowing prominence of Dickens as a powerful brand which trivialized his collaborators at first and then ended up erasing them

from these works altogether. Rather this chapter will endeavour to explore how Dickens, through calculatedly setting up the construction scheme and functionality of the selected Christmas numbers, as well as through experimenting with the employment of the frame-tale technique, shaped the impact it would have on his obscure Christmas collaborators, their contributions, and consequently, their professional success and reputation in future.

I. The Beginnings: *The Seven Poor Travellers* and the Interdependent Frame

Appearing in the year 1850, the first ever Christmas stories to be published in *Household Words* were just a bunch of miscellaneous tales contemplating the subject of Christmas. These Christmas tales did not even hold a collective title which could signify that they belong to one singular composition, or that they, though miscellaneous, are units constituting a common ensemble. Therefore, this Christmas collection is simply referred to as *A Christmas Tree* - the title of the number's first story written by Dickens.¹⁰¹ The following year's (1851) Christmas stories were presented in a similar fashion, lacking a shared or mutual caption, and thus are collectively known by the title of Dickens' opening story *What Christmas Is, As We Grow Older*.¹⁰² In 1852, however, Dickens decided to provide a unified heading for that year's set of (still unconnected and assorted) Christmas stories – *A Round of Stories by the Christmas Fire*.¹⁰³ This was also the case for the

¹⁰¹ Charles Dickens et al., *A Christmas Tree*, in *Household Words*, 21 December 1850, in *Dickens Journals Online*, <http://www.djo.org.uk/household-words/volume-ii/page289.html>

¹⁰² Dickens, Charles et al., *What Christmas Is as We Grow Older*, in *Household Words*, December 25 1851, in *Dickens Journals Online*, <http://www.djo.org.uk/household-words/volume-iv/page-601.html>

¹⁰³ Dickens et al., *A Round of Stories by the Christmas Fire*, in *Household Words*, 18 December 1852, in *Dickens Journals Online*, <http://www.djo.org.uk/householdwords/volume-vi/page-577.html>.

Christmas number of 1853 which was titled *Another Round of Stories by the Christmas Fire*.¹⁰⁴

Until this point, though these stories deal with the common theme of Christmas, they treat the subject in their own individual and autonomous ways and are as self-sufficient as the discrete articles of any ordinary number of *Household Words*. Hence, the contributors of these narratives - without having an obligation to connect to a common platform and to share their authorial territory - were able to make their pieces stand more independently as compared to the 'framed' Christmas numbers which were to follow next. *The Seven Poor Travellers*, published in 1854, was the first Christmas story to employ a narrative framework which provided an underlying context to the overall assortment. Dickens formulates a thematic umbrella under which six travellers and the narrator (Dickens) himself happen to gather 'upon a Christmas eve' at 'Watt's Charity', a charitable hospice founded by Richard Watts in 'the ancient little city of Rochester in Kent'. The hospice offers to provide 'one night[s] lodging, entertainment' to 'six poor travellers' along with 'four pence each'.¹⁰⁵ As the narrator, Dickens introduces the setting of the narrative through 'looking about' the hospice chambers, explaining how the management affords the 'maintenance of this foundation', all of which the narrator finds to be 'highly

¹⁰⁴ Dickens et al., *Another Round of Stories by the Christmas Fire*, in *Household Words*, 19 December 1853, in *Dickens Journals Online*, <http://www.djo.org.uk/household-words/volume-viii/page-610.html>.

¹⁰⁵ Dickens et al., *The Seven Poor Travellers*, in *Household Words*, 25 December 1854, p.573, in *Dickens Journals Online* <http://www.djo.org.uk/household-words/volume-x/page-573.html>

complimentary to the importance of the six poor travellers'¹⁰⁶, followed with an inquiry about the six necessitous travellers who will be staying at the lodging the night before Christmas.

It is interesting to find that throughout the opening framework, the narrator's conversations and interests almost entirely focus on those six poor travellers whom he intends to join later to spend Christmas eve. After making elaborate inquiries with the matron regarding where the travellers will be dining and sleeping, the narrator personally inspects the state and shape of the galleries in which they were to be lodged. Fascinated by his incoming fellow lodgers, this framework presents a narrator who is effervescently engrossed by the six travellers who are about to arrive at the hospice:

'I went back to my inn...and, during the remainder of the day, could settle to nothing for thinking of the Poor Travellers...I pictured them advancing towards their resting-place along various cold roads, and felt delighted to think how little they foresaw the supper that awaited them. I painted their portraits in my mind, and indulged in little heightening touches. I made them footsore; I made them weary; I made them carry packs and bundles; I made them stop by linger posts and milestones, leaning on their bent sticks and looking wistfully at what was written there; I made them lose their way, and filled their five wits with apprehensions of lying out all night, and being frozen to death'.¹⁰⁷

We can see how the narrator or conductor of the framework enthuses over the arrival of the six poor travellers and makes them the primary subject of his rumination.

¹⁰⁶ Dickens et al., *The Seven Poor Travellers*, p.574

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p.575

He imagines them in all sorts of different situations on their way to the hospice as his fancy runs wild. After spending most of his evening musing on the travellers, being so utterly enthusiastic to meet them, he even decides to climb up to the castle's top amidst the snow and freezing gusts of wind only in the hope of catching a glimpse of the approaching travellers in the distance: 'I took up my hat and went out, climbed to the top of the Old Castle, and looked over the windy hills that slope down to the Medway: almost believing that I could descry some of my Travellers in the distance'.¹⁰⁸ With the travellers still taking time to reach the hospice, the narrator goes on to express his absolute preoccupation with the expected guests: 'I became so full of my Travellers that I could eat no dinner, and felt constrained to watch them still, in the red coals of my fire.' His fixation with the six poor travellers is reinforced when he conveys that the mere possibility of some of them not being able to make it to the hospice in time, robs him of all his delight and rapture that he had been so expectantly building up for this festive night: 'There, my pleasure was dashed by the reflection that probably some Travellers had come too late and were shut out.'¹⁰⁹

As is evident, the framework is constantly developing a special and significant space for the six poor travellers. Irrespective of whether Dickens intended to foreground the presence of these travellers or not, the way in which the framing narrative conducts itself towards these characters, makes them appear central and purposeful. The narrator's

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p.575

¹⁰⁹ Dickens et al., *The Seven Poor Travellers*, p.575

account takes an unfeigned interest in the welfare of the travellers. Though the travellers are offered 'four pence each' to spend on their Christmas meal, the narrator has a strong inclination towards buying them a proper Christmas dinner and wassail: 'I was possessed by the desire to treat the Travellers to a supper and a temperate, glass of hot Wassail...that if I were permitted to hold the feast....I could be merry and wise myself, and had been even known at a pinch to keep others so....In the end, I prevailed, to my great joy....that I, faint and unworthy minister for once of Master Richard Watts, should preside as the Christmas-supper host of the six Poor Travellers'.¹¹⁰

The frame narrator constantly demonstrates his concern for their comfort and contentment; whether it is through examining the standard of their sleeping chambers or providing them with an appetizing supper, he spends his entire evening - and in terms of narrative- sections, Dickens spends the entire framework - endeavouring to make them happy and fulfilled. He expresses the pleasure he feels when he is successful in doing so: 'It made my heart rejoice, to observe how their [the travellers'] wind-and-frost hardened faces, softened in the clatter of plates and knives and forks, and mellowed in the fire and supper heat.'¹¹¹ The passion with which the narrator views the six poor travellers brings these characters to the forefront of the overall narrative. Since the framework, through its conductor, treats the travellers with such high importance, it affords an immense interest

¹¹⁰ Dickens et al., *The Seven Poor Travellers*, p.575

¹¹¹ Dickens et al., *The Seven Poor Travellers*, p.576

in the *role* of these travellers for the reader as well; essentially, what is central to the narrator and what becomes the pivot of his attention, becomes equally attractive and intriguing for the readers too who are perusing his narrative.

Moreover, towards the end of Dickens' opening framework, when the narrator provides a character sketch for each of the six poor travellers, the reader's connection with them becomes even more close as we are given a visual portrait to finally materialize our perception of these travellers:

I found the party to be thus composed. Firstly, myself. Secondly, a very decent man indeed, with his right arm in a sling; who had a certain clean, agreeable smell of wood about him, from which I judged him to have something to do with shipbuilding. Thirdly, a little sailor-boy, a mere child, with a profusion of rich dark brown hair, and deep womanly-looking eyes. Fourthly, a shabby-genteel personage in a threadbare black suit, and apparently in very bad circumstances, with a dry suspicious look; the absent buttons on his waistcoat eked out with red tape; and a bundle of extraordinarily tattered papers sticking out of an inner breast-pocket. Fifthly, a foreigner by birth, but an Englishman in speech, who carried his pipe in the band of his hat, and lost no time in telling me, in an easy, simple, engaging way, that he was a watchmaker from Geneva, and travelled all about the continent, mostly on foot, working as a journeyman, and seeing new countries - possibly (I thought) also smuggling a watch or so, now and then. Sixthly, a little widow, who had been very pretty and was still very young, but whose beauty had been wrecked in some great misfortune, and whose manner was remarkably timid, scared, and solitary. Seventhly and lastly, a Traveller of a kind familiar to my boyhood, but now almost obsolete: a Book-Pedlar: who had a quantity of Pamphlets and Numbers with him, and who presently boasted that he could repeat more verses in an evening, than he could sell in a twelvemonth.¹¹²

As readers, the travellers have now become an integral part of our comprehension of this narrative. By the end of the introductory chapter, we are rendered curious

¹¹² Dickens et al., *The Seven Poor Travellers*, p.575

regarding what they might tell us about themselves and in what way they are going to participate in the turn of events; hence, the travellers' accounts appear to hold the vanguard of plot progression. As the framework revolves around these travellers, readers are naturally led to expect that these figures will contribute something to the main narrative, and that they certainly hold some function in the fulfilment of the present storyline. When this expectation is not met, and the travellers - after dominating the first half of the work - completely disappear from the remaining pages as a result of the exclusion from collected editions, an imbalance is struck within the narration as regards thematic thrust distribution.¹¹³

For his sections to stand alone, Dickens had to make some minor technical revisions to his framework when these Christmas numbers were collected; however, the aforementioned instances from *The Seven Poor Travellers* and their signification which we have discussed so far stays the way it was originally published in *Household Words*. What we may conclude from this fact is that any such reprint which excluded the accounts of the six poor travellers from its narrative, will still appear to develop that special and significant space for the travellers because its 'included' framework - the ground where the travellers are spotlighted - still remains intact. This being the case, such reduced

¹¹³ The interpolated stories were excluded from the Diamond edition (first edition to collect Dickens' Christmas stories) and all subsequent editions of the Collected Works. Charles Dickens, *The Uncommercial Traveller*, and *Additional Christmas Stories*, The Diamond Edition, (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1867), *Charles Dickens, The Charles Dickens Edition of the Works of Charles Dickens* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1871); The Centenary Edition (1911); The National Edition (1907); The Gadshill Edition (1898); Library Edition (1910); Household Edition (1876) and many others.

editions present an inconsistent narrative in terms of subject unity, and lack a symmetrical flow of content which affects the overall story development.

This explains the need to include the travellers' accounts in later editions and raises the question whether this narrative could still stay meaningful and self-reliant once it has been stripped of its interpolated stories which effectively means becoming deprived of those very travellers whom it has been so dearly cherishing since the very beginning.

As stated earlier, conducting a chronological study of the Christmas numbers in terms of the employment of a connecting framework will allow us to observe a shifting centre of significance within an evolving relationship between the frame and its interpolated stories. From the above observations, we can say that the framework of *The Seven Poor Travellers* devotes most of its space and time to the discussion of its contributors' characters (here, the travellers) and engages rather less in working towards the advancement of the actual plot. This is most likely because the framework of *The Seven Poor Travellers* was designed for the merely utilitarian¹¹⁴ purpose of serving as a substructure to the interpolated stories. We will see how the centre of significance shifts as we approach the later Christmas numbers with far more complex frameworks. With a focus on enhancing their scheme of events, these frameworks largely attend to the

¹¹⁴ Harry Stone mentions the 'sparse and utilitarian' nature of *The Seven Poor Travellers'* framework as 'the typical strategy was to bring together a group of strangers and have them while away their time by telling stories'. Stone, p.523

onward movement of their central plot, and strive to achieve self-sufficiency and comprehensiveness of their own.

II. *The Holly Tree Inn*: Dispensing with the Interdependent Frameworks

Dickens' selection of a unifying thematic scheme for the Christmas numbers seems to have gradually developed and been remoulded with every passing collaboration. It should become easier to observe as we move further and arrive at 1855's Christmas number, *The Holly Tree Inn*. In terms of the narrative focus and the narrative style, a contrary pattern comes to attention when we juxtapose this Christmas number with its predecessor. When compared to *The Seven Poor Travellers*, the focus of the narrative, here, changes hugely from an external subject of discussion to an internal state of thoughts and feelings. The frame presents a narrator who has set upon a journey of expatriation. 'On making the discovery' that his fiancée Angela prefers his bosom friend Edwin over him, he 'resolve[s] to go to America' to cope with the pain of rejection and betrayal.¹¹⁵ The overall framework is more of a personal account, sharing one's life-situation and past experiences, than an observer's commentary where the narrator records events – which are distant not only from his private life but also from his past – simultaneously as they occur, as is the case in *The Seven Poor Travellers*. Before his departure, the frame narrator decides 'to make a visit to a certain spot on the further borders of Yorkshire' which 'was endeared to [him]' by his having 'first seen Angela at a farmhouse in that place', and his 'melancholy was

¹¹⁵ Dickens et al., *The Holly Tree Inn*, in *Household Words*, 12 December 1855, p.573, in *Dickens Journals Online*, <http://www.djo.org.uk/household-words/volume-xii/page-573.html>

gratified by the idea of taking a wintry leave of it'. Due to heavy snowfall, it is on his way to that spot when the narrator has to stop at an inn called the Holly Tree.¹¹⁶ As for the provision of the subject-matter, instead of relying on something extrinsic from his surroundings, like other characters or incidents, the content originates from the narrator's own circumstances. The narrator is immersed in his own story, and hence, much of the narrative takes the shape of an interior monologue. This indicates that, unlike its preceding Christmas number, *The Holly Tree Inn* presents a narrator who has an internal source for supplying the incoming content of the narrative, and, thus, is independent of his environment – including the staff members of the Holly-Tree inn who later provide the interpolated accounts – for the progression of the plot.

Throughout the framework, there is not much reference to other people and their activities apart from certain utilitarian pieces of information. The narrator brings other characters into the scene only when they have some technical function around him; for example, the landlord and the landlady showing him his room or the ostler handling his portmanteau. We can see that Dickens is constructing a self-reliant plot here and avoiding any connection or communication between the narrator and the tellers of the interpolated stories within the framework.

One of the central traits of the narrator of *The Holly Tree Inn* – the first thing which he states and confides in his readers in the very opening line of the number –, his

¹¹⁶Dickens et al., *The Holly Tree Inn*, p.573

'bashfulness', is conspicuously presented. The narrator begins his account by writing: 'I HAVE kept one secret in the course of my life....I am naturally a bashful man...I might greatly move the reader, by some account of the innumerable places I have not been to, the innumerable people I have not called upon or received, the innumerable social evasions I have been guilty of, solely because I am by original constitution and character, a bashful man'.¹¹⁷ This quality is underlined and reiterated regularly by Dickens throughout the framework. This makes us, as readers, perceive the narrator's choices and actions in the light of his being bashful, and thus, believe that his functioning in the narrative and his engagement with other characters would certainly be influenced by this self-effacing and withdrawn nature. As his bashfulness is so frequently referenced in the framework, a lack of interaction between others and the narrator becomes ingrained in our anticipation of the upcoming narrative, and hence, the absence of other characters and their accounts does not strike us as odd when reading reprints which excluded the interpolated stories, such as the Diamond edition and all subsequent editions of Dickens' Collected Works. This seems to be a strategy which Dickens employs to distance the narrator – and, consequently, the central storyline of the framework - from the characters who later recount the interpolated stories. The more distanced and aloof the conductor of the framework is from the tellers of the interpolated stories, the more complete and less deficient the narrative would seem when republished separately without those

¹¹⁷ Ibid. p.573

stories. This implies that Dickens anticipated the shift from multi-authored periodical publication to single-authored volume reprints, which would omit the work of others and reprint his sections alone.

The design of the framework has changed significantly since the previous Christmas number's framework where the narrator's attention was entirely focused on his fellow raconteurs; making them the main subject of discussion, such a design resulted in an asymmetrical and inconsistent flow of content in the reduced volume editions. By contrast, in *The Holly Tree Inn*, Dickens attempts to formulate a narrative design which takes the spotlight away from the contributing storytellers and makes them seem rather negligible in the current scheme of things; this is done by equipping the number's framework with a backstory, and, consequently, limiting the central storyline to the narrator's personal thread which minimises the possibility of any staff member becoming involved in the resolution of the central plot. Hence, in general, the overall interpretation and resolution of the story requires answers concerning the narrator alone. Does he finally leave England and set off for America? Does he ever confront his fiancée Angela and his friend Edwin? Was his suspicion true after all or was it all his imagination? Almost all the thematic explanations which readers may posit or try to obtain towards the end of the narrative lie in the narrator's sphere of life, and therefore, technically as well as structurally, they lie in the framework. It is not likely that readers will need to know more about any of the staff members as they have been conveniently distanced and dissociated from the central action. Such a framework facilitates and enhances the self-sufficiency of

the reduced reprints because it is clearly shifting the centre of significance from the tellers of the interpolated stories to the narrator or conductor of the framework.

Thus, as for the objective of chronologically observing a shifting centre of significance in relation to the employment of a developing framework, *The Holly-Tree Inn* vests its centre of significance in its narrator whose story exposes as well as resolves itself within the boundaries of its framework without stepping into the interpolated sections. This signifies that the story will feasibly culminate and fulfil itself even when the interpolated sections are excluded because the centre of significance now lies in a section which will permanently feature in every future reprint. This is a crucial development since *The Seven Poor Travellers*, where the centre of significance was placed among the raconteurs of its - soon to be omitted - interpolated stories, weakening the reduced volume editions with subject irregularities.

Also, the format in which the number is presented is that of a memoir penned down by the narrator for his readers. He records his remembrances of this Yorkshire visit and introduces the Christmas number as if he were telling the story of his 'travels and discoveries in the Holly Tree Inn'.¹¹⁸ This assigns the control of storytelling solely to the hands of the narrator as he is the one who recounts all the interpolated stories in third-person; hence, although those accounts come from other characters, they themselves never engage in a direct conversation with the reader. This implies that the other 'supposed' storytellers who participate in this narrative are dependent on the narrator for

¹¹⁸ Ibid. (p.573)

their stories to be told and conveyed, since the memoir format of the number makes the narrator the sole direct mediator between the story and its readers. When we look at the previous collaborative number, *The Seven Poor Travellers*, the tellers of the interpolated accounts are allowed to communicate directly to their readers and are given their fair share of holding the narrative command. In other words, they tell their stories in first person and get a chance to occupy the central storytelling stage by leading the narration, one at a time, which enables them to independently relate their own pieces. However, in *The Holly-Tree Inn*, the tellers of its interpolated stories are rendered passive as opposed to the active storytellers of *The Seven Poor Travellers'* interpolated sections; this reinforces the dominance of the framework over the interpolated sections and further encourages the trivializing of these constituent stories.

As regards narrative temporality, when we read through the Diamond edition's reprint of this number or any other reduced volume edition, temporal placement of different constitutive sections becomes harder to justify. Had Dickens also edited the temporal distribution of different episodes over the narrative when making amendments for the reduced version, it could have been more efficient in achieving a consistent spread of narrative events across the temporal canvas. Let us examine this in detail.

The title for the reduced republication of this number was modified by Dickens to *The Holly-Tree: The Three Branches*.¹¹⁹ It was reduced to three (out of the original seven)

¹¹⁹Stone, *Charles Dickens' Uncollected Writings from Household Words*, p.542-544

sections in total: 'First Branch: Myself' (which is essentially the opening framework and was originally named 'The Guest') comprising of the narrator's memoir on inns; 'Second Branch: The Boots' (originally, 'The Boots'), telling the story of the boots at the inn, and included in the reduced edition despite being an interpolated story because it was contributed by Dickens; and 'Third Branch: The Bill' (originally, 'the Bill'), concluding the story and providing a resolution for the narrator's case. According to the temporal distribution which Dickens has provided for different sections of this number, the narrator's recollections of his inn experience last only for about a day. The narrator arrives at the inn on the night of December 23rd. According to the narrative clock, the narrator (being snowed-up and looking for things to pass time) spends the first half of the next day, December 24th, perusing a very short collection of reading material which happens to be available at the inn, but he being a 'greedy reader.....could not make this supply hold out until night; it was exhausted by tea-time.'¹²⁰ Still following the narrative clock carefully, the narrator begins writing about his experience of the inns that evening and finishes it next morning, that is the morning of Christmas day. We know that the narrator stays for a complete 'seven days and nights...among the sheltering branches of the Holly-Tree'¹²¹ inn. Considering that the Boots' account is distinctly shorter than the narrator's account on inns, it is highly unlikely for the narrator to have taken more than a day at most, to hear and write down the Boots' story. If so, just within the first two days

¹²⁰ Dickens et al., *The Holly Tree Inn*, p.576

¹²¹ Ibid. p.607

out of his one-week stay at the Holly-tree inn, the narrator has finished with all the engagements which he accounts for in his narrative. This seems odd as far as temporal consistency is concerned, and raises the question: what did the narrator do in the remaining five days of his stay? Though it is possible that the narrator might have taken the remaining five days to hear and write down the Boots' story, or that he might have done so within one single day and decided not to give an account of his activities for the remaining five days, it is very unlikely since the narrator declares at the commencement of his memoir that his 'object' here 'is to give' a complete 'account of [his] travels and discoveries in the Holly-Tree Inn'¹²².

However, on reading the number in its original form, it is easy to realize that the way the five interpolated stories - in addition to the narrator's opening account on inns, which makes them six accounts in total - are brought together and organised under a very methodical temporal arrangement, fits perfectly within that seven-day time-frame. As mentioned above, the narrator arrives at the inn on the night of December 23rd at 9 o'clock and leaves the inn on the night of December 30th a little after 8 o'clock, staying for precisely seven days and seven nights. The six accounts neatly position themselves within six days of the week, counting one story per day, and the remaining twenty-four hours – apportioning and adjusting themselves symmetrically at either end of his stay – constitute the narrator's arrival and departure, making all the segments fit exactly in that one-week

¹²² Ibid. (p.607)

period. The original design with all the interpolated stories intact, not only enables the constituent episodes to be spread consistently across the narrative but also helps them to fittingly conclude and culminate within the allotted temporal space without leaving any unaccounted or vacant periods. It would appear that Dickens deliberately decided to include five interpolated accounts besides the narrator's account with the intention of synchronising the duration of all segments collectively with the length of the narrator's stay. This tallies the number of the accounts with the number of the days the narrator spent at the inn; thus, when we take notice of it, the seven constituent sections of the original format seem to be cleverly and conveniently claiming one day each for their fruition in the story - Day 1: The Guest; Day 2: The Ostler; Day 3: The Boots; Day 4: The Landlord; Day 5: The Barmaid Day; 6: The Poor Pensioner; Day 7: The Bill.

It is certainly possible that the reduced version might not even induce an inkling in every reader that the narrator's activity-log for the seven-day span - does not seem to be evenly laid out across the narrative in terms of temporality, and that the number, thus, loses a perfectly good temporal structure which it was originally endowed with. However, there is no doubt that the inclusion of the interpolated stories leads to a much better, well-timed and orderly presentation of the story's events with respect to their temporal occupancy in the course of the narrative.

On looking back to *The Seven Poor Travellers* as regards the reduced republication, the absence of the interpolated tales is fairly obvious to notice; since the framework completely invests itself in foregrounding the six poor travellers, it is easier to pinpoint

exactly what is missing and identify that it is actually the interpolated accounts of those travellers which are absent from the narrative. For *The Holly-Tree Inn*, upon reading its reduced republication, this realisation might not be that straightforward but is certainly possible to arrive at - even for readers who are completely unaware of the original existence of the interpolated accounts - after some rumination about the purpose of the narrator's engagements as recorded in his memoir. It might not be directly discernible that it is actually the stories by other staff members whose absence is apparent and which the narrator could have recorded to resolve the issue, but after encountering a temporal gap in the narrator's activity-log, an inconsistency - though yet ambiguous in nature - is felt, and we try to imagine and consider different possible pursuits which the narrator could have occupied himself within those five unaccounted days.

If we engage in a hypothetical reading of the reduced volume edition of *The Holly-Tree Inn*, despite our attempt to come up with numerous potential engagements for the narrator during this unaccounted period, our reasoning favours one possibility above all the others: the pursuit of recording accounts of other staff members as well, just like he did with the Boots. The reason for this is the magnitude of isolation and loneliness built-up by the opening framework, combined with the narrator's declaration 'to overcome [his] inherent bashfulness', and '[seek] out' the 'company [he] might find' at 'the landlord's table'¹²³ at the end of his own account. Despite constructing a bashful narrator, who would later prove very useful for sustaining the reduced reprints and naturalising the

¹²³ Dickens et al., *The Holly Tree Inn*, p.581

absence of the interpolated accounts, at the time of original conception, Dickens had to find a way to accommodate those accounts together in the narrative in accordance with the need of producing a typical collaborative Christmas number. Hence, the narrator, though with a natural tendency to avoid contact, has a change of mind. After finding out that he has been snowed up at the inn, the narrator realises the scope of his solitude, which is intensified by the uncertainty regarding how long this period of inactivity might last depending on the inclemency of the weather. 'Being then entirely cast upon' his 'own resources' and getting 'through an hour in considering what to do next', the narrator decides to resolve the emptiness by 'endeavour[ing] to recall' his 'experience of Inns', making a written record of those remembrances, and see 'how long it lasted [him]'.¹²⁴ To the narrator's dismay, this self-contained pursuit does not last more than a day. 'The Holly-Tree was fast reviving within' him 'a sense of loneliness.' He 'began to feel conscious that [his] subject would never carry [him] on until [he] was dug out' as he 'might be a week here - weeks!'¹²⁵ The entire framework constantly works towards developing the intensity of seclusion and solitude the narrator is experiencing, and emphasises the unavailability of any tasks 'with which [he] could cheat the tardy time':

What was I to do? What was to become of me? Into what extremity was I submissively to sink? Supposing that, like Baron Trenck, I looked out for a mouse or spider, and found one, and beguiled my imprisonment by training it? Even that might be dangerous with a view to the future. I might be so far gone when the road did come to be cut through the

¹²⁴ Dickens et al., *The Holly Tree Inn*, p.576

¹²⁵ Ibid. p.579

snow, that, on my way forth, I might burst into tears, and beseech, like the prisoner who was released in his old age from the Bastille, to be taken back again to the five windows, the ten curtains, and the sinuous drapery .¹²⁶

Thus, 'a desperate idea came into [his] head. He resolves to swallow his bashfulness for once, and musters up the courage to approach and form acquaintances with the staff members (as they are the only people at the inn besides the narrator himself; there are, of course, no other guests to interact with at the inn as it is Christmas) with the 'object of getting...either a whole autobiography, or a passage or experience' for his journal. This idea is a last resort which 'under any other circumstances [he] should have rejected; but, in the strait at which [he] was, [he] held it fast'¹²⁷, and finally acts upon it, as is evidenced by our arrival at the account by the Boots if not others.

Hence, the above consideration - the pursuit of recording accounts of other staff members - becomes the most convincing possibility with which the narrator could have occupied himself with in those five unaccounted days. The last thing the narrator communicates emphatically before closing his account and prior to the commencement of the interpolated section, is his firm decision to seek the company of the inn's staff with the intention of obtaining a few stories for his memoir. Therefore, despite the fact that we do not get an account of the remaining five days, it is only natural if we expect him to have engaged in what he claimed to pursue. Moreover, if he obtained the Boots' account

¹²⁶ Ibid. p.581

¹²⁷ Ibid. p.581

at the landlord's table where he goes to seek some company, it is highly likely for him to have met other staff members there as well (at least, the landlord), and to have procured something from them to write down and continue with his memoir. This re-asserts the validity of our informed guess (as hypothetical readers of the volume edition) as regards the most possible pursuit for his unaccounted days. So, the absence of the interpolated accounts from the reduced versions might not be that apparent and easy to pinpoint, but eventually, as discussed, we do arrive at that realisation, and find ourselves expecting or even hoping for a few other accounts by the rest of the staff members. In other words, though the role of the interpolated stories, here, might not be very significant for the thematic fulfilment of the overall number, their absence is certainly perceptible, thus questioning the seeming self-sufficiency of the framework, which, ironically, the narration strived to achieve.

III. Eliminating Interdependency: *The Wreck of the Golden Mary* and the Self-Sufficient

Frame

The Christmas number of 1856, *The Wreck of the Golden Mary* is considered, by Harry Stone as, 'far and away the best conceived and most cunningly integrated of the Christmas stories written to this date'.¹²⁸ The narrative follows the story of a captain in the Merchant Navy named William George Ravender, and his voyage to California five years previously

¹²⁸ Stone, *Charles Dickens' Uncollected Writings from Household Words*, p.563

in 1851, which he recalls and documents later in the year of the number's publication. Dickens' character (who is also, as always, the conductor of the frame), Captain Ravender, is assigned with the task of taking a 'new [chartered] ship', named the Golden Mary, to 'California...to take out cargo to the diggers and emigrants [there], and to buy and bring back gold [to England]'¹²⁹. He sets off on the magnificent 'barque of three hundred tons' with 'John Steadiman as [his] chief mate', 'a crew of eighteen men, a second mate in addition to John, a carpenter, an armourer or smith, and two apprentices (one a Scotch boy, poor little fellow)' and some 'twenty passengers' on board. Unfortunately, on its way, the Golden Mary is struck by a 'huge iceberg' and it 'sink[s] away', 'lurch[ing], and plung[ing] to the bottom head-foremost', leaving the voyagers behind 'shocked and solitary' on a couple of lifeboats 'alone on the wide ocean'.¹³⁰ Out of the two lifeboats, Captain Ravender takes charge of the Long-boat whereas his chief mate Steadiman takes control of the Surf-boat. After leading and managing the Long-boat and its passengers for 'twenty-seven nights and twenty-six days', Captain Ravender is 'worn out at last in [their] service, and for [their] sakes'. With the captain immensely ill, unconscious and '[unfit] for duty', the 'chief mate', John Steadiman is 'placed in charge of the lost passengers and crew of the Golden Mary, on the morning of the twenty-seventh day after the ship struck the Iceberg, and foundered at sea.' With 'awful responsibility now laid on [Steadiman's]

¹²⁹ Dickens et al., *The Wreck of the Golden Mary*, in *Household Words*, 6 December 1856, pp. 573-608, *Dickens Journals Online* <http://www.djo.org.uk/household-words/volume-xiv/page-573.html>

¹³⁰ Dickens et al., *The Wreck of the Golden Mary*, p. 578-579

shoulders', he '[takes] [his] Captain's vacant place at the helm' of not only the calamity but also the narration.

Structurally, the narrative's framework is divided into two parts: the first half is narrated by Captain Ravender which is written by Dickens, and the second half, the part after the captain loses consciousness, is narrated by John Steadiman and written by Wilkie Collins. This was the first time that Dickens had allowed a fellow contributor to become a part of the framework, sharing his exclusive domain with Collins. Though the frame was successful at attaining self-sufficiency (as we shall discuss later), when it comes to the editions of the Collected Works¹³¹, *The Wreck of the Golden Mary* reverts to an incomplete narrative, just like its preceding Christmas numbers, because, this time, the frame itself was not included in its entirety. Nearly half of the frame was excluded from the later editions as it was written by Collins; for this number, the frame meets the fate of the interpolated stories, leaving its procured self-sustainability useless.

I have demonstrated how the frame was expanded and developed with every passing Christmas number, and how Dickens constantly endeavoured to attain an independent frame which could be a complete and individual narrative in itself. This endeavour could be attributed to Dickens' anticipation of future republication, which would exclusively collect and print his sections from these collaborative framed tales. This

¹³¹ Charles Dickens, *The Charles Dickens Edition of the Works of Charles Dickens* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1871); The Centenary Edition (1911); The National Edition (1907); The Gadshill Edition (1898); Library Edition (1910); Household Edition (1876) and many others.

would indicate that by the mid-1850s Dickens (who was conscious of his being one of the most marketable literary brands) was certain that his story frames would endure separately, despite their being mere constituents of a much larger collaborative narrative; hence, he considered it important to make his sections substantially independent from the beginning. This seems a precautionary step towards maintaining the singularity of his brand market. Under such an evolving design, in *The Wreck of the Golden Mary*, though the frame reaches its most advanced form yet, becoming a fine self-contained story without any thematic or structural reliance on the interpolated stories, the fact that the closing frame-chapter is not written by Dickens, made the publishers eliminate that entire section from the collected editions. Regardless of the fact that the closing chapter is a vital part of the frame, the literary market chose to include sections of the narrative based on their authorship rather than the degree of their importance to the plot fulfilment.

