“DELICIOUS PLURAL”: THE EDITORIAL “WE” IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY FICTION AND PERIODICALS

By

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To my husband Anton Garcia-Fernandez,

the love of my life

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INTRODUCTION

A running gag in the 1935 Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers comedy *Top Hat* has a stuffy British man-servant (Eric Blore) puzzling all and sundry by referring to himself in the first-person plural. "Allow us to introduce ourselves, sir. We are Bates, sir." Bates's plural allows him to stand-aloof from the foolishness of his American employer (Edward Everett Horton) while ostensibly remaining deferential. Like so many of the old-fashioned British traditions the film mocks, the plural establishes Bates as a critical judge of taste, intimidating his employer but not the irrepressible Travers (Astaire). When Bates compliments Travers on his choice of attire, Travers replies, "*They* like me." Bates's use of "We" also confuses two hotel detectives investigating an altercation in the lobby. To divert suspicion from Travers, who is partially at fault in the contretemps, Bates tells the detectives, "Oh, possibly we had been a little imprudent, sir." Bates's employer repeats his words for the record, "Of course, you see, we had been a little imprudent," perplexing the detectives further. "But you said it wasn't you," the detective exclaims. This moment exaggerates the humor in Bates's linguistic self-presentation, but it also arouses genuine confusion for the detectives trying to determine the person responsible for the disturbance. Bates ends up falsely confessing: "We take all the blame myself."

Because the film requires a light-hearted appeal to accompany Astaire's smooth performances, the critique of Bates's formalities is never too serious but remains tempered by the comedic effect of perpetual misunderstandings. The characters' self-mockery functions alongside briefer moments that sting with derision for the man-servant's stuffy proprieties and other outmoded social conventions to make the ridicule palatable. In the same way, nineteenth-century periodicals used comedy to mitigate their critical blows for audiences outside of the

profession of letters. The “We” wielded respect from readers looking for sound perspectives on the changing world around them, but it also enabled writers to create humorous interludes and playful exchanges of words.

The same kind of balance between humor and authority often proved necessary to journals such as *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* when they tackled politically delicate topics, whether the politics be internecine literary issues or larger questions of state. For example, when making a comparison to the competing *Quarterly Review* in 1829, the fictional editor Christopher North describes *Blackwood*’s characteristic balance of fun and seriousness, a combination that proved advantageous given the journal’s harsh critical attacks that provoked other periodicals occasionally to refer to *Blackwood’s* as Mohawk Magazine:

> Absurd, trifling, and ridiculous, we often—too often, are,—ye, never; but dull, heavy—nay, stupid—ye sometimes are, while with us, these are universally admitted to be the most impossible of all impossible events in nature. In mere information—or what is called knowledge—learning, and all that—facts, and so forth—we willingly give ye the pas: but neither are we ignorant; on the contrary, we are well acquainted with arts and literature, and in the ways of the world.... You have a notion in your wise heads, that you are always walking in advance of the public; we have a notion in our foolish ones, that we are often running in the rear. (296-97)

When North chooses “we” to represent *Blackwood’s* here, it means many things. The mask of “We” empowers *Blackwood’s* specific style of periodical critique, a style that fluidly mixes analysis with diversions, spiced up with disguises, caricatures, and jokes. The passage alludes to the conglomeration of voices and fictionalized contributors created for the series *Noctes Ambrosianæ*, which dramatized the corporate production of *Blackwood’s*, but also invokes the anonymous editorial “We” of the authoritative reviews that made the journal famous and, to some, infamous. Many periodicals in the nineteenth century, like *Blackwood’s*, honed the manipulation of “We” and its wide-reaching effects on reading audiences.

This dissertation pairs fictional texts with periodicals in four different time periods that span the nineteenth century to compare the changing narrative perspectives encoded in the great "We." Despite the seemingly straightforward function of the pronoun, and its consistent ability to influence readers, writers adapted the "We" to multifarious purposes throughout the century. Many Victorian writers, including the authors in this study, wrote both periodical material and independent fiction, and their texts not only illustrate how formal and stylistic trends in periodicals influenced fiction writing (and vice versa) but also demonstrate how writers developed and expressed opinions about social topics in different literary arenas. The world of periodicals emboldened many writers to speak openly as critical readers, judging and esteeming current events and texts through the language of authority or through the language of satire crafted to critique while it unsparingly entertained. These approaches to periodical engagement with the reader molded periodicals' uses of "We" and "I" voices. In fiction, many authors brought a level of that same authoritative or satirical scope of the world to their narratives—for instance, an *Athenaeum* critic once remarked that Thackeray had a "certain professional causticity" in his novels (1273). But the distinct realm of fiction was not predicated on critiquing, like periodicals, but on showing and exploring and entertaining through sustained plots, which in turn could alter the tone and agenda of "We" and "I" voices. I explore how the "We" takes on distinct significance in periodicals and fiction from the 1820s, the 1840s, the 1860s and '70s, and the 1890s. Its varying uses are symptomatic of changing cultural attitudes about such concepts as self-representation, stylistic trends (like realism), politics, commercialism, and generic categorization.

The comparison of fiction to periodicals enables an analysis of four Victorian writers whose broad-ranging work and engagement with contemporary issues cannot be understood fully

without examining their stances about the presentation of voice and argument to both novel readers and periodical readers. As Fionnuala Dillane says in a study on George Eliot as critical reviewer, the "construction of an essayistic voice and the many ambiguities related to subject, journal and intended audience are typically not considered in detail when addressing the non-fiction periodical work of fiction writers (such as Dickens, Thackeray, Meredith, among many others)" (244). My project expands Dillane's focus on "authorial statements"—specifically the "authorial statement" of George Eliot, for Dillane—to address the cultural issues driving periodicals' uses of "We" and "I" voices as a crucial context with which to interpret narrative perspectives of fiction. The authors considered here—Benjamin Disraeli, William Makepeace Thackeray, Anthony Trollope, and George Gissing—use periodical trends and conventions to analyze irregular narration in their fiction, and in turn, this practice informs these authors' approaches to significant cultural topics in their texts.

Periodical publishing in the 1820s, for instance, was marked by politically driven corporate agendas, but by tracking the "We" outside of periodicals, specifically where it encounters fashionable celebrity in Benjamin Disraeli's first novel, I cite evidence of political action and profitable literary production envisioned as something other than corporate, as something driven by bold personality and individualism. The market of the 1840s, the second stage in this study, profited from a period of social agitation that encouraged new categories of content for growing audiences with widening social identities. The "We" and "I" voices of periodicals complemented the seriousness of commanding reviews by elaborating on the pseudonyms and eidolons of the 1820s and '30s with more platforms for recurrent fictionalized characters and even serialized fiction. Examining the work of a periodical writer attempting to broach the novel market of the 1840s, specifically that of Thackeray, I consider an experiment

with fictional realism that uses periodicals' multiplicity of voices as a guide for recording conflicting perspectives and portraying labor (including literary labor) for new working-class readers.

The 1860s witnessed the age of the great Victorian periodicals, but the leading journals still had to challenge their established status quo with innovations, such as signature policies to promote accountability and author celebrity, to maintain prominence among growing competitors. Contrasting Trollope's contributions to nonfiction and fiction in the 1860s, I apply discussions of anonymity policies in periodical reviews to his grotesque caricature of collective voice in short stories, which eventually fueled a longer indictment of political representation from unaccountable sources in the 1870s. The overbearing commercialism of publishing in the 1890s—which was characterized by niche markets, generic categorization, and the use of both anonymity and signature depending on marketability—threatened the livelihoods of would-be writers attempting to craft work of integrity and artistry. Yet, variations of narrative voice in the fiction of George Gissing, read in tandem with his later periodical work, suggest that "artistic integrity" was not necessarily acquired by overcoming the circumstances of commercialism but by embracing its limitations and using its labels to experiment in blended genres and points of view.

The subtle dynamics of power and denial, of impersonal judgment, of irony and confusion, were at work in the ubiquitous plural narrator in Victorian fiction and periodicals. For this dissertation, I have selected from among this extensive period texts that interrupt a reader's ability to identify a narrator or narrative approach, those that withhold from the reader the opportunity to settle on a specific construction of narrative perspective. In these inconsistencies, the reader is shaken—if only for a moment—from the pattern the text has

established in its narrative perspective. So, if the narrator generally goes unnoticed in the book, then suddenly its presence becomes fore-grounded with personalized comments, or the narrator who is a character in its own tale suddenly disappears for some duration *or* takes on the attitudes of a different figure, one perhaps detached or preoccupied with seemingly distinct concerns. It may be as simple as a shift from "We" to "myself," but suddenly the reader cannot be sure of who is narrating the text and must wonder *why* the voice has changed. These moments make the *telling* of the story stand out, prioritized, if only briefly, over the stories being told. Although they may not redirect the flow of the narrative altogether, such irregularities are important because they interrupt the process of reading to puzzle the reader: *what was that*? Depending on the text, the narrator may quickly fall back into its established patterns of narration, so the irregularities do not appear to alter or influence meaning in the story. Nevertheless, they remain as ripples in the accumulation of narrative mediation in the reader's mind; they remain as questions, and often they go unanswered.

Editors serve as parallel figures to narrators in that they, too, mediate texts for readers. In the nineteenth century, periodicals often shaped audience's understandings of the world around them, and to that end, editors maintained very specific policies on the voices with which to address their respective audiences. In the world of journalism, a writer's choice of "We" or "I," or of pseudonym or anonymity, was a conscious choice that had a clear origin in a policy based on such factors as politics, demographics, tradition, or competition. In the case of fiction writers who share a history of work in the periodical world, I argue that changes in their patterns of narrative perspective also signify in the texts—not perhaps as moments of conscious choice or slippage but as shifts that nonetheless register periodicals' ways of thinking about the representation of voice and the manipulation of reading audiences.

*   *   *

The editorial "We" and the intertwined relations between periodicals and novels by no means started in the 1820s. As some of the major studies of the eighteenth-century British novel have suggested,[1] the historical changes that marked the rise of the middle class in Great Britain correlate with, if they do not originate, the rise of the reading public that would eventually spark the considerable growth of the Victorian publishing industry. The question that the work of such critics as Ian Watt, Michael McKeon, and John Klancher raise is how writers in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries addressed the tension between conflicting versions of that rising public audience, or as Klancher puts it, "the conflicting forms of collective awareness" (4). Whether fractures in that collective awareness resulted from, for instance, competing trends in defining and valuing historical authenticity in novel writing, with which McKeon is much concerned, or from a process of readers' self-identifying as part of an audience in reaction to journals' strategic depictions of "other" more politically radical audiences, as Klancher maintains, critical studies of eighteenth-century reading and literature scrutinize representations of expanding and yet ununified audiences. What is so useful about considering periodicals in relation to late-eighteenth-century reactions is that, as Klancher explains, periodicals were able to distinguish or "make" audiences—by crafting their journal's departments, persona, and politics, with which readers could affiliate—audiences that in many cases could not distinguish themselves independently (4). By identifying their own readers within certain categories in a market that acknowledged the existence of journals with other, conflicting readerships,

[1] See Ian Watt's *The Rise of the Novel* (1957); Michael McKeon's *Origins of the English Novel*: 1640-1700 (1987); Jon P. Klancher's *The Making of English Reading Audiences, 1790-1832* (1987); and Margaret Anne Doody's *The True Story of the Novel* (1996).

"periodicals provide perhaps the clearest framework for distinguishing the emerging publics of the nineteenth century" (Klancher 4).

In 1750, even several decades before the time of periodical innovation that interests us, Samuel Johnson uses the "framework" of his *Rambler* to theorize about changing concerns for fiction writing. In issue No. 4, Johnson suggests that as literary trends shift from topics that are "incredible" or fantastical to those that "exhibit life in its true state, diversified only by accidents that daily happen in the world," a new cause for concern for writers is that these new kinds of fiction "are in danger [of critique] from every common reader" (1). Whereas in *The Rambler*, Johnson feels comfortable citing remarks made by "Scaliger upon Potanus" (1) and expressions by Horace in Latin, "*plus oneris quantum veniae minus,*" and claiming that writers of stories about "dryads" and "hermits" and "shipwrecks" are "safe, except from the malice of learning," he acknowledges that the growing popularity of fiction—which is so engaging in its new forms because it offers "portraits of which everyone knows the original, and can detect any deviation from exactness of resemblance" (1)—threatens the value of a writer's work from the judgment of "every common reader." Johnson's broad, vague description of the novel writer's audience here contrasts strongly with the supposedly "exact" nature of the fictional topics he or she crafts as "imitations of nature" (2) for an amorphous group of critical readers. Much of *The Rambler* No. 4 is occupied with delineating the moral ramifications of texts' imitating parts of nature "deformed by wickedness" (2), but Johnson's discussion of novels within the safer, more knowable framework of his intellectual periodical acutely, if briefly, records the question of audience looming for writers of fiction in the late-eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

The question of audience is also tangible in the work of Henry Fielding, particularly in the novels *Joseph Andrews* (1741) and *Tom Jones* (1749). The latter is especially important

because of Fielding's deft use in it of what Wayne Booth has termed "the self-conscious narrator" (163), which is characterized by its intrusiveness. Throughout the novel, Fielding invokes this intrusive narrative voice, reminiscent of the narrators of eighteenth-century periodicals like the *Spectator* and *Idler* who speak to their knowable audiences directly, creating and maintaining a sense of intimacy with their readers. As an introduction to each book of *Tom Jones*, Fielding's narrator provides a chapter in which he addresses the reader, in order to preface each part of the story with brief discussions of style and content that bring the reader into the narrator's own privileged and mocking point of view of the events to come. To establish this rapport with the reader, Fielding's narrator utilizes an "I" to explain how the course of the text will unfold but shifts at moments into a "We" that includes the reader, in a manner bringing him into the text and influencing his perception of it. For instance, the narrator explains early in Book I: "Reader, I think proper, before we proceed any farther together, to acquaint thee that I intend to digress, through this whole history, as often as I see occasion, of which I am myself a better judge than any pitiful critic whatever" (5). Fielding fashions the relationship between the narrator and the reader as a journey they take together, yet one that is essentially to be a "critical" journey in which they will judge all that the novel presents, because of their distance from the action, *as well as* the self-conscious manner in which the narrator presents the tale. At the end of the novel, Fielding returns to this motif of the journey, now at its end, when the narrator utters his words of farewell to the reader as a preface to the final book: "We are now, reader, arrived at the last stage of our long journey.... let us behave to one another like fellow-travellers in a stage-coach, who have passed several days in the company of each other... and mount, for the last time, into their vehicle with cheerfulness and good humour... never to meet more" (819). That the reader is still to remain critically amused by the form of the final chapters is clear as the narrator

suspiciously contends that his focus will acquire a seriousness in this final book unseen elsewhere in the novel: "if I have now and then... indulged any pleasantry for thy [the reader's] entertainment, I shall here lay it down. The variety of matter... will afford no room for any of those ludicrous observations which I have elsewhere made, and which... have prevented thee from taking a nap when it was beginning to steal upon thee.... All will be plain narrative only" (819). Just as does Johnson's *Rambler* No. 4, Fielding's *Tom Jones* envisions its readers as a critical audience, and yet the "We" of the novel's self-conscious narrator enables Fielding seemingly to invite and thus maintain control over his readers' critique of his fictional world.

Epistolary novels raise related questions about literary representations of non-unified perspective. Epistolary novels build their form around a presentation of various distinct perspectives, non-unified in their collection of written correspondence from several different characters. Such collections presented as novels are one of the characteristic forms of the eighteenth century[2], and the epistolary novel's use of letters to depict both the course of a plot and the subjective reactions and internal psychology of individual characters made it especially useful to early novel writers like Samuel Richardson. Writers of novels in letters also deployed various signs of authentication to validate the historical provenance of a text as well as its corresponding value. Yet, in many cases, such efforts to record and substantiate the authenticity of such material as "real" or "found" resulted in ever more questions among readers and competing writers about what defines historicity and its significance in literature (McKeon 93). In addition to juggling multiple interpretations of the value of literature that is supposedly "true"

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[2] Aphra Behn's *Love-Letters Between a Nobleman and His Sister* (1683-7), Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* (1740) and *Clarissa* (1749), Frances Burney's *Evelina* (1775), and Jane Austen's *Lady Susan* are just a few examples of epistolary novels. For more information of the genre, see John Skinner's *Raising the Novel: An Introduction to Eighteenth-Century Fiction* (2001) and Joe Bray's *The Epistolary Novel: Representations of Consciousness* (2003).

or not, the epistolary novel likewise presents a complex array of competing perspectives in that, as critic Joe Bray argues, the epistolary narrative “oscillates between unity and disintegration of the self” (16) by recording “the fluctuating relationship between the [present] narrating self and the [past] experiencing self” (20). Thus, even when such novels are comprised only of numerous first-person accounts, they are able, according to Bray, to depict reflexive “anxieties of self and identity” created through changes over time (20). In this way, the presentation of perspective in epistolary novels is similar to the kind of irregular, overlapping, or fractured understandings of collective audiences that eighteenth-century writers were working to sort into identifiable structures for the market.

Coming out of these traditions, then, nineteenth-century writers had two models for the kind of experimentation in representing shifting forms of consciousness and perspective in their texts: the strategic design of departments and corporate character in periodicals and the subtle contrast of selves in characters of epistolary novels. The point in time I have chosen to begin an examination of narrative perspective in the nineteenth century closely coincides with the period shortly after writers in the periodical industry, in order to survive among the divided and audience-driven market they had created, began “merging writer, editor, and publisher into a corporate, collective ‘author’ institutionally set apart from [a journal’s] readers” (Klancher 48). Periodical writers had to routinely express their shifting in and out of personal and then corporate, collective representations of voice, in the same way that they represented for their readers imagined ways for the individual reader to relate to the collective audience (Klancher 11). As writers merged these roles, periodicals thus established a blending of methods from both fiction and nonfiction traditions to address audience through engaging, innovative ways. Letters to the editor, for instance, often served as familiar departments in journals in which writers could

fictionally imagine exchanges between ideal readers to construct a periodical's readership but also to present a seemingly authentic record of value and legitimacy in the market. By beginning in the 1820s, I consider how periodicals' approach to particular strategies of perspective and genre-crossing tactics crosses into fiction writing through the influence of such writer figures that played multiple roles in corporate publications and produced copy in multiple genres and formats. In many ways, the writers I examine in this project put the process itself of *creating* author-audience exchanges on display, whereas the periodicals from which they culled their techniques most often sought to efface that process. The art of creating that author persona and conversing with the reader becomes of key interest to the writers in this dissertation.

By absorbing the language of periodicals—designed to categorize audiences, journals, and both personal and corporate voices of writers in the market—in addition to the various traditions of multiple discourses and perspectives coming out of eighteenth-century fiction, the titles in this dissertation depict several incarnations of the novel as a self-reflexive form. I consider four different interpretations or definitions of the novel, created by four different writers in four distinct time periods, which are nonetheless linked by their efforts to represent the push and pull between individual and collective expression throughout the nineteenth century. This project does not seek to define the nineteenth-century novel in any sweeping way. Any definition of the novel is complicated, and each case presented here offers a different understanding of the novel form, each a unique incarnation, though also linked by the same technological and publishing factors as the periodicals of their time.

One innovation of form distinctly links periodicals and novels as early as 1836, with the publication of Charles Dickens's *The Pickwick Papers*: serial or part-issue publication. To overlook seriality as a point of contact between the form of the periodical and that of the novel

would be to overlook one of the most productive catalysts of literary production in the Victorian period. The power of seriality, beyond "spread[ing] the cost of a book over a long period, thus appealing to the great body of middle-class readers who could afford to spend a shilling a month but not lay out a cool guinea... at a time" (Altick 279), was that it enabled writers—with each successive installment, part, or book—to offer "virtually limitless multiplication" of interpellations of "the bourgeois subject" (Feltes 9). *The Pickwick Papers* actually began as a pseudo-periodical, with Dickens contributing text to accompany the illustrations of Robert Seymour in a project funded by publishers Chapman and Hall. As the first installments of the project demonstrate, the idea behind *The Pickwick Papers* originally centered around Seymour's sporting illustrations, which required Dickens to contrive an imaginary club of gentlemen whose recorded adventures in the country are found and presented by an editor figure. This narrator repeatedly denies any involvement with the Pickwick club and, rather, establishes his role as a mere arranger of content, addressing the reading audience with a formal editorial "We." In the fourth chapter, which originally appeared in the second installment, the narrator offers such a disclaimer eschewing any undue credit for the authorship of the following diverting pages:

> Many authors entertain, not only a foolish, but a really dishonest objection to acknowledge the sources whence they derive much valuable information....We are merely endeavouring to discharge, in an upright manner, the responsible duties of our editorial functions; and whatever ambition we might have felt under other circumstances to lay claim to the authorship of these adventures, a regard for truth forbids us to do more than claim the merit of their judicious arrangement and impartial narration.... (69).

This narrator explicitly defines himself as an "editor" with "editorial functions," and the "We" perspective acts as a distinctly editorial "We" that models itself on the narrative structures of contemporary periodicals.

When, prior to the publication of the third installment, Seymour committed suicide and Dickens took over creative control of the project, the model of the periodical episode served as a basic guide to follow as he continued to plan out future installments. The editorial function of the narrator allowed Dickens to slowly bridge the gap between the more familiar form of the periodical episode and the serial novel he was beginning to create. When Dickens writes Chapter 6, signaling his new approach to the text, the editorial "We" does not appear, as episode confidently focuses on the intrigues of the Pickwick club, which are now more detailed and immersed in plot. Yet, he nevertheless returns to the narrator's editorial comments from time to time to remind the audience of the original claim that the Pickwick club was real, in order both to heighten the ridiculousness of the supposedly "true" adventures *and* to maintain the connection with the mode of periodical narration that gave order to the parts that what would soon become a much longer collection to navigate. So, for instance, the narrator periodically returns to his found documents to remind the readers of the source and justify the course of the plot: "Shall we extract Mr. Pickwick's masterly description of that heart-rending scene? His notebook, blotted with the tears of sympathizing humanity, lies open before us; one word and it is in the printer's hands. But no! We will be resolute! We will not wring the public bosom with the delineation of such suffering" (161). Dickens would rely on the dynamics of the periodical model, or of serial publishing, throughout his career in fiction, using it to build suspense, divert expectations, mold digressions, and illustrate his own narrative control in his texts.

