

Dickens, “Dickensian,” and the Pseudo-Dickens Industry

ADAM ABRAHAM

[T]here never were such books—never were such books!
—*Nicholas Nickleby*¹

The word “Dickensian” is older than the *Oxford English Dictionary* records. From 1881, eleven years after Charles Dickens’s death, the dictionary cites an *Athenæum* review that describes the American journalist and humorist Bret Harte: “He has a touch of Dickens in his style; he has trained his imagination to walk with a Dickensian gate; he observes with a Dickensian eye.”² While the *OED* concedes that the awkward coinage “Dickenesque” and the cheerier “Dickensy” appeared earlier, in 1856 and 1859, respectively, the more familiar “Dickensian” is older still.³ Surprisingly, or perhaps unsurprisingly given the Harte example, the word was first deployed to describe not the writings of Dickens but rather an imitation thereof. An anonymous plagiarism of Dickens’s weekly periodical *Master Humphrey’s Clock* used the adjective “Dickensian” in 1840 in a twopenny newspaper, the *Town*. This paper quarrels with “Mr. Pickwick’s Tale,” a legend interpolated into *Master Humphrey’s Clock* and told by Mr. Pickwick, who suggests that the name of Will Marks’s lover is lost. The anonymous author in the *Town* protests, “This is wrong. Her name was Maria Page, as has already been said four times in this beautifully, needlessly circumfuse paragraph, of Dickensian verbosity.”⁴ So “Dickensian” first referred to an imitative text; further, the adjective modifies the noun “verbosity”—a trait that emulators of Dickens’s fiction found themselves able to reproduce.⁵

Adam Abraham completed his doctoral degree at the University of Oxford in 2016. He is a postdoctoral fellow at Virginia Commonwealth University, and he is writing a book on plagiarism, parody, and identity in Victorian Britain.

But the *Town* was only one of many spurious bursts of Dickensiana that bloomed in the years after Dickens triumphed with *The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club*. Publishers replicated the form of *Pickwick*—shilling monthly numbers with paper wrappers and illustrations—in “a rather desperate attempt to crack the formula.”⁶ By 1839, the *Morning Post* could refer to “Pickwick Periodicals,” and readers could choose among offerings such as *Paul Periwinkle* and *The Queerfish Chronicles*.⁷ While the “Pickwick phenomenon” was underway, from approximately 1837 to 1842, Dickens did not remain idle, nor did his copyists.⁸ In 1838, the novelist sent his publisher Richard Bentley two imitations of *Oliver Twist*, both entitled *Oliver Twiss*. “The vagabonds have stuck placards on the walls—each to say that *theirs* is the only true Edition,” Dickens complains in a letter.⁹ As he followed *Oliver Twist* with *Nicholas Nickleby* and *Master Humphrey’s Clock*, opportunistic publishers proffered works such as *Nickelas Nicklebery* and *Master Timothy’s Book-Case*. Robert Douglas-Fairhurst observes that, for Dickens, “these unauthorized literary add-ons and knock-offs meant that his identity as a writer was now in serious danger of drifting away from his control.”¹⁰

The imitations themselves are often out of control, marked by a tendency to stray. An ostensible *Oliver Twist* devolves into *Pickwick*; plagiarisms of *Nicholas Nickleby* echo *Oliver Twist* or *Sketches by Boz*. The interpenetrations of these various epigones recall G. K. Chesterton’s classic statement on Dickens’s art: “Strictly, there is no such novel as ‘Nicholas Nickleby.’ There is no such novel as ‘Our Mutual Friend.’ They are simply lengths cut from the flowing and mixed substance called Dickens—a substance of which any given length will be certain to contain a given proportion of brilliant and of bad stuff.”¹¹ Chesterton’s image thus allows the possibility of intertextual straying, as he playfully suggests: “There is no reason why Sam Weller, in the course of his wanderings, should not wander into ‘Nicholas Nickleby.’ There is no reason why Major Bagstock, in his brisk way, should not walk straight out of ‘Dombey and Son,’ and straight into ‘Martin Chuzzlewit.’”¹² Steven Marcus discovers this in practice: “Sam Weller has in *Oliver Twist* become the Artful Dodger, who possesses all of Sam’s coolness and wit, but who exists on the margins of society.”¹³ Indeed, both the Dodger and Dick Swiveller seem to audition for the Weller role. Dick also recalls Mr. Pickwick’s legal troubles when the young man avows, “There can be no action for breach, that’s one comfort.”¹⁴ The United Metropolitan Improved Hot Muffin and Crumpet Baking and Punctual Delivery Company,

in the first number of *Nicholas Nickleby*, evokes some of the leaden humor in the first number of *Pickwick*, and John Bowen finds that *The Old Curiosity Shop* repeats motifs from *Nicholas Nickleby*, such as “a foolish relative,” “a country school,” “travelling showmen,” and “monstrous villains.”¹⁵ Daniel Quilp, like Fagin and Miss Knag, compulsively rubs his hands together and is himself reproducible: he “glanced upward with a stealthy look of exultation that an imp might have copied and appropriated to himself.”¹⁶

What emerges in these early works is a kind of Boz brand, and a single word encapsulates the brand: “Dickensian.” It is perhaps no coincidence that the word first appeared in a plagiaristic newspaper. Imitators of Dickens sought the essence, the quality soon known as Dickensian. While not always superlative writers, they were attentive readers, and they stood alongside periodical reviews and newspaper extracts among the earliest and most vivid responses to the rise of Dickens the novelist in the 1830s. Yet these imitative works are rarely studied. This article situates Dickens in the historical context of his plagiaristic successors, who destabilized and reified his authorial identity in its formative years. After a brief overview of the merits and demerits of unoriginality in literature, I will offer two arguments. First, a reading of early imitations of Dickens’s novels, with particular attention here to variations on *Nicholas Nickleby*, illuminates our understanding of the term “Dickensian” around the time that it entered the language. Second, rather than ignore these gadflies, Dickens responded to the onslaught by changing his narratives and altering his forms—he even imitated *Pickwick* in *Master Humphrey’s Clock* to prove, paradoxically, that he was inimitable.

