

The Pickwick Papers and “Sam Weller’s Scrap Sheet”: The Making of a Print-Neutral Public

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“Ah,” said Mr. Spangle, “paper has been my ruin.”
“A stationer, I presume, Sir?” said Mr. Pickwick, innocently.
“Stationer! No, no; confound and curse me! – not so low as that. No trade.
When I say paper, I mean bills.”
“Oh, you use the word in that sense. I see,” said Mr. Pickwick.
Charles Dickens, *The Pickwick Papers* (1836–37)

IN the June 1837 installment of Charles Dickens’s *The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club* (1836–37), Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Spangle confront the alterity of paper. Acknowledging different “senses” of the word, they define paper interchangeably as the material stock of a stationer and as a metonym for debt. The varied associations signify Pickwick and Spangle’s different professions, class backgrounds, and cultural experiences, but, as their shared certitude reflects, paper held a profound and pervasive significance that permits an easy exchange of associations between the two men. This exchange is particularly striking given the titular prominence of paper in *Pickwick*, itself a fictive amalgamation of papers supposed to be edited by “Boz.” Today, *Pickwick*’s significance within Victorian print culture is well understood: it is the vehicle that is supposed to have “democratized fiction” due to its unprecedented success among disparate social classes.¹ Pickwick and Spangle’s exchange should remind us, however, that the installments first circulated among varied print cultures, each with considerably different relationships to the material, form, and medium of fiction.² During a period of intense debate over the advantages and limitations of a burgeoning print public, *Pickwick* defines its assorted papers in conspicuously ambiguous terms.

As criticism seeks to better understand Dickens’s dynamic relationship to the shifting configurations of Victorian print culture, it has benefited from historically specific analyses of the print communities with

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which he commingled. Gregory Vargo and Mary Shannon have, for example, persuasively argued that Dickens's writing in the 1830s maintained a close and sometimes contentious engagement with radical writers. They illustrate that newly intersecting print networks in early Victorian London fueled cultural tensions while also allowing authors and editors to "represent their occupations as a coherent body of work."³ Others turn away from Dickens's authorship and toward down-market responses to his early fictions. Adam Abraham, Carrie Sickmann Han, and Kristen Starkowski, among others, have studied the many low-cost *Pickwick* parodies and sequels to persuasively argue for the critical readings of *Pickwick* that these publications circulate. These studies model a methodology that, as Claire Pettitt has recently argued, is crucial to understanding the origins of serial fiction itself. She insists on "the importance of unregarded and cheap ephemera in the early decades of the nineteenth century, particularly of illustrated materials," in order to understand a wider range of responses to the cultural, intellectual, and social work of serialization.⁴ The present discussion applies the significant insight that ephemera offers into print cultural transitions with its focus on "Sam Weller's Scrap Sheet." Though the "Scrap Sheet," a broadsheet first published in 1837 by John Cleave, remains undiscussed within *Pickwick* reception histories, it provides a compelling response to *Pickwick's* representation of contemporary print cultures. If *Pickwick* constructed the foundations of a unified reading public, then "Sam Weller's Scrap Sheet" recalls the tense grounds on which this foundation was built.

The "Scrap Sheet" disambiguates *Pickwick's* fictional collected papers into a distinctly working-class form and genre. It appears to undermine the print cultural union represented by *Pickwick's* narrative framework, that is, episodes recounted via the assorted documents supposed to be collected by the Pickwick Club during their travels across Britain. An underexamined correlate to this framework is that, in the editorial guise of "Boz," Dickens renders heterogeneous genres—periodicals, essays, letters, manuscript books, ballads, commercial valentines, and more—on a uniform material, the printed paper of the serial. As such, *Pickwick* circulates an idea of early Victorian print culture as the shared access to a wide variety of texts. By contrast, the "Scrap Sheet" insists on preserving the material cultures and contexts in which print is produced, circulated, and used. The "Scrap Sheet" and *Pickwick* extend disputes over the emergence of a fixed and stable print culture into Victorian contexts. As Adrian Johns writes of Enlightenment print,

print culture is itself constructed: it is the “*result* of manifold representations, practices, and conflicts, rather than just the monolithic *cause* [of new print technologies] with which we are often presented.”⁵ In early Victorian Britain, the proliferation of print instigated another “qualitative shift in the identity of print as a medium” as industrial technologies expanded the scope and scale of printed texts.⁶ Together, “Sam Weller’s Scrap Sheet” and *Pickwick* exhibit contending constructions of the “identity of print” during this shift as industrialization gradually separated the raw materials of print from the text that it contained.⁷ By beginning this essay with an analysis of the “Scrap Sheet,” I seek to surface tensions over the material identity of print, which had largely smoothed over by the mid-nineteenth century and are now all but invisible in a reading of *Pickwick* alone. The “Scrap Sheet” suggests the benefits of a more historically situated reading of *Pickwick*’s representation of reading and writing materials: its interpellation of disparate genres constructs the illusion of a unified print culture that, in reality, it helped bring about.

Aside from the new perspective that the “Scrap Sheet” offers on *Pickwick*, the two works’ relationships to print as a material object more broadly confront current methods of studying serial fiction. The contesting identities of print in *Pickwick* and the “Scrap Sheet” nuance what is now a common refrain in Victorian studies: the necessity of reading serial fictions in their original material form.⁸ Somewhat counterintuitively, I suggest that Dickens sought to transcend the raw material of *Pickwick* in order to disassociate material quality from literary value and to construct the illusion of print cultural union. *Pickwick*’s picaresque plot and editorial framework offered an experiment in aggregating disparate information networks—from oral tales to private manuscripts, political newspapers to commercial rhymes, and more—and binding them together to create a cohesive web of information that overrode classifications of value based on who created the information, where it was made, and how it was circulated. On the other hand, the “Scrap Sheet” takes issue with the homogenization of material cultures that this process entails. These contesting relationships to the representation of print inform my concluding discussion, in which I posit the ways that *Pickwick* and the “Scrap Sheet” illuminate debates over digital interfaces’ ability to efface or encode material differences. As the title of this essay suggests, *Pickwick*’s collection of disparate media constructs an early Victorian “print neutral” public—one that presages contemporary net-neutrality debates in its desire to equalize access to an expansive web

of information. In this sense, *Pickwick* and the "Scrap Sheet" parallel ongoing inquiries into the validity of an open, accessible, and democratic information network in reminding us of who and what is at stake when material differences are flattened into a smooth interface.

