

The Dickensian

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Dickens's Court Suit: The Charles Dickens Museum.

From the Editor

‘Tomorrow’, Dickens wrote to Frank Beard in April 1870, ‘I am going to the Levee, and shall be absent (in a Fancy Dress) at our usual time’. The ‘Fancy Dress’ was Dickens’s elegant court suit, worn on the occasion of his meeting with the Prince of Wales on 6 April 1870, and it is on display at the Charles Dickens Museum (see Frontispiece). It looks like something from a modern theatre wardrobe, but it isn’t. There is an aura to these real clothes once worn by the real man, especially since no other suit of his seems to have survived. It is odd that we have so few of such items from Dickens. His gold cuff-links, buckled by his furious hammering on his Reading Desk to re-enact Nancy’s death, survive in a private collection. ‘Bleak House’ at Broadstairs, many years ago, used to display a macabre relic, the collar Dickens was wearing on the day of his death – apparently once in the possession of the veteran actor Bransby Williams. Sitting there in its dusty display cabinet it had a distinctly worn look, and yet it was oddly affecting, as if it still carried something pungently immediate and intimate from Dickens himself – from the brush of his skin or hair, perhaps.

Unlike the musty old collar, the court suit has been handsomely restored, like many of the remaining houses that Dickens once lived in or frequented. Restoration’s effect is complex and contradictory (for this Dickensian, at least). The original inhabitant of these renovated old clothes and old houses seems partially to return to us, synthesised by the meticulous restoration of his habitat; at the same time Dickens himself grows further out of reach, the one material entity that cannot be restored.

The court suit is, of course, empty; but it reveals some personal details. Dickens’s waist was 34 inches; as the Museum Curator, Frankie Kubicki, has remarked, that’s quite impressive for a 58-year-old. The schoolboy Dickens was described as a ‘stout-built boy’, with a ‘decidedly military’ appearance. Whatever that ‘stout’ meant, in adulthood he evidently remained lean: ‘a slight, compact figure’, recorded Thomas Trollope, and with ‘well-proportioned, finely developed limbs’ (according to Marcus Stone). To many he continued to seem either military-looking or else like a seasoned sea-captain. Carlyle thought him ‘a fine little fellow...very small’, but then Carlyle was over six foot tall, whereas the average height of a full-grown man in 1871 was five foot five inches (*Oxford Economic Papers*, April 2014). From the court suit Frankie Kubicki infers Dickens’s height to have been about five foot and eight or nine inches. Marcus Stone remarked ‘his actual height was five feet nine’. David Copperfield’s father was five feet nine and a half

inches, according to the scrupulous Mr Omer, who had professional reasons for wanting to be mathematically precise.

I know – it seems odd to be determining Dickens in inches. As Lady Ritchie put it, Dickens’s actual presence was felt only as ‘a sort of brilliance in the room, mysteriously dominant and formless.’

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Beyond Fidelity: Censorship and Morality in Universal's 1934 Version of *Great Expectations*

VIOLETA MARTÍNEZ-ALCAÑIZ

IN NOVEMBER 1934, the National Association of Teachers of English used Universal Studio's film adaptation of *Great Expectations* to 'aid high school students in the study of literature' (*Motion Picture Herald* 117: 48). A study-guide *ad hoc* for that photoplay was prepared. The National Association considered this booklet as the most 'valuable medium for stimulating enthusiasm for the *right* kind of films' for youngsters (*The Motion Picture and the Family* 1: 4, my emphasis). Furthermore, a radio dramatisation of scenes from the film was given by pupils of a Newark high school (*Variety* 116: 21). The book-to-film movement promoted by the National Association was based on considering the motion picture as a powerful educational device. According to its members, watching a film adaptation could raise the ratio of pupils who read a novel as much as reading a book could increase the percentage of students' attendance at movie theatres (*Motion Picture Herald* 117: 48). But what sorts of screen versions were considered 'right' in the 1930s?

Beyond fidelity criticism

Adaptation studies have been traditionally identified with a 'persistent model', meaning 'the one-to-one case study that takes a single novel or play or story as a privileged context for its film adaptation' (Leitch 106). While it seems to us inappropriate to define the evolution of the academic discourse on film adaptation as 'depressing' (McFarlane, *Novel to Film* 194), we should not deny that it has remained, in most cases, tied to a book-to-film univocal correspondence (i.e. where each element of the source text is connected to a single element of the movie). General approaches address film's faithfulness to either the spirit or the letter of the novel, that is, the equivalence in meanings of both forms. Such approaches imply that (a) it is possible to define spirit as a corporeal entity that can be aesthetically measured; (b) the 'digest phenomenon' (Bazin 19) (that is, the condensation, summary or alteration of the source text) taking place in every film's narrative discourse responds only to the intrinsic characteristics of the medium. Instead, we believe that other elements have to be considered, such as the historical context in which the film is produced or the audience it addresses. Literature and cinema

are, of course, different languages and they have their own rules and conventions. But filmmakers have managed to develop a cinematic equivalent of the literary style. What remains a matter of further consideration, in our view, is the fact that many pictures introduce major changes with regard to the source text that entail no challenge in terms of cinematic style; that is, they do not respond to the intrinsic characteristics and codes of the medium. Rather, as will be shown, we argue that such variations are prompted by external factors, such as the politics, the economy or the technological development.

On the other hand, fidelity criticism often involves a 'rhetoric of possession' (Sheen 3), whereby critics and academics see themselves as possessors of the novel's true meaning and judge the film adaptation in terms of the adequacy to that meaning, and an 'articulation of loss' (Ibid.; see also Hodgdon v), in which the critic or academic notes what is not on the screen.

Over recent years, new approaches have explored ideological, theoretical or historical issues which overstep the binary or 'inter-semiotic transposition' (Raitt 47) that opposes 'cinema versus literature, high culture versus mass culture, original versus copy' (Naremore 2). Instead of considering both art forms as two relatives who share a similar root, some academics have embraced a new conception in which 'there is no such thing as faithful adaptation', as Robin Wood has stated (qtd. in Boswell 147). This argues that since literature and cinema are different languages, even when appealing to the same plot or idea, they create different meanings. In this sense, we believe that Julie Grossman's concept of *elasTEXTity* is of great interest for this purpose. She thinks about texts 'as extended beyond themselves, merging their identities with other works of art that follow and precede them'. Adaptations, therefore, must be understood as creative works of arts that resituate previous texts in a different context. As a result, they provide further perspectives, raise additional questions and reshape stories for new audiences. The pre-existing text is not regarded as the 'authority' or the 'controlling parent' any more; rather, both sources and adaptations form a 'rhizome', following Deleuze and Guattari's terminology. They shape a non-hierarchical, horizontal multiplicity whose elements establish random networks and connections one with another, as well as with the context in which they are produced. This recent way of understanding film adaptations helps to provide cinema with a new status that places it at the same level as literature. Nevertheless, we feel that it still fails in determining the reasons behind the process of creation and destruction taking place en route from the source text to its adaptation. In this respect, it is our belief that the practice of adaptation has been very much influenced by the historical context

in which it has been produced. That is, that the economic, political and sociocultural circumstances of an epoch affect and orient the book-to-film movement as much as (and, sometimes, even more than) the auteur of the film. Those aspects remain, however, rarely discussed, especially with regard to classical Hollywood. In what follows, we will analyse how the historical context influenced the filmmaking of Universal's 1934 version of *Great Expectations* so as to make it fit the requirements of the 'right' films.

Censorship and film adaptation

The attitude of the film industry towards the adaptation process and its regulation over the 1920s and the 1930s was determined in the previous two decades. Debates concerning cinema's damaging impact on American society came into the spotlight from the mid-1900s onwards. A key turning point took place in 1915, when the Supreme Court ruled that motion pictures were a mere form of entertainment, generated for profit, and therefore could not be protected under the constitutional guarantee of free speech (Wertheimer 158; see also Muscio 438). As a consequence, local censorship boards emerged in certain states, thus joining the National Board of Review of Motion Pictures, a private censorship body.

The required standards of morality were, nonetheless, reduced after the outbreak of the First World War, filmmakers addressing controversial subjects such as capital punishment or prostitution (Fisher 150-1). This relative laxity did not last long, for certain religious and civic groups, educational organisations and other parties publicly called for stricter motion-picture censorship over the 1920s. In 1922, the major studio corporations established the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America (MPPDA) to protect and support the film industry. Former Postmaster General William H. Hays, a Presbyterian elder with a creditable career in the Republican Party, was elected President to give cinema a high level of respectability (Ernst and Lorentz 125).

Whereas the MPPDA formulated some informal rules during the decade, it was not until the years 1929-30 when Hays, together with Martin Quigley (*Motion Picture Daily's* editor-in-chief), Father Daniel E. Lord (a Catholic priest) and certain Protestant organisations, drew up the Production Code (Gomery and Hays ix; see also Muscio 447), known as the 'Hays Code'. The text was promulgated on 31 March 1930 and included specific indications on how to represent controversial issues such as violence, crime or sex. Delicate subjects were reoriented, substituted or condensed at the script level, that is, during the pre-production stage. Despite the companies' obligation to subject their scripts for revision, over the period from 1930 to 1934 the implementation of the Production Code was weak. Thus, filmmakers enjoyed four years of latitude

in which the code commandments were violated with impunity in a series of provocative films that explored adultery, pre-marital sex, miscegenation, orgies, organised crime, speakeasies, mobsters or illegal alcohol (Pollard 52). Their strategy was based on the compensation of moral values: that is, on '[advocating] the final punishment and suffering of "bad" characters or their regeneration' (Jacobs 93).

In 1933-34, the Catholic Church's Legion of Decency and the Payne Fund Studies campaign warned that motion pictures were a great menace to faith and moral values, and even called for a boycott of all Hollywood films. Moreover, they enlisted the support of the Bank of America president A. P. Giannini, who threatened to cut off production funds if the Production Code was not enforced (Doherty 325-7; see also Pollard 52-3). Box-office boycotts and threats to film financing, together with the decrease of motion-picture attendance as a consequence of the Great Depression, forced studios to acquiesce in a regulation. In June 1934 an amendment to the Production Code was adopted, thus establishing the Production Code Administration which required all films to obtain a certificate of approval before being released. In fact, 'all member companies agreed not to distribute or release a film without a certificate' (Maltby, "The Production Code and the Hays Office" 61).