UNORIGINALITY AND POSTROMANTIC AUTHORSHIP

Confronting the prose imitations of Dickens’s fiction, one encounters anonymous and pseudonymous texts; part-issue and penny publications; and works that are incomplete, infrequently or never reprinted, rarely read, woebegone, lost. Although I have used the terms “imitation” and “plagiarism,” there is a degree of instability in these paraliterary offerings. For instance, the *Dickensian* magazine charged that Dickens “suffered at the hands of literary hacks of the period, who, having no imagination or ability of their own, adapted, continued, plagiarized or stole the fruit of his brain.”¹⁷ That this anonymous writer resorts to four verbs—“adapted,” “continued,” “plagiarized,” and “stole”—suggests some indecision about what is going on. The range of terms that could

be used to describe this corpus, with varying degrees of accuracy, is vast indeed: imitation, adaptation, appropriation, transformation, repetition, re-mediation; satire, parody, pastiche, travesty, burlesque, lampoon, caricature, spoof; forgery, counterfeit, hoax; intertext, metatext, hypertext; sequel, prequel, continuation, fanfiction, remake, revival, reboot; paraphrase, summary, condensation, digest, précis; allusion, quotation, reference, parallel, homage; copy, piracy, palinode, plagiarism, palimpsest.¹⁸ The purpose of this article is not to define these historically complex terms, but it is worth noting that formal and generic shifts may be at work when one surveys what Gérard Genette calls "literature in the second degree."¹⁹

Unoriginality works against Romantic notions of authorship. Robert Macfarlane, drawing on George Steiner, distinguishes *creatio* ("creation as generation") from *inventio* ("creation as rearrangement"), with the autonomous Romantic author striving for the former.²⁰ Macfarlane writes, "1840 can usefully be considered as the high-water mark of originality as *creatio* within Britain."²¹ Yet from 1839 to 1840, as John Sutherland indicates, between fifteen and twenty *Pickwick*-like shilling monthlies were on sale.²² At a moment when *creatio* seemed ascendant, *inventio* was not far behind. According to H. M. Paull, "The history of plagiarism is indeed the history of literature."²³ Such a statement can be corroborated by canonical writers who, at different times, have been accused of pilfering from others: Chaucer, Michel de Montaigne, Christopher Marlowe, Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, John Webster, Milton, Molière, Voltaire, Laurence Sterne, Walter Scott, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Alexandre Dumas, Benjamin Disraeli, Alfred Tennyson, Dickens—a veritable Norton anthology of literature. Indeed, in the early part of Dickens's career, reviewers charged that he drew on Washington Irving, Theodore Hook, and others. Such allegations were common in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as a species of source hunter or plagiarism hunter arose: journalists who performed pre-electronic-era searches to discover borrowings and concordances. Scott railed against the practice: "It is a favorite theme of laborious dulness to trace out such coincidences; because they appear to reduce genius of the higher order to the usual standard of humanity, and, of course, to bring the author nearer a level with his critics."²⁴

Other writers shared this skepticism about plagiarism hunting and about the usefulness of promoting originality as a literary virtue. Ralph Waldo Emerson, in an 1876 essay entitled "Quotation and Originality," argues that "there is no pure originality. All

minds quote. Old and new make the warp and woof of every moment. There is no thread that is not a twist of these two strands."²⁵ Twentieth-century critical discourses have further developed such sentiments, especially as intertextuality and reader-response theory have challenged notions of the autonomous text and the author as a locus of meaning. In *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*, Genette writes that "there is no literary work that does not evoke (to some extent and according to how it is read) some other literary work."²⁶ Michel de Certeau contributes to a shift from author-centric to reader-centric approaches as he develops his notion of reading as poaching: "readers are travelers; they move across lands belonging to someone else, like nomads poaching their way across fields they did not write."²⁷ Michael Ryan Moore concurs with this assessment: "audiences take ownership."²⁸

A seminal argument can be found in Edward Young's 1759 pamphlet *Conjectures on Original Composition*. While the existence of "illustrious Examples" may "*engross, prejudice, and intimidate*" the latter-day writer, Young also suggests that originals themselves are productive: "an *Original* author ... will probably propagate a numerous offspring of Imitators, to eternize his glory."²⁹ Joel Weinsheimer, in an article on Young's thesis, finds that a work of art "is not original until it originates, and what it originates are imitations. The originativity of the original depends on its being imitated, and so disseminated, by readerly writers."³⁰ By this view, texts that mimic, in some fashion, *Pickwick* or *Oliver Twist* do not diminish or deplete their sources; rather, these reproductions make the originals original in that they originated something. Further, prose imitations of Dickens's early novels capture a piece of art in motion—a bird in flight—and make its features apprehensible. In other words, something that is not Dickens helps us see with greater clarity that which is Dickens or Dickensian—itsself an ambiguous term that refers to works that are produced by Charles Dickens as well as qualities that are typical of his writing.

PRESUMPTUOUS *PICKWICKS*, KNOCKOFF *NICKLEBYS*

Hyperbole reigns in accounts of Dickens's first book-length narrative, *Pickwick*. "Nothing like it had ever happened before," claims biographer Edgar Johnson.³¹ Besides its remarkable publishing success, the book launched an array of imitations (such as *The Penny Pickwick*), unauthorized sequels (*Pickwick*

in *America*, *Pickwick in India*), stage adaptations (*The Pickwick Club*, *Peregrinations of Pickwick*), and other derivations.³² Indeed, Percy Fitzgerald contends that "there is a regular 'Pickwick' literature."³³ Explanations for the proliferation—"[t]he innumerable progeny of the Pickwick Papers," in the words of a contemporary newspaper—might include mercantile or aesthetic considerations, the open-ended nature of serial publication, and the limitations of nineteenth-century copyright law.³⁴ One possibility lies in a genteel fiction promoted by a March 1836 advertisement, which appeared five days before the first shilling number. This notice suggests that *Pickwick* is a reproduction of an unavailable (and nonexistent) original: "The Pickwick Travels, the Pickwick Diary, the Pickwick Correspondence—in short, the whole of the Pickwick Papers, were carefully preserved, and duly registered by the secretary, from time to time, in the voluminous Transactions of the Pickwick Club."³⁵ According to this announcement, Boz is merely the editor, not the author. The supposed existence of these "voluminous Transactions" implies a source from which more than one enterprising editor or author might draw inspiration.

As a representative of the field of plagiaristic *Pickwicks*, consider the anonymous *Droll Discussions and Queer Proceedings of the Magnum-Fundum Club*, published in 1838. Its format is typical of such derivatives: an eight-page penny weekly with crude illustrations, four issues of which could be stitched into a thirty-two-page monthly part with an illustrated wrapper and sold at 4d. (*Pickwick*, which cost a shilling a month, was thus three times as expensive.) *The Magnum-Fundum Club* seems to have expired after thirty-two pages.