1. "SAM WELLER'S SCRAP SHEET": REFORMULATING *THE PICKWICK PAPERS*

Between 1837 and 1842, *Pickwick's* popularity among all classes of readers was reinforced by the proliferating market of *Pickwick* adaptations, parodies, sequels, and paraphernalia. "One met *Pickwick* everywhere—one rode in 'Boz' cabs, wore Pickwick coats and hats and smoked Pickwick cigars," writes Louis James.⁹ In addition to commodity goods, *Pickwick's* characters, style, and structure were reproduced in a succession of ephemera, including "jest books, songbooks, extra illustrations, allo-graphic sequels, adaptations, and imitations," as well as in the music hall and theater.¹⁰ Certainly, the wealth of adaptations demonstrates publishers' desire to capitalize on the success of *Pickwick*. There was, John Sutherland writes, "a rather desperate attempt to crack the formula of 'Boz's' success."¹¹ Although Dickens denigrated these works as unlawful plagiarisms, Thomas Peckett Prest and Edward Lloyd countered that their publication, as the popular *Penny Pickwick*, was intended for readers who would otherwise be unfamiliar with *Pickwick*, widening its popularity "at a price consistent with his means."¹² The producers of low-cost fiction were keenly aware that the realities of print production, circulation, and access inhibited any real shared experience of reading. As such, the many *Pickwick* adaptations, imitations, parodies, and sequels suggest that Dickens's popularity was an impulse for print diversification, rather than unification. Opposed to Dickens's own perception of popular culture as a "shared medium" among disparate social classes,¹³ the penny publications make apparent the differences between audience experiences of literary culture.

Sam Weller, the shoeshiner hired by Mr. Pickwick in the fourth installment of *Pickwick*, was a recurrent focus of down-market adaptations. Dickens's Weller was not a folkloric ideal but, rather, stemmed from the language and manners of the semiliterate laboring class in contemporary London.¹⁴ Readings of *Pickwick* frequently point to Weller and Pickwick's friendship as indicative of Dickens's desire to unify divergent class experiences. Their "gradually converging points of view" and "easy, effortless commerce and exchange" permit the possibility of stable class relations.¹⁵ In adaptations and imitations of *Pickwick*, however, Weller tends to

vocalize a specifically working-class point of view that oftentimes spoke at the expense of the middle and upper classes. In the *Penny Pickwick*, for example, Mr. Pickwick is subjected to mockery and insults while Weller is made into the hero of the story. Via Weller's perspective, such adaptations stand to offer "working-class readings of a middle-class text" that oftentimes radically revise the original.¹⁶ The disparities between reading and writing cultures that persisted alongside *Pickwick's* burgeoning popularity ensured that the material form in which *Pickwick* circulated would have carried significant resonance, in addition to its characters, style, and plot. Among its audience were, after all, those who could "for the first time own a book, or at least a portion of one."¹⁷ Turning to "Sam Weller's Scrap Sheet," we will see that the keen attention it pays to the interactive potential of print material, together with the declared intellectual authority of Weller, seeks to confront *Pickwick's* narrative representation of print culture.

In 1837 John Cleave distributed "Sam Weller's Scrap Sheet," a one-penny broadsheet measuring twenty by thirty inches and containing forty separate woodcuts of characters from *The Pickwick Papers*. A short verse, supposed to be written by *Pickwick's* aspiring poet, Augustus Snodgrass, accompanies each character's depiction. In the only extant criticism on the "Scrap Sheet," a short essay published by F. Gordon Roe in *The Bookman* in 1934, Roe notes the illustrations' mix of imitation and invention: "Whereas most of the 'portraits' are clearly after 'Phiz,' some appear to be more or less original conceptions."¹⁸ The images of Pickwick, Weller, Tony Weller, Doctor Slammer, and Mrs. Leo Hunter, for example, mirror the original serial illustrations precisely; images of Mary, Job Trotter, Tracy Tupman, Spangle, and Roker, among others, are based on the serial illustrations but appear to imagine new scenes and expressions; and Mr. Pott, Smorltork, Dodson and Fogg, and Mr. Namby are among those characters newly delineated. The verses, too, add narrative scenes. For example, below the woodcut of Mary, a verse imagines her response to Sam Weller's valentine: "A valentine from Master Sam / I declare the sight of it moves me, / I'd *sweep* his visage from my mind, / But I think the fellow loves me." Based on the images' affinity to Hablot Browne's original plates rather than re-etched versions, Roe posits that the "Scrap Sheet" "was one of the really early plagiarisms of 'Pickwick,' and that it was issued before the latter completed monthly publication in November, 1837."¹⁹ Aside from Roe, scholarly discourse on the "Scrap Sheet" is limited; when it is mentioned, its contexts tend to be misconstrued. In 1879, for example, James Cook included it as

one of two "extra-illustrations of *Pickwick*," and John Podeschi finds that buyers "of this one-penny sheet obviously were able to cut it apart and reassemble a deck of 40 prints of playing-card size."²⁰ Neither of these uses, however, would have been likely among the "Scrap Sheet's" original purchasers.²¹ Its contexts and history remain uncertain in more recent references to the "Scrap Sheet," which vary widely in their assessments of its radical or commercial intent.²² In order to fully understand the relationship between the "Scrap Sheet" and *Pickwick*, it is necessary to consider both the history of scrap sheets in early Victorian London and to engage with Cleave's publishing career.

Scrap sheets emerged as a lucrative publication format in the late 1820s alongside massive cultural shifts in graphic culture. Beginning with George Cruikshank's series of miscellaneous images published between 1828 and 1832, *Scraps and Sketches*, scrap sheets developed into a distinct commercial genre. Broadly defined, scrap sheets "comprised images deliberately produced, either in sheets or as small separate images, in the expectation that they would be cut and reassembled as decorative pages in albums or scrap-books."²³ The content of scrap sheets varied but tended to circulate "small vignettes of a mixed social character: illustrated puns, minicartoons, whimsies of all sorts."²⁴ Scraps were one of several graphic genres that extended the political satire of Regency caricature into a growing middle-class genteel print market, and, according to Brian Maidment's study of the genre, they "offer evidence of a changing marketplace, and a recognition that caricature needed to be reinvented to remain commercially successful."²⁵ Following Cruikshank's success, comic journals, magazines, and annuals increasingly incorporated graphic "scraps," including publications such as *Bell's Life in London*, *Figaro in London*, and the *Comic Annual*.