Arguably no other writer was more able to harness this correlation of seriality between periodicals and novels, and to profit by it in the nineteenth century, than Dickens. Not only his role in the invention of part publication but his editing of *Bentley's Miscellany*; his extensive development of corporate characters, agendas, and promotions; and his championing of fiction in

Household Words and *All the Year Round* all demonstrate Dickens's centrality in the suturing of periodicals and novels in Victorian culture, as has been acknowledged by a long tradition of critical studies on Dickens. Yet, to begin with Dickens for my study into the influences of periodical perspective and representations of consciousness on novels is to miss a crucial earlier chapter. Dickens emerged from the period, previously mentioned, when writers were combining roles both figuratively and practically with editors and publishers, and his achievements represent the pinnacle of a mature situation where someone could simultaneously occupy positions as both iconic author *and* iconic editor. Yet, I am interested in the maturing of the literary and market factors that led to such a possibility, in the maturing process of how periodicals and novels began to interact with each other, specifically at a time when periodicals were succeeding in consciously, strategically addressing the concerning question of audience and fractured collective awareness. Therefore, I begin this dissertation with the work of Benjamin Disraeli in the late 1820s, before the enduring formations of Dickens's career had happened.

* * *

Many texts in the nineteenth century feature the first person plural, or what Anthony Trollope calls the "delicious plural":

> The great WE was not, in truth, ours to use…. We shall, therefore, tell our story, as might any ordinary individual, in the first person singular, and speak of such sparks of editorship as did fly up around us as having created but a dim coruscation, and as having been quite insufficient to justify the delicious plural. ("The Panjandrum" 136)

A distinctive narrative point of view, which critics from Roman Jakobson to Amit Marcus have characterized as "inherently contradictory" and "semantically unstable" (Marcus, 47-48) because it gives voice to multiple consciousnesses at one time, first person plural narration nevertheless

appeared regularly in Victorian periodicals, both in fiction and nonfiction. The editorial "We"—as it was known in the publishing arena—owed much of its popularity within periodicals to its ability to represent a corporate identity and to confer a tone of finality and consensus to essays, playing to audiences' desire for authoritative information. Trollope's story "The Panjandrum," which originally appeared as one of six stories in the series *An Editor's Tales* in *St. Paul's Magazine* in the late 1860s, recalls the struggle of a group of writers launching a new scholarly journal and testifies to the important role that the editorial "We*"* held for writers, editors, and the very life of the publications in which it appeared. Writers and critics from both the nineteenth century and today have pointed to the veneer of authority that the first person plural could bestow on a text.[3] As Trollope makes clear, that authority held sway not just with readers looking for reliable content and collective opinions but also with other writers and editors in terms of prestige and validation in the marketplace.

How does an unstable narrative perspective manage to produce authority, and what are its consequences for that authority and the narrative discourse? As in "The Panjandrum" excerpt

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[3] Kelly Mays says in "The Disease of Reading and Victorian Periodicals" that "the corporate character of the periodical text was exemplified formally in the practice of not identifying authors… as well as… in the 'we' endemic to the middle-class periodical" (167). She then cites evidence of this practice in writings from Victorian journalists such as Eneas Sweetland Dallas, who wrote in 1859 that "periodicals not only were the representatives and creators of public opinion but also were 'to a large extent… in fact—the public'," and Frederick Oakley, who claimed in the *Dublin Review* of 1853 that the power of the journals lay in their corporate identity: "The regular contributors to a Review, constitute a kind of corporation, each member of which derives an immense accession of weight from the fact of his forming an integral part of the whole" (188). As periodicals began to find a place for literature and fiction, the authority of "public opinion" that Dallas suggests the journals wielded through their corporate identities spread from influence over politics to influence over concepts of literature and aesthetics and the function of fiction, be it moral or entertaining or socially experimental. For a further introduction to the editorial "We" and corporate identity in Victorian periodicals, see Kelly J. Mays's "Reading and Victorian Periodicals" in *Literature in the Marketplace*; Sarah Nash's "What's in a Name? Signature, Criticism, and Authority in *The Fortnightly Review*" *Victorian Periodicals Review* 43:1, Spring 2010; and Laurel Brake's *Subjugated Knowledges* (1994).

above, the integrity and stability of the “great WE” can be easily subverted. Trollope’s narrative voice achieves just that when it self-deprecatingly claims the need to tell the short-lived history of *The Panjandrum* in the first person singular, all the while maintaining a voice in the first person plural throughout this introduction: “We shall, therefore, tell our story… in the first person singular.” So what makes the form of the editorial “We” so powerful when it is so easily circumvented? The narration commences with a naturalness located in an unobtrusive plural voice, yet it is a plural voice that sharply contrasts with the fabricated and pretentious quality implied in the narrator’s comments about the “great WE.”[4] What is more, this more ordinary “We” must be quickly disguised according to certain conventions wherein the “great We” is earned through proof of editorial “sparks” or brilliance, in order to tell the story of the failed publishing venture. This first less noticeable “We,” which Trollope’s narrator works hard to distinguish, is (as it says) not there to tell the story—the first person singular will do that—but to render noticeable and unnatural, through its own juxtaposition, the manufactured exclusivity (which thrives on a promise of inclusion) functioning through the editorial “We.” This dissertation considers the purpose of such posturing through an examination of perspective in fiction *and* periodicals across the nineteenth century.

The ubiquity of periodicals in the nineteenth century makes their inclusion in critical discussions on Victorian narrative perspective in fiction crucial to a more thorough understanding of the time period. As George Saintsbury put it in 1896, periodicals are the most

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[4] The term “the great We” had been in use for decades by the time Trollope employed it in “The Panjandrum,” which affirms the authority that the narrative mode had garnered in periodicals throughout the first half of the century. Cornelius Webbe uses the term, for instance, in *The Man about Town* (1838) when he concludes that MacBeth could have avoided much trouble if he had only had the informative newspapers of the 1830s at his disposal to track his enemies’ movements, but unfortunately: “The great WE, who now so ably governs all the World, as yet was not, or was such a “*wee* thing,” that Time saw him not—perhaps did not look to see him” (26).

"distinctive and characteristic" feature of English literary history in the nineteenth century, without which "more than half the most valuable books of the age in some departments, and a considerable minority of the most valuable in others, would never have appeared as books at all" (166). This project grounds itself in the critical question of how conventions established in periodicals, namely the *editorial "We"* and the correlating concepts of *corporate identity* and the play of *anonymity* and *signature* in the press, are altered when employed in the form of the novel.[5] The influence of periodical conventions on novels is significant because the nineteenth century saw fiction enter periodicals, due to the market's need to provide content for growing reading audiences *and* the onset of serial publication, requiring the journal and the novel to overstep their formal boundaries and share copy.[6] Likewise, many nineteenth-century writers

[5] For more information on the issue of signature in nineteenth-century periodicals, see William Thackeray's "On the Press and the Public" from *Punch*, 1850; John Morley's "Memorials of a Man of Letters" from the *Fortnightly Review*, 1878; Morley's "Valedictory" from the *Fortnightly Review*, 1882; Tighe Hopkins's "Anonymity?" from *The New Review*, 1890; Kelly J. Mays's "Reading and Victorian Periodicals" from *Literature in the Marketplace*; and D. Liddle's "Salesmen, Sportsmen, Mentors: Anonymity and Mid-Victorian Theories of Journalism," from *Victorian Studies*, 41, Autumn 1997.

[6] In the 1820s and 1830s, periodicals typically featured political and social commentary, evangelical content, the occasional short fiction and poetry, or critical reviews of literature (often accompanied by lengthy excerpts), among other miscellaneous nonfiction material. Periodicals did not generally contain extended series of fiction. Richard Altick details the small cheap papers that were beginning to introduce fiction for entertainment to the market, which consisted of "disjointed and unauthorized extracts from books, clippings from floating literature, old stories, and stale jocularities" (319). Part-issue publications, however, would soon change the place of fiction in the periodical market and challenge "the supremacy of the guinea-and-a-half three decker as a vehicle for the original publication of fiction" (279). Publishers began experimenting with producing long fiction in serialized monthly part issues, which, while not a part of any particular periodical, were printed, advertised, and sold using the cheap materials and methods of journal publication and were created to compete on the periodical market. By the 1840s, periodicals were beginning to position serialized fiction as recurrent departments in their weekly and monthly publications. For more information on publishing practices of the nineteenth century, see Altick's *The English Common Reader* (1957), N.N. Feltes's study *Modes of Production of Victorian Novels* (1986), John Klancher's *The Making of English Reading Audiences: 1790-1832* (1987), and a collection of essays edited by John Jordan and Robert Patten, *Literature in the Marketplace* (2003).

produced material for *both* periodicals and novels, and the range of their literary experiences inevitably marks their work.

Over the past few decades, scholars of nineteenth-century print culture have offered a multitude of perspectives on periodicals' contemporary influence on literature and the reading public.[7] Many of these studies consider the role of the history of the publishing market in relation to the novel. For instance, N.N. Feltes examines the effects of printing formats, such as part-issues and three-volume editions, on novels' literary styles, and Linda Hughes and Michael Lund address the issue of periodicity and the significance of serialization in novels for Victorian culture. I approach this stage in the history of British publishing by analyzing the role of *narration* in novels that show evidence of influence from periodical conventions established to represent the self through narrative perspective in four time periods—Benjamin Disraeli's *Vivian Grey*, from the late 1820s; William Makepeace Thackeray's *Pendennis*, from the late 1840s; Anthony Trollope's *An Editor's Tales* and *The Way We Live Now*, from the late 1860s and the mid 1870s; and George Gissing's *New Grub Street*, from the early 1890s.

This study examines how the editorial "We" functions differently in periodicals and novels. Because the "We" was so often employed by periodicals that fostered corporate identities and refrained from printing editors' and contributors' names, except with the use of pseudonyms, my dissertation *also* explores the role of corporate identity as well as anonymity and signature policies and their potential to affect perspective in novels, even novels with clearly

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[7] See N.N. Feltes's *Modes of Production of Victorian Novels* (1986); Linda Hughes and Michael Lund's *The Victorian Serial* (1991); the collection of essays edited by John Jordan and Robert Patten in *Literature in the Marketplace* (2003); Laurel Brake's *Subjugated Knowledges* (1994) and *Print in Transition* (2001); James Mussell's "Cohering Knowledge in the Nineteenth Century: Form, Genre and Periodical Studies" (2009); and David Stewart's "Filling the Newspaper Gap: Leigh Hunt, *Blackwood's*, and the Development of the Miscellany" (2009).

cited single authorships. These conventions—the *editorial "We,"* the practice of *corporate identity*, and *anonymity* or *signature policies*—are mutually constitutive and so often occurred together in journals that it has been useful to consider them together in this study on nineteenth-century literary perspectives. It is important to note, however, that historical changes shape alterations in these conventions. As a result, because the editorial "We" decreased in popularity over the course of the century, and as the sway of corporate identity lessened in periodicals as they began to adopt signature policies and market the celebrity of individual authors in the second half of the century, these conventions play lesser roles. For instance, although Trollope's work examines the transformation of functions of the editorial "We" from periodical nonfiction into fiction, it begins to focus equally on the effects of anonymity and signature as on corporate identity and its collective voice, which for Trollope in the 1860s had become a suspect practice. By the time Gissing is publishing in the 1880s and early 1890s, the editorial "We" has become outmoded to such an extent that it does not appear at all in Gissing's novel about periodical hacks, *New Grub Street*.[8] Rather, the influence of periodicals on Gissing's fiction has emerged

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[8]In his final editorial address, "Valedictory," for the *Fortnightly Review* written in 1882, John Morley refers to the periodical's experiment with signature and adds his thoughts to George Henry Lewes' final comments as editor several years earlier:

> 'The arguments in favor of [signature] were mainly of a moral order; [those] against it... mainly asserted its inexpediency. The question of expediency has, I venture to say, been materially enlightened by the success of the Review.' The success of other periodicals, conducted still more rigorously on the principle that every article ought to bear its writer's signature, leaves no further doubt on the subject. (513)

Several pages further, Morley makes the point for the new dominance of signature policies more forcefully: "The press is more and more taking the tone of a man speaking to a man. The childish imposture of the editorial 'We' is already thoroughly exploded" (516). Despite the change in review practices, other contemporary evidence makes clear that the editorial "We" was still in use in many newspapers. An article from the *Speaker* from 1904, even twenty-two years after Morley's editorial address, writes suspiciously about the continued appearance of the editorial "We":

out of what had been the role of the editorial "We" and transformed into questions persisting in the late century about anonymity and signature, as well as issues of the marketability of different kinds of writing.

Periodical commentary on the editorial "We" contextualizes attitudes about narration in the first person plural point of view. A bias toward the authority and prestige of anonymity, for instance, colors multiple mentions of the editorial "We" in periodical excerpts from the 1820s through the 1850s. For instance, although C.H. Townshend offers an attack of the "awful power that lurks indefinite in 'we' and 'our'" (119) in his 1827 satirical poem "Reigning Vice," a reviewer for *The Kaleidoscope*, also writing in 1827, counters Townshend's concerns with a description of general market practice:

> Who can read Cobbett's writings without being disgusted with his egotism—his perpetual repetition of I, I, I? Besides, as applicable to reviews, &c., the "we" is not only more modest, but more appropriate, as the articles in such works are written by so many persons, that the general editor could not with propriety adopt the monosyllable I. (422)

While the "I" was seen by many periodical writers early in the century as "egotistical," writing with the "We" outside of corporate periodicals, in single-authored texts, was equally discouraged, as an article from *The English Review* of 1849 illustrates of Hugh Scott's *The Scottish New Generation, or the Reaction*:

> But a moral question, in fact a series of moral questions, arises when, let us say, a Tariff Reformer buys a Free Trade newspaper, buildings, editor, staff, office boys, and all as a going concern. But what about the editorial 'We'? Whom did the Free Trade We (let us say) of the *Standard*, a fortnight ago, represent?—proprietor, editor, manager, and leader writers, or only the first, or only the first two, or only the second and the last? We presume the editor was a strong Free Trader, yet he tells us that Mr. Pearson, the chairman of the Tariff Reform League, asked him to stay on and allow Free Trade problems to rest on the shelf for a time. (201)

The writer of the article writes himself in the first person plural ("let us say") but suggests that publications must take responsibility for their positions through some means of transparent intent.

> the writer, despite the name on the title-page, adopts throughout the use of the editorial We, and in one passage seems to indicate that his essay is reprinted from some Scotch Review. If this be *not* the case, we must confess, that the self-conceit breathing from many passages is not a little offensive to our eyes. (221)

The "We" of periodicals is so respected that if a writer is even suspected of using it outside of the bounds of the journalistic world his work becomes "offensive," even though this particular reviewer goes on to state that Scott's text offers "so much of which we heartily approve." Allegiance to the "We" persists in the 1850 article "A Lecture on Journalism" by "An Old Stager" in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*. In it, speaking of a "decline" in the profession of journalism that has resulted, supposedly, from forced signatures on the French periodical market, the writer—who makes a point to use a dramatic pseudonym that keeps him anonymous—worries for his own country's market: "I don't like this, I own it. I wish to see its respectability kept up, and its decencies preserved, and I don't think that can be accomplished by the suppression of the editorial 'We'" (697).[9] Whereas the "We," in its function to unify the collaborating voices behind corporate periodicals, contained or concealed the overload of voices for the sake of professional presentation, writers such as the "old stager" often felt empowered by the "We" so much as to characterize it as "preserving decency" and to fear that it, inherently a suppressor, would become "suppressed."

As the century progressed, instances of periodical commentary on the "We" shifted to display more uncertainty. W.H. Watts says in 1862 in *My Private Notebook: or Recollections of an Old Reporter* that in his early days of editing he "saw the enormous power for good and evil

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[9] This article, which appears in *Blackwood's* in December of 1850, goes on to speak of the certain failure of articles presented by the likes of "Jenkins, or Larkins, or Perkins" in contrast to the unsigned articles of "a leading London journal." These moments are quite reminiscent of moments discussing the certain failure of articles by "Smith, Brown, Jones, and Robinson" in Thackeray's essay "On the Press and the Public" that he published in *Punch* in August of 1850. I discuss Thackeray's essay in more depth in the third chapter, in relation to Trollope's work.

that vested in the editorial 'We'," (qtd. on 177) although a reviewer in *The Critic* is skeptical of melodrama in Watts's book and does not seem to think this dramatic statement genuine (177). In the following decade, the poem "That Editorial 'We'" printed in an issue of *Fun* from October 24, 1877, heightens the harsh appraisal of the plural perspective through a satirical rhyme:

> I only war 'gainst those who wield contributorial pen.
> I grieve to say in private life their notions disagree
> With what they hold as good and just beneath the mantle 'We'....
>
> What one man writes a thousand heed in these degenerate days.
> Each journal leads crowds by the nose through thought's entangled ways.
> How can an honest man abuse such pow'rs for good as these,
> And lose his soul's identity in editorial 'We's? (201).

As G.H. Lewes pointed out in his final address of the *Fortnightly* about its arguments for signature, many writers like the poet from *Fun* discussed the moral and immoral effects of the editorial "We" and its capacity for "good" and "evil" (see footnote 8). John Morley reiterates this point in another article from the *Fortnightly*, "Memorial of a Man of Letters" from 1878, when he casts the convention of the first person plural as a deception against the public: "there is a monstrous charlatanry about the old editorial We." Yet, he also admits that a new system of signature offers new opportunities for dishonesty, for those willing to take advantage:

> but perhaps there are some tolerably obvious openings for charlatanry of a different kind under our own system. The man who writes in his own name may sometimes be tempted to say what he knows is expected from his position.... signature perhaps offers as many inducements to one kind of insincerity as anonymity offers to another kind. (605)

What Morley makes clear is that while conventions like the "We" may lend themselves to misrepresentation, a press intent on controlling the public—or simply pleasing the public—will find many different ways to achieve those ends. Morley's position helps clarify the complexity of the debate and the lingering doubts within the publishing arena about the transition into the age of signature that would last into the next century. In the very same year, 1878, a writer for

The Examiner actually prescribes, albeit in a less rigorous article, poets' use of the editorial "We" in place of an "I" as "what can most safely be recommended" to remedy audiences' mistaking ordeals of poetical subjects as "the presentment of [the poet himself], his hopes, his lives, his sorrows, his guilts and remorses, his history and psychology generally" (269). Rather than educating readers, the writer maintains that controlling audience responses with the editorial "We," however out of place it may seem in the personal scenes of poetry, offers "safe" and reliable results. Regardless of the oscillating opinions of the market about anonymity and signature, by 1890—the year before *New Grub Street* was published—writer Tighe Hopkins looks back at the century's debate and sums up its practical conclusions succinctly: citing Morley from "Valedictory" he says, "'The childish imposture of the editorial We' will not cease yet, but the days of its authority are told.... the public is beginning to be weary of the heavy and colourless ways of anonymity" (276). Whatever the profits of the editorial "We," the market was changing because audiences could no longer accustom themselves to its nondescript formal pose. These various quotes give only a small taste of the myriad thoughts about perspective in the periodical market, but they demonstrate in brief form the changing sense of the "We" to which I refer throughout my analysis.

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The "We" had as many variations in fiction as in nineteenth-century periodicals. Charles Dickens, G.W.M. Reynolds, George Eliot, Lewis Carroll—these are but a few of the novelists who capitalized on the multifarious uses of "We." The functions of "We" in these narratives range in agenda from constructing unified reading audiences to engaging novel readers in social and political issues to contemplating new philosophical and scientific conceptions of both external and internal

perception.[10] When Charles Dickens invokes a "We" narrator in his novel *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1840-41), for instance, he does so only occasionally in a tale that begins with a first-person narrator, Master Humphrey, but that is primarily told in a third-person omniscient form: "And now that I have carried this history so far in my own character and introduced these personages to the reader, I shall for the convenience of the narrative detach myself from its further course, and leave those who have prominent and necessary parts in it to speak and act for themselves" (33). Despite this admission, which Master Humphrey honors throughout most of the novel, Dickens's text adopts a new voice, this time in the "We," for a moment of transition halfway through the narrative:

> As the course of this tale requires that we should become acquainted, somewhere hereabouts, with a few particulars connected with the domestic economy of Mr. Sampson Brass, and as a more convenient place than the present is not likely to occur for that purpose, the historian takes the friendly reader by the hand, and springing with him into the air... alights with him upon the pavement of Bevis Marks. The intrepid aeronauts alight before a small dark house, once the residence of Mr. Sampson Brass. (248)

The shift into this "We" reminds the reader that Master Humphrey has withdrawn from the role of teller and now identifies with the audience. In this moment, the "We" feints a necessity to "become acquainted... with a few particulars" of the tale so that the narrative voice can experience *with* the reading audience the mystery and anticipation that drive the novel's course. It is this production of common experience that unifies the reading audience, which includes Master Humphrey through the "We." Observing a distinct "historian" take the "friendly reader" through the London sky to land outside a character's home evokes the imaginative thrills of the reading process, but it is Dickens's use of the "We" here, the depiction of Master Humphrey as

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[10] For more information on narrative and narrative voice see Elizabeth Ermarth's *Realism and Consensus in the English Novel* (1983); Catherine Gallagher's *The Industrial Reformation of English Fiction: Social Discourse and Narrative Form*, 1832-1867 (1985); Kate Flint's *The Woman Reader: 1837-1914* (1995); Garrett Stewart's *Dear Reader: The Conscripted Audience in Nineteenth-Century British Fiction* (1996); Leah Price's *Anthology and the Rise of the Novel: From Richardson to George Eliot* (2000); Caroline Levine's *Serious Pleasures of Suspense: Victorian Realism and Narrative Doubt* (2003); and Nancy Armstrong's *How Novels Think: The Limits of Individualism from 1719-1900* (2005).

just another reader, that so deftly bonds the audience.[11]

G.W.M. Reynolds's *The Mysteries of London* (1845), in comparison, relies on the "We" as the regular narrative voice in the series that presents London's gritty underworld alongside glossier episodes featuring high society. Originally written for *Reynolds's Miscellany*, the novel challenged the market's accepted forms of content and garnered enormous audiences with its melodrama and radical messages (Altick 292). Not only did Reynolds seek to entice low-level workers who had just acquired a level of literacy but he likewise endeavored to promote open discussion and political action among middle-class people who had the potential to sympathize with their less fortunate countrymen and the power to influence social conditions in mid-Victorian Britain:

> For if, on the one side, we have raked amidst the filth and loathsomeness of society,—have we not, on the other, devoted adequate attention to its bright and glorious phases? Have we not taught, in fine, how the example and philanthropy of one good man can 'save more souls and redeem more sinners than all the Bishops that ever wore lawn-sleeves?'.... And if... we may presume that so long as we are enabled to afford entertainment, our labours will be rewarded by the approval of the immense audience to whom we address ourselves,—we may with confidence invite attention to a SECOND SERIES of "THE MYSTERIES OF LONDON." (328-9)

When Reynolds uses the "We" here in the novel's epilogue, the plural voice serves as an editorial "We" emphasizing the labor of the narrator in crafting the series—in parallel to the other laborers of the novel—but through its repetition it also rallies for common identity among its readers of differing classes. The proof of such common identity would be realized for Reynolds's narrator in tangible financial returns, from the continuing purchase of *Mysteries* supplements by these myriad readers, as the excerpt's final promotion insinuates.

[11] Victorian readers' enthusiasm for *The Old Curiosity Shop* and the plight of Nell and its many other characters is recorded in the novel's sales: "As readers' interest in her welfare grew, the sales of *Master Humphrey's Clock* rose to 100,000 copies per week" (Brennan xi).