The closing chapter, titled 'The Deliverance', written by Collins, provides a resolution to the conflict presented in the opening chapter of the narrative, 'The Wreck'.¹³² The conflict being the occurrence of a shipwreck, which renders the passengers' fate 'perishing' amidst 'the heavy seas', demands a resolution by generating an inquiry as regards the 'hope of deliverance'.¹³³ The story could not be satisfactorily complete without providing any hint of their prospects 'over the stormy waters'.¹³⁴ Do they ever

¹³² Dickens et al., *The Wreck of the Golden Mary*, p. 582

¹³³ *Ibid.* p. 579

¹³⁴ *Ibid.* p. 580

'[make] land' by 'steer[ing]' in the right 'course'?¹³⁵ Do 'any lives' get 'lost among [them]'; do they get 'picked up by some vessel' or do they instead 'get buried' in 'the grave of the Golden Mary'?¹³⁶ Answers to all of these questions are given in the concluding chapter of the frame as they should be, which makes it indispensable, yet it was not included in most reprints of *The Wreck of the Golden Mary*. A plot sketching the episode of a shipwreck cannot be resolved without referring to the aftermath in context of the 'shipwrecked people', unless it aims to leave the ending to the readers' imagination.¹³⁷ Even if we try to justify the abrupt ending based on the above logic, the fact that we already know that Captain Ravender and John Steadiman survived the accident, makes it inefficacious. Captain Ravender pens down his account and starts narrating the whole incident 'on the second day of this present blessed Christmas week of one thousand eight hundred and fifty-six'.¹³⁸ Later in the narrative, we are told that '[they] parted...at a quarter past four o'clock in the afternoon of the seventh of March, one thousand eight hundred and fifty-one'.¹³⁹ Hence, it becomes clear that the narrated events took place back in 1851, and Captain Ravender, now well and sound, is recounting it five years later. Similarly, when we get to John Steadiman's account, it becomes apparent that it would have been impossible for the chief-mate to relate his part had he not stayed alive. This awareness makes the enigmatic ending even more unsatisfactory for the reader of later editions; the moment we find

¹³⁵ Ibid. p. 579

¹³⁶ Ibid. p. 581

¹³⁷ Ibid. p. 580

¹³⁸ Ibid. p. 573

¹³⁹ Ibid. p. 575

out that the Captain is recalling a past experience, we start anticipating a rescue as we evidently know that there is going to be one. Therefore, without an explanation as to how the Captain and his chief-mate managed to survive, the narrative appears to be incomplete and truncated, as if the plot were brought to a premature end when it ideally needed further development.

William Davis Ticknor and James Thomas Fields of Ticknor and Fields, an American publishing company based in Boston, Massachusetts, were the first publishers to collect Dickens' stories from the Christmas Numbers in 1867. In the preface to this edition of his collected works, also known as the Diamond edition, Dickens states that 'these short stories of [his] writing', which are 'reprinted from [the] 'Christmas Numbers' of *Household Words* or *All the Year Round*, represent the portions of those Numbers written by [himself] as [his] contribution towards the execution of [his] own general design'. More importantly, Dickens points out that '[his portions] were originally so constructed as that they might express and explain themselves when republished alone'.¹⁴⁰ Unlike *The Seven Poor Travellers* and *The Holly-Tree Inn*, Dickens did not permit the inclusion of *The Wreck of the Golden Mary* in this edition, perhaps because he realised that his portion of this narrative could not express and explain itself when republished alone, as 'collaborating' on the 'frame' complicated the revisions for solo republication. On the other hand, Dickens' statement re-asserts and reinforces our indication as to why a transition in the

¹⁴⁰ Preface to Charles Dickens, *The Uncommercial Traveller, and Additional Christmas Stories*, The Diamond Edition, (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1867) pp. ii-iii

frame design was needed and how its development and progression towards thematic independence was shaped by the purpose of 'republish[ing] alone'.

While the way the frame evolved appears to be well-thought out and purposive, and while it does correspond to Dickens' concern with the reprints according to his statement above, the fact cannot be ignored that he did, after all, decide to include one of his young men into that very frame, which was solely going to define and represent a Dickensian product later in time. In other words, the frames of these Christmas numbers were the only portions which were to endure and constitute the entire narrative of their respective Christmas titles in future, owing to their authorial background and status. Within this collaborative context, the framework was exclusively Dickens' authorial territory until *The Wreck of the Golden Mary*, something which was developed and honed over time for his market demands and to aid his literary impact. However, by sharing his individual department with Collins for the 1856 Christmas narrative, Dickens complicates his intentions for singularising his sections in terms of brand-expansion.

Anthea Trodd suggests that through *The Wreck of the Golden Mary*, Dickens tries to imagine literary 'collaboration...in hierarchical terms' and presents the Christmas number as 'an example of well-led and disciplined writing in company'.¹⁴¹ Developing Trodd's argument further, if we suppose that Dickens sought to manifest his real-life literary authority over his collaborators through a fictional narrative by demonstrating how collaborative hierarchy functions in 'nautical terms', there are certain factors which

¹⁴¹ Anthea Trodd, 'Collaborating in Open Boats: Dickens, Collins, Franklin, and Bligh', *Victorian Studies*, Vol. 42, Issue 2, (1999-2000), pp.201-225

complicate this assertion. As we have witnessed, leading the narration, and more importantly, taking charge of other contributors' narrations and handling their interpolated accounts, signifies authorial control and collaborative command. As we observed in *The Holly-Tree Inn*, Dickens does not allow other contributors to engage in a direct conversation with readers. Instead, Dickens' character leads the narration throughout the number and takes control of relating others' accounts as well. However, in *The Wreck of the Golden Mary*, with Dickens' character, Captain Ravender down and 'unfit to serve', Collins' character, Steadiman starts handling the narrative by '[speaking] a few encouraging words to the men forward...[sending] them to their places' and '[promising] to serve'.¹⁴² It is at this point that the interpolated stories are introduced, and Steadiman is the one who introduces and presents all the stories. Contrarily, here for the first time, it is a contributor and not Dickens himself who assumes the authority of presenting the interpolated accounts and relating them second-hand to the reader. There is no evidence in Dickens' correspondence as to why he made such an unusual arrangement for this Christmas number. It would be easy to mistakenly assume that Steadiman presents the stories simply because the Captain himself is unconscious. Upon close reading, we find that this assumption is erroneous because according to the narrative's clock, all the stories are told well before the Captain falls ill. It is only in the recollection and the narration of the incidents from memory that the sequence of events has changed. As Ravender records - when he was well and functioning - 'I proposed that,

¹⁴² Dickens et al., *The Wreck of the Golden Mary*, p. 585

whenever the weather would permit we should have a story two hours after dinner as well as our song at sunset.¹⁴³

Moreover, the fact that Ravender does not present the stories in his section of the narration, which would have been more accurate to the sequence of events as they occurred on the lifeboats, suggests that the task of controlling the interpolated stories was being reserved for Steadiman/Collins. As the authority to present others' stories and to lead the narration till the end is vested in the hands of the chief-mate, Trodd's assertion of imagining literary collaboration in hierarchical terms, is further complicated because Dickens (perhaps unintentionally) is allowing Collins to take the charge.

It is interesting to notice the contrast between *The Holly Tree Inn* and *The Wreck of the Golden Mary* in terms of Dickens' contentment with the overall scheme and cohesiveness of these Christmas numbers. Dickens was extremely dissatisfied with the all-round composition of the former and he complained to his sub-editor W.H. Wills that 'the way in which ... [the interpolated stories] *don't* fit into that elaborately described plan, so simple in itself, amazes [him]'.¹⁴⁴ His desperation in putting the number together can be seen in a letter to Collins dated December 12, 1855: 'The botheration of that No. has been prodigious. The general matter was so disappointing and so impossible to be fitted together or got into the frame, that after I had done 'The Guest' and 'The Bill' and thought

¹⁴³ Ibid., p. 581

¹⁴⁴ Dickens, *The Pilgrim Edition*, 7, p. 753

myself free for *Little Dorrit* again, I had to go back once more (feeling the thing too weak), and do 'The Boots'.¹⁴⁵ It is rather confusing that just for the last Christmas number, Dickens was so unhappy with the arrangement that he not only wrote the opening chapter as well as the closing chapter of the frame as usual, but he also had to contribute one of the interpolated stories for the framed-tale; hence, he ended up writing almost half of the total segments in *The Holly-Tree Inn*. When we contrast the level of Dickens' contribution to the following year's number, it is interesting to find that, let alone contributing an interpolated story, Dickens did not even consider it necessary to complete the frame himself, which was typically his portion of the assignment. Though Dickens conceived the plot for the frame narrative and formulated the scheme for the number as always, he himself only wrote one section out of the total eight sections, the least of any Christmas number Dickens ever produced. Despite this, Dickens considered *The Wreck of the Golden Mary* as 'the prettiest Christmas no.' that *Household Words* 'has ever had'.¹⁴⁶ He even claimed that '[he] never wrote anything more easily, or [he] think[s] with greater and stronger belief'. More importantly, though, Dickens found 'the Narrative too strong (speaking as a reader of it; not as its writer) to be broken by the [interpolated] stories'.¹⁴⁷

The extreme difference in Dickens' opinion of the two numbers regarding their overall coherence and how well the contributed stories fit within the laid-out frame is not

¹⁴⁵ Dickens, *The Pilgrim Edition*, 7, p. 762

¹⁴⁶ Charles Dickens, *The Pilgrim Edition*, 8, p. 234

¹⁴⁷ Dickens, *The Pilgrim Edition*, 8, p. 222

because the stories of *The Wreck of the Golden Mary* are somehow more adjustable or pertinent to their respective scheme than those of *The Holly Tree Inn*, but because the nature of the frame and its plot in *The Wreck* has been honed to such versatility that any given set of interpolated stories from any other Christmas number of *Household Words* would have fitted in as cohesively as they do in the 1856 Christmas number. The reason for this is the major change in the setting of the plot. A review of *The Wreck of The Golden Mary* published in *The Leader* on December 6, 1856, stated: 'For some years past, we have been accustomed to receive from the pens of Mr. Dickens and his contributors a collection of stirring and beautiful tales set in some bright and fantastic framework; and people have wondered at the fertility of imagination which could so often vary the same general conception. This time, it will be seen, Mr. Dickens abandons the land, and tosses us out into the wild, wind blown seas, making us parties to a shipwreck and a rescue – an agony and a release.'¹⁴⁸ Though on a very basic level, and without acknowledging the impact it has on the relationship and compatibility between the frame and its interpolated stories, the review does spot this crucial difference regarding the shift in the circumstances in which the Christmas numbers by Dickens are usually set. As opposed to the jolly, sheltered and warm settings of the previous framed-tales, which are endowed with an atmosphere of hospitality and security, this time Dickens places his characters in a dangerous and life-threatening situation, rendering them 'doleful', 'weak' and 'dazed with wet, cold and

¹⁴⁸'The *Household Words* Christmas Number', *The Leader*, 6 December 1856, p.1171

hunger'.¹⁴⁹ The frame is, thus, equipped with a rather dismal and melancholic theme.

Unlike the previous Christmas numbers, the time-frame of Christmas has altogether been left out and the events do not intersect or synchronise with the festive season in any manner (except for when Captain Ravender decides to recall the incident years later during the Christmas week).

Essentially, the story told by *The Wreck's* frame is a tragedy, and by relating a calamitous story, the frame naturalises the accommodation of the interpolated accounts which relate stories of human relations and sufferings. The reviewer of *The Leader* goes on to assert the narrative's 'fit[ness] for a season of religious holiday [Christmas], as the subject.... awakens our sympathy for our fellow creatures' and 'draws us out of ourselves, and softens our hearts by the contemplation of the sore trials and pitiable needs of humanity'.¹⁵⁰ Almost all the stories which were interpolated into Dickens' Christmas numbers are based upon a set of themes which induce a similar emotional catharsis, regardless of how distinct the themes themselves might be. Themes such as betrayal, dreams, failed courtships and marriages, familial sufferings, hauntings, death, memories and childhood, crime, revenge, and enticement always form the basis of these contributed stories. Given the diversity of these themes, it might appear that they would have dissimilar effects on the central plot, which would question their pertinence to the

¹⁴⁹ Dickens et al., *The Wreck of the Golden Mary*, p. 583

¹⁵⁰ 'The Household Words Christmas Number', *The Leader*, 6 December 1856, p.1171

frame, challenging the suggestion that any set of contributed stories among Dickens' Christmas numbers would build an equally coherent unit with the frame of *The Wreck of the Golden Mary* to the actual group of interpolated stories. However, though the above themes, and different stories based on them, might be diverse on a very broad and basic level, the effect they produce is pretty much similar in terms of reflecting philosophically on the miseries of people's lives. In other words, the way all these stories are fashioned, almost all of them come down to acknowledging the pain and suffering present around us by relating the grim fates and hardships of some unfortunate souls.

As many critics have noticed, Dickens frequently engages with the 'theme of memory'¹⁵¹ to 'recall past disappointments and losses' in his Christmas narratives; 'he urges' the reader 'to remember old aspirations, old loves, past regrets' because 'we are, or should be, strengthened by the unaccomplished visions of our youth'¹⁵², as they provide 'comforting and peaceful reassurances'¹⁵³ in desolate times. Therefore, following the Dickensian model of memory and loss, most of the contributed tales in Dickens' Christmas numbers echo similar thematic patterns, which arouse compassion and charity in both the listening fellow characters and the reading audience. Moreover, it is apparent that such thematic patterns function far better when the characters are facing adverse circumstances because such cathartic accounts seem more fitting and spontaneous if

¹⁵¹ Glancy, Ruth F. 'Dickens and Christmas: His Framed-Tale Themes', *Nineteenth Century Fiction*, Vol.35, no. 1, (1980), p. 59

¹⁵² ¹⁵² Dickens et al., 'What Christmas is to a Bunch of People', in *Household Words, Dickens Journals Online*, 25 December 1851, p. 603, <http://www.djo.org.uk/household-words/volume-iv/page-603.html>

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

they come from 'people in distress and dreadful extremity'.¹⁵⁴ Agonies from one's past often come back to the surface when one has little hope of surviving and is nearing death. Therefore, if *The Wreck of the Golden Mary* appears to be the perfectly integrated Christmas number, it is not simply because the frame and the interpolated stories happened to coincide especially well or because this particular frame shares a special relationship with this particular set of stories, but because the nature of the frame is so versatile and cleverly devised, that it would share the exact same relation and unity with any given set of stories. As mentioned above, when Dickens wrote to Wills, that '[he] find[s] the Narrative too strong (speaking as a reader of it; not as its writer) to be broken by the [interpolated] stories', by the 'Narrative' he actually means that the 'frame' is too strong to be broken down by a group of random tales. He goes on to write that '[he] has therefore devised with Collins for getting the stories between his Narrative and mine, and breaking neither'.¹⁵⁵

By employing a tragic frame-tale, Dickens not only gives the frame an admirable narrative strength and great versatility which entails all-round coherence, but also shifts the centre of significance to the unfortunate incident itself, how it transpires and how it gets resolved. Unlike *The Holly Tree Inn*, where the narrator himself is the centre of significance, *The Wreck of the Golden Mary* transfers that centre from the conductor of the frame to the circumstances of the frame. If we disregard the exclusion of Collins' 'The

¹⁵⁴ Dickens et al., *The Wreck of the Golden Mary*, p. 581

¹⁵⁵ Dickens, *The Pilgrim Edition*, 8, p. 222

Deliverance' from the editions of Dickens' *Collected Works* and observe the self-sufficiency of the whole frame as a singular and discrete narrative, I would argue that it is the most independent and complete story in itself among all the frames we have discussed so far. While the frame accommodates the interpolated stories in the most natural and fitting way, it is in no manner reliant or dependent upon them. All the answers that the reader needs, in relation to the central plot, lie within the frame, and it makes a comprehensive piece of fiction with an exposition, a rising action or conflict, a climax, and, most importantly, a satisfactory resolution. Such independence threatens the function and necessity of the interpolated stories. Moreover, because of the life-and-death setting of the frame, the interpolated stories are further trivialised, as their humble themes are overshadowed by the frame's high-priority and weighty state of affairs. *The Examiner* wrote in a review of the Christmas number on December 20, 1856: 'The narrative of the wreck of the Golden Mary, with the escape and deliverance of the crew, occupies twenty of the six and thirty pages in this Christmas number, and it is in itself one of the best Christmas stories Mr. Dickens ever wrote. The three or four tales told as beguilement in the boats are all good, but they appear, - as indeed they should, - much less true than the danger that encompasses the story tellers, and so make a comparatively faint impression on mind.'¹⁵⁶ Likewise, the review in *The Leader* spent all its space admiring the central plot of *The Wreck of the Golden Mary* and giving excerpts from the

¹⁵⁶ 'The Wreck of the Golden Mary' in 'The Literary Examiner', *The Examiner*; 20 December 1856, p.305.

frame; while for the interpolated accounts, the reviewer just added a line towards the end, stating that they have 'no space to speak' of the interpolated accounts.¹⁵⁷

The interpolated stories do not contain any crucial piece of information which might be necessary for explaining the events of the shipwreck or for a fuller comprehension of the plot. Equally, the frame never touches on any aspect of these stories themselves; or tries to intrude in their resolution. Most of the stories are left with unresolved plots or open-ended and ambiguous scenarios, which leave the reader curious and unsatisfied, but the frame does not explain or indicate anything about their contexts. The two sections - frame and interpolated stories - are so detached, that it almost feels like they are oblivious of each other's presences. Therefore, given the fact that the self-contained frame does not share any sort of interdependence, be it thematic or structural, with these stories, the exclusion of these interpolated accounts becomes easier as *The Wreck of the Golden Mary* remains a fulfilling narrative even without them. Hence, this Christmas number's framework was the most evolved and sophisticated to date in the process of making the frame self-sufficient.

I. *Arabian Nights*: How Traditional Framed Narratives Operate

In the context of the importance and dispensability of their respective interpolated stories and the kind of relationship their respective frames share with those stories, it would be interesting to compare Dickens' Christmas numbers of *Household Words* to *Arabian*

¹⁵⁷ 'The *Household Words* Christmas Number', *The Leader*, 6 December 1856, p.1171

Nights, one of Dickens' favourite childhood tales, which largely shaped his understanding and enthusiasm for the framed-tale technique. The fact that ancient frame-narratives like *Arabian Nights*, *Panchtantra*, and *Baital-Pachisi* have endured through multiple centuries and have been immensely successful in the same form could account for why they make some of the best frame-narratives ever produced. They have never been republished in a format which kept the frame and excluded all the interpolated stories. The reason for this does not lie in the brilliance of the interpolated stories, but in the brilliance of how the frame relates itself to those stories. To illuminate this statement, let us take the example of *Arabian Nights*. Like Dickens' Christmas numbers, the interpolated stories of this framed-classic also do not relate to each other or to the frame in thematic terms. However, the frame-tale has been developed in such a way that its very existence depends on the inclusion of and involvement with its interpolated stories. For us to understand this interdependent relationship, it is essential to quickly get acquainted with the narrative's plot and its structure.

The frame-tale follows the story of the Sasanian king Shahryar who hears about the infidelity of his brother's wife followed by a shocking discovery of his own wife's adulterous engagements, Shahryar develops a grudge against women, believing that all of them are unfaithful and treacherous. Out of spite, he starts marrying maidens one after the other in a series, only to have them executed the next morning, before they can get a chance to disgrace him. Owing to the unavailability of any more maidens, the daughter of Shahryar's vizier, Scheherazade, offers herself as the next bride. On the night of their

marriage, Scheherazade begins telling a story to Shahryar, but cleverly doesn't conclude it, leaving it halfway and unresolved. Shahryar, very eager to know the ending, decides to postpone her execution by one day for her to complete the tale. She finishes the first tale on the following night, but also instantly commences a new one; in a similar fashion, she leaves this one too in the midst, making the best use of the cliff-hanger technique. Shahryar and his burning curiosity, once again, delay Scheherazade's execution. This cycle repeats itself for one thousand and one nights.¹⁵⁸

We can safely assert from the above description that the frame of *Arabian Nights* has been designed to share an interdependent relation with its interpolated stories. The interpolated tales of this framed-narrative have been invested with the power to have a decisive impact on the central plot and its events. The cleverly devised scheme under which the frame establishes a connection with these tales makes them hugely significant. The interpolated stories become the solitary reason for keeping the narrator and conductor of the frame, Scheherazade, alive in the most literal sense. In other words, the narrative events which proceed from the setting of the frame depend on the content of these tales. Plot progression and how the events unfold completely depend on how Scheherazade chooses to present her story every time, and more importantly where and when she chooses to leave it with a cliff-hanger. For anyone to grasp the narrator's witty management of those plot-determining story-breaks, a complete and thorough knowledge of the interpolated tales is necessary. Since the protagonist's, and more

¹⁵⁸ *The Arabian Nights*, translated by Malcolm C. Lyons and Ursula Lyons, (Penguin Classics, 2008)

importantly the 'sole' narrator's, fate and chances of survival depend on the interpolated stories, the key to the frame's perpetuation, essentially, lies in these stories. The more these tales are included and the more fully they are told and explained, the longer Scheherazade gets to live and the frame to exist. Hence, such a frame could not allow its interpolated stories to be dispensed with or excluded under any circumstances.

Within this classic framed-narrative, the interpolated stories become supremely valuable and significant since they are the only motivation for the continuation of both the frame and its conductor. This makes it evident that, unlike Dickens' Christmas framed-numbers, here, the centre of significance does not lie in the frame but instead in those interpolated stories which actually sustain a dependent frame. It is apparent that the frame serves as a utilitarian tool for linking up all of the different stories. The tales in such ancient texts might be unconnected and might not share any common thematic thread like Dickens' interpolated stories, but the frame has a very strong structural reliance on the stories.

At the beginning of this chapter, we hoped to find some answers as to why the interpolated stories from Dickens' framed Christmas numbers have been regularly omitted from later reprints and what makes their exclusion so easy. The above comparison explains how interpolated stories could escape the exclusion and survive despite being dissimilar to the frame-story in thematic terms. The frame-tale technique was formulated for the purpose of bringing completely unrelated stories together. The fact that these stories do not usually share a common thematic thread threatens their

inclusion in later editions. By taking the example of *Arabian Nights* I have demonstrated how in order to prevent such omissions and exclusions, a frame needs to be designed in such a way that it shares a very strong structural relationship with its interpolated stories, to compensate for the fact that it does not do so in thematic terms. This example helps to explain how the exclusion of Dickens' interpolated stories was facilitated, since his Christmas frames do not even share a structural interdependence with their interpolated stories, let alone a thematic connection.

This lack of interdependent relationships, however, developed over time, as I have demonstrated in this chapter. Dickens' frame never stopped evolving into a more independent narrative. For the earliest framed Christmas number of *Household Words*, *The Seven Poor Travellers*, Dickens employed a framed-tale technique somewhat like the classic texts, by keeping the frame mostly functional and applying it for the sake of holding the discrete accounts together. In this number, Dickens did not try to develop the frame's central plot to the extent that it trivializes or overshadows the interpolated tales. Rather, following the ideal methodology of applying a framed-tale technique, Dickens develops a reliance, though partial, on the interpolated stories by making his framework preoccupied by the tellers (the six poor travellers) of those stories, which entails readers' expectation and desire to read their accounts as well. Therefore, by giving the readers a need to read and a reason to take interest in those tales, Dickens' frame partially fulfils the function of an ideal frame-tale. Though the interpolated tales were still excluded from the Diamond edition and subsequent editions of the collected works, despite the frame's

interdependent relation with the tales, the absence of these tales is obvious and prominent. While such prominence might not be helpful for Dickens' purpose of making them fit for separate republication, from the perspective of preserving or restoring the original multi-authored context and recognition, it could prompt or convince future publishers to include the interpolated tales when republishing *The Seven Poor Travellers*.

However, in *The Holly Tree Inn*, we found Dickens to be already ahead in the process of eliminating that interdependence and taking away control from the contributed tales. Dickens focussed his attention on developing and expanding the main frame-tale, equipping it with a back-story and centring it around the personal life of the narrator. The frame is designed in such a way that it provides ample reasons for readers to remain interested and curious about the narrator's account, which exposes as well as resolves itself within the frame, but it does not direct our attention to the tellers of the interpolated accounts. The centre of significance shifts considerably from the previous number's fellow storytellers to the current number's narrator, which limits any inquisitiveness concerning the interpolated accounts by trivializing the appeal of their recounters. Though the frame is largely free of the contributed tales and suitable for individual republication, Dickens, perhaps unknowingly, reveals a structural reliance on the interpolated accounts in terms of convincingly synchronising the duration of all of the segments with the total length of the narrator's stay at the inn. This accidental development of interdependence in the form of temporal inconsistency slightly weakens the frame's case for standing as a self-reliant narrative for separate republication.

Finally, in *The Wreck of the Golden Mary*, we witnessed the most advanced and versatile frame of all, which owing to its selection of theme and mood, succeeds in coherently accommodating diverse interpolated stories unlike its preceding Christmas numbers. We disproved the possible assumption that this Christmas number is the most unified and cohesive narrative because it enjoys a harmonious interdependence between the frame and its interpolated stories. Rather, I demonstrated how the frame is perfectly self-sufficient and independent of any sort of reliance through arguing that Dickens, by placing the characters in a life-threatening and desolate situation, eases the flow of melancholic accounts into the frame, and hence, makes it appear unified. While the congruence of the frame's plot with the general concept of bringing back past pain and sufferings to the surface (a concept that is followed by most of the interpolated stories across all of Dickens' Christmas numbers), naturalises the insertion of these stories, it also makes the stories replaceable with others. Despite Melisa Klimaszewski's strong case for finding connecting links between the frame of *The Wreck* and its interpolated stories, I would like to argue that the exceptionally adaptable nature of the frame actually makes it easier for the reader to see common themes and form connections which might not necessarily be exclusive to that particular set of interpolated stories. In this particular case, Klimaszewski tries to draw relationships between trauma, memory and storytelling which, according to her, form the focal themes that the frame and the interpolated stories share in common.¹⁵⁸ However, there are several stories within Dickens' Christmas number corpus which explore trauma and memory, and which, if hypothetically placed with the frame of *The Wreck*, would seem to share similar thematic relationships, given the highly malleable

nature of Dickens' shipwreck. To name a few, stories such as 'The Old Nurse's Story' in *A Round of Stories by the Christmas Fire* (1852), 'The Poor Pensioner's Story' in *The Holly Tree Inn* (1855), 'How the Third Floor Knew the Potteries' in *Mrs Lirriper's Lodgings* (1863), 'No. 3 Branch Line. The Compensation House' in *Mugby Junction* (1866), etc. are quite distressful and scaring, and all of them integrate the elements of memory and trauma to create a visceral storytelling experience. I believe any of these stories could replace the interpolated stories in *the Wreck*, and the Christmas number would still stand equally effective and unified. No wonders Dickens found the frame narrative 'too strong'. It is common for our interpretation as a reader to get attached to the original combination of stories that we have been reading for decades, and since *the Wreck* has only been read with the present set of interpolated stories, given that is the way it originally appeared, it would not be entirely inaccurate to think that our reading could often formulate subjective narrative bonds, which we might believe to be exclusive within that story. Other than that, we could safely assert that the frame *The Wreck of the Golden Mary* is thoroughly self-contained, and, thus, capable of being complete and meaningful with or without the interpolated stories.

According to this chapter's objective, we assessed the value of the interpolated stories in selected Christmas numbers of *Household Words*. We inquired how, despite their

¹⁵⁸ Melisa. Klimaszewski, *Collaborative Dickens: Authorship and Victorian Christmas Periodicals*. 1st ed., Ohio University Press, 2019. *JSTOR*, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv224twng>. p.155. Also see, Melisa Klimaszewski, "Rebuilding Charles Dickens's *Wreck* and Rethinking the Collaborative," *SEL* 54, no. 2, (2014), pp.815-33. Also see Dickens, *The Pilgrim Edition*, 8, p. 222

lack of any immediate value or utilitarian function towards the advancement of the plot and the progression of its events, these stories still might share some structural interdependent relation with the frame, and how their exclusion might or might not make a difference to the overall narrative. In finding answers to these inquiries, we demonstrated how Dickens' frame evolved through this chronological study. We found out that though the earlier Christmas numbers did share some structural interdependence between its respective frame and interpolated stories, it ceased with time as Dickens endeavoured to make the frame self-contained and independent to increase its suitability for solitary publication. Through the examination of *Arabian Nights* and its employment of the frame-tale technique, we were illuminated as to why Dickens' interpolated stories are so much easier to exclude, and how Dickens experimented with the technique by gradually rendering the stories devoid of any interlocking relation with the frame which catalysed their removal from the Christmas numbers. This not only led to the transformation of multi-authored periodical publication to a single-authored volume reprint, but, over time, it redefined and reshaped the identity of these Christmas titles as being an exclusively Dickensian composition, thus, denying and erasing these collaborators' claim to (even a small share of) the authorship of these titles. The findings from this chapter will help us next with the examination of the impact of such issues on the careers and literary reputation of Dickens' Christmas collaborators.

Chapter II

Victorian Literary Apprenticeship and Dickens' 'Young Men'

I. Introduction: Dickens' Enterprise and Institutional Apprenticeship

The functioning of Victorian literary apprenticeship in relation to Dickens' 'young men' is crucial to our understanding of the effects of brand affiliation on the professionalization of aspirant writers in the nineteenth-century print industry. It is not surprising that the periodical market brought up greater and more frequent opportunities to young authors as the periodicals, given their wide scope and dynamic constitution, opened up the space and the need for collective authorship to function more systematically. The definition of Dickens' young men and what their role in his enterprise entailed has been approached from different perspectives by modern scholars. For some critics such as Anne Lohrli and John M.L. Drew, they were a group of young, obscure contributors who were trained in the school of Dickensian stylistics and later became their master's servile imitators; while others, including Harry Stones and Michael Slater, chose to define and categorise them more technically: they formed the permanent staff of Dickens' periodicals and contributed the majority of articles for their weekly issues.

The issue of stylistic and thematic imitation brings the enquiry into the real function of the 'young men' hired by *Household Words* and *All the Year Round*. Dickens' 'young men' included George Augustus Sala, Edmund Yates, Blanchard Jerrold, Sydney Blanchard, William Moy Thomas, Walter Thornbury, John Hollingshead, James Payn, Percy Fitzgerald, Andrew Halliday amongst many others. Their writing, over time,

developed in a manner that resembled Dickens' hand, and thus cultivated, or rather gave the impression of a singular and uniform stylistic identity for his journals, despite it being a collective effort, especially when combined with the mode of anonymous publication.¹⁵⁹ Sala wrote in his *Life and Adventures of George Augustus Sala* (1896) that 'Dickens's young men were, to a certain extent, *constrained* to imitate the diction of their chief, and I fell in with the trick as deftly as perhaps my colleagues did.'¹⁶⁰ This statement suggests that a team of especially devoted and amenable obscure authors were recruited to produce articles which characteristically extended the Dickensian vision and treatment of life. Thus, uniform and consistent issues for the journal could be produced which exhibited a similar authorial identity throughout, without Dickens having to 'write it all'.¹⁶¹

In this chapter, I define Dickens' 'young men' as a group of literary apprentices, whose authorial skills were influenced and developed profoundly from Dickens' insightful guidance and experience in the industry, but also, who professionally benefitted from targeted job positions and employment projects, structurally *created* for them by Dickens and his enterprise in an organizational capacity.

¹⁵⁹ As we discussed previously, Dickens stressed his aim of creating a coherent identity for his journal via anonymous publishing, so that *Household Words*, despite the diversity of its writers, would seem to speak with a single uniform voice. He expresses, how *Household Words* unlike *Master Humphrey's Clock*, allowed him to assimilate the journal's character with a Dickensian vision of life and control the style of its contents despite using other hands to share the burden of filling columns, largely because of *Household Words'* policy of publishing anonymously.

¹⁶⁰ George Augustus Sala, *Things I Have Seen and People I Have Known*, 1, p.81

¹⁶¹ Drew, *Dickens the Journalist*, p.118

This particular form of literary apprenticeship that Dickens' periodicals offered and that many young writers of the day pursued, was a more structured and systematized practice than scholars have previously assumed.

George Augustus Sala and Edmund Yates are perhaps the two best-known names identified as Dickens' young men. In addition to Dickens, as Peter Edwards ruminates, they were influenced by other notable literary men of the nineteenth century such as Thackeray, Frank Smedley, Albert Smith and others.¹⁶² However, none of these influences could structurally constitute what we could call an organisational or institutional apprenticeship. As mentioned previously, apart from *Household Words* and *All the Year Round*, both Sala and Yates, like many other of Dickens' young men, contributed to other major periodicals of the time such as *Illustrated London News*, *Cornhill Magazine*, *Chambers* and the like, but the employment relationship between these publications and their contributors could not be defined as an institutional apprenticeship. Firstly, apprenticeship under Dickens for these writers rested on a permanent employment agreement, whereby both Yates and Sala received a monthly payment for their contributions to Dickens' periodical, and constituted his 'regular' staff.¹⁶³ Secondly,

¹⁶² Edwards, *Dickens's 'Young Men'*, p.1.

¹⁶³ Stone, *Charles Dickens' Uncollected Writings from Household Words*, p.237

Dickens provided more exceptional opportunities to his apprentices than other established celebrity authors could offer: despite being one of the most successful literary brands, he invited novices and obscure amateurs to participate in direct professional collaboration with him. An opportunity to co-author a text with a literary giant presents itself as a rare platform for new writers to build upon their professional résumé. Dickens' collaborative Christmas numbers, which dominated literary markets between 1850 and 1867, provided that rare platform, a useful foundation for starting authors who were not yet established in a brand-driven publishing business. The reason why immediate collaboration with Dickens held great value for newcomers is the notion of becoming 'brand-tested' or 'brand-approved' in the industry, which figuratively certified the standards and the quality of the apprentices' authorial skills, based on their participation in joint authorship. This made them more attractive to contemporary publishers, editors, agents and other literary proprietors, and raised their employability, particularly given the popularity of Christmas annuals in the Victorian periodical press. There are scarcely any other examples of established authors within the period engaging in direct collaboration and sharing the authorship of their works with novices; this is understandably so, since this practice, regardless of how constructive it may have been for aspiring collaborators, puts the celebrity author's reputation and professional standards at risk. Dickens himself was often viewed by critics and reviewers as jeopardising the authorial value of his works by incorporating other less polished hands in their composition.