Porous boundaries persisted between scrap sheets' populism and radicalism in the 1830s. Like other graphic genres, scrap sheets toed the line between social criticism and commercial appeal: they circulated images that appealed to sociopolitical unrest but that were unoffending enough to be pasted into scrapbooks and onto walls. There are two ways of understanding scrap sheets as an inherently critical print form. First, as John Marriot argues, radical publishers continued the antiestablishment graphic tradition exemplified by Regency caricature into the Victorian age largely through formal innovation.²⁶ Second, scrap sheets offered their users a means of reorganizing and refashioning urban realities. "Scraps brought back to readers an egalitarianism and involvement in the world of signs and signification that had been largely lost in the



Figure 1. "Sam Weller's Scrap Sheet: Containing all the Pickwick Portraits, with the Poetical Effusions of Augustus Snodgrass, Esq., M.P.C.," London: John Cleave, ca. 1837. Dickens Gimbel Collection, Beinecke Special Collections Library, Yale University.

world outside.²⁷ “Sam Weller’s Scrap Sheet” does not just passively participate in this cultural history but rather leverages it. It embodies the form several years after scrap sheets’ prominence in the late 1820s and early 1830s, exemplifying radical writers’ penchant for repurposing popular literary forms to their own ends, and “inventing syncretic forms that scrutinized the transformations of their industrializing society.”²⁸ These contexts suggest that the “Scrap Sheet” deploys its form for critical purposes, rather than solely seeking to profit off of *Pickwick*’s success.

The “Scrap Sheet’s” critical contexts are more apparent given the career of its publisher, John Cleave. Cleave was a prominent Chartist printer in the 1830s known as “the hero of the unstamped press.”²⁹ After working as an assistant on the *Weekly Free Press* (1828–31), he edited the *Working Man’s Friend* (1832–33) and the *Weekly Police Gazette* (1834–36). The latter’s circulation reached 30,000–40,000—the highest of any unstamped paper—and for which he was prosecuted for violation of the Stamp Duty.³⁰ By 1837, Cleave was targeting a more general audience with his periodical, *Cleave’s London Satirist and Gazette of Variety*. Although the content was not explicitly radical, Cleave’s political associations persisted. According to William Thackeray, for example, the *Satirist*’s popularity was partly due to its “abstract political creed.”³¹ The “Scrap Sheet” similarly bears traces of Cleave’s radicalism. It circulated in two versions that are identical in all respects except for the imprint: one version reads, “London: Sold at Cleave’s ‘Penny Gazette’ Office, Shoe Lane, Fleet Street,” and the other reads, “Published by Wakelin, 1 Shoe Lane, Fleet Street.”³² Cleave’s Shoe Lane, Fleet Street offices recall his earlier persecutions as editor of the *Weekly Policy Gazette*, also printed and sold at his Shoe Lane office. Wakelin, the name used on the second imprint, is presumed to be either a “disguise of Cleave or a real person” whose name was used to hide Cleave’s continued use of the Shoe Lane office while prosecuted.³³ Its appearance on one version of the “Scrap Sheet” suggests that Cleave’s name continued to conjure radical allegiances. The dating of each version is unclear, but the two separate imprints emphasize Cleave’s continued negotiation of his radical allegiances within a broadened commercial appeal.

The “Scrap Sheet” is anonymously illustrated, but Cleave is known to have worked with politically vocal artists. He collaborated with the radical-minded Charles Jameson Grant, for example, on illustrations to the *London Satirist*, whose works are said to have forwarded the “most coherent and deeply felt progressive and oppositional graphical commentary on England in the 1830s.”³⁴ Much of his satire sought to dissemble

and reformulate preexisting forms and genres, a method similarly deployed by the “Scrap Sheet.” Cleave and Grant worked together on scrap sheets in the 1830s, publishing “Cleave’s Picture Gallery of Grant’s Comicalities,” a one-penny broadsheet that not only circulated explicitly radical cuts, but accorded to Grant the status of artists like Robert Seymour and George Cruikshank, whose names also adorned the cheap broadsheet “galleries” that they illustrated.³⁵ Of course, Seymour tends to be studied today as *Pickwick’s* original illustrator and, by some accounts, its initial creator, whose control over the publication was quickly usurped by the young Dickens. By returning *Pickwick* to a graphic scrap sheet, “Sam Weller’s Scrap Sheet” recalls a hypothetical version of the text that was overwritten in *Pickwick’s* early installments by Dickens’s assumption of authorship. It does not just participate in the proliferation of documents that *Pickwick* appears to initiate, such as Sickmann Han writes of other *Pickwick’s* parodies, but wholly revises *Pickwick’s* representation of print culture from the perspective of an alternative authority.

Cleave positioned Weller as an active participant within a counter-cultural print network within the pages of the *Satirist*. In an April 1838 issue, a letter to the editor is signed by none other than Weller. The letter, titled “Sam Weller to the Satirist,” claims Weller as a reader and imagines his political sympathies. In it, he largely critiques workhouse conditions and taxes on the poor. He takes a radical position to social reform, such as when he calls attention to the “disgusting murders in the Bridgewater workhouse.”³⁶ To preface these viewpoints, Weller opens the letter by referencing the expanding network of print in which he newly participates: “Sir,—I beg leave to send you a letter, which I hope you’ll put in. I’ve been told many newspapers and miss-sell-any, would receive my communication; but I think to do the thing once respectably is better than half-a-dozen times otherwise—as the man said that saved a penny for six days to have a ride in the omnibus.”³⁷ Cleave positions Weller firmly within a reading audience that is wholly attentive to—and wary of—expanding print access. Moreover, Weller’s distrust of “miss-sell-any’s” directly counters Dickens’s own work as the then-editor of *Bentley’s Miscellany*. In other words, Cleave characterizes Weller as a reader whose relationship to print is removed from Dickens’s print public.

With the radical contexts of scrap sheet culture and of Cleave’s publishing career in mind, we can return to the form and content of “Sam Weller’s Scrap Sheet” to examine its response to *Pickwick’s* material

framework. Its criticism is foregrounded by the title itself: the alliterative title reformulates *Pickwick* by trading the intellectual Samuel Pickwick for the working-class hero, Samuel Weller, and the collected papers for an ephemeral array of scraps. In order to retell the narrative from Weller’s point of view, Cleave remediates it from a serial installment to a scrap sheet, a narrative medium with which Weller would have been more familiar. In the “Scrap Sheet,” material form and narrative content operate simultaneously and independently of each other. That is, the “Scrap Sheet” can be used as a physical scrap sheet to be cut up, rearranged, and reproduced in albums according to the purchaser’s wants, or it can be read as a fictional narrative—a scrap sheet supposed to be produced by Weller during his travels. Its co-constitutive identities maintain the interactivity and multimodality that had long been associated with working-class print. The multiple meanings of the “Scrap Sheet” as both a material object and a narrative converts *Pickwick*’s linear arrangement of fictive documents into a dynamic, interactive, and multimodal alternative. According to Helen Hauser, *Pickwick*’s major innovation was its text-centric structure, or “fiction-first *content*,” that transmuted the fiction-first *form* of miscellanies. Fiction “holds the whole together—without fiction, there is only disorder.”³⁸ The overriding structure of text is the very innovation with which the “Scrap Sheet” contends, in preference of decentralized readings—or “disorder.” The material interactivity embedded in the very form of the “Scrap Sheet” admits the potential of alternative authorities by inviting an endless array of interpretations, uses, and reformulations.