The enforcement of the MPPDA legislation was indicative of the movement towards the cultural legitimation of the cinema. In order to be considered as 'right', films ought to meet the Production Code requirements: namely, they had to be designed to be suitable for viewers of all ages, even if they were intended primarily for adults. This meant that pictures had moral obligations as entertainment produced for the masses, and so they should tend to improve the nation ("The Motion Picture Production Code of 1930"). Among the 'right' films were those fitting into the most popular production trend of the thirties, the prestige film. Generally speaking, the prestige film was a big-budget film adapted from a pre-sold literary source and tailored for top stars. The classic texts were among the material regarded as suitable for that kind of picture. As Deborah Cartmell has rightly pointed out, 'some filmmakers were of the view that a dependency on literature of "great art" would also elevate the status of the film'. As a matter of fact, the classics had already gone through a process of social and cultural legitimation, earning them a sort of canonical reputation that cinema obviously lacked. Thus, by translating the classic texts to the screen, producers expected that films would gain a certain level of respectability. Additionally, adaptation promoted a democratising effect: it brought the classic texts to the masses, but it also brought the masses to the classic texts.

As part of nineteenth-century European literature, Dickens's novels also attracted the attention of the production companies. The case of the English writer is of interest if we examine the range of responses that his work generated and the process of construction of his public profile. There was a considerable gap between his popularity among the masses and the reservations expressed by the conservative elite with regard to his methods and themes. As an example, many Edwardians and certain members of the Bloomsbury group could not stand Dickens because of 'his sentimentality, uncontrolled and, sometimes, ungrammatical prosings, stagy plots and impossible heroines' (Patten 24). Notwithstanding, Dickens's literary reputation started to change at the end of the nineteenth century. Renowned authors such as George Gissing and Gilbert K. Chesterton published a series of essays in which Dickens was acclaimed as one of the greatest writers that ever lived (a good example of this change of perception is the publication in 1914 of an extra number of the journal *The Bookman*, especially dedicated to the English novelist). Even when his novels were not yet considered to be improving *classics*, they were admitted as recommended reading for students. Thus his increasing status of respectability and his established popularity made Dickens suitable for different tastes and audiences. Over the years 1934-35, several of his novels were among the film productions arranged 'to shop intelligently from [the] film diet' in order that children could receive 'proper

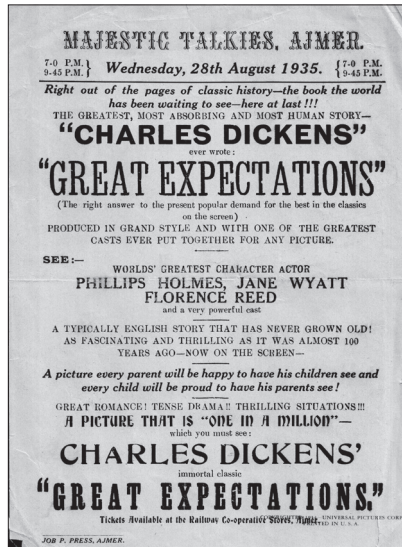


Fig. 1. Poster for Universal's *Great Expectations*: 'A picture every parent will be happy to have his children see.' The poster advertises a screening in 1935 at Majestic Talkies Cinema, Ajmar, Rajasthan, India (Rajasthan's oldest cinema, 1929-2015).

By courtesy of Kent Museum of the Moving Image, Deal, Kent

guidance' (The Motion Picture and the Family, 1: 5-7). The 'right' pictures were especially promoted through marketing strategies that appealed to both parents and educators (see Fig. 1). Essential to this was the establishment of policies of cooperation between the MPPDA and teachers' organisations for the publication of study guides sponsored by the National Council of Teachers of English. Those guides were regularly attached to the prestige productions adapting masterpieces of classic literature (Maltby, "The Production Code and the Hays Office" 63), and students were encouraged just as much to read them as to watch the film versions.

To be sure, the proliferation of film adaptations from classics partially responded to an economic interest, since 'adaptations [...] offered the best guarantee of commercial success' (Maltby, "To prevent the prevalent type of book" 559). Thus, classics not only provided cinema with a status of respectability inasmuch as their plots easily met the requirements of the 'right' films; they also offered a certain degree of safety against box-office failures. Fundamental to these criteria was Wall Street's involvement in the financial control of Hollywood's major studios. This was expressed through a homogenisation of cinema, based on a few basic patterns (the romantic and virtuous, but ultimately bland hero; the enhancement of traditional values such as love, marriage and fidelity; the punishment or redemption of characters who have transgressed moral principles), as well as a deployment of the main ideologies and myths of American culture (Ray 30). According to Ernst and Lorentz, during the thirties, 'the American film [served] as propaganda for the emotional monotony, the naïve morality, the sham luxury, the haphazard etiquette and the grotesque exaggeration of the comic, the sentimental and the acrobatic that [were] so common in the United States' (150). Thereby, Wall Street's control of Hollywood films, together with the implementation of the Production Code, led to a homogenised style where each cinematic element was subordinated to the narrative discourse imposed by these economic, political and cultural forces. Films became the perfect media for promoting morality lessons and penalising transgression; and this, of course, affected the adaptation process.

Who holds the authorial control over the film adaptation? The case of Universal's *Great Expectations*

Answering the question that opens this section moves us away from debates around fidelity criticism. It finds its legal basis as early as 1931. That year, Theodore Dreiser went to the Supreme Court to restrain Paramount from releasing a version of his novel *An American Tragedy*, which, according to him, did not portray its original. Justice Witschief ruled that whether the film remains

faithful to the book or not depends on one's point of view, adding that many critics found the picture a true representation of the letter and spirit of the novel (Bluestone 217). Additionally, the Supreme Court considered that the audience's interest should prevail over the author's right to determine whether or not a film version respected the meaning of his/her work (Maltby, 'To prevent the prevalent type of book' 567). The sentence gave legal censorship the right to define the principles of the adaptation process under the Code era. Thereby, neither the novelist nor the producer had real authorial control over the film as it finally appeared on the screen.

On 22 October 1934, Universal Pictures released a screen version of *Great Expectations*, directed by Stuart Walker. Whereas the company had gone into receivership during the Great Depression (Balio 15), the instantaneous success of a series of horror movies including *Dracula*, *Frankenstein* and *The Raven* improved the economic conditions of the company. However, the horror factory mostly appealed to the uneducated and the working classes (Brunas, Brunas, and Weaver 1), and by 1934 Universal looked at the first-run market, that is, to the luxury theatres where the wealthy middle and upper classes attended to see the newest films. That meant for Universal the production of prestige films (Hammond 94). As already argued, behind the term 'prestige' lies an attachment to the policies promoted by the Production Code and the financial powers, which enabled a film to be regarded as a 'right' picture. Dickens seemed a good option for adaptation, since he was considered one of the few authors able to bridge the gap between 'elite' and 'popular', that is, between the upper classes who, it was assumed, appreciated high literature, and the relatively uncultured mass (Hammond 94). Thus, Universal could maintain its regular movie-going audience while attracting new spectators from the middle and upper classes.

Great Expectations got 'Class A' in the official list of classified pictures prepared by the Chicago Legion of Decency, meaning that the film was 'suitable for family patronage' (Harrison's Report 17: 209). Similarly, it was graded as 'A' in *Modern Screen*, where the reviewer wrote that the 'beautiful production' had retained 'the original flavour' (Modern Screen 54). 'The film clings closely to the classic book', claimed the journal *Hollywood* (26). The same view was expressed in another review: 'Gladys Unger's screen play retains the complete period flavour' (*Motion Picture Daily*, 36: 10).

That *Great Expectations* pleased the critics is not in doubt. The film was recommended not only for families, but also for schools and libraries (*National Board of Review Magazine* 9: 17). Educational organisations also approved the film. In fact, *Great Expectations* was chosen by the National Council of Teachers of English to initiate a nationwide campaign 'to raise the standard

of motion picture appreciation by the younger generation' (*The Film Daily*, 66: 2). According to the committee, the picture was 'one of more than usual excellence and worthy of discussion in the classroom' (*The Educational Screen*, 13: 251). Thus, the release of the film was accompanied by both a radio dramatisation of some scenes and a study guide intended for all the pupils across the nation (*Variety*, 116: 21; see also *Motion Picture Herald*, 117: 25). It is this endeavour to defend the Universal's screen version that leads us to consider the film more closely, and to examine the veracity of these statements.

We agree with Brian McFarlane (*Screen Adaptations*) when he argues that 'the most interesting thing about [the film] is that . . . it never begins to *feel* like the original'. He states that even though the film moves through the novel's major cardinal functions — the 'hinge-points' that initiate or resolve an 'alternative directly affecting the continuation of the story' (Barthes 248)— the film fails in finding a significant structure, which results in a crucial loss of dramatic tension between Pip's snobbery and his moral concerns. What emerges, eventually, is a studio romance where the atmosphere of the original has been lost in the transference of events from page to screen (McFarlane, *Screen Adaptation*). McFarlane delves into the extent to which the film is faithful to the novel. Notwithstanding the important value of McFarlane's contribution, I would like to widen the scope of this analysis far beyond the notion of fidelity, which cannot adequately explain by itself the differences between both works. In my view, the narrative shifts present in the film are a logical consequence of the context in which the picture was produced.

Whereas Charles Dickens's works acquired a status of innate moral goodness during this period, Universal was forced to make some changes to the original source to fit the Production Code. According to Mary Hammond, one scene in which Joe and his wife are seen in bed and another depicting a kiss between Pip and Estella were ordered to be cut, and the use of the word 'Lord' was eliminated (94-5). Dickens was not only one of the most beloved and well-known authors; the fact that his works were freely available was equally important. This means that the plot could be conveniently altered for the sake of morality without the author complaining about the distortion of his novel. The film avoids any possibility of serious conflict in an attempt to minimise as much as possible any moral corruption that appeared in the novel. It eliminates troublesome characters, compresses or drives out some plotlines, modifies dialogues or introduces certain symbols that reinforce the championship of morality. For instance, when Pip brings the convict food and a file, the picture makes clear that the child has *borrowed* them, not *stolen*, which exculpates the young protagonist from any charge of immorality. Note must also be

taken of how Magwitch appears before Pip in a cruciform posture (Fig. 2.), thus suggesting early in the film that the convict will be punished for his crime. But the cross is also the most important Christian symbol, representing the atonement and the victory over sin and death that will save Magwitch's soul. All these alterations clearly appealed to both religious and educational organisations in their demands for moral and instructive pictures.



Fig. 2. Magwitch in the churchyard: scene from *Great Expectations* (1934), Universal Studios.