As the season's literature had become synonymous with Dickens' name and identity, for some, sharing his Christmas productions with others meant that the delights of Dickensian Christmas would be stripped of their purity. As I have discussed previously, Dickens undoubtedly commenced and popularised the practice of publishing extra Christmas numbers in the periodical industry and the market for this seasonal product expanded remarkably during the mid-nineteenth century.¹⁶⁴ With the increase in the demand for issues exclusively devoted to Yuletide fiction, the readers, and the publishers of Victorian periodicals looked up to Dickens' Christmas numbers as a model, and the editors tried to adopt his approach to the making of their own Christmas story collections. This naturally created more job opportunities and augmented the employment scope for Dickens' collaborators, given the fact that they had been a part of the highly successful 'original' scheme with the master who blazed the trail for 'extra Christmas Numbers'. They were deemed experienced in the genre and, thus, a safe choice for composing Yuletide stories for periodicals relatively new to the business. For their contributions to other periodicals, not only did Dickens' collaborators maintain the same thematic tastes and characteristic styles as they used to engage in whilst under Dickens' editorship, but some of his collaborators even went on to adopt and imitate his frame-tale technique

¹⁶⁴ 'Doctor Marigold's Prescriptions', *Belfast Morning News*, December 11 1865, Vol. XI, Issue 1716, p.4, 19th Century British Library Newspapers, <<https://www.gale.com/intl/c/british-library-newspapers-part-i>>

to formulate their own Christmas numbers, produced for the periodicals they edited later in their careers.

Thirdly, Dickens' brand created tailored job positions and projects for his apprentices. Perhaps the most famous example of this would be creating the position for a special correspondent in the English periodical press. As Gerald Grubbs suggests, 'possibly the most far-reaching single innovation that Dickens introduced into periodical literature was that of the employment of a special foreign correspondent.' In 1856, Dickens sent George Augustus Sala to Russia as a special correspondent for *Household Words*, leading to the publication of 'the first report of the first special foreign correspondent for an English magazine entitled, "A Journey Due North"'.¹⁶⁵ This foundation allowed Sala to achieve distinguished expertise in the genre and major publications like *The Daily Telegraph* and *Illustrated London News* permanently employed him as their special correspondent later in his career. Catherine Waters states that Dickens 'launched Sala in what was to become his best-known role as a special correspondent.'¹⁶⁶ Essentially, this remarkable opportunity and the establishment of special correspondence units in the nineteenth-century periodical press, helped Sala make a prominent career in the genre. Similarly, the popularisation of the journalistic travel letter as a distinctive periodical feature by Dickens was followed by ensuing travel

¹⁶⁵ Gerald Giles Grubb, 'Dickens' Influence as an Editor', *Studies in Philology*, Vol. 42, No. 4 (Oct., 1945), pp. 811-823, (p.815) <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4172737>

¹⁶⁶ Waters, "'Much of Sala, and but Little of Russia": "A Journey Due North", *Household Words*, and the Birth of a Special Correspondent', p.305

projects and field assignments designed for young staff writers of *Household Words* and *All the Year Round*; this further added to the scope of professionalization provided by Dickens' enterprise.

One significant fact remains that most of Dickens' young apprentices found employment opportunities with other mainstream periodicals much later, only after they had first established their professional affiliation to Dickens' enterprise as well as gained experience working as Dickens' apprentices for a substantial period of time. Sala, for example, first gained recognition when he was hired as a writer in a professional capacity by Dickens, and his manuscript submission 'The Key of the Street' was accepted to be published in *Household Words* in 1851. Similarly, Hesba Stretton's 'entrance into literary life was brought about by her sending a ghost story, "The Lucky Leg, to Charles Dickens."¹⁶⁷ Having started with a minor periodical titled *Court Journal* in 1852, Yates might not have debuted with Dickens, but *Household Words* became the first mainstream and well-known periodical to which Yates started contributing from 1854 onwards. The inaugural publications of such apprentices in Dickens' journals may have been anonymous, but this

¹⁶⁷ Hesba Stretton, Introduction to *Jessica's First Prayer* (New York: T.Y. Crowell, 1890), p.3-4. Dickens published Stretton's first story, "The Lucky Leg", in *Household Words* on March 19, 1859. It had been sent to him, after being returned by *Chambers'*, on February 21st; on March 31st, Stretton received, a cheque for £5.5.0 from sub-editor Wills. The appeal of the story for Dickens may be surmised. It is not sensational in a romantic, Bronte-like manner, but is an odd, even a grotesque, little tale about a one-legged girl who is mysteriously wooed by a gentleman with a taste for wives with wooden legs. It is framed as a story told by one of the ladies at a Dorcas meeting where charitable sewing is enlivened, by gossip and the telling of stories about love and marriage. The meeting is handled with some humour, and Dickens had in any case a taste for framed tales.

anonymity only affected their identification and recognition for the reading public. They were well recognised within the professional circles of the newspaper and periodical press, and were a part of Victorian literary networks and societies.¹⁶⁸ In other words, they were fairly well-known to the people working in the publishing industry, including fellow writers, literary agents, publishers, literary proprietors, and editors of the press.

Many young writers of the day would be 'very willing to admit' that they owed their professional beginnings to Charles Dickens.¹⁶⁹ Hence, the term – "Dickens' young men" - gained an official recognition in the industry: "Dickens' young men" constituted a small professional unit that was established in Dickens' periodical staff and practised systematized apprenticeship within his literary enterprise. As mentioned above, Dickens also provided official letters of introduction and recommendation for his young apprentices to be sent to fellow editors and publishers of the day. For instance, Dickens wrote a letter of introduction for Yates to the American publishers, Messrs Ticknor and Fields, to support the serialisation of Yates' novel *Nobody's Fortune* in their weekly magazine *Every Saturday*:

'My dear Sirs, My particular friend Edmund Yates has asked me if I will give him a letter of introduction to you, advancing – if I can – his desire of disposing of early proofs for publication in America of a new novel he is writing, called *Nobody's Fortune*. Mr. Yates is the most punctual and reliable of men in the execution of his work. I have had the plan of his story before me, and have advised him upon it, and have no doubt of it being a great promise, and turning upon a capital set of incidents. It has not yet been offered in America as yet, I am assured.'

¹⁶⁸ Sala, *Things I Have Seen and People I Have Known*, 1, pp.81-82

¹⁶⁹ Charles Dickens the Jr., 'Dickens as an Editor', *The Critic: An Illustrated Monthly Review of Literature, Art, And Life* (New York: The Critic Printing and Publishing Company), pp.81-83. (p.81)
<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015006954583&view=2up&seq=98>

¹⁷⁰ Edmund Yates, *Edmund Yates, his Recollections and Experiences*, 1, (London: R. Bentley, 1885) pp.122-123

Dickens followed that by a letter to Yates as well, providing some business insights based on his own experience with the publishers as to how the working arrangements with Messrs Ticknor and Fields may operate. Just days before dying, Dickens wrote to Yates on June 5th 1870:

'My dear Edmund, I enclose you a letter to Field's House. You address them as Publishers, Boston, Mass, U.S. of America. There is this difficulty in the way. They republish from early proofs in a weekly magazine of their own, called *Every Saturday*. In the case of *Edwin Drood*, their republication in those pages (tried with a serial, I think, for the first time), to their own best advantage, would have anticipated, as to certain portions, the publication in England; and consequently, as to those portions, would have destroyed the English copyright. This I was obliged to point out to them, and forbid. As they had not anticipated the objection, they may find the speculation generally not worth their money. But I merely mention this to you for your private preparation, and take no notice to them.'¹⁷¹

When Yates' novel was being published in volume form by Chapman and Hall in 1872, after being serialised in *Bow Bells* in England in 1871, Chapman and Hall used Dickens' letter to Ticknor and Fields for promoting and advertising Yates' novel abundantly. A whole section of the letter was quoted in the main advertisement body itself alongside the announcement of the new publication. This is clearly a marketing tactic, re-iterating how highly Dickens thinks of this work and how the author of this novel is brand-affiliated.¹⁷²

Another reason why Dickens' periodicals attracted such large numbers of common writers was because both *Household Words* and *All the Year Round* were open to manuscript submissions from the general public, and 'utmost pains were given to the

¹⁷¹ Yates, *Edmund Yates, his Recollections and Experiences*, 1, (London: R. Bentley, 1885) pp.123-124

¹⁷² See advertisements published in *Pall Mall Gazette*, 1 May 1871, p. 1938, *19th Century British Library Newspapers*. GALE|BA3200317287

consideration of every manuscript that came to the office, no matter whether its owner bore a name honoured in literature or was only a raw recruit in the great army of writers.¹⁷³ Henry Morley, one of the most prolific members of *Household Words*' permanent staff, observed in one of his letters: 'Dickens reads every letter sent to him, and not a note to the office is pooh-poohed'; Morley goes on to state that 'the last year, we read 900 manuscripts, of which eleven were available for this journal, after being entirely re-written.'¹⁷⁴ Percy Fitzgerald wrote in his memoir: 'Everyone sent their contributions; whole sacks arrived which it was impossible to deal with [...] Boz was willing to welcome any really new style of writing whatever, no matter whence it came' in an attempt to '*introduce talent*'.¹⁷⁵ Anne Lohrli asserts further, 'Undoubtedly, *Household Words*' received 'hundreds of manuscripts from perhaps hundreds of writers' most of which were rejected, 'but, as the "Office Book" shows, it accepted the writings of a surprisingly large number' as well.¹⁷⁶

Another reason 'why so many aspiring authors sent their work', according to Drew, was that '*Household Words* paid amply and (no small virtue in a Victorian magazine)

¹⁷³ Charles Dickens Jr., 'Dickens as an Editor', p.81

¹⁷⁴ Henry Shaen Solly, *Life of Henry Morley* (London: E. Arnold 1898), p.199. See Charles Dickens, and Henry Morley, 'H.W.' in *Household Words*, VII, April 16 1853, in *Dickens Journals Online*, <http://www.djo.org.uk/household-words/volume-vii/page-145.html>. p.145. The article discusses different aspects of receiving hefty amounts and varieties of 'voluntary contributions' that were received by the office of *Household Words*.

¹⁷⁵ Percy Hetherington Fitzgerald, *Memories of Charles Dickens* (Bristol: J. W. Arrowsmith Ltd., 1913) p.4

¹⁷⁶ Anne Lohrli, "'Household Words' and Its 'Office Book'", *The Princeton University Library Chronicle*, 26, no.1, (1964), Princeton University Library, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26402926> pp. 27- 47

¹⁷⁷ Drew, *Dickens the Journalist*, p.120

promptly: a guinea for a 2-column page of prose, double or more for poetry, and by arrangement for serial fiction.¹⁷⁷ Fitzgerald writes that after contributing to his first *Household Words* Christmas number in 1856, 'during the thirteen years that followed' working for Dickens, 'must have put into [his] hands many thousand pounds – the liberal guerdon of ever-generous Boz'.¹⁷⁸ This factor also explains why a number of Dickens' young men exclusively kept working for *Household Words* alone for many years, barely contributing to any other publication during that period despite being at full liberty to do so as they were not bound by any contractual obligations. It was unusually common about most of Dickens' young men - especially the younger and least established ones who had little or no experience and were just starting out in the literary market - that they exclusively devoted their inceptive years to Dickens' periodical and seldom wrote for any other magazines or newspapers during that initial phase. For example, Sala observes in his memoir 'that during the years of [his] close affiliation to Mr. Dickens's periodical [he] scarcely ever wrote an article for any other paper or magazine. About half a dozen, perhaps, would be the aggregate of [his] extraneous contributions to the periodical press' in almost a decade.¹⁷⁹ Since making a decent living out of writing must have been the initial primary objective of aspirants entering untested waters of professional authorship which was especially unreliable in the nineteenth-century, it becomes understandable why Dickens' apprentices were more than satisfied and happy to stay exclusively with

¹⁷⁸ Fitzgerald, *Memories of Charles Dickens*, p.4.

¹⁷⁹ Sala, *Things I Have Seen and People I Have Known*, 1, p.81.

Household Words without feeling the need to find employment elsewhere during their formative years. More importantly, *Household Words* also controlled the process of its own printing¹⁸⁰, which cut down the cost of overall production; this meant an increased profit allocation for the staff.

Also, Dickens, being the proprietor and the biggest share-holder of *Household Words* (and the sole owner in the case of *All the Year Round*), had the autonomy to modulate and manage payments for different contributions and contributors as he deemed fit. Such centralization of finances would have been more difficult for other periodical businesses where editors and proprietors were not the same person. This arrangement allowed more capital to be available for the contributors and more funds being invested in the introduction of new talents. When a periodical takes significant interest in finding and introducing new writers to the industry, its efforts and efficacy at running professional apprenticeships make it all the more attractive and promising for prospective applicants. Similar to what we witnessed above in the memoirs of Percy Fitzgerald, Charles Dickens Jr. described how keen their editor-proprietor was:

to enlist promising recruits; to help forward rising merit; to further the development of latent ability; and above all, to give every possible assistance to young writers who showed steadfast perseverance, and any of his own capacity for taking pains in small thing as well as in great; these objects were always foremost in [Dickens'] editorial mind. Nothing gave him keener pleasure than to find anything good from a new writer; nothing was of more interest to him than the progress of any one who was able to date an important success in the battlefield of literature from a first appearance under his banner.¹⁸¹

¹⁸⁰ Robert L. Patten, *Charles Dickens and His Publishers* (Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1978) p.10.

¹⁸¹ Charles Dickens the Jr., 'Dickens as an Editor', (pp.81-82)

Dickens appreciated the significance and indispensability of financial security as a professional author; the very reason he started *Household Words* was to secure a permanent source of income that could stabilise his economic prospects. Douglas-Fairhurst observes that Dickens nominally kept open the possibility of a career in law by renting chambers at the Inns of Chancery even after he had successfully established himself as an author; this suggests his deep understanding of just how unpredictable authorship could be.¹⁸² Dickens' impassioned efforts to reform the Royal Literary Fund, that was set up to award pensions; his prominent role in the foundation of the Guild of Literature and Art, an 'institution' established 'to render assistance' and 'to encourage life assurance and other provident habits among authors and artists' in financial difficulties;¹⁸³ 'his energy for organising benefits for the bereaved families of author friends; and Dickens' friendships with bohemian authors' (including Sala, the "king" of literary Bohemia by the 1860s, and Yates), according to McNicholas, 'demonstrates that he took a sincere interest in, and was keenly aware of, the precariousness of writing for a living for the majority of authors, long after his own success was established.'¹⁸⁴ Also, in an age where the 'Dignity of Literature' was debated within all literary and intellectual circles, it would have been reassuring for new authors to be apprentices to someone like Dickens who used his influence and success in the industry to promote financial independence for

¹⁸² Robert Douglas-Fairhurst, *Becoming Dickens: The Invention of a Novelist* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard, Belknap, 2013), p.68

¹⁸³ Charles Dickens, 'The Guild of Art and Literature' in *Household Words*, 5 May 1851, pp.145-147 in *Dickens Journals Online*, <http://www.djo.org.uk/indexes/articles/the-guild-of-literature-and-art.html>

¹⁸⁴ McNicholas, *Dickens by Numbers*, p.27

authors. Dickens was always an ardent activist in this regard and stood for the cause of authors getting paid in return for their work - the very principle of the professionalisation of authorship. Dickens insisted on paying for every little piece of work that was published in his periodicals, however trivial or minor it may have been. While accepting a poem written by Katey Macready, for example, he wrote a letter to her father W. C. Macready, the actor, saying, 'Please note that I make it a rule to pay for everything that is inserted in *Household Words*, holding it to be part of my trust to make my fellow proprietors understand that they have no right to unrequited labour.'¹⁸⁵ The 'office-book' or 'contributors' book that was kept by Wills for *Household Words* points out that the payments for different contributions to the magazine ranged from £1.11s.6d to £6 with more than half of the contributions recorded in the book being around £5 or more.¹⁸⁶ Wills once complained to Dickens that Richard Henry Horne was being overpaid with his contributions averaging around £8 per article.¹⁸⁷

As noted above, Dickens received great pleasure in discovering a talented new writer, and paid them amply irrespective of their reputation. Dickens wrote to Wills in regard to paying Sala when the young apprentice had recently debuted with *Household Words*: 'Sala is very good. Don't run him close in the money way. I can't bear the thought

¹⁸⁵ Charles Dickens, *The Letters of Charles Dickens*, edited by Georgina Hogarth, and Mamie Dickens, The National Library Edition, 20 vols, 1, (New York: Gresham Publishing Company 1928) pp.507-508.

¹⁸⁶ B. W. Matz, ed, *The Works of Charles Dickens: Miscellaneous Papers*, National Library Edition, (New York: Baker and Taylor Company, 1928), pp. xiv-xvii.

¹⁸⁷ R. C. Lehmann, ed, *Charles Dickens as Editor; Being Letters by Him to William Henry Wills, His Sub-Editor* (New York, NY: Kraus, 1912), p.35.

of making anything like a hard bargain with him.’¹⁸⁸ It was often the case that Dickens accepted and even paid for contributions which he never intended to publish; this was done in order not to discourage capable young writers who had the potential to produce good pieces of writing. J.S. Bratton observes that quite a few stories by Hesba Stretton that were submitted to Dickens' magazines such as ‘Annie and Roger’ and ‘Mr. Seppings’ were generously paid for but were never used for publication by Dickens. Bratton writes regarding one such story that Stretton sent in for the 1861 Christmas number: ‘Her second story had also been excluded, from the issue, though it was paid for to the tune of £10....there is no trace of the story having been used. It may well be that Dickens was being kind to a promising contributor in buying it.’¹⁸⁹ By the time, *Household Words* was replaced by *All the Year Round* with Evans, Bradbury and Forster now out of the picture as proprietors, and Dickens holding a much greater percentage of the total shares than before, the pay rates for contributors seem to have increased considerably (even for obscure beginners). As mentioned previously, with articles averaging £5 each, *Household Words* was already generous in its payments by the standards of the Victorian periodical press; £10 for a single short story in 1861, when Stretton’s dealings with Dickens had just begun, and more importantly, when that story was never even used, seems rather charitable. Also, it is noteworthy that increased capital for Dickens directly resulted in

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., p.137.

¹⁸⁹ J. S. Bratton, ‘Hesba Stretton's Journalism’, *Victorian Periodicals Review*, Vol. 12, no. 2 (1979), pp. 60-70, (p.65), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20081886>

increased payment for his apprentices as well; this suggests a facilitating work-environment since Dickens' policies as an employer were somewhat philanthropically motivated to help the cause of his line of work - the professionalisation of authorship rooted in financial independence. Apprenticeship under his enterprise contributed towards this end by helping new authors gain economic stability in their founding and developing years. Quite early in her career, when Stretton 'was about to leave home and embark upon precarious independence in Manchester...her artistic life and development were reaching a point of crisis', one significant 'factor which pushed on the improvement in her writing' was 'the help, guidance and support she had received from *All the Year Round* over a not very productive patch of her life.'¹⁹⁰

John Hollingshead, while recalling his apprenticeship years with *Household Words*, wrote that his article "What is a pound?" 'was paid for, but never published by Dickens.'¹⁹¹ The manuscripts which were rejected and sent back were always accompanied with rather useful and constructive advice upon 'how [the writing] could be improved; [Dickens] is known to have been helpful to other contributors in this way.'¹⁹² The editor of *Good Words* offered to pay the double of 'Dickens' scale' for Hollingshead's above article which Dickens had accepted but had not used; the payment, Hollingshead states, was 'ample' but the dealing was not 'sentimentally liberal' as was the case with Dickens.¹⁹³ The inclination towards doubly paying for Hollingshead's article may have been motivated by the

¹⁹⁰ Bratton, 'Hesba Stretton's Journalism', p.67.

¹⁹¹ Hollingshead, *My Lifetime*, 1, p.96.

¹⁹² Bratton, 'Hesba Stretton's Journalism', p.64.

¹⁹³ Hollingshead, *My Lifetime*, 1, p.96.

fact that Dickens accepted and approved of the writing. The quality of being ‘sentimentally liberal’ that Hollingshead associated with Dickens, something rare to be found amongst other editors, suggests a lack of appreciation for professional development in other literary enterprises, with material and commercial aspects being the sole focus of proprietors in general. Bratton gives an account of the stressful relationships Stretton had with other periodicals to which she contributed, especially *Temple Bar* whose publications were often affected by its office’s internal politics that involved favouring certain contributors over others regardless of the quality of their work. However, ‘the relationship with *All the Year Round* and its editors had, by contrast, a dimension of personal involvement and esteem; Sara Smith [Hesba Stretton] valued her connection with the periodical, and she was herself valued and her creative development fostered, by its editors.’¹⁹⁴

Hence, in addition to creating tailored assignments combined with the benefits of brand affiliation, access to exclusive professional networks, and literary training, an apprenticeship under Dickens also saw a philanthropic understanding and support along with a genuine interest in the professional development of his apprentices. Dickens’ periodicals essentially took in amateur novices, trained them and supplied specialised professionals to the Victorian literary industry. Many writers distinctly experienced this professionalisation where they were upskilled and had their capabilities in the trade practically expanded. As is emphasized in the case of Stretton, ‘more tangibly, she had

¹⁹⁴ Bratton, ‘Hesba Stretton's Journalism’, p.64.

gained, by her association with the journal [*All the Year Round*] a professional tenacity, an ability to write to order and to time, and a growing capacity for judging and managing her work.¹⁹⁵ The apprentices also developed a similar understanding to their mentor as regards the basic principles of an authorial profession, and a confidence in their approach to the industry. 'I started in my new calling with a fixed determination that whatever I wrote', writes Hollingshead, 'should be printed, published, and paid for by someone, and had a commercial qualification for my task which I possessed in common with my great master.'¹⁹⁶ McNicholas asserts that 'Dickens came of age as an author during a period in which the notion of what an author was, and what control he or she ought to assume in relation to printers and publishers and, ultimately, his or her own work, was under dispute.'¹⁹⁷ Dickens had a significant influence in this regard as he set an example for others by taking the next step towards the professionalisation of authorship, that was to control one's own publishing and printing, and dealing wisely in terms of monitoring and selling one's copyrights: in other words, gradually expanding from being an individual solitary author to becoming a large multi-faceted enterprise, overseeing the process of writing and editing in addition to its commercial production and distribution. Dickens further added to the practical parameters of 'professionalisation' by merging authorship with entrepreneurship. Dickens' young men learnt significantly from his example and their professionalisation in the periodical industry could be traced along the same lines.

¹⁹⁵ Bratton, 'Hesba Stretton's Journalism', p.67.

¹⁹⁶ Hollingshead, *My Lifetime*, 1, p.96.

¹⁹⁷ McNicholas, *Dickens by Numbers*, p.28.

II. Edmund Yates: Power-Hierarchy in Collaborative Christmas Numbers after

Dickens

Edmund Hodgson Yates (1831–1894) was one of the best-known journalists of the nineteenth century. He is probably best associated with the world of gossip columns and personal journalism. Born to the established and well-known actors, Frederick Henry Yates and Elizabeth Brunton, Yates, at a very early age, began writing reviews of plays and novels, light verse, and journalistic sketches for various journals. In the year 1852, he debuted by writing for the *Court Journal*, at a salary of one pound a week, mainly contributing theatrical criticism.¹⁹⁸ He worked as a theatre critic for the *Daily News* between 1855 and the early 1860s. His first editorial experience was gained on two ephemeral weeklies, *Comic Times* (1855) and *The Train* (1856–8). He later went on to edit more successful periodicals such as *Temple Bar*, *Tinsley's Magazine* and *The World*. He also contributed a gossip column, 'The Lounger at the Clubs', to the weekly *Illustrated Times* between 1855 and 1863.¹⁹⁹ Yates commenced similar columns, published every Monday, in the *Morning Star*, headed 'The Flâneur', and to the same paper contributed stories and essays titled *Readings by Starlight*.²⁰⁰ With this he later claimed to have

¹⁹⁸ Edwards, *Dickens's 'Young Men'*, p.23.

¹⁹⁹ Yates, *Edmund Yates: His Recollections and Experiences*, 1, pp.260-261

²⁰⁰ Edwards, *Dickens's 'Young Men'*, pp.41-43.

invented the style of personal journalism that dominated the popular press from the 1870s.²⁰¹

In the Introduction, I briefly examined how Yates, later in his career, framed several Christmas numbers for different magazines, especially for *Tinsley's Christmas Annuals*. Perhaps one of the most important objectives in terms of recording Dickens' impact on Yates as one of his Christmas collaborators would be examining the fact that Yates framed some of the later Christmas numbers for Dickens' magazine. *All the Year Round* resumed publishing extra Christmas Numbers in 1871 following Dickens' death in 1870. These numbers continued to adhere to Dickens' frame-tale design. It is little known that Edmund Yates provided the frame for the first three Christmas numbers of the recommenced series. Besides contributing multiple independent Christmas stories to Dickens' Christmas numbers and other popular Christmas annuals of the day, Yates also had some prior experience in writing overarching frames for a few Christmas collections; Yates framed the first three *Tinsley's Christmas Annuals* (1867-1869) before he went on to do the same for *All the Year Round*. The Christmas numbers for *All The Year Round* framed by Yates - *Slaves of the Lamp* (1871), *Doom's Day Camp* (1872), and *The Blue Chamber* (1873) - allow an interesting analysis of the power-hierarchy between the frame-tale and the interpolated stories in terms of their relative significance. In the first chapter, we studied Dickens' treatment of the power-hierarchy between his frames and the interpolated stories for his extra Christmas numbers in *Household Words*. A clear shift in

²⁰¹Yates, *Edmund Yates: His Recollections and Experiences*, p.261

the centre of significance from the interpolated stories towards the frame-tale could be observed as we move chronologically across *Household Words's* collaborative Christmas issues. While listing Yates' third framed Christmas number, *The Blue Chamber* (1873) for *All the Year Round*, P.D. Edwards, in *Edmund Yates 1831-1894: A Bibliography*, suggests that Yates likely contributed all the interpolated stories for this number in addition to providing a frame.²⁰² Although this is speculation on Edwards' part, as the Christmas collection in question has never been studied, I believe Edwards' hypothesis could be proved with the help of a comparative analysis. By examining the three aforementioned titles in the light of collaborative authorship and textual power-hierarchy, it can be demonstrated why it is very likely that Yates wrote all of *The Blue Chamber*, including its interpolated tales, unlike the number's multi-authored predecessors, *Slaves of the Lamp*, and *Doom's Day Camp*, which exhibit stories by different authors interpolated into a connecting frame-tale provided by Yates.

When we look at the plot-design of Yates' frame for *Slaves of the Lamp* (1871), Yates' thematic borrowings from Dickens' earlier frames become apparent. The first ever Christmas number that Yates framed and assembled was *Tinsley's Christmas Annual* for 1867 entitled *Stormbound*. The frame-tale follows a group of passengers stuck on a maritime station amidst a snow-storm. The thematic design is a basic one, and does the task of bringing a bunch of characters together by holding them stranded in the 'salle d'attente' waiting for the storm to be over; this naturally leads to communal storytelling

²⁰² Peter D. Edwards, *Edmund Yates 1831-1894: A Bibliography*, (St. Lucia, Qld: Department of English, University of Queensland, 1980), p.48.

as a way to pass the time and to introduce multiple interpolated stories into the frame. The frame-tale is wrapped up after including a few stories related by the stranded passengers as everyone gets ready to depart after the storm has cleared up.²⁰³ The frame is largely utilitarian and the overarching plot theme seems trite amongst the framed Christmas annuals of the day, which is not surprising given the fact that this was the first Christmas frame Yates had ever produced. However, the frames Yates produced for *All the Year Round* are comparatively much more elaborate with a substantial plot development of their own. There is a compositional evolution in the gravity of the events transpiring in the framework, which is purposely done to place the centre of significance within the frame by making its story more pressing than the interpolated stories. I will explore this development as we move on to discuss *Slaves of the Lamp* and *Doom's Day Camp*. The *Slaves of the Lamp* came out in 1871 and the reviewers welcomed the recommenced series of extra Christmas numbers in *All the Year Round*. *Freeman's Journal* published its review on 7 Dec. 1871, stating that 'anything that calls to mind either the works or the name of Charles Dickens, has got its passport to public favour.' However, 'we do not mean to say that "Slaves of the Lamp" as the extra Christmas number of "All the Year Round" has to depend altogether on the charm of this incidental association for its success.'²⁰⁴ The title 'Slaves of the Lamp' gives the impression of being derived from

²⁰³ Edmund Yates et al., 'Stormbound', *Tinsley's Christmas Annual*, 1867.

<https://archive.org/details/1867stormboundtinsleymagazinechristmasannual/page/n3/mode/2up>

²⁰⁴ 'More Christmas Numbers', *Freeman's Journal*, 7 Dec. 1871, (No page number visible), *British Library Newspapers*,

<https://link.gale.comappsdocBB3204705065BNCNu=leedsuni&sid=BNCN&xid=e473da4c>. Accessed 21 May 2020

one of Dickens' primary inspirations, *Arabian Nights*, but instead it comes 'from the ministrants of a modern light whose marvels realize the wonders of the old enchantments'²⁰⁵. The *Examiner* wrote in a review published on December 9th 1871: 'Slaves of the Lamp, the Christmas number of *All the Year Round*, is a tale in branches, after the old fashion, with a title suggestive of the *Arabian Nights*, but quite modern in its subject.'²⁰⁶ The 'slaves of the lamp' are indeed 'mortals, with almost immortal power; men whose lives are passed in blessing and banning; now establishing a kingdom, and now announcing a revolution; in a word, the Lamp gives the light by the reflected movement of which the messages coming through the Atlantic cable are recorded, and the Slaves are the telegraph clerks.'²⁰⁷ The plot revolves around a freelance writer Stewart Cameron whose friend Arthur Stacey seeks his help: Stacey is about to get married to a Miss Tregon when he receives a letter from his first wife, Ellen Pollard - who was presumed dead until now - blackmailing him for some money in return for keeping quiet and staying hidden. The story is set in Ireland and the letter is sent from New York. Cameron suspects this to be the deed of an opportunist imposter and offers to travel to New York to investigate the truth of the matter. The introductory frame ends here with Arthur Stacey

²⁰⁵ 'Christmas Books', *Cambridge Independent Press*, 23 December 1871, p.6, *British Library Newspapers*, Gale Databases, <https://link.gale.comappsdocJF3240600441BNCNu=leedsuni&sid=BNCN&xid=8b9029a1> Accessed 24 Nov. 2020.

²⁰⁶ 'Literary' in *Examiner*, 9 December 1871, p.1221, *British Library Newspapers*, Gale Databases, <https://link.gale.comappsdocBB3201022989BNCNu=leedsuni&sid=BNCN&xid=1d9600c1>. Accessed 24 Nov. 2020.

²⁰⁷ Edmund Yates et al. 'The Slaves of the Lamp' in *All the Year Round*, 4 December 1871, p.5, *Hathi Trust Digital Library*, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/inu.30000080759719>

left behind in the most anxious and restless state of mind waiting amidst the slaves of the lamp, for Cameron' telegram, 'pre-occupied...self-contained...in his solitude...and ever asking himself the constantly recurring question, "What will be the result of Stewart's mission —what future is in store for me?".'²⁰⁸

The telegram would either put his worries to rest or confirm his worst nightmare. Stacey finds some solace in a bunch of manuscripts that Cameron left behind amongst his luggage; these manuscripts form the interpolated stories of the number that Stacey peruses to get through the distressful waiting period. The theme of finding a collection of manuscripts stuffed in a luggage bag draws a strong resemblance with Dickens' frame for *Somebody's Luggage* published in 1862. Both frames concern a professional writer and use his manuscripts to constitute the interpolated stories. Besides Dickens' *Somebody's Luggage*, Yates' frame for *Slaves of the Lamp* is the only other frame in the entire Christmas number corpus of both *Household Words* and *All the Year Round* which interpolates stories in the form of manuscripts penned by a professional writer. It is very likely that the interpolated stories here were again written by names who regularly contributed to Dickens' Christmas numbers. Like all other numbers of *All the Year Round*, *Slaves of the Lamp* was also published anonymously and none of the writers have been identified, especially due to the unavailability of the office book that maintained the records of all writers, including their contributions and payments. For the first Christmas number that he framed, Tinsley's *Stormbound*, we know that Yates solicited stories from

²⁰⁸ Yates et al. 'The Slaves of the Lamp', p.6.

some of the most regular Christmas collaborators of Dickens, such as Amelia B. Edwards, George Augustus Sala, Charles Allston Collins, Andrew Halliday, Eliza Lynn Linton and others.²⁰⁹ The choice of Christmas collaborators reinforces the possibility that Yates would have invited more of Dickens' regular Christmas staff to write stories for his Christmas frames in *All the Year Round*. The first story, entitled 'In the Confessional', is certainly written by Amelia B. Edwards as she later included the story in her short story collections, *Miss Carew* and *Monsieur Maurice*.