To begin at the beginning, the long-winded opening sentence is worth quoting in full for its parade of Pickwickian (and Dickensian) motifs:

The glimmering landscape was fading on the sight—the stars were peeping through the cloudless atmosphere of a March evening—the muffin man's bell jingled its wintry chime upon the air—the gas had begun to display its impertinent glare in the streets of the Metropolis—and, amidst the intense cold of a frosty night, the miscellaneous multitude passing to and fro resembled so many locomotive engines blowing off the steam from their mouths and nostrils, ere they were laid up for the night—the itinerant potatoe [sic] merchant, with brazen lungs, was proclaiming to his customers that his belly-balls were "all hot"—the

coaches were rattling over the London stones; and one amongst them, driven with more than ordinary speed, the “Red Rover,” arrived at the “Bell Inn.”³⁶

The initial clause is a reversal of *Pickwick*'s opening: “The first ray of light which illumines the gloom.”³⁷ In *Magnum-Fundum*, we are at the close of day, not its commencement. The mention of a “March evening” nods to *Pickwick*'s first shilling number, which was published on 31 March 1836; this may also be an example of what David M. Bevington refers to as “seasonal relevance”—the undated number of *Magnum-Fundum* may have been issued around March 1838.³⁸ As in many of the *Sketches by Boz*, the unnamed city is merely “the Metropolis.” As in Dickens's imagery, humans appear to be machines (“locomotive engines”), and the inanimate is animated (“impertinent” gas). This long and highly paratactic opening concludes with a stagecoach, associated, as it was for Dickens, with speed, and the conveyance, like the sentence, finally arrives at a Pickwickian inn with a cheerful name, the “Bell Inn.” *Pickwick* itself was named for Moses Pickwick, a coach proprietor who later owned an inn.³⁹ In the thirty-one pages that follow, *Magnum-Fundum* continues to echo *Pickwick* in terms of style, an emphasis on conviviality (read: “drunkenness”), and a focus on Dickens's singular fixations.

Indeed, *Magnum-Fundum* cannily, or uncannily, identifies some of Dickens's more subterranean elements. For instance, the protagonist, Matthew Magnumfundum, has “a timber leg”; countless jokes and pratfalls follow as a result (p. 1). As John Carey argues, “Dickens' most popular lifeless bit is the wooden leg, about which he has a positive obsession.”⁴⁰ Although this obsession becomes manifest only in the later novels, Carey points out that the wooden-leg bit appears in one of Dickens's earliest extant letters. “I am quite ashamed I have not returned your Leg,” writes the young Dickens, using a slang term for “lexicon.” “I suppose all this time you have had a *wooden leg*.”⁴¹ Anny Sadrin agrees that Dickens is drawn to “fragmented people.”⁴² In *Magnum-Fundum*, the hero, rather than walking, “stumped up towards the platform” (p. 3). On one occasion he removes his prosthesis and uses it as a gavel; on another “he seemed to forget that one of his legs was born in the forests of America” (p. 9). Nor is Matthew Magnumfundum alone in his disability: “forty or fifty wooden-legged sons of Neptune” stump into a tavern (p. 20).

More surprising is *Magnum-Fundum*'s attention to one of Dickens's closest-held obsessions: Warren's Blacking, where he

was employed for a time after his twelfth birthday. Mary Teresa McGowan argues that knowledge of this incident is "based on later biographical information" unavailable to readers (and writers) in 1838.⁴³ But it appears in *Magnum-Fundum* nonetheless. A character named Mr. Jinglescansion, derived from *Pickwick's* Mr. Jingle, is a "verse manufacturer to Warren and Co., Strand" (p. 5). As Rosemarie Bodenheimer observes, "sly references to poets who wrote for Warren's Blacking crop up frequently in Dickens's early works."⁴⁴ Jinglescansion, who is more a poet than a confidence-man like his near namesake, sings a sample of his versification: "Say it shines like a tub / Of Warren's jet blacking" (p. 7). In another instance, Mr. Slosqsquosh sings "some of those elegant stanzas inserted in the Morning Chronicle by Warren and Co., 30, Strand" (p. 5). This last is a double Dickens reference: both to Warren's, where Dickens worked as a child, and to the *Morning Chronicle*, where he worked as an adult. Douglas-Fairhurst points out that in fact "there were two 'Warren's' warehouses within shouting distance of each other."⁴⁵ Dickens labored at the *other* one, the plagiarist, with the imitative address: Warren's Blacking, 30, Hungerford Stairs, Strand. Regardless, McGowan insists that these references "cannot be other than accidental."⁴⁶ Yet it is possible that *Pickwick* was so potent to its earliest readers that they intuited some of Dickens's secrets.

While the *Pickwick* phenomenon was intense, *Oliver Twist* and subsequent Dickens novels also met with a fair share of imitation. The available sample of Dickens material grew, and his successors were able to judge with greater acuity that which is Dickensian. In some ways, derivations of *Nicholas Nickleby* are more instructive, in part because it "consolidate[s] the most impressive qualities of the two novels that preceded it."⁴⁷ The most audacious *Nickleby* variant is *Nickelas Nickelbery. Containing the Adventures, Misadventures, Chances, Mis-chances, Fortunes, Mis-fortunes, Mysteries, Mis-eries, and Mis-cellaneous Manœuvres of the Family of Nickelbery*. According to its title page, the work was "Edited by 'Bos,'" a penname used by Thomas Peckett Prest.⁴⁸ Like *Magnum-Fundum*, *Nickelas Nickelbery* was issued as an eight-page penny weekly, from 1838 to 1839.

In a moment that is perhaps unprecedented in the annals of imitation, Bos's first weekly number of *Nickelas Nickelbery* appeared on the same exact day as the first monthly number of *Nicholas Nickleby*, 31 March 1838 (the second anniversary of *Pickwick*). As a result, for at least eight pages, Prest was compelled to plagiarize a work that he had not yet read. Louis James finds that

“‘Bos’ clearly did not know what he was imitating,” and Michael Slater agrees that the author was “forced to pad out his pages as best he could.”⁴⁹ By the second and third weekly numbers, Bos caught up to Boz, and the resulting narrative is, for James, “the closest of the Dickens plagiarisms up to this date.”⁵⁰ Reaching a somewhat expedited conclusion on page 342, *Nickelas Nickelbery* accounts for only half of Dickens’s narrative. It is therefore a *Nicholas Nickleby* without the Cheeryble brothers (“these pot-bellied Sir Charles Grandisons of the ledger and day-book”) and without the tepid love affairs enjoyed by the hero and heroine.⁵¹