Walker's 1934 film portrays Pip as a constant victim of the world surrounding him: he is threatened by the convict, mistreated by Mrs Gargery, reprimanded by Uncle Pumblechook, used by Miss Havisham for her revenge on the male sex, and heartbroken by Estella. In fact, the news of his great expectations and his new social status never efface his past as a labouring boy. Whereas the picture reveals very little interest in Pip's education as a gentleman, two scenes stress the predicament of an uneducated blacksmith apprentice: Pip and Estella meet at the forge in a moment of the film's invention and Estella shows her disdain towards him. Estella, in a pure white dress, refuses Pip's hug because he is 'too black', thus reminding him that he is just a labouring boy and that she is out of his reach (Fig. 3.). Afterwards, Pip states that the forge is a 'good place for a man', to which Estella replies: 'And are you a man? Oh, I was thinking you were a boy!' Before leaving, she tells Pip that he will be allowed to work for her when she becomes a great lady. In another passage, while having dinner at Mr Jaggers's home, Pip receives some polite tips from his friend Herbert Pocket about proper mealtime manners, which is in the original novel, of course (though not conducted at Jaggers's home).

The film portrays Pip as a constant victim: 'victim of the convict's threats, of Mrs Joe's bullying, of Miss Havisham's vengeance on the male sex and of Estella's snobbish disdain for his being a common "labouring boy"' (McFarlane *Screen*



Fig. 3. Estelle greets 'black' Pip: scene from *Great Expectations* (1934), Universal Studios.

Adaptations). This depiction has a major implication: there is a lack of contrast between young Pip, the good-hearted child, and adult Pip, as depicted in the novel, with his growing snobbery and moral decline towards selfishness and rejection of his humble origin (indeed, one of the key issues that Dickens explores). After Pip moves to London to begin a new life as a gentleman, the figure of Joe vanishes, while Biddy does not appear at all. Whereas in the novel adult Pip is ashamed of Joe's lack of culture and rejects his origins, in the film these feelings are simply omitted, thus avoiding again any corruption of the protagonist. The keen interest of the picture in presenting Pip as a candid and naïve character shows up, additionally, in the absence of Trabb's boy and Orlick. As McFarlane has rightly pointed out in *Screen Adaptations...*, Trabb's boy and Orlick portray 'provincial young men who don't inherit property and who are, subsequently, in the novel, made the objects of Pip's superior denunciations'. Furthermore, the absence of Orlick avoids showing his attempt to murder Pip, a thorny subject for a film addressing viewers of all ages.

The Production Code stated that motion pictures had moral obligations since they were produced for the masses. Thereby, one of the code's working principles was that evil and good should never be confused. However, the code also indicated that crime did not always need to be punished as long as it was made clear for the audience that it was wrong ("The Motion Picture Production Code of 1930"). How is evil punished in Universal's *Great Expectations*?

Whereas the material contained in the second third of the novel is very much compressed in the film, a considerable amount of time is given to Magwitch's self-justification after he reveals himself as Pip's benefactor. He explains his relationship with Compeyson and Molly, and how he became a convict. The viewer discovers that his daughter, whom Magwitch believes dead, is

actually Estella. The convict's account works as a confession designed to redeem his sins, sins which Pip's kind heart cannot but forgive. He saves Magwitch's life when Compeyson tries to kill him, arguing that he has 'tried to be as loyal as you've been to me'. Furthermore, in a subsequent scene, the film suggests that Pip has made a petition for mercy that, according to Jaggers, has not received any answer. Jaggers adds that all Magwitch's money and possessions have been confiscated, but Pip's only concern is that his benefactor should never receive this information. The remarkable lack of interest in money on the part of the protagonist clearly appeals to the audience of that time, who still suffered the ravages of the Great Depression.

In what we take as a collapsing of Miss Havisham's revenge mission, the film makes clear she deserves some punishment. Hence, Pip and Estella reproach her for having used them for her purposes. Estella cannot give love to her because she can't give her 'what you've never given to me'. It is noteworthy that Estella uses the term 'mother-by-adoption' in addressing Miss Havisham, thus emphasising that there is no blood relationship between them. Similarly, Pip accuses the old lady of making him unhappy. In fact, Miss Havisham's punishment consists in realising she has destroyed the lives of both young people. Pip's inability to write 'I forgive you' in Miss Havisham's Bible, even when contradictory compared to the behaviour he shows in the rest of the film (he forgives Magwitch's threats, Mrs Joe's mistreatment and Estella's snobbish manners), has to be seen just as a mechanism to punish her sins. Miss Havisham dies off-screen of unspecified causes, the film preventing her from seeing Pip and Estella happily together. Estella's engagement with Bentley Drummle is conveniently broken, so she is finally free to love Pip.

Summary and Conclusions

During the thirties, Hollywood went through a period of financial difficulties after the Great Depression. At the same time, it had to deal with the hard criticism from religious and civic groups, educational organisations and other parties claiming cinema's negative influence on American society. Thereby, the film industry faced the need to find a compromise between the pressure groups' demands and its commercial interest, oriented toward the international market. Furthermore, it was obliged to adapt to the business standards promoted by Wall Street, responsible for financing its expansion. Finally, studios agreed to acquiesce in the Production Code in 1934, the same year that Universal's *Great Expectations* was released.

The Production Code included specific indications on how to represent controversial issues such as violence, crime or sex. Delicate subjects were reoriented, substituted or condensed at

the script level, during the pre-production stage. Ultimately, the purpose was to make films suitable for spectators of all ages. Masterpieces of the classic literature proved to be ideal sources to fulfil this requirement, and local preview committees, educational and religious organisations, and some film journals and magazines encouraged the production of that sort of film adaptation. They were considered 'right' films, especially for juvenile audiences, and their release used to be accompanied by the publication of study guides to discuss in the classroom.

In this context of economic instability, political disturbance and sociocultural threats and demands, it comes as no surprise that Universal regarded *Great Expectations* as a good novel to be adapted. Charles Dickens had acquired a certain status of morality and his novels were among the most popular. He was, indeed, one of the few who could bring together the upper classes, the working class and the uneducated. Thus, Universal attempted to maintain its principal market, namely, the rural, small-town movie houses, while catering for the first-run theatres, patronised by the middle and upper classes.

Despite Dickens's status and *Great Expectations*'s prestige as a classic, the film, as we have attempted to show, was 'encouraged' to make some changes to meet the Production Code. Pip, the protagonist, is portrayed as a victim of the corrupted society that surrounds him, suffering from threats, mistreatment, bullying or revenge. But the picture emphasises his kind and naïve character, which drives him to forgive any affront and to remain within the limits of morality, even if that means to lose his fortune. As a result, this motion picture is more than an adaptation; it is a reworking of the source text, which, by means of eliminating any appeal to immorality or corruption, blurs all the Dickensian hallmarks. In fact, that the film received positive reviews from the MPPDA, the critics, and the educational and religious organisations, suggests that some of the narrative changes were made to meet the moral obligations imposed on the American film industry from 1930 onwards.

As we have attempted to show, we believe that Universal's *Great Expectations* is a good example of the need to move away from debates concerning fidelity criticism. Film adaptations are as conditioned by the source text as they are by the economic, political and cultural factors prevailing in a given society at a particular point in history. It is our belief that the context in which the picture is produced must be necessarily analysed to understand not only what has been removed, altered or added in the adaptation process, but, above all, why those changes have been made and the extent to which they can manipulate the source text and lead the audience towards a desired perception of controversial subjects.

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‘A Metaphysical Sort of Thing’: the Shared Reading of Dickens

PHILIP DAVIS

In our last issue (Spring 2017) we carried a review by Jenny Hartley of a production of A Christmas Carol by the inmates of Wormwood Scrubs Prison. In both that review and the issue’s editorial there was some discussion of the therapeutic power of Dickens’s writing, its capacity to make profound changes in the life and the sense of self of his reader or listener. Professor Philip Davis is one of the founder members of the Centre for Research into Reading, Literature and Society at the University of Liverpool. His article outlines the variety of studies undertaken by the Centre and concentrates particularly on the use of Dickens’s writing as an agent of change.

I WANT TO START where our projects always start – working from below upwards, from a specific literary example before ever we fully know what to make of it.

So here is a moment of thought that seems to me crucial to the effect of Dickens at his most dynamic. It is from *Dombey and Son*, chapter 33, where Harriet Carker insists how changed is her ruined brother since the embezzlement he carried out in his youth. ‘But’ says her mysterious visitor, ‘we go on’ oblivious to the repentance of such as John Carker:

‘we go on in our clockwork routine, from day to day, and can’t make out, or follow, these changes. They—they’re a metaphysical sort of thing. We—we haven’t leisure for it. We—we haven’t courage. They’re not taught at schools or colleges, and we don’t know how to set about it.’

It is this *Dombey* passage that I will have in mind throughout this essay. Not least because the work Josie Billington, Rhiannon Corcoran and I do at the Centre for Research into Reading, Literature and Society (CRILS) at the University of Liverpool, in partnership with the outreach charity *The Reader*, is precisely to do with ‘these changes’ that are too rarely taught at schools or colleges.

Dickens could be the patron saint of *The Reader*: he would have loved the unprofessionalised reading groups set up in often hard-to-reach communities – working from below upwards, in prisons, drug rehabilitation centres, dementia care homes, libraries, schools, GP drop-in centres - where great literature is not read in advance via a traditional book-club but read live and aloud, often stumblingly, with pauses for shared thoughts and feelings. That is after all what Dickens’s public readings and serialisations were about, democratically: creating a series of inter-related communities existent at the same time across

classes within the nation; humans reading aloud together in small family-like groupings, where the insides of people were turned more openly outside, to be emotionally shared. A prison group knows very well what Marley means: 'I wear the chain I forged in life. I made it link by link . . . ?'.

In one such group *Dombey and Son* was read weekly over a period of more than eighteen months. Ben Davis from *The Reader*, leading the group, reported in his notes that one episode to which the group kept returning was in chapter 35 when Dombey, apparently asleep with his face covered with a handkerchief, is able to see Florence looking at him, lovingly and needily, without her observing him doing so. It is a rare perspective, momentarily a time-out from the stuck self: 'There are yielding moments in the lives of the sternest and harshest men...'. One woman in the group had spoken of how terrifyingly impressive it was that throughout the novel Dombey kept resisting the possibility of emotional change, again and again and again. But here for once, she said, concentrating on the repeated use of the little word 'may' in the passage, there was through that handkerchief what she called 'the chink' of possibility – all the more painful, she added, for its then being shut down again.