More importantly, however, in terms of the plot-scheme, the frame story for *Slaves of the Lamp* draws a strong influence from the frame story of Dickens' *The Holly Tree Inn*. Both revolve around complications encountered in a love-story where the tormented lover seeks refuge in a bunch of tales, one through listening as well as writing them down in case of *The Holly Treen Inn*, and the other through reading them in *Slaves of the Lamp*. Arthur Stacey comforts his aching heart through perusing the interpolated stories just as Charley gets through his troubled and somewhat involuntary stay at the Holly Tree inn before emigrating to America.²¹⁰ 'Waiting' is another common factor connecting the two protagonists and their relation to the interpolated stories; these stories get the opportunity to be included precisely by the need to fill that empty restless space of time and to keep one's agitated mind engaged or distracted. Developing circumstances that would make characters wait collectively in one place is probably one

²⁰⁹ Sue Thomas, *Indexes to Fiction in Tinsley's Magazine, Later the Novel Review (1867-1892)*, (St. Lucia, Qld.: Dept. of English, University of Queensland, 1981) pp.23-29.

²¹⁰ Dickens, Charles, et. al. *The Holly Tree Inn*, in *Household Words* Volume XII, 25 December 1855, pp.573-614, *Dickens Journals Online*, <https://www.djo.org.uk/household-words/volume-xii/page-573.html>

of the most common and recurring ways to instigate interpolated stories. Another similar pattern emerging in Yates' frame is to convert the oral culture of storytelling into written records - this will become more apparent when we analyse Yates' *The Blue Chamber* that directly transfers the accounts from characters' consciousness to a written composition. This echoes the pattern in Dickens' framed tales that often transfers orally related accounts into written memoirs; Christmas numbers like *The Holly Tree Inn* and *The Wreck of the Golden Mary* amongst others commence with the protagonist cum narrator recollecting stories that were told to them a long time ago or remembering scenarios they encountered in their past and then writing those down to share their experience and forward the legacy through the power of the written word. Dickens was a passionate reinforcer of the oral culture of storytelling which probably explains his ardent passion for giving public readings; he promoted this ancient tradition time after time through his framed Christmas numbers as we will discuss below.²¹¹ At the same time, being an author, he appreciated the fact that transforming the gifts of oral culture into the written form could naturally expand its durability; that literature and documentation goes even further in extending the functionality of storytelling. Hence, he often tries to strike a balance between the two modes in his framed tales.

Despite the above similitude, the plot-scheme of Yates' current frame compared with that of Dickens' *The Holly Tree Inn* is only similar in terms of how it functions for the frame's protagonist and applies to his needs, but not so similar, rather convergent, in

²¹¹ See Philip Collins, 'Dickens' Public Readings: Texts and Performances', *Dickens Studies Annual*, vol. 3, (1974), pp. 182–244, www.jstor.org/stable/44372322. Accessed 27 Oct. 2020.

terms of the relationship it develops between the frame and its interpolated stories. The interpolated stories are rendered narrator-less as they are read privately and are sourced from an inanimate luggage bag. There are no real characters to relate these stories; the protagonist reads them quietly, sitting all by himself in his private chambers. Such a source could not be given any face, name or background as to where the stories are coming from. Robert Tracy argues that 'a written composition, formal, structured, intended to be read alone and silently by a single reader, to create a kind of closed circuit between writer and reader, is often presented as artificial and lacking in sincerity.'²¹² Dickens' frame design for *Holly Tree Inn*, which Yates echoes, opposed this arrangement and clearly worked towards the promotion of the idea of the oral culture of storytelling via communal gathering. As we recall from our analysis of *The Holly Tree Inn* in Chapter I, Dickens not only creates different fascinating characters to relate the interpolated stories but also makes his protagonist overcome his bashfulness to enable him to socialise with other characters present in the frame, seek their company and engage in interactive storytelling. Tracy further elaborates: '[written composition] is contrasted with oral or spoken composition, the art of the gifted story-teller speaking in the presence of an audience, open to the audience's reactions, building the tale to some extent in response to those reactions, improvising, the tale sustained by the audience's interest and response, the speaking voice highly individualized and somehow, by its living presence, a

²¹² Robert Tracy, 'Reading Dickens' Writing', *Dickens Studies Annual*, vol. 11, (1983), pp. 37-59, (p.38-39), www.jstor.org/stable/44372412. Accessed 26 Oct. 2020.

guarantee of sincerity and natural truth.²¹³ This absence of a 'living presence' to relate the stories strips Yates' frame of some of the primary elements required for achieving the effects of bilateral storytelling. Narrators who are physically present to communicate their story perhaps also 'imply a greater authenticity - the narrator was there, saw events unfold, knew the characters. The narrator's speaking presence supposedly confirms the story, and the narrator's need to unfold the story in his or her own way presumably absolves the writer from holding anything back from the reader.'²¹⁴

We see yet another similarity when Yates mirrors the bashfulness Dickens endows his protagonist with as regards socialising with the inn's staff as well as his attempt to go and chat with the landlord regarded as 'the traveller's last resource' to while time away. However, all this is aimed at different outcomes for Arthur Stacey since he does not manage to find any company for his purposes:

Arthur thought he would try the traveller's last resource of chatting with the landlord; but the landlord had gone to market at Cahirciveen, and would not be back till late, and he had neither the inclination nor the courage to break in upon the convivial circle whose boisterous mirth came pealing in from the kitchen. One hope was left him, his servant might have thought to pack some books in the portmanteau. He would go and see. No, no books, only clothes...²¹⁵

It is here when Stacey stumbles upon Stewart's papers whilst rummaging through the luggage: "Good Heavens! what is this? A series of manuscripts of different shapes and size, and evidently in various hands, neatly folded, docketed, and tied together in one

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ Tracy, "Reading Dickens' Writing." (p. 37-38)

²¹⁵ Yates et al. 'The Slaves of the Lamp' (p.7)

general wrapping sheet, on which were the following words pencilled in Cameron's well-known hand: G.'s G. for 187". This is accompanied by a list of informal descriptions - jotted down roughly for Stewart's own use - which identify the following stories one by one based on their genre.²¹⁶ These manuscripts seem to have been arranged by Stewart in an editorial capacity as part of his preparations to assemble the next issue of some periodical published by Gogerty, hence the G.'s G., which stand for Gogerty's Garland; 187 is probably the issue number for which the following manuscripts have been lined up. This situation resembles the task Yates is currently engaged in - arranging and assembling manuscripts by different contributors, and putting together the next Christmas number for *All the Year Round*. Arthur realises these to be the manuscripts which Stewart fondly imagined he had taken with him to arrange on the voyage, and hence the interpolated stories are introduced: '[Stewart] will be in a tremendous state of mind about it, but I think his wrath would be mitigated if he knew how opportunely they have come in for my relief.'²¹⁷

Breaking away from the set-up in Yates' previous Christmas frame, *Stormbound*, the narrative of *Slaves of the Lamp* is more focussed on the outcome of the frame's plot itself, rather than putting an emphasis on the culture of storytelling or story-sharing that could possibly highlight the place of the interpolated tales in the frame. There is a

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

successful attempt at riveting the entire number to Stacey's *personal experience*. The attention of readers is focused on the emotions he is going through during the process of uncovering the truth behind Ellen Pollard and how this might affect his future with Miss Tregon. Throughout Stacey's time spent in the telegraph office (i.e. the entirety of the frame), waiting for any news following Stewart's ongoing investigations in New York, 'the misery of his position, the horror under which he was suffering on the night of' the receipt of the blackmail 'recurred to Arthur Stacey in its fullest force' and this turns itself into the primary concern for readers.²¹⁸ Just as the frame of Dickens' *The Holly Tree Inn* is dominated by its protagonist, Charley's inner thoughts as he struggles to relieve himself of the anxiety caused by the misunderstandings involving his fiancée, we find that most of the frame for Yates' *Slaves of the Lamp*, is comprised of Stacey's internal monologue: 'That thought' that his friend Cameron Stewart has successfully reached New York 'rather intensified than relieved his anxiety. He found himself constantly wondering what steps Cameron would take for the elucidation of the mystery. What he might be doing at that particular time, why Ellen Pollard had sent over to England the news of her death, she can have been a gainer by the device. Maud Tregenna, too, Arthur could scarcely bear to think of her!'²¹⁹ As for the provision of the subject-matter, instead of relying on something impersonal, such as a shared extrinsic event - as was the case in *Stormbound* - the

²¹⁸ Yates et al. 'The Slaves of the Lamp' p.6.

²¹⁹ Ibid. p.7

content originates from Stacey's own circumstances.²²⁰ The frame is immersed in his story, and hence, much of the narrative ends up describing his chain of thoughts; this indicates that, unlike Yates' preceding Christmas number, *Slaves of the Lamp* presents a frame whose protagonist has an internal source for supplying the incoming content for the narrative, and thus, is independent of his environment for the progression of the plot.

After *The Seven Poor Travellers*, whose frame revolved around the characters who were to narrate its interpolated stories, Dickens' strategy to make his next frame independent in the *Holly Tree-Inn* was to diminish the participation of such characters in the frame narrative. Yates not only learnt from this technique but erased the need of such characters altogether by introducing a bunch of manuscripts to fulfil the basic function of incorporating other stories within the frame. We could see a developmental pattern in Yates' frames similar to what we witnessed in Dickens' Christmas numbers for *Household Words*. Originally, the interpolated stories were intended to form the main substance of the Christmas numbers and the framework was merely a tool designed for holding those stories together, as has been obvious in Dickens' *Seven Poor Travellers* as well as Yates' *Storm-bound*.²²¹ Given that *Storm-bound* was the first Christmas frame Yates composed, the centre of significance, instead of resting with one character, lies with the community

²²⁰ A shared extrinsic source for providing subject-matter, like a storm in the case above or something as simple as a communal celebration, would be an occurrence or activity that could be perceived uniformly by multiple characters, and thus becomes a public spectacle, as opposed to a storyline that eventuates from one character's personal circumstances.

²²¹ Harry Stone mentions the 'spare and utilitarian' nature of *The Seven Poor Travellers'* framework as 'the typical strategy was to bring together a group of strangers and have them while away their time by telling stories'. Harry Stone, *The Uncollected Writings of Charles Dickens: Household Words, 1850-1859* (London: Allen Lane, 1969), p.523.

of people ‘thrown together’ on a Christmas eve ‘for a certain number of hours’, and the culture of storytelling they partake in by aiming to ‘do [their] best to entertain each other, and that such among [them] as knew any interesting stories should tell them for the general good.’²²² The frame is designed for the purely functional purpose of serving as a *substructure* to the interpolated stories. The frame-tale does not have a self-sufficient plot of its own and relies on the incorporated tales to give weight and expression to an otherwise empty setting. As stated at the beginning of this section, conducting a chronological study of Yates’ Christmas numbers in terms of the employment of a connecting framework allows us to observe a shifting centre of significance within an evolving relationship between the frame and its interpolated stories. It is discernible that the centre of significance shifted as Yates progressed from *Storm-bound* to the *Slaves of the Lamp*, the latter exhibiting a far more complex framework than its modest and serviceable predecessor. As we move on, we will see how Yates’ framework, with a focus on enhancing its scheme of events, begins to facilitate the onward movement of its central plot, and strives to achieve self-sufficiency and a comprehensiveness of its own.

Next in line is the Christmas number, *Doom’s Day Camp*, published by *All the Year Round* in 1872. The frame tale follows the account of an Englishman, Harry Middleton and his American driver called Rufus Croffut, on their way to Chicago on the night when that ill-fated city was destroyed by fire. Arriving in the city, Middleton is horrified to find that

²²² Edmund Yates, et al. ‘Stormbound’, *Tinsley’s Christmas Annual*, 25 December 1867, p.6
<https://archive.org/details/1867stormboundtinsleymagazinechristmasannual/page/n3/mode/2up>

his fiancée Myra Otis, to whom he is about to get married, is absent from the hotel where he expected to meet her, and in his anxiety, Middleton seeks her in the midst of the fire, almost losing his own life. He is, however, saved by Croffut, whose genial, warm-hearted character is well drawn, and whose lively remarks upon the scenes that occur are often aimed by Yates at mitigating the horrors of the tragedy. Middleton and Croffut, with many other survivors, most of whom are now homeless, take refuge in Lincoln park - the setting thence is referred to as the Doom's Day Camp:

They grouped themselves around, and after discussing for the thousandth time the incidents of the fire, as personally affecting themselves, drifted into indifferent topics. At last one of the men lying on the outside edge of the circle struck a key note by saying: "This here park jines [*sic*] on to the cemetery, I guess. I hope no catawampous vampires will be out grazing there to-night." "Ach Himmel, don't talk of such dreadful things as vampires," cried a fair-haired German girl, burying her head in her mother's lap. "And yet they are not so dreadful as those who think they have to deal with them," said a grave French gentleman from his place close by Harry. "I know a story—" "A story!" cried Croffut, "Hyer, hand it round." Instantly there was a chorus of exclamations in various languages, all clamouring for the story. "Well," said the French gentleman, relaxing into a grave smile, "I will tell you the story. It may serve to send some to sleep, or for a time to distract the thoughts of others from matters of which, Heaven knows, they will have enough." And so, without further preface, he commenced— ²²³

It seems a bit strange for recently traumatized survivors of a tragic fire, most of whom have lost their homes, to be willing to tell stories immediately after the incident. However, the main concern that captures readers' attention is the whereabouts of Middleton's fiancée Myra, as it is not revealed until the very end of the frame whether she was saved and what ultimately became of her. Yates based this frame tale on a real-

²²³ Edmund Yates et al., 'Doom's Day Camp', in *All the Year Round*, 16th December 1872, p.6, *Hathi Trust Digital Library*, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015074630214>

life event - the Great Chicago Fire of 1871. Borrowing themes from real-life calamities for composing a 'tragic' frame tale is reminiscent of Dickens' *The Wreck of the Golden Mary*, which was based on the shipwrecks that took place during the California Gold Rush in the 1850s, and reflected the highly perilous voyages that vessels endured across the Atlantic.

Following Dickens' example, Yates, by employing a tragic frame-tale, not only gives the frame an effective narrative strength and versatility which entails an all-round coherence, but also shifts the centre of significance to the unfortunate incident itself - how it transpires and how it gets resolved - making any interpolated material which is not directly related to the tragedy, extraneous. Unlike *Slaves of the Lamp*, where the narrator himself is the centre of significance, *Doom's Day Camp* shifts that centre from the protagonist of the frame to the circumstances prevailing in the frame. Yates as such enhances the self-sufficiency of his frame as a singular and discrete narrative by equipping it with an overriding theme. Owing to the life-and-death setting of the frame, the interpolated stories are trivialised, as their humble themes are overshadowed by the frame's urgent and weighty state of affairs; these tales appear much less true than the danger that encompasses the story tellers, and so make a comparatively pale impression on the reader's mind. This helps us understand how Yates, akin to his mentor Dickens, is formulating the power-hierarchy between the frame-tale and the interpolated stories in terms of their relative significance.

However, after producing such complex Christmas frames and constantly evolving their thematic urgency and self-sufficiency for them to be prioritized over the interpolated

tales, Yates brings in an unexpected Christmas frame which completely tears away from the developmental pattern that he had been following so far. *The Blue Chamber* was published in *All the Year Round* in the year 1873. The frame for this number surprisingly reverts to being a basic substructure to the interpolated tales. The thematic design of the frame tale does not possess any overarching significance, neither does the plot make a complete, self-sufficient story in itself. Unlike the preceding two Christmas numbers of *All the Year Round*, whose frames made a comprehensive piece of fiction and were in no manner reliant or dependent upon the interpolated stories, the frame tale of *The Blue Chamber* regresses to being a tool designed for holding those stories together, and relies on them to provide some substance to an otherwise inconsequential storyline. Vernon Blake, a 'special correspondent' of the *Statesman* newspaper, finds himself on Christmas eve in a German village where all inns and hostels are closed, but is fortunate enough to be offered the hospitality of the Treuenfels, the castle of Baron Von Wehrendorf, who shows his guest their ancestral picture gallery; also 'the blue chamber', where hung from twenty-five to thirty portraits of male and female ancestors of the Wehrendorf family who had committed some crime, and had for this reason been relegated to this chamber as not being fit company for the occupants of the more respectable gallery. The interpolated tales are told by the ghosts of some of these crime-stained individuals which are recorded by Blake for publication purposes.²²⁴ No climactic conflicts have been set

²²⁴ Edmund Yates, et al. 'The Blue Chamber' in *All the Year Round*, 1 December 1873, pp.231-278, in *Hathi Trust Digital Library*, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/umn.31951000728557z?urlappend=%3Bseq=232>

forth within the frame tale that would need resolving towards the end; a lack of such plot twists diminishes readers' need to prioritize the frame, as we have witnessed so far. If we take away the interpolated stories, all the number will be left with is the arrival of a special correspondent in a castle followed by a brief viewing of his host's ancestral picture gallery, without being furnished with any information on these ostracised ancestors. It is not difficult to see that the accounts related by the ghosts of these ancestors form the core of *The Blue Chamber*. Such reversion to the old rudimentary frame tale design could be explained if we consider P.D. Edwards' earlier hypothesis - Yates most likely wrote all the interpolated stories for *The Blue Chamber* in addition to the connecting frame. An absence of collaborative authorship perhaps did not compel Yates to engage in a power-hierarchy or be cautious of the interdependent relationship that naturally develops between a frame and its interpolated stories. The number received mixed reviews from critics. The *Derby Mercury* commented that 'there is no attempt at originality in the framework in which these stories are set'.²²⁵ *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper* agreed that '*The Blue Chamber* is certainly not original in conception' and commented on December 14th, 1873:

The Blue Chamber which forms the holiday number of *All the Year Round*, contains nothing remarkable. We are sorry to observe that an idea which Charles Dickens wisely said was exploded, and worked to death, has been resuscitated by the son, with a difference that can only strike the

²²⁵ 'Literature', *Derby Mercury*, 3 December 1873, p.11, *British Library Newspapers*, <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/BA3202764675/BNCN?u=leedsuni&sid=BNCN&xid=63a3894e>. Accessed 24 Nov. 2020.

reader with sadness; but the honoured name upon the familiar blue cover carries such weight with it, that the periodical still prospers.²²⁶

While most reviewers were of the view that ‘the system on which [*The Blue Chamber*] is founded is entirely used up, worn threadbare and can only be redeemed by the most brilliant writing’,²²⁷ implying that Yates’ writing did not manage to do the job, some newspapers did publish good reviews of the number. *The Era* wrote on 14 December 1873, that ‘the Christmas number of *All the Year Round*’ is ‘[full] of amusement and enthralling incidents’ and ‘we commend it heartily’. The review even claimed that *The Blue Chamber* ‘is the cheapest and the best four pennyworth to be met with at any of the bookstalls, and its sale will be enormous, we are convinced.’²²⁸

²²⁶ ‘Christmas Literature’ *Lloyd’s Illustrated Newspaper*, 14 December 1873, in *British Library Newspapers*, <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/BC3206319984BNCNu=leedsuni&sid=BNCN&xid=a2e1a52c>. Accessed 24 Nov. 2020. (No page number visible)

²²⁷ *Ibid.*

²²⁸ ‘Literature’, *Era*, 14 December 1873, p.4, in *British Library Newspapers*, <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/BB3202458150/BNCN?u=leedsuni&sid=BNCN&xid=65a593ee>. Accessed 24 Nov. 2020.

III. George Augustus Sala: The Special Correspondent's Debut with Dickens

George Augustus Sala (1828-1895) was one of the most successful special correspondents in the world of Victorian journalism. Some of his most famous collections of his contributions to weeklies and monthlies, and special correspondent's reports from abroad are *Twice Round the Clock* (1859); *My Diary in America in the midst of War* (1865); *William Hogarth: Painter, Engraver, and Philosopher* (1866); and *Paris Herself Again in 1878–79* (1879). Besides taking him constantly to western Europe, Sala's journalistic duties entailed three visits to America and Russia, one to north Africa, and one to Australia. He was the first editor of *Temple Bar* (1860–63) and also edited *Banter* (1867–68) and *Sala's Magazine* (1892–93). He wrote several novels during his career, none of which were commercially successful: *Quite Alone* (1864), which he abandoned writing half-way through, *The Seven Sons of Mammon* (1862), and *Margaret Forster* (1897), which was originally supposed to have been written in collaboration with M. E. Braddon. Sala was a friend of A. C. Swinburne, whose taste for flagellation he shared, and was part author of a pornographic tale, *The Mysteries of Verbena House* (1882). He also wrote two autobiographical works, *Things I have Seen and People I have Known* (1894), and *The Life and Adventures of George Augustus Sala* (1895).²²⁹

Sala started work as an etching artist and an engraver in the mid 1840s, and made a living out of similar artistic but non-literary occupations until 1851 when he made up his

²²⁹ Edwards, *Dickens's 'Young Men'*, (p.5,6,7)

mind to send in one of his short sketches entitled 'The Key of the Street' to Dickens' *Household Words*. The sketch originated in an experience when Sala was locked out of his lodgings at night and had to stroll the city-streets until morning. One of Sala's friends suggested that this 'nocturnal misadventure' could make an entertaining piece of reading, should Sala choose to write it down and perhaps send it to a magazine like *Household Words* for publication; Sala's reaction to this was: 'I shrugged my shoulders. I was utterly unknown and obscure, and, in addition, normally nervous and distrustful of myself [...] what editor, would accept anything of writing' from him?²³⁰ Sala relates in his autobiography *Things I Have Seen and People I Have Known*, that during his early years, 'the ambition or even the hope of doing anything of noticeable kind, either in literature or journalism, was for the time dead, or rather dormant within [him].'²³¹ Sala earned a decent livelihood as an engraver on steel and copper, a lithographer, and a draughtsman on wood; however, he had completely lost faith in his ability to write anything that people would find readable. In 1847, when he drew a large number of humorous illustrations for a little comic publication called *The Man in the Moon*, edited by Albert Smith and Angus Reach, Sala recalls: 'I used to ask Albert or Angus to write the line or two of letterpress which explained my caricatures.'²³² Owing to such severe lack of experience in writing, especially 'professional' writing, Sala thoroughly questioned the idea of sending his

²³⁰ Sala, *Things I Have Seen, And People I Have Known*, 1 (Kessinger Publishing, LLC, 2010), p.66.

²³¹ Ibid. p.64.

²³² Ibid.

amateur literary experiment to one of the most successful and reputed magazines of the day, edited by a literary giant: 'Ah! I thought...What chance was there for the great Charles Dickens even condescending to cast his eyes on a manuscript penned by a necessitous engraver, three parts of whose time was passed in digging tools of steel into metal plates, laying etching grounds, smoking them and butting the needle work in the aquafortis?'²³³ Not only did Dickens consider the submission, attending to the manuscript properly regardless of the sender's work-experience, but he also accepted the article with a prompt payment of £5, a remarkable sum for a first submission. Young Sala, overwhelmed with Dickens' approval and appreciation, was encouraged to contribute further articles to the journal, and thereupon became a staff member to *Household Words*, his compositions appearing every week, sometimes twice within the same issue.

Alongside having been permanently hired with a weekly salary averaging around £5, affiliation to *HW* also significantly aided the expansion of Sala's professional contacts and literary networks. The *HW* office frequently hosted official dinners and similar exclusive social events that received some of the most prolific and distinguished names of the Victorian publishing industry. Sala recounts:

How often these social gatherings were held, I do not know; but to my great glee and contentment, I used to get an invitation to dine at "H.W." office about once a month. On this point, however, I am not at all certain, for I must explain that in 1851-52, I had – with the exception of Dickens and Thackeray, Albert Smith and Shirley Brooks – absolutely no

²³³ Sala, *Things I Have Seen, And People I Have Known*, 1, p.67.

literary friends in London. As a boy, under my mother's roof, I had met and looked up to with veneration some of the greatest writers of the preceding generation; but when I first became a contributor to the periodical conducted by Dickens, I had no literary associate; belonged to no club, and was practically, from an intellectual point of view, alone in a metropolis then numbering some three million of souls. But every time I dined at the hospitable board in Wellington Street, I began more and more to acquire a personal knowledge of members of that Republic of Letters of which I was at the time scarcely the humblest of citizens.'²³⁴

Access to literary clubs had the ability to 'bring persons of power and ability into contact', and consequently authors were able to promote themselves to publishers, editors and to the general public within these professional chambers, which made a significant difference to their career prospects.²³⁵ According to Marrison Joseph, club memberships were deemed very important by nineteenth-century authors because 'memberships to elite clubs attached them to the perception of being professional.' Also, beginning authors who were new to the industry, 'did not have sufficient influential social ties to warrant memberships to elitist clubs, and furthermore did not have the financial capital to do so either.'²³⁶

Based on Sala's memoirs and autobiographical accounts, it could be argued that his membership of the Reform Club, the Fielding Club, and the Garrick Club was aided through his affiliation to *Household Words*, alongside the connections he made at the

²³⁴ Sala, *Things and People*, pp.84-85

²³⁵ 'The Athenaeum Club-House', *Fraser's Magazine for Town and County*, 1 March 1830, p.11, *19th Century UK Periodicals Online*, Gale Databases, <https://find.gale.com/menu/commonmenu.do?userGroupName=leedsuni>

²³⁶ Marrison, Joseph, *Victorian Literary Businesses: The Management and Practices of the British Publishing Industry*, (Switzerland: Springer Nature, Palgrave Macmillan, 2019) p.95

official dinners regularly held by Dickens for his journals.²³⁷ In addition to the most prolific members of the regular writing staff at *Household Words*, such as William Moy Thomas, James Payn, Henry Morley, William Henry Wills, Sydney Blanchard, and Richard Henry Horne, these social events were frequented by some of the more prominent names of the period, such as Thomas Carlyle, the Brownings, Anthony Trollope, William Makepeace Thackeray, John Forster, Robert Lytton, and Charles Reade amongst others.²³⁸ Sala recounts that it was not 'without some slight amount of trepidation that [he] found [him] self sitting at the same table with two very eminent men of letters connected with *Punch*, Douglas Jerrold and Mark Lemon' at one of these dinners.²³⁹ Dickens, after having introduced Sala to Mark Lemon, went to great lengths to get Sala a position on the writing staff of *Punch*.²⁴⁰ It was through socializing in these circles that Sala, and Dickens' other young apprentices, became acquainted with the mainstream editors and publishers of the day that helped them expand their professional circle and business contacts. When

²³⁷ Sala, George Augustus, *Things I Have Seen, And People I Have Known*, 1, pp.84-85.

²³⁸ Fitzgerald Percy. *Memories of Charles Dickens*, p.77.

²³⁹ Sala, George Augustus, *Things I Have Seen, And People I Have Known*, 1, p.86.

²⁴⁰ Sala writes in his autobiography: Dickens had made 'strenuous, but fruitless, efforts to obtain for me a position on the staff of *Punch*, not as an artist, but as a writer.' The reason Sala actually makes that distinction towards the end is because this was not the first time that Dickens had tried to professionally help Sala in a similar fashion. Back when Sala had not yet started writing for magazines, Dickens, after reviewing some of Sala's sketches, provided a letter of introduction for Sala to be sent to Mark Lemon for the position of an etching artist on *Punch*. 'The genial editor of *Punch* greeted [Sala] with unctuous kindness and a whole cascade of smiles' at his office in Whitefriars and 'promised to look [Sala's portfolio] over' with a view to 'favourable consideration' when he received the letter of introduction 'from the author of "Pickwick"'. Sala, *Things I Have Seen, And People I Have Known*, 1, pp.62-63.

Dickens accepted Sala's first article 'The Key of the Street' and it appeared in *Household Words* in 1851, Thackeray was so impressed by the piece that he actually proposed Sala for membership of the Garrick Club.²⁴¹ Thackeray remarked: 'I think it's almost the best magazine paper that ever was written [. . .] I talked about Sala a hundred times to Dickens and admired his extraordinary power'.²⁴² Sala sets the scene in one of his letters to Edmund Yates, when he finds himself writing from the smoking room of the prestigious Reform Club. He makes a point of mentioning that Dickens is seated at the next table and describes how gaining access to such exclusive clubs and people is a definite sign of his rising in the world. Thackeray had seconded his application for membership just two months previously.²⁴³

Sala's growth and establishment as a special correspondent was significantly aided by Dickens' professional guidance and mentorship during his apprenticeship years on *Household Words*. Dickens, through his astute sense of professional judgement, was able to foresee that Sala was the kind of writer who would excel at urban reporting and metropolitan sketches. Seeing Sala's capabilities as a flâneur, Dickens encouraged him to saunter the streets of London and Paris, and then to transform his observations into articles. Dickens was the first to recognise and promote this flâneurial gaze that lay

²⁴¹ Letter from Charles Delapryne to Sala, 19 Apr 1894, Beinecke Library, Yale University.

²⁴² Cited in Philip Collins's introduction to George Augustus Sala, *Twice Round the Clock* (London: Houlston and Wright, 1859), p. 9.

²⁴³ Judy McKenzie, ed, *Letters of George Augustus Sala to Edmund Yates in the Edmund Yates Papers, University of Queensland Library*, (Queensland: Victorian Fiction Research Unit, University of Queensland, 1993), Letter 63.

dormant in Sala, and which was to lay the foundation of his career as a special correspondent. Following the 'Key of the Street', and after seeing Sala's second article on the 1851 Great Exhibition, Dickens wrote to Wills, discussing Sala's prospects as an urban delineator:

There is nobody about us whom we can use, in his way, more advantageously than this young man. It will be exceedingly desirable to set him on some subjects. I will endeavour to think of a few, suited to him. Suggest to him Saturday night in London, or London Markets – Newport Market, Tottenham Court Road, Whitechapel Road ... the New Cut etc. etc. I think he would make a capital paper out of it.²⁴⁴

Dickens's shrewd eye for literary style and content meant that, on the strength of only two submissions, he realized that he had found a writer who, as Peter Blake describes, 'could take over his mantle as the delineator of London'.²⁴⁵ Indeed, his talent as a lively downtown sketcher proved to be Sala's prominent asset in his journalistic specialization, on the basis of which he was to earn his reputation in the literary market. Whether it was his initial works like *A Journey Due North for Household Words* or his later sketches like *America in the Midst of War* for *The Daily Telegraph*, every piece of special correspondence by Sala relied heavily on the flâneurial gaze, which he developed through learning from Dickens as well as through following the imaginative yet realistic style that Dickens impressed on his contributors to adopt.

According to Blake, Sala's exploration of his content and the ways in which he formulated and visualized ideas, resembled that of Dickens. Catherine Waters, in her

²⁴⁴ Charles Dickens, *The Letters of Charles Dickens*, ed. by Madeline House et al., 12 vols, 6, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965) p.497

²⁴⁵ Peter Blake, 'Charles Dickens, George Augustus Sala and *Household Words*', *Dickens Quarterly*, 26 (2009), p.28

article 'Much of Sala, and but Little of Russia: A Journey Due North', regards Sala's 'need to draw inspiration from the life of the streets' to be constructively Dickensian. Waters draws a comparison between both writers, noting how the bustling and crowded nature of a metropolis lays the foundation for their urban sketching. While in Lausanne, Switzerland, composing *Dombey and Son*, Dickens complained to Forster about 'the lack of busy London streets which were indispensable to his writing'. Similarly, in the second last installment of *A Journey Due North*, Sala blames the dearth of masses in the Russian outdoors for his inability to achieve a comprehensive detail in his description of the local colours of Russia: 'Be it mine," I said, the very first night I laid down in my bed in the family vault at Heydes, "to take this Russian people, and spread it out between sheets of paper like caviare in a sandwich, for the million at home to digest as best they may." But, my dear and forbearing reader, *I couldn't find the people.*'²⁴⁶

These similarities suggest that Dickens played an important role in shaping Sala's methods for collecting information and gathering ideas that inspired the content for his articles. Dickens tutored him on how to delineate and document a metropolis and its regional peculiarities in a more fanciful and descriptive manner that allowed him to pack his writing with a plethora of engaging details. Although Dickens was a thorough editor and the articles that were accepted for publication were often rewritten entirely, Dickens always sent the altered version back to the writers accompanied with a letter of feedback,

²⁴⁶ Catherine Waters, 'Sketches of the Metropolis: Pub-Crawling with George Augustus Sala in *Household Words*.' *Dickens Quarterly*, (2013), pp. 26–42, (p.27). Also see, Catherine Waters, "'Much of Sala, and but Little of Russia", "A Journey Due North", *Household Words*, and the Birth of a Special Correspondent', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 42 (4), (2009), pp. 305-323., <https://www.kent.ac.uk/english/research/docs/waters.doc>

guiding them on how to improve their writing; this allowed them to receive direct training from the celebrity editor. Dickens showed his skill as a magazine editor in the handling of his staff and contributors. His editorial methods were remarkably successful. Dickens was able to develop a highly skilled group of contributors 'through personal contact and personal direction of assignments', as well as through 'train[ing] them in "The Dickens School of Journalism."', and impart[ing] to them his editorial policies.'²⁴⁷ This flâneurial modus operandi that Sala developed under Dickens' apprenticeship proved even more useful for the travel writing he produced later in his career, as Sala did not limit this method of writing to his urban sketches but extended it to his special correspondence - a genre through which he primarily built his reputation. Hence it could be argued that Sala's apprenticeship for Brand Dickens set him on the right track by helping him choose the right literary genre for him, as well as coaching him in the art of effectively composing impactful travelogues.