Several decades later, George Eliot's *Middlemarch* (1871-72) also experiments with moments of "We" in its narrative. Like Dickens and Reynolds, who saw the potential to unify large masses of unconnected readers through the presentation of common experiences or common causes, Eliot explores the potential for the introspective self to relate to other people and to one's own social personas through instances of the "We." Rather than cast the narrator as a reader or a laborer, however, Eliot chooses to use the "We" when the narrative voice—which typically speaks with an "I," such as in "But of Mr. Brooke I make a further remark perhaps less warranted by precedent" (66)—desires to imagine *ideal* ways of understanding other people and the self. Thus the narrator contemplates: "Suppose we turn from outside estimates of a man, to wonder, with keener interest, what is the report of his own consciousness about his doings or capacity.... Doubtless his lot is important in his own eyes, and the chief reason that we think he asks too large a place in our consideration must be our want of room for him" (84-5) and "Strange, that some of us, with quick alternate vision, see beyond our infatuations, and even while we rave on the heights, behold the wide plan where our persistent self pauses and awaits us." (152). Eliot enacts this self-reflexive process of understanding and relating to others and different versions of one's own self by allowing the "We" to enlist the previously established "I" narrator in a community with other points of view. This "We" is not the plural of an authoritative editor, or a passive narrator, or a social radical, but it does represent the singular narrative "I" as it conceives of idealized identifications with other people.

Another text that illustrates the complexity of the collective voice of "We" in relation to Victorian fiction is Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and its sequel *Through the Looking Glass* (1871). Since the first book's publication, Alice has remained for many audiences a loveable character who stumbles her way through the oddities and nonsense of

Wonderland, in texts that poke fun at the seriousness of language—such as what is promulgated in periodical reviews—and that excuse the occasional confusion of a child reader alongside Alice's blunders. The stories do not by any means focus on the world of periodicals, and yet various examples indicate that Carroll purposefully referred to periodical culture from time to time.[12] Not only does he allude to the debate on signature policies in the Knave's trial—"'If you didn't sign it,' said the King, 'that only makes the matter worse. You must have meant some mischief, or else you'd have signed your name like an honest man'" (93)—but Humpty Dumpty sounds like a veritable editor. In arguing with Alice over the meaning of words, Humpty Dumpty takes the authoritative and financially minded attitude of a periodical editor when he says,

> "When I use a word... it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less.... They've a temper, some of them—particularly verbs.... When I make a word do a lot of work like that.... I always pay it extra.... Ah, you should see 'em come round me of a Saturday night... 'for to get their wages, you know." (Alice didn't venture to ask what he paid them with, so you see I can't tell you.) (169)[13]

The words are like periodical hacks that must write and mean what their editor wishes them to write and mean, and like hacks, they are wage-workers who create meaning for reimbursement.

Alice revels in nonsense and the malleability of language, but sometimes the nonsense becomes unsettling when the narrator suddenly speaks up and admits his own ignorance. A harmless example can be seen in the quote above, where the narrator "can't tell" the reader how the words are paid because Alice does not ask: the narrator shifts without warning from the

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[12] Of the material Carroll wrote for *Alice*, some of the earliest tales and poems can be found in a periodical he created as a young man for his family's amusement, *MischMasch* (1855-1862). That Carroll read and referred to periodicals and periodical culture routinely is evidenced in this experimentation in journal writing.

[13] Humpty Dumpty's language here is reminiscent of the commanding language of the editor from Trollope's story "Mrs. Brumby" who says, "The word 'peruse' we certainly never used in our life. We object to 'perusing,' as we do to 'commencing' and 'performing.' We 'read' and we 'begin' and we 'do'" (228).

position of the creator of a make-believe world to an observer of events he cannot control or explain. A more pronounced moment of confusion, for instance, occurs in *Through the Looking Glass* when Alice attempts to board a train without a ticket and a chorus of voices from unspecified people boarding with her starts to mock her. Said to speak "like the chorus of a song" (131), the people tell Alice not to waste time because the guard's time "is worth a thousand pounds a minute" and the land "is worth a thousand pounds an inch" and the smoke from the train "is worth a thousand pounds a puff." When Alice runs out of responses to these chants, she thinks:

> 'Then there's no use in speaking.' The voices didn't join in, *this* time, as she hadn't spoken, but, to her great surprise, they all *thought* in chorus (I hope you understand what *thinking in chorus* means—for I must confess that I don't), "Better say nothing at all. Language is worth a thousand pounds a word!" (131)

The collective judgment of the chorus overwhelms Alice, who is all alone and must make decisions by herself, especially because it gains force through the momentum of its repeated references to commodities worth a "thousand pounds." Not coincidentally, the final commodity in the installment is the one most significant in *Alice*—that of language—and the chorus refers to it in terms of the word rates of periodical labor: "language is worth a thousand pounds a word." What proves so unsettling about the scene is that, in a text so committed to parodying the adult world's process of weighing words, meaning, and the value of labor, the narrator suddenly interjects his perspective on the episode and places himself on the side of ignorance alongside Alice, "I hope you understand what *thinking in chorus* means—for I must confess that I don't." In a manner, the narrator attempts to disarm the threatening collectivity behind the concept of "thinking in chorus" by identifying with Alice and the child reader, combining with them to make a new collective group. But the strategy, while it pacifies anxiety at the surface level of the

text so that Alice can continue on the train, does not resolve the haunting creepiness of a collective group of unknown voices violating the autonomy of Alice's thoughts.

As long as the narrator understands the apparent "nonsense" of the stories, then Alice (and the child reader, as well) maintains the potential to acquire the system of knowing with which to understand the world. But if the narrator claims ignorance, then the chorus that so confidently assigns judgment to Alice in terms she cannot understand becomes a closed community, incomprehensible and impenetrable even with time and learning. What Carroll's narrator accomplishes here requires a different reading, however, from an adult perspective and the more rounded interpretation it allows. First of all, the narrator, in referring to *thinking in chorus*, describes in quite succinct terms the effect that results from periodicals' employment of the editorial "We": audiences assimilate themselves into the "We" of reviews and editorials and perpetuate the set of ideas and ideals proscribed by those periodicals, thus "thinking in chorus." Appearing as an "I" voice that fails to recognize or understand the process of "thinking in chorus" aligns the narrator, within the context of nineteenth-century periodical debate, with the side of signature policies and the pull away from collective voice as the accepted norm of formal persuasive argumentation. Again, it is not coincidental that the gentleman riding in the train carriage Alice has boarded is "dressed in white paper" and complains that Alice "ought to know which way she's going, even if she doesn't know her own name," which is yet another allusion to the practice of outspoken critical articles by unnamed reviewers in the publishing market. Although such periodical references do not turn all of the nonsense into sense in *Alice*—because many times the point of the text *is* to destabilize meaning and expectations—their relevance to the cultural practices examined in *Alice* brings new interpretations to old, familiar scenes. When placed as an overlay to instances of the narrator's anxiety or uncertainty, the world of

periodicals—which worked to construct knowledge in a manner opposite to Carroll's attempts at unraveling it—reveals a commentary that is not so easy to spot *through the looking glass.* Part of learning to navigate through the looking glass, of successfully interpreting its overflow of signs and meanings, therefore, is experiencing the fluctuation between identifying with collective perspectives *and* distinguishing individuality apart from them. That the experience of identity in Victorian culture was inherently *both* collective *and* individualized is recorded in the fluctuations of self-representation in the periodical world and in the fiction that sought structure in its patterns.

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The dissertation begins with Disraeli's *Vivian Grey*, which seeks first to represent the author's understanding and mastery of editorial power in 1820s periodicals—namely *The Representative* and the *Star Chamber*—(and its correlation to power in politics) and second to reject that world, so the presence of the *editorial "We"* and *corporate identity* are integral to the analysis in this chapter. Disraeli's text pits the constraints of corporate production in periodicals against what he sees as the liberating individualism of the novel, and *anonymity* signifies as part of the process of editorial power and corporate identity that Disraeli champions and then abandons. The second chapter moves into the 1840s, examining Thackeray's attempts in *Pendennis* to adapt the techniques that brought him success in periodical writing to the form of the novel, which promised greater profits. Because Thackeray embraced the system of *corporate identity* in periodicals, unlike Disraeli's shifting between "We" and "I" narrators, which reflects his shifting identification with and dissociation from periodical culture, Thackeray's novel shifts between "We" and "I" narrators in a way that maintains his periodical allegiance. The *multiplicity of voices* in *Pendennis* emerges out of but then diverges from corporate identity in

periodicals, which was meant to unify the collaborating voices creating the brand of each journal, to become in Thackeray's definition of the novel an expression of realism defined by its fractures, interruptions, incompleteness, and malleability under the perpetual demands of the publishing market.

The dissertation's third chapter turns to periodicals and fiction of the 1860s and 1870s. Many periodicals had begun to question their use of *corporate identity* by the late 1860s, especially as individual authors acquired greater notoriety and editors realized the benefits that signature policies—by no means yet the norm in the market—could offer to their journals' subscriptions. By depicting the physical absurdity of a collective "We" narrator in his series *An Editor's Tales* (1869), Trollope supports in his fiction the campaign for signature policies and transparent accountability that he started in periodical reviews. Over a ten-year period Trollope modifies his opinion about signature for different kinds of writing, so that while he allows for anonymity in political newspapers in "On Anonymous Literature" (1865), by the time he writes *The Way We Live Now* in 1875, his indictment of the political sway of editors in the novel reflects his suspicion of unidentified collective voices in *An Editor's Tales*. The work of George Gissing stands out in the fourth chapter in that it does not deal directly with the editorial "We." As already stated, the reason for this is that by the 1890s, many periodicals were minimizing the use of corporate identities, at least to the extent that the editorial "We" was no longer an assumed norm in periodical perspective. Gissing's novel *New Grub Street* does *not* employ a "We" narrator, and yet it is linked to the other novels in this study by its reliance on and manipulation of other conventions affecting periodical perspective that developed alongside the "We," namely *anonymity* and *signature*. The terms *anonymity* and *signature* no longer suggest corporate, creative, or transparent agendas as they did for Disraeli, Thackeray, and Trollope; in Gissing's

New Grub Street they represent a monetary agenda in which the periodical market willingly accepts *both* anonymity and signature and exchanges one for the other to accommodate top value under fluctuating circumstances. The other aspect of Gissing's novel that connects it to first person plural narratives is that *New Grub Street* provides evidence that it may be read as an example of what Max Saunders calls fictionally authored texts (134), rendering it in many ways similar to the indistinct points of view presented by ambiguous "We" narrators. Saunders's framework about fiction that claims to be written by someone other than the author aligns the narration of *New Grub Street* with Jasper Milvain's focalization—to use Gerard Genette's term (189-198). Supporting Gissing's interest in fictionally authored writing, his most popular novel, *An Author at Grass: Extracts from the Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft* (1902), which was originally published as nonfiction periodical extracts edited by Gissing for the *Fortnightly Review*, was subsequently marketed as a fictionally authored novel in book form.

The fiction in this study features irregular narrators, most often those presented in the first person plural (excepting Gissing's novel), *as well as* content that corresponds to some aspects of the authors' careers in journalism. The specific history that each writer—Disraeli, Thackeray, Trollope, and Gissing—has with the profession of periodical writing illuminates their texts with references that help interpret the influence of periodical conventions in their use of narrative perspective and also justifies the relevancy of the journalistic world to their definitions of the novel. Each piece of writing elicits a series of questions: what does it mean to read a text without knowing from whom it comes? Why does a writer acknowledge a conscious, subjective narrator through an "I" or "We" in place of a third-person omniscient perspective only to deny the reader any specific information about the narrator and what defines his or her privileged subjectivity? If a narrator constructs the vantage point from which a reader synthesizes the many

details and dimensions presented in a certain novel's version of the world, then how does the reader reconcile this process when his or her understanding of this world is predicated on the vantage point of a narrator who, though he or she may speak with an "I" or "We," has little or no detail or dimension in the novel?

The answers to these questions are as varied as Victorian novels, and yet, in regard to the novels in this study, the answers become specific through their relation to the periodical. Looking to nineteenth-century periodicals, and their long history of tension between the voices of "We" and "I," to comprehend this dilemma of unstable or unknowable narrators in *Vivian Grey*, *Pendennis*, *An Editor's Tales*, and *New Grub Street* has enabled me to see in the gaps and inconsistencies of their narrators other stories being told. They are stories of editorial ambition and rejection for Disraeli, of blended forms and fractured "realities" for Thackeray, of convoluted conventions and denaturalized voices for Trollope, and of disguised authorship and necessary commercialism for Gissing. With each of these writers' work, the context of the periodical not only holds sway over their content, plot, and background, but it is intimately connected to their implementation of narrative voice. By replacing the lens of periodical culture through which so many people saw and processed the world around them—to replace "the daily organ of intelligence by which [so many] appeared to govern [their] own," as the editor of *Fraser's Magazine* once described his father's favorite newspaper—a word as basic and all-encompassing as "We" takes on many definitions. Then, the "great We" acquires the cultural and historical specificity of the many incarnations of the publishing market that for centuries has created and recreated meaning in print.

CHAPTER I

REPRESENTING AND REJECTING EDITORSHIP IN DISRAELI'S *VIVIAN GREY*

Benjamin Disraeli's 1826 novel *Vivian Grey* might appear an odd choice to begin a study into the history of editorial power and periodical practice as presented in nineteenth-century fiction. The plot of the two-part novel veers from bold political intrigue and satire to the Romantic ramblings and disoriented wanderings of a depressed Englishman on the Continent. Where is the focus on the journalistic world? Where are the writers, the editors, the deadlines? In truth, they are not present throughout most of the book but surface only as brief references to peripheral characters. Yet, despite appearances, *Vivian Grey* offers an intimate response to and portrait of the publishing world created in the 1800s. It disguises, chronicles, and attempts to interpret a young Disraeli's encounters collaborating with the likes of investor John Powles, publisher John Murray II, and writer John Lockhart to found a political newspaper, *The Representative*, in the mid-1820s. Resulting in a devastating loss for nearly all involved, both financially and emotionally, *The Representative* lasted a mere six months, and without the record of Disraeli's subsequent novel, its story would easily have faded into the haze of periodical failures.

Many critics have already explored the history of both *The Representative* and *Vivian Grey*[14]. The volatile unfolding of both publications paints the early days of the future prime minister as cast with ingenuity and a bold disregard for protocol. This chapter's task, however,

[14] For an introduction to the history of Disraeli's involvement with *The Representative* and his writing of *Vivian Grey*, see Ridley, Nickerson, Flavin, Bradford, and Weintraub. The historical background I provide as context throughout this chapter relies mostly on these biographical sources.

is to explore the literary qualities of *Vivian Grey* in the context of those well-documented historical relevancies and analogies. Evident in his decision to transform the story of creating *The Representative* into a story about creating a new political party led by an avid new prime minister, the young Disraeli conflates political power with editorial power. Much of the work going into publications at the time came from a range of like-minded contributors, channeled through the representative policies of an editor, often from the angle of a particular political or social faction. An avid reader interested in politics, Disraeli would have been familiar with the era's openly political publications, such as Tory monthlies like the *Quarterly Review*—founded to oppose the *Edinburgh Review* and often featuring politically charged articles about social reform—and the *Anti-Jacobin Review*, which opposed radicalism and actually grew into a monthly publication out of what originally had started as a weekly report of parliamentary sessions.[15] Recognizing the role that periodical editors were playing in the political world, Disraeli also saw the parallel between the corporate structure of periodicals and that of political parties, which encouraged him to rhetorically conflate editorial and political power in his novel and have a political party represent the machinations of a burgeoning political paper. The struggle that *Vivian Grey* enacts, then, is that of a young writer, yet to start his political career, volleying back and forth over what his own specific role in a high-stakes publishing scenario would be. By examining the unpredictable methods of narration, plot construction, and characterization exhibited in the novel, I register *Vivian Grey*'s engagement with questions of

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[15] Foreign Secretary George Canning wrote for both of these Tory-based publications and helped found the *Anti-Jacobin* near the turn of the century (Dixon 40, Rolo 12), a history that supports his possible involvement in *The Representative* endeavor of the 1820s. Influenced by his role in peace negotiations in France, Canning felt the potential threat that lay behind the unstable nature of the class system in Great Britain and embraced the power of the press to promote anti-radical sentiments (Dixon 40). See footnote 8 for further information on Canning.

contemporary editorial practice. My analysis shows that Part One of the novel[16] presents the defensive and self-conscious testimony of a would-be editor endeavoring to record his own skill and ability, while Part Two demonstrates a rejection of those original aspirations and the periodical conventions that accompanied them. While *Vivian Grey* tells the story of *The Representative*, I argue that it is more than a historical record of events, or even a revenge text calculated to embarrass important social figures. It is a novel that displays the editorial techniques Disraeli had been readying for his chance at *The Representative*, and it also shows the effects that his personal experience had on the impersonal, calculated restraints with which he as an editor was supposed to collaborate with others and monitor his text.

Although some historical uncertainty remains over whether Disraeli ever acted or was expected to act as editor of *The Representative* (Ridley 36, Weintraub 62)[17], his reactionary novel makes clear that he was working through what the responsibilities of an editor entailed, as well as the approach required by that important figure. As the text reveals, Disraeli understood the complicated reality that in order to achieve success, whether in publishing or politics, one must often lead by *appearing* to befriend and follow. The protagonist of Disraeli's novel maintains a similar philosophy, which he practices on his friend the Marquess of Carabas—Disraeli's stand-in for Murray:

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[16] Colburn published the first four books of *Vivian Grey* as a complete edition in 1826. Two years later, Disraeli provided four more books, with which Colburn issued the supplemental second part to the novel (Ridley 61).

[17] The *London Magazine* reported in September 1826 that Disraeli was the "projector" of the paper, but the writer does not clarify this term. He only adds: "Of D'Israeli I do not know much, and mean to say less" (113). The article claims that a Mr. Tyndale was the "avowed editor" and a Mr. Lane was the "sub-editor." By the end of the piece, the list of temporary editors grows to include a Mr. Willett and a Mr. Forbes (114) and even William Maginn, whom Disraeli had contracted as a correspondent for the paper. The writer states that despite all of these "editors," the group was incapable of managing the "pompous, ill-conducted scheme" (118).

> It was a rule with Vivian Grey never to advance an opinion as his own.... the opinions of a boy of twenty, however sound, and however correct, stand but a poor chance of being adopted by his elder, though feebler, fellow-creatures.... it was therefore his system always to advance his opinion as that of some eminent and considered personage; and when, under the sanction of this name, the opinion or advice was listened to, Vivian Grey had no fear that he could prove its soundness and its expediency. (30)

Vivian demonstrates the practice of periodical reviews here when he circulates knowledge that originates from elsewhere: his work is a "system" to quote, to excerpt, to cite "under the sanction of [some] name," and then to support. He does not establish or initiate ideas but presents them as if they were already confirmed truths, and thus he builds support for his own positions. This system of conversing points to the corporate nature of periodicals, whose editorial "We"s allude to information that is always a collaboration of sources. In this way, Disraeli uses both the narrator *and* Vivian to act as editor figures in the novel; both Vivian and the narrator wish to show themselves masters of this collaborative process. Yet, the narrator does so from the informed position of an experienced editor manipulating the text with conventions like the "We" while Vivian strives to act out an editorial role under the guise of politics, reflecting Disraeli's vulnerable position in *The Representative* history. For Disraeli, his perceptive strategy to use others' words to support his own designs came with its consequences, especially when executed by an inexperienced "boy of twenty." Although he may have felt himself prepared to take on the role of editor—a sentiment expressed repeatedly through the content and editorial techniques displayed in *Vivian Grey*—he was not so well prepared for obstacles in his path. These came in the form of a financial disaster that cost each of the partners many thousands of pounds *and* in a feeling of mutual betrayal among all involved that cost Disraeli his first chance to prove himself an editor and a leader.

When Vivian Grey's father tells Vivian early in the narrative, "pray, my dear fellow, beware of magazine scribbling" (18), the words—though they transfer anxiety from the newspaper scenario to "magazine scribbling"—refer to a real hurt to Disraeli's ego, as well as to a lesson he was still endeavoring to work out. The events of the past two years leading up to the failure of the newspaper had been a dramatic rollercoaster for Disraeli, so it is understandable that he required the length of a novel to process all that had taken place. It is worth taking a look back at the events that led up to the brief publication of *The Representative* in order to appreciate the context of the editorial world in *Vivian Grey*. Through tracking these historical analogies, I explore the rivalry for editorship that Disraeli experienced with Lockhart and expressed with the characters of Vivian and Cleveland, as well as how that context manifested tangible effects on the editorial conventions at play in the novel. Although Disraeli had known John Murray since childhood, when his father, Isaac D'Israeli,[18] had worked with the publisher on several books, it was not until Disraeli was in his late teens that the two slowly began discussing projects of a professional nature. Impressed with Disraeli's eagerness to make a name for himself and his perceptive appraisal of some short prose pieces, Murray began seriously attending to Disraeli's ideas for business ventures and, therefore, became involved in a financial investment scheme when Disraeli, working as a clerk, met investor John Powles (Ridley 25). Powles was at the time successfully promoting several companies in the newly liberated South and Central American republics, and shares for the various companies were on the rise, much thanks to support from foreign secretary George Canning. Encouraged by the prospect of a fast source of wealth with

[18] As a young man, Benjamin stopped using the apostrophe in his family's name because he felt it looked foreign (Ridley 26). His grandfather originally added the "D'" to "Israeli" upon immigrating to England from Italy; the prefix did not connote noble lineage, as Benjamin would later lead people to believe (10).

which to start his career in politics, Disraeli quickly began purchasing shares with the Anglo-Mexican Mining Association, and he likewise convinced John Murray to do so.

Despite signs that a market panic was imminent, the three men—two substantially older and more experienced than the third—used the investment as an occasion to commence another business partnership, *The Representative*. Murray would put up half of the capital and Disraeli and Powles each a quarter, to be paid out of the anticipated profits of their mining shares, to launch a new Tory newspaper that would rival *The Times* (Ridley 30-34). Here the story becomes a bit more complicated because as Jane Ridley explains, the project briefly stalled because "they had no editor" (34), and the historical record testifies that although Murray felt confident in following his young friend into a major business partnership with a fortune at stake, he lacked enough confidence in his promising protégé to place him at the helm of *The Representative*. Murray already was aware of Disraeli's literary inclinations and had even published on credit three lengthy pamphlets by Disraeli, presented anonymously, rallying support for and fending off criticism against the mining shares when fears about the speculation were reaching their fervor (32-34). It could not have been a great leap for Murray at least to consider Disraeli among possible editors, given his persuasive ability as demonstrated in the pamphlets, his business management—Disraeli himself handled much of the correspondence and initial logistics involved in the early stages of the paper—and his stamina for long-term projects. The year before, Disraeli had sent Murray the manuscript of his first novel, *Alymer Papillon*, and although Murray rejected the work, Disraeli took the rejection in stride as the first experiment in what would be an ongoing pursuit (Ridley 27, Nickerson 280). Perhaps it was this sample of writing, however, that displayed Disraeli's inexperience and convinced Murray that the group needed an established literary man to serve as editor. Whatever the reason, Murray contacted his

influential friend Sir Walter Scott about the matter, and so entered the possibility of attaining his son-in-law John Lockhart as editor.