It is those often tiny or transient chinks or openings that our research concentrates upon, using a variety of methods in collaboration with health professionals, linguisticians, sociologists and psychologists. Quantitative measures from self-reporting questionnaires, at the beginning, middle and end of the groups' months of time together, show changes in emotional states, in people's sense of personal meaning and purpose. Physiological measures of heart-beat show moments of individual change and of group coalescence. Brain-imaging experiments reveal what difference a change in word or syntactic position may make, in challenging the mechanisms of mere automaticity. And I'll pause here to give a possible design-example of this. It is from *David Copperfield* (chapter 48) where David is trying to say that what he missed in his marriage was a dreamy ideal of love incapable of realisation, as all adults had to learn. Yet he adds another sentence: what difference would it make to the brain if Dickens had had David write of his marriage to Dora not:

But that it would have been better for me if my wife could have helped me more, and shared the many thoughts in which I had no partner; and that this might have been; I knew.

but more straightforwardly:

But I knew it would have been better for me if my wife could have helped me more and shared the many thoughts in which I had no partner.

And this is not a million miles away from Dickens's own brain-work because the manuscript shows that *'and that this might have been'* was an added interpolation, an extra brain-wave on second thought, as soon as he got away from straightforwardly sequential thinking. But fMRI scanning might help to see the effect of the delayed main verb ('I knew'), of those 'that's' ('that it would have been better ... and that this might have been') in changing the very shape of thought. I list our relevant papers at the end of this article, but suffice to say for the moment: our research so far has had to do with text – usually in some sense poetic, but only as literary prose itself can be – that challenges simple automaticity of understanding, left to right across the page. It demands instead what I would want to call deep reading as opposed to default-based scanning. That is to say, reading that involves significant reappraisals of meaning en route, activating parts of the brain that are recruited whenever a language task cannot be accomplished using solely automatic processing streams. And this updating of habitual expectations and default predictions is often related to the calling in of parts of the brain associated with core autobiographical self, in the effort emotionally to understand and to assimilate. It is this process of strong intelligence that can afford the inclusion of the possibility of a 'might have been' in the human mind, even when, painfully, it cannot be fully actualised.

It is these qualitative changes and the struggles around change itself that may most interest readers of *The Dickensian*. Our analysis of video-recorded sessions examine those moments of change in the way group-members begin to speak – the way someone can change from 'the clockwork routine' of doggedly saying 'Well, I just think . . .' to opening the imaginative chink through 'It is almost as though . . .'. Or it may just be the noting of an ostensibly tiny detail, like Pip's own shame at his workman-like hands when he first visits Miss Havisham and Estella: 'They had never troubled me before, but they troubled me now, as vulgar appendages' (*Great Expectations*, chapter 8): 'So when he is in the blacksmith's he is not having these negative feelings about himself,' said one participant, 'but in another setting, he is seeing himself in a completely different way.' The present tense in which this is spoken is not detached but rather in the here-and-now of the reading group. In the raw, often without sophistication, these groups rediscover, live, the vital first thoughts of immediately felt experience – all that has got forgotten in what Dickens calls that 'clockwork routine' or 'jog-trot' of habitual life.

Often we go on to show the participants filmed excerpts of themselves, thinking in action. Watching himself, one man from an alcoholic rehab centre said he could fake his way through the usual therapy groups, pretending he had changed, not taking a drink this time; but the problem with the shared reading groups, he said, was the *involuntary* emotion it triggered:

With books and poems it makes you look at things honestly. It's harder to lie around them. You can't unknow. It's about feelings, there's feelings so you're talking about feelings. In the other [therapy groups] it's only about actions, behaviour.

Dickens would surely have loved this bold account of elemental feeling and the stark messages it carries in it. The group-member is thinking about the sort of emotional torrent Pip experiences at that first visit to Miss Havisham's, beyond the simple language of non-literary categorisation: 'I was so humiliated, hurt, spurned, offended, angry, sorry – I cannot hit upon the right name for the smart – God knows what its name was – that tears started to my eyes.'

Besides the shedding of easy names, one other linguistic sign of this shift from clockwork norms in the group is the secret and unconscious mobility of pronouns. Psychologists argue rather simply that the change from a discourse centred upon 'I' to one involved with 'you' is a sign of mental health. But reading Dickens involves something more than that: group-members move seamlessly in seconds from 'I' to the 'she' or 'he' in the story, and back again, and then best of all to 'you' in that informal sense of 'one', which while still very much inside the felt experience, at the same time marks a transition from the specific to the thought of the general – an event not happening once to 'me' or 'her' but as also happening generally to 'us'. So, another group-member, thinking aloud about the plethora in Pip's pain ('humiliated, hurt, spurned, offended, angry, sorry . . . that tears started . . .'), said this:

And often, like with him [Pip], people can be so angry that they are tearful and they are cross at themselves, thinking I am so angry but why am I crying? . . . You just can't have one feeling, it is all more than any of us can cope with.

There are five different pronouns there – the shifts not thought out but testimony to the responsive rapidity of associations.

In the name of 'these changes', I want to emphasise in the final part of this little report how that mobility may be repeated at the higher, macro level of changing perspective. Here is a group-member suddenly responding to the account in *Great Expectations* of Pip's feeling of being out of place and scorned at Miss Havisham's. It affects, and brings out, his core self. Now a middle-aged man, Fred recalls his own childhood when he was sent to a school for those with special needs: 'Not much was expected years ago of people with disabilities, there were absolutely no expectations of anybody'. There weren't any great expectations; teachers treated him indifferently or cruelly, he felt, till he hardly wanted to read. It isn't a story, he tells an interviewer later, that he has ever told to strangers, as he does here in this reading group:

It affected me so much I didn't want to go to school in the end. Then four years ago my partner and I went back because they opened a memorial garden for staff and pupils that had died. I always swore I was never going back it was a closed door, but she said come on now, Fred, please, please come back, and I went back with her and what was the first thing I saw on the fence. A plaque in the memorial garden - that this particular teacher that had given me a dog's life had died 1997. And of course what did I go and do: I went and opened my mouth. That old so-and-so, I said aloud, made my life a bloody hell for five years.

But then there was a further twist that, again, Dickens himself might have appreciated:

Unfortunately I was tapped on the shoulder by a rather nice gentleman: 'Do you mind not talking about my mother like that.'

So that made me feel absolutely . . . I called her all the old 'so-and-sos' - all the bad names I could lay my tongue to, and he said, pointing to the little girl at his side, 'It's not for her granddaughter to hear that.'

And I said, 'Well, accept my apologies, I didn't know', and that made me feel absolutely dreadful. But I was only giving vent to my feelings then.

Fred felt that even in speaking on behalf of the castaway child he had been, he had at the same time involuntarily done a little more family damage to an equivalent young child. This complex of feelings goes deeper than a story of vindicated anger. We at CRILS want to do more real-world research into what people both give to and take from the texts, into those deep changes from child to adult to child again, child and grown-up self together, inside and outside, back and forth, in the dense mixture of different feelings and faculties and dimensions. 'They're a metaphysical sort of thing.'

But for the moment I end on this. In another group reading *Great Expectations*, a woman who had suffered repeated child abuse - call her Maggie - said at interview:

I can understand *between* the book and myself. I mean, like linking: it communicates one thing to another, doesn't it.

She is not a particularly well-educated or articulate person. But the novel, she tried to say, somehow, obscurely, got itself in place of her childhood trauma:

Because that stops that. It breaks that gap because your mind's focusing on something else, concentrating on something else. So that will break that.

She desperately wanted to carry on to the end of the book, for all her difficulties in reading and expression, for all the partial struggles and failures inside and outside the novel itself:

Pip's ended up pretty good in the end. And I've ended up pretty good in the end, haven't I? Because I've done more since I went to the reading group and my voluntary work for *The Reader*. So I've come on. I've gone forward haven't I?

Fiona Magee, the CRILS researcher who interviewed her, reported: 'Maggie feels lucky to be able to describe what's going on in her, and what has gone on in her life. Like she's newly translatable. And that's by identifying with Pip, and not just with the previous definitions given of her – Maggie was even called sub-normal. I'm interested in her use throughout this interview of indeterminate terms in pointing, like "that stops that". It really does feel like a journey, exploration . . . and there aren't the words yet (other than those in the literature).' Even Harriet Carker's visitor stuttered it: 'They—they're a metaphysical sort of thing.'

But I've gone forward: 'haven't I?'

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'A Speaking Likeness': Dickens's Pre-Raphaelite and Photographic Portraiture in *Bleak House*

LAURA MAYNE

‘A H! THE DIFFICULTIES OF ART, my dear, are great’, declares the miniature-portrait painter Miss La Creevy in *Nicholas Nickleby* (1839), as she directs us to ‘[l]ook at the Royal Academy. All those beautiful shiny portraits of gentlemen in black velvet waistcoats [...] are serious, you know; and all the ladies who are playing with little parasols [...] – it’s the same rule in art, only varying the objects – are smirking’.¹ The rules of art, and particularly of portraiture, prove to be a central concern of Dickens’s. In his essay ‘The Ghost of Art’ (1850), for instance, Dickens presents a young man’s suspicious encounter with a familiar face; he asks himself, ‘[w]here had I caught that eye before?’ and soon discovers that the man is an excessively versatile model.² The tale is reminiscent of Dickens’s own uncanny recognition of a stranger, as recorded in his travelogue *Pictures from Italy* (1846): ‘I soon found that we had made acquaintance, and improved it, for several years, on the walls of various exhibition galleries’.³ In these stories the deceptive versatility of the models exposes the falseness of the images in which they appear. Indeed, in *Little Dorrit* (1857), Dickens presents the hypocrisy displayed in dishonest portraiture when the abhorrent Mr Casby is represented as a gentle young boy in an eighteenth-century pastoral-style portrait, ‘disguised with a haymaking rake, for which he had had, at any time, as much taste or use as for a diving-bell; and sitting (on one of his own legs) upon a bank of violets, moved to precocious contemplation by the spire of a village church’.⁴ Thus, in his fiction Dickens the novelist turns art critic to present a distrust of portraiture;⁵ and in his letters he maintained, ‘whenever I go into a Gallery I hang out “No Trust” in legible white letters on a black ground’.⁶

Dickens’s daughter, artist Kate Perugini, grants us some insight into Dickens’s distrust of artistic portraiture.⁷ She argues that her father ‘was intuitive, an excellent judge of a portrait [...] he was quick to note the smallest exaggeration into which the artist might have been tempted to fall.’ She continues: ‘I think that on the whole my father may be said to have been a real lover of art, but that he undoubtedly had a still greater love of nature, against which he thought that many artists, either from want of reverence for their art, or from want of knowledge, or from a mere whim or affectation, which it was not in his nature to forgive, often

very gravely offended.⁸ Here, Dickens is presented as believing that truth in art stems from a fidelity to nature. Indeed, Dickens himself argued in *Pictures from Italy* that, 'I have no other means of judging of a picture than as I see it resembling and refining upon nature' (p. 95). Moreover, in his letters he lamented that form and convention in English painting had taken 'the place of living force and truth'.⁹ In his own words, Dickens desired in portraits 'plain and simple truthfulness' to nature.¹⁰