This training undoubtedly started when Dickens gave Sala his first job as a special correspondent in 1856. At that point, the Crimean War was 'com[ing] to a close' and 'the Treaty of Paris' was about to [be] ratified', owing to which Sala 'was suffused by a burning

²⁴⁷ Gerald Giles Grubb, 'Dickens' Influence as an Editor', *Studies in Philology*, Vol. 42, No. 4, (1945), pp. 811-823, p.820. University of North Carolina Press, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4172737>. Practically every article and story that went into his journals went through his hands; many of them were drastically revised, and nearly all received some finishing touches. His personal method of work demanded great exactness, extremely methodical habits-to which his family and friends testify-long hours, and the expending of much nervous energy, all of which probably contributed to his relatively early death. The development of Wilkie Collins, who was possibly the most valuable contributor, testifies to the effectiveness of his method; the training of Mrs. Gaskell in the art of serial writing shows the patience of the editor; and the advising of Bulwer-Lytton speaks eloquently for his editorial tact.

desire to see something of the Russians and of the great Empire of Muscovy itself.’²⁴⁸ He wanted to visit Russia in the capacity of a correspondent and write about the nation and its people. However, special correspondence was only a feature of newspapers during the 1850s, and periodicals, especially bourgeois family magazines, did not engage in the genre at all. Sala considered applying to various newspapers for the position of a special correspondent to cover the latest political and cultural developments in Russia, but he ‘was so young and so obscure, that, had [he] sent in an application for such employment to the editor of any London newspaper, [he] should probably have received a polite refusal from the editors whom [he] approached’. Upon finding out about Sala’s aspiration, Dickens, who was as encouraging and supportive towards his young apprentices as ever, ‘very gladly fell in’ with the writer’s idea about ‘go[ing] to St. Petersburg and Moscow, and tell[ing] the readers of *Household Words* what the Russians at home were like.’ These travel reports on the aftermath of the Crimean War, amalgamated with urban sketches about Russian life and mannerisms, were published in serial form in *Household Words* under the title *A Journey Due North* between April and October 1856. Before reaching the agreement with Dickens, Sala had written to Yates that he ‘had (and have) in [his] muddled brain an idea that Dickens will set [him] straight eventually, and enable [him] to get that start’ in the newspaper industry he had always wanted. As Sala predicted, this

²⁴⁸ Sala, *Things I Have Seen, And People I Have Known*, 1, pp.101-102

arrangement with Dickens indeed turned out to be a significant breakthrough in his career since it allowed him to make his debut in special correspondence.²⁴⁹ Dickens not only gave his young and aspiring writer this opportunity, but in order to do so, he introduced special correspondence in his magazine. Despite it being a new and unconventional genre for magazines, Dickens created a hybrid periodical genre by merging news and documentary journalism with fanciful and entertaining portrayals of places and people. *A Journey Due North* sold around 100,000 copies per issue when it was being published in *Household Words*; it was later reprinted in book form with Bentley, and sold around 1000 copies of the first edition and 1500 for the second.²⁵⁰

This eventually led to Sala's established expertise in special correspondence; he was appointed in a similar capacity by newspapers such as *The Daily Telegraph* and *Illustrated London News* to travel around the world and report back as their foreign correspondent. It was on the strength of his Russian correspondence that Edward Levy-Lawson, eager to recruit lively young writers for his fledgling paper, offered him, in 1857, the job with the London *Daily Telegraph*, that led him to fame, if not fortune. One of his first projects for the *Telegraph* - a series of reports on the progress of the Civil War in United States - entitled *My Diary in America in the Midst of War* was published from November 1863 to December 1864. His reputation for fancy and polemic was assured, and the series

²⁴⁹ Judy McKenzie, ed, *Letters of George Augustus Sala to Edmund Yates in the Edmund Yates Papers* University of Queensland Library. Letter 2.

²⁵⁰ Edwards, *Dickens's 'Young Men'*, p.53

was so successful that his mission was extended for another six months; as he put it himself, estimating that at least a quarter of a million people were reading them: “these letters may not have made me favourably known, ... but *they have made me known*”. By 1875 *Vanity Fair* described him as arguably the best-known journalist of the day in a cartoon captioned with just one word, “Journalism.”²⁵¹

A long series of overseas assignments followed and Sala’s ‘special’ correspondence became a valuable feature for the *Daily Telegraph*. *A Trip to Barbary by a roundabout Route* (1866?) recorded a journey to Algiers in the train of Emperor Napoleon III of France.²⁵² *From Waterloo to the Peninsula: four Months' hard labour in Holland, Belgium, France, and Spain* (1867), represented his journal of travel between November 1865 and February 1866.²⁵³ During the rest of the latter year and part of the next he was in northern Italy, for a time with Garibaldi's army, and afterwards in Venice during its evacuation by the Austrians. His letters from Italy formed the basis of his *Rome and Venice, with other Wanderings in Italy in 1866–7*.²⁵⁴ In 1867 and 1870 he was in Paris, on the first occasion preparing *Notes and Sketches* of the exhibition, and on the second observing the opening scenes of the Franco-Prussian war.²⁵⁵ A flying visit to Metz in August

²⁵¹ George Augustus Sala, *My Diary in America in the Midst of War* (London: Tinsley Brothers, 1865), Diary 1, p.13.

²⁵² George Augustus Sala, *A Trip to Barbary by a Roundabout Route* (London: Tinsley Brothers, 1866).

²⁵³ George Augustus Sala, *From Waterloo to the Peninsula: Four Months' Hard Labour in Belgium Holland Germany and Spain* (London: Tinsley Brothers, 1867).

²⁵⁴ George Augustus Sala, *Rome and Venice: With Other Wanderings in Italy in 1866-7* (London: Tinsley Brothers, 1869).

²⁵⁵ George Augustus Sala, *Notes and Sketches of the Paris Exhibition* (London: Tinsley Brothers, 1868).

1870 was followed by his arrest in Paris as a spy; but he managed to reach Geneva, and on 20 September was at Rome when the Italian troops ended papal rule there. He was present at the opening of the German parliament at Berlin in the autumn of 1871, and witnessed in Spain in 1875 the accession to the throne of Alphonso XII and the close of the Carlist war. At the end of 1876, when war between Russia and Turkey was imminent, he was ordered to St. Petersburg, whence he made his way to Constantinople and Athens, returning home in the summer of 1877. He spent much time in Paris during the exhibition of 1878, and described his impressions in '*Paris herself again*' (1880).²⁵⁶ Between December 1879 and the spring of 1880 Sala was again in the United States, and he collected his correspondence in a volume called '*America Revisited* (1882).²⁵⁷ He hurried to St. Petersburg in March 1881, after the murder of the emperor Alexander II, and was there in May 1883 at the coronation of Emperor Alexander III. On 26 December 1884 Sala started on his final journalistic tour—an extended journey through America and Australia. He had undertaken to lecture on his own account, chiefly about his journalistic adventures, as well as to describe for the *Daily Telegraph* the countries and peoples he visited. As a lecturer he met with many rebuffs, but the result showed a substantial profit. He came home by way of India.²⁵⁸ His letters from Australia appeared in the *Daily*

²⁵⁶ George Augustus Sala, *Paris Herself Again*, 2 vols, (New York: Scribner and Welford, 1880)

²⁵⁷ George Augustus Sala, *America Revisited from the Bay of New York to the Gulf of Mexico and from Lake Michigan to the Pacific*, 2 vols, (London: Vizetelly, 1883)

²⁵⁸ George Augustus Sala. *The Life and Adventures of George Augustus Sala*, 2 vols, (New York: Scribner and Welford, 1895)

Telegraph under the heading, 'The Land of the Golden Fleece,' and formed the subject-matter of two volumes— *A Journey due South* (1885) and *Right round the World* (1888).²⁵⁹ These works were originally written as a series of travel letters for *The Daily Telegraph*, and were subsequently published in book form, apart from those from Australasia. It was during these years of foreign reportage that Sala climbed the 'topmost rung' of the journalistic ladder, as Ralph Straus termed it, and his name and initials became famous across the world.²⁶⁰ Waters remarks: 'Sala's work for *Household Words* was an apprenticeship crucial for his subsequent career as the pre-eminent special correspondent of his day.'²⁶¹

Another factor that reinforced the accuracy of Dickens' early advice for Sala as regards sticking with travel journalism and reporting was Sala's lack of success in other literary genres, especially fiction.²⁶² Sala attempted writing novels, but failed miserably. One of his last attempts at writing works of long fiction ended abruptly when Andrew

<http://catalog.hathitrust.org/api/volumes/oclc/34757540.html>. Accessed 19 Oct. 2022. Also see, Edmund Yates, *Fifty Years of London Life: Memoirs of a Man of the World* (New York: Harper & Bros 1885); Henry Vizetelly, *The Story of the Diamond Necklace Told in Detail for the First Time Chiefly by the Aid of Original Letters Official and Other Documents and Contemporary Memoirs Recently Made Public ... by Henry Vizetelly* (Tinsley Brothers, 1867).

²⁵⁹ George Augustus Sala and Robert Dingle, *The Land of the Golden Fleece: George Augustus Sala in Australia and New Zealand in 1885* (Brisbane: Mulini Press, 1995). Also see, George A. Sala *A Journey Due South Travels in Search of Sunshine*, (London: Vizetelly, 1885). Also see, George Augustus Sala, *Right Round the World with Some Stories I Found on It* (London: J. Dicks 1887), <http://books.google.com/books?id=IXr5f6zfYxIC>. Accessed 19 Oct. 2022.

²⁶⁰ Ralph Straus, *Sala: The Portrait of an Eminent Victorian* (London: Constable and Co., 1942), pp.232-51

²⁶¹ Waters, 'Sketches of the Metropolis: Pub-Crawling with George Augustus Sala in *Household Words*, p. 37.

²⁶² Dickens, Charles, *The Letters of Charles Dickens: The Pilgrim Edition*, [Dickens to Wills, August 13, September 27, 1851], 7, p.211. Also see Sala, George A. *Charles Dickens* (London: G. Routledge, 1870) pp. vi-vii

Halliday was assigned with the task of completing the remaining instalments of a novel that Sala had started titled *Quite Alone* (the only novel Dickens ever accepted by Sala to be serialised in his periodicals). Sala could not finish the final chapters of the story. This further corroborates Dickens' observation about Sala's strengths and his opinion on the areas where Sala could most productively employ his literary talents. However, Sala also experienced some difficulties working with Dickens and his powerful periodical image. Originally, when Sala started writing, he was not sufficiently imaginative and his writings often did not engage with the element of fancy, or at least not as much as Dickens expected and encouraged his staff to. His first article 'The Key of the Street', though brilliant in every other aspect, 'lacked the fancy and imagination' which Dickens 'craved' for; this was Dickens only 'criticism of the piece'.²⁶³ In the context of the ratio between imagination and realism, Blake comments that:

Sala's article, constructed around an actual incident, was far more realistic. It highlighted in graphic detail the plight of the poor and homeless in the nation's capital, provided topographic details of the city, and poured scorn upon the aristocracy, who are portrayed as fleeting shadows haunting the night, usually in a state of debauchery while "out on the spree."²⁶⁴

As discussed previously, owing to Dickens' tastes and desire to maintain one uniform voice for his journals, many contributors ended up imitating Dickens' style and techniques to make their compositions more compatible. Many contributors had a hard time learning Dickensian compositional methods, as Percy Fitzgerald described: 'The

²⁶³ Blake, p.26

²⁶⁴ Blake, p.25

writers were compelled, owing to the necessity of the producing effect, to adopt a tone of exaggeration. Everything, even trivial, had to be made more comic than it really was. This was the law of the paper [.....] this pressure became all but irresistible.²⁶⁵ Sala was naturally gifted in these stylistic techniques and '[his] feeling for the fanciful and the picturesque was akin to Dickens'. Thus, Sala was one of the very few people who were effortlessly able to produce 'fine articles in the Dickensian mode.'²⁶⁶ Most submissions for publication in *Household Words* were heavily edited by Dickens. Sala did not always like it, especially when Dickens modified the drafts of his Russian reports. He wrote in one of his letters to Yates: 'I am glad you liked H.W. I don't. The woodman who has not spared the tree has applied the pruning knife - "Zounds! the axe." He never lost the power to extemporize on my subject, and was never afraid to blend fact and fantasy; nothing was ever too large or too small for his descriptive powers.'²⁶⁷

Owing to the overpowering element of fancy, the boundaries dividing reality and imagination were often made vague and indistinct. This trait could make travel reports far less realistic and reliable, especially when special correspondence is traditionally expected

²⁶⁵ Percy Hetherington Fitzgerald, *Memoirs of an Author* (London, Richard Bentley and son, 1895), p.170, <<http://archive.org/details/cu31924104096692>> [accessed 14 September 2016]

²⁶⁶ Harry Stone, *Charles Dickens' Uncollected Writings from Household Words*, 1, p.34.

²⁶⁷ Judy McKenzie, ed, *Letters of George Augustus Sala to Edmund Yates in the Edmund Yates Papers University of Queensland Library*. Letter 4.

to stick more with facts and figures and less with efforts to deliver entertainment and comic effect. Thus, in the case of *A Journey Due North*, the use of such narrative technique led to suspicions that Sala 'had never been to Russia at all'²⁶⁸ The reviewers for the *Saturday Review* and *The Times* were especially sceptical of its authenticity. The *Saturday Review* stated: "There is not a trace of local colour in the whole narrative....and Mr Sala might well have written it—perhaps did write it—before he left London'. Regarding some of the character portraits and comic-sketches that Sala composed to describe the fellow passengers and some guests who were staying with him at Heyde's hotel in St. Petersburg, the reviewer declared, 'we reject as mere fictions his far-fetched account of the humours and excesses of the guests' . Complaining about the lack of realism and verifiable information in the series, the reviewer continued that 'Had he been more impartial, less anxious for effect, and more forgetful of self, he would have turned his observations to a better account, and might have taught us a great deal more.' To sum up this scathing criticism in one line, the *Saturday Review* concluded that: 'Mr. Dickens is out-Dickensed by this imitator of his overwrought style of word-painting'.²⁶⁹ Similarly, noticing the excesses of fancy and farce which may be appropriate for writing fiction but interfere with the reliability of foreign correspondence, the *Times* wrote:

This is certainly not the best qualification for a traveller who goes to see in our behalf what men of ordinary temperament would see, and who is expected to make a report which we can rely upon as fairly representative. If a man is tormented by the utter

²⁶⁸ George Augustus Sala, *A Journey Due North. Being Notes of a Residence in Russia in the Summer of 1856* (London: Bentley, 1858), p.377

²⁶⁹ 'Sala's Journey Due North', *Saturday Review*, 11 September 1858, p.262-263

absurdity of earthly things, he will see farces in stones and fun in everything, to the confusion of our impressions if not his own; especially will he be found an unsafe interpreter of the phenomena of a state of semi-civilisation if he regards those mainly in a spirit of contemptuous irony.²⁷⁰

However, on the other hand, the Dickensian mode of writing was also appreciated and admired by many reviewers, such as the *Daily News* which was not at all sceptical of Sala's visit to Russia.²⁷¹ It was the view that the Dickensian style in which Sala engages, gives a special quality to *A Journey Due North*, as its imaginative word-painting, full of picturesque and characterful descriptions, makes the often dry documentary mode of journalistic travel-writings more palatable for the wider public. As P.D. Edwards remarks: 'Too much talkee-talkee, particularly about himself, was to remain the most exasperating, yet most popular, characteristic of all Sala's special correspondent's reports, and all his other journalism.'²⁷² His literary style, highly coloured, bombastic, egotistic, and full of turgid periphrases, gradually became associated by the public with their conception of the *Daily Telegraph*; and though the butt of the more scholarly literary world, his articles were invariably full of interesting matter and helped to make the reputation of the paper.²⁷³ Joseph Hatton asserted that Dickens' stylistic influence on Sala's writing ensured the writer's career as 'the chief of travelled specials'.²⁷⁴

²⁷⁰ George Augustus Sala "A Journey Due North", *Times*, 30 September 1858, p.2.

²⁷¹ George Augustus Sala, "A Journey Due North. Being Notes of a Residence in Russia in the Summer of 1856", *Daily News*, 20 August 1858, p.4.

²⁷² Edwards, *Dickens's 'Young Men'*, p.35.

²⁷³ George Augustus Sala. *The Times*. 9 December 1895. No. 34755, p. 6.

²⁷⁴ Joseph Hatton, *Journalistic London: Being a Series of Sketches of Famous Pens and Papers of the Day* (London: Routledge, 1998), p.169

Chapter III

Professional Evolution of Amelia Blandford Edwards and Charles Collins:

The Christmas Collaboration in *All the Year Round*

I. Introduction: Amelia Blandford Edwards

Amelia Blandford Edwards (1831-1892) was one of the most prolific contributors to Dickens' Christmas numbers published in *All the Year Round*; she contributed to five out of the eight Christmas numbers featured by the periodical between 1859 and 1867. Unlike most of the Christmas stories published in *Household Words* which didn't employ ghosts in their narratives, most of Edwards' stories were predominantly ghost stories as one would traditionally expect Christmas stories to be. According to Brenda Moon, 'in her own lifetime', Edwards became famous 'in *particular* for her ghost stories' in addition to her engagement with Egyptology that came much later.²⁷⁵ Though if we focus on Edwards' literary career that covered a much longer period of her life than Egyptology, her ghost stories definitely form the platform that earned her most fame, recognition and popularity. More importantly, for this discussion, these ghost stories are also a platform which originated in her collaboration with Dickens and was perfected over time with every passing Christmas annual of *All the Year Round*.

²⁷⁵ Brenda E. Moon, *More Usefully Employed : Amelia B. Edwards, Writer, Traveller and Campaigner for Ancient Egypt* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 2006) p.1.

Edwards also tried her hand at writing novels, the Victorian literary staple, and produced a few that were fairly successful like *Barbara's History* (1864) and *Lord Brackenbury* (1880). However, she contributed only one novel to Dickens' periodicals - *Half a Million of Money*, a sensation novel, which was serialised in *All the Year Round* in 1865.²⁷⁶ Despite this novel being Edwards' 'least popular novel', it was ranked highly' by *The Standard* (one of 'the main four London dailies' which 'enjoyed the largest circulations' during 1860s and 1870s).²⁷⁷ The review read: 'This romance from the life of "Saxon Trefalden"....place[s] her [Edwards] high up in the highest class of modern female novelists.²⁷⁸ To say that it ranks far above all the Miss Braddon school is merely to say what everybody already knows, the difference between the two styles of composition being about as patent as that which divides the *Blue Fire* and *Demons* at the Surrey Theatre from the real acting of *Plot and Passion* at the Olympic.'²⁷⁹ Contemporary critics may have been influenced by the source of publication when passing a judgement on the status of the novel. An anonymous reviewer wrote: 'This is one of the best stories we have read

²⁷⁶ Ibid, p.2.

²⁷⁷ 'Barbara's History', *The Standard*, 4 April 1866, pg.1. *British Library Newspapers*, <http://gale.cengage.co.uk/british-library-newspapers/19th-century-british-library-newspapers-part-ii.aspx>

²⁷⁸ Lucy Brown, 'The Treatment of the News in Mid-Victorian Newspapers', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, vol. 27, (1977), pp. 23–39, p.24.

²⁷⁹ 'Barbara's History', *The Standard*, 4 April 1866, pg.1.

for a long time past.... this fresh production...will firmly establish her in a position amongst the first lady novelists of the day.²⁸⁰

While Amelia Edwards was one of the most prolific contributors to *AYR*'s December issues, her contribution to *Household Words* was quite limited as in the 1850s she was merely starting out as a *professional* full-time author. It was in February 1852 that Edwards wrote an essay titled 'The Rainbow' which became the first work for which she ever received a payment: 'I sent it to the *Eliza Cook's Journal* & to my surprise received in a few days a proof & a guinea. This encouraged me.....'. Edwards 'resolved to keep it up' and 'resolved to be an author', given the newly discovered prospects of earning 'money by the pen'.²⁸¹ Though Edwards had been writing since she was a child and some of her compositions had appeared in local penny weeklies (most of which became defunct soon thereafter),²⁸² her 'literary ardour' was 'never fed by *payment* of any kind', as a result of which she never took authorship as a serious occupation until the early 1850s.²⁸³ Brenda Moon, however, argues that Edwards' 'contributions to *Household Words* are more extensive than is often recognised'²⁸⁴. As is well known, the office book of *Household Words* survived which lists the authors of every single article published in the magazine, and, hence, all the contributors and their specific contributions to the journal have been identified.

²⁸⁰ 'ABE: scrap book: "Vocal pieces" & c with some loose cuttings', 7 September 1850. Oxford, Somerville College Library Special Collections, *The Amelia Edwards Archive*, Item 434.

²⁸¹ 'ABE: "Memoir": autobiographical notes', November 1855. Oxford, Somerville College Collections, *The Amelia Edwards Archive*, Item 439.

²⁸² 'ABE to R. R. Bowker: typescript copy of an article on her novel-writing to appear in *Harper's*', June 1888. Oxford, Somerville Special Collections, *The Amelia Edwards Archive*, Item 438.

²⁸³ Oxford, Somerville Special Collections, *The Amelia Edwards Archive*, Item 439.

²⁸⁴ Moon, *More Usefully Employed*, p.22.

According to this record, Amelia Edwards contributed only one piece of work, a short story called 'The Patagonian Brothers' (1858) to *Household Words*. Moon bases her claim on a proof copy of Dickens' short story 'The First' (from the 1854 Christmas number *The Seven Poor Travellers*), which, according to her, is heavily edited in Amelia Edwards' handwriting.²⁸⁵ Moon goes on to write: 'In the index to the magazine issued by the University of Toronto Press only *The Patagonian Brothers* is ascribed to Amelia, but in the Somerville archive there is a proof copy of *The First Poor Traveller's Story* with extensive alterations in her hand, with the effect of reducing the length.'²⁸⁶ Moon states that such a document exists in the Somerville College Archives which holds a major collection on Amelia Edwards; however, after thorough investigation on my part and an official audit by Somerville's chief archivists, no such document was found. A proof copy of Dickens' 'The Boots' (from the 1855 Christmas number *The Holly Tree Inn*), heavily edited by Edwards, does exist. This proof copy, however, seems to be an unauthorised edit, as none of what Edwards changed, condensed or added was ever published or included in the final print of the respective Christmas number of *Household Words*. Not just the 1855 print run of the magazine's December issue but all subsequent reprints of the story have kept the text the way it was originally written by Dickens and never incorporated any alterations made by Edwards. So, even though such an edited proof copy of one of Dickens' short stories

²⁸⁵ Anne Lohrli, *Household Words: A weekly journal 1850-1859 conducted by Charles Dickens*, p.247.

²⁸⁶ Moon, *More Usefully Employed*, p.22.

exists and it is possible that Moon accidentally interchanged the titles of these two stories when referring to the document, it still does not support her claim that Edwards' contributions to *HW* were not limited to 'The Patagonian Brothers' because her version of 'The Boots' (the only other *HW* item associated with Edwards) never made it to the publication. The document seems to be a private exercise on Edwards' part, with no official consent from Dickens.

Moreover, it seems highly unlikely that Dickens would ever let any of his contributors, especially a less established one who had no prior experience of working with him, edit one of his compositions. 'The Boots' was written in 1855, and prior to this date, Edwards did not contribute a single article to Dickens' magazines. It was in 1858 that *Household Words* published her first contribution, 'The Patagonian Brothers'. So, it seems quite improbable that Dickens would assign a task of such gravity (Christmas numbers were of critical importance for Dickens) to Edwards with whose authorial and literary capabilities Dickens was yet unacquainted, and who, at that point, was still a novice at writing short stories. One more reason which makes this edit by Edwards seem rather strange is that Dickens was particularly frustrated with the 1855 Christmas number, as I discussed in the previous chapter. The contributions from various collaborators were not coming together to his satisfaction even after Dickens had extensively revised them. To resolve this issue, he had to additionally compose 'The Boots', despite having already written the framework to make the number more coordinated. Hence, it is clear that Dickens was relying exclusively on his own pieces for making the frame-tale work, and

more importantly, 'The Boots' was intended to be the saviour of the 1855 Christmas number. Thus, it becomes even more dubious as to whether Dickens would let a literary novice edit that key story with the intention of keeping the resultant revisions in the final publication. Dickens, on the contrary, was the one who made extensive changes and corrections to the contributions from his collaborators, in order to make their styles more congruent with his own and to secure an overall uniformity.²⁸⁷

Even Wilkie Collins, who was one of the most experienced collaborators on Dickens' staff, whom Dickens trusted to the extent of sharing the authorship of several Christmas frameworks with him (as discussed in the previous chapter), is not known to have edited any of Dickens' pieces. Despite the arbitrary nature of this document, though, it is useful and revealing in terms of studying the development of Edwards' literary style under Dickens' influence because it demonstrates her engagement with the story and her interest in editing her soon-to-be editor's style. It allows us to witness a stage of Edwards' writing career when her manner and technique had not yet been impacted upon by the Christmas collaborations with Dickens.

The introduction to the story is the longest and most elaborate alteration that Edwards made. 'The Boots' relates the tale of Cobbs, who used to work as a gardener for a wealthy family, the Walmers, but is now the 'Boots' at the Holly-tree inn. Upon being prompted by the narrator of *The Holly Tree*, he starts to relate the 'curiousest [sic]

²⁸⁷ Drew, *Dickens the Journalist*, p.115.

incident he ever witnessed - the son of the family, Master Harry, aged eight had confided in Cobbs that he was in love with a little girl named Norah, aged seven, and later the young pair elope and coincidentally come to stay at the very inn where Cobbs now works as the Boots. Below is Dickens' introduction to 'The Boots':

What was the curiouesest thing he had seen? Well! He didn't know. He couldn't momentarily name what was the curiouesest thing he had seen—unless it was a Unicorn—and he see *him* once, at a Fair. But, supposing a young gentleman not eight year old, was to run away with a fine young woman of seven, might I think *that* a queer start? Certainly? Then, that was a start as he himself had had his blessed eyes on—and he had cleaned the shoes they run away in—and they was so little that he couldn't get his hand into 'em.

Master Harry Walmers's father, you see, he lived at the Elmses, down away by Shooter's Hill there, six or seven mile from Lunnon. He was a gentleman of spirit, and good looking, and held his head up when he walked, and had what you may call Fire about him. He wrote poetry, and he rode, and he ran, and he cricketed, and he danced, and he acted, and he done it all equally beautiful. He was uncommon proud of Master Harry as was his only child; but he didn't spoil him, neither. He was a gentleman that had a will of his own and a eye of his own, and that would be minded. Consequently, though he made quite a companion of the fine bright boy, and was delighted to see him so fond of reading his fairy books, and was never tired of hearing him say my name is Norval, or hearing him sing his songs about Young May Moons is beaming love, and When he as adores thee has left but the name, and that: still he kept the command over the child, and the child *was* a child, and it's to be wished more of 'em was!

How did Boots happen to know all this? Why, through being under-gardener. Of course he couldn't be under-gardener, and be always about, in the summer-time, near the windows on the lawn, a mowing, and sweeping, and weeding, and pruning, and this and that, without getting acquainted with the ways of the family.—Even supposing Master Harry hadn't come to him one morning early, and said, " Cobbs, how should you spell Norah, if you was asked? " and then begun cutting it in print, all over the fence.

Here, Dickens is descriptive and anything but brief when it comes to introducing the setting and the characters of the story. Even though he has limited space since it is a short story, Dickens prioritises character formation and takes his time to sketch

generously descriptive scenes filled with lively conversations. His narration is never that of a reporter who relays basic information to briefly summarise the setting and nondescriptly acquaint readers with its characters. It is not until four hundred words into the story that we are finally told how the Boots knew the children and what was his association with the Walmers. All this is revealed to the readers through an engaging series of exchanges between the characters; Dickens' narration actively engages in dialogue, and the dialogue is fashioned in a manner that delivers enough substance to familiarise us with the characters of Cobbs, Master Harry and Mr Walmer. All in all, Dickens' narrator never appears to be separate and distinct from the action of the story; rather, he lives it and is as equal a participant in the events as the characters experiencing them.

Now let us look at the introduction that Edwards wrote for 'The Boots' after she cancelled out all the above lines from the proof copy. Edwards replaced the above text with the following:

He was called Boots when he took the service with Mr Miles of the Holly Tree Inn – but his rightful name it was Cobbs. He was never called anything but Cobbs when he lived as undergardener at Mr Walmers's, up at Shooters Hill. Mr Walmers, you must know, was Master Harry Walmers's father, & he was uncommon [*sic*] proud of Master Harry, who was his only child. But he didn't spoil him neither. He was a gentleman that had a will of his own & would be minded; so he kept the command over the child - & the child *was* a child – which is to be wished more of 'em was [*sic*]. Now where Master Harry was about 8 year old, Miss Norah (who was the granddaughter of a neighbour nearby) was just 7; what must these two children do but fall in love. Yes – as much in love & as much in earnest as any of you grown up ladies & gentlemen ever were in your lives.²⁸⁸

²⁸⁸'ABE: proof copy, greatly altered, of story: "The Boots" for *All the Year Round*', Dec.15th 1855. Oxford, Somerville College Collections, *The Amelia Edwards Archive*, Item 522, p.1.

We can see that Edwards has largely reduced the introduction and covered all the necessary details in almost half the space. The fashion in which she introduces the settings and the characters is sufficient and would not seem wanting unless put against Dickens' version. Her narration lists all the particulars required to understand the foundation of the story, but, unlike Dickens, her narrator does not invest much in character development or direct conversations between the characters, a feature that will recur in Edwards' early short stories. Edwards seems to be very keen on making it clear in the very first sentence who 'Boots' was, his real name, where he used to work and how he developed the capacity of telling this story. This demonstrates a stark contrast between Dickens and Edwards at this stage in her writing career. Edwards feels the need to clearly lay out the source-details and the origin of the story for the reader along with the characters' backgrounds before the narrative action begins, whilst Dickens conveys this information through readily putting the characters in action. That is to say, Dickens does not feel the need to establish the premise of the story beforehand like Edwards does, but his readers simultaneously uncover these details as he progresses with the storyline. Moreover, Edwards' narrator is more of a distant onlooker who is summarising the circumstances rather than performing them, as Dickens' embedded narrator does. When we compare Edwards' early short stories (written during the late 1850s and early 1860s) to her later ones, which she wrote during and after her collaboration with Dickens (from themid to late 1860s), a transition from passive reporting to active dramatization becomes apparent in her narrative style.

Throughout this edited draft of 'The Boots', Edwards' primary objective seems to be a substantial reduction in the narrative's length without losing any information crucial to the plot development. However, with Edwards' narratorial preferences, this leaves the scenes devoted to the setting in danger of being removed. Further modifications by her suggest a disinclination towards investing time and space in character development, especially Dickens' method of characterisation. Dickens' approach to presenting and creating characters does not follow an intricate examination of psychological states or delineation of abstract perceptions and moods, but his characters are developed, as Johnson suggests, by 'creating consistent and emphatically defined patterns of individualized responses to external circumstance; in showing, that is to say, character in action.'²⁸⁹ This is precisely the reason why his narration is saturated with ongoing conversations and the action proceeds through those verbal exchanges. Such mode of narration provides a platform for those 'patterns of individualized responses' to occur and develop, consequently establishing a unique character. Even the scenes which are not directly providing any crucial information upon which the diegesis could progress, and which are dedicated to moulding an atmosphere or setting, are indispensable for placing the characters amidst those 'external circumstance[s]' which would elicit their reactions or add to the formulation of their mannerisms.

Such a mode of narration is, of course, not necessary for an author like Edwards whose plot construction relies more on physical mechanisms and action-based scenarios

²⁸⁹ E. D. H. Johnson, *Charles Dickens: An Introduction to His Novels* (New York: Random House, 1969) pg.65.

(as we will later observe), such that the dynamics of characterization do not hold much importance in the interpretation of her stories. However, when Edwards tries to apply the same approach to Dickens' narrative structure - someone whose diegesis could not be expounded without a proper understanding of his characters - it qualitatively affects the realisation and appreciation of the meaning conveyed within. For example, Edwards has struck out multiple passages in the proof copy that allow us to take a closer look into the personalities and determination of little Harry Walmers and Nora, as well as the nature of their innocent and gullible relationship with Cobbs. These passages offer a wonderful feeling of human depth and eliminate the dangers of ending up with 'flat' characters. Dickens' characters effortlessly assume the lineaments of living people because he gives them a chance to also express and function towards what is not pertinent to the immediate demands of plot progression, in addition to what is. This places them in a more realistic spectacle of life which enhances the reception of their experiences. Clearly, Edwards considers such features extraneous that do not steer the central action. She has also struck out the scenes which elucidate Cobb's despair over the sad reality of the world working against Harry and Nora's union in which he was complicit: 'he wished with all his heart there was any impossible place where those two babies could make an impossible marriage, and live impossibly happy ever afterwards. However, as it couldn't be, he went into the Governor's plans'²⁹⁰, which were to call the childrens' parents who would take them separate ways. That is what followed: 'Mr. Walmers drove away in the chaise,

²⁹⁰ Oxford, Somerville College Collections, *The Amelia Edwards Archive*, Item 522, p.3. These lines are struck out in the document.

having hold of Master Harry's hand. The elderly lady and Mrs. Harry Walmers, Junior, that was never to be (she married a Captain long afterwards, and died in India), went off next day.'²⁹¹ The final confirmation - which underlines the broken-hearted truth that despite being once 'deep in love' and 'on their way to be married' incredibly hopeful, brave and exceptionally 'innocent of guile...those two children' never saw each other again - also did not make it in Edwards' version.