Given Disraeli's keen desire to pursue a political career, he may have been in agreement with his partners that they needed to find another person to fill the role of editor. A variety of factors marking both Disraeli's behavior in preparation for the launch of the paper and his novel commemorating its loss, however, suggest otherwise: Disraeli envisioned himself an editor and foresaw his performance as editor of *The Representative* as a pivotal first step into his political career. He expected the publication to become the new leading paper, and from that success he expected "not only considerable profit, but... also [material assistance] in gaining the object of my highest ambition" (qtd. in Ridley 34). Nevertheless, the initial plan was to convince Lockhart to edit the paper, and as Disraeli went along with this course, much of the content for the first part of *Vivian Grey* comes from the period when Murray and Disraeli struggled to acquire Lockhart for their project. At issue, first of all, was Lockhart's (and Scott's) aversion to working for a daily paper, which seemed to them too common an enterprise (Ridley 35). The subsequent negotiations involved two trips by Disraeli to Scotland to visit Scott and Lockhart as well as a variety of letters, meetings, and delicate maneuvers pitting certain of Murray's publishing associates against others. But the result of these complex exchanges, which demonstrate the level of corporate interaction driving the business of periodicals, was that Disraeli's efforts secured Lockhart an agreement for the editorship of the *Quarterly Review* and secured the founders of *The Representative*, supposedly, Lockhart's unofficial counsel (Nickerson 282).

Two key pieces of the puzzle that had seemingly fallen into place were about to slip away. First, correspondence between all the major players in the deal shows how Lockhart's

friendship with and reliance on Disraeli prior to his appointment to the *Quarterly Review* quickly came to an end when Murray discovered that Disraeli was keeping more confidences with Lockhart than with himself in the midst of negotiations (Nickerson 306, Ridley 37, 41). Despite Disraeli's loyal effort to help the younger Scotsman, Lockhart did not care to invest his time and efforts into the new daily once he had the reputable *Quarterly* in his charge, whatever he had said to Disraeli about offering the newspaper venture his counsel. More important a loss, however, was the City crash of December 1825, in which a trade deficit ruined the mining companies and the fortunes of the three backers of *The Representative* (Ridley 40). All said, Powles lost up to £120,000, Murray thousands of pounds, and Disraeli several thousand himself—substantial losses.[19] Due to the combination of these factors, the once promising business relationship between Murray and Disraeli found itself on unstable ground.

In the confusing fall out from these events, the first issue of *The Representative* nevertheless appeared in January 1826. In part due to Murray's injured finances, the paper quickly became a liability, especially since the publisher was *never* able to acquire an official editor for its pages, making it "disastrously dull and shapeless, and lack[ing] a clear editorial policy" (Ridley 40). *The Age* provided an anecdote (likely apocryphal, but telling) that depicts both the urgent and ridiculous dilemma Murray experienced at having a new publication with no editor to manage it:

> it is well known that he had no less than six editors in seven successive days. During those annoying changes, John was seen one evening wandering... in a zigzag fashion.... [when] a certain humane person, who feeling for his situation, enquired if he wanted a cab. 'No, d— me Sir,' hiccupped John, 'I want an editor!'. (251)

[19] According to Great Britain's *National Archives* Web site, a loss of £120,000 in 1830 (the site's closest conversion increment to 1826) would equal a loss of £5,938,800 in 2005 (again, the closest increment to 2012).

Months after the paper failed, the *Literary Magnet* claimed that the new daily had been so lauded prior to its publication that "had it been managed with the most ordinary tact and ability, it would ere this have become one of the most valuable newspaper properties in the metropolis" (4). On top of this embarrassing outcome and the disappointment of everyone's expectations, the worst part of the story, according to the *Literary Magnet*, was that the paper had failed because of "the influence of the elder Mr. D'Israeli with Mr. Murray, and the feverish impatience of the son to seize the editorial reins." The result of this interference was that "in little more than a fortnight the Representative was damned past all redemptions; and the editor after such a display of puppyism, ignorance, and mendacity... was deposed amid the scoffs and jeers of the whole Metropolitan Literary World" (4). The strange chaos that ensued led Disraeli to deny any editorial responsibility for the paper and to accuse Lockhart of editing it. According to Disraeli, Lockhart spread the rumor, at the first sign of failure, that Disraeli had edited the paper. The paper's corporate collaboration had devolved into a mess of disparate antagonistic struggles for control and also impunity. Like a drunken Murray wandering the streets of London in search of an editor, the history of *The Representative* sounds like a melodrama created to sell papers, although the irony is that it did not[20]. As I explain with my analysis of *Vivian Grey*, what it did do was sell novels.

Several of the steps Disraeli took in helping to prepare *The Representative* suggest interest on his part in the role of editor. As letters from the visits indicate, Disraeli initially made every effort to convince Lockhart that he, Lockhart, should edit *The Representative*, explaining in a report to Murray that he urged Lockhart with an appeal that he was "not to be an Editor of a

[20] *The Representative*'s final issue appeared on July 29, 1826, and with its failure, John Murray lost £26,000 and "had to give up his ostentatious house in Whitehall Palace and his summer villa at Wimbledon and move his family back above his offices in Albemarle Street" (Weintraub 62-63).

Newspaper, but the Directeur General of an immense organ and at the head of a band of high-bred gentlemen and important interests" (qtd. in Ridley 35). The clarification indicates Disraeli's (and perhaps the group's) ambitious hopes for the political weight of the paper. What is most interesting, however, is that as Disraeli continues his report to Murray, his words take on a tone of the very authority and political aspirations he was promising to Lockhart. In suggesting that, in tandem with his editorship of *The Representative*, a seat in Parliament could await Lockhart[21], Disraeli says: "If this point could be arranged... I have no doubt, that I shall be able to organize, in the interest with which I am now engaged, a most IMMENSE PARTY, & MOST SERVICEABLE ONE" (36). Although his intent at this point was still, supposedly, to engage Lockhart for the newspaper, Disraeli speaks of his own "organizing" and "engagement" in the interest of the paper, words with editorial intent and command. His reference to the "immense party" also indicates that he still, as yet, saw himself representing a collaborative, corporate effort.

In volunteering to handle the negotiations with Lockhart in Scotland, Disraeli also put himself in a position—at a great distance from Murray—to argue the case to his own advantage. It was during his first visit to Scotland, which lasted three weeks, that Disraeli and Lockhart appeared to strike up a friendship, and somewhere along the line the concept of Lockhart's editing the *Quarterly*—nowhere part of the original plan—arose. It is uncertain where or from

[21] Charles Nickerson explains that "the paper may have been part of a larger political plot, perhaps involving Canning... concocted at a time when the power of the daily press as an agent for moulding public opinion was beginning to be recognized" (281, footnote 6). He also indicates that even Lockhart believed rumors that Canning could have been secretly involved in both *The Representative* and the *Quarterly Review* (footnote 7). Involvement of an influential figure like Canning would be necessary to substantiate claims from Disraeli that the founders of the new paper could obtain a seat in Parliament for Lockhart.

whom the idea first originated[22], and certainly Lockhart and Scott could have eyed the more prestigious literary post on their own, especially since Lockhart had stepped down from his controversial role at *Blackwood's*. Yet, whether or not the idea could have come from Disraeli, he was likely aware that the *Quarterly* would be a more tempting venue with which to secure Lockhart's services. He was also equally likely to realize that just such a new alternative would inevitably leave the post of editor at *The Representative* open, possibly to himself, and so quite probably would have encouraged the idea. When Disraeli finally was able to arrange a meeting in London between Murray and Lockhart, Disraeli acted as the sober enabler who witnessed, along with lawyer William Wright, the drunken pair sign off on the agreement that Lockhart would edit the *Quarterly* and occasionally contribute to *The Representative* (Ridley 36). All involved seemed pleased with this arrangement when first reached, yet it nonetheless veered greatly from the original plan and quickly proved a catalyst for internal complications and unrest among the associates of both publications. Unfortunately, while the established *Quarterly* would overcome these issues, the fledgling *Representative* would not.

Beyond the possibility that Disraeli secretly plotted to edit *The Representative* himself by negotiating the *Quarterly* for Lockhart, a variety of his activities reveal he was already performing many of the duties of an editor. Throughout the summer prior to the paper's winter launch, Disraeli occupied himself with acquiring correspondents from around the world to provide news for the paper. He reported that "he had written to six different correspondents in

[22] According to Stanley Weintraub, William Wright had written to Lockhart and Scott in advance of Disraeli's personal visit and reported that Murray might be willing to replace the *Quarterly*'s current editor, John Taylor Coleridge, with Lockhart in order to secure him for the new paper (58-59). The letter, however, does not address the complication of how Lockhart would be able to manage two such demanding publications. The problem, whether Murray would admit it or not, was that even if he could acquire Lockhart through the lure of the *Quarterly*, he would still need another capable person to oversee *The Representative* if it were to have a legitimate chance at success.

the Levant and Morea; in Germany, correspondents had been secured in ten cites...; all South America was covered, and all the North American newspapers" (Ridley 37). Disraeli had even persuaded William Maginn to serve as Paris correspondent by giving him "a slight and indefinite sketch of our intentions," a preview at which Maginn seems to have jumped. Disraeli often alluded in vague and confidential terms to the secret potential for political power that *The Representative* would realize were it to succeed. Here, as in his work securing all of the correspondents, Disraeli presents himself as intimately involved with and representing the enterprise's political and ideological interests, whatever they may have been.

In this respect, both Arthur Frietsche and Michael Flavin note that *Vivian Grey*'s discussion of political principles, while spirited, remains vague throughout the novel. "The precise details of 'the principles' [of the Carabas party] are conspicuous by their absence," says Flavin (12). To explain this absence, Flavin claims that Disraeli is more interested in political machinery than political ideologies in his first novel. If the key piece of "political machinery" for Disraeli, at this point in his limited experience, was *The Representative*, then it makes sense that he replaced detailed political principles with an exploration of editorial qualifications and the process of acquiring editorial power. For many working in Victorian periodicals, such power lay in editors' abilities to represent their publications and to contract with the best contributors available. The extent of correspondents that Disraeli had secured for *The Representative*, including Maginn, who had already garnered some success and a name contributing to *Blackwood's* and its *Noctes Ambrosianæ*, demonstrates that the youngest partner knew of this important role that an editor was supposed to play and was doing his best to fill it.

In addition to fleshing out a list of contacts for the upcoming publication, Disraeli went so far in acting as editor as to campaign for the importance of his services by grossly

exaggerating those services. Though he did communicate with potential foreign correspondents for the paper, he did not acquire his network of informants through his own influence but wrote letters to them using Murray's name to encourage responses, many of which remained tentative (Ridley 37). And although he did gain Maginn as Paris correspondent, he did so by allotting him a stipend with which to set up in the French capital, and the writer promptly headed to Paris to drink up the available funds (Bradford 20). Not one to be discouraged, though, Disraeli simply focused on and exaggerated the positive aspects of his diligent efforts on behalf of the paper, which he called the *magnum opus*. Throughout the summer and fall, he wrote to various people, including Lockhart, about these updates and promoted himself as a capable literary man with the charge of the paper foremost in his thoughts (37). Were Murray eventually to give Disraeli the editorship, he would have to be convinced that he was leaving the publication in the hands of a stable, competent manager; therefore, at the same time that Disraeli worked to find staff and a feasible operating system for the paper, he simultaneously worked to paint himself as that fully capable and impressive editorial figure for all those around him. Had Disraeli not wished to acquire more responsibility with the paper than he already possessed as one of its founders, he would not have needed to campaign in this way.[23] Just as when Vivian says to the Marquess of Carabas, "Leave all this to me... give me your Lordship's name, and your Lordship's influence, and I will take upon myself the whole organization of the Carabas party" (38), Disraeli was acting as a corporate agent on Murray's behalf in order to make himself invaluable to *The Representative.* The other act for which Disraeli received credit, as well as unanimous approval, was naming the paper *The Representative*, a title specifically alluding to the corporate nature of

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[23] Jane Ridley adds that once Lockhart was designated editor of the *Quarterly*, Murray wrote to Scott about "two most efficient and respectable persons" he had in mind to edit *The Representative*, and Ridley concludes: "that one of [them] was Disraeli seems more than likely" (37). If that is the case, Disraeli's campaigning may have been paying off.

periodicals and politics (Bradford 21). More than just a financial participant or a flunky for Murray, Disraeli demonstrated himself time and again invested in crafting the image and organizational corporation of the paper, as well as crafting himself into its editor.

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Despite these efforts, the paper collapsed relatively quickly after its commencement, for reasons that remain unclear, and thereafter Disraeli struggled to come to grips with his failed collaboration in *The Representative*, which was to have led him into the world of politics. Facing rumors, debts, lost friendships, and shaken confidence, Disraeli became sick and wavered as to how to proceed with any future plans. What eventually roused his spirits was the project of a novel that would retrace the events leading up to the failure of *The Representative* and restate his case as a fully capable writer and editor who had been overlooked or prematurely dismissed without the chance to prove himself. Disraeli learned that Robert Ward, the man from whom his family was renting a house, was the author of the anonymous literary hit of the season: *Tremaine, or the Man of Refinement* (1825). What was more, he had recently met the London literary socialite Sara Austen, who was both a neighbor and friend to his father. Austen had served as Ward's literary agent for *Tremaine*, which publisher Henry Colburn had made a sensation by presenting it anonymously, capitalizing on the social gossip in the content and on audiences' speculation about its authorship. Disraeli hoped to achieve equal success using Austen to help shape his manuscript and Colburn to market the text as the same kind of fashionable tell-all about the intrigues and disappointments of *The Representative*, written by an anonymous insider divulging secrets of real-life social figures. Here again, at least at the outset,

Disraeli was envisioning his novel as a collaborative endeavor, still determined to succeed in a project that mimicked the corporate system of the periodical and political worlds. The first part of *Vivian Grey* came out in April 1826 and, as Disraeli had hoped, was a huge success.

At this time, Disraeli also collaborated with Austen and friend William Meredith to create satirical material and promotions for his novel in a weekly periodical published by Peter Hall, the *Star Chamber*.[24] Many articles in the paper were presented by "the great unknown," with a style and language matching Disraeli's in *Vivian Grey*, and many of which similarly poked fun at Murray and Lockhart (Bradford 25). In fact, the *Literary Magnet* of 1826 claims that Disraeli edited the *Star Chamber* (190), which supports the idea that Disraeli was eager to find a venue with which to launch his editorial career. Excerpts from the first several installments of *Vivian Grey*, on Chateau Desir and Stapylton Toad, appeared along with high praise of the "very extraordinary production [that] must infallibly be very universally read" (33) in the first issues of the *Star Chamber*, just as Colburn released the completed first part in book form. The material in the weekly journal offered periodical satire similar in concept to the parodies set up in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*; for instance, the very first article to appear in the *Star Chamber*, "No. 112 Pall Mall," caricatures the supposed staff of the new publication determining subjects for literary and political copy while enjoying a delectable dish of anchovies and wine. Accompanying the little announcements and excerpts about *Vivian Grey*, the journal examines a current issue of the *Quarterly Review*, features the poem "Dunciad of To-day" (in which Disraeli

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[24]Richard Altick explains that the "Star Chamber" was the name of a court established in Elizabethan England to limit the number of new publishing houses established each year (19). Disraeli saw his publication as a new incarnation of this court, wielding the authority to state what should and should not be published, and provided a quote about the original Star Chamber from Cavendish's *Life of Wolsey* at the start of each issue. Years later, Disraeli would deny all involvement with both attempts at editorship, *The Representative* and the *Star Chamber* (Ridley 50, 59).

lampoons at least 70 named authors and several unnamed, as well), and provides a "Key to *Vivian Grey*," elucidating the real-life subjects behind the characters of the novel. The text introducing the key claims that the editor of the journal was sent a manuscript copy of the novel containing handwritten comments by the author in the margins, thus legitimizing its source for the key. Weintraub argues that the key Disraeli created for the *Star Chamber* posited misleading real-life analogues for the Marquess and Cleveland— Disraeli lists a Marquess of C—— for the Marquess of Carabas and a R. A—— , Esq., for Cleveland (Disraeli 115-16)—as a way to make his attack less vitriolic and to put critics and his newly made enemies off the scent for a while (69). Though possible, Disraeli's motive is not obvious. What is more evident, however, is that Disraeli deployed satirical tactics in both *Vivian Grey* and the *Star Chamber*, using them in collusion as weapons in a *personal* attack, despite the façade that the publications derived from his *corporate* collaboration with others and the promotion of corporate images such as the one in "No. 112 Pall Mall."

The *Star Chamber* lasted only nine weeks, and the month following its failure, the *Literary Magnet* released a scathing review of the journal, calling out Disraeli as the "ex-editor of the *Representative*" (105) *and* as the editor of the *Star Chamber*: "Mr. D'Israeli, jun., the author of *Vivian Grey*, and the editor of the *Star Chamber*, are one and the same person" (105). The writer of "The *Star Chamber* Dissected" cites "would-be fashionable slang," claims of "mixing in good society," a repeated joke by Croker about the geography of Russell Square, and "affected" and "absurd" references to high society and French terminology as the evidence that links Disraeli to the novel and the periodical (105-6). For the *Literary Magnet*, Disraeli's short-lived second attempt at editing is a "bantling" and "misshapen urchin" that is "deformed" and "spiteful and malicious in the extreme" (104). While these descriptions sound like harsh

criticism, Disraeli was looking to elicit bold reactions from the literary community, as can be seen from the advertising tactics he employed, which are described in the *Literary Magnet* article. The writer details watching a man walk about town wearing a blue placard on which was printed: "The *Star Chamber* of to-morrow will contain the Dunciad of to-day,—a Satire for which all living authors, but more especially the following are requested to prepare themselves," after which appeared the names of the 70 or so authors specified in the poem. Then in what appears to be a minor critique, that of Disraeli's orthography, the reviewer suggests the excuse that "as he is, to borrow his own phraseology, 'anonimous,' and probably writes with a bad pen, he may stand in some degree excused" (108). The comment, however humorous in its assessment of Disraeli's spelling, nonetheless provides a revealing insight into *Vivian Grey*: the novel's initial anonymity, and the anonymity of "the great unknown" in the *Star Chamber*, plays a very different role from the anonymity of the periodical "We." It is a personalized anonymity that serves as a secure place from which Disraeli can launch his singular attack on the literary world, an expression of his sense of rejection and sensitive shortcomings, rather than a space of collaborative interaction and corporate identity.

Vivian Grey's own satirical approach provides an array of social portraits—such as those of a Stapylton Toad, a Mrs. Millions, and a Charlatan Gas—and indeed proved popular with readers but also provided a good cover under which Disraeli could vent his frustrations with uncomplimentary portraits of John Murray, as the Marquess of Carabas, a character name from the child's tale *Puss in Boots* (Ridley 44), and John Lockhart, as Frederick Cleveland, among others. More "keys" decoding the list of players, printed by various papers other than the *Star Chamber,* additionally fueled rumors as to which real-life people were represented by the

colorful characters in the novel[25]. By May, however, Disraeli's authorship had been leaked to the press, and Murray, who was horrified by his portrayal as the drunken and incapable Marquess, would not speak to Disraeli or his family for years (49). Unfortunately for Disraeli, once the public and critics learned that the author of *Vivian Grey* was a virtual nobody, poor and unconnected, the advantages of success quickly transformed into unfounded accusations, such as that he bribed servants to acquire his information, and prejudiced denunciations of the newly famous author[26]. Again, it would take time for Disraeli to recover from the blow to his ego, and it was only after months of traveling on the Continent that he completed the second part of the novel, which would be a far more chaotic text and less commercially successful than the first part.

One of the most dramatic moments in the novel comes at the end of the first part when the young politician Cleveland—serving as Lockhart in *The Representative* scenario—challenges Vivian to a duel over the collapse of the political party. Though Vivian first fires in the air and

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[25] The idea that Disraeli's novels needed to be decoded remained popular throughout the nineteenth century and perhaps even gained in popularity as Disraeli became prime minister and had more viable experience with which to write on famous figures. Many publications printed codes without concern for their accuracy, simply to profit off of the excitement surrounding fashionable books such as *Vivian Grey*. Interestingly, a book published in 1904, *The Earl of Beaconsfield: Key to Characters, Biographies, and Portraits*—a kind of commemoration of Disraeli's life—claims to provide keys to *Vivian Grey*, *Venetia*, *Coningsby*, *Tancred*, and *Lothair*. Despite substantial historical evidence that Disraeli was writing about John Murray and *The Representative*, the book still decodes the Marquess of Carabas as the Marquess of Clanricarde (the son-in-law of George Canning), and fails even to mention the character of Cleveland. It proves correct, however, about characters of lesser importance, such as when it reveals Lord Alhambra to be a Lord Porchester.

[26] Hesketh Pearson cites a passage from *Contarini Fleming* in which the protagonist reflects on the harsh critique which his satire *Manstein* receives from a great Edinburgh journal, which Pearson says is Disraeli's memory of the hurtful review *Vivian Grey* received from *Blackwood's* after his authorship became known: "With what horror, with what blank despair, with what supreme, appalling astonishment, did I find myself, for the first time in my life, a subject of the most reckless, the most malignant, and the most adroit ridicule. I was sacrificed, I was scalped" (Disraeli 19-20).

then shoots again at random, due to Cleveland's goading, he pierces Cleveland's heart and kills him (159). Charles Nickerson suggests that with this scene Disraeli was "probably alluding to the incident in Lockhart's past" when Lockhart fueled an argument between *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* and the *London Magazine* that led to a duel and the death of editor John Scott (292). The allusion is a viable reading, and Disraeli's referencing it in *Vivian Grey* could easily have added to embarrassment for Lockhart, now in his respectable position at the *Quarterly*. Yet, in a book so emotionally charged with the events related to *The Representative*, the scene acquires a double significance within that context. Remembering that Lockhart and Disraeli were pitted against each other in the rumors circulating in the aftermath of the failed paper, Vivian's killing Cleveland is likewise symbolic of Disraeli's desire to rid himself of the rival that made his aspirations to become editor so impossible.