Dickens's desire for a fidelity to nature in art resonates with contemporary aesthetic debates—specifically, John Ruskin's urging for artists to 'go to Nature in all singleness of heart, and walk with her laboriously and trustingly, having no other thought but how best to penetrate her meaning'.¹¹ Indeed, it was on Ruskin's cue that the Pre-Raphaelites advocated a return to honesty in visual art through a detailed fidelity to nature. Yet, in his article 'Old Lamps for New Ones' (1850) Dickens famously attacked the Pre-Raphaelites' 'utmost fidelity' to nature as a method which was opposed to 'beauty' in art, and which consequently prevented 'elevating thoughts'.¹² We might expect Dickens to have admired the Pre-Raphaelites' intensely detailed truth to nature (which had, in part, been inspired by Dickens's own narrative descriptions),¹³ and there have been many attempts to explain Dickens's apparently contradictory attack on the Pre-Raphaelites.¹⁴ Perugini, for example, sought to justify the severity of Dickens's judgement by reasoning that it was because he was such a visual writer. Indeed, she states that her father's opinion was 'interfered with' by 'the excessive realism of his mental vision [...] Thus the picture in his own mind of any subject which attracted him was often so vivid as to preclude the possibility of its being conceived in any other way than the one his own fancy had created, and it was perhaps this curious mental faculty that caused him to write so severe a critique of Millais's "Carpenter's Shop"' (p. 129).¹⁵ It appears, therefore, that Dickens's attack on the Pre-Raphaelites was born out of a shared concern over the unstable concepts of 'truth to nature' in art as achieved through 'realism'.

Ironically, commenting on the verisimilitude of their works, contemporary critics often paired the Pre-Raphaelites' pictorial precision with the detailed descriptions presented in Dickens's novels.¹⁶ One review in *Littell's Living Age*, for instance, described how 'Mr Dickens has in various parts of his writings been led by a sort of pre-Raphaelite *cultus* of reality'; and another argued that just as Pre-Raphaelite creations 'may be the most faithful reproduction of the natural originals [...] So it is with the novelist [Dickens]'.¹⁷ Moreover, when wishing to emphasise the true-to-life appearance of their creations, reviewers often compared both Pre-Raphaelite art and Dickens's prose to photography. For

example, William Bell Scott argued that ‘the seed of the flower of Pre-Raphaelitism was photography’;¹⁸ while George Brimley stated that a ‘daguerreotype of Fleet Street at noon-day would be the aptest symbol’ for Dickens’s literary realism.¹⁹ Indeed, George Eliot famously equated Dickens’s descriptive form to that of a ‘sun picture’, implying that his style was photographic in its ability to represent characters’ external traits and in its failure to capture their psychological interiority.²⁰ Eliot’s analysis perhaps reveals more about contemporary discussions regarding the reality captured by the camera than it does about Dickens’s literary realism. With regard to photographic portraiture a debate raged over claims for the camera’s ability to artfully manipulate and reveal external reality whilst concealing interior identity. Engaging in this debate, Dickens published an article in his weekly magazine *Household Words* by Henry Morley and W. H. Wills in which they argued that ‘in the present state of photographic art, no miniature can be utterly free from distortion’;²¹ and another article by John Payn which described how in photographs what looks ‘so pleasant and so real’ is, in fact, nothing but ‘artificial smiles, and a painted screen’.²²

Contextualised by these contemporary reviews and debates, an understanding of the relationship between Pre-Raphaelite pictorial precision and Dickens’s literary realism thus rests upon an appreciation of how both parties’ conceptualisations of truth to nature in art were affected by the disruption that the advent of photography caused to the unstable dichotomies involved in visual perception: the external and internal, and the subjective and objective.²³ Indeed, there have recently been many critical accounts of how the invention of photography affected the form of Dickens’s literary realism. For instance, Nancy Armstrong argues that realist fiction and photography participated in an epistemological project devoted to the presentation of a so-called ‘real’ world; thus, Dickens’s ‘realist’ fiction ‘referenced a world of objects that either had been or could be photographed in order to assert its realism’; and consequently, ‘readers read with a standard in mind based on the fidelity of language to [such] visual evidence’.²⁴ However, whereas Armstrong focuses on the way in which photography defined what would be ‘real’ for literary fiction, Daniel A. Novak conversely argues that, in fact, artfully manipulated forms of photography, such as combination printing, ‘set the standard for what was *not* real’ in fiction.²⁵ There have also recently been many separate accounts of Pre-Raphaelite hyperrealism in relation to the advent of photography. For example, Lindsay Smith argues that because ‘vision is imaginatively powerful; it enables forms of imaginative contemplation, the articulation of memory and speculative projection’. Thus the advent of photography specifically called

attention to forms of subjective and psychologically determined vision, and Smith demonstrates how these theories of perception were reflected in the subtle details of Pre-Raphaelite painting and poetry.²⁶ Countering this claim, Laurence Talairach-Vielmas states that, in fact, Pre-Raphaelitism depended on objective notions of perception; consequently, it 'was famous for its reliance on physiognomical and phrenological theories and was very often close to photography in its blunt portrayal of human features'.²⁷ However, as yet, no studies have specifically considered Dickens's own exploration of his and the Pre-Raphaelites' shared preoccupation with truth to nature in the visual and literary art of portraiture as a reaction to the destabilising advent of photography.

Bleak House: A Gallery of Portraits

Bleak House (1853) was written in the aftermath of Dickens's controversy with the Pre-Raphaelites and it is a work preoccupied with artistic verisimilitude. In the preface to the novel, Dickens laboriously defends the authenticity of his narrative choices (including the spontaneous combustion of Mr Krook and the presentation of Chancery), explaining that 'everything set forth in these pages [...] is substantially true, and within the truth'.²⁸ He would later advise fellow writers that it is not 'enough to say of any description that it is the exact truth; but the merit or art in the narrator, is in the manner of stating the truth'.²⁹ In *Bleak House*, for his writing to inhabit the realms of truthfulness through the manner in which he states the truth so as to achieve such an ambivalent form of realism, Dickens tells us that he has 'purposely dwelt upon the romantic side of familiar things' (p. 7). This echoes his declaration in the first issue of *Household Words* that the magazine will shine 'the light of fancy' and, in doing so, 'show to all, that in all familiar things [...] there is Romance enough, if we will find it out'.³⁰ Thus the means to find the romantic out of the familiar, while remaining within the truth, works as a process of defamiliarisation. It is a technique that involves what Robert Newsom describes as the holding of the familiar or the true to life in tension with the romantic or fanciful.³¹ Moreover, it is particularly through his representations of characters' identities as they are captured in portraits in *Bleak House* that Dickens creates and explores this tension. Indeed, many contemporary reviewers referred to *Bleak House* as a 'gallery of portraits'.³² It is, after all, a novel filled with them, for example: Tulkinghorn's walls are covered with 'portraits of the great clients' (p. 432); Mrs Bayham Badger displays portraits of her two deceased husbands; Guppy's portrait seems 'more like than life: it insisted upon him with such obstinacy' (p. 614); Mr Jarndyce has '[h]alf-length portraits in crayon' (p. 87); there are Sir Leicester Dedlock's

portraits of the ‘Fancy Ball School’ (p. 458); and the companion portraits of the Snagsbys painted ‘in oil – plenty of it too’ (p. 157). Even Hablot Knight Browne’s (Phiz’s) illustrations to *Bleak House* present portraits within portraits to comment on the characters’ pretences. For instance, while Turveydrop poses in the Prince Regent style, as ‘a perfect model of parental deportment’, a framed portrait of the Prince in model posture provides the background in the illustration (Fig. 1).³³

At the centre of the novel, however, are two paintings of Lady Dedlock – an oil painting hanging in the family gallery at Chesney Wold and a mass-produced copper-plate impression displayed in Mr Jobling’s/Weevle’s lodgings – the fidelity of which characters try to interpret in order to uncover hidden truths and familial secrets. In her work *Parentage and Inheritance in the Novels of Charles Dickens*, Anny Sadrin argues that ‘the portraits of *Bleak House* are all presented as perfect imitations of the models who sat for them’;³⁴ however, I argue, this is far from the case. Indeed, specifically analysing these ekphrastic pictures, Ronald Thomas suggests that in *Bleak House* ‘photographic



Fig. 1. Hablot Knight Browne (“Phiz”).
A model of parental deportment. 1853.

images are contrasted [...] with a set of painted portraits which do not tell the truth.’³⁵ As Regina Oost rightly argues, Dickens does not present one form of representation as a more accurate and truthful measure of reality; rather, he demonstrates an ‘ambivalence about what any portrait – painted or photographed – can convey’.³⁶ While the Pre-Raphaelite-style oil portrait of Lady Dedlock seems to be a ‘perfect likeness’ (p. 110), when photographically reproduced in the form of a copper-plate impression, its realism is undercut. This is because the reproduced image appears to lack ‘force of character’ (p. 637). In spite of this lack, however, the copper-plate impression is ‘forensic[ally]’ (p. 637) examined to determine evidence of Lady Dedlock’s

true identity, leading to her fatal demise. Thus, in *Bleak House* Dickens conveys an ambivalence about what any portrait can convey to ultimately question how far, if at all, art – specifically Pre-Raphaelite and photographic portraiture – can achieve truth to nature, and the dangers of trusting it to do so.