As a product of Weller’s experiences, the “Scrap Sheet” depicts a number of minor characters who are largely disconnected from Pickwick’s perspective but who impact Weller. Weller’s valentine, for instance, resurfaces in Mary’s hands in the “Scrap Sheet,” although its reception is only hinted at in *Pickwick*. In addition, the “Scrap Sheet” deepens the narrative detail of a number of minor characters who are barely glimpsed in *Pickwick*. For example, it depicts Mr. Namby with a beaver top hat, an accessory that Weller taunts him about in the text. The accompanying verse extends his ridicule of Namby’s extravagance: “Behold a Sherriff’s officer / His graceful figure scan / Say, is he not in all respects, / A *captive*-ating man.” The image and verse not only indicate an attentive reading of the text but broaden the narrative space provided to minor characters. As Starkowski writes of *Pickwick* adaptations, the “additional page space for minor characters in the spinoffs affords us larger glimpses of these characters’ worlds,” distinguishing the

publications as critical responses rather than indiscriminate plagiarisms.³⁹ The “Scrap Sheet’s” attention to minor characters, however, is more visible than “additional page space”; its graphic interface visually restructures the relationship among characters to equalize the narrative space occupied by each. If graphical forms produce knowledge via “the features of spatialized relations such as hierarchy, juxtaposition, and proximity,” then the “Scrap Sheet’s” even distribution of cuts into a grid of forty images rescinds any presumed hierarchy of character.⁴⁰ Each of the forty characters depicted signifies equally across the space of the “Scrap Sheet.”

Circulating simultaneously as a material object and narrative act, the “Scrap Sheet” reformulates *Pickwick’s* abstract “papers” into a tactile form. By claiming Sam Weller as the author of the “Scrap Sheet” and as a reader of *Cleave’s London Satirist*, Cleave suggests that the practices and concerns of his print audience are not represented within *Pickwick’s* collected papers. In fact, as the “Scrap Sheet,” makes clear, *Pickwick’s* “papers” bear little connection to the realities of print production and circulation. In her discussion of the book’s use as a material object in the nineteenth century, Leah Price considers the implications of a Victorian literary culture that tended to prioritize text over material:

Not noticing that the book was made of paper also implied ignoring that others had commissioned, manufactured, and transmitted it, and that other handlings had preceded and would follow one’s own. The good reader—himself disembodied and unclassed—forgot what books looked like, weighed, and would fetch on the resale market; he also forgot how books had reached his hands, and through whose, and at what price. (The abstraction of the book thus mimics the abstraction of its readers.)⁴¹

Price’s observation helps us rethink the different conceptions of “print culture” that are circulated by the “Scrap Sheet” and *Pickwick*. In both its narrative content and material form, the “Scrap Sheet” reinforces a sense of reading and print as embodied activities that draw from the authorities of multiple, interdependent co-producers. In *Pickwick*, however, the distinct material qualities of its constitutive genres are smoothed over, bound together, and cohered into a linear narrative.

2. *PICKWICK’S* ABSTRACTED PAPERS

The clearly defined material identity of the “Scrap Sheet” puts the ambiguity of *Pickwick’s* “papers” into relief. As a result of its low cost, its

episodic structure, and its editorial framework, *Pickwick's* earliest reviewers remained uncertain over how, exactly, to categorize it. The *Morning Chronicle* described it as "a magazine consisting of only one article," and *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal* called it "a series of monthly pamphlets."⁴² The *Eclectic Review* circumvented established genres altogether, finding that it is "difficult to determine that precise species of the very extensive genus of fictitious publications to which *Pickwick* ought to be referred."⁴³ Several months passed before *Pickwick's* installments were recognized, in October 1836, as anything other than magazine ephemera.⁴⁴ Its narrative framework continues to defy categorization: according to Stephen Marcus, *Pickwick* is made up of "mythical papers" from which Dickens constructs a "world of words."⁴⁵ John Bowen asserts that *Pickwick* seems "more the material and method of a variety show or scrapbook than a formally coherent work of art,"⁴⁶ a telling description in light of the "Scrap Sheet." Both Marcus and Bowen point to *Pickwick's* negotiated relationship between preexisting forms of literary and popular culture, and admit the visible material dimensions of these forms. The materials of reading and writing are not just represented in the text, as in the thematic metatextuality of Dickens's later novels, but inform the structure of the narrative itself.

The titular designation of "papers" immediately confers a material similitude among the dissimilar forms and genres represented in *Pickwick's* narrative. Rendering its contents collectively as "paper," *Pickwick* eschews an early-industrial marketplace that associated material quality with literary value to, instead, emphasize paper as a shared material for all forms of writing. At a time when "the entire production-reception complex of popular literature seemed unprecedented, unpredictable, immense," the quality of the material on which a text was printed came to stand in for its class of readers and, thus, the quality of the text itself.⁴⁷ In this context, an overt attention to the cheapness of material was "metonymic for literary worthlessness."⁴⁸ Dickens admitted the impact that these associations had on the formation of *Pickwick* in the preface to the 1847 edition. He was cautioned, he writes, against publishing in such a "low, cheap form of publication" because it recalled the chapbooks and magazines enjoyed by laboring-class readers and would not, therefore, be well received by a literary establishment.⁴⁹ Of course, by the time of writing the preface, his own popularity was firmly established, and Victorian print culture was far more stable than it had been a decade earlier. At the time of its inception, *Pickwick's* self-proclaimed identity as "papers" functions as a rhetorical tool, defining

its generic contents and thereby preempting the desultory associations that may have been conjured by the cheap quality of the actual papers on which it was printed. As Daniel Hack writes, “although authors and texts ‘suggest’ in myriad ways their constitutive and contingent materialities, such suggestions are themselves loaded, even functioning at times as covert claims for the very detachment they seem to abjure.”⁵⁰ In this vein, *Pickwick* calls attention to the paper on which it was printed if only to redefine its own cheap materials into a value-neutral medium for writing. “Papers” elides *Pickwick*’s pages with the fictive documents that it contains, so that even the paper surface of the serial is eschewed and replaced by a rhetorical construction. All forms of paper become, as *Pickwick* states, a word. Once defined according to a shared paper medium, the disparate forms of literary and popular culture can circulate freely without the associations tied to their disparate material qualities.