Further proof to corroborate Disraeli's focus in *Vivian Grey* on his rivalry with Lockhart for the editorship can be found when the Marquess surprisingly announces his hopes for Cleveland to lead the new party that Vivian has been concocting. Having convinced the Marquess that a celebrated political future is still ahead of him, if he would only incite other influential contacts to join a new party with him—again, this concept is the novel's analogue for *The Representative* venture—Vivian attends a dinner at which he and the Marquess will present their idea to a crowd of political dignitaries. Vivian follows a speech by the Marquess with an address of his own on the great potential for the new party and is met all around with compliments, save one remark by a Sir Berdmore Scrope. Speculating as to who should lead the party, Berdmore says:

> Mr. Grey might be capable of undertaking that charge, but still, it must be remembered that in that assembly he was as yet untried.... If their Lordships, on the whole, were of the opinion that this charge should be entrusted to him, he, Sir Berdmore, having the greatest confidence in Mr. Grey's abilities, would certainly

> support him to the utmost. (88)

The Marquess's response to this reservation—namely about Vivian's youth and inexperience—is important not just to the outcome of the Carabas party but also to Vivian personally, who up until this point has only received glowing accolades from his mentor. As the narrator relates about Vivian's first days with the Marquess:

> all was sunshine with Vivian Grey. His noble friend and himself were in perpetual converse, and constantly engaged in deep consultation. As yet, the world knew nothing, except that, according to the Marquess of Carabas, 'Vivian Grey was the most astonishingly clever and prodigiously accomplished fellow that ever breathed'. (40)

All signs point to the Marquess's nominating Vivian to lead the party. When Berdmore raises his concerns, the Marquess's first words about Vivian are still positive: "he can do anything" (88), and the sentiments are echoed by the lords around the room.[27]

As one unwilling to put forth any opinion as his own, Vivian appears appropriately humble to this encouragement but will not suggest his own nomination:

> whatever my talents are, they are at your service, and in your service will I venture anything; but surely, my Lords, you will not unnecessarily entrust this great business to a raw hand! I need only aver that I am ready to follow any leader who can play his great part in a becoming manner. (88)

From these words, the spotlight of the scene returns to the Marquess who must, with "the eyes of every guest... fixed on the haranguing host," answer with a leader, be it Vivian or someone else. When he opens his mouth, to the shock of all, the Marquess exclaims: "I give you our leader, Mr. Frederick Cleveland!" Not present at the dinner, and previously unmentioned in the novel, the

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[27] One of the lords present at the speech is a Lord Beaconsfield, which happens to be the future title of Disraeli. In fact, in the late Victorian period, many copies of Disraeli's novels would be published with the name "Lord Beaconsfield" as author, instead of "Benjamin Disraeli." Hesketh Pearson comments on the "freakish coincidence" in *Vivian Grey* that "a character in the novel is named Lord Beaconsfield, who is dismissed by another character as 'a dolt'" (22). In a book full of satirical caricatures of real-life figures, it is worth pointing out the odd appearance, to avoid any anachronistic critique.

eligible, young politician Cleveland is an unforeseen candidate and his nomination comes as a surprise to the crowd. As one of the lords says on behalf of the group, "it appears to us that, of all the persons in the world, the one man with whom Mr. Cleveland would be least inclined to coalesce would be the Marquess of Carabas" (89), and the reason for their surprise is a past falling out between the two men on the political stage—a reference to Murray's withdrawing funds and the London distribution from *Blackwood's* several years earlier when he felt the satire from writers like Lockhart was growing too personal and heated (Nickerson 291).

For Vivian, however, the shock is of another kind, because despite his seemingly humble suggestion that perhaps another candidate would do a better job, he has schemed "to become a great man in a hurry" (25) with the Marquess as his vehicle to power. Early on in the novel, during Vivian's first private visit with the Marquess at which he plants the idea of the aristocrat's lagging political influence and the need for a new political party, the narrator explains: "it would have been impossible for a hawk to watch its quarry with eyes of more fixed and anxious earnestness than did Vivian Grey the Marquess of Carabas" (33). Vivian is calculating and in control yet always careful in his approach with the Marquess. Relying on his strategy never to promote an idea as his own, Vivian wins over the aristocrat by appearing to be won over himself, which entails:

> The flood of anecdotes, and the little innocent personalities, and the compliments so exquisitely introduced, that they scarcely appeared to be compliments; ... and the quotation from the Marquess's own speech; and the wonderful art of which the Marquess was not aware, by which, during all this time, the lively, chattering, amusing, elegant conversationist, so full of scandal, politics, and cookery, did not so much appear to be Mr. Vivian Grey as the Marquess of Carabas himself. (31)

Vivian constructs his conversation with the Marquess with the variation of a journal featuring a range of genres, "anecdotes... personalities... scandal, politics, and cookery," in its departments. Moreover, by "[quoting] from the Marquess's own speech," Vivian aligns the Marquess's point

of view and opinions with the other information Vivian himself provides, like a ventriloquist making the Marquess speak from a "lively, chattering, amusing, elegant" and informed position. In doing so, Vivian acts the role of an editor, who empowers his readers with knowledge and, when they discuss what they have read and further circulate the content of the periodical, speaks through them. At one point, the narrator reveals that Vivian's influence has become so strong that the Marquess feels he cannot even survive the conversation before a dinner party without Vivian by his side: "all this time the Marquess of Carabas had wanted Vivian Grey twenty times, but that gentleman had not appeared" (64). In the same way that a periodical editor imbues his readers with information, confidence, and an air of being part of a knowledgeable elite, Vivian enables the Marquess to share the ideas and charm Vivian provides him. But Vivian's strategy to appear in the background, an essential presence but never forcing his ground, backfires during the scene when he loses the nomination to Cleveland. When the Marquess chooses Cleveland to lead the party over Vivian, the novel presents this unexpected choice as a striking loss to Vivian, if not a betrayal.

In order to stay in the midst of the party's operations, (and Vivian, like Disraeli, does wish to remain part of the corporate structure of the party rather than venture into politics on his own), all Vivian can do is offer his services in going to Scotland to convince and retrieve Cleveland, which is exactly what Disraeli does with Lockhart. If Vivian's subsequent actions follow those of Disraeli in the preparations for *The Representative*, surely his disappointment at the entrance of Cleveland onto the scene follows Disraeli's disappointment at Lockhart's selection as editor. That Cleveland should meet his end at the hands of "our hero" (93), albeit by an alleged accident, is an inevitable conclusion to their rivalry more than it is simply a dramatic

allusion to Lockhart's past with *Blackwood's.* In fact, the narrator begins a chapter following a heated literary discussion between Vivian and Cleveland with a foreshadow of the duel:

> These conversations play the very deuce with one's story. We had intended to have commenced this book[28] with something quite terrific, a murder or a marriage; and all our great ideas have ended in a lounge.... We are not always in action.... Occasionally we talk... as often about our enemies, at least, those who have any; which, in my opinion, is the vulgarest of all possessions. (144)

The relevancy of the historical analogies in *Vivian Grey* to this study, therefore, lies in their substantiating the editorial context of the novel. Although none of the outward elements of plot or theme points to the editorial world, through the historical analogies and the rivalry between Vivian and Cleveland that the first part of the novel pursues so intensely, it is possible to pursue a productive reading of the novel that explores nineteenth-century editorial conventions as a prominent motif influencing its development.

* * *

In writing the first part of *Vivian Grey*, Disraeli experiments with several techniques that showcase his abilities as an editor. Because Disraeli plays with these concepts in his satirical novel—and perhaps, as many claimed, because he was so young and inexperienced—they do not typically come across with the consistency or formality of the conventions from a serious daily like *The Times*.[29] Nevertheless, his use of an editorial "We," his repeated calls (sometimes

[28] Meaning Book IV, or the final book of the original edition, of *Vivian Grey*. Vivian and Cleveland's discussion appears in Chapter 1, the foreshadow to the duel appears in Chapter 2, and Cleveland's death marks the end of Chapter 5.
[29] James Mussell explains some of the generic conventions of nineteenth-century periodicals in his study on form: "The nineteenth-century periodical, as has often been noted, was a genre predicated upon the new. However, in order to make sense of a social world constantly in flux, the new was represented according to generic conventions that related it to the familiar.... The

sarcastic) for "qualified knowledge," and his detailed familiarity with the publishing market as portrayed through jokes about quoting other writers and satirical portraits all depict the narrator as eager to prove what he knows about the journalistic conventions of the day. As Michael Flavin points out, "*Vivian Grey*'s canvas of narrative and stylistic levels is varied and broad, reflecting its central protagonist's search for self-hood and a satisfactory outlet for his talents" (10). Then contrasting this point, Flavin adds, "however, this project is undoubtedly grounded in *The Representative* and its fallout." Both of Flavin's comments are perceptive descriptions of Disraeli's novel, but they do not necessarily oppose each other. Because the novel is grounded in the editorial context of *The Representative*, the novel pursues not just the protagonist's search for selfhood and an outlet for talent but also the narrator's search and outlet as an editor. Moments when this editorial focus is interrupted occur often enough, usually with a highly personal or idiosyncratic voice narrating in the singular point of view. Such moments work alongside the more editorial ones for a time to register Disraeli's personal frustrations connected to the experiences, but eventually they register a more serious questioning of the editorial conventions he did not get the chance to employ at *The Representative*. They demonstrate a text

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organization of a title into sections, as well as the customary address used within each, negotiated between the demand to fill each issue with new content and the need to establish an identity that could transcend the single issue" (95). Determining the most effective combination of departments and a balance of information and style, or "customary address," would have been an essential step for the founders of *The Representative*. Given the unpredictable nature of much of *Vivian Grey*, creating such a plan for the paper either proved a task outside of Disraeli's reach or one that he rejected as an impediment to his political and creative energies. David Stewart also addresses conventions of periodical writing in the early nineteenth century, pointing out that new publications "made their appeal to new readers with a new periodical style," one that was less scholarly and esoteric, because "a large commercial print market necessitated a professional style" (157). Stewart acknowledges that the literary monthlies that found so much success in the early to mid-nineteenth century had room for more creative flexibility than daily newspapers, which were focused on political and current events, could accommodate. Part of Disraeli's struggle, then, may have been a conflict between his desire to launch and manage a powerful political daily and his desire to explore creative and literary miscellany such as only a monthly format could support.

uncomfortable with the expected constraints of periodical writing and a preference for what may have seemed to a young Disraeli as fiction's more independent and free creative range.

The first words in *Vivian Grey* begin with the plural perspective appropriate to most editors in the early nineteenth century: "*We* are not aware that the infancy of Vivian Grey was distinguished by any extraordinary incident..." (7, emphasis mine). By beginning the novel with a negative claim, the narrator suggests that he is entering a conversation that is ongoing, in which he positions *Vivian Grey* as a novel distinct from others already being discussed for their portrayal of celebrity, thus alluding to the system of periodical review. The irony is that, while Disraeli may have been an unknown entity in aristocratic and periodical circles, his first novel achieved great popularity and would be discussed precisely for its manipulation of celebrity and satire of fashionable figures. Routinely throughout the novel's first part, the narrator speaks with the editorial "We" in terms that suggest it as a monitor for consistency, accuracy, as well as agreement with the audience. Examples of the voice range from "*we* must endeavor to trace, if possible, more accurately the workings of Vivian Grey's mind" (23), to "How shall *we* describe Chateau Desir" (41), to "although *we* are of those historians who are of the opinion that the nature of the personages they celebrate should be developed..." (43), to "*We* will condense, for the benefit of the reader..." (70). While there are exceptions, instances of the editorial "We" in *Vivian Grey* typically register an editorial task—such as "tracing" or "describing" or "developing" or "condensing." On occasion, the "We" also serves to create a sense of community with the audience: "Fear makes us feel our humanity, and then we fly to men, and Hope is the parent of kindness" (111), but this use occurs less frequently. Yet, whether the responsibility is to identify with the audience or monitor the progress of the text, the "We" voice exhibits an editorial agenda in *Vivian Grey*. Although not particularly unusual for literature of

the time period, Disraeli's use of "We" in the novel takes on greater significance when read alongside the context of his lost editorship. By employing the current conventions, the novel emphasizes the mistake Disraeli felt Murray had made in choosing Lockhart over him.

In addition to displaying the editorial "We," Disraeli's narrator also refers several times to whether or not he is qualified to give information to his audience, a stance that serves two purposes in the text. First of all, by openly avowing that he is not sufficiently qualified to provide certain information, the narrator fulfills an editorial obligation to present his audience with accurate information from reliable sources. It also simultaneously refers to the claims of youth and inexperience that Murray and others likely put to Disraeli about his potential to edit *The Representative*. Disraeli underscores through the narrator that he was found to be unqualified to provide the services of an editor. For instance, one episode early in the novel presents Vivian, his father, and the Marquess of Carabas at dinner, and the narrator admits a gap in his depiction of the scene: "I am sure I cannot tell what the weighty subject was that was broached by the ex-minister; for I did not dine with Grey that day, and had I done so, I should have been equally ignorant, for I am a dull man, and always sleep at dinner" (30). It is an odd interjection in the plot, but the very claim—note the presence of the personal "I" to make this statement—that the narrator is incapable of providing complete information about the episode explains its presence. The narrator here emphasizes a personal lack of qualifications, reminiscent of Disraeli's lack of qualifications, which he exaggerates with the comments that he is a "dull man, and always sleep[s] at dinner." He then contradicts his own ignorance by acknowledging that a skilled editor only provides information for which he can account.

In a similar vein that emphasizes a lack of qualifications, the narrator discusses a popular tendency among some people to conduct business after dinner, and he hesitates in judging its

benefits and disadvantages: "[it] is a grave question, which we do not feel qualified to decide" (86). The narrative voice here is in the plural perspective, yet the narrator still adds a personal tone with the dramatic modifier "grave," which—though it is intended sarcastically—potentially implies dramatic circumstances of which the reader is yet unaware in the scene. The phrase reiterates the earlier motif characterizing the narrator as unqualified, and its "grave" warning colors the upcoming important scene in which the Marquess announces Cleveland as his candidate to lead the party instead of Vivian. The narrator goes so far as to suggest that perhaps such festivities prior to business meetings are productive, in that:

> had it not been for the opportunity which the banquet afforded of developing the convivial qualities of the guests, and drawing out, by the assistance of generous wine, their most kindly sentiments and most engaging feelings, it is very probable that the appointment for the transaction of the business would never have been made at all. (86)

The references to "convivial qualities" and "generous wine" play a part in Disraeli's characterizing John Murray—the Marquess—as a drunken buffoon, the portrayal that Murray found difficult to forgive (Ridley 48-49). These biographical and sensational elements were of great significance to Disraeli as he constructed *Vivian Grey*, and they heighten the importance of what passes for another rather odd digression and mention of poor qualifications. In many ways, the scene and the preceding statement that the narrator is not qualified to judge mixing business with pleasure redirects any suspicious indictment of Disraeli's behavior onto Murray and the consequences of his actions. For instance, perhaps Murray, through drinking, rendered himself unqualified to make the decisions affecting the viability of *The Representative*.[30]

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[30] The closest Disraeli comes to openly criticizing Murray, beyond characterizing him as a ridiculous drunk, are moments such as this where the narrator withholds judgment but raises questions about the Marquess's decisions. The fact that Disraeli had been blamed by the press for the whole downfall of the paper struck the writer's parents, if no one else, as unfair but also ludicrous, given their son's young age and lack of experience: "Maria D'Israeli followed her

When the narrator distances himself from the subject of business after dinner with the comment "we do not feel qualified to decide," he responds to several possible accusations that the emotionally motivated Disraeli could have been trying to deflect. First, it counters the idea that Disraeli had proven a liability to *The Representative* because he was ignorant of how to finesse negotiations like an experienced businessman. Rather, the narrator here admits inexperience but sounds open to learning the protocols preferred by veterans of the market. Second, the phrase challenges claims that Disraeli had been eager to manipulate others' indulgences to gain his own advantage.[31] The indecisive yet serious statement from the narrator does not suggest ulterior motives to encourage decisions made with the aid of alcohol. The phrase also disarms the charge that Disraeli had openly disagreed with many of Murray's choices for *The Representative* because the narrator distinctly refrains from criticizing the actions of his older and more influential associates. In each case, the narrator is conveniently "unqualified" to

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son's plea [to Murray's wife Anne] with a very different letter to John Murray. No one would accept stories that the paper was ruined 'through the management and bad conduct of my Son,' she told him forcefully. 'It would not be believed that the experienced publisher of Albermarle Street could be deceived by the plans of a boy of twenty whom you had known from his cradle and whose resources you must have as well known as his Father and had you condescended to consult that Father the folly might not have been committed'" (Weintraub 64).

[31] Many people involved in correspondence over *The Representative* depicted the young Disraeli as over-eager to gain power and recognition. For instance, lawyer William Wright described Disraeli in a letter to Lockhart and Scott, calling him a "sensible clever young fellow" but making the important critique that "his judgment, however, wants sobering down; he has never had to struggle" (qtd. in Weintraub 58). Certainly Vivian's character also admits he is willing to manipulate other people to get what he wants, even though he is young. The *London Magazine* alluded to Disraeli, as well, when it said of Murray's failure: "He was also undoubtedly under the influence of weak and selfish counselors—men who had private ends to seek and private animosities to gratify" (118). After the fall of *The Representative*, however, Disraeli was quick to defend himself against rumors that he maliciously took advantage of anyone. In *Contarini Fleming*, for instance, Disraeli writes of the press's and the public's reaction to his behavior: "They talked of confidence violated, which never had been shared; and faith broken which never had been pledged. Never was so much nonsense talked about nothing since the days of the schoolmen" (157).

say what he thinks about business after dinner or the way Disraeli's partners at *The Representative* conducted their affairs.

Still determined to prove himself a capable editor, Disraeli juxtaposes the self-deprecatory statements of the narrator with the more confident maneuvers of Vivian. In contrast to confessions of ill qualifications from the narrator is Vivian's early avowal to the Marquess, when asked his opinion of the lord's political career: "what should my opinion be, but an echo of the circle in which I live, but a faithful representation of the feelings of general society" (35). By claiming to provide "a faithful representation of the feelings of general society," Vivian presents himself as fully in line with the qualifications of an editor. Not only can he identify and represent the general feelings of society but he can report them faithfully to the Marquess. In addition, Vivian can also manipulate information for effect, as when he commences the dialogue with the Marquess by alluding to a newspaper article he will not let his companion see in full:

> "... has your Lordship seen the Post? But I knew it was impossible; I said so, I—"
> "Said what Mr. Vivian Grey?"
> "Said that the whole paragraph was unfounded!"
> "Paragraph! what paragraph?... Sadler, bring me the *Morning Post*."
> The servant entered with the paper. Mr. Vivian Grey seized it from his hands before it reached the Marquess, and glancing his eye over it with the rapidity of lightning, doubled up the sheet in a convenient readable form, and [pushed] it into his Lordship's hands.... (33)

Like any good editor, Vivian anchors his political discussion with the Marquess in a respected source, the *Morning Post* article, but only allows his audience to see a portion of the source's information. He trims it, conforming it to his own desired message, while also delivering the Marquess a "convenient readable form." Vivian mostly works by suggesting vague ideas with inflammatory words like "impossible" and then withholds his more specific speculations until the Marquess nearly begs for them, mimicking this tactic from the *Morning Post* article itself. The portion he divulges to the Marquess similarly creates its message by referring to outside

sources and appearing to withhold its own opinion: “We are informed that some alteration in the composition of the present administration is in contemplation.... a noble Peer... is reported as having had certain overtures made him, the nature of which may be conceived, but which, under present circumstances, it would be indelicate in us to hint at” (33). The passive voice enables the force of the subtle insinuations, and Vivian proves thoroughly qualified to mimic and build off this style in the *Morning Post* article.

Another technique that works to display Disraeli’s editorial prowess is the novel’s claim that its hero can deftly quote in the style of various popular authors, as well as its presentation of portraits of various literary figures. These methods characterize Vivian more as an editor than as a politician and again demonstrate Disraeli’s ability to mimic accepted styles of writing. They place Vivian and Disraeli as knowledgeable and humorous sources of information at the center of the journalistic world. When explaining Vivian’s philosophy to promote his own ideas as those of respected people, for instance, the narrator says of the protagonist: “he possessed... the singular faculty of being able to improvise quotations, that is, he could unpremeditatedly clothe his conceptions in language characteristic of the style of any particular author; and Vivian Grey was reputed in the world as having the most astonishing memory that ever existed” (31). Disraeli’s gift of quotation to Vivian illustrates what he understood as his own gift that particularly suited him to editorial work. Undoubtedly many periodicals made use of copy that mimicked, and at times mocked, the style of other writers. *Blackwood’s*, where Lockhart had previously contributed, certainly made its name and a number of scandals out of its contributors’ abilities to mimic and was a likely source for Disraeli’s concept of editorial skill. As well, because John Murray was known to have boasted extensively about Disraeli’s affinity for literary work early in their professional relations, the hyperbolic “Vivian Grey was reputed in the world

as having the most astonishing memory that ever existed" takes on an echo of Murray's praises, now marred by gross exaggeration and printed to mock both the fallen protégé and the disgraced mentor.

This ability to quote others builds into a full joke when, prior to losing his ideal place at the head of the Carabas party, Vivian impresses a young lady by writing the signatures of famous authors:

> "Mr. Grey, I wish you could get me an autograph of Mr. Washington Irving; I want it for a particular friend."
> "Give me pen and ink; I will write you one immediately."
> "Ridiculous!"
> "There! now you have made me blot Faustus."....
> "Come, there is Washington Irving's autograph for you; read it; is it not quite in character? Shall I write any more? One of Sir Walter's, or Mr. Southey's, or Mr. Milman's or Mr. Disraeli's? or shall I sprawl a Byron?"
> "I really cannot sanction such unprincipled conduct. You may make me one of Sir Walter's, however." (54)

Not only does Vivian claim the ability to quote in the style of others, but he can sign their autographs, as well. The audience does not get to see any of the signatures, but Vivian's boast, "is it not quite in character?", refers to handwriting's potential to connote personality and authenticity.[32] Yet the remark also blurs the act of writing with which an author develops a unique style with the act of signing the physical script of a famous author. By replicating famous signatures, Vivian makes an analogy to editors' habit of replicating the styles of famous authors, with and without permission. Then, when the young Julia Manvers replies to Vivian's gesture that she "cannot sanction such unprincipled conduct" and yet cannot resist the temptation of having Scott's signature, her contradictory stance enacts the equally contradictory expectations

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[32]Periodicals at the time were beginning to take advantage of new technologies that allowed for the reproduction of the scripts of famous authors. As Catherine A. Judd says, "The cult of authorship and the commodification of the signature had been growing throughout the nineteenth century, the two key examples of marketability of the personal name in literature being Walter Scott and Charles Dickens" (255).

of audiences to have both what was based on principles *and* what was most popular and entertaining. Such contradictions often posed dilemmas for editors who could not always, easily, meet both needs. Whether by printing material without permission, extensively quoting as part of a review, presenting copy from unsigned contributors, or mocking the styles of popular authors through well-honed mimicry, editors in the nineteenth century often manipulated the concept of signature and even subsumed the identities of individual authors to provide material that would please their audiences. Vivian's willingness to sign the names of the authors mentioned shows Vivian coyly playing with audiences' moral expectations, but it also reiterates on yet another level Disraeli's understanding of current editorial practices.