Lady Dedlock's Pre-Raphaelite-style Oil Portrait: 'a perfect likeness'

As Skimpole recounts his tour of the portrait gallery at Chesney Wold, we see previous Lady Dedlocks painted in the eighteenth-century pastoral mode as 'portentous shepherdesses' who 'tended their flocks severely in buckram and powder, and put their sticking-plaster patches on to terrify commoners, as the chiefs of some other tribes put on war paint'. These figures are painted wielding 'peaceful crooks' like 'weapons of assault' (p. 604). Thus, in keeping with Dandy inclination, the pretend country poor are presented as 'picturesque'; and, in their extreme artificiality, these theatrical portraits play to the gallery. Indeed, Dickens animates them to the extent that they appear like melodramatic caricatures as they 'vanish into the damp walls in mere lowness of spirits' (p. 21); or, when the sunlight is upon them, are 'beguiled into a wink', one even 'shoots out into a halo and becomes a saint' (p. 641). The sun mischievously distorts these formal portraits while vitalising them. Indeed, the vivacity Dickens grants these portraits contrasts with how the sitters were 'in life [...] "stuffed people" [...] perfectly free from animation' (p. 605). These descriptions thus seem intended to demonstrate the ineffectuality of attempting to imbue portraits with living force without truth to nature. However, there is one portrait of a Lady Dedlock which does appear uncannily alive. Significantly, this portrait does not hang in the gallery together with the others; instead, it hangs over the fireplace in the living room. It is not painted in the eighteenth-century pastoral style, but 'by the fashionable artist of the day' (p. 110). Although T. W. Hill's note in the Norton Critical Edition of *Bleak House* establishes the novel's setting as the late 1830s (based upon Dickens's references to the development of the railroad in rural England),³⁷ here Dickens does not present an 1830s grandly Romantic portrait in the style of Sir Thomas Lawrence (the mode of which Dickens and Phiz satirise in the figure of Mr Turveydrop, as already mentioned, seeming like Mr Tite Barnacle in *Little Dorrit*, to have 'been sitting for his portrait to Sir Thomas Lawrence all the days of his life' (p. 126)).³⁸ Instead, this portrait of Lady Dedlock appears imbued with hyperrealism, evoking the style of the luminously detailed Pre-Raphaelite images which were fashionable at the time of the novel's publication (1852-53).³⁹

We are not given a detailed ekphrastic description of the painting itself; instead, Dickens presents the powerful impact its

realism – its ‘perfect likeness’ to Lady Dedlock (p. 110) – has on characters. For instance, when Mr Guppy, the law Clerk, first sees the painting it ‘acts upon him like a charm’, and is thus credited with a level of performativity (p. 110). Indeed, this portrait possesses such a captivating power over Guppy that he is ‘fixed and fascinated’, ‘absorbed’ and ‘immovable’ before it (pp. 110–11). He continues ‘into the succeeding rooms with a confused stare, as if he were looking everywhere for Lady Dedlock again’ – ambiguously, either the real life figure and/or the portrait (p. 111). He is told that the portrait “‘is considered a perfect likeness’” to the woman herself (p. 110); however, Guppy cannot fathom whether he has seen the image, or the real woman, before. “‘Blest! [...] if I have ever seen her. Yet I know her!’” (p. 110), declares Guppy. He continues, “‘It’s unaccountable [...] how well I know that picture!’” (p. 111). Interestingly, Guppy’s reaction to the powerful realism of Lady Dedlock’s portrait recalls the experience of several owners of Pre-Raphaelite paintings who were overwhelmed by their images’ lifelike resemblance. For instance, the first owner of William Holman Hunt’s *The Awakening Conscience* (1851–53), Thomas Fairbairn, was so disturbed by the lifelike expression of the mistress captured in the painting that he requested Hunt repaint the face in a less provocative manner (Fig. 2).⁴⁰ Pre-Raphaelite paintings often strove to depict such lively expressions in their characters in order to convey emotional and psychological depth; moreover, this was specifically in reaction to the blunt and rigidly frozen images that were presented in photographs which required long exposure times.⁴¹

As the novel progresses, the portrait of Lady Dedlock, in its similarly excessive realism, becomes so true to life that it seems to have captured an essential part of Lady Dedlock’s self as it alters in appearance to reflect the lady’s own misfortune. The portrait is thus paradoxically demonstrated as more expressively true to the woman herself, because while Lady Dedlock imitates the frozen attitude of the eighteenth-century pastoral-style family portraits, this Pre-Raphaelite-style portrait of her reveals the repressed depths of her suffering. Strikingly, the portrait’s alterations are depicted through its luminosity – a key stylistic feature of Pre-Raphaelite images. Indeed, Hunt argued that ‘luminosity’ was essential to the realism of Pre-Raphaelite style and gave a detailed account of the techniques of light and shade necessary to achieve it.⁴² Furthermore, William Bell Scott claimed that, influenced by mechanisms of light employed by photography and the consequent realism it achieved, Pre-Raphaelite art attempted to capture ‘the unerring fatalism of the sun’s action, as well as the perfection of the impression on the eye’.⁴³ It is specifically this combination of the ‘unerring fatalism of the sun’s action’ as well as the ‘perfection of the impression on the eye’ which Dickens depicts in his



Fig. 2. William Holman Hunt. *The Awakening Conscience*. 1853.
 Oil paint on canvas, 762 x 559 mm. Tate Britain, London.
 Photo Credit: © Tate, London 2017.

presentation of Lady Dedlock's portrait. For example, as Guppy and Tulkinghorn deepen their investigation, the portrait becomes covered with 'bars and patches of brightness' (p. 182); later with 'broad strips of sunlight shining in, down the long perspective, through the long line of windows, and alternating with soft reliefs of shadow' (p. 255). These descriptions of light and shadow playing upon the surface of the portrait create the impression of the represented lady as locked behind bars, thus reflecting

the real Lady Dedlock's imprisonment under Tulkinghorn's and Guppy's investigative gaze. Furthermore, the 'clear cold sunshine' cuts Lady Dedlock's image in two in a distinctly condemnatory direction: '[a]thwart the picture of my Lady, over the great chimney-piece, it throws a broad bend-sinister of light that strikes down crookedly into the hearth, and seems to rend it' (p. 182). The 'broad bend-sinister' is explained by Nicola Bradbury in the notes to the Penguin Edition of *Bleak House* (2003) as 'a Heraldic device: diagonal line top left to bottom right of family shield; it signals illegitimacy, so acts here as a proleptic revelation of the plot, conspicuously highlighted' (p. 1024). Thus, this portrait bears its sitter's personal truths as Lady Dedlock comes under increasing scrutiny.

As the novel reaches its climax, the portrait comes under further assault from the shadows that replicate Guppy's and Tulkinghorn's pursuit of Lady Dedlock. Dickens, for example, describes how 'now, upon my lady's picture over the great chimney-piece, a weird shade falls from some old tree, that turns it pale, and flutters it, and looks as if a great arm held a veil or hood, watching an opportunity to draw it over her' (p. 641). This seemingly supernatural image evokes the scene of Lady Dedlock visiting her lover's grave disguised by her veil as her maid Hortense – the event which, upon Tulkinghorn's discovery, will be Lady Dedlock's undoing. In addition, the tree proleptically references Lady Dedlock's doomed meeting with her illegitimate daughter Esther in the woods by Chesney Wold where, as Esther recalls, '[t]he perspective was so long, and so darkened by leaves, and the shadows of the branches on the ground made it so much more intricate to the eyes, that at first I could not discern what figure it was' (p. 565). Furthermore, in the next presentation of the portrait, Dickens describes how '[t]he shadow in the long drawing-room upon my lady's picture is the first to come, the last to be disturbed. At this hour and by this light it changes into threatening hands raised up, and menacing the handsome face with every breath that stirs'. The next line spoken describes the real life Lady Dedlock: "'She is not well'" (p. 642). Thus the condition of the portrait and its real life sitter blur. Lady Dedlock's death appears conspicuously close as the shadows menacingly threaten her portrayed countenance. The portrait's uncanny, supernatural, 'living force' is thus imbued with the 'truth' of Lady Dedlock's identity and must consequently follow her towards her wretched end. Indeed, after her death, Sir Leicester sits looking up at the portrait, until its light 'seems gradually contracting and dwindling until it shall be no more' (p. 983). The Pre-Raphaelite image is so true to life, it must be buried in darkness with its character.



Fig. 3. Hablot Knight Browne ("Phiz").
Sunset in The long drawing-room at Chesney Wold. 1853.

The Galaxy Gallery of British Beauty

While the too true-to-life Pre-Raphaelite portrait is imprisoned, attacked, and ultimately blacked out, its mysteriously reproduced and circulated replica lives on to undercut its lifelike realism. Upon first seeing the oil portrait, Guppy asks if the picture has been engraved, believing that, if he has not seen the original, he has seen a copy of it. Rosa, the maid, explains that '[t]he picture has never been engraved' (p. 110). Later, however, Guppy recognises a 'speaking likeness' to Lady Dedlock in a 'copper-plate impression' Jobling owns and displays as part of his collection of Galaxy Gallery British Beauties (p. 510). As Ronald Thomas has pointed out, this is most likely a copy of the original oil painting; and, since the original painting has presumably not been engraved, we might surmise that this copy may have been reproduced by some primitive photographic process such as chromolithography or photo-engraving.⁴⁴ Indeed, the Galaxy Gallery portraits resemble images described in advertisements for photography studios which were publicised with instalments of *Bleak House*. It is, therefore, insightful to analyse the Galaxy Gallery picture of Lady Dedlock as an image specifically copied from the Pre-Raphaelite style of oil portraiture through an early form of photography.

The Galaxy Gallery of British Beauty, in the tradition of *Heath's Book of Beauty*, represents 'ladies of title and fashion in every variety of smirk that art, combined with capital, is capable of producing [...] the Galaxy Gallery of British Beauty wears every variety of fancy dress, plays every variety of musical instrument, fondles every variety of dog, ogles every variety of prospect, and is backed up by every variety of flower-pot and balustrade' (pp. 330-31). Thus the figures' poses are affected: they 'smirk'; they are

not just costumed, but masquerade in ‘fancy dress’; and they are staged in an endless ‘variety’ of theatrical scenes (pp. 330-31). They are ‘art, combined with capital’, and therefore present specifically superficial middle-class aspirations (p. 330).



Fig. 4. ‘The Mask’, *Heath’s Book of Beauty*. 1833. Copper plate engraving, such were often taken from oil portraits through photographic means. Courtesy of Heinz Archive and Library, National Portrait Gallery.

The figures (eg. Figs. 4.&5.) anticipate an advertisement for John E. Mayall’s Daguerreotype Portrait Studio which was included with instalment number 15 of *Bleak House*, and which was specifically targeted at such aspirants.⁴⁵ Recalling the Galaxy Gallery portraits, this advertisement promotes costumed dress for sitters because it apparently ‘adds to the beauty of the picture’ and ‘enhances the general effect’, specifically: ‘shawls, scarfs, mantles and all flowing drapery’ for women; ‘fancy vests and neckerchiefs’ for men; and ‘hair in ringlets for children.’ Upon



Fig. 5. 'The Marchesa', *Heath's Book of Beauty* (1835),
Copper plate engraving. Courtesy of Heinz Archive
and Library, National Portrait Gallery.

visiting Mayall's studio for their article 'Photography', which was published in Dickens's weekly magazine *Household Words*, Henry Morley and W. H. Wills described how one 'lady's dress was not at all ill chosen for a photographic sitting or a masquerade'. In addition, they commented upon Mayall's 'mysterious designs',⁴⁶ which Dickens – having sat for Mayall in 1852, six months before the advertisement appeared – described as 'the little eccentricities of the light and the instrument'.⁴⁷ In the advertisement these techniques are presented as the 'admirable tinting and execution of draping'. They are thus elements of artistic arrangement that deliberately alter the appearance of the sitter in order to enhance it. Such a practice of manipulating photographs to intentionally mislead the viewer was inconsistent with the belief that the camera provided an objective, accurate representation of the sitter. Ironically, the advertisement's claims for the veracity of photographic portraits are undercut even as they are advanced.⁴⁸ For instance, the advertisement, while promoting the 'artistic treatment' and transformation Mayall's studio offers, simultaneously argues for 'images without the slightest distortion'.