Throughout his career, Dickens deployed a number of strategies to bring together readers into a single, unified public. Lorna Huett’s bibliographic examination of *Household Words* magazine, for example, argues that its “obvious formal proximity” to the cheap press and penny bloods was a deliberate choice to invert views of the cheap press, make low-cost print an acceptable medium for literature, and thereby construct a middle-class reading audience.⁵¹ Helen Small similarly calls attention to Dickens’s active management of “the idea of the reading public” in his reading tours.⁵² However, both *Household Words* and the reading tours were undertaken when Dickens was already a well-established author, in the 1850s and 1860s. *Pickwick* corresponds to his career-long management of a middle-class audience, but betrays a more cautious handling of print cultural factions.

Pickwick’s print cultural management might rather be compared to *Sketches by Boz*. The two works share the authorship of “Boz,” demonstrate similar miscellaneous structures, and were published approximate to each other in the late 1830s. *Sketches*, the two-volume collection of disparate works of short fiction that Dickens published across six different magazines between 1833 and 1836, was published in February 1836—just one month before *Pickwick* commenced—and a “Second Series” of *Sketches* was published in August 1836. Prior to the second series’ publication, Dickens pondered the relationship between it and the sketch that he planned to write for the *Carlton Chronicle*, “Hackney Cabs.” On August 3, 1836, Dickens asked *Sketches* publisher John Macrone for input on the sketch’s title: “As I have the Copyright of the Sketches,” he writes, “don’t you think the following would be a good one, for our

purpose?—Leaves / from an Unpublished Volume / By Boz / (which will be torn out, once a fortnight)."⁵³ The proposed title seeks to unsettle the generic form of the sketch: drawing on paper as a shared medium of writing, Dickens collapses the generic distinctions between article, manuscript, and forthcoming book to recall all three formats simultaneously. The purpose of doing so, he explains, is to broaden the audience for the forthcoming book. He continues, "The circulation I believe is a small one. So much the better—Fewer people will see the Sketches before they are collected. It is all among the nobs too—Better still. They'll buy the book." Assured that the "nobs"—the wealthy and socially elite subscribers to the *Carlton Chronicle*—would purchase the collected edition of sketches, and that his previous sketches' readers would likely not access the *Carlton Chronicle*, the heading both claims Dickens's authorship and extends its reach. As his tentative formulation of "Hackney Cabs" suggests, Dickens acknowledged that varied media channels needed to be bridged together in order for literary culture to circulate freely among social classes. Dickens positions print material as connective rather than divisive, and yields it as a tool that could simultaneously address and collect distinct readerships.

A similar redefinition of material form occurs in the opening chapter of *Pickwick*, supposed to be an entry from the Transactions of the Pickwick Club. The entry narrates the founding of the Corresponding Society of the Pickwick Club and the society's proposal to forward "authenticated accounts" of its travels in letters and parcels (16). Writing as the editor of these collected accounts, Dickens redefines the "papers" of the work's title into "documents": the entry, he writes, is "proof of the careful attention, indefatigable assiduity, and nice discrimination, with which his search among the multifarious documents confided to him has been conducted" (15). The transformation of papers into documents operates on multiple rhetorical levels: it insists on the factual evidence provided by the incorporated materials; and it retains the diverse social, cultural, and geographical origins of the incorporated materials. As Lisa Gitelman writes in her history of the document, documents maintain objectivity precisely because they are "importantly situated; they are tied to specific settings." As such, they maintain independent and collective meaning: they are "separate and separable, bounded and distinct."⁵⁴ Each document, rooted in a specific locale and handled by individuated characters, reflects the varied modes of reading, writing, and communication within early industrial England; by encountering them in his travels and ordering them into a cohesive

narrative, Dickens positions the collected papers as the bound and unified product of previously fractured discursive traditions.

Once the scattered papers are redefined as documents, Dickens promises to deploy them as a cohesive narrative. After identifying the documents that predicate the publication's existence, ranging from the club's debate to its transactions ledger, letters, and "manuscript authorities," the opening chapter closes:

Here the entry terminates, as we have no doubt the debate did also, after arriving at such a highly satisfactory, and intelligible point. We have no official statement of the facts, which the reader will find recorded in the next chapter, but they have been carefully collated from letters and other MS. authorities, so unquestionably genuine, as to justify their narration in a connected form. (20)

"Boz" promises narrative coherence from scattered materials. He has ordered and bound the "multifarious documents" into a "connected form" and in this way has constructed the narrative now being circulated. Boz's editorial expertise thus promises a unified product—a narrative—from discrete and previously disconnected materials. Like the "multifarious documents" that Boz edits, Dickens formulates a fixed, systematic, and stable sense of print culture for a broader readership.

Brought together in the shared medium of a serial installment, the "multifarious documents" introduce a wide array of cultural modes, perspectives, and practices. The first installment closes, for example, with the introduction of a "roll of paper" that contains a narrative by the destitute actor, Dismal Jemmy. Jemmy "opened the roll of paper and proceeded, partly to read, and partly to relate, the following incident, which we find recorded on the Transactions of the Club as 'The Stroller's Tale'"—the tale that begins *Pickwick's* second installment (48). To Patten, the episode exemplifies *Pickwick's* clumsy structure: in it, "the very chapter endings . . . are foregrounded as artificial stops."⁵⁵ Read another way, it is a clever rhetorical device by which Dickens grafts the media of popular culture into his narrative. The alliance between the opening of the roll of paper and the opening of the second serial installment provides a strategic, if somewhat clumsy, method of structuring the early installments. The activity of the reader as he or she opens the second installment of *Pickwick* imitates the narrative activity of Jemmy as he unfurls the broadsheet; the physical pages of the serial itself momentarily elide with the representation of Jemmy's sheet of paper. It is an instance in which "the distinction between the internal and external starts to break

down," so that "the very stuff of the novel, its textual raw material," bears an uncertain relationship to the material culture that it draws on.⁵⁶ The chapter stop seems "artificial" because, in this instance, the potential activity of material, rather than narrative, determines structure.⁵⁷ Successive interpolated tales, such as the "madman's manuscript," are similarly dependent on the introduction of fictive documents, but in this case, the potentiality of material in *Pickwick* "is enfolded safely within a controlling rhetorical structure."⁵⁸ As *Pickwick* progressed, Dickens continued to depict the visible joints and connective threading of fictive documents, but mitigated the relationship that these documents' material dimensions bore on the structure of his narrative.