Nickelas Nickelbery is not quite a piracy, and it is not quite a plagiarism, which makes it representative of the formal instability mentioned earlier. Fred G. Kitton describes it as “parodying the whole of the story and characters under very slightly altered names”; readers meet Whackem Speres, Mr. Crumples, Miss Cragg, and Snikes.⁵² Bos is careful to paraphrase Dickens’s text, as if wary of committing wholesale plagiarism. To cite one of many examples, Boz’s Nicholas “threw himself on the bed, and turning his face to the wall, gave free vent to the emotions he had so long stifled”; Bos’s Nickelas “threw himself upon his coarse pallet, and burying his face in his hands, gave free indulgence to the violence of his agitation.”⁵³ Bos is typical here of imitative Dickensians, with a use of multisyllabic words: “upon” for “on,” “pallet” for “bed,” “indulgence” for “vent.” Also, the addition of “coarse” and “violence” color the original scene: a sullen moment in *Nicholas Nickleby* is made more so, its condition worsened and made manifest.

Despite the ineptitude and occasional errors in Bos’s book, *Nickelas Nickelbery* proves a subtle text as well. It captures the willful innocence of Dickens’s narrative voice, its insistence on not knowing. For example, when *Nickelas Nickelbery*’s Whackem Speres returns from a tavern, “he was according to custom so mysteriously excited” (p. 125).⁵⁴ Further, Bos’s text illuminates Dickensian motifs, such as “a repeated undercurrent or fear of cannibalism.”⁵⁵ The unfortunate pupils at Ruminby Lodge, Bos’s version of Dotheboys Hall, are described as so malnourished that “one cannibal could not have found meat sufficient upon all their bones to make him a luncheon” (p. 86). But Dickensian is more than a motif; it is a mode of perception.⁵⁶ By reading Dickens carefully, Bos, like Bret Harte some years later, “observes with a Dickensian eye.” *Nickelas Nickelbery* illuminates absences and fills some gaps in Dickens’s work. For instance, in *Nicholas Nickleby*, the landlord at the tavern near Portsmouth is not described. But in Bos’s version, the landlord “was a dingy, red-nosed looking

man, and was contemplating a number of hieroglyphics in chalk behind the door and rubbing his hands in a thoughtful manner" (p. 244). This landlord sounds very much like a Dickens type, and the "hieroglyphics" evoke the not-knowing perspective of his narratives in that a text appears illegible. What is more, like Fagin, Miss Knag, and Quilp, the landlord occupies himself by "rubbing his hands."

Bos is also alert to the structuring principles of Dickens's narratives. In the sixth weekly number of *Nickelas Nickelbery*, published after only two monthly parts of *Nicholas Nickleby* had appeared, Nickelas is introduced by his uncle, Roger, to the Yorkshire schoolmaster, Speres. Outside, Nickelas soliloquizes that his uncle "certainly must have some secret on his mind, and with which I am in some manner connected" (p. 44). One page later, Speres comments, "The boy grows amazingly!" to which Roger replies, "Hush!" (p. 45). Bos, at this early stage, intuited a connection among Ralph Nickleby, his nephew, the schoolmaster, and an unnamed boy. As Dickens planned his novels with greater care, hidden connectivity became increasingly important, such as the revelation that Smike is Ralph Nickleby's son. However, Bos's conjectures are not infallible. At the end of his narrative, he reveals that Snikes is not Roger's son but rather the victim of his treachery.

Scenes from the Life of Nickleby Married, in contrast, benefited from the completion of Dickens's serial. Published in 1840, in 6d. parts with imitative green wrappers, *Nickleby Married* is the work of "Guess"—alerting us to the possibility that it is anyone's guess—and the illustrations are credited to "Quiz," recalling Dickens's frequent collaborator Hablot Knight Browne, known as "Phiz." In the book's preface, the author claims that a "friend" proffered the notion of producing a sequel to *Nicholas Nickleby*. "I liked the idea, and as the mine had been abandoned by the discoverer, I conceived that it lay fairly open to any person who might feel the inclination to work it."⁵⁷ This image suggests that Dickens's novel is a natural resource and transforms the book into something like the "Transactions of the Pickwick Club," from which more than one narrative can be drawn. The process here resembles Marjorie Garber's "sequel-effect," by which the ontology of a text is changed by the appearance of a successor; the earlier text is now designated "the original."⁵⁸ Yet the narrative that follows this preface is something of a misnomer: there are almost no scenes from the life of Nickleby married.

Like *Magnum-Fundum* and *Nickelas Nickelbery*, *Nickleby Married* imitates Dickens at the stylistic level. Guess employs *periphrasis*—a lawyer is described as “an aspirant to the dignity of that learned profession, of which a member eats his way to the bench” (p. 337)—but he excels at *occultatio*: “It would be useless to enumerate the good things that were said or eaten on that night” (p. 15).⁵⁹ Later, an entire scene is rendered through that which the narrator does not describe: “We mean not to dwell upon the rarity of the viands or the excellence of the wines, nor to relate how Pyke after dinner, in the paroxysm of a champagne fever, kissed Miss Pullman, and how Miss Pullman was so indignant that she said nothing about it ... These and numerous other little incidents, which varied the amusements of the party until the London steamer again lay alongside Hungerford Stairs at ten o’clock at night, we leave to the imagination of the affable and ingenious reader” (pp. 396–7). This Dickensian passage naturally terminates at a Dickensian address: Hungerford Stairs, where Dickens worked at Warren’s Blacking warehouse as a child.

Indeed, *Nickleby Married* assimilates more than Dickens’s style; it also seems to capture some of his obsessions and anxieties. Adelina Gambroon is the nouveau-riche widow of a tailor. With her new paramour, Sir Mulberry Hawk, and other elegant companions, she enjoys a pleasure outing, in which she suddenly re-encounters friends from her plebeian past—namely, the Kenwigs family and Mr. Lillyvick, gorging themselves in a picnic. Her discomfort evokes that of the Lord Mayor elect in *Master Humphrey’s Clock* when he receives a visit from Joe Toddyhigh: the past returns when it is least convenient. Sir Mulberry’s faction enjoys the widow’s embarrassment as if it were a performance: “Pyke and the others, nearly smothered by endeavouring to suppress their mirth, were stuffing their pocket-handkerchiefs down their throats” (p. 393). Mrs. Gambroon extracts herself and drags Sir Mulberry away “until they had fairly got out of sight and hearing of her humble friends” (p. 395). “Panting from loss of breath and ready to sink with shame, Mrs. Gambroon made some sort of a confused apology to her aristocratic friends”; she confesses, “I have befriended these poor people as far as I could, and now they’re so grateful that its [*sic*] quite distressing” (p. 396). Like the Lord Mayor elect, Mrs. Gambroon has ascended the social heights only to be rudely reminded of her roots.