Following Vivian's jokes about signatures, Disraeli further bolsters the novel's displaced approach to representing the journalistic world—as an internal critique that gains strength from its subtlety and camouflage—by presenting brief but brutally personal portraits of writers and editors in attendance at a banquet for the Marquess of Carabas. The narrator quickly introduces the reader to "Mr. Cayenne, a celebrated reviewer" and "Mr. Partenopex Puff, a small author and smaller wit" (63), and by eavesdropping on their chit-chat, the narrator gives the reader an idea of the mix of vicious competitors and unknowing dilettantes that make up periodical networks: "Mr Partenopex Puff... generally fathered his bon mots on his valet Booby, his monkey, and his parrot. 'I saw you in the last number,' said Cayenne. 'From the quotations from your own works, I imagine the review of your own book was by yourself!'" (63). The critique becomes more pronounced when the narrator pits Vivian against some of the more ill-qualified literary aspirants at the banquet. The scene anchors itself on the subjects of Goethe and the burgeoning literary career, in poetry, of a Lord Alhambra. On gaining his seat after a late entrance to the dinner, Vivian acquaints himself with his companions at the table and asks Lord Alhambra:

> "Do you ever see the Weimar Literary Gazette, my Lord?"
> "No, why?"
> "There is an admirable review of your poem in the last number I have received."
> The young nobleman looked agitated. "I think, by the style," continued Vivian, "that it is by Goëthe. It is really delightful to see the oldest poet in Europe dilating on the brilliancy of a new star on the poetical horizon."
> This was uttered with a perfectly grave voice, and now the young nobleman blushed. "Who is *Gewter*?" asked Mr. Boreall....
> "A celebrated German writer," lisped the modest Miss Macdonald.
> "I never heard his name," persevered the indefatigable Boreall; "how do you spell it?"
> "*G O E T H E*," re-lisped modesty.
> "Oh! *Goty*!" exclaimed the querist. "I know him well: he wrote the Sorrows of Werter."
> "Did he indeed, sir?" asked Vivian, with the most innocent and inquiring face. (67)

The misunderstandings, misspellings, and mispronunciations of this scene appeal to the comedic interests of readers, but they also assert Vivian's superiority over his companions. Lord Alhambra's success in publishing comes under the scrutiny of Vivian, who later taunts the aristocrat with quotes from his own poems and then the narrator mockingly posits: "His Lordship did not exactly remember [the lines]: it would have been a wonder if he had" (68). The comment, likely in reference to the long, six-canto poem *The Moor* (1825) by Lord Porchester[33], seems to suggest either that the lord did not write his own poems or that the lines come from a work so long he cannot remember his own words when they are quoted to him. Vivian teases the aristocrat with a claim that Goethe has reviewed his poetry, and the allusion to the German philosopher and poet only reveals the further inadequacies of Vivian's comrades at the table. They cannot identify their own work, much less that of Goethe, and they cannot spell or pronounce with the sophistication that Vivian spouts naturally. This scene also foreshadows the

[33] According to Disraeli's own key of characters, Lord Alhambra represented Lord Porchester, and this pairing is corroborated by contemporary reviews. Both *Blackwood's* and *The Oriental Herald* of 1825 lampoon Porchester's *The Moor* and make fun of his allusions to Byron.

turn that the novel will take in Part Two, which pulls much of its inspiration from Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* (Bradford 28).

For the following two or three chapters, Vivian finds himself surrounded by this mix of characters from the periodical and aristocratic worlds, many of whom match Lord Alhambra and Mr. Boreall for ridiculousness and lead the narrator to a mini-climax on "toadeys" to resolve these scenes. In addressing the "sweet reader," the narrator commiserates with what he assumes is the audience's experience with "toadeys" of every kind: from the "Common-place Toadey" to the "Playing-up Toadey" to the "Drawing-out Toadey." As the narrator builds intensity, he suddenly stops himself with an interjection: "and then there is—but we detest essay writing, so we introduce you at once to a party of these vermin" (80). The line produces an interesting double effect in that it misleads the reader into briefly expecting a description of "Essay-writing Toadeys" that will continue the list in progress, but it also illustrates the narrator self-consciously critiquing his own writing process and abruptly changing course. When the narrator says, "we detest essay writing," he means literally that he does not want to write a flat prose piece that philosophizes about the nature of toadeys.[34] He wants to show them in a lively scene of dialogue

[34] Disraeli's strategy in this section is first to mimic and then to mock the serious tirade against toadeys that William Hazlitt presents in his article "The Times Newspaper" in *Political Essays* (1819). In it, Hazlitt attacks the periodical and political "toadeys" that were appeasing the monarchy with claims of "Legitimacy" in order to derail the violent threat of Jacobin radicalism. Disraeli styles the paragraph after Hazlitt's essay with terms such as "animated by the 'spirit of freedom'" and "revenging their voluntary bondage" (80) but then he abandons the invective for a comic scene that gives voice to the toadeys Hazlitt condemns. He still critiques toadeys, but rather than critiquing the press's "[bowing their heads] before the idol of Divine Right, or Legitimacy" (380) as Hazlitt does, he critiques servants' "[bowing] assent" (81) to their aristocratic employers who indulge pet parrots and poodles at their servants' expense: "that is rather a fault of the dear Marchioness, a little want of consideration for another's feelings; but she means nothing" (81). It is a telling allusion that Disraeli uses Hazlitt's attack on the periodical press, and specifically on the editor of *The Times*, to mark his own attack on the periodical approach that has been driving his text thus far. Whereas Hazlitt takes his role in periodical disputes seriously, Disraeli, by the end of the first part of *Vivian Grey*, ridicules his

and interactions, which the narrator subsequently produces. The confession that the narrator detests essay writing also alludes to the problems of form that Disraeli potentially experienced with *The Representative*: if his energies found better outlet in fiction that was driven by action and dialogue, then Disraeli's style could easily have been at odds with the drier and more reflective articles requisite of a serious daily paper. This abrupt change of course also illustrates the kind of editorial flexibility and experimentation Disraeli embraced more strongly in the second part of his novel, in many ways to the detriment of the text.

Prior to the second part of *Vivian Grey*, however, the main character with whom Vivian discusses periodical topics, and in whom he finds a viable competitor, is Cleveland. Nearly an entire chapter is devoted to a literary conversation between Vivian and Cleveland, during which the subtle tensions between these two characters become more tangible and register the fragile state of their relationship as it lies between friendship and competition. Filled with references to political writing, *Blackwood's*, Southey, Partenopex Puff's new volume of Ariosto, and even Byron, the chapter works like a literary match in which the two men must continue the set with volley after volley for as long as possible. The dialogue does not necessarily become pointed between the characters yet; rather, they mostly share benign comments on current writers and questions about each other's opinions, such as "Well that is the usual advice," "What think you of a proposition...," and "And you imagine literature is equally affected, Grey?" (139). This last comment arises from Cleveland in response to Vivian's claim that "literature of the present day, [is] a fungus production which has flourished from the artificial state of our society, the mere creation of our imaginary wealth." That Vivian puts this provoking claim to Cleveland is

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own past aspirations and seeks to make fun of the power dynamics and political colluding that drive editorial animosity in the periodical world.

relevant to the rivalry between Disraeli and Lockhart—given that Lockhart came from a higher class and maintained the status, connections, and resources to which Disraeli aspired[35].

As Vivian continues this speech, his comments point to a simultaneous admiration for and rejection of the work Lockhart has come by. Although Vivian wants to be a great man in a hurry, in the following speech he aligns himself much more with the slow, private studies and contributions of Isaac D'Israeli than with the success and popular approach of Lockhart or Scott:

> There is nothing like a fall in stocks to affect what it is the fashion to style the Literature of the present day.... A fall in stocks! and halt to 'the spread of knowledge' and 'the progress of liberal principles' is like that of a man too late for post-horses. A fall in stocks!.... We were literary because we were rich. Amid the myriad of volumes which issued monthly from the press, what one was not written for the mere hour? It is all very well to buy mechanical poetry and historical novels when purses have a plethora; but now, my dear fellow, depend upon it, the game is up. We have no scholars now, no literary recluses, no men who ever appear to think. "Scribble, scribble, scribble" as the Duke of Cumberland said to Gibbon, should be the motto of the mighty "nineteenth century." (139-40).

Vivian here directly alludes to the financial disaster, "a fall in stocks," that left Disraeli and *The Representative* in such precarious positions. In the full paragraphs, he repeats "a fall in stocks" three times and links that fall to the "halt of the 'spread of knowledge!' and the 'progress of liberal principles'" in addition to the decline of literature. In alluding to the Duke of Cumberland's "scribble, scribble, scribble," the narrator aligns the Duke's dismissive words about Gibbon's serious scholarship in *The Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire* with dismissive treatment that Disraeli possibly received, perhaps from influential figures like Lockhart, regarding his serious designs for *The Representative* to become a vehicle for intellectual, political, and literary progress after he lost all financial means to support the paper. As Vivian

[35] As Ridley points out, Disraeli emphasizes his own humble origins in *Vivian Grey* when he states at the outset: " Neither the fortune nor the family of Mr Grey entitled him to mix in any other society than that of what is, in common parlance, termed the middling classes" (qtd on 24).

tells Cleveland, "but now, my dear fellow, depend upon it, the game is up," he is referring to the state in which *The Representative* was left, with few valuable resources and meaningful contributors, after the financial crash persuaded uncommitted backers to withdraw from the project the financial and organizational support it would need to survive.[36] Vivian repeats the words "your game is up!" (151) several chapters later, as he self-narrates his exit from the Marquess's home after the collapse of the party. With those words, on both occasions, Vivian admits an awareness that he will *not* become an editor and, as a result, directs his anger toward Cleveland.

Cleveland does not take Vivian's words as a threat and simply continues the conversation about specific writers, but the passage articulates much of the anger that will lead to Cleveland's "accidental" death in only twenty pages or a few months of narrative time. During the discourse on periodical current events, Vivian must yield to Cleveland on several occasions, in admiration of his experience: "Your acquaintance with Byron must have been one of the gratifying incidents of your life, Cleveland?" (141). Yet, despite Vivian's unavoidable acknowledgment of his foe's illustrious acquaintances and background—and his all-important status as the *qualified* candidate—Disraeli notes in two separate instances that Cleveland lacks ability as a writer. Not only does Cleveland say of himself, "I never could write a line," (135) but the narrator explains that:

> like many men who are born to be orators, like Curran and like Fox, Cleveland was not blessed, or cursed, with the faculty of composition; and indeed, had his pen been that of a ready writer, pique would have prevented him from delighting or instructing a world whose nature he endeavored to persuade himself was base and whose applause ought, consequently, to be valueless. (93)

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[36] The *London Magazine*'s anonymous "Private History of the Rise and Fall of a Morning Paper" from September 1826 supports this idea that *The Representative* was left in shambles when it lost financial backing and could no longer pay its reporters and contributors.

It is strange in a novel written, in many ways, out of revenge to read about another writer's "pique," and yet Disraeli calls out Lockhart's approach to writing and editing as being too harsh and commercially driven. This reaction against the popular scribblings that Disraeli felt were filling the market fuels his growing disregard for periodical conventions in the second part of *Vivian Grey* and the novel's unflattering depiction of editors, including even the most seemingly ideologically driven editor, Mr. Sievers.

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While periodicals had seemed to Disraeli the ideal venue through which to explore his literary potential and to launch his political career, there proved to be one insurmountable problem with the regular functions of the periodical format for the young Disraeli. Although the market was overflowing with periodicals of all sorts and sizes, printing texts loaded with bold and creative copy, the key to success for many of the prominent journals of the nineteenth century was maintaining a regularity and control over the publication that harnessed its creativity and made it accessible and palatable to audiences. In the early days of *The Representative*, John Murray and the supposedly endless number of potential editors, including Disraeli, faced questions such as how long the paper should be, how long each article should be, in what perspective their writers should write, what their policy on this situation or that circumstance should stipulate. For a young man who prided himself on his bold personality and ability to improvise anything, from popular allusions to grand schemes, Disraeli could have found reining in his literary energy with established periodical conventions a task too great to handle, at least at the pace that a daily newspaper would require. In *Vivian Grey*, the first part of the novel vents

Disraeli's frustrations about the failure of *The Representative* and affirms periodical modes of writing, but in the second part, the text ventures into an experimental mode that rejects the conventions of the periodical market in preference for an unpredictable and idiosyncratic incarnation of the novel format. Considering Disraeli's thorough literary background that stemmed from exposure to his father's library, the formlessness of Part Two expresses more than a lack of control. Rather, it is an articulation of a young writer both eager to experiment with the range of styles he had encountered and also reacting against the constraints of the periodical format and professional disappointment.

By imitating editorial conventions from periodicals and then dropping them or mocking them, Disraeli maintains a tension between the periodical form and the novel form throughout *Vivian Grey*, and that tension locates a sense of liberating freedom and individualism in the form of the novel. It enacts what Nancy Armstrong calls the novelist's production of the individual: "Novelists had to figure out the rhetorical means of generating dissatisfaction with the available social possibilities before they could create a human subject with the restlessness to grow—over time and in successive stages—both more complete as an individual and more worthy in social terms" (4). Disraeli participates in the novelist's movement to create the individual, which empowers him as a writer and a politician, but he is only able to accomplish that process by the "rhetorical means" of opposing his definition of the novel to the periodical.

Symptomatic of this shift are changes in narrative technique beginning late in the first part of *Vivian Grey*. While Disraeli employs a mixture of plural and singular voices throughout much of the first part of the novel, he does so in a way that either maintains a semblance of editorial formality, entreats a humorous response from the audience, or registers the personal feelings of disappointment and rejection that Disraeli experienced after the loss of the paper.

What he begins to do as the first part winds down is self-consciously acknowledge moments of the narrator's indecision as well as his lack of regard for the seriousness of the text he is producing. For instance, the narrator commences a chapter with a sudden address to the reader:

> What is this chapter to be about? Come, I am inclined to be courteous! You shall choose the subject of it. What shall it be, sentiment or scandal? A love scene or a lay sermon? You will not choose? Then we must open the note which Vivian in the morning found on his pillow.... (118)

Unlike the narrator who earlier says he must "trace" and "describe" and "condense" material for the reader, the narrator now pretends to relinquish editorial duties to the reader. Additionally, he challenges the reader's inevitable silence on the issue—"you will not choose?"—in a manner that is humorous but also disruptive of the congenial relationship that a periodical editor would maintain with his audience. The question, followed by the narrator's subsequent answer, underscores that the reader is always at the mercy of the editor—revealing that even as Disraeli begins to play with the concept of editorial control, to break free from its conventions, he struggles with an awareness of its inevitable influence on texts and its appeal as a source of power. The narrative moment also provides an interesting formal experiment in engaging differently with a reading audience, and it awakens the reader from the routine of expected beginnings and expected explications. But it was just that routine that periodicals relied on so heavily. While well-established and respected publications such as *Blackwood's* or the *Quarterly* could afford to experiment with the audiences they had earned, Disraeli's desire for experimentation and a break from accountability in the narration, as exhibited here, would not have strengthened his efforts to achieve an editorial identity and professionalism with potential readers of *The Representative.* In an interesting approach, the narrator's brief interlude with the reader also enacts the type of discussion that would be necessary among members of a corporate board of contributors compiling issues of a periodical. Cooperation among contributors could be

either trying or encouraging, and the narrator's quick decision to move onto Vivian's note recalls the authority an editor would have to enforce in order to keep production moving along. The way the narrator ends this experimental moment with such an abrupt decision, rather than carrying on the ruse of collaboration with the reader, does not bode well for periodical methods in the rest of *Vivian Grey* because the narrator insists on portraying editorial interactions either as unserious or as foreclosing the experimentation and collaboration they claim to support.

Similarly, further down the same page the narrator adds a dismissive remark about the plan for the course of the novel, again addressing the reader in a blunt manner:

> There are three persons, mind you, to be attended to: my lord, or my lady, as the case may be (usually the latter), the pet daughter, and the pet dog. I throw out these hints en passant, for my principle objects in writing this work are to amuse myself and to instruct society. In some future book, probably the twentieth or twenty-fifth, when the plot begins to wear threadbare, and we can afford a digression, I may give a chapter on Domestic Tactics.

The narrator revels in feelings of indecision—"I throw out these hints en passant" and "I may give a chapter on..."—reacting in opposition to restrictive demands to have a plan for the plot and a focus for each chapter. Although it is impossible to know how closely Disraeli was involved with the editorial planning of *The Representative*, the growing desire of *Vivian Grey*'s narrator to abandon pre-laid plans, as well as to create at random, support the possibility that Disraeli, however eager to edit, did not have or care for the regularity that a serious newspaper would require. While many periodicals at the time offered the flexibility to experiment and vary styles that Disraeli's work called for, as a result of his experiences with *The Representative*, Disraeli may not have wished to give more suitable venues in the periodical market a chance. Having failed to work as part of a collaborative group, and having failed to gain the position of leader among the group, Disraeli's text suggests he preferred to work independently and make decisions at his own whim. The suggestion from the narrator that "my principle objects in

writing this work are to amuse myself and to instruct society" is unbelievable when understood from Disraeli's perspective, because he both wanted to embarrass his now estranged colleagues and desperately needed the money *Vivian Grey* could bring in. But the comment arrogantly claims that the narrator is simply "writing to amuse [him]self and to instruct society." The words once again break confidence with the reader in a way that periodical editors could little afford. Although periodicals often amused their own staff members and likewise intended to instruct readers on a variety of levels, those purposes had to be veiled on the one hand and earned on the other. Audiences only appreciate amusement when they are invited in on the joke, which is the reason why the keys to characters were such essential marketing tools for the success of Disraeli's novel. Only with those keys, and the chance for readers to share in the gossip, does the narrator's pose of not caring to amuse anyone but himself acquire a kind of charm. Amplifying the carefree tone is the exaggeration that the narrator will compose as many as twenty-five books for *Vivian Grey*—the combined parts only reached eight books—which also boasts of the popular success Disraeli was experiencing with the novel. Each element of the narrator's explanation of his "principle objects in writing" mocks the seriousness of periodical editors and the presumed objects of their work. The truth of the narrator's statement and other digressions like it is that *Vivian Grey* was not serious because it did not supply a specific demand, such as the demand for news and other current information, but simply frivolous amusement and gossip. That a young man of twenty could "instruct society" on anything, much less Domestic Tactics, continues the mockery. Likewise, Disraeli bolsters this satire by applying the narrator's serious editorial attention to ridiculous details such as a character's loud snore, "we have now both philosophically accounted and politely apologized for the loud and unfashionable snore which sounded in the blue chamber" (292), and ladies' costumes. Alluding to his new role

as an author of a fashionable novel, the narrator's editorial comments sound fake and frivolous: "In a subsequent chapter, at a ball which we have in preparation, we will make up for this brief notice of her costume by publishing her court dress. For the sake of our fair readers, we will not pass over the ornament of her hair" (355).

These initial signs of indecision and superficial motivations translate from small narrative comments in Part One of *Vivian Grey* into an almost complete abandoning of a comprehensible plot in Part Two.[37] I see the incoherence of the plot—which mimics the unpredictable trajectories, wild satire, and blended genres of the picaresque tradition—as distancing Disraeli from the world of serious journalism and representing a systematic rejection of the editorial skill and control he set out to prove he had at the start of the novel. To clarify, it is not that the world of fiction is not shaped by its own conventions and expectations, but as a novel specifically written about periodical editing, its rejection of regularity and consistency of plot and narration more readily symbolizes Disraeli's loss of faith in his periodical future than an understanding of fiction as a wild open playing field without bounds. Proof enough of Disraeli's awareness of fictional conventions, such as a consistent narrative perspective, character development, and even the progression of a romance, can be found in the much more controlled approaches to telling stories that he exhibits in later Victorian novels, such as *Sybil: Or the Two Nations* (1845), or even in his second publication after *Vivian Grey*, *The Young Duke* (1831).[38] Yet, in

[37] As Arthur Frietsche puts it, "From the moment that the author leaves the family hearth for the vagaries of the world of fashion, *Vivian Grey* begins to lose what form it possesses, and to slide toward the incoherence which eventually overwhelms it" (13).

[38] That many of Disraeli's other novels display consistent narrative perspectives shows that he was capable of carefully planned writing *and* that the wildness of *Vivian Grey* was a unique expression that was singularly influenced by his experiences in the periodical world. Examples of Disraeli's more regular narrative constructions can be found just a few years after *Vivian Grey*, when he wrote *The Young Duke*. Of the controlled perspective in the novel, Ridley says, "the other theme is the voice of the narrator who, like the narrator in Byron's *Don Juan*, talks

his 1826 novel that records the literary ripples of *The Representative*, just to get through the plot the reader must navigate hundreds of pages in which characters change from book to book, time has no significant effect on the course of events, and odd characters and events seem to haunt Vivian's travels without any subsequent explanation of their significance. For instance, aside from his acquired sidekick, Essper George—a strange dwarf who becomes Vivian's servant and saves him from card swindlers and suspicious political intriguers all while performing contortions—an entourage of bizarre figures appearing and disappearing in picaresque fashion bombard the reader in the second part of the novel. The Baron von Konigsetin broods suspiciously over past transgressions until he is supposedly blackmailed by a friend into swindling Vivian and his comrades out of a small fortune: "I foreswore, with the most solemn oaths, the gaming table; and had it not been for the perpetual sight of De Boeffleurs, I might, perhaps, have felt at ease" (233). After his pitiful discovery and Vivian's forgiveness, "I recommend you to leave Ems to-morrow.... cease to accuse your fate" (237), the Baron is gone from the novel for good. The melodrama continues when Vivian discovers he is in love with a young lady, Violet Fane; unfortunately, the girl has delicate health, and when Vivian accompanies her back to the carriage after an afternoon's group outing in the woods, just as he admits his love for her, she dies: "At last her arms gave way and fell by his side.... it was very slowly that the dark thought came over his mind.... He gave a loud shriek, and fell on the lifeless body of VIOLET FANE!" (250-251). In addition to these dramatic figures, the novel keeps a

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frankly and directly to the reader" (75). Ridley is careful to point out that the content of the narration oscillates wildly between different moods, but the perspective remains in the first person. Likewise, Arthur Frietsche explains of *Contarini Fleming* (1832) that the novel reworks much of the material from *Vivian Grey* but that as the hero is to become a poet, "such a motive makes first-person narration a necessity, as much of the action takes place in the poet's mind" (22). Although Disraeli may have been working through how to characterize his protagonists for years to come, the wildness of narration he presents in *Vivian Grey* is something he seems to have tamed relatively quickly.

brisk pace with scenes featuring the floundering ruler of Little Lilliput, whom Vivian saves from the attacks of a wild boar, and the eccentric politician Beckendorff[39], who keeps a room of trained birds, plays the violin in mid-conversation, and rarely eats or sleeps throughout his secretive political scheming.