In addition, the advertisement quotes a review from the *Spectator* which describes how Mayall's photographs capture the 'aspect of living reality'; and, another from the *Daily News* which describes the 'remarkably striking likeness' achieved in the images. Indeed, the advertisement references the *Era* which confirmed that seeing such realistic photographic portraits at Mayall's studio is evidence of the camera's ability to depict reality, and will thus 'convert' any 'unbelievers' of its power. The advertisement concludes by quoting a review from the *Manchester Examiner and Times* which extols the studio photographer's work for its accuracy: 'with regard to portraits we see our friends as they are, without a vestige of the tinselled flattery of bygone art, as true as the polished mirror would depict them'. The photographers may not employ the 'tinselled flattery of bygone art'; however, their own new methods of artistic manipulation involve the 'polished mirror' which does not present a neutral reflection, but instead a scrubbed-up, glossily refined, and adorned image.

The indeterminate status of the Galaxy Gallery portrait of Lady Dedlock illustrates the difficulty in interpreting the verisimilitude of these artfully staged photographic pictures. Lady Dedlock is, for instance, presented as standing with 'a pedestal upon the terrace, and a vase upon the pedestal, and her shawl upon the vase, and a prodigious piece of fur upon the shawl, and her arm on the prodigious piece of fur, and a bracelet on her arm' (p. 510). This depiction is ostentatious as it highlights the ornamental regalia that surrounds and represents Lady Dedlock. However, by this point in the novel, we recognise its misleading superficiality: in reality, Lady Dedlock is not the ideal aristocratic figure. Moreover, the satirical tone with which the picture is described recalls not the true-to-life Pre-Raphaelite-style oil portrait of Lady Dedlock, but instead the narrator's derisive treatment of the eighteenth-century pastoral-style family portraits. In addition, the narrator's verbal enumeration of props and accessories recalls the pictures of the Fancy Ball School which would be 'best catalogued like the miscellaneous articles in a sale. As "Three high-backed chairs, a table and cover, long-necked bottle (containing wine), one flask, one Spanish female's costume, three-quarter face portrait of Miss Jogg the model, and a suit of armour containing Don Quixote"' (pp. 458-59). This catalogue draws attention to the picture's contrived staging and meretricious concern with its accessories, props and costumes. Such stylisation makes such painted portraits dubious in a similar fashion to the Galaxy Gallery portraits. Indeed, when Tulkinghorn sees the magazine image of Lady Dedlock, he claims it is "'[a] very good likeness in its way, but it wants force of character'" (p. 637). This criticism echoes Dickens's own about contemporary English painting which he felt lacked 'living force and truth'.⁴⁹ Thus, if based upon a photographic reproduction of

the Pre-Raphaelite-style oil painting, this copper-plate impression does not capture the original portrait's 'living force'; rather, it undermines it, appearing staged, superficial and dubious. It is far from 'true to nature'.

Lady Dedlock's Galaxy Gallery Portrait Subjected to 'forensic lunacy'

Despite lacking 'force of character', the Galaxy Gallery portrait – photographically captured, mechanically reproduced, disseminated into the world as public property and openly displayed – now threatens to reveal Lady Dedlock's personal history and true identity as Esther's mother. Indeed, whether Guppy's initial inexplicable familiarity with the original portrait of Lady Dedlock stemmed from his seeing Esther or the Galaxy Gallery photographic copy in it is ambiguous, as he states "I didn't at the moment even know what it was that knocked me over" (p. 464). However, viewed through Guppy's investigative gaze – 'he has an inquiring mind in matters of evidence' (p. 311) – the portrait, as Ronald Thomas suggests, becomes a mug-shot: 'a wanted poster that silently announces Lady Dedlock's dark past'.⁵⁰ Indeed, as it is exposed to Guppy's gaze, this image literally frames Lady Dedlock, as holding the image 'in [his] hand', Guppy subjects it to 'forensic lunacy' (p. 637). Ironically, the image's 'speaking likeness' (p. 510) to Lady Dedlock – and, by extension, Esther – silently presents evidence of her scandalous crime: her affair out of wedlock and the consequent illegitimate child she bore.

The Galaxy Gallery thus anticipates the Rogues' Gallery – a police collection of photographs kept for the identification of criminals – that would follow it.⁵¹ As was noted in an article in Dickens's magazine *All the Year Round*, by the mid-nineteenth century, '[s]harp detectives have photographs of criminals of whom they are in search'.⁵² In response to the development of these photographic images, physiognomy and other (pseudo) sciences focused on capturing, reading and categorising the criminality of the human body.⁵³ However, the mug shot, forcibly taken and publicised, did not simply capture the appearance of a criminal but branded criminality onto the image. Furthermore, once the image was publicly displayed in local police precincts, the identity of the 'criminal' became deliberately open to public surveillance. In *Bleak House* Mr Bucket seems to have established such an archive of mug shots in the rogues' gallery of his mind. He has 'a keen eye for the crowd' as he 'surveys' the city for Lady Dedlock (p. 804) and he gazes with special interest 'along the people's heads' (p. 804). Furthermore, appearing 'to possess an unlimited number of eyes', detective Bucket seems to those on whom he looks 'as if he were going to take [their] portrait'

(p. 355) instantaneously through his ‘sharp-eye’ (p. 762). As Ronald Thomas has noted, Bucket thus possesses ‘virtually photographic powers of vision [...] capabilities [that] might properly be compared to those of the camera’.⁵⁴ Personified in Bucket, photography is, therefore, ‘represented not simply as an instrument for artistic representation [...], but also as a technology designed for surveillance, and control’⁵⁵ – a technique with which to capture the criminal. Indeed, when Guppy finally discovers the disreputable events in Lady Dedlock’s past, he contemplates the ‘taking down’ of her Galaxy Gallery portrait from Jobling’s wall, proclaiming that since his ‘undivulged communication’ with her, he has taken her down: she is now nothing more than a ‘shattered idol’ (p. 637). Thus, although the photographically reproduced copy of the original Pre-Raphaelite-style oil portrait is a ‘speaking likeness’ (p. 510) to Lady Dedlock, it does not tell the truth. Investigated ‘forensic[ally]’ (p. 637) by a detective gaze, like a mug shot, it captures only superficiality: ‘the undoubted strong likeness [between Esther and Lady Dedlock] which is a positive fact for a jury’ (p. 468). It thus frames Lady Dedlock for a sexual scandal and for the consequent desertion of her illegitimate child without allowing her to voice her own testimony or her deeper feelings for her daughter.

Conclusion: ‘Nature never writes a bad hand’

In an article in *Household Words*, ‘The Demeanour of Murderers’ (1856), Dickens sarcastically explains how ‘we express an opinion that Nature never writes a bad hand. Her writing, as it may be read in the human countenance, is invariably legible, if we come at all trained to the reading of it’.⁵⁶ Thus the key to interpreting human faces, we assume, is to be able to read the human countenance: nature’s text. Once one has learnt how to read nature’s markings, by extension, one is surely able to interpret artistic portraits of these markings by perceiving to what extent they are true to nature’s hand. Making a claim for the camera’s ultimate fidelity to nature, William Henry Fox Talbot titled his photographically illustrated book on calotype invention, *The Pencil of Nature* (1844-46).⁵⁷ For Dickens, however, interpreting truth to nature in art is not so straightforward, particularly in portraiture. In *Bleak House*, for instance, characters strive for a definitive reading of the ‘inscrutable Being’ (p. 24), Lady Dedlock, by ‘forensic[ally]’ examining (p. 637) her image as it is depicted in the replica photograph of the original Pre-Raphaelite-style oil portrait; however, this proves to be unjustly fatal for the novel’s character. Dickens thus demonstrates that depending on how portraits are captured and viewed, they have the power to redefine the identity of the sitter. We should, therefore, be wary of interpreting images so definitively, without being sensitive to what escapes the frame.

Upon sitting for a photographer himself, Dickens stated that the final image ‘does not look to me at all like, nor does it strike me that if I saw it in a gallery I should suppose myself to be the original’.⁵⁸ For Dickens, bodies in visual art cannot be rendered into legible texts. Dickens the novelist turned art critic directs us to read his ‘No Trust’ sign in order to think beyond the question of images’ truth or untruth, so that we can begin to interrogate the very processes of artistic presentation and interpretation.

¹ Charles Dickens, *Nicholas Nickleby*, ed. by Mark Ford (London: Penguin, 1999), p. 121.

² Charles Dickens, ‘The Ghost of Art’, *Household Words*, 20 July 1850; repr. in *The Dent Uniform Edition of Dickens’ Journalism*, ed. by Michael Slater, 4 vols (London: Dent, 1994-2000), II (1996), 262. Further references will be to this edition.

³ Charles Dickens, *Pictures from Italy*, ed. by Kate Flint (London: Penguin, 1998), p. 131. Further references will be to this edition and included in the text.

⁴ Charles Dickens, *Little Dorrit*, ed. by Stephen Wall and Helen Small (London: Penguin, 2003), p. 160. Further references will be to this edition and included in the text.

⁵ This epithet comes from F. R. and Q. D. Leavis’s book *Dickens the Novelist*, the purpose of which was to ‘enforce as unanswerably as possible the conviction that Dickens was one of the greatest creative writers’, see: *Dickens the Novelist* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1970), p. xi. In this essay, I will consider Dickens’s novels against other forms of his writing, including journalism, letters and travel writings, to show how Dickens was also a very active art critic.

⁶ Charles Dickens, Letter to Count Alfred D’Orsay, 18 March 1845, in *The Pilgrim Edition of The Letters of Charles Dickens*, ed. by M. House, G. Storey, K. Tillotson, and others, 12 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965-2002), IV (1977), 284. Further references will be to this edition.