Other characters in *Nickleby Married* also experience Dickensian revenants or reveries. Newman Noggs might seem a surprising contender for a Dickens stand-in, except that he is an iteration

of the hero, that other N. N., Nicholas Nickleby. The misfortune of Newman, once a gentleman and now a new man, anticipates that of Nicholas, the son of a gentleman but compelled to work. Robert L. Patten insists that Newman's "history is absolutely crucial to *Nickleby*."⁶⁰ In *Nickleby Married*, Newman indulges in Dickens's pastime of walking the city at night. Newman "felt a strange pleasure in gliding into Golden Square after dusk, and standing opposite the house where Ralph Nickleby resided, and recalling the scenes he had there witnessed" (p. 203). The house, now unoccupied, is thought to be haunted. Newman, in this instance, becomes a ghost himself, haunting his past. He finds the brass plate with Nickleby's name "corroded by time" (p. 205)—an image that suggests the loss of identity, tantamount to Bos or Guess effacing the name of Boz. Compulsively, Newman polishes the plate "as if it had been his daily employment for the last twenty years" (p. 205). Newman is then compelled to enter the house by the serial novelist's stock-in-trade, "curiosity" (p. 205).

He glances at an unfinished letter on Ralph's desk, and the novel suddenly anticipates Dickens's autobiographical fragment, with its recollection of the blacking warehouse: "even now, famous and caressed and happy, I often forget in my dreams that I have a dear wife and children; even that I am a man; and wander desolately back to that time of my life."⁶¹ Here is *Nickleby Married*: "As Newman examined at the window the well-known characters, he could with difficulty persuade himself that the events of the last ten years had not been a dream—that he was not still the broken-down drudge of the usurer" (p. 208). This author so completely absorbs his source that he foreshadows something that Dickens had yet to write. Newman then explores the rest of the house with a "candle stuck in an empty blacking bottle" (p. 209)—the perfect Dickensian light source.⁶²

CHARLES DICKENS, RESPONDENT

Mid-nineteenth-century copyright law offered no protection against such creative interventions: any enterprising author could compose his or her own *Pickwick*, *Oliver Twist*, or *Nicholas Nickleby*. To an extent that has yet to be fully explored, the advent of these imitators altered the direction of Dickens's career and imprinted themselves in his fiction, as early as *Oliver Twist*. Monica F. Cohen investigates some of this terrain in a recent article, "Making Piracy Pay: Fagin and Contested Authorship in Victorian Print Culture." She finds in Fagin "a figuration of the

nineteenth-century literary pirate” and observes that “this struggle for Oliver’s soul occurs as a struggle for controlling the ownership of his story.”⁶³ Similar observations appear in Patten’s *Charles Dickens and “Boz”: The Birth of the Industrial-Age Author*. In Patten’s reading of *Oliver Twist*, literature and theft intertwine, and Oliver “experience[s] what it is like to be an author plagiarized.”⁶⁴ Yet neither Cohen nor Patten situates *Oliver Twist* in the larger context of the Pickwick phenomenon.

The first theatrical productions based on *Pickwick* premiered in London on 27 March and 3 April 1837.⁶⁵ In the May 1837 installment of *Oliver Twist*, written during the month of April, Oliver first encounters the criminal-world figures of Jack Dawkins (a.k.a. the Artful Dodger) and Fagin. This might be a coincidence, but the fact remains that just as Dickens’s narrative was pilfered by hack playwrights, he plunged little Oliver into a den of thieves. Furthermore, weekly numbers of Bos’s *The Penny Pickwick* first appeared in or around May 1837. Chapman and Hall, the publishers of *Pickwick*, attempted to restrain publication but failed on 8 June 1837.⁶⁶ It is in the next installment of *Oliver Twist* (July 1837), possibly written during that same month of June, that Mr. Brownlow is robbed of his pocket handkerchief and Oliver arrested for the theft. Brownlow first appears “in a bottle-green coat with a black velvet collar, and white trousers.”⁶⁷ In other words, his color scheme is that of the monthly parts of *Pickwick*: green wrappers, black ink, and white pages. Naturally, Brownlow is robbed at a bookstall while he intensely peruses a volume; he even manages to steal the book in an act of absentmindedness.

In short, just as Dickens’s first great triumph was poached by unscrupulous authors of the day, he generated a narrative about thieves, loss of identity, and the struggle among a group of father-figures/authors—Bumble, Fagin, Brownlow, Monks, and, to a lesser extent, Gamfield and Sowerberry—to determine the fate of the legal entity known as Oliver Twist (and perhaps *Oliver Twist*). Further, the handkerchief stolen from Mr. Brownlow is the perfect image for the plagiaristic process: a sheet pilfered from someone is then unwritten; “the marks shall be picked out with a needle,” Fagin explains.⁶⁸ Once the author’s autograph—or monogram—is effaced, the sheet can be sold afresh. In this manner, an imitating author can unwrite Dickens’s narrative and market it as something new. Cohen notes the handkerchief motif in one of Dickens’s earliest brushes with piracy: when his story “The Bloomsbury Christening,” published in April 1834, was exploited six months later as a stage farce, now titled *The Christening*,

Dickens lamented, "my handkerchief is gone."⁶⁹ John O. Jordan, in "The Purloined Handkerchief," proposes a similar analogy: "I believe that the idea of the handkerchief as a printed document or text is implicit in the novel."⁷⁰ Further, Jordan states that Oliver is himself "a purloined handkerchief circulating through the text."⁷¹ Thus, *Oliver Twist*, like *Oliver Twist*, is an article of property on which others can indite their own texts. As an orphan, Oliver is disinherited—that is, alienated from his name and birthright, like a piece of literary property divested from its author and progenitor.