The quintessential moment, however, to illustrate the chaotic and aimless quality of the plot of Part Two is the party between various noblemen at a remote chateau in the German woods at which they celebrate "catching those flavours which alone make the world endurable" (260). The drunken assembly refuses to give the worn and weary Vivian any food unless he drinks through the night with them, and at the point when he can no longer match their pace, Vivian and Essper must run for their lives, chased in circles around the chateau in opposite directions, in an episode of ridiculous slap-stick humor:

> In spite of their very disagreeable and dangerous situation, it was with difficulty that Vivian refrained from laughter, as he met Essper regularly every half minute at the foot of the staircase. Suddenly, as Essper passed, he took Vivian by the waist, and with a single jerk placed him on the stairs.... Vivian pulled down a large coarse [fishing] net, which covered nearly five sides of the room. It was immediately unfolded, and spread over the fallen crew.... in ten minutes they were again on their horses' back and galloping through the star-lit wood. (269)

Such meaningless interludes create a disjointed second part of the novel and even when Vivian seems to settle for a while in the realm of Little Lilliput—caught up in the political intrigues of several deposed leaders—the focus soon fades. The riotous travels come to a close just as Essper George is interrupted from telling his life's story by an unexplained catastrophic natural disaster. What at first seems to be an earthquake, "the great grey peak tottered on its foundations! It shook! it fell! and buried in its ruins the castle, the village, and the bridge" (436), quickly

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[39] Both Weintraub (42) and Ridley (25) cite an early diary entry of Disraeli's, in which he recorded a family friend's detailed memory of an older Byron living on the Continent, as the source of Beckendorff's eccentric description in *Vivian Grey*.

becomes a raging storm that does not even spare Essper from its wrath, "An amethstine flame hung upon rocks and waters, and through the raging elements a yellow fork darted its fatal point at Essper's resting-place." And there, with the total destruction of plot, setting, and characters, the "grey peak" of *Vivian Grey* totters, and the narrator concludes simply: "Here we leave Vivian!" (437). It is a startling ending to Disraeli's novel, both an abrupt halt and a relief for the reader. In many ways, the variety and creativity of characters and ideas filling the second part of the novel would make for good copy in a miscellany, which likely could have managed the jumping focus and shifting attention better with a journal's distinct departments than could a novel's interdependent chapters. Yet, for Disraeli, who was recovering from power plays over ideologies, policies, budgets, and other formal details of *The Representative*, periodicals did not signify range and diversity but rules and arguments with corporate bodies that mangled the creative process if not completely stifling it. Literature in the fictional realm of a book meant independence and spontaneity. The quick movement of the plot and even the seemingly flat, rapid portraits of new characters represent both Disraeli's desire to indulge in as many experiments in plot and description as possible and also to practice a technique he would foster throughout his literary career, of employing political allegory in his fiction and melodrama.

One of the most forceful ways in which Disraeli rejects periodical conventions in the second part of *Vivian Grey* is to present a character that utilizes a royal "We" that echoes the plural perspective of the periodical "We," only to mock its arrogant use of language. It is the introduction of the Prince of Little Lilliput that ushers in this interrogation of the royal "we." When Vivian saves a huntsman (unaware that he is really the Prince) from the threat of a wild boar, the regal character distinguishes himself immediately with remarks such as, "'Sir, we owe you our life' said the huntsman, with great dignity, as Vivian assisted him in rising from the

ground" (276). Routinely adding in the attributions "we think" or "we observe," the prince maintains the plural pose even when reminiscing about childhood, "the debauch of last night was the usual carouse which crowned the exploits of each day when we were a boy" (281), and when discussing his family members, "But why comes not our son? Have you bidden the Prince Maximilian to our presence?" (282). Most remarkable about this use of the royal "we" is that the narrator immediately indicts the habit. When, for example, the prince reunites with his son after the dangerous boar attack, he exclaims, "My darling," and then the narrator interjects that the father has "[forgotten] at this moment of genuine feeling the pompous plural in which he had hitherto spoken of himself" (283). The accusation of the "pompous plural" requires careful consideration in a text that wrestles with editorial conventions and wavers back and forth between "we" and "I" throughout its pages.

What makes the prince's manner of talking, along with "the evident affectation of royal pomp which pervaded the whole establishment" (286), so out of place to Vivian is that the prince turns out to be "mediatised," or deposed (288). He has no power but that which he enforces through silly displays of veneration from his small court and his continuing use of the pompous plural. Much that remains of the novel involves Vivian counseling the prince as he attempts to fashion a deal with Prime Minister Beckendorff to reacquire some of his authority and status. It is a scenario that harks back to the political debacle with the Marquess and Cleveland, a parallel to which both Vivian and the narrator are sensitive:

> He could not refrain from remembering the last time when he was placed in the same situation... Mr. Vivian Grey's maiden speech... at the political orgies of Chateau Desir. Could he really be the same individual as the daring youth who then organised the crazy councils of those ambitious imbecile grey-beards? What was he then? What had happened since? What was he now? He turned from the comparison with feelings of sickening disgust, and it was with difficulty that his countenance could assume the due degree of hilarity which befitted the present

occasion. (287)

The distinct difference between Vivian's circumstances with the Carabas party and his interactions with Little Lilliput now is that Vivian remains completely disinterested throughout the entire ordeal in Germany, even when he is offered regal rewards for his services. He no longer wishes to achieve political power—or editorial power—as he once did, and the "pompous plural" now presents itself for what it really is, an arrogant and ridiculous façade.

It must be noted that the narrator of *Vivian Grey* does not discontinue the use of the "we" in his exchanges with readers; the text continues to shift back and forth between plural and singular forms throughout the novel. The prince of Little Lilliput, on the other hand, speaks with the royal "we" for only a brief interval longer—"we shall refrain this night from our accustomed potations, and betake ourselves to the solitude of our cabinet" (287)—before he opts to converse with Vivian in the singular "I": "'Sir,' said his Highness, 'your sympathy consoles me. Do not imagine that I can misunderstand it.... Your conversation and your company have made me pass a more cheerful day than I am accustomed to'" (289). The change is significant as the narrator again takes time to highlight it; when the prince asks Vivian to consult with him on important business, the narrator clarifies: "since the explanation of last night, the Prince, in private conversation, had dropped his regal plural" (305). The prince's dropping the royal "we" suggests that he need not maintain a veneer of authority and enforced respect when talking to Vivian because they are characters who understand each other. Therefore, they do not require such convoluted formalities because they already bestow each other with appropriate and mutual respect. The "regal plural" echoes the "pompous plural" and reminds the reader of the importance of the prince's presentation of voice as well as the narrator's presentation of voice in the novel. These are editorial questions, and despite the chaos that characterizes the second part

of *Vivian Grey*, such an editorial context remains a prevalent theme and an important lens through which to read the text. Without doubt, the episode in Little Lilliput undermines the importance of authority[40] and control, both political and editorial, in *Vivian Grey.*

Through the mediatized kingdom of Little Lilliput, the narrator introduces the reader to the greater German court of Reisenburg, which offers new opportunity to de-legitimize London's periodical market through analogy. Little Lilliput's scholar and tutor Mr. Sievers, once an editor in Reisenburg who was banished for a critical article on Austria, tells Vivian of the history between the two regions. He explains that Reisenburg's market is characterized by an "Attack-All Review," in which "every author is reviewed by his personal enemy," and in opposition by a "Praise-All Review,"[41] in which "every author is reviewed by his personal friend" (362). These journals have replaced the prominence of a third and older journal that had provided "critiques and articles... as impartial as they were able, as sincere as they were sound," the result demonstrating that "mankind have no innate desire for scandal, calumny, and backbiting... only... that they have an innate desire to be gulled and deceived" (362). The periodical market of Reisenburg presents a false world that is both overly harsh and overly nice, according to Sievers, and he complements this information with an appraisal of the region's popular fiction as equally fake: "Here we write novels like history, and history like novels: all our facts are fancy, and all

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[40] Even Essper George undermines the prince's authority when he impersonates the royal bugle several times while riding with Vivian in the woods; he revels in the hilarious chaos that ensues when the court cavaliers hear his calls and rush about the forest in search of the prince, whom they think is in distress (273).

[41] *The Key to Characters, Biographies, and Portraits* of 1904 reports the Attack-All Review as the *Quarterly Review* and the Praise-All Review as the *Edinburgh Review* (17). As the reviews were elements of Part Two of *Vivian Grey*, they do not appear in many of the original keys produced to accompany the novel.

our imagination reality" (363)[42]. The final blow to the integrity of the periodical world in the second part of *Vivian Grey* comes when Sievers himself succumbs to the lure of periodical success. Despite his perspective on the artificiality of the market and his excitement that some journals nevertheless have been trying to elude the Reisenburg censors to encourage a free press and other reformations (300), Sievers accepts a position from Prime Minister Beckendorff to return to Reinsenburg as the "Editor of the Austrian Observer, and Censor of the Austrian Press" (372). At the news that Sievers is to become the very censor he opposed and fled from, Vivian "doubt[s] whether he should most grieve or laugh at this singular termination of Mr. Sievers' career."

As the second part of the novel comes to a close, both Vivian and the narrator have become disillusioned with the prospects and promise of the periodical market. The narrator registers more faith in the format of fiction, and yet even there, the novel stresses the importance of individuality and exploration over popular modes and established conventions. Essper George puts the message clearly to Vivian in the midst of one of their rides through the German forest: "Each of us has his own way of telling a story, and... he who would hear a tale must let the teller's breath come out of his own nostrils" (413). The point of much of the unpredictable, dizzying turns of the second part of *Vivian Grey* was simply that the narrator wishes to have his own way, however outrageous, in telling his story. When Vivian is left amid total destruction, again the narrator rejects any responsibility for leaving the story and the protagonist in such a mess. Instead, he simply says to the reader:

> [Vivian's] history has expanded under my pen, and I fear that I have, even now, too much presumed upon an attention to which I am not entitled to command.... I would fain believe that following my roving fancy, I might arrive at some green

[42] This portion of Sievers's speech, which alludes to a Von Chronicle who is Reisenburg's great historical novelist, is a frank jab at Sir Walter Scott.

> retreats hitherto unexplored, and loiter among some leafy bowers where none have lingered before me. But these expectations may be as vain as those dreams of Youth over which we have all mourned" (437).

Recalling the earliest books of *Vivian Grey*, in which Vivian and the narrator struggled together to prove they were "entitled to command" an audience, the narrator here gives up what he now qualifies as youthful dreams. His ambitions for periodical editorship have transformed into literary experimentation and a search for originality, to "loiter among some leafy bowers where none have lingered before me," much more Romantic ideals than the politically driven schemes of Disraeli with *The Representative*.

Yet, as history shows, Disraeli did not spend his days to come loitering in a leafy bower, nor did he abandon his political ambitions. So what do these transformations of Vivian and the narrator signify? What can be gained from reading *Vivian Grey* with its historical context and the frame of editorial power nearly won and then lost and finally rejected? It reveals a conflict between the form of the political periodical—at a time when periodicals thrived on their political affiliations—and one of the most influential political figures of the nineteenth century. The form of the periodical demanded that Disraeli conform to a set of rules determined by multiple commercial interests in collaboration, among which he as a young, inexperienced, and unconnected up-and-comer could not attain a prominent position. As a result, Disraeli used the novel, whose technique is grounded in the antecedents of picaresque satire, to indulge in a testing of formal boundaries and to stray from the conventions that failed to distinguish him in the periodical world. What his allegiance to the novel registers, despite his overlooking the literary conventions that likewise made novels commercially profitable, is his alignment with the spirit of individualism that would characterize much of the coming century, in literature and politics. What is most interesting, however, is that in order to create that spirit of idiosyncratic

individualism in *Vivian Grey*, Disraeli had to pit the form of the periodical, which he could not ignore despite all his efforts to reject it in Part Two, against the form of the novel. For Thackeray in the 1840s, however, the idiosyncrasy of narrative voices would emanate *from* his experience writing for periodicals and would be the hinge that linked his work in journalism with his early experiments in novel writing, as evidenced in *Pendennis.*

CHAPTER II

PERIODICAL MULTIPLICITY IN THACKERAY'S *PENDENNIS*

To his travel-writing audience, he went by Michael Angelo Titmarsh. His magazine readers knew him better as Charles James Yellowplush, Ikey Solomon, the Literary Snob, and even the Fat Contributor. In longer fiction, he masqueraded for a time as George Savage Fitzboodle. More than a century after audiences first encountered his work, scholars are still trying to determine the extent of his literary record and his endless list of pseudonyms. A chameleon of voices, William Makepeace Thackeray set out to succeed in the competitive London publishing arena of the 1830s by crafting scores of *noms de plume* and promoting himself as an entire catalogue of contributors: versatile and eager for work in any venue. But it was as the "Old Man" that he always saw himself, even from his early years as a bachelor in the London metropole.[43] Perhaps the idea grew out of harsh experiences from childhood, when he was faced with the death of his father, the romantic scandals of his mother, and his separation from family life in colonial India for the toils of education in a British boarding school. Or the feeling may have taken root later in life, when he squandered a small fortune and all the benefits

[43] Biographer Gordon Ray describes the effects of the early strains on Thackeray's family life and the growing pressure from his responsibilities as a writer supporting his family: "though he was not yet thirty, he fell into the habit of presenting himself as a man of fifteen or twenty years older, who had become an observer of the battle of life, rather than a participant in it" (277). Ray explains that Thackeray was aided in promoting this vision of himself as an old man because his hair had turned gray by the time he was thirty (213). In an endnote, the biographer also cites a fellow *Punch* contributor who, writing in the *Critic* of 1885, confirms that he "never felt quite at home with [Thackeray]" because "he was always so infernally wise" (note 1, 490). To clarify, the "Old Man" was not one of Thackeray's literary pseudonyms; it is a name I employ to characterize the way he saw himself, in contrast to the many literary names and masks he donned in his writing.

of a young gentleman almost immediately with excessive traveling and gambling.[44] But whatever the cause, the idea that age had come to him quickly shaped Thackeray's life in many ways, from influencing his style of work, to encouraging his penchant for benefacting young people, to unfortunately suggesting married life as an ideal solace to his early troubles. What is clear from his writing is that the "Old Man" had undoubtedly acquired early in his career a multiplicity of perspectives, a complex way of looking at the world from multiple points of view and of looking back at himself with that same variation and depth, that fitted his self-characterization as someone who had lived long and seen much. This multiplicity of perspectives likewise fueled his success with the most popular and dynamic media of the age: the periodical.

The 1840s found William Makepeace Thackeray one of the quintessential professional writers of his time—young in his career and yet still standing out in relief among a few other successful scribblers in the growing throng of the London publishing market. It was a decade that saw him publish hundreds of reviews, articles, sketches, and illustrations for scores of disparate journals, ranging from *Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country* to *Punch, or the London Charivari* to *The Foreign Quarterly Review* to *The Times* to the *Calcutta Star*. The amassed production of his various literary endeavors, just during the ten-year period between 1837 and 1847, reveals a repertoire of 476 magazine pieces, in addition to three books[45] (Shillingsburg 43, 49). Although his periodical work drew little critical attention in its first stages, his eagerness to produce copy and his adaptability as a writer kept the "Old Man" among the list of contributors for many journals. Thackeray finally began to gain greater notoriety in

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[44] See Peters 22-44, Ray 139-174.

[45] These books include *The Paris Sketchbook* (1840), *The Irish Sketchbook* (1843), and *Notes on a Journey from Cornhill to Grand Cairo* (1846).

the mid-1840s, for series such as his *Book of Snobs* that he wrote for *Punch*, which finally landed him a secure income and the footing to step more confidently into the world of fiction (Taylor 200).

Thackeray did not abandon this multiplicity of perspectives when he began writing novels: *Vanity Fair* in 1848 and *Pendennis*, which appeared in monthly parts from 1848 to 1850. Ever reflecting and invested in writing about his own experiences, Thackeray produced his second novel, *Pendennis*, as a semi-autobiographical tale about a young gentleman who dashes his initial opportunities in education and society but then recovers his pride and livelihood through writing for periodicals. Beyond culling details from his life for the content of a rather typical coming-of-age romance, however, Thackeray crafted his definition of the novel as a vehicle to portray the multiplicity of perspectives he had fostered in his professional haven of periodical writing. In feeling his way toward making his periodical skills applicable to the novel form, and thus rendering them more lucrative, he experimented with creating a multiplicity of perspectives through the novel's form and narrative voice. Denying the novel unified elements of time and point of view, Thackeray interrupted the conventional plot with intermittent episodes of nonlinear chronology, erratic changes in narrative purpose, and inconsistent presentations of narrative personality and even pronouns. Hence, the novel's formal structure features conventions characteristic of multi-authored periodicals, whose compilations often revealed a lack of unity in perspective and time, different narrative voices, and the use of the editorial "we" to disguise an array of writers behind a single corporate presence. Thackeray was invested in these periodical conventions because they expressed an experience of multiplicity that one could encounter through both the writing and reading of the Victorian periodical. *Pendennis* is a

striking endeavor because it is a serialized novel that reduplicates periodical form, not just content.

According to Gordon Ray's biography, Thackeray felt a conflict of forms in his work as he tried to move into the novel, with all its potential for larger commercial profits. Despite his hefty periodical repertoire, Thackeray felt incapable of either writing a hit novel or of writing a work that would feature his unique style. Ray comments on Thackeray's slow entry into fiction: "The upshot of his efforts was merely to strengthen his position as a periodical writer. 'I can suit the magazines,' he wrote in June, 1845, 'but I can't hit the public, be hanged to them'" (347). Of course, Ray highlights this period of uncertainty as a lull before Thackeray's rise to success with *Vanity Fair*. But even as Thackeray overcame this period of uncertainty and secured his status as a professional novelist, he never forgot how to "suit the magazines." This quality likely favored his selection decades later as the first editor of the enormously popular *Cornhill Magazine* of the 1860s, one of the most important and influential publications of the Victorian era.[46] His enduring talent for periodical writing empowered him to stand out with a versatility of styles or pastiche throughout his career. By experimenting with so many identities for different periodicals and manipulating so many pseudonyms designed for the multitude of purposes related to different publishing venues, Thackeray exemplified what it meant to participate in periodicals' corporate identities, camouflaging himself and playing behind their ruses. By spreading himself so far across the periodical field, Thackeray was never seduced by any one

[46] According to Richard Altick, "the first number of [the *Cornhill Magazine*] sold an astounding total, considering its price, of 120,000 copies. This was one of the most heartening events in the whole history of English periodicals" (359). Altick goes on to explain how the magazine, despite its initial success, would decline in the following decade due to competition and accusations of overly censored content. For more on the *Cornhill Magazine*, see "Periodicals and Newspapers 1850-1900" in *The English Common Reader*.

corporate identity. Rather, the conventions that periodicals used to disguise and unite their creative teams behind a corporate identity fueled the disunity and chaos of multiple voices characterizing Thackeray's style.

The novel *Pendennis*, which draws on Thackeray's entry into the world of 1830s publishing, follows a pattern set out in the preface, of favoring a characterization of the protagonist, Arthur Pendennis, as a periodical contributor over one as a novelist. In the preface to the 1850 collected volumes of *Pendennis*, Thackeray speaks of himself as one who is in "constant communication with the reader," who is a "perpetual speaker," who has won "many thousands more readers than [he] ever looked for" and yet who has at times lost "subscribers" (vii-viii). The word choice of "constant" and "perpetual" and "subscribers" recalls the pace and cyclical reception of periodical writing rather than the slower speed and belated responses of novel writing. Again, Thackeray chooses to emphasize that he has been in "constant communication with the reader," and he avoids the term "the public" and its associations for him with novel readers. Hardly evoking the image of a distinguished literary figure or independent author such as a Henry Fielding or a Walter Scott, Thackeray writes of himself as something more typical. While concerned with the prestige and dignity of professional writing as a career for a gentleman throughout his lifetime, Thackeray does not seek to paint himself as an artist or an author or anyone of importance but simply as one among many perpetual writers. He is marketing himself as a periodical contributor. In the same fashion, Pen is "a professional writer, or literary hack" whose life is "full of routine, and tedious of description" (vol.1 359). Once Pen gets his start, the narrator divulges his daily routine and success as a journalist, explaining that "Arthur Pendennis's merits [were] recognized as a flippant, witty, and amusing critic" and he "likewise… furnished Magazines and Reviews with articles of his composition, and is believed

to have been… London correspondent of the 'Chatteris Champion'" so that "by these labors the fortunate youth was enabled to earn a sum very nearly equal to four hundred pounds a year" (360-61). Just through its content alone, Thackeray's *Pendennis* gives a uniquely detailed picture of the periodical world in the mid-nineteenth century.

Unlike *Vanity Fair*, which has often been deemed Thackeray's masterpiece, *Pendennis* provides a rather conventional scenario of a young ingénue coming of age and starting his career in London, a plot line which is bolstered by a rather limited cast of compelling supporting characters. Yet, as Catherine Peters comments, the novel has value because of the in-depth picture it provides of London's literary world: "apart from giving Pendennis an easier time than he had himself, Thackeray's picture of literary London in his youth is vivid, and, within the limits imposed by Victorian censorship, accurate" (175). Moreover, it was a successful novel in its time,[47] holding its ground on the market against the likes of Charles Dickens's *David Copperfield*, and it registers the significance of periodical culture on nineteenth-century fiction in a way that many other texts do not.

Moving past the preface to the novel itself, the narrator continues to muse on the work of professional writers and the respectability of such a career choice, arguing that "when you want to make money by Pegasus… farewell poetry and aerial flights" (359). The narrator of *Pendennis* draws a line between the writers of respected forms of literature—classical literature and poetry—and writers of daily periodical content, specifically Pen's contributions to the *Pall*

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[47] For information on the sales of Thackeray's novels at this point in his career, see Altick 385, footnote 31.

Mall Gazette.[48] But rather than suggest that he is against the practices of journalism as a means of making a living, the narrator then clarifies:

> If he gets the whip, Pegasus very often deserves it, and I for one am quite ready to protest with my friend, George Warrington, against the doctrine which some poetical sympathizers are inclined to put forward, viz., that men of letters, and what is called genius, are to be exempt from the prose duties of this daily, bread-winning, tax-paying life, and are not to be made to work and pay like their neighbors. (359-360)

The text reveals here its preference for literature as a profession over literature as art. It is not interested in the work of haughty "men of letters" or classical subjects or audiences of the elite. The periodical market is about broad audiences and current subjects and new kinds of writers—contributors, namely, who have to participate in the world of commerce that fuels their existence. Writing in *Pendennis* is not the work of Pegasus, and yet the narrator is clear that just because the factors of the market come into play does not mean that the quality and craft of writing is dirtied by association. In fact, to be a part of the exchange and labor of the market is what provides the experience and the content for *Pendennis* and for the changing nineteenth-century audience. Thackeray's narrator also alludes in the passage to specific disputes over respectability of literature and the possibility of government financing for national writers and poets, questioning why men of letters and their texts should be allowed to exist outside the world of commerce that supports them.[49]

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[48] Thackeray titles this chapter "Where Pen Appears in Town and Country," which is a covert reference to the section's autobiographical context—Pen has finally been accepted as a contributor for the *Pall Mall Gazette* just as Thackeray had been accepted as a contributor for *Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country* in his early career. The title reinforces the frame of the periodical world on the content of the novel.