As Dismal Jemmy's narration emphasizes, the circulation of texts brings the clubmen into contact with diverse perspectives and experiences. It is the activity of passing, sharing, listening to, and discovering texts that provides the connective fabric of *Pickwick's* picaresque. In the 1830s these acts of exchange brokered "relationships among the bodies of successive and simultaneous readers."⁵⁹ In *Pickwick*, the circulation of narrative is the means by which pedantic, professional, and provincial subjects convene. Among the wide range of material documents represented are, for example, the competing newspapers the *Eatanswil Gazette* and the *Eatanswil Independent* (166); the interpolated oral narratives such as "The Bagman's Story," "The Story of the Goblins Who Stole a Sexton," and "The Story of the Bagman's Uncle" (185–97, 380–90, 644–59); songs and ballads, such as "The Ivy Green" and "Romance" (85, 580); letters, delivered and dead (144, 243, 659); ancient inscriptions (148); scholarly essays (15, 157); religious tracts (356); commercial valentines (431–37); court papers (264); and a "mad man's" hidden manuscript (149–56). The documents range broadly across material objects, intellectual cultures, and historical periods to evince the active intersection of oral, manuscript, and print cultures. "Never were more essays invoked in fiction," writes Amir Tevel, an observation that may be broadened to note that never were more material formats invoked in fiction.⁶⁰ The wide array of reading and writing acts depicted, and *Pickwick's* protracted investment in representing the mediums through which these activities occur, suggests Dickens's commitment to a shared sense of reading and the processes by which print cultures intersect and might unify.

In *Pickwick's* robust print network, the association between material value and literary worth breaks down as diverse experiences of print converge. Sam Weller's experiences of cheap print particularly unsettle the

tendency to use material as a metonym for worth. In *Pickwick*, Weller's perceptions of print counteract cultural hierarchies of value and express a matter-of-fact reality of production and reception. In one telling scene, Weller seeks common ground with the Reverend Mr. Stiggins as he extolls the circulation of religious tracts, or what Stiggins calls "moral pocket-handkerchiefs," in the West Indies. Unfamiliar with the metonymic description, a reference to the tracts' cheap material and emotionally charged content, Weller prompts a series of successive redefinitions that shift from metonym to generic form to marketplace realities:

"What's a moral pocket-ankercher?" said Sam; "I never see one o' them articles o' furniter."

"Those which combine amusement with instruction, my young friend," replied Mr. Stiggins, "blending select tales with wood-cuts."

"Oh, I know," said Sam; "them as hangs up in the linen-drapers' shops, with beggars' petitions and all that 'ere upon 'em?"

Mr. Stiggins began a third round of toast, and nodded assent. (356)

Ultimately, the exchange between Weller and Stiggins neutralizes the assumptions of value or depreciation by associating each description of the tracts until an assent is reached. Weller's knowledge of the tracts within a print marketplace, in fact, makes classifications of value ridiculous when, as he explains, purportedly moralizing tracts circulate alongside street literature such as beggars' petitions. Like the "Scrap Sheet," *Pickwick* recognizes Weller's print cultural experiences as a potential site of difference, but by bringing Weller into a wider network of print, the differences can be reconciled into a shared understanding. In this scene, Dickens calls on the contexts of circulation and reception to emphasize that, in the surrounding print marketplace, disparate literary forms are porous when they appear to be made of the same material—in the case of Weller's and Stiggins's exchange, single-sheet pamphlets with text and woodcuts. On another level, the scene calls attention to *Pickwick's* indebtedness to forms of popular culture, itself a publication that combines amusement with instruction and blends select tales and images. As Tevel observes, "Dickens enjoyed posing the risk [of association] precisely for the pleasure of dismissing it."⁶¹ Perhaps less deliberate than a dismissal of associated forms, however, the scene exemplifies *Pickwick's* own exploration of material print as it is perceived and used among a wide cross-section of the British public. It is a playful reminder of the rhetorical deployments of print's material identity, a metadiscourse on the redefinition of papers that *Pickwick* undertakes.

The representation of disparate print materials allows Dickens to unify disconnected perspectives into one cohesive vision. It is an explicitly materialist vision of Dickens's penchant for coalescing multiple narrators in his later novels that, Alexandra Valint argues, reflects the "gradual movement toward a more democratic state" in the Victorian era.⁶² To be sure, *Pickwick's* illustration of a wide array of the British public speaks to this gradual democratization, but the fictive collation of documents carries different implications than the fictive collation of voices. When represented as narrative contents, the disparate print objects can be reimagined as participants within a single, coherent print network. Extracted from their signifying contexts of production and circulation, however, and rendered in narrative, print artifacts "lose their prime function and identity."⁶³ In his discussion of the "scriptural economy," Michel de Certeau interrogates the process of collecting the raw materials of culture and incorporating them into the written word. It is a type of "scriptural play," he writes, that

refers to the reality from which it has been distinguished in order to change it. Its goal is social efficacy. It manipulates its exteriority. The writing laboratory has a "strategic" function: either an item of information received from tradition or from the outside is collected, classified, inserted into a system and thereby transformed, or the rules and models developed in this place (which is not governed by them) allow one to act on the environment and to transform it. The island of the page is a transitional place in which an industrial inversion is made: what comes in is something "received," what comes out is a "product."⁶⁴

Undoubtedly, Dickens's distinct power lies in his ability to absorb "the raw materials of popular culture,"⁶⁵ but, as de Certeau reminds us, this also entails the transformation of the material contexts of popular genres into a product that conforms to an urban and industrialist network.