If the issue of plagiarism is encoded in *Oliver Twist*, then it became explicit with the publication of *Nicholas Nickleby*. In the *Nickleby Proclamation*, of 28 February 1838, Boz complains that "some dishonest dullards, resident in the by-streets and cellars of this town, impose upon the unwary and credulous, by producing cheap and wretched imitations of our delectable Works."⁷² It is unclear how many credulous nineteenth-century book buyers actually purchased a faux-Dickens by mistake. As freestanding penny publications, *Oliver Twiss* and *Nickelas Nickelbery*, for example, did not command much comment in the press. Yet in one newspaper, the former is wrongly attributed to Dickens: Boz is called the "author of the celebrated Pickwick Papers, life of Oliver Twiss, and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby."⁷³ Another newspaper refers to "the sinister leer and whine of 'Old Fagin' the Jew, in 'Oliver Twiss.'"⁷⁴ Yet in Bos's *Oliver Twiss*, the equivalent character is named Solomons.⁷⁵ These instances may represent typographical errors, but they could indicate misattribution—a blurring between Dickens and not-Dickens. In the pages of *Nicholas Nickleby*, the author directs his fury at one target in particular, the playwright William T. Moncrieff. The fifteenth monthly number (June 1839) chastises "a literary gentleman ... who had dramatised in his time two hundred and forty-seven novels as fast as they had come out—some of them faster than they had come out."⁷⁶ Moncrieff, unlike Bos, guessed Smike's parentage and revealed it prematurely.⁷⁷

Because Dickens's "delectable Works" proved so imitable, the author found it necessary to twist or swivel away from his competitors. The year 1839 marked a transition. Both *Pickwick Abroad* and Bos's *Oliver Twiss* were published in volume form; thus, ephemeral imitations earned the distinction of bound books. In July, Dickens proposed a new work that would defy his imitators. Recalling the neglected club frame from *Pickwick*, he imagined "a little club or knot of characters" that would gather around a clock case, a literal magazine or storehouse holding

manuscripts. Dickens planned to “reintroduce Mr. Pickwick and Sam Weller,” to spite the Pickwickian pretenders and to show that he alone knew how to animate these beloved characters.⁷⁸ Patten suggests that the new serial’s mode of weekly publication was designed to outpace any imitating “play, parody, or sequel.”⁷⁹ With *Master Humphrey’s Clock*, which began publication in April 1840, Dickens splits the narration into multiples: Master Humphrey and his friends will each, in turn, read a manuscript to the club. So in place of a single authorial voice, there is a form of multiple authorship—more for a bold plagiarist to master. In a letter to illustrator George Cattermole, Dickens makes his intentions clear: “my object being to baffle the imitators and make it as novel as possible” (although perhaps not a novel).⁸⁰ He demands secrecy from his correspondent, otherwise “there would be fifty Humphreys in the field.”⁸¹

McGowan concedes that Dickens “has all the plagiarists generally in mind,” but this does not go far enough.⁸² *Master Humphrey’s Clock* was Dickens’s revenge. Within the text, Master Humphrey’s club is imitated by “Mr. Weller’s Watch,” a collection of servants who replicate the tale-telling evenings of their masters. In the fifth weekly number, Samuel Pickwick enters the new serial; many readers assumed that this marked a failure of invention. John Ruskin asked a correspondent, “Can it be possible that this man is so soon run dry?”⁸³ The *Monthly Review* argued that characters from *Pickwick* emerged in *Master Humphrey’s Clock* “in order to save that new work from absolute ruin.”⁸⁴ Yet the plan to reintroduce *Pickwick* characters was there from the start. Samuel Pickwick’s first appearance, as described by the narrator, Master Humphrey, clarifies the rhetorical point: “I condoled with him upon the various libels on his character which had found their way into print. Mr. Pickwick shook his head and for a moment looked very indignant, but smiling again directly, added that no doubt I was acquainted with Cervantes’ introduction to the second part of *Don Quixote*, and that it fully expressed his sentiments on the subject.”⁸⁵ These “libels” are publications that wrested Samuel Pickwick into imitative narratives or allographic sequels. Cervantes also suffered the theft of his literary property, to which part 2 of *Don Quixote* was in part a response, as Genette explains: “we owe the continuation written by Cervantes himself to the counterfeit one by Avellaneda.”⁸⁶

But the most inspired attack on the plagiarists to appear in *Master Humphrey’s Clock* comes in the shape of little Tony Weller, grandson to the coachman. This infant phenomenon pretends to

smoke and drink, and he "actually winked upon the housekeeper with his infant eye, in imitation of his grandfather."⁸⁷ Like a professional impersonator, Tony can perform different figures. His grandfather boasts, "He's even gone so far as to put on a pair o' paper spectacles ... and walk up and down the garden with his hands behind him in imitation of Mr. Pickwick."⁸⁸ Paper spectacles make a telling detail: Tony sees through paper, as does an imitating author.

If Dickens thought that the form of *Master Humphrey's Clock* was one that no other writer could—or would want to—emulate, he was deceived. George Reynolds offered *Master Timothy's Book-Case*, and Frederic Fox Cooper dramatized the new serial in May 1840. Bos's contribution is *Mister Humfries' Clock*. The highlight is the grandson to Ephraim Veller, "little Ephy," who imitates his grandsire by "drinking an' smokin' as nat'ral, as if he had been hinockylated for 'em," according to the elder Ephraim. "Now ain't Eppy grand-daddy!" cries the child: an imitation of an imitation.⁸⁹

"Dickens is one of those writers who are well worth stealing"—so claims George Orwell.⁹⁰ As I have shown, early imitations of Dickens's novels illuminate that which is Dickensian—stylistic, formal, even subterranean elements. These strange and rarely read works improve our understanding of one of the nineteenth century's foremost figures. Of course, Dickens himself could hardly relish the phenomenon. Powerless against the legal free-for-all, he threatened the pirates, redirected his narratives, and altered his modes of publication. Yet in *Nicholas Nickleby*, there appears the possibility of solace. The protagonist gains employment with the Cheeryble brothers and assists Tim Linkinwater, who both generates and treasures the firm's books, which he has kept with meticulous care for nearly forty-four years. Tim observes that Nicholas excels at imitation: "His capital B's and D's are exactly like mine."⁹¹ Encouraged by the advent of this literary clone, Tim is pleased that his life's work will somehow survive him, and he imagines his own posthumous papers with a bit of verbal repetition: "The business will go on when I'm dead as well as it did when I was alive—just the same; and I shall have the satisfaction of knowing that there never were such books—never were such books!"⁹²

NOTES

¹ Charles Dickens, *Nicholas Nickleby*, ed. Mark Ford (London: Penguin Books, 1999), p. 449.

² Review of *The Complete Works of Bret Harte*, *Athenæum* 2786 (19 March 1881): 390–1, 390. Bret Harte's parodies include "The Haunted Man," attributed to "Ch-l-s D-k-ns."

³ *OED*, 2d edn., s.v. "Dickensian."

⁴ "Master Humphrey's Turnip, a Chimney Corner Crotchet," *Town* (23 May 1840): 1245.