⁷ Kate Perugini was herself a successful portrait painter, exhibiting her own works at the Royal Academy. See, Lucinda Hawksley, *Katey: The Life and Loves of Dickens’s Artist Daughter* (New York: Doubleday, 2006), pp. 266-67.

⁸ Kate Perugini, ‘Charles Dickens as a Lover of Art and Artists’, *Magazine of Art*, 27 (1903), 125-69 (pp. 130-69). Further references will be to this edition and included in the text.

⁹ Charles Dickens, Letter to John Forster, ?11-12 November 1855, *Letters*, VII (1993), 743.

¹⁰ Charles Dickens, ‘The American Panorama’, *The Examiner*, 16 December 1848; *Journalism*, II (1996), 135.

¹¹ John Ruskin, ‘Modern Painters’, in *The Works of John Ruskin*, ed. by E. T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, 39 vols (London: George Allen, 1903-12), III (1903), 624. For a discussion on Ruskin’s aesthetic principle ‘truth to nature’, see: Edward Alexander, *Matthew Arnold, John Ruskin, and the Modern Temper*, where it is defined as a ‘minute and particularised description of nature with the poet’s grasp of her spirit’ (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1973), p. 142.

¹² Charles Dickens, ‘Old Lamps for New Ones’, *Household Words*, 15 June 1850; *Journalism* II, (1996), 242-48.

¹³ William Holman Hunt claimed to have been influenced by Dickens's novels, see: *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*, 2 vols (London: Macmillan, 1905-06), I (1905), 17. Dante Gabriel Rossetti was also inspired by Dickens, see: Oswald Doughty, *A Victorian Romantic: Dante Gabriel Rossetti* (London: Muller, 1949), p. 49.

¹⁴ Hunt claimed that Dickens's attack was born out of 'blind fellowship' to his artist friends, who seemed to be the objects of Pre-Raphaelite scorn, see: Hunt, I, 205-06. Leonée Ormond argues that Dickens thought the term "'Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood" [...] implied a deliberate attack on Raphael', whom Dickens admired; in addition, 'Dickens's objection to the Millais' painting was stimulated [...] by its religious subject', see: 'Dickens and Painting: Contemporary Art', *The Dickensian*, 80 (1984), 2-25 (pp. 20-21). Peter Ackroyd claims it to have been based on a 'confusion' of the Brotherhood's aims, see: *Dickens* (London: Sinclair-Stevenson, 1990), p. 462.

¹⁵ Kate Perugini perhaps sought to justify her father's attacks on the Pre-Raphaelites because of her own association with them. For instance, in 1880 John Everett Millais painted Kate Perugini's portrait and he had previously used her as a model for his painting *The Black Brunswicker* (1860). In addition, Perugini's first husband was the Pre-Raphaelite artist Charles Collins, see: Hawksley, pp 145-53.

¹⁶ Anonymous, 'The Waverley Novels', *Littell's Living Age*, 57 (1858), 569.

¹⁷ Anonymous, 'Charles Dickens', *Littell's Living Age*, 100 (1869), 708.

¹⁸ William Bell Scott, *Autobiographical Notes on the Life of William Bell Scott*, ed. by W. Minto, 2 vols (London: James R. Osgood, McIlvaine, and Co., 1892), I, 250-1.

¹⁹ George Brimley, 'Dickens's *Bleak House*', *The Spectator*, September 24 1853; repr. in *Essays of the Late George Brimley*, ed. by William George Clark (Cambridge: Macmillan, 1858), p. 294.

²⁰ George Eliot, 'The Natural History of German Life', *Westminster Review*, 66 (1856); repr. in *Selected Essays, Poems, and Other Writings*, ed. by A. S. Byatt and Nicholas Warren (London: Penguin, 1990), pp. 107-39 (p. 111).

²¹ Henry Morley and W. H. Wills, 'Photography', *Household Words*, 19 March 1853, pp. 54-61 (p. 59).

²² John Payn, 'Photographees', *Household Words*, 10 October 1857, pp. 352-54 (p. 352).

²³ Jonathan Crary has written an extensive account of the profound changes in ideas of seeing and perception in the nineteenth century that occurred as a result of new optical technologies, including the camera. He argues that there was a 'complex remaking of the individual as observer into something calculable and regularizable and of human vision into something measurable and thus exchangeable', see: *Techniques of the Observer* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992), p. 17.

²⁴ Nancy Armstrong, *Fiction in the Age of Photography: The Legacy of British Realism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), pp. 7-10.

²⁵ Daniel A. Novak, *Realism, Photography and Nineteenth-Century Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 6.

²⁶ Lindsay Smith, *Victorian Photography, Painting and Poetry: The Enigma of Visibility in Ruskin, Morris and the Pre-Raphaelites* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 4.

²⁷ Laurence Talairach-Vielmas, *Moulding the Female Body in Victorian Fairy Tales and Sensation Novels* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2007), p. 121.

²⁸ Charles Dickens, *Bleak House*, ed. by Nicola Bradbury (London: Penguin, 2003), p. 5. Unless otherwise stated, further references will be to this edition and included in the text.

²⁹ John Forster, *The Life of Charles Dickens*, ed. by J. W. T. Ley (London: Palmer, 1928), pp. 727-8.

³⁰ Charles Dickens 'A Preliminary Word', *Household Words*, 30 March 1850; *Journalism*, II (1996), 177.

³¹ Robert Newsom, *Dickens on the Romantic Side of Familiar Things* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977), pp. 7-9

³² Reviews which referred to *Bleak House* as a 'gallery of portraits' include: Anonymous, 'The Collected Works of Charles Dickens', *The British Quarterly Review*, 35 (1862), 135-160 (p. 154); Anonymous, 'Mr Charles Dickens', *The Glasgow Herald*, 11 June 1870, p. 3; Anonymous, 'Charles Dickens', *The Preston Chronicle*, 18 June 1870, p. 4; and, George Smith, 'Charles Dickens', *The Gentleman's Magazine*, 236 (1874), 316.

³³ Interestingly, many of the portraits described by Dickens are represented in the background of Hablot Knight Browne's illustrations to *Bleak House*. Unfortunately, these illustrations – and Dickens's relationships with his illustrators – are beyond the scope of this essay. For further reading, see: Michael Steig, *Dickens and Phiz* (Bloomington: Indiana U.P., 1978) and Jane Cohen, *Charles Dickens and His Original Illustrators* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1980).

³⁴ Anny Sadrin, *Parentage and Inheritance in the Novels of Charles Dickens* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 69.

³⁵ Ronald Thomas, 'Double Exposures: Arresting Images in *Bleak House* and *The House of Seven Gables*', *Novel*, 31 (1997), 87-113 (p. 103).

³⁶ Regina Oost, "'More Like than Life": Painting, Photography, and Dickens's *Bleak House*', *Dickens Studies Annual*, 30 (2001), 141-58 (p. 142).

³⁷ Charles Dickens, *Bleak House*, ed. by George Ford and Sylvère Monod (New York: Norton, 1977), p. 654.

³⁸ See endnote 33.

³⁹ In an article in 1852, David Masson notes which 'Pre-Raphaelites' were at this time 'best known to the public', see: 'Pre-Raphaelitism in Art and Literature', *The British Quarterly Review*, 16 (1852), 197-220 (p. 197). Moreover, Robert Tracy argues that *Bleak House* provides a 'guide to contemporary reality', see: 'Lighthousekeeping: *Bleak House* and Crystal Palace', *Dickens Studies Annual*, 33 (2003), 25-52 (p. 30).

⁴⁰ Apparently, Fairbairn could not bear to see the realistic 'lips half open, indistinct in their purple quivering; the teeth set hard; the eyes filled with the fearful light of futurity', see: Hunt, I, 418.

⁴¹ See, *Pre-Raphaelite painting techniques, 1848-56*, ed. by Joyce Townsend, Jacqueline Ridge, and Stephen Hackney (London: Tate Publishing, 2004), p. 68.

⁴² Hunt, I, 276-77.

⁴³ William Bell Scott, I, 250-1.

⁴⁴ Ronald Thomas notes that Louis Daguerre and William Henry Fox Talbot had arrived at successful methods for fixing images by the early 1830s. Consequently, he argues that Lady Dedlock's portrait 'may have been reproduced by some primitive photographic process', see: 'Making Darkness Visible: Capturing the Criminal and Observing the Law in Victorian Photography and Detective Fiction', in *Victorian Literature and the Visual Imagination*, ed. by Carol Christ and John Jordan (Berkeley: University of California Press,

1995), pp. 134-68 (p. 140). Furthermore, in 'Double Exposures' Thomas argues that 'this copy may well have been reproduced [...] we may even speculate, on collodionised glass plate', p. 95.

⁴⁵ Charles Dickens, *Bleak House* (London: Bradbury & Evans, 1853).

⁴⁶ Henry Morley and W. H. Wills, p. 55.

⁴⁷ Charles Dickens, Letter to Miss Burdett Coutts, 23 December 1852, *Letters*, VI (1988), 833-34.

⁴⁸ This is also noted by Oost who reads this advert, along with others, as part of her analysis of the commodity culture of the rising Victorian middle class, p. 143.

⁴⁹ Charles Dickens, Letter to John Forster, ?11-12 November 1855, *Letters*, VII (1993), 743.

⁵⁰ Ronald Thomas, 'Making Darkness Visible', p. 140.

⁵¹ By 1859 Rogues Galleries were commonly in operation, see Oscar Solbert, Newhall Beaumont and James Card, 'Rogues Gallery', *Image, Journal of Photography*, 7 (1952), 2.

⁵² Anonymous, 'Since This Old Cap Was New', *All the Year Round*, 19 November 1859, pp. 76-80 (p. 79).

⁵³ In 1889 Alphonse Bertillon, while Chief of the Bureau of Identification in Paris, introduced an anthropological system of identification, see: Oscar Solbert, Newhall Beaumont and James Card. This was followed by Francis Galton's composite photography method for constructing an image of a typical, biologically-determined, criminal face, see: Jonathan Finn, *Capturing the Criminal Image* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), p. 22.

⁵⁴ Ronald Thomas, 'Double Exposures', p. 91.

⁵⁵ Ronald Thomas, 'Making Darkness Visible', pp. 138-39.

⁵⁶ Charles Dickens 'The Demeanour of Murderers', *Household Words*, 14 June 1856; *Journalism*, III (1998), 378.

⁵⁷ William Henry Fox Talbot, *The Pencil of Nature* (London: Longman, 1844-46).

⁵⁸ Charles Dickens, Letter to John Forster, ?1 and 2 December 1855, *Letters*, VII (1993), 758.