To illustrate the consequences of the industrial inversion that *Pickwick* enacts, we might turn to the making of Sam Weller's valentine in the twelfth installment. The scene distills the strategies used in *Pickwick* to figure the material contexts of reading and writing within a wider network of print. In the scene, Weller composes and constructs a makeshift valentine after seeing a commercial valentine—"a highly coloured representation of a couple of human hearts skewered together with an arrow," and so on—for sale in a print-seller's window (431). Rather than paying the "reduced rate of one and sixpence" for a manufactured card, Weller purchases the raw materials to make his own: "a sheet of the best gilt-edged letter paper, and hard-nibbed pen." Soon

after he begins writing he is joined by his father, and the two effectively compose the valentine's verse together. The scene imagines the activities of a newly emerging print-buying public. Part of the scene's comic energy, for example, stems from the pair's semiliteracy as they debate the meaning and use of certain words, such as "circumscribed" and "circumvented" (435). In J. Hillis Miller's reading of the episode, Sam Weller's valentine reveals the broader mechanisms at work in *Pickwick*: the scene is, like the novel itself, an act of "truth-telling poetry" or "the exploitation of the figurative possibilities of language that calls attention to its own operation."⁶⁶ Such singular focus on language, however, does little to explain the negotiated relationship between material and language in the scene, and this relationship's resonance with *Pickwick* more broadly.

Extending Miller's interpretation of the valentine as representative of *Pickwick*'s operative mechanisms, we might also consider the way that valentine enacts the transformation of raw materials into text. It exemplifies, in other words, the relationship between material and literary cultures that *Pickwick* seeks to manage. Although the material of the valentine is, like the other genres represented in *Pickwick*, clearly delineated, the significance of the valentine's text ultimately overrides its material production: despite his father's objections to poetry, Weller wants to "end with a verse," and so he signs it "Your love-sick / Pickwick" (437). To the Wellers, authority is tied to their material production, but, unbeknownst to them, to sign as "Pickwick" obfuscates their material production and authorizes it as the labor of Pickwick alone. The material interactivity of production and composition is replaced by the final closure of the written word. Moreover, the Wellers's production can only be authorized, published, and circulated when codified with the signature of the middle-class intellectual, Pickwick. It is a stabilizing act, but it is also an effacing act. In Dickens's depiction of a uniform print culture, all variety of printed matter circulates and makes meaning, but it is ultimately language that signifies. As Miller concludes of the valentine, "the language or the signature of another is used to get something done with words";⁶⁷ the potential efficacy of material is lost.

3. PRINT NEUTRALITY, PRINT HOMOGENIZATION: DICKENS AND DIGITAL NETWORKS

"Sam Weller's Scrap Sheet" and *The Pickwick Papers* forward opposing perspectives on the unification of print cultures. In *Pickwick*, Dickens imagines a print culture in which a variety of media from disparate regions of

Britain might freely circulate. The "Scrap Sheet" contends that such unification homogenizes and, in fact, erases the distinctions among reading and writing cultures. The contending senses of paper in *Pickwick* are largely invisible today because we participate in the reality that Dickens sought to construct. As Mary Poovey writes of *David Copperfield* (1850), our "apparent likeness to this subject is, in fact, the effect of the very ideological operations" employed by Dickens.⁶⁸ The "Scrap Sheet," however, opens up an alternative reading of *Pickwick* that makes it clear that its print public was far from assimilated. Although the print cultural tension is not as visible to contemporary readers, the contending perspectives of *Pickwick* and the "Scrap Sheet" bear significant likeness to debates within contemporary digital culture on intellectual networks. A brief consideration of these similarities may make the implications of *Pickwick's* and the "Scrap Sheet's" opposing perspectives more apparent.

It is now commonplace to draw comparisons between Victorian print culture and the digital present. In both time periods, it is shown, individuals and institutions seek to grapple with an unprecedented scale of information as it affects social, cultural, and political life and perceptions of reality.⁶⁹ We might particularize the similarities already drawn between Victorian print and digital media to *Pickwick* by considering its support of "print neutrality." I define "print neutrality" as a Victorian-era counterpart to net neutrality, the term used to describe equal, unrestricted access to information on the web.⁷⁰ Proponents of net neutrality argue that the channels through which information passes must be value-neutral and cannot be valued or monetized differently according to the users who access it. In fact, its ideas are rooted in the medieval British doctrine of "common carriage," which sought a fair and equal establishment of transportation networks throughout the nation. Dickens's envisaged "print neutral" public, then, participates in a historical continuum of conversations about how to establish value-neutral access to existing channels of information. Whether in medieval common carriage, Victorian print, or the digital present, the drive toward a more democratic state involves a media network that does not delimit or restrict access to information based on the cost of its constituting materials. Yet the impulse toward democratic access and inclusivity involves a simultaneous standardization of the interfaces that carry information. In the twenty-first century, this process bears out in the homogenization of web design. This phenomena, it is argued, tends to overlook the way that aesthetics and form connote the intended audience, values, and use of the information. "Sam Weller's Scrap Sheet" similarly upholds the

significance of material individuation within a homogenizing information culture. As a response to Dickens, it calls attention to the ways that *Pickwick* flattens what were, in reality, dynamic, intersecting early Victorian reading and writing practices.

The contending relationships to material print carried out by *Pickwick* and the “Scrap Sheet” allow us to rethink the strategies that Dickens deploys to amalgamate disparate print factions. In particular, it helps illustrate the difference between the representation of material and the real production and circulation of material texts. In its pursuit of a “print-neutral public,” *Pickwick* represents a wide variety of print cultures and, as a result, revels in its formal heterogeneity, but the “Scrap Sheet” makes clear that the assimilation of a reading public was far from complete. To Cleave and his readers, *Pickwick*’s abstraction of discrete genres into “paper” extracts them from the signifying contexts of material production. The contending interpretations depend on the purpose to which “paper” is put: as a discrete material produced and circulated within specific contexts, or as a shared medium for writing. A horizontal reading of *Pickwick* within its broader field of print not only makes Dickens’s strategic management of print culture more visible but opens up more nuanced histories of its reception.

NOTES

1. Patten, *Charles Dickens and His Publishers*, 258.
2. Nineteenth-century print historians have long pointed to the 1830s in Britain as a period of experimentation due to print producers’ attempts to fulfill the needs, literacies, and values of a growing print audience. According to Turner, the decade is marked by a “complex, knotty relationship of overlapping print forms vying for new readers in a network of print” (“Companions, Supplements,” 120).
3. Shannon, *Dickens, Reynolds, and Mayhew*, 47.
4. Pettitt, *Serial Forms*, 17.
5. Johns, *The Nature of the Book*, 20. Johns’s rebuke of a uniform “print culture” focuses especially on Eisenstein’s conception of print culture as the effects of more uniform texts on “laws, languages, and mental constructs” (Eisenstein, *The Printing Press*, 5).
6. E. Miller, “Reading in Review,” 626.