⁵ For recent discussions of "Dickensian," see John Gardiner, "The Dickensian and Us," *History Workshop Journal* 51 (Spring 2001): 226–37; and Juliet John, *Dickens and Mass Culture* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2010). *Dickensian* is also the title of a BBC television series, which aired from 2015 to 2016.

⁶ John Sutherland, *Victorian Fiction: Writers, Publishers, Readers*, rev. edn. (Basingstoke UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), p. 90.

⁷ "The Periodicals for August," *Morning Post* 21, 285 (8 August 1839), qtd. in Kathryn Chittick, *Dickens and the 1830s* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1990), p. 135.

⁸ The phrase "Pickwick phenomenon" appears in John Bowen, *Other Dickens: Pickwick to Chuzzlewit* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2003), p. 48n13.

⁹ Dickens to Richard Bentley, Doughty Street, [? Early January 1838], in *The Letters of Charles Dickens*, ed. Madeline House, Graham Storey, and Kathleen Tillotson, 12 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965–2002), 1:350–1, 350.

¹⁰ Robert Douglas-Fairhurst, *Becoming Dickens: The Invention of a Novelist* (Cambridge MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 2011), p. 308.

¹¹ G. K. Chesterton, *Charles Dickens* (London: Methuen, 1960), p. 66.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Steven Marcus, *Dickens from Pickwick to Dombey* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1968), p. 91.

¹⁴ Dickens, *The Old Curiosity Shop*, ed. Elizabeth M. Brennan (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1998), p. 64.

¹⁵ Bowen, p. 132.

¹⁶ Dickens, *Old Curiosity Shop*, p. 30. Some early Dickens novels forecast later ones as well. A theatrical fellow in *Martin Chuzzlewit* boasts, "Pip's our mutual friend" (Dickens, *The Life and Adventures of Martin Chuzzlewit*, ed. P. N. Furbank [New York: Penguin Books, 1995], p. 520).

¹⁷ "Charles Dickens in Chancery," *Dickensian* 10, 8 (August 1914): 216–7, 216.

¹⁸ Processes that might overlap with some of the forms mentioned include influence, mimesis, mimicry, impersonation, and translation. Harold Bloom's six revisionary ratios could also join the list (see *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* [New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1973]).

¹⁹ Gérard Genette, *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*, trans. Channa Newman and Claude Doubinsky (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1997).

²⁰ Robert Macfarlane, *Original Copy: Plagiarism and Originality in Nineteenth-Century Literature* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2007), p. 6.

²¹ Macfarlane, p. 39.

²² Sutherland, p. 92.

²³ H. M. Paull, *Literary Ethics: A Study in the Growth of the Literary Conscience* (London: Thornton Butterworth, 1928), p. 103.

²⁴ Walter Scott, qtd. in Brander Matthews, *Pen and Ink: Papers on Subjects of More or Less Importance*, 3d edn. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1902), p. 25.

²⁵ Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Quotation and Originality," in *Ralph Waldo Emerson*, ed. Richard Poirier (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1990), pp. 427–39, 427.

²⁶ Genette, p. 9.

²⁷ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven F. Rendall (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1988), p. 174.

²⁸ Michael Ryan Moore, "Adaptation and New Media," *Adaptation* 3, 2 (August 2010): 179–92, 183.

²⁹ [Edward Young], *Conjectures on Original Composition. In a Letter to the Author of Sir Charles Grandison* (London: Printed for A. Miller, 1759), pp. 17 and 68.

³⁰ Joel Weinsheimer, "Conjectures on Unoriginal Composition," in "A Special Issue on Translation," special issue, *ECent* 22, 1 (Winter 1981): 58–73, 66.

³¹ Edgar Johnson, *Charles Dickens: His Tragedy and Triumph*, 2 vols. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1952), 1:156.

³² For more Pickwickiana, see Louis James, *Fiction for the Working Man, 1830–1850: A Study of the Literature Produced for the Working Classes in Early Victorian Urban England* (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1963), pp. 45–71; Mary Teresa McGowan, "Pickwick and the Pirates: A Study of Some Early Imitations, Dramatisations, and Plagiarisms of *Pickwick Papers*" (Ph.D. diss., Univ. of London, 1975); and Elliot Engel, *Pickwick Papers: An Annotated Bibliography* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1990).

³³ Percy Fitzgerald, *The History of "Pickwick": An Account of Its Characters, Localities, Allusions, and Illustrations* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1891), p. 4.

³⁴ "Literature," *Shipping and Mercantile Gazette* 454 (27 August 1839), qtd. in Chittick, p. 135.

³⁵ Advertisement for *The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club*, *Athenæum* 439 (26 March 1836): 232.

³⁶ *Droll Discussions and Queer Proceedings of the Magnum-Fundum Club* ([1838]), p. 1. Subsequent references to *Magnum-Fundum* are to this edition and will appear parenthetically in the text by page number.

³⁷ Dickens, *The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club*, ed. Robert L. Patten (London: Penguin Books, 1986), p. 67.

³⁸ David M. Bevington, "Seasonal Relevance in *The Pickwick Papers*," *NCF* 16, 3 (December 1961): 219–30, 219.

³⁹ Edwin Pugh, *The Charles Dickens Originals* (New York: AMS Press, 1975), p. 85.

⁴⁰ John Carey, *The Violent Effigy: A Study of Dickens' Imagination*, 2d edn. (London: Faber and Faber, 1991), p. 91.

⁴¹ Dickens to O. P. Thomas, [1825–26], in *Letters*, 1:1.

⁴² Anny Sadrin, "Fragmentation in *The Pickwick Papers*," *DSA* 22 (1993): 21–34, 30.

⁴³ McGowan, p. 493.

⁴⁴ Rosemarie Bodenheimer, *Knowing Dickens* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 2010), p. 68.

⁴⁵ Douglas-Fairhurst, pp. 30–1.

⁴⁶ McGowan, p. 493.

⁴⁷ Marcus, p. 92.

⁴⁸ Bos is also the author of *The Sketch-Book by "Bos," The Penny Pickwick, Pickwick in America, Oliver Twiss, Mister Humfries' Clock, and Barnaby Rudge*. Although anonymous, *Posthumous Papers of the Cadgers' Club* may also be the work of Thomas Peckett Prest.

⁴⁹ James, *Fiction for the Working Man*, p. 63; and Michael Slater, *The Composition and Monthly Publication of Nicholas Nickleby* (Menston UK: Scolar Press, 1973), p. 19.