So overall, in terms of narrative structures and treatment of characters within the diegesis, Edwards' style and priorities are quite different to those of Dickens. This can be related to her preference for sensational fiction, featuring mysteries, ghosts and murders. Her productions were widely successful and depended on external circumstances and turn of events rather than character development. Still, it is unclear why Edwards decided to engage in the exercise of editing one of Dickens' short stories. The fact that Edwards selected 'The Boots' for this experiment - a story that was, in terms of genre, not even close to her area of expertise - makes her purposes more puzzling. It would have made more sense, had she selected any of Dickens' macabre and ghostly tales which exist in abundance and most of them were already published at that time (including stories of murder, suicide, executions, cannibalism, dealings with Satan, child butchery, and existential terror). Perhaps Edwards wanted to pick something from Dickens' publications in *Household Words* because she was planning on sending manuscripts to be considered for publication in Dickens' magazine. Edwards edited this proof copy in 1856

²⁹¹ Ibid. Item 522, p.4. These lines are struck out in the document.

and her first publication in *Household Words* appeared in 1858. The congruence in timeline supports the above theory. *Household Words* was especially famous for giving opportunities to new writers, and several of the regular contributors initiated their professional careers with the magazine when Dickens published their first ever article. Although Edwards had published previously, she was still relatively obscure and unknown to the reading public, and joining Dickens' periodical staff would have proven to be a substantial breakthrough in the development of her professional literary career. Edwards' attempt to edit Dickens' work may have been motivated by her curiosity to study the differences between her and Dickens' writing styles. The reason for this might be Edwards' assumption that as a contributor to *Household Words*, she would be expected to echo the editor's literary technique. The magazine's permanent writing staff, especially Dickens' young men, were already said to emulate their master, and hence, articles published in its issues were often difficult to distinguish in terms of authorship. Edwards may have been curious about the comparability between her and Dickens' styles, yet she is certainly not trying to make her compositional methods identical to his; if anything, she is largely moving away from them, reinforcing the dissimilarities between their narrative modes. Edwards might thus seem resistant to the idea of emulating Dickens in terms of the technical aspects of constructing narrative design and characterization, but in terms of thematic influence, her stories went on to borrow significantly from Dickens' themes and tropes, as we shall examine later.

II. Amelia Blandford Edwards: Professional Visibility and Exposure

Edwards contributed a story titled 'Picking Up Terrible Company' to the Christmas number of AYR in 1861, *Tom Tiddler's Ground*, which was her second collaboration with Dickens, the first being *A Message from the Sea* (1860), where she contributed 'Oswald Penrewen's Story'.²⁹² 'Picking Up Terrible Company' tells the tale of a Frenchman, Francois Thierry who had been a political prisoner in France, accused of 'conspir[ing] against the government'²⁹³. He had been chained to a repeat felon called 'Gasparo, the forger'. Francois developed a natural loathing of this 'hardened...wild beast' for which Gasparo 'revenged himself up on [Francois] by every means that a vindictive nature could devise'. Somehow Gasparo convinces Francois to join him in an escape plot, but during the escape, he 'deal[s] [Francois] a tremendous blow' uttering the words: "'stay and be taken! I have always hated you!'", and leaves him to be captured.²⁹⁴ Francois manages to escape custody again and makes his way to Rome where, by a twist of fate, he is reunited with Gasparo, both of them having been hired for undertaking the dangerous task of 'illuminat[ing] the Saint Peter's' dome for Easter which involved 'slid[ing] rapidly down' using a secured rope 'over the curve of the dome, and, while thus sliding,' they '[were] to apply [their] torch to every lamp [they] passed in [their] downward progress.'²⁹⁵

²⁹² Amelia Edwards, 'Oswald Penrewen's Story', *All the Year Round*, 25 December 1860, pp.597-603, *Dickens Journals Online*, <http://www.djo.org.uk/all-the-year-round/volume-iv/page-597.html>

²⁹³ Amelia Edwards, 'Picking Up Terrible Company', *All the Year Round*, 25 December 1861, pp. 586-593, (p.588), *Dickens Journals Online*, <http://www.djo.org.uk/all-the-year-round/volume-vi/page-586.html>

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.* p.589.

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.* p.591.

Gasparo, still vindictive and grudge-bearing, tries to kill Francois by 'firing the rope' by which Francois is suspended, but in self-defense, Francois 'dashe[s] [his] torch full in the solitary felon's face' causing 'blinded and baffled' Gasparo 'to drop like a stone' to his death.²⁹⁶

The story's final scene, portraying the life and death struggle miles up in the air made it an instant success with critics and the public. A majority of newspapers and journals published positive reviews of the story which praised the intricacy of the climax and the masterful construction of thrill that forms its denouement. *The Era*, for example, stated: '*Picking up Terrible Company* is the most powerful tale...the description given of the lighting of the dome of St. Peter's at Rome is very fine. Here we have the duty and the power of endurance exemplified.'²⁹⁷ The hazardous act of being suspended at a great altitude combined with murderous intentions and nail-biting grappling, proved to be an effective formula to generate sensation and excitement which Victorian readers applauded. Newspapers printed multiple excerpts from this scene in their columns whilst reviewing *Tom Tiddler's Ground*, hence singling out Edwards' story from other contributions to the Christmas number. *The Era* printed almost the entire scene under the block-lettered caption: 'Lighting the Dome of St. Peter's Cathedral at Rome'.²⁹⁸ Other

²⁹⁶ Ibid. (p.592-593)

²⁹⁷ 'Tom Tiddler's Ground, The Christmas Number of *All the Year Round*', *The Era*, 22 December 1861, p.7, *19th Century British Library Newspapers*,

²⁹⁸ Ibid.

newspapers such as *The Leeds Times* and *The Westmorland Gazette* printed the whole story itself;²⁹⁹ whilst crediting its source *All the Year Round's* 1861 Christmas Number properly.³⁰⁰ The story became so popular owing to its last scene that it was selected for public readings on various occasions and such readings continued to take place for a considerable time; the *Berkshire Chronicle* advertised one such reading that was held two years after the story was originally published.³⁰¹ The newspaper, however, listed the selection 'Picking Up Terrible Company' under Dickens' name. Whether by this they meant Dickens as the author of the piece or whether Dickens' name was simply used to reference the original source of this story is unclear.

When considering the mode of anonymous publication and the mononymous fashion in which Dickens' periodicals and his Christmas numbers were formatted, presented and advertised, it is understandable why most people would not have had any other knowledge of the authorship of a component article except for the fact that it was produced and brought to the public by Dickens' brand. Therefore, most of the time, to specify any such piece of work in their discussion, the only particulars that might have been known to the reviewer would be the source of its publication; this in turn would

²⁹⁹ 'Picking Up Terrible Company', *The Leeds Times*, December 14th 1861, Saturday, *19th Century British Library Newspapers* Part III 1741 to 1950, Issue 1506, Leeds, England. p.6

³⁰⁰ 'Picking Up Terrible Company: The Frenchman's Tale', *The Westmorland Gazette*, December 28th 1861, Saturday, *19th Century British Library Newspapers*, Part III 1741 to 1950, Issue 3096, Kendal, England. p.3

³⁰¹ 'Penny Readings', *Berkshire Chronicle*, March 07, 1863; Saturday, *19th Century British Library Newspapers*, Part IV: 1732-1950, Issue 1880, Reading, England. pg. 5

make readers identify that piece of work with Dickens' brand by default, irrespective of its original authorship.

Coming back to the widespread popularity of the climax which made 'Picking Up Terrible Company' so successful, it is interesting to note that this climax is almost identical to that of 'The Patagonian Brothers' - Edwards' first contribution to one of Dickens' journals. 'The Patagonian Brothers', published in 1858, follows the story of an acrobat William Waldur and his partner John Griffith. They 'called' themselves 'the Patagonian Brothers' and 'became good friends'³⁰², given the fact that they spend most of their time together while working for various travelling circuses. For Edwards, a typical narrative tool to develop conflict between two otherwise best friends was to introduce a woman who is desired by both men simultaneously. The same device is followed here, creating tension between the two friends and deeply straining their relationship. The narrator of the story, Waldur, somehow manages to win Ally's hand in marriage while Griffiths drifts further away, dangerously harbouring feelings of jealousy and revenge. On the day before the marriage, Waldur and Griffiths have to perform one last act together - 'an exhibition of posturing and a balloon ascent both in one' high up in the air 'on a triangular wooden framework, which framework was called the trapeze'.³⁰³ When they are 'about two thousand feet high'³⁰⁴, performing on the trapeze affixed to the hot air balloon, with

³⁰² Amelia Edwards, "The Patagonian Brothers", *Household Words, Dickens Journals Online* (January 23, 1858), <http://www.djo.org.uk/household-words/volume-xvii/page-126.html> (p.126)

³⁰³ *Ibid.* (p.129)

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.* (p.131)

Waldur in an upside down position and Griffiths 'hanging below...holding on by [Waldur's] two hands,' the latter suddenly 'shift[s] his grasp from [Waldur's] hand to [his] wrist, and then up to the middle of [his] arm, so raising himself by degrees, till [their] faces came nearly on a level.'³⁰⁵ Griffiths maliciously asks: 'William Waldur...wasn't tomorrow to have been your wedding-day?' This spine-chilling question reveals Griffiths' intentions and Waldur sees that his partner had a 'large, open clasp-knife, and he was holding it with his teeth'; Griffiths vengefully continues: 'I bought it this evening, I hid it in my belt, I waited till the clouds came round and there was no soul to see. Presently I shall cut you away from the balloon. I took an oath that you should never have her, and I mean to keep it!' As Griffiths 'make[s] a spring at the pole overhead' in order to cut Waldur loose from the place where his foot was affixed to the pole, he resultantly 'let[s] free [Waldur's] arms', and after a few minutes of 'the deadly, deadly strife', Griffiths 'make[s] a false clutch at the trapeze, and reel[s] over', but Waldur 'ca[tches] him, just in time, by the belt round his waist' and eventually saves his life along with his own.³⁰⁶

The only significant difference between the climaxes of these two stories is that Gasparo dies at the end and Griffiths is saved. Apart from that, the construction of the climactic scene and the plot-design that implements the chilling attempt on the protagonist's life amidst the perilous physical circumstances in which the characters are placed, is highly similar. Edwards seems to have successfully produced two exciting short

³⁰⁵ Ibid. (p.130)

³⁰⁶ Ibid. (p.131)

stories using the same climatic idea twice. When we consider the fact that the success of 'Picking Up Terrible Company' rested in its climactic scene (the illumination of the St. Peter's dome), and that the two stories have twin culminations, it is surprising to find that 'The Patagonian Brothers' never received the same amount of attention as 'Picking Up Terrible Company'. If it were the thrilling life and death battle thousands of feet up in the air that the readers enjoyed, 'The Patagonian Brothers' should have been equally noticed, if not more so, since not only was it published first out of the two stories, but also because its culmination is far more detailed and dramatic than that of 'Picking Up Terrible Company'. The fact that after a prolonged and draining struggle, Waldur managed not only to persist but also to save his assaulter and 'hold him up', despite being 'already half exhausted',³⁰⁷ exemplifies 'the duty and power of endurance' as *The Era* opined above while commending 'Picking Up Terrible Company'.³⁰⁸

This disparity may be explained by the fact that 'The Patagonian Brothers' was an independent or stand-alone story by Edwards, whereas 'Picking Up Terrible Company' was part of a collaborative venture with Dickens. Not only did Dickens co-author the overall composition, but the story appeared in the famous 'extra Christmas number' of Dickens' periodical; Dickensian Christmas numbers had become a celebrated annual phenomenon and a highly profitable industry by mid 1850s. The domain of Dickens'

³⁰⁷ Ibid.

³⁰⁸ 'Tom Tiddler's Ground, The Christmas Number of *All the Year Round*', *The Era*, December 22nd 1861, p.4, *19th Century British Library Newspapers*, <http://gale.cengage.co.uk/british-library-newspapers/19th-century-british-library-newspapers-part-ii.aspx>

Christmas number and its annual production held major significance in the Victorian literary market and anything that became a part of this domain became more visible and as a result gained a much larger audience. The 'extra Christmas numbers' of *All the Year Round* reached sales of almost 300,000 at their peak.³⁰⁹ Hence, it is safe to assume that 'Picking Up the Terrible Company' was given a much larger platform and circulated much more widely than 'The Patagonian Brothers'. An extensive search on 'The Patagonian Brothers' does not return even a single review in the *Nineteenth Century British Library Newspapers* database. The problem of not being read widely and not gaining enough exposure could be partly traced back to the question of how largely the work was advertised. This again, to a great extent, depended upon the authorial status of the work in question and the status of its publisher or publication source.

A hierarchical pattern can be seen when examining these two aspects in the context of Dickens' Christmas collaborators. If we take the example of Edwards and look at her early career short stories, the works that she produced prior to writing for Dickens, like 'A Railway Panic' for instance (published in 1856), do not have any available record within the *British Library Newspapers* or the *Nineteenth Century UK Periodicals* databases. The story itself is not searchable or accessible in the first place. It thus becomes apparent that any advertisements or reviews concerning the story cannot be found or simply do not exist. Owing to the lack of information about the story, its publication-source is not known either, which makes the work even more elusive. Then, a little higher up are the stories

³⁰⁹ Drew, *Dickens the Journalist*, p.147-148.

that were published in one of Dickens' periodicals but were not produced in collaboration with him. 'The Patagonian Brothers' is a good example of this category. It is easily available online or in print copies of HW. The individual piece or story was not advertised singularly but the overall publication-source (i.e. the upcoming issues of *Household Words* or *All the Year Round*) were frequently advertised in most of the mainstream newspapers of the mid-nineteenth-century. *HW* and *AYR* themselves advertised their forthcoming numbers regularly, though items like short stories and articles, unlike novels, were not singled out by their titles in a general advertisement for the entire number. Since the weeklies already had such a sizeable circulation, these advertisements reached a wide readership.

In addition to Dickens' weeklies, publications like *The Morning Post*, *The Daily News*, *The Standard*, *The Examiner*, *The Morning Chronicle* and several others³¹⁰ habitually published notices promoting the weeklies' upcoming numbers, sometimes also mentioning their contents, especially the ongoing serialisations. However, such smaller independent contributions from early-career authors were scarcely reviewed or noticed by contemporary critics. As mentioned above, 'The Patagonian Brothers' was hardly reviewed: major nineteenth-century databases do not return any search results for the story. The 'extra Christmas numbers' sit at the top of this hierarchical structure in terms

³¹⁰ See *Gale Databases* such as *News Vault*, *Nineteenth Century Collections Online*, *British Library Newspapers*, *Archives Unbound* and *19th Century UK Periodicals*, <http://0-find.galegroup.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/menu/commonmenu.do?userGroupName=leedsuni>

of advertisements, exposure, accessibility, circulation, reviews, and critical scrutiny. As mentioned earlier, Dickens' 'extra Christmas numbers' had started to reach sales of around 300,000 copies by the mid-1860s, while the regular numbers of his periodicals settled for between 100,000 and 120,000.³¹¹ To understand the scope of these figures and to get a comparative overview, *The Times*, Britain's leading and most well-known daily newspaper in the 1850s, had a circulation of around 40,000.³¹² Such a large circulation of the extra Christmas numbers could partly be attributed to the rigorous advertising that preceded their appearance. Not only were these issues thoroughly publicised by a majority of the leading national as well as provincial newspapers and journals of the time, but the space allotted to these special numbers in the layout of the publicizing sheet was also notably generous and manoeuvred to stand out from the rest.³¹³ The advertisement for these numbers ordinarily held the top central spot of the page and was often much larger in surface area than the surrounding ads, covering almost one-fourth of the 34cm sheet.³¹⁴ Moreover, these advertisements listed all the component stories of the number individually, mentioning the separate titles of different contributions from

³¹¹ Circulation figures derived from the *Waterloo Directory of English Newspapers and Periodicals 1800-1900*, http://0-english.victorianperiodicals.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/series3/title_search_start.asp#

³¹² 'Newspapers', *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. XIX, (Cambridge University Press, 1911). p.557

³¹³ From the main daily newspapers published in London which circulated nationwide such as *The Times*, *The Morning Chronicle*, *The Morning Post*, *The Standard* etc. to the more regional and smaller newspapers like *The Bristol Mercury*, *The York Herald*, *Cambridge Independent Press*, *Chester Chronicle and Cheshire and North Wales General Advertiser* etc., the Extra Christmas Numbers of HW and AYR were advertised nationally (and even internationally in cases of British colonies) in a plethora of publications.

³¹⁴ For example, see *The Examiner*, 14 December 1861, p.1131, *British Library Newspapers*, Gale Document Number: BB3201015466

Dickens' collaborators, which, from the collaborators' point of view was better than general homogenous advertisements. In the case of Edwards, from what I have shown so far, co-authoring a work with Dickens and publishing in his special Christmas numbers provided a better platform for her work to be disseminated and for her authorial talent to be noticed.

III. Learning from the Mentor: Thematic Influences and Edwards' Development as a Ghost Story Writer

Apart from the tremendous exposure and visibility that Edwards' work received as a result of being published alongside Dickens, her writing also developed thematically under his apprenticeship. Her later short stories were influenced by themes from Dickens' earlier ghost stories. The prime example of this influence is the transition in Edwards' modus operandi for solving the crimes that form the storyline of most of her ghost stories. A development in the methods that Edwards employed to unravel her murder mysteries can be demonstrated by observing the plot evolution between her short stories 'How the Third Floor Knew the Potteries', published in *All the Year Round's* 1863 Christmas number, and 'The Four-Fifteen Express' published in *Routledge's Christmas Annual* in 1866. The question of how Dickens' authorial influence was responsible for this evolution in Edwards' writing can also be exhibited through simultaneously examining the above stories in comparison to Dickens' 'To Be Taken with a Grain of Salt', published in *All the Year Round's* 1865 Christmas number, *Dr Marigold's Prescriptions*.

'How the Third Floor Knew the Potteries' formed one of the seven interpolated

stories of *Mrs Lirriper's Lodgings* which gathers together the accounts of various tenants residing at the lodgings owned by an amiable landlady named Mrs Lirriper. This ghost story by Edwards follows the story of a 'plain man' named Ben and '[his] best friend' George Barnard, 'the foreman of the yard' who worked 'down among the Potteries'.³¹⁵ Their lives are pleasant until 'a Frenchman', Louis Laroche causes a serious rift between Barnard and his long-time 'sweetheart' Leah Payne. This results in Barnard becoming enraged, with the intention of taking his revenge upon Laroche: 'It's that cursed Frenchman....he's a villain. I know he's a villain! But I'll be revenged as sure as there's a sun in heaven, I'll be revenged!'³¹⁶ Soon after that, one night when Ben arrives for his shift on 'the ovens' at the Potteries, at a time Barnard specified 'till [which]' he 'shall be there [him]self', Barnard was nowhere to be found. After checking all 'the baking-houses' and making a 'thorough 'survey of the yards', Ben suddenly sees Barnard (or his apparition). Barnard's spectre leads him straight 'up to the oven – and there pause....absorbed into the furnace, and disappeared!'³¹⁷ After Barnard has 'continued absent' for weeks, Ben's story is taken seriously and the ashes from the oven are submitted to a forensic examination; it is found that 'a considerable portion of those ashes consisted of charred bone' which belonged to Barnard. It is concluded that Barnard 'had been foully

³¹⁵ Amelia Edwards, "How the Third Floor Knew the Potteries", *All the Year Round, Dickens Journals Online*, 25 December 1863, pp. 607-612, (p.607), <http://www.djo.org.uk/all-the-year-round/volume-x/page-607.html>

³¹⁶ *Ibid.* p.609.

³¹⁷ *Ibid.* p.612.

murdered, and that his body had been thrust into the furnace'. Naturally, 'suspicion fell upon Louis Laroche' and 'a coroner's inquest was held', but 'all the sifting in the world....failed either to clear or to condemn Louis Laroche.'³¹⁸

It is evident here that though Edwards has implemented the mechanism of ghostly intervention to resolve the mystery as to 'what [became] of George' and where he disappeared, it does not extend itself towards aiding the task of convicting the culprit. Neither does it serve to explain or illuminate how and under what circumstances George Barnard died; in other words, there is hardly any 'deciphering' involved in this murder mystery. The ghost of the dead victim does not provide enough clues for the living to bring out the complete truth and the story ends enigmatically with half a puzzle still unsolved. Edwards' technique of employing such ghostly interventions, however, developed dramatically after having collaborated with Dickens on multiple Christmas numbers. Edwards' ghost stories became more endowed with the Dickensian approach of balancing dark thrillers with poetic justice, setting the tone for a typical Victorian Christmas that sought an entertainment which is both chilling and edifying at the same time.

However, Dickens' influence over Edwards was not limited to the broader aspects of storytelling such as pervading tones and the character of these seasonal tales, but extends to something as specific as deploying the services of the supernatural to aid the functioning of an otherwise incompetent judicial system. This becomes apparent when

³¹⁸ Edwards, 'How the Third Floor Knew the Potteries', p.612.

we consider Edwards' 'The Four-Fifteen Express' (1866), which was written towards the end of her collaborative years with Dickens. A businessman, William Langford, takes a train from London and just when he thinks that he had 'taken sole possession of an empty compartment' on 'the 4.15 Express', 'a gentleman....step[s] in'. It is not long before Langford 'recognised [his] companion' - 'his name was Dwerrihouse....[who] was first cousin to the wife' of Langford's 'excellent friend Jonathan Jelf'. Langford learns that Dwerrihouse, now a 'considerable shareholder' is 'travelling upon rather troublesome business' and '[has] seventy-five thousand pounds at this moment upon [his] person' to be paid for the 'completion of [a] sale' on behalf of his firm. When Dwerrihouse leaves at his station, his 'cigar-case....fall[s], from [his] pocket'. Langford gets out to return the cigar-case and as he is trying to make his way through the crowded platform, he notices that Dwerrihouse 'had met some friend' and 'that they were' engaged 'in earnest conversation'. Despite all the 'running' and 'breathless[ness]', Langford loses them and gives up the pursuit in order to catch his train.³¹⁹

Later Langford's account is met with 'general consternation' when he relates his experience to others, the reason being - as he learns to his surprise - 'John Dwerrihouse absconded three months ago, with seventy-five thousand pounds of the Company's money, and has never been heard of since.' The news of Langford's encounter reaches the company's board and they summon him for further interrogation on the matter. From

³¹⁹ Amelia Anne Blandford Edwards, 'The Four-Fifteen Express', in *A Night on the Borders of the Black Forest* (Leipzig: B. Tauchnitz, 1874), pp.145-188, (pp.145-146).

here, the proceedings follow pretty much as they do in a court of law. The board sits down acting as a jury of sorts, and Langford gives his testimony. His account is largely doubted at first, since it is nullified by the statement of the train-guard and the porter who claimed that they 'saw no one' but Langford in the carriage that evening and '[he] travelled down alone'. However, things take a different direction as soon as Langford catches the sight of the company's under-secretary, a Mr Augustus Raikes; Langford cries out: 'that person....is the same who met Mr. Dwerrihouse upon the platform at Blackwater!' When the records of his absence from the office are checked, Raikes, 'white as death, with lips trembling and livid', eventually breaks down and confesses the murder of Dwerrihouse which he committed months ago in September – the time since people believed Dwerrihouse to have absconded with the seventy-five thousand pounds. Raikes intended to steal the money Dwerrihouse was carrying to complete the business sale. Raikes is handed over to the police right away; he paid full penalty of his crime, and was hanged at the Old Bailey in the second week in January, 1857.

It is clear towards the end of the story that Langford had actually encountered the ghost of Dwerrihouse - something that 'bore the living likeness of the murdered man' - on the four-fifteen express who led him to the culprit. Edwards' ghostly intervention is successfully brought into play here and it ensures the criminal's lawful apprehension this time. The protagonist is not just assisted with solving the mystery surrounding the victim's disappearance and clearing his name, but the murderer's identity is served up on a plate for Langford by the ghost of Dwerrihouse without having the need to conduct an

investigation. When the law-enforcement authorities did not even deem it necessary to launch an official search for the missing man, as a result of which the victim was ironically established as the transgressor in the eyes of society, it is much less expected of them to have accomplished the much harder task of detecting the truth and putting the pieces together in order to figure out the real culprit. Hence, the supernatural comes to the rescue so that justice can be served:

I know that it spoke, and moved, and looked as that man spoke, and moved, and looked in life; that I heard, or seemed to hear, things related which I could never otherwise have learned; that I was *guided*, as it were, by that vision on the platform to the identification of the murderer; and that, a passive instrument myself, I was destined, by means of these mysterious teachings, to bring about the ends of justice.³²⁰

This entire plot mechanism reminds us of Dickens' 'To Be Taken with a Grain of Salt' published just a year before 'The Four-Fifteen Express' in *AYR's* 1865 Christmas number, *Dr Marigold's Prescriptions*. The story relates the tale of a juror who is visited by the ghost of a murder victim upon whose case the juror has been appointed to serve. Prior to the hearing, the juror has a vision of 'two men on the opposite side of the way' in 'chambers in Piccadilly, very near to the corner of Saint James's street'. 'They were one behind the other. The foremost man often looked back over his shoulder. The second man followed him, at a distance of some thirty paces, with his right hand menacingly raised.'³²¹ The

³²⁰ Edwards, 'The Four-Fifteen Express', p.148.

<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=coo.31924013454750;view=1up;seq=1;page=root;size=100;orient=0>

³²¹ Charles Dickens, "To Be Taken with a Grain of Salt", *All the Year Round*, December 7 1865, pp.606-610. (p.606) *Dickens Journals Online*

http://www.djo.org.uk/media/downloads/articles/6264_To%20Be%20Taken%20With%20A%20Grain%20Of%20Salt.pdf

protagonist stresses that '[he] saw their two faces very distinctly, and [he] knew that [he] could recognise them anywhere.' This vision lays the ground for the juror to later positively identify and convict the guilty man during the prosecution. The certainty of seeing the culprit very distinctly, as well as seeing the culprit *with* the victim is repeated in Edwards' story: Langford 's[ees] both *distinctly*—the face of Mr. Dwerrihouse and the face of his companion' as 'the light fell full upon their faces' from a 'vivid gas-jet just above their heads'.³²²

Moreover, to ease the forthcoming identification process, both Dickens and Edwards engage in an explicit visual description of the suspects when they are seen for the first time. Dickens' second man 'who followed [the first] was of the colour of impure wax' and Dwerrihouse's new companion 'was considerably younger and shorter than the director [himself], that he was sandy-haired, mustachioed, small-featured, and dressed in a close-cut suit of Scotch tweed.'³²³ Another similarity could be traced in the fact that the apparitions and the action in which they are engaged, are only visible to the protagonist and invisible to others, alluding to the fact that they are participants in a supernatural scheme or vision. Dickens' juror, upon seeing the second man's menacingly raised up hand, relates: 'the singularity and steadiness of this threatening gesture in so public a

³²² Edwards, 'The Four-Fifteen Express', p.147.

³²³ Ibid. p.152.

thoroughfare, attracted my attention....the more remarkable circumstance that nobody heeded it'.³²⁴

The case involving Edwards' protagonist is similar: the very reason why the train-guard and the porter nullified his statement and claimed that he travelled alone that evening, was because neither could see Dwerrihouse's apparition nor his meeting with the undersecretary Augustus Raikes at the platform. Both stories also follow arduous prosecution proceedings under impotent juries which need supernatural assistance to serve justice; Edwards essentially adopts Dickens' approach to a cynical satire which exposes the crippled nature of Victorian institutions whose inept judgment and lack of competence make it difficult to attain something as elusive as justice. The half-witted officials, babbling clerks, corruptible judges and a world of rampant inequity, Dickens found so despairing that, satirically, only instruments from beyond the earthly realm were powerful enough to rectify. Thanks to the dead man's efforts in the court, such as discrediting dishonest witnesses, exposing his slashed throat, and looming menacingly over his murderer, all of which only the protagonist see, the accused in Dickens' story is found guilty. When he is about to be hanged, he surprisingly, makes a remarkable declaration in his last words: 'My Lord, I knew I was a doomed man, when the Foreman of my Jury [the protagonist] came into the box. My Lord, I knew he would never let me off, because, before I was taken, he somehow got to my bedside in the night, woke me,

³²⁴ Dickens, "To Be Taken with a Grain of Salt", p.606.

and put a rope round my neck.’³²⁵ This reveals that the juror himself appeared as a ghostly apparition to the accused before the trial, and it was only after becoming one with the supernatural, though momentarily, that he was able to pass a verdict that saw the guilty to the gallows.

Unlike Edwards’ ‘How the Third Floor Knew the Potteries’, the true culprit is sentenced to death at the end in ‘The Four-Fifteen Express’, just as he is in Dickens’ ‘To Be Taken with a Grain of Salt’. This is just one example of Dickens’ impact on Edwards’ thematic development, and development of her methodologies to operate his tropes. One of the most famous and most reprinted stories by Edwards, ‘The Phantom Coach’, which was initially published as an interpolated story in *AYR*’s 1864 Christmas Number *Mrs. Lirriper’s Legacy*, seems to have borrowed several ideas from Dickens’ ‘The Story of the Bagman’s Uncle’ (1837), as *The Reader* pointed out that Edwards’ contribution ‘brings back reminiscences of the famous ghostly mail-coach which carried the dead-letters in “Pickwick”.’³²⁶ Dickens’ compositional influences on Edwards did not rest here and extended to multiple other stories which Edwards produced throughout her literary career.

³²⁵ Dickens, “To Be Taken with a Grain of Salt”, p. 610.

³²⁶ ‘Christmas Stories’, *The Reader*, 17 December 1864, p. 765, *19th Century British Library Newspapers*, <https://go.gale.com/ps/dispatchBasicSearch.do?userGroupName=leedsuni&prodId=BNCN>

IV. Introduction: Charles Allston Collins

The influence of Dickens' authorial tastes and style is easily noticeable in Collins' approach to designing his contributions for *All the Year Round*. Charles Allston Collins (1828-1873) started his career as a painter and illustrator; he studied at the Royal Academy of Arts where he formed close friendships with John Everett Millais and William Holman Hunt. Through them, Collins became associated with the Pre-Raphaelites in the early 1850s but was never a member of the Brotherhood itself. A few of his paintings were exhibited at the Royal Academy, the most famous being *Convent Thoughts* (1851).³²⁷ In 1857, however, Collins gave up painting in order to pursue a career in writing. He was introduced to Dickens by his elder brother Wilkie Collins whence he started contributing fiction, essays and sketches to Dickens' *Household Words* and *All the Year Round*. He also wrote for other magazines, including *Macmillan's* and *Cornhill*, and occasionally worked for the *Echo* as an art critic, but the works which actually brought him fame and became highly successful - *The New Sentimental Journey* (1859), *The Eye Witness* (1860), and *Cruise Upon Wheels* (1862) - were all published in *All the Year Round* under Dickens' editorship, which proved very helpful in Collins' development as a professional author. In addition to multiple short stories and various series of travel sketches and reports, Collins also produced three novels in his lifetime - *The Bar Sinister: A Tale* (1864), *Strathcairn*

³²⁷ Lohrli, ed, *Household Words: Table of Contents & List of Contributors & Their Contributions by Dickens, Charles, 1812 - 1870*, p.235.

(1864) and *At the Bar: A Tale* (1866), all of which were serialised in *All the Year Round* and later published in volume forms.³²⁸

After Dickens, Collins was the most prolific contributor to the Christmas Numbers of *All the Year Round*: he contributed to seven consecutive numbers (1860-1866) out of the total of nine that appeared in the magazine between 1859 and 1867, making him the most frequent Christmas collaborator to Dickens on *AYR*'s staff. The first Christmas number to which Collins contributed was *A Message from the Sea* (1860). He is the only collaborator with the exception of Wilkie Collins who was given the privilege of sharing the frame narrative of a Christmas number with Dickens. He composed an essential part of the frame-tale for *A Message from the Sea* in joint-authorship with Dickens. The frame-tale for this number is longer and more elaborate than the usual stretch of Christmas frames that Dickens designed; hence, the frame narrative had to be divided into multiple chapters instead of following the general compositional pattern (which involved the frame being contained in two chapters - the introduction and the conclusion - whilst enveloping the interpolated stories). The narrative of *A Message from the Sea* features five chapters which form the frame-story; three are placed towards the beginning, before the four interpolated stories are introduced, and two towards the end, in all comprising nine chapters.

³²⁸ William Baker, 'Collins, Charles Allston (1828-1873), Painter and Writer', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). Retrieved 20 Jun. 2019, <https://0-www.oxforddnb-com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-5935>

Out of the five frame chapters, Collins co-produced the third chapter entitled 'The Club Night' with Dickens, which immediately precedes the interpolated stories; the chapter, thus, having the most important function of a frame-tale narrative: creating a situation in the narrative which reasonably opens up a passage for the accommodation of the interpolated stories, and then introducing the interpolated stories as well as the characters who will be narrating them into the central storyline. The overall frame tells the story of Captain Jorgan and Alfred Raybrock who are trying to find the truth about Alfred's brother Hugh Raybrock's disappearance in a shipwreck; 'The Club-Night' narrates how the Captain and Alfred arrive at an inn where they find a few old sailors telling stories. They join the group in the hope of getting any relevant information in relation to the protagonists' shipwrecked brother, and this is where the four interpolated stories are introduced, which are told one each by the old sailors at the club.³²⁹ The chapter is narrated in the third person and follows a dual protagonist structure with the Captain and Alfred sharing the spotlight and leading the plot forward. The narrative voice is unobtrusive in terms of letting the characters govern the pace and direction of the events, never overpowering the scene and adjusting its presence to fill in the empty spaces left by the characters during their engagement in non-verbal actions. This section will demonstrate how Collins' experience with Dickens led to a remarkable change in his treatment of narrative voices in his succeeding short stories.