7. In *How to Do Things with Books*, Price refers to this separation as "the gulf separating bibliographic codes from linguistic codes" (35). See E. Miller, "Reading in Review," and Menke, *Literature, Print and Media Technologies*, for detailed discussions of the deepening of this gulf in the second half of the nineteenth century.
8. See, for example, Golden, introduction to *Book Illustrated*, 1–30; Warhol, "Seriality," 873–76; and Surridge and Leighton, *The Plot Thickens*, 1–50.
9. James, "The Beginnings," 47.
10. Abraham, "The *Pickwick* Phenomenon," 30; James, "The Beginnings," 49. The most frequently discussed of these adaptations is *The Post-humorous Notes of the Pickwickian Club*, also known as *The Penny Pickwick*, written by Thomas Peckett Prest and published by Edward Lloyd in weekly penny issues between 1837 and 1839. Other titles exemplify the range of genre and narrative across the adaptations, including *The Peregrinations of Pickwick* (1836); *Sam Weller, a Journal of Wit and Humor* (1837); *The Pickwick Songster* (1839); and *Pickwick Abroad; or, The Tour in France* (1839).
11. Sutherland, "Dickens's Serializing Imitators," 102.
12. Peckett Prest, *Post-humorous Notes*, 5–6.
13. John, *Dickens and Mass Culture*, 40.
14. Bowen, *Other Dickens*, 70.
15. Axton, "Unity and Coherence," 676; Bowen, *Other Dickens*, 59.
16. Abraham, "The *Pickwick* Phenomenon," 48.
17. Patten, "The Audience Widens," 219.
18. Roe, "Sam Weller's Scrap Sheet," 46.
19. Roe, "Sam Weller's Scrap Sheet," 47.
20. Cook, *Bibliography*, 84; Podeschi, *Dickens and Dickensiana*, 465.
21. Extra-illustration, the incorporation of graphic material into published books by their owners, remained a genteel practice from the mid-eighteenth through mid-nineteenth century. For more on the history and practice of extra-illustration, see Peltz, *Facing the Text*, 1–7. As to their affinity to playing cards, the cuts are too small and are printed on too thin sheets of paper to make this use likely.
22. Gregory Vargo uses the "Scrap Sheet" to remark on Chartist newspapers' attention to down-market adaptations of *Pickwick*. See Vargo, *An Underground History*, 21. Louis James references the "Scrap Sheet" as one of several illustration-based adaptations of *Pickwick*. See James, "The Beginnings," 48. Similarly, Brian Maidment groups the "Scrap Sheet" among down-market pictorial publications that grasped the

- “commercial potentialities” of comic images. See Maidment, *Robert Seymour*, 89.
23. Maidment, “Scraps and Sketches,” 5.
 24. Kunzle, “Between Broadsheet Caricature and ‘Punch,’” 339.
 25. Maidment, “Graphic Satire,” 86.
 26. Marriot, *Unknown London*, xl.
 27. Maidment, “Scraps and Sketches,” 19.
 28. Vargo, *An Underground History*, 7.
 29. Brake and Demoor, *Dictionary*, 127.
 30. Brake and Demoor, *Dictionary*, 126–27; Jacobs, “The Pursuit,” 42.
 31. Thackeray, “Half-a-Crown’s Worth,” 281.
 32. Both versions are held in the Dickens Gimbel Collection at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. “Sam Weller’s Scrap Sheet,” London: Printed for John Cleave, 1837, Folio Gimbel/Dickens H1149; “Sam Weller’s Scrap Sheet,” [London]: Wakelin [ca. 1838], Folio Gimbel/Dickens H1149a.
 33. Jacobs, “The Pursuit,” 49.
 34. Maidment, “Graphic Satire,” 98.
 35. Kunzle, “Between Broadsheet Caricature and ‘Punch,’” 344.
 36. Weller, “Sam Weller to the Satirist,” 1 (emphasis in original). The letter recalls the perspective of Bridgewater reformer John Bowen (1785–1854), who resigned in 1837 as guardian of the poor for the Bridgewater Union over conditions at the Bridgewater workhouse.
 37. Weller, “Sam Weller to the Satirist,” 1.
 38. Hauser, “Form and Reform,” 25.
 39. Starkowski, “Our Delectable Works,” 271.
 40. Drucker, *Graphesis*, 66.
 41. Price, *How to Do Things*, 31.
 42. Quoted in Chittick, *Dickens and the 1830s*, 65, 77.
 43. Quoted in Engel and King, “*Pickwick’s Progress*,” 56.
 44. Chittick, *Dickens and the 1830s*, 64–65.
 45. Marcus, “Language into Structure,” 187, 200.
 46. Bowen, *Other Dickens*, 46.
 47. Fyfe, “Random Selection,” 2.
 48. Price, *How to Do Things*, 11.
 49. Dickens, *The Pickwick Papers*, 761. All subsequent references to this edition are noted parenthetically in the text.
 50. Hack, *Material Interests*, 9.
 51. Huett, “Among the Unknown Public,” 77.
 52. Small, “A Pulse of 124,” 265.

53. Dickens, *Pilgrim Edition*, n.p.
54. Gitelman, *Paper Knowledge*, 4.
55. Patten, "Serialized Retrospection," 127.
56. Williams, "Advertising and Fiction," 329.
57. Dickens overwrote for the first installment and therefore brought the narrative to an abrupt close in the midst of chapter 3. Heinz Reinhold reads the introduction of "The Stroller's Tale" as evidence that "Dickens was unequal to the difficult problems of composition in this genre [serial fiction]," and Patten notes its display of the artificiality of chapter division within *Pickwick*. See Reinhold, "The Stroller's Tale," 146; and Patten, "Serialized Retrospection," 127.
58. Metz, "The Madman's Curious Manuscript," 134.
59. Price, *How to Do Things*, 12.
60. Tevel, "Counter-Didactic Pickwickians," 210.
61. Tevel, "Counter-Didactic Pickwickians," 211.
62. Valint, *Narrative Bonds*, 5.
63. Flint, *The Appearance of Print*, 182.
64. De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 135.
65. Ledger, *Dickens*, 69.
66. Miller, "Sam Weller's Valentine," 116.
67. Miller, "Sam Weller's Valentine," 120.
68. Poovey, "The Man-of-Letters Hero," 90.
69. Among the recent studies that compare nineteenth- and twenty-first century media cultures, see Alfano and Stauffer, *Virtual Victorians*; Menke, *Literature, Print and Media Technologies*; and Teukolsky, *Picture World*.
70. See Pickard and Berman, *After Net Neutrality*, 1–14, for a historical introduction to debates over net neutrality.

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