⁵⁰ James, *Fiction for the Working Man*, p. 64.

⁵¹ "Charles Dickens and His Works," *Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country* 21, 124 (April 1840): 381–400, 396.

⁵² Fred G. Kitton, *Dickensiana: A Bibliography of the Literature Relating to Charles Dickens and His Writings* (London: George Redway, 1886), p. 392.

⁵³ Dickens, *Nicholas Nickleby*, pp. 250–1; [Prest], *Nickelas Nickelbery. Containing the Adventures, Mis-adventures, Chances, Mis-chances, Fortunes, Mis-fortunes, Mys-teries, Mis-eries, and Mis-cellaneous Manœuvres of the Family of Nickelbery* (London: E. Lloyd [sic], [1838–39]), p. 235. Subsequent references to *Nickelas Nickelbery* are to this edition and will appear parenthetically in the text by page number.

⁵⁴ Compare Dickens: "Mr Squeers got down at almost every stage—to stretch his legs as he said, and as he always came back from such excursions with a very red nose, and composed himself to sleep directly, there is reason to suppose that he derived great benefit from the process" (*Nicholas Nickleby*, p. 64). For more on the not-knowing perspective of Dickens's narration, see Bodenheimer, esp. pp. 1–19.

⁵⁵ Bowen, p. 90. See also Harry Stone, *The Night Side of Dickens: Cannibalism, Passion, Necessity* (Columbus: Ohio State Univ. Press, 1994), esp. pp. 81–3.

⁵⁶ According to Genette, Marcel Proust's view is that "the great artist is the man capable of an original vision and capable too of imposing that vision (little by little) upon his public" (p. 106).

⁵⁷ *Scenes from the Life of Nickleby Married* (London: John Williams, 1840), p. iii. Subsequent references to *Nickleby Married* are to this edition and will appear parenthetically in the text by page number.

⁵⁸ Marjorie Garber, *Quotation Marks* (New York: Routledge, 2003), p. 78.

⁵⁹ For *periphrasis*, see James, "Pickwick in America!," *DSA* 1 (1970): 65–80, 76; and Sadrin, p. 27. For *occultatio*, see Matthew Bevis, *The Art of Eloquence: Byron, Dickens, Tennyson, Joyce* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2007), p. 89; and Jon Mee, *The Cambridge Introduction to Charles Dickens* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2010), p. 33. The term *occultatio* overlaps with *apophrasis* and *paralipsis* (a.k.a., *paralepsis*).

⁶⁰ Patten, *Charles Dickens and "Boz": The Birth of the Industrial-Age Author* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2012), p. 223.

⁶¹ Dickens, qtd. in John Forster, *The Life of Charles Dickens*, 3 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2011), 1:33.

⁶² This image also appears in [Prest], *The Life and Adventures of Oliver Twiss, the Workhouse Boy* (London: E. Lloyd, [1837–39]): "A candle, stuck in an empty blacking bottle gave them light" (p. 129).

⁶³Monica F. Cohen, "Making Piracy Pay: Fagin and Contested Authorship in Victorian Print Culture," *DSA* 44 (2013): 43–54, 44.

⁶⁴Patten, *Charles Dickens and "Boz,"* p. 173.

⁶⁵See H. Philip Bolton, *Dickens Dramatized* (London: Mansell, 1987), p. 75.

⁶⁶See "Vice-Chancellor's Court, Thursday, June 8. Chapman and Hall v Lloyd," *Times* (London), 9 June 1837, p. 7.

⁶⁷Dickens, *Oliver Twist, or, the Parish Boy's Progress*, ed. Philip Horne (London: Penguin Books, 2003), p. 74.

⁶⁸Dickens, *Oliver Twist*, p. 70.

⁶⁹Dickens to the Editor of the *Monthly Magazine*, [October 1834], in *Letters*, 1:42. See also Cohen, p. 50.

⁷⁰John O. Jordan, "The Purloined Handkerchief," *DSA* 18 (1989): 1–17, 6.

⁷¹Jordan, p. 12.

⁷²"Appendix I: *The Nickleby Proclamation*," in *Nicholas Nickleby*, by Dickens, pp. 779–82, 780–1.

⁷³"Literature and the Fine Arts," *Bristol Mercury*, 7 July 1838.

⁷⁴"Corn Law Repeal Humbug," *Northern Liberator*, 9 March 1839.

⁷⁵The name is probably borrowed from Ikey Solomons, a real-life underworld figure who may have inspired Dickens's fence. There is also no Fagin character in the other *Oliver Twiss*, edited by Poz (*Oliver Twiss, the Workhouse Boy* [London: James Pattie, 1838]).

⁷⁶Dickens, *Nicholas Nickleby*, p. 597.

⁷⁷William T. Moncrieff's play *Nickleby and Poor Smike; or, the Victim of the Yorkshire School* opened on 20 May 1839, well before *Nickleby's* final double number appeared on 30 September.

⁷⁸Dickens to John Forster, Petersham, [14 July 1839], in *Letters*, 1:562–5, 563.

⁷⁹Patten, *Charles Dickens and "Boz,"* p. 243.

⁸⁰Dickens to George Cattermole, 1 Devonshire Terrace, 13 January 1840, in *Letters*, 2:7–9, 7.

⁸¹Dickens to Cattermole, in *Letters*, 2:9.

⁸²McGowan, p. 435.

⁸³John Ruskin to W. H. Harrison, 6 June 1841, in *Dickens: The Critical Heritage*, ed. Philip Collins (London: Routledge, 1971), pp. 100–1, 100.

⁸⁴"Art. VIII.—*Charles O'Malley, the Irish Dragoon*," *Monthly Review* 2, 3 (July 1840): 398–411, 399.

⁸⁵Dickens, *Master Humphrey's Clock* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1840–41), p. 51.

⁸⁶Genette, p. 206. Alonso Fernández de Avellaneda's spurious sequel appeared in 1614.

⁸⁷Dickens, *Master Humphrey's Clock*, p. 129.

⁸⁸Dickens, *Master Humphrey's Clock*, p. 132.

⁸⁹[Prest], *Mister Humfries' Clock* (London: E. Lloyd, 1840), p. 63. This is the title of both the weekly issue and the volume edition. The work was also packaged as a monthly serial under the title *Mister Humfrie's Clock*.

⁹⁰George Orwell, "Charles Dickens," in *A Collection of Essays* (San Diego: Harcourt, 1981), pp. 48–104, 48.

⁹¹Dickens, *Nicholas Nickleby*, p. 449.

⁹²*Ibid.*