³²⁹ Charles Dickens, and Charles Allston Collins, 'The Club-Night', *All the Year Round*, IV, 25 December 1860, p.581-603. (p.582)

Preceding his first Christmas Number contribution to *AYR* in 1860, Collins wrote various pieces of short fiction for the regular numbers of Dickens' periodicals between 1857 and 1860, such as 'My First Patron', 'Her Face', 'The Smallport Monte-Cristo', 'The Great Dunkerque Failure', 'Coelebs in Search of a Dinner', 'The Smallchange Family', 'Some Wild Ideas', amongst many others.³³⁰ From the very beginning, Collins exhibited a great ability to produce elaborate and engaging caricatures in Dickensian fashion, accompanied with touches of Dickensian humour. He found his strength in narratorial observation and reporting, much like the skills of a flaneur, which made his apprenticeship under Dickens' guidance even more rewarding. Dickens' travelogue writing and metropolitan sketches had a huge role in shaping Collins' methods of sketching characters and executing situational humour and confusion. These elements were not limited to Collins' essays and reports but also extended to his short fiction.

Prior to collaborating with Dickens on *A Message from the Sea* in 1860 and before getting a sense of Dickens' preferred modes of narration, Collins had a slightly different approach to implementing narrative voices and balancing them with the presence and action of lead characters. In his earlier stories, Collins' narrator appears to be prominent to the extent of almost interrupting the flow the protagonists' activity. The fact which makes Collins' early narrators even more invasive is that the narrator himself never partakes in the ongoing action. Most of the short stories produced by Collins between

³³⁰ Charles Allston Collins, 'Article Index', *Dickens Journals Online*, <http://www.djo.org.uk/indexes/articles.html>

1857 and 1860 feature a detached narrator who, though a minor character, always remains at a great distance from the central storyline, as well as from the characters leading those proceedings. Despite being physically absent from the scene, this type of narrator seems to be surprisingly omniscient, with the ability to describe even the minutest particulars of the ongoing affairs. This would not have been problematic, had it just featured a traditional omnipresent narrative voice relating the incidents; however, with the narrator also being a character in the tale himself, physically absent from the scenes and not in possession of any written records of the occurrences which could plausibly inform him of such exhaustive details, the design renders itself inexplicable.

'The Great Dunkerque Failure' (1858) provides a useful example for understanding Collins' early use of a passive yet interruptive narrator. The story follows the adventures of the narrator's 'half-brother, James Chowler, and [their] dear and mutual friend Purkis' who both 'had taken it into their heads to undertake a voyage to Dunkerque and back in a lugger.'³³¹ The character of the narrator is absent throughout the voyage - the central action upon which the whole narrative is directed - and he explains why he cannot partake: 'Gladly, most gladly, would I have joined them but for one infirmity, which unfortunately quite unfits me for all marine purposes - I am a bad sailor.'³³² Despite not being part of the sailing group, the narrator keeps on referring to

³³¹ Charles Allston Collins, 'The Great Dunkerque Failure', *Household Words*, XVIII, 30 October 1858, p.476.

³³² *Ibid.*

the central participating characters as ‘we’ – ‘we began to rub our hands – I say *we*, because, in all the preparations and in the voyage itself, I was as much interested as anybody, though, owing to my infirmity of [*sic*] s-kn-s, unable to engage in the cruise itself.’³³³ The narrator continues to relate all the particulars of the cruise journey and what obstacles were encountered by the characters actually engaged in the action, still using the pronoun ‘we’ as if trying to conceal his absence from the immediate scheme of things: ‘There, I have said *we* again – I really cannot help it, and must petition to be allowed the use of that pronoun’.³³⁴ A yet more noticeable trait of this non-participating narrator, as mentioned above, is his constant effort to remain significant within the central action, which can often appear as invasive and even prying. The narrator of ‘The Great Dunkerque Failure’ conveys repeatedly throughout the story how he is the person who is most concerned with the voyage and the one who would be most affected by its success or failure.

When he outlines how being ‘a bad sailor’ renders him ‘unfit for all marine purposes’, he continues: ‘and yet by a strange and ironical combination of qualities’, he is ‘an ardent lover of the sea, of ships, and all things maritime.’³³⁵ This statement is made to justify his future intrusions in the business of the participating party. Towards the end, when it is apparent that the voyage has been a failure, and it being ‘one of the most sultry

³³³ Ibid. p.477.

³³⁴ Ibid.

³³⁵ Ibid.

days' with 'not a breath of air stirring', the cruising members have to embarrassingly row their boat back to the shore using just 'one long and skinny oar' in front of a 'whole mass of human beings gathered together to witness the arrival of the Dunkerque party, on the side of the pier'³³⁶, it is the non-participant narrator who emphasises the humiliation this has caused him more than anybody on the boat. When the reader is focussed on this climactic scene and eager to follow how the cruising party's entry unfolds, every second line is interrupted by a reminder of how the narrator's 'credit' was significantly 'involved in their [cruise party's] making a satisfactory entry', and how their 'creeping towards the shore in this ignoble wise' caused '[his] degradation'.³³⁷

The tense scene that follows involves the voyaging members being inspected by some revenue officers upon their miserable arrival on the shore; the gravitas of their body search and the building tension are again interrupted by the narrator to reclaim attention for himself by tracing his association with the object(s) of attention: 'Was it nothing, to see those tattered trousers of my half-brother's – how glad I felt at the moment that he was not my whole brother – was it nothing, to see those tattered trousers which I have so often entreated him to give away, extended on the deck while their pockets were turned inside out?'³³⁸ Humorous though it may be, such mode of narration remains obtrusive nonetheless.

³³⁶ Ibid. p.478.

³³⁷ Ibid.

³³⁸ Ibid. p.479.

Dickens drew attention to the same issue in a letter of constructive criticism to Collins. He pointed out the over-intrusion of a non-participating narrator, and the 'want of touches of relief, and life, and truth' in Collins' early contributions, while at the same time admiring his 'correct and delicate observation' and 'excellent humour'.³³⁹ Collins took these suggestions seriously and sought to address them, the results of which are noticeable in his later short stories, especially the ones written for Dickens' Christmas numbers. Collins' natural talent and aptitude for the flaneur mode of writing may have inclined him towards taking the role of a non-participating narrator, someone who sits in the backseat and observes others who are active in the spotlight. At the same time, however, the desire to make his commentary zestful and humorous akin to that of Dickens, might have encouraged Collins to make his narrators more personal for the reader. Combining these two somewhat conflicting modes may have caused the imbalance described above in the young author's compositions.

Following the 1860 Christmas number where Collins experienced the dual protagonist structure accompanied by a weak narrator whilst collaborating with Dickens, his short fiction for subsequent Christmas numbers adopted a similar mode of narration. If it was necessary for the narrator to be a central figure - which is usually preferred in the case of writing fiction as opposed to flaneur or report-writing - Collins learnt how to make

³³⁹Dickens, Charles, Ed. Angus Easson, K.J. Fielding, Madeleine House, Graham Storey, and Kathleen Tillotson. *The Letters of Charles Dickens: The Pilgrim Edition*, [Dickens to Charles Collins, 19 November 1859, IX] Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965. Print. (p.164-165)

him an active participant in the narrative action. Collins' 'Picking Up Evening Shadows', published in *Tom Tiddler's Ground* (1861)³⁴⁰, for example, features a narrator who is also the protagonist of the tale and relates a retrospective account of his life. This mode is largely similar to that of Dickens' retrospective protagonists-cum-narrators who recount their own recollections or life experiences in Dickens' Christmas frames, such as Captain Ravender and the Guest from *The Wreck of the Golden Mary* and *The Holly Tree-Inn* respectively. With this number, Collins even made the effort of drawing in the same theme for his story upon which Dickens' frame narrative is based - the idea of social isolation. Dickens' protagonist traveller in *Tom Tiddler's Ground* endeavours to prove to Mr. Mopes that his decision to isolate himself from society is wrong through the stories of other passing travellers, one of whom happens to be Mr Broadhead (Collins' protagonist) who relates his experience of having isolated himself from friends and family in his past and the circumstances which led him out of his isolation for good. The story is thus very relevant and effective in terms of the objective of Dickens' frame as it thematically synchronises with the frame-tale and seeks to provide exactly what is needed for Mr. Mopes, thus buttressing the frame's message and extending its applicability. This was something rarely found in the interpolated stories of Dickens' Christmas numbers, the lack of which threatened their overall coherence and caused Dickens much anxiety and disappointment as an editor. It is worth noting, in this context, that besides Dickens'

³⁴⁰ Dickens et al., 'Tom Tiddler's Ground', *All the Year Round*, 25 December 1861, p.573. *Dickens Journals Online*, <http://www.djo.org.uk/all-the-year-round/volume-vi/page-573.html>

frame story for *Somebody's Luggage* (1862), 'To Be Taken at the Dinner-Table' by Collins, written for *Dr Marigold's Prescriptions* (1865), is the only other story in the entire Christmas number corpus which concerns a commercial writer and his work in the periodical industry and tries to convey the painstaking labour that a writer goes through in producing material which is not often recognised or appreciated.³⁴¹ This story echoes the message in Dickens' 'Our Voluntary Correspondents' (1853) which satirically derides those who 'ha[ve] a general idea that literature is the easiest amusement in the world' and those who 'figure' an author's 'whole time is devoted to idleness and pastime'.³⁴² It is thus apparent that Collins also endeavoured to align himself with Dickens' thematic concerns in addition to modifying his narrative methods in accordance with his mentor's advice.

V. The Role of Dickens' Editorship in Establishing Collins' Professional Identity

Apart from being a direct influence on the development of Collins' narrative modes, Dickens' editorial agency also considerably aided the young apprentice's independent commercial growth. Despite Collins' engagement as a regular contributor for multiple other magazines and editors of the time, it could be demonstrated that only Dickens (out of all those for whom Collins wrote) and his affiliation singularly laid the way for the establishment of Charles Collins' professional authorial identity. All the works produced

³⁴¹ Charles Allston Collins, 'To be Taken at the Dinner-Table' in *Doctor Marigold's Prescriptions, All the Year Round*, 7 December 1865, pp.587-591, (p.587) *Dickens Journals Online*, <http://www.djo.org.uk/all-the-year-round/volume-xiv/page-587.html>

³⁴² Charles Dickens, 'Our Voluntary Correspondents in H.W.', *Household Words*, VII, 16 April 1853, p.145.

by Collins which were later reprinted in volume form first appeared in Dickens' periodicals, predominantly in *All the Year Round*. Collins did not exclusively write for Dickens, but contributed multiple articles to major Victorian periodicals, especially for *Macmillan's Magazine* and *Cornhill*. Yet only the works which were initially serialised in AYR were sought by publishers for reprinting in volume editions. These included his series of travel sketches: *A New Sentimental Journey* (1859)³⁴³, *The Eye-Witness* (1860)³⁴⁴, and *Cruise Upon Wheels* (1862)³⁴⁵; and his serialized novels: *At the Bar* (1866),³⁴⁶ *Strathcairn* (1864),³⁴⁷ and *Bar Sinister* (1864).³⁴⁸ These texts were reprinted by some of the most successful mainstream publishers of the period, including Chapman and Hall, Routledge, Warne and Routledge and Co., and Smith, Elder and Co.. A plethora of articles by Collins, such as 'Poet's Corner; or an English Writer's Grave' (1860), 'The Morning Paper' (1862), 'An English painter's Tomb' (1860), 'Our Audience' (1863), 'Biography at a Discount', (1864), and 'The Expression of the Eye' (1866), amongst many others, appeared in *Macmillan's* and *Cornhill* over the years, though none of these were ever collected or reprinted.

³⁴³ Charles Allston Collins, *A New Sentimental Journey: In Five Parts* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1859) pp.164-168

³⁴⁴ Charles Allston Collins, *The Eye-Witness and His Evidence About Many Wonderful Things* (London: S. Low, Son and Co, 1860);

³⁴⁵ Charles Allston Collins, *A Cruise Upon Wheels: The Chronicle of Some Autumn Wanderings among the Deserted Post-Roads of France* (Routledge, Warne and Routledge, 1862).

³⁴⁶ Collins Charles Allston, *At the Bar* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1866).

³⁴⁷ Collins Charles Allston, *Strathcairn* (London: S. Low Son and Marston, 1864).

³⁴⁸ Collins Charles Allston, *The Bar Sinister: A Tale by Charles Allston Collins* (London: Smith Elder and Co, 1864).

Dickens' influence on, and support for, Collins' professional development was not just limited to the provision of an affiliation to his brand by regularly giving Collins' compositions space in his highly successful journals . Dickens' direct and personal editorial involvement with his contributors in the conception of their works also played a significant role in the recognition and development of their literary specialisms. Dickens was famously one of the most rigorous editors, who personally went to the trouble of devoting large 'amount[s] of time and labour....to the polishing and finishing of other people's work in proof....which would surprise many occupants of editorial chairs.'³⁴⁹

No other celebrity author-editors of the time are known to have been as diligently involved in their editorial duties as was Dickens. According to Charles Dickens Jr., 'Nothing was considered too small, too petty, for his own personal attention.'³⁵⁰ Moreover, Dickens, in addition to constantly going through the strenuous process of reading, correcting and re- writing substantial portions of these manuscripts, still had boundless energy to correspond with the writers of these manuscripts and give them detailed and constructive feedback. Several examples could be found in his official correspondence which demonstrate 'the care and thought he was in the habit of giving to casual contributors, of whom he knew nothing except through the manuscripts which they

³⁴⁹ Charles Dickens the Jr., 'Dickens as an Editor', p.81.

³⁵⁰ Ibid.

offered for his editorial judgment.³⁵¹ His letters are filled with useful advice and guidance to scores of aspiring writers for them to improve and develop their authorial potential, addressing issues such as how to synchronise their writing patterns with current modes of publication and market needs, what they were individually good at, what to avoid and what to pursue, and so forth.

Dickens always had an eye for identifying suitable core genres for different writers on his periodical staff. Just by observing their first few contributions to his journals, he was quick to recognize their talent for a specific mode of writing, and more importantly, help them recognize the same. Collins initially contributed an article (which was later to become a series) entitled 'Our Eye-Witness'³⁵² to *All the Year Round*, and Dickens found it so engaging, and seeing Collins' aptitude for producing such travel sketches, that he encouraged him to continue writing related articles on the topic and to produce an entire series out of it.³⁵³ Dickens was astute in assessing the scope of this project – the series ran successfully and ended up including twenty-two articles, serialized in *All the Year*

³⁵¹ Ibid. p.82.

³⁵² Collins, 'Our Eye-Witness', p.203-205

³⁵³ Charles Dickens, *The Letters of Charles Dickens: The Pilgrim Edition*, 9, [Dickens to Charles Collins, 19 November 1859], p.139.

Round between June 1859 and July 1860.³⁵⁴ With Dickens' constant encouragement and suggestions to focus his faculties on travel-writing, Collins produced three popular series of travel sketches (mentioned above) for *All the Year Round* which were read and appreciated widely; they became the most prominent works of Collins' literary career, which were principally responsible for bringing him to fame and constructing his independent professional identity as an author.

The long list of young writers whose careers took off under Dickens' editorship could be extended; James Payn and Hollingshead were also brought up in the school of Dickens and benefitted from his unfailing support and guidance. They entered Dickens' circle in the mid-1850s, and like Sala and Collins, both of their professional careers made real beginnings in *Household Words*. Throughout his life, Hollingshead spared no opportunity to praise Dickens for his friendship and encouragement, while Payn likewise expressed his great appreciation of what Dickens did for him, in his autobiography entitled *Some Literary Recollections* (1884). He began his tribute with the words: 'It was in 1856 that I first made the personal acquaintance of Charles Dickens – a circumstance which to me was an epoch in my existence.'³⁵⁵

³⁵⁴ Collins, 'Our Eye-Witness and Certain Story-Tellers [vii]', *All the Year Round*, Volume II, No. 33, 10 December 1859, p.154-157. Also see, Collins 'Our Eye-Witness in Great Company [x]' *All the Year Round*, Volume II, Magazine No. 37, 7 January 1860, p.249-253

³⁵⁵ James Payn, *Some Literary Recollections* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1884), p. 137.

Dickens also pioneered the 'journalistic travel letter.'³⁵⁶ He initiated the literary trend back in the days of *Master Humphrey's Clock* (1840-41), whereby he proposed to travel abroad and 'write travel letters based on his experience for publication in his periodical.'³⁵⁷ He published multiple series of travel sketches based on his trips to Ireland, America, and Italy, as well as his experience of travelling locally within England; these travel series include *Pictures from Italy*, *American Notes*, and *The Uncommercial Traveller*, amongst others. Dickens' engagement in the genre largely contributed to its widespread popularity which notably refashioned 'the stream of journalistic travel literature.'³⁵⁸ All of the above factors make it clearer how Collins' authorial growth was benefitted by Dickens' involvement. The articles and essays published by Collins in other magazines cited above cover a range of engaging subjects which could broadly interest readers in a continued discussion and held scope for being developed into a series. Articles such as 'Poet's Corner; or an English Writer's Grave' (1860) and 'An English painter's Tomb' (1860) are again travel accounts describing Collins' visits to the famous graves of Laurence Sterne and William Hogarth respectively, whereas pieces such as 'Our Audience' (1863) and 'Biography at a Discount' (1864) deal with the landscape of nineteenth century print culture and attempt to define the public's place within published literature. Both of the latter articles throw light on the 'ways in which' society and readers 'interact with

³⁵⁶ Grubb, 'Dickens' Influence as an Editor', p.814.

³⁵⁷ Walter Dexter Vide, ed, *The Letters of Charles Dickens*, 3 vols, (London: The Nonesuch Press, Bloomsbury, 1938), 1, p.219.

³⁵⁸ Grubb, 'Dickens' Influence as an Editor', p.815.

print.³⁵⁹ These sketches and essays fall within thematic categories that have plenty to offer and thus could easily be expanded upon with follow-up articles to form a series, but they also did well with the reading public and received positive reviews from critics. *The Dundee Courier & Argus* tagged 'Our Audience' as 'a rather amusing paper',³⁶⁰ while *The North Devon Journal* considered it to be a 'fine humorous sketch'.³⁶¹ 'An English Painter's Tomb' was recommended as 'worthy of perusal by the general reader' and that such 'papers' make 'a number at once instructive, attractive, and amusing.'³⁶² Yet despite attaining general success and being pertinent to the interests of the general reader, none of these articles were developed into a series, nor were they collected for a volume publication. This could be partially attributed to the lack of an involved editor who is genuinely interested in promoting their contributors whilst ensuring that they reach their full potential.

How promising writers and their skilful treatment of a topic with good potential could be utilised by a periodical publication markedly depends on the astute business acumen and foresight of its editor. Hence, most of the articles by Dickens' young men that appeared in Dickens' magazines were often developed further until they transformed into

³⁵⁹ John Drew, Hazel MacKenzie, and Ben Winyard, *Charles Dickens & the Mid-Victorian Press 1850-1870* (Chicago: Legend Times Group, 2013), p.67.

³⁶⁰ 'Literature', *The Dundee Courier & Argus*, 1 June 1863, p.7, *British Library Newspapers*.

³⁶¹ 'Magazines for the Month', *The North Devon Journal*, 11 June 1863, p.3, *British Library Newspapers*.

³⁶² 'Magazines for April', in 'The Royal Leamington Spa Courier', *Warwickshire Standard*, 31 March 1860; p.2, *British Library Newspapers*.

a much longer journalistic series which comprised of several related articles that fell under the same thematic umbrella. Such facts often go unnoticed but having Dickens as their editor made a significant difference for these young writers' professional evolution and commercial expansion. The fact that the majority of Collins' literary productions outside Dickens' periodicals were never collected for a volume publication suggests an absence of appropriate guidance and encouragement which is usually a product of a mentor-mentee relationships that only a few magazine editors like Dickens were willing to offer. His literary output for various contemporary magazines other than Dickens is not very well recorded and remains less accessible given the fact that it was seldom reprinted. It can be safely assumed that when it came to reprints, the articles contributed by Dickens' young men for his *Household Words* and *All the Year Round* were often part of much larger organised projects and thus made a suitable structure for volume productions, but also that publishers who offered to reprint these works were mainly enticed by the idea of republishing material from the issues of Charles Dickens' periodicals. Given the high demand for, and immense popularity of, the periodicals, the contents which once constituted their weekly numbers, were likely to be profitable if reprinted. Publishers, as well as authors, would make sure to state that the works presented in such volume

³⁶³ For example, see John Hollingshead, *Under Bow Bells: A City Book for All Readers*, (London: Groombridge and Sons, 1859), or, Charles A. Collins, *The Eye-Witness and His Evidence About Many Wonderful Things*, (London: S. Low, Son and Co, 1860); or George A. Sala, *Papers Humorous and Pathetic: Being Selections from the Works of George Augustus Sala; Revised and Abridged by the Author for Public Reading*. (London: Tinsley Bros, 1872); or, George A. Sala, *Looking at Life: Or, Thoughts and Things*, (London: Routledge, Warne, and Routledge, 1860); or, Hollingshead, John. *Odd Journeys in and Out of London*. London: Groombridge and Sons, 1860

reprints, first appeared in *Household Words* or *All the Year Round*, thus underlining their affiliation to Brand Dickens.³⁶³ This was a good advertising strategy that attracted readers and ensured high sales. The fact that Collins' contributions to other magazines were not reprinted suggests a relative lack of publishers' interest partly based on the comparative difference in the magazines' popularity and sales figures at that particular point in time. Outside Dickens' periodicals, even the few contributions by Collins that were turned into a series - 'Some Chapters on Talk' included four articles published in *Cornhill Magazine* between December 1867 and March 1868 - were never collected or reprinted. By the late 1860s, the popularity of the *Cornhill* had declined, and despite its remarkable success during its early years, the sales had now dropped to a mere 20,000,³⁶⁴ whilst Dickens' magazines maintained an average of 100,000-120,000 for standard numbers³⁶⁵ and 250,000-300,000 for the Christmas numbers.³⁶⁶ This, and a combination of other factors, might not have given publishers much of an incentive to publish Collins' works beyond his productions brought out in affiliation to Dickens's brand.

³⁶⁴ "*Cornhill Magazine - The John Murray Archive* - National Library of Scotland".digital.nls.uk.

³⁶⁵ *Waterloo Directory of English Newspapers and Periodicals 1800-1900* http://0-english.victorianperiodicals.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/series3/title_search_start.asp#

³⁶⁶ Drew, *Dickens the Journalist* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p.147-148

Chapter IV

Premonition and Supernatural Intervention: The Professional Beginnings of

Eliza Lynn Linton

I. Introduction

Eliza Lynn Linton (1822–1898) was one of the most prolific female writers on Dickens’ periodical staff. She was born in Cumberland and raised in the Lake District and Kent. She was known for her radical political views and scepticism about religion and Christianity which probably resulted out of the conflicted relationship she had with her clergyman father Reverend Samuel Goodenough. She educated herself and received no formal schooling; she “did lessons” with her eldest sister; read books in her father's library; taught herself languages³⁶⁷. From a very young age, Lynn Linton aspired to become a writer and began writing short stories and verses. Following the publication of two of her poems in *Ainsworth’s Magazine*, she moved to London when she was twenty-three to pursue authorship professionally. She published two historical novels *Azeth, the Egyptian* (1847) and *Amygone: A Romance in the Days of Pericles* (1848) both of which were reviewed positively. Lynn Linton turned to journalism soon after and started working for *The Morning Chronicle* on twenty guineas per month; she became the first female newspaper staffer in England to draw a fixed salary. Lynn Linton started writing for

³⁶⁷ Lohrli, *Household Words: A weekly journal 1850-1859 conducted by Charles Dickens*, p.276.

Household Words in the early 1850s and continued contributing to its successor *All the Year Round*. Dickens valued her work for his journals and considered her to be ‘Good for anything, and thoroughly reliable’.³⁶⁸

In addition to contributing stories to Dickens’ Christmas numbers, Linton also went on to write for the Christmas issues of various other periodicals in her later years. Given that she had gained experience in writing yuletide fiction through training and publishing within Dickens’ very own extra December numbers, other major publishers in the Christmas market such as *Routledge’s Christmas Annual*, *Belgravia Annual*, *Tinsley’s Magazine* etc. often solicited her contributions. Some of her notable Christmas stories published by Christmas annuals other than that of Dickens include ‘The Story of the Hills’ (published in the 1867 Christmas number for *Tinsley’s Magazine* entitled *Stormbound*); ‘What the Eye Does Not See’ (published in the 1889 Christmas number for *Tinsley’s Magazine*); ‘Between the Lines’ (published in *Belgravia’s Christmas Annual* 1885); ‘Hancock’s Secret’ (*Routledge’s Christmas Annual* 1872); ‘The Last Tenants of the Hangman’s House’ (published in the 1871 Christmas number for *All the Year Round*); (1871); ‘Christmas Eve in Beach House’ (*Routledge’s Christmas Annual* 1870); ‘The Legend of Lady House’, (*Routledge’s Christmas Annual* 1869) etc. ‘The Last Tenants of the Hangman’s House’ was included by Edmund Yates in *Slaves of the Lamp*, the first Christmas number that he compiled and edited for *All the Year Round* as we have discussed previously.

³⁶⁸ Dickens wrote this against her name once when he was making a list of contributors for one of his numbers. George S. Layard, *Mrs. Lynn Linton: Her Life, Letters and Opinions*, (London: publisher not identified, 1901), p. 81.

The story has often been attributed to Yates himself,³⁶⁹ however, Linton included it in one of her short story collections entitled *With a Silken Thread and other Stories* (1880), extending her gratitude to the editors of *All the Year Round* for 'their courteous permission' to republish her 'stories which have from time to time appeared in their magazine'.³⁷⁰

II. Redefining the Conventional 'Ghost' and Adapting the Paranormal Mode for the Modern Victorian Readers

As with most of the other Christmas collaborators, Linton's writing was also influenced by Dickens; it is easy to see a close resemblance between their work. Linton's case becomes even more interesting when we find that Dickens, in addition to exerting a literary influence on her, also borrowed certain elements from this Christmas collaborator's early pieces for his very own compositions. The following section aims to demonstrate how Dickens and Linton tried to experiment with the definition of the supernatural by giving a more nuanced meaning to the term while adapting it for the Victorian readers. The conventional paranormal mode that features ghosts and phantoms is replaced by the inexplicable and the unfathomable that draws from our interpretation of the uncanny. In their supernatural tales, both writers make real people the source of all horror instead of relying on traditional ghosts. However, the lines between the real world and the paranormal are blurred and the horror manifests itself through occurrences that could neither be classified as supernatural nor could they be explained rationally.

³⁶⁹ P.D. Edwards has speculated this to be the case; Edwards, Peter D. *Edmund Yates, 1831-1894: A Bibliography* (St. Lucia, Australia: Dept. of English, University of Queensland, 1980), p.48.

³⁷⁰ Elizabeth Lynn Linton, *With a Silken Thread and Other Stories*, (London: Chatto and Windus, 1880), pp.5-7.

Edward Bulwer Lytton precisely states that fine line between the supernatural and the inexplicable in one of the early examples of occult detective fiction, *The Haunted and the Haunters* (1859); the unnamed narrator says: 'I had witnessed many very extraordinary phenomena in various parts of the world — phenomena that would be either totally disbelieved if I stated them, or ascribed to supernatural agencies. Now, my theory is that the Supernatural is the Impossible, and that what is called supernatural is only a something in the laws of nature of which we have been hitherto ignorant.'³⁷¹ This definition suggests that supernatural is something that is not known to occur in nature and thus, is beyond the scope of normal scientific understanding; something that cannot be logically explained by a society whose perception and comprehension of events is dictated by and limited to the laws of nature. This definition somewhat demonstrates how Linton and Dickens' upcoming stories choose to interpret the supernatural whilst experimenting with the traditional interpretation of ghosts.

The stories Linton contributed to Dickens' *Household Words* are especially important to study this flow of ideas between both authors. The first story Linton contributed to Dickens' Christmas corpus was 'The Old Lady's Story' published in *Household Words'* extra Christmas number for 1853, *Another Round of Stories by the Christmas Fire*. Linton's plot follows the story of a young woman named Lizzie who has a premonition about meeting this dark stranger who seems to gain a sinister control over her. It all starts when she sees a face in a broken mirror:

³⁷¹ Edward Bulwer Lytton, *The Haunted and the Haunters* (Kent: Marshall Hamilton, 1925), p.147.

I went on looking in the glass... when suddenly I saw a man's face peering over my shoulder in the glass... I could draw that face to this hour! The low forehead, with the short curling hair, black as jet, growing down in a sharp point; the dark eyes, beneath thick eye-brows, burning with a peculiar light; the nose and the dilating nostrils; the thin lips, curling into a smile, I see them all plainly before me now.³⁷²

The fact that Lizzie sees it all being reflected back in a mirror where the sinister figure appears to be hovering next to her own reflection could be interpreted as a warning of an impending danger looming over Lizzie. This ominous premonition soon materialises itself when a rather mystifying stranger called Mr. Felix moves into Lizzie's neighbourhood. It doesn't take long for her to recognize that Felix's 'was the same face in the glass that [she] had seen before, the sneering smile even more triumphant, the blighting stare of the fiery eyes, the low brow and the coal-black hair, and the look of mockery.' Felix slowly starts to gain menacing power over Lizzie as if an ominous occultic force working through this stranger 'struck into [her] a sense of submission'. Owing to this sense of submission and the mysterious sway he held over her, she agrees to elope with him:

[she] consented to leave [her] sister, who [she] well knew was dying; [she] consented to leave [her] father, whose whole life had been one act of love and care for his children; and to bring a stain on [their] name, unstained until then. [She] consented to leave those who loved [her], all [she] loved, for a stranger.³⁷³

Felix's overpowering influence over Lizzie's life causes her sister Lucy's health to decline and Lucy eventually dies succumbing to this evil presence. Although it is not explicitly suggested that Felix could have spectral or supernatural origins, there are certain elements that make the matter more ambiguous; Lizzie states the following when

³⁷² Eliza Lynn Linton, 'The Old Lady's Story' in *Household Words*, 19 December 1853, Volume VIII, pp. 581-585, (p. 582).

³⁷³ *Ibid.* p. 584.

describing one of her encounters with Felix: 'I was in the drawing-room. Suddenly, noiselessly, Felix was beside me. He had not entered by the door which was directly in front of me; and the window was closed. I never could understand this sudden appearance; for I am certain that he had not been concealed.'³⁷⁴ The mystic and somewhat bewildering ability to suddenly appear in a room and Lizzie's helplessness when looking for an explicable mode of entrance points towards a supernatural, or rather, an unaccountable presence. Further she describes the lane which Felix had picked for their daily rendezvous as 'haunted': 'day after day I stole at his *command* from the house, to walk with him in the Low Lane,' the lane which the country people said was haunted, and which was 'consequently always deserted'.³⁷⁵ Low Lane is where Felix commences manipulating Lizzie into agreeing to elope with him; his sinister influence over her seems to be the strongest in desolate places such as this which are infamous for being otherworldly. Also, the house that Felix bought, 'Green Howe' was a deserted old property 'by the river side', where no one had lived for many years - 'not since the young bride, Mrs. Braithwaite, had been found in the river one morning, entangled among the dank weeds and dripping alders, strangled and drowned, and her husband dead - none knew how - lying by the chapel door.'³⁷⁶ The place had developed a bad name ever since, and no one would live there. Perhaps an association is implied between the harrowing

³⁷⁴ Ibid. p. 584.

³⁷⁵ Ibid.

³⁷⁶ Ibid. p. 582

incident and Felix's arrival at that very abode as if such a place and its ghastly past suited his true identity. However, these speculations do not amount to a definitive answer and Felix remains an enigmatic figure. He could be a human, well within the bounds of the natural world, as much as he could be a visitor from the underworld.

The deliberate ambiguity in this regard is perhaps an attempt on Linton's part to suggest a transition from the traditional ghosts and clichéd hauntings to the horror induced by something more real that has a greater potential to corrupt the esteemed values of the respectable Victorian society. The prophetic vision which shows Felix hovering next to Lizzie in the reflection of the mirror, and the mystifying power he gains on Lizzie, could be seen as a danger looming over the sanctity of Victorian maidenhood and chastity. Throughout the story, there is an attempt to comprehend and ruminate upon the meaning of a ghost or rather to experiment with it. Instead of relying upon the conventional paranormal mode which furnishes us with spirits of the dead i.e. phantoms or apparitions, here, strange occurrences that can't be explained rationally, become the source of all horror and trepidation. Linton's story seems to borrow this very concept from one of Dickens' earlier ghost stories 'To Be Read at Dusk' published in 1852. The story begins with 'Five couriers, sitting on a bench outside the convent on the summit of the Great St. Bernard in Switzerland'³⁷⁷ who set up the frame for two shorter stories that follow. They all have been contemplating the true meaning of the supernatural.

³⁷⁷ Charles Dickens, *To Be Read at Dusk; and Other Stories, Sketches and Essays* (London: Redway, 1898), p.1.

<https://archive.org/details/tobereadatduskot00dickuoft/page/6/mode/2up?ref=ol&view=theater>

Putting the conventional ghosts aside, this points towards the unfamiliar, the inexplicable, something not so otherworldly but bewildering enough to place itself outside the bounds of natural reasoning; something that hangs between the natural and the supernatural, the rational and the irrational, and this very ambiguity about its actual nature adds to its unaccountability. As the German courier puts it, 'Very strange things do happen without ghosts!' He then asks one of his fellow couriers to 'tell [their] story of the English bride. There's no ghost in that, but something full as strange.'³⁷⁸ The courier's statement reinforces the above experimentation witnessed in Linton's story as regards how one chooses to interpret or define the supernatural. As we study Dickens' story of the English bride³⁷⁹, we come across more of such similarities. Of course, Linton's piece borrows, as one of its central motifs, precisely what lays the foundation of Dickens' framed tale - premonition:

When a certain man is coming to see you, unexpectedly; and, without his own knowledge, sends some invisible messenger, to put the idea of him into your head all day, what do you call that? When you walk along a crowded street, and think that a passing stranger is like your friend Heinrich, and then that another passing stranger is like your friend Heinrich, and so begin to have a strange foreknowledge that presently you'll meet your friend Heinrich—which you do, though you believed him at Trieste—what do you call *that*?³⁸⁰

The story of the English bride builds up on this very idea where a newlywed heiress is haunted 'by a dream of a face.' For three nights before her marriage, 'she [sees] a face in a dream—always the same face, and only One.' The heiress is constantly troubled by

³⁷⁸ Ibid. p.3.

³⁷⁹ Dickens' 'To be Read at Dusk' is a frame tale and is comprised of two interpolated stories which are not given an individual title; 'the story of the English bride' (as the German courier addresses it) forms the first of these untitled stories, hence we will refer to it likewise.

³⁸⁰ Ibid. p.2.

this vision and remembers that face every passing moment: 'The face of a dark, remarkable-looking man, in black, with black hair and a grey moustache—a handsome man except for a reserved and secret air. Not a face she ever saw, or at all like a face she ever saw.'³⁸¹ As we observed above, the face of Linton's enigmatic stranger is also described in similar detail; given that a dark countenance forms the basis of the entire plot in both stories, both Dickens and Linton try to make it more memorable and stand out. The stranger in the heiress's dream always stood in front of her, 'doing nothing... but looking at her fixedly, out of darkness'³⁸² just as the face of Linton's stranger 'looked at [Lizzie] meaningly through the darkness.'³⁸³ These disquieting faces emerging from darkness into both women's lives only to bring discord and destruction further reinforces the ambiguity as to how we choose to interpret them, as again there is no clear suggestion that would connect them to the world of supernatural. Ever since that dream, the heiress starts to stay distressed and fearful as if expecting something bad to happen. After the newlyweds leave for a vacation in Genoa, during their stay at the old palazzo, her husband makes the acquaintance of a Signor Dellombra upon the very sight of whom the heiress 'was nearly terrified to death'; 'her face changed, she gave a cry, and fell upon the marble floor'.³⁸⁴ Despite this encounter and the effect it had on the heiress, Dellombra continued

³⁸¹ Ibid. p.6.

³⁸² Ibid.

³⁸³ Lynn Linton, 'The Old Lady's Story' p. 582.

³⁸⁴ Dickens, *To Be Read at Dusk; and Other Stories*, p.9.

to visit the couple; upon every meeting, the heiress 'would cast down her eyes and droop her head, before the Signor, or would look at him with a terrified and fascinated glance - as if his presence had some evil influence or power upon her'. This is exactly the kind of effect Felix has on Lizzie as we witnessed above in Linton's tale. Things went on until one day, the heiress just disappeared, vanished in thin air under inscrutable circumstances. It was heard that Signor Dellombra, had passed' through a miserable posthouse across the desolate Campagna 'in a carriage, with a frightened English lady crouching in one corner.' She was never traced 'beyond that spot'. All that is known is 'that she vanished into infamous oblivion, with the dreaded face beside her that she had seen in her dream'.³⁸⁵

There are various parallels that could be drawn between both stories. To reinforce that unfamiliar, unfathomable being of both strangers and push them further towards the realm of the Victorian 'other', they are presented to be quite exotic. While Dickens' Dellombra, furnished with an 'an odd name', is a foreigner of unknown origins, who is possibly being pursued by the Austrian government 'on political suspicions',³⁸⁶ Linton's Felix 'had been long in the East' and arrived with 'a travelling carriage and four, followed by another full of servants - Hindoos, or Lascars, or Negroes; dark-coloured, strange looking people' as he 'took possession of Green Howe' (the deserted old property in Lizzie's neighbourhood with a terrible history). Lizzie describes the impact this alienness had on

³⁸⁵ Ibid. p.12.

³⁸⁶ Ibid. p.9.

her: 'The foreign servants in Eastern dresses, covered with rings, and necklaces, and earrings, the foreign smells of sandal wood, and camphor, and musk; the curtains that hung everywhere in place of doors, some of velvet, and some of cloth of gold; air of luxury, such as I, had never seen before, made such a powerful impression on me that I felt as if carried away to some unknown region.'³⁸⁷ This quality of being unknown and unfamiliar seems to strengthen the psychological manipulation of the abductees by their abductors in both stories. The two tales have a number of quintessential gothic elements but what makes the horror they project, truly invasive, is the transference of those distant 'ghosts' onto the domestic spaces that threatens the virtue of Victorian respectability. According to Michael Cox, this shift from the foreign to the local, blurs 'the boundaries between fact and fiction', between supernatural and reality. Victorian ghost stories seemed more factual even as authors introduced inexplicable supernatural phenomena into their texts.³⁸⁸

Both stories entertain the possibility of respectable well-bred young women taken away dishonourably from their reputable families by strange men. This constitutes itself as a threat to Victorian propriety and functions as an equally effective replacement of the supernatural horror. It is not difficult to notice a direct influence Dickens has had on Linton's present themes given Linton penned her story just a year after Dickens' 'To be Read at Dusk' was published. However, there is a fascinating difference between the ways

³⁸⁷ Eliza Lynn Linton, 'The Old Lady's Story' in *Household Words*, Volume VIII, 19 December 1853, p.583.

³⁸⁸ Michael Cox and R.A. Gilbert, eds, *Victorian Ghost Stories: An Oxford Anthology*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. x.

both tales end and the manner in which Linton and Dickens chose to resolve their plot or leave it unresolved respectively. Unlike the successful materialisation of the premonition that pointed towards a forthcoming villainous abduction of the new bride in Dickens' story, Linton's heroine is able to withstand her potential abductor and preserve her respectability. Aine -Helen McNicholas asserts that there could be a strong 'link' between 'the arrival of the stranger' and 'the threat to female virtue'.³⁸⁹ By changing the ending to her highly comparable plot, Linton attempts to symbolically protect and maintain the sanctity of ideal maidenhood as perceived by the Victorian society. It seems as if Linton is rewriting Dickens' story in order to rectify or perhaps redeem what is lost in Dickens' version.

III. Criminal Investigation via Supernatural Intervention

As briefly mentioned earlier, Linton's case stands out amongst other of Dickens' Christmas collaborators since the impact between the mentor and the apprentice seems to have been reciprocated momentarily here. In addition to Dickens' themes being borrowed by Linton, some of Dickens' work also seem to have borrowed certain ideas from Linton's early Christmas fiction. Linton's second Christmas contribution to Dickens' Christmas number corpus is entitled 'The Sixth Poor Traveller' that came out in the year 1854 and was published as part of *Household Words* extra special Christmas number, *The Seven Poor Travellers*. It follows the story of a woman called Mary, who has been wandering

³⁸⁹ McNicholas, *Dickens by Numbers*, p.145.

ever since she escaped her husband who had previously killed her sister, Ellen, and later tried to silence his wife as well when she found out about the murder. The story is narrated by Mary from a first-person point of view. The most significant feature of this story which makes it useful for the purposes of our research is the employment of the supernatural for the resolution of the crime. Linton is the first collaborator in Dickens' Christmas number corpus to introduce supernatural intervention in crime detection and investigation. It could be argued that Linton's present story features several elements of occult detective fiction. The occult detection is aimed at solving supernatural events (some of which are associated with crimes) whereas the detection in which Linton engages here, seeks to solve crimes in which the supernatural becomes involved. Some scholars do not agree with this distinction but for others they are both types of the same genre and jointly represent what we call 'occult detective fiction'.³⁹⁰ The beginning of the occult detective fiction is generally identified as November 1855 when Fitz-James O'Brien's short story "The Pot of Tulips" was published in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*. This makes Linton not only the first collaborator in Dickens' Christmas numbers, to engage in this genre, but also one of the earliest in the broader nineteenth-century periodical press.

To briefly sum up the plot, Ellen comes over to stay with her sister and her brother-in-law, Harry, and after a few days of her arrival, she is found dead outside her room. There doesn't seem to be any explanation as to what had happened. A local doctor is called upon

³⁹⁰ Tim Prasil, *Those Who Haunt Ghosts: A Century of Ghost Hunter Fiction*, (Ohio, USA: Coachwhip Publications, 2016), p.43

the scene but to no avail. No one could determine what actually transpired that led to Ellen's sudden and untimely death. Later that evening, Ellen's body is 'laid out on her bed'; Mary, still bewildered and unable to grasp the events 'found [herself] sitting by the bedside watching [her] dear sister'. She emphasises feeling Ellen's 'spiritual presence' that somehow co-existed with her 'bodily death'. Upon 'looking towards the farther corner of the room', she sees, 'standing at some little distance, [her] sister Ellen'. The figure smiles as it comes nearer. Mary 's[ees] it advance' towards her... 'it came glidingly; [she] remembered afterwards that it did not walk - but it came forward - to the light, and stood not ten paces from [her]. What follows next becomes crucial in 'unravel[ling]' the truth behind this mystery; Mary continues:

[Ellen's figure] looked at me still, in the same sad gentle way, and somehow - I do not know whether with the hand or by the turning of the head - it showed me the throat, where were the distinct marks of two powerful hands. And then it pointed to its heart; and looking, I saw the broad stain of blood above it. And then I heard her voice - I swear I was not mad - I heard it, I say to you distinctly - whisper softly, "Mary! "and then it said, still more audibly, " Murdered!"³⁹¹

Here, Ellen's supposed apparition reveals two major facts. Firstly, Ellen did not die due to a natural cause, nor was her death an accident as everyone previously suspected, but instead she was murdered covertly. Secondly, the method of the murder disclosing how she was killed. It was as if the apparition had a 'mission' to 'fulfil'; as soon as 'the warning had been given; [Ellen] passed away, for her work with earth was done'. Mary, resolute

³⁹¹ Lynn Linton, 'The Sixth Poor Traveller', *Household Words*, X, 25 December 1854, pp. 601-606, [p.605]

to investigate the clues Ellen's figure had pointed towards, takes upon herself to confirm what happened:

I raised her head and took off the bandage from round her face; and then I saw deep black bruises on her throat, the marks of hands that had grappled her from behind, and that had strangled her. And then I looked further, and I saw a small wound below the left breast, about which hung two or three clots of blood, that had oozed up, despite all care and knowledge in her manner of murder. I knew then she had first been suffocated, to prevent her screams, and then stabbed where the wound would bleed inwardly, and show no sign to the mere bystander. ³⁹²

The post mortem examination Mary manages to conduct, confirms everything communicated by the spectral figure. There was only one other person in the house at the time of the incident. Upon breaking into her husband's study, she discovers 'a long and slender dagger' that was 'red with blood', and 'a handful of woman's hair rudely severed from the head, lay near it. It was [Ellen's] hair.' Mary also stumbled across various 'stamps, and dies, and moulds, and plates, and handwritings with facsimiles beneath, and bankers' cheques, and a heap of leaden coin, and piles of incomplete bank-notes – and all the evidences of a coiner's and a forger's trade – the knowledge of which had caused her [sister's] death'.³⁹³ It is made apparent in the story that had there been no supernatural intervention, the murder disguised as a natural mishap might have never been discovered, let alone resolved, and thus, would have been ruled out as an accident. The true nature of the crime came to light only when an investigation was prompted by the spectre. It is quite clear that the crime is resolved through the agency of the supernatural.

³⁹² Ibid.

³⁹³ Ibid. p.606.

This approach bears a direct resemblance to Dickens' 'To be Taken with a Grain of Salt', also better known as 'The Trial for Murder' (1865). It was published as one of the interpolated stories in *Dr Marigold's Prescriptions*, the 1865 Christmas number for *All the Year Round*. As we know from our discussion of the story in the previous chapter, 'To be Taken with a Grain of Salt' is one of the most popular tales amongst Dickens' Christmas numbers and a primary example of how the services of the supernatural are deployed to settle unresolved murders and set the investigators on the right path. The spectre of a murder victim appears to the foreman of the jury during the trial and ensures that the jurors investigate and discover the truth behind the incident as it occurred. The murderer is found guilty and sentenced to death owing to the otherworldly intervention. Through looming menacingly over his murderer, 'pointing out' with 'an extended arm and an outstretched finger' at him and his 'evil countenance' and especially through 'frightfully sawing at its severed throat',³⁹⁴ the apparition of the murdered man sees the trial through until justice is served. The spectre's non-verbal manner of communication while relating the modus operandi of the crime, especially by pointing to the fatal wounds strongly echoes the attempts made by the spectre of Ellen in Linton's 'The Sixth Poor Traveller' when it tries to 'show [Mary] the throat' with 'distinct marks of two powerful hands on it' and 'point[s] to the 'heart' that has a 'broad strain of blood above it'.³⁹⁵

The throat of the murdered man had been cut straight across. In the opening speech for the defence, it was suggested that the deceased might have cut his own throat. At that very

³⁹⁴ Charles Dickens, *Christmas Stories* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1894), p.310.

³⁹⁵ Lynn Linton, 'The Sixth Poor Traveller', p.605.

moment, the figure, with its throat in the dreadful condition referred to (this it had concealed before), stood at the speaker's elbow, motioning across and across its windpipe, now with the right hand, now with the left, vigorously suggesting to the speaker himself the impossibility of such a wound having been self-inflicted by either hand.³⁹⁶

Dickens has modified the technique by increasing the spectre's participation in the formal investigation itself as part of the court proceedings, hence in order to confirm its account, its capability of producing counter-arguments is introduced, which in turn makes its presence more detailed, and its function slightly more advanced as compared to Linton's spectre. Despite different levels of engagement however, the basic approach – as regards the role and purpose of the supernatural and why it is needed – remains the same.

However, there remains one major difference between both authors in terms of what ramifications follow for the murderer past the ghostly intervention. Most of Linton's stories that deal with crime and criminals, especially murderers who have been found guilty via supernatural aid, end up in the guilty party breaking free, escaping from the law and becoming a fugitive instead of being charged and sentenced for their deeds. 'The Sixth Poor Traveller' has the same outcome. Dickens on the other hand, not only apprehends and punishes his murderer appropriately, but makes the entire story about the delivery of justice by setting up a court drama which rightfully convicts the criminal. In spite of taking the common route of paranormal revelation and detection via spectral encounters, both authors' attitude towards crime and their treatment of the guilty are fairly different.

³⁹⁶Dickens, *Christmas Stories*, p.310.

Ellen's figure sets itself free and 'its work with earth was done' and a mission 'fulfil[led]'merely after telling Mary the truth but the figure of Dickens' murdered man couldn't be set free until its transgressor was legally punished and the right verdict was passed. The ghost disappears as soon as justice has been served: 'As [the foreman] gave in [the jury's] verdict, "Guilty," the veil collapsed, all was gone, and [the figure's] place was empty.'³⁹⁷

IV. The Pattern of Open-Ended Plots in Dickens' Christmas Number Corpus

Linton developed a propensity to use such open-ended thematic structure aided by supernatural intervention over the course of her career as a short-story writer. Many of Linton's other stories such as 'The Story of the Hills' (1868), 'The Last Tenants of the Hangman's House' (1871), 'Christmas Eve in Beach House' (1870), as well as the 'The Legend of Lady House' (1869) feature a murderer who escapes into the mist after their crime is uncovered via the aid of the supernatural. As they are never caught, the families of the victims live in constant fear that someday the killer may return to exact revenge on the ones who helped expose their crimes.

Linton's 'The Story of the Hills', first published in *Tinsley's Christmas Annual* for the year 1868, *Stormbound*, follows the story of George Graham who finds himself trapped in a rather perilous love triangle and gets murdered by his erotic rival named Abel Armstrong

³⁹⁷Dickens, *Christmas Stories*, p.312.

in cold blood. Erotic rivalry is also one of the most recurrent themes in Linton's stories as well as Dickens' Christmas number corpus which almost always leads to homicides. Dickens' Christmas collaborators very often engage in themes of toxic masculinity and sexual tensions that result in criminal consequences. Following Graham's disappearance and amidst a wide ongoing search for him, 'the form of George Graham' appears before his friends, 'standing there in the moonlight', before the window, 'dressed as [they] had seen him last, with blood oozing from a large wound on his forehead. Then the shape passed away, and only the mist-wreaths lay upon the hill sides.'³⁹⁸ This gives them a clue – again led by supernatural agencies – to look for him in the 'hill sides'. The red flare of the torches flashed 'upon the water like bands of blood, laced here and there with faint lines of silver, where the moonlight stole' and then 'O God! the light fell upon the pale face of a dead man, lying in the shallows among the rocks, with a broad stain of blood on his forehead, where his skull had been battered in.' Nothing more was ever known, of the prime suspect Abel Armstrong who 'disappeared from the place, and no one heard of him again'. Once indeed, years after, he was seen 'down at Whitehaven, on board a suspicious-looking foreign vessel'. He never came back 'to face the reports that went about concerning him and George Graham; for the whole vale believed that he had murdered the poor fellow —the whole vale having known of the rivalry'. The plot is left open here as well given the killer is still on the loose and was never apprehended.

³⁹⁸ Eliza Lynn Linton, 'The Story of the Hills', in *Stormbound*, in *Tinsley's Christmas Annual* (1867), p.96, <https://archive.org/details/1867stormboundtinsleymagazinechristmasannual/page/n3/mode/2up>

Similarly, 'Christmas Eve in Beach House' was published in *Routledge's Christmas Annual* in 1870. The narrative relies on the recurrent tropes of dreams and visions to investigate the mystery behind the disappearance of Captain Charles Mackenzie. 'No one ever knew more of him than that he was reported absent when he should have returned to his quarters at Truro, after a week's leave', and that from that time to this he was missing, and 'had left no trace behind.' Every effort had been made to find him, but without success; and his family had almost given up the hope not only of seeing him again but of knowing what his end had been. Still, there 'the mystery of his fate remained, and it looked likely enough to remain a mystery to the end of time.' Following his disappearance, his daughter Alice moves to a beach house with her husband Walter where she starts having 'dreadful dreams'; 'they are scarcely dreams— they are like visions more than dreams, for [she] seemed to [her]self to be wide awake all the time'. It was later discovered through the help of the visions that a handy man called, Jem Penreath who was working at the beach house had indeed killed Mackenzie and buried his remains within the walls of the property. Despite the discovery, Penreath manages to escape never to be seen again. 'Swift steps pressed forward, sturdy hands were thrust out, but, swifter and stronger than any, Jem Penreath thrust them all aside, then sprang through the doorway', no one 'could tell which way he had gone; and, search as they might, he never was seen in the place again, and never a sign, never a trace of him was found.'³⁹⁹ It is

³⁹⁹ Eliza Lynn Linton, 'Christmas Eve in Beach House' in *Routledge's Christmas Annual* (1870), pp.43-54, (p.54), *Hathi Digital Trust*, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/iau.31858031799277>

important to note that Linton was the first writer in Dickens' Christmas number corpus to have penned an open-ended plot and perhaps to have commenced the pattern of such stories in the Christmas numbers of *Household Words* and *All the Year Round*. Her 'The Sixth Poor Traveller' happens to be the first story in the corpus that uses the aforementioned narrative design. Mary confesses that 'the fear of [her husband's] return haunted [her]. [She] could get no rest day or night for dread of him; and [she] felt going mad with the one hard thought for ever pitilessly pursuing [her] that [she] should fall again into his hands.'⁴⁰⁰

After Linton initiated this characteristic plot structure in Dickens' Christmas numbers, open-ended stories became a common feature of *Household Words* and *All the Year Round*. Wilkie Collins' 'The Ostler' published in *The Holly Tree Inn* in 1855, revolves around this very concept of continuity and explores the ongoing sense of perpetual fear and suspense. The protagonist of the story, Isaac Scatchard, talks about a vision he has had several years ago on his birthday at 2am - the exact time of his birth - in which he sees a woman attempting to take his life. By a twist of fate, Isaac gets married to a woman not realizing until later that she is in fact the ominous figure that appears in his visions. Although Isaac manages to leave her and run away, the threat is never really gone; the story ends in an ambiguous manner suggesting that she could return at any moment and succeed in her attempts to finish Isaac off.

Similarly, Percy Fitzgerald's 'Supercargo' which forms the first story interpolated in the section entitled 'Beguilement in the Boats' of Dickens' 1856 Christmas number

⁴⁰⁰Lynn Linton, 'The Sixth Poor Traveller', p.606.

The Wreck of the Golden Mary, also ends in a very abrupt and ambivalent fashion without clarifying what eventually became of the characters. The lead character, Will Wichello, a blacksmith who is known as the 'Ding Dong Will' owing to the rhythmic periodicity and power with which he strikes his sledgehammer, finds himself trapped in a difficult love triangle and murders his rival, Mr Temple, upon being incited by Miss Arthur. The narrator finds Ding Dong Will standing near the bludgeoned body of Mr Temple. It appears as if the blacksmith used his famous hammer to smash the victim's head. Will disappears soon after the crime occurred and it is never specified where he went or if he was ever caught. We are only told that Ding Dong Will is pursued by an angry crowd. Whether he was captured and hung by this violent mob remains unclear. Ding Dong Will may have also succeeded in escaping the crowd and disappearing in the woods. 'What end Will Whichelo came to... But Mary Arthur - she who drove him on to it, as everybody knew - she was let away, and went up to London, where she lived to do mischief enough'.⁴⁰¹ It is not specified what the narrator means by 'mischief' when talking in context of Miss Arthur. Klimaszewski suggests that perhaps she went on to incite more men to commit murders in London.⁴⁰² Thus, the plot ends on a rather equivocal note leaving the

⁴⁰¹ Charles Dickens et al., 'Beguilement in the Boats' in *The Wreck of the Golden Mary, Household Words*, Volume XIV, 19 December 1856, p. 582

⁴⁰² Melisa Klimaszewski, 'Rebuilding Charles Dickens's Wreck and Rethinking the Collaborative', *SEL* 54, no. 2, (2014), pp. 815-33, (p.823).

narrative open to the possibility of more crimes and potential murders waiting to happen. Given these stories are part of a bigger overarching frame narrative, it's also interesting to look at how it could possibly affect the plot and the characters of the frame tale. The frame involves the survivors of a shipwreck trying to keep their spirits up by telling each other stories in life boats while waiting to get rescued. The story of Ding Dong Will is just one of the several stories interpolated within the frame narrative that are related to calm down the stranded and distressed passengers. However, such a violent and unresolved (pseudo-)end to the story could only add to the tensions of the afflicted group instead of having a pacifying effect. As Klimazewski argues that a love triangle morphs into a premeditated, grisly murder in the space of a few paragraphs. Just as suddenly as the brutality appears, the tale ends with no apparent lesson for the desperate passengers apart from the message that some people kill when their desires are frustrated. Such open-ended and unresolved interpolated stories could thus potentially, in theory, have an altering effect on the overarching frame plot as well.

A very similar example to Linton's 'The Sixth Poor Traveller' would be Amelia B. Edwards's ghost story, "How the Third Floor Knew the Potteries" published in the 1863 Christmas number of *All the Year Round*, *Mrs Lirriper's Lodgings*.⁴⁰³ As we know from the

⁴⁰³ Amelia B. Edwards, 'How the Third Floor Knew the Potteries', *Mrs Lirriper's Lodgings* in *All the Year Round*, *Dickens Journals Online*, Volume X, 3 December 1863, pp. 35-40, (p. 582).
<http://www.djo.org.uk/all-the-year-round/volume-x/page-607.html>

previous chapter, Edwards' protagonist is guided by the ghost of his friend George Barnard who mysteriously vanishes one day. The ghostly intervention leads the protagonist to the coal furnaces of their village where he finds a burnt heap of human remains. Barnard's rival and the prime suspect in the case, Louis Laroche, however, couldn't be convicted due to a lack of evidence that could prove his involvement. Laroche finally disappears and the case is never resolved. In Harriet Parr's story "The Poor Pensioner" that featured in the 1855 Christmas number for *Household Words*, *The Holly Tree Inn*, Hester's son is hung for a crime that he resolutely claimed he didn't commit. As a result, Hester is driven mad, and Dickens's introduction to the story describes her wandering the corridors of the inn, looking forward to the day when her son's innocence will finally be proven, muttering the phrase, 'I am more patient than death: I am more patient than injustice'.⁴⁰⁴ These open-ended stories could be seen as a foundation for any forthcoming sequels. Even if the sequels do not appear later, it does help leave the door open for further follow-up narratives to be written.

Nicholas Daly argues that such open-ended stories create a form of the 'pleasurable suspense' that is often associated with sensation fiction, but they also create a sense of ongoing action, of contemporaneity with their original readers, much like the for

⁴⁰⁴ Harriet Parr, 'The Poor Pensioner', *The Holly Tree Inn*, in *Household Words* (December 15, 1855), pp. 31–35, (p. 603). <http://www.djo.org.uk/household-words/volumexii/page-603.html>.

of the periodical itself.⁴⁰⁵ Margaret Beetham goes on to observe that the periodical form is itself 'open-ended and resistant to closure'.⁴⁰⁶ Klimasewski refers to the 'messy' endings of the contributed stories to Dickens' Christmas collaborations suggesting that the stories might benefit from being open to a sense of the form's own resistance to neat and tidy endings.

⁴⁰⁵ Nicholas Daly, *Literature, Technology, and Modernity, 1860-2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) p.49.

⁴⁰⁶ Margaret Beetham, 'Towards a Theory of the Periodical as a Publishing Genre', in *Investigating Victorian Journalism*, edited by Laurel Brake, Aled Jones, and Lionel Madden, (London: Macmillan, 1990), pp. 19-32, (p.26).

Conclusion

This thesis has aimed to demonstrate the way brand affiliation and apprenticeship functioned in Dickens' literary enterprise and how its extended effect on collaborative authorship and professional development could be observed in the broader nineteenth century publishing industry. It could be safely said that an apprenticeship in Dickens' periodicals provided a rather elusive platform for young and inexperienced writers to work and publish in the mainstream periodical press. It would be useful to reiterate that Dickens was one of the very few editors who took in absolute amateurs who had no prior experience of writing in a professional capacity. Editors and proprietors of highly reputed magazines seldom accepted unsolicited submissions from general public which largely narrowed down the possibility of random beginners making professional debuts in established periodicals. Dickens by making an exception to such exclusionary practice, allowed his periodicals to make a perfect ground for an institutional apprenticeship to function at its fullest, that could be truly useful to people of talent who lack the resources and connections needed to rise in the profession.

Not only did their authorial skills flourish under Dickens' editorial direction and guidance, but their professional résumés significantly upgraded upon entering a direct collaboration with one of the most successful and marketable authors of the time. This allowed their reputation to build up more quickly in the industry than it would have done otherwise. An affiliation to Dickens acted as a catalyst in their professionalisation and made them more attractive to other publishers and editors of the time. Also, as studied in the case of Edwards, co-authoring a work with Dickens and appearing in his highly

celebrated special Christmas numbers provided a much better platform for their work to be disseminated and for their authorial talent to be noticed. Not only did their work gain a tremendous exposure and visibility but their thematic choices and treatment of the subject-matter became more informed and attuned to the contemporary consumer market owing to the guidance they received from their editor.

Many of Dickens' young men went on to write for other mainstream magazines later in their careers and became frequent contributors to major publications of the time, yet, as we witnessed in the case of Charles Collins, quite a few of these writers' literary productions beyond Dickens' periodicals were seldom reprinted or collected for a volume publication and thus remains less accessible today. This could be partially attributed to the lack of an involved editorship that often fostered a mentor-mentee relationship; only a handful of magazine editors were as devoted as Dickens to offer their time and energy into providing such guidance and support.

On the other hand, most of the articles that these young men contributed to Dickens' magazines were often developed into a much longer and more organised journalistic series which comprised of several related articles that fell under the same thematic umbrella. Such series thus made a suitable structure for volume collections. Dickens encouraged his young staff to collect their articles (published in his journals over the years) and print them in volume form under their own names as monographs. Following his advice, many of his contributors such as John Hollingshead, William Blanchard Jerrold, Walter, Thornbury Sidney Blanchard in addition to Collins, Sala and

Edwards published multiple volumes of their articles collected from *Household Words* and *All the Year Round*.

Dickens, by virtue of his position and influence in the Victorian literary market, also instituted certain innovative features in the periodical industry which directly benefited his young contributors. One of the most impactful and influential of these, was the introduction of the annual special Christmas numbers in the periodical press, which, owing to its immense popularity and wide following, ended up blazing the trail for the customary practice of publishing Christmas Annuals in the wider Victorian periodical press. Owing to their high demand, Dickens' Christmas numbers were treated as a specimen and other editors frequently adopted his method of framing these multi-authored compositions for their own yuletide collections. This undoubtedly augmented the employment scope for Dickens' Christmas collaborators since they were considered experienced in composing Dickensian themes and designs for Christmas annuals.

In other words, because they featured with Charles Dickens on the 'extra' special Christmas numbers of *Household Words* and *All the Year Round*, many editors of mainstream magazines solicited their services and hired them to compose their annuals. For their contributions to other periodicals, Dickens' collaborators implemented similar thematic structures and maintained the same characteristic style which they were trained to use under Dickens' editorship. Hence, the influence Dickens had on his collaborators in turn extended far beyond Dickens' periodicals; his apprentices spread their mentor's

Christmas model whilst expanding his original scheme into a much broader practice of nineteenth century print culture. One of the primary examples for this has been examined in the case study of Edmund Yates who went on to adopt and imitate Dickens' frame-tale technique to formulate his own Christmas numbers.

Justin McCarthy emphasizes the impact of Dickens' innovative editorial system and his introduction of novel periodical features by observing: 'We owe directly to him the creation of a whole school of modern periodical literature'.⁴⁰⁷ Besides receiving the opportunity to co-author Christmas productions, Dickens' apprentices also benefitted from targeted job positions and special projects, structurally created for them by Dickens and his enterprise in an organisational capacity. The primary example of this would be instituting the position of a special correspondent in the English periodical press, as exemplified in the case study of George Augustus Sala who significantly benefitted from Dickens' far-sightedness and professional mentorship. His career in special correspondence was established when Dickens sent him to Russia; *A Journey Due North* was the much-needed start that set Sala on the path of becoming one of the best-known journalists of the day.

Despite Sala's absolute inexperience in special correspondence, Dickens did not think twice before agreeing to organise such a novel project and paid the unknown amateur £8 more per month than he paid his experienced sub-editor William Henry Wills, or within slightly less than £2 a month of the figure he paid himself as editor. This throws

⁴⁰⁷ Justin McCarthy, *Portraits of the Sixties*, (London: T.F. Unwin, 1903) p.14.

light on Dickens' inclination for creating more job opportunities for his apprentices and his readiness to deploy practical mechanisms that would directly contribute to their commercial expansion whilst significantly aiding their professionalization as developing authors. It is worth reiterating the words of Charles Dickens Jr., who served as sub-editor to his father after W.H. Wills, and intimately observed Dickens' editorial diligence; he described at length the extraordinary efforts made by Dickens 'to enlist promising recruits; to help forward rising merit; to further the development of latent ability; and above all, to give every possible assistance to young writers who showed steadfast perseverance', this was 'the effect of a policy and a principle' which were always upheld, 'in connection with the two magazines.'⁴⁰⁸ Sala later affirmed that without '[Dickens'] friendship and encouragement, [he] should never have been a journalist or a writer of books. [His] first coherent production was published by him in 1851; the first five-pound note [he] ever earned by literature came from his kind hand.'⁴⁰⁹ Hence, an apprenticeship under Dickens also yielded a philanthropic empathy and support along with a genuine interest in the professional development of these aspiring young recruits. Many writers distinctly experienced this professionalisation where they were upskilled and had their capabilities in the trade practically expanded. Dickens' periodicals essentially took in amateur novices, trained them and supplied specialised professionals to the Victorian literary industry.

⁴⁰⁸ Charles Dickens, the Jr., 'Dickens as an Editor', pp.81-82.

⁴⁰⁹ George A. Sala, *Charles Dickens* (London: G. Routledge, 1870), p.18.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that if Dickens' collaborators are read and recognised today by the general reading public in the twenty-first century, there is a very good chance that they reach this audience through Dickens' collaborative Christmas numbers. To take the example of Sala, perhaps the most well-known of Dickens' collaborators, the difference between his independent and collaborative works in the context of readership in the twenty-first century proves the above hypothesis. I gathered some data to investigate the extent of contemporary readership, reprints and world-wide circulation that Sala receives in the twenty-first century because of his contribution to Dickens' Christmas numbers; the data collected, therefore, involves figures for the Christmas numbers to which Sala contributed – *The Seven Poor Travellers* and *The Haunted House*, both of which currently have over 150 editions across 12 languages, available for purchase online. Whereas two of the most widely successful independent works of Sala, *My Diary in America in the Midst of War* and *A Journey Due North* only have around 20 editions available, in English only. As this is a representative study, the data has been collected by literary sales on various commercial platforms such as *Amazon Books*, *Abe Books*, *Book Scouter*, *eBay*, *Goodreads*, *Audible* and *Kindle Direct Publishing*. These platforms have over twenty million members worldwide and the statistics they provide are thoroughly accurate and representative of commercial reception of the works and authors in question because it provides officially confirmed statistics on sales, circulation and readership.

It is clear from the number of publications and available editions of the collaborative and independent works that the frequency of reprints for the collaborative Christmas stories is higher than that of Sala's independent works. The data shows that in the last fifteen years, Dickens' collaborative Christmas works, have been published constantly, sometimes multiple editions arriving every month. This reinforces the core argument of this thesis that Dickens' apprentices benefitted from their collaboration with Dickens, not only in their lifetime but even in their afterlife.

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