[49] Michael Lund usefully explores this portion of *Pendennis* in two chapters of his *Reading Thackeray*, discussing an exceptional delay that occurred in Thackeray's writing process immediately prior to his writing the passage on Pegasus and literary hacks. In October 1849, Thackeray became ill after the publication of his eleventh part and was unable to produce the twelfth part for three months. That delay, in tandem with a particularly cruel scene featuring a

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Pendennis does not unify its voices following the traditional course of periodicals. Nor does it unify its form as one might expect from a novel in the emerging school of realism. When Thackeray transplants the tactics of corporate periodicals to *Pendennis*, the conventions alter their effects so that, for instance, the editorial "we" begins to highlight in the novel what it works to cover up in the periodical. Readers of Thackeray's periodicals took for granted that the text originated from multiple sources, and so the "we" in them functions acceptably to deemphasize moments of discontinuity. In his novel, however, audiences took for granted that the text derived from Thackeray, so that the editorial "we" he employs *irregularly* throughout the novel emphasizes a pose by the author to portray multiple voices. Whereas the culture of corporate identity in periodicals offered magazines continuity and consistency that unified their various voices, what it offered to Thackeray's texts were endless incongruent incarnations of himself: multiple perspectives, *not* unified perspectives.[50] Thackeray produces an *exploratory* work that tests the possibilities of transplanting conventions from one literary form to another: in this case, transplanting narrative conventions like the editorial "we" from the world of periodicals into the

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literary reviewer that Thackeray left dangling in readers' minds, prompted journals like the *Morning Chronicle* to debate the issues of the dignity of literature, the character of novelists and professional writers, and adequate means of compensation for creative labor during the three-month lag. Thackeray wrote several letters to the editor of the *Morning Chronicle* among other publications: "argu[ing] that writers were adequately recognized by society… [but] indirectly assert[ing] that the system did not always recognize quality" (64).

[50] The interruptions or fluctuations built into the narrative perspective of *Pendennis* do not produce the simulation of routine that might encourage the adoption of realism, as Michael Lund and Linda Hughes have discussed with other realist texts. Their work explores the similarities between the pacing and staccato-like quality of the periodical market and the dominance of the realist style in the nineteenth-century novel: "The interruptions inherent in serials naturally encouraged writers to work in the primary mode of the Victorian Age, realism" (11). Yet, because Thackeray's interruptions occur erratically and unpredictably in the text. they fracture the text rather than aligning it with "the primary mode" of realism.

world of novels. Despite its lack of unity, *Pendennis* is an exceptional critical resource and piece of literature because as a *novel* it captures the myriad paces, processes, and voices of the periodicals that produced writing *and* reading as experiences of multiple perspectives in the mid-nineteenth century.

Tracking the narrative perspective of *Pendennis* does not create a sense of synthesis or unification. Rather, Thackeray constantly shifts perspective—from a "We" that is clearly editorial and merely rhetorical in its plurality; to other versions of "We" that imply union through common experience (typically with either male readers or British compatriots); to an "I" that recalls the voice of a supposed historian and friend to the characters; to more self-conscious "I"s that gesture in the opposite direction to reading publics, known controversies in the press, and the tribulations of independent professional writers. From present to future and from future to past, the experience of the narrative unfolds as that of a fun house with constant shifts in the factors affecting point of view. Consider the following quotes from *Pendennis,* all of which present comments from the narrative voice, as a brief survey of the range of narrative perspectives Thackeray toys with in the novel:

- "We must drape him, and give him a certain conventional simper" (viii).
- "A youth… now appeared before Pen in one of those costumes to which the public consent, which I take to be quite as influential in this respect as 'Johnson's Dictionary," has awarded the title of 'Swell'" (30).
- "If Captain Costigan, whom I have the honor to know, would but have told his history, it would have been a great moral story" (47).
- "We have described the play before, and how those who saw Miss Fotheringay perform in Ophelia saw precisely the same thing on one night as on another" (93).
- "Thus, O friendly readers, we see how every man in the world has his own private griefs and business" (147).
- "For we beg the reader to understand that we only commit anachronisms when we choose, and when by the daring violation of those natural laws some great ethical truth is to be advanced" (vol. 2, 141).

The content of these quotes that display the various narrative voices characterize knowledge coming from the narrator, whether from a "we" or "I," as influenced by concepts of definition ("'Johnson's Dictionary'"), exactitude ("precisely the same thing"), and a natural order ("natural laws"), and yet it is also malleable ("give him a certain conventional simper" and "we only commit anachronisms when we choose") for the sake of presentation or palatability. Thackeray's approach to narration, according to these examples, presents content that derives from what he considers to be some definable, precise source of reality—shown through detailed description of non-idealized subjects and historical evidence, albeit contrived—but the presentation of that content is subject to unpredictable manipulations of style to please audience's moral expectations *or* to express the writer's frustrations over those limitations.

Like Disraeli in *Vivian Grey*, Thackeray presents different versions of narrative voice. But while Disraeli utilizes his mix of voices to transition from an unrewarding presentation of periodical conventions to an invigorating preference for idiosyncratic individualism in the novel, Thackeray maintains his range of voices in order to blend the periodical and novel forms. He wants to see if it is possible to tell a story in a novel from multiple points of view and purposes,[51]

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[51] Although he does not discuss shifts in narrative voice, Michael Lund writes in *Reading Thackeray* that the shifts in time characteristic of Thackeray's texts (43-47) often reveal his belief in "stability of character," a pattern which Lund says has led critics to erroneously suggest that protagonists such as Pen do not develop very much within their bildungsroman journeys (39, 56). He then claims that although Pen does not appear to alter dramatically in the novel, the manner in which the text was published serially actually built in time for the original historical readers to experience change and development themselves. According to his argument, readers could fill in the gaps of Pen's marginal change with their own change over the course of serialization (41). Lund makes an acute observation here about the tangible effect of serialization on the experience of reading a novel as well as on Thackeray's development of character, plot, and even reader investment. Lund's argument also provides a useful explanation for the fact that Pen does not manifest significant changes in the book, an argument which is compelling because it derives from the form of the novel itself. Yet, Thackeray's text—whether in original serial version or subsequently collected version—does not support a philosophy based on "stability of character" when the reader simply cannot pin down a stable character for the

in the same way that a periodical constructs its texts. His strategy also explores the extent to which the narrative voice or character affects the story it is creating. Does it function as an integral part of the novel and change the story when it itself changes, or is it external to the story, a function that can be played with at whim and without consequence. Because for Thackeray the writing of a published text was always its own story, worthy of an audience, narrative voices necessarily always had more than one tale to tell at a time. Therefore, his texts strive to balance narrative voices that are consequential to the novel being written and those that can also function outside the plot to represent that other story of writing the novel. The corporate periodical could handle this task well; Thackeray's challenge in *Pendennis* was to determine if his definition of the novel could do the same.

Thackeray's work in *Pendennis*—despite claims in the preface that the novel seeks to present "truth" (vii)—is not driven by a creation of simulated reality but focuses more on a truth built out of fracturing its story with the multiplicity of voices that were so at home in the form of the nineteenth-century periodical. In many ways, the multiple perspectives collected into reviews and journals developed a multifaceted survey of reality—of the current events and current conflicts of opinion on politics, philosophies, styles, etc.—for reading audiences, and in this way, Thackeray's definition of the novel reflects a construction of reality out of many conflicting or disparate perspectives. Yet, what makes Thackeray's multiple voices different from other nineteenth-century novels narrated by multiple voices, such as Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* (1847) or Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White* (1859-1860), is that while Bronte's and Collins's novels build their realism out of an array of perspectives presented through letters or testimonials, they also distinguish and separate the distinct points of view in a

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narrator or even a perspective from which to organize and comprehend the telling of the narrative.

way that Thackeray's novel does not. While they predicate their reality on the conglomeration of truth coming out of many overlapping versions of a story from different narrators, Thackeray's novel seems to present only one narrator, but it is a narrator that changes without any accounting for when or why. His is a narrator more interested in the effects of changing points of view than on the different versions of reality those points of view create. As such, his narrator adds the additional perspective of the reality of the writer creating perspectives and responding to the challenges of the market. Thackeray flourished as a young writer behind his many personae and relished the flexibility his pseudonyms provided to blur the lines between fiction and reality. As Peter Shillingsburg puts it: "Among the novels by Victorians, Thackeray's most effectively blur the seam between fiction and history…. Yet the author never lets the reader forget the real world of story-telling and the marketing of fiction" (5). In *Pendennis*, Thackeray constantly jumps back and forth over the tight-rope between fiction and history, and he does so by emphasizing the technique of writing, entertaining these shifts in narrative perspective, and calling attention through periodical conventions to the multiple voices he projects into the text. Reminiscent of the dynamic form of the periodical, the novel at times presents the voice of an author, at others those of a contributor, a historian, a friend, even a reader. The voice of a reader is critical in this list in that it represents not just the average novel reader but rather the *critical reader* or reviewer behind the corporate "We," on which the rise of the nineteenth-century periodical was predicated.

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The depth of idiosyncrasy of Thackeray's narrators is evident in his earliest published submission to *Punch*, the series "Miss Tickletoby's Lectures on English History," which began

in 1842. Although canceled before its intended completion, the series secured Thackeray his long-sought security as a professional writer. His daughter Anne Richie writes: "By Christmas time 1843 my father became a regular contributor and took his seat at the *Punch* table, as a successor to Albert Smith" (xviii). The first episode of the *Tickletoby* series sets out the intricacy of the narrative structure and lends a strong sense of the ridiculous to the presumptive content of the series: educational lectures on the history of England. The episode is titled: "A Character (To Introduce a Character)," but Thackeray could easily have added "—to introduce another character" because there really exist three layers within the narration of the series. In simplest terms, a regular contributor to *Punch* writes (layer 1) about being approached by a floundering periodical writer and poet, Adolphus Simcoe, Esquire, in the hopes of publishing his report (layer 2) on a series of educational lectures (layer 3) by a society instructor, Miss Wilhelmina Maria Tickletoby.

Addressing each layer of narration individually, the reader first encounters a layer containing the voice that would prove most familiar and comfortable: that of the supposed regular *Punch* contributor. What is noteworthy of this first voice is that it utilizes the editorial "We;" it speaks with an educated, critical, and somewhat sarcastic vocabulary; and—as the reader learns from the dialogue with Adolphus Simcoe, who addresses the *Punch* contributor as "Halfred"—it goes by the name of Alfred. Alfred the contributor then provides readers with an introduction to Simcoe—"we have the pleasure to be acquainted with a young fellow…" (3)—and explains Simcoe's past literary endeavors (prior to his present desperate state) with a magazine called *The Lady's Lute:* "the public, for near a year, may be said to have been almost taken in by Adolphus Simcoe—as they have been by other *literary characters* of his kind" (4, emphasis mine). Not only does Alfred the contributor here cast suspicion on Simcoe, the

presumed narrator of the upcoming series, with his comment about "the public [being] almost taken in," but he also casts suspicion on the entire premise of periodical narrators with the self-conscious epithet of "literary character" that he gives Simcoe. Although in the supposedly serious mode of the text, Alfred is just using the term "character" in its colloquial and derogatory form, he nonetheless emphasizes the fictional construction of any narrative voice—even the fictional construction of his own self as "Halfred," "Alfred," or "We."

Moving on to the second layer of narration, which is that provided by Simcoe, the reader first receives a preview of this new voice in the dialogue provided by Alfred: "'Halfred,' said he, 'you know I hoccupy no common position in the literary world. I ave at least done so, until misfortune hovertook me…. those literary men…. they won't accept a single harticle of my writing'" (5-6). According to the scenario Alfred's dialogue sets up, then, the second layer of narration is to be a contribution to *Punch* by Simcoe: what he describes as "a report of Miss T's lecture, prefaced by a modest leading harticle." This imminent shift in the narration is finally made absolutely clear by the intermediary Alfred, who clarifies to end the installment: "Adolphus Simcoe is to be paid for his contributions, and next week we shall begin Miss Tickletoby's lectures."

Once the second installment begins, the narrative structure becomes more complex, perhaps as anticipated by the reader who is now waiting to hear from a third person (Miss Tickletoby, who is the one supposedly giving the lectures on which Simcoe will be commenting), but this complexity is not just due to the anticipated third layer. The voice the reader encounters in the second installment is now supposedly that of Simcoe himself, and yet there is a marked discrepancy between this voice and the voice of Simcoe as presented by Alfred in the dialogue from the first installment. Previously, Simcoe came across as brash, boastful, and

poorly educated in contrast to Contributor Alfred: "Hever since hi've been in the ouse of that hangelic being—she's hold, Halfred, hold enough to be my grandmother, and so I pray you let the sneer pass away from your lips—hi've not neglected, has you may himagine, the sacred calling for which hi feel hi was born" (5-6). Yet in "Lecture I," or the second installment of the series, what the reader hears is instead a totally different kind of voice:

> We have spoken of the public character: a word now regarding Miss Tickletoby the woman. She has long been known and loved in the quarter of which she is the greatest blessing and ornament—that of St. Mary Axe. From early life practising tuition, some of the best families of the City owe to her their earliest introduction to letters. (7)

Simcoe's language, according to Alfred, is marked by his strong cockney accent; his use of casual injections and references such as "Miss T's"; and his recourse to melodramatic word choices like "angelic," "sneer," and "sacred." The Simcoe who is now narrating the first lecture marks his language with more complex rhetorical forms that indicate poise, organization, and precision. This voice uses formal social norms: it no longer claims "Miss T" as a "grandmother," the diction is more restrained and sophisticated in tone, and most important, Simcoe the narrator now employs the editorial "we" in his description of Miss Tickletoby.

What does this discrepancy reveal about the series Thackeray was constructing for *Punch*? Foremost, an ambiguity as to which narrator has manipulated Simcoe's voice: Alfred or Simcoe himself? Did Alfred manipulate the voice in his dialogue to create a caricature in dialect for comic effect, or did Simcoe manipulate his own voice when writing to take on a mode more suited to the magazine? As it is a piece of fiction, the answer is, of course, irrelevant—neither narrator did anything because the episodes did not take place. But on a metafictional level, both possibilities are plausible, and they both highlight the element of writing with which Thackeray was toying here: *the power to transform and manipulate multiple voices*. Emphasizing even

further this potential for narrative play in voices is Simcoe's adoption of the editorial "we" for his discourse on Miss Tickletoby—with his style so refined in comparison to the Simcoe of Alfred's dialogue, Simcoe's "We" sounds just like Alfred's "We," so that the reader has to question whether Alfred has resumed the narrative where he left off from the previous installment or if, as specifically promised, Simcoe truly has begun his own presentation of Miss Tickletoby for the magazine.

Evidence culled from the rest of Lecture I suggest that Simcoe is now handling the narrative. Not only does the text provide details of his in-depth, personal knowledge of the subject, Miss Tickletoby, but it also features a claim from the narrator that "we… being from our habits more accustomed to philosophical abbreviation, have been contented with taking down rather the heads and the *suggestivity*… of Miss Tickletoby's discourse," a comment which aligns itself with the magazine's later disclaimer about Simcoe's style of work: "it is to ADOLPHUS SIMCOE, ESQUIRE, author of the 'Ghoul,' 'Leila,' 'Idiosyncrasy,' &c. that we are indebted for the following philosophical synopsis of Miss Tickletoby's First Lecture on English History" (11-12). Despite these details, however, the first several installments of this series do much to blur their various narrative voices and, as a result, demonstrate the adaptability and truly *corporate* nature of periodical writing. Most important, Thackeray carefully *emphasizes* this blurring, putting on display the multiplicity of voices behind the "we" rather than covering them up. He demonstrates the course they take in conforming one voice to another behind the consistent "we" presented on the periodical page.

Furthermore, the entire process of presenting Miss Tickletoby's lectures in *Punch* apparently requires an entourage of writers and proves a truly corporate endeavor: Simcoe relates that while he was occupied with his philosophical synopsis, "the reporters of this paper were

employed in taking down every word that fell from the speaker's lips" (7). When the installment finally reaches Miss Tickletoby's actual lecture, and it does eventually get there, the first-person voice of her talk has been tainted with a fair amount of suspicion—she may say things such as "learn for learning's sake; if not, I have something hanging up in the cupboard, and you know my name is Tickletoby" (9), but the reader is not aware if these words are supposed to come from the verbatim reports, from the philosophical synopsis, or simply from another exaggerated caricature from one of the various narrative voices introducing this material in *Punch*. The irony extends outside of the bounds of the narrative structure to wink back at Thackeray as a contributor to *Punch*, as well as to wink at any of the other voices and pseudonyms behind which he writes. Again, the text is an exercise in representing the dynamic conglomeration of voices that exist behind periodicals, and by making the unraveling layers so confusing and ridiculous, the series parodies the way the various voices function together to portray an abstract corporate presence that obscures their multiple perspectives.

Thackeray creates a maze that fascinates in the way it enters in and out of different voices and perspectives and merges them. But it seems in this particular instance that it was a maze too difficult to maintain because as the series continues, the structure simplifies and the reader encounters simulated editorial comments such as: "[*Punch*, in concluding this long paper, begs to hint to Mr. Simcoe, whose remuneration will be found at the office, that for the future he may spare his own remarks, philosophical, laudatory, or otherwise, and confine himself simply to the lectures of Miss Tickletoby]" (17). Indeed, the later installments focus more and more primarily on the supposed voice of Miss Tickletoby and the actual content of her lectures. This editorial footnote reiterates Thackeray's inclination to discuss writers' labors and their pay—a pattern that will re-appear throughout *Pendennis*, as well—and it confirms a quality of his writing and

thematic preoccupations on literary labor that Jack Rawlins notes in his analysis of *The Adventures of Philip*: “It is this apparent willingness to destroy the novel to make a point about the business of reading and writing that makes us realize that we cannot look past the frame of a picture to the imagined reality beyond” (149).

Speaking of Thackeray’s periodical labor, which included work for publications as far off as France, India, and the United States, Catherine Peters explains: “The experience of writing for different personae, gave him the opportunity to experiment with the varied styles and levels of discourse that were to become a distinctive part of his major fiction” (99). Thackeray honed the many styles and multi-layered discourse of those experiments, but he did not narrow his range to choose one dominant mode for his novel writing. Rather, he continued to juggle the many different layers and registers of his periodical career to shape the unique and almost indefinably complex quality of narrative voice that he manipulated throughout his career as a novelist.

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Thackeray’s manipulation of the periodical “we” in his novel *Pendennis* illustrates this complexity generating the story from more than one position, from more than one point in time, and from multiple perspectives. The narrative voice in *Pendennis* ultimately challenges the conventional principles of realism in the novel, which ironically was the style for which Thackeray was celebrated as the “chief” by *Fraser’s Magazine for Town and Country* (January 1851, 86) and which drove so much of the literary trends of the times. His narrative voice favors, rather, an undercurrent invested in multiple, self-conscious, nonunified perspectives and,

in a broader scope, the important possibility for change that such literary representations of disunity and multiplicity in perspective offered for Victorian culture.

The periodical "we" disrupts the novel because its irregular, erratic usage cannot provide any consistency or consensus of voice and setting that is necessary for simulating reality. As Elizabeth Ermarth explains, "the implication of realist technique is that proper distance will enable the subjective spectator or the subjective consciousness to see the multiple viewpoints and so to find the form of the whole"—or what Ermarth goes on to call "consensus"—"in what looks from a closer vantage point like a discontinuous array of specific cases" (35). That "subjective spectator" or "consciousness" to which she refers is anchored in the narrator of the nineteenth-century novel, which is designed to piece together the multiple viewpoints and relay or direct that synthesis onto the subjective consciousness of the reader. Yet, as the text of *Pendennis* reveals, there is no consistent "subjective spectator" or "consciousness" to anchor readers' experiences of multiple viewpoints, leaving one to conclude that the text's major preoccupations or undertakings did not align themselves with creating a consensus or simulated reality, as so many proponents of Thackeray's uniquely styled fiction would suggest. Propelled by his experience working for periodicals, Thackeray demonstrates a style that favors meaning in the "discontinuous array" rather than in the "form of the whole." Despite his skill in creating detailed worlds that cast him as the "chief" of realism and his ability to conform to prescribed corporate identities, Thackeray builds much of his creative work off of instability, inconsistency, and multiplicity. *Pendennis* is not about any kind of consensus or any kind of uniform corporate presence. It is about recording a market full of differing and competing periodicals and voices and contributors and audiences and forms, all of which persist in their diversity despite trends to

obscure and assimilate them. It likewise registers a multitude of difference existing across a reading culture: different classes, different genders, different politics, and different styles.

The difficulty in applying the concept of consensus or the category of realism to Thackeray's work in *Pendennis* arises because his narrator or narrative voices never remain consistent enough to guide any kind of synthesis nor are they reliably distanced. Not to overly simplify the concept of the realist narrator, however, I will briefly return to Ermarth, who acknowledges the complexity of some realist narrators. In reference to *Middlemarch*, for example, she states that Eliot's narrator

> is a medium that includes the personalized narrative voice with other voices in a continuum of minds and voices that even extends beyond characters into the metaphors and tempo of the novels. Thus George Eliot's narrator shuffles between extremes of personalization and abstraction…. because consensus finally is not possible…. one consensus after another is established and dissolved (237-42).[52]

Yet, unlike Eliot's narrator, Thackeray's narrative voices do not "shuffle between extremes of personalization and abstraction," but instead, they are branded by the conventions of the periodical arena, such that they shuffle between extremes of personalization similar to the character voice of a *pseudonym* and then of abstraction similar to the *corporate editorial "we."* While reading the many narrative voices, the many "I"s and "we"s, of *Pendennis*, it is as if one encounters in the narrator a figure like Adolphus Simcoe who is merely friends with Arthur Pendennis, just as he was friends with Miss Tickletoby, and who is eager to provide his acquaintance's life story for a little remuneration; yet, the voice that is similar to Simcoe's shifts in the novel continuously taking on other voices, sometimes one like that of an Alfred,

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[52] For more information about George Eliot's narrative voice as well as her work in periodicals, see Fionnuala Dillane's "Re-reading George Eliot's 'Natural History': Marian Evans, 'the People,' and the Periodical" (2009). Dillane explores Eliot's "authorial statements" in periodical reviews in tandem with her understanding of transparency in critical writing and how that influenced her uses of pseudonym.

sometimes one like that of an unknown editorial "We," sometimes even inching close to one like a cameo from Thackeray himself,[53] but the voice never settles on just one option. Such shifts are neither arbitrary nor subtle; rather, his style comes directly from his work as a journalist, a style that builds out of the creative literary ventriloquism pioneered and perfected in the bustling productions of the Victorian periodical market.

This periodical frame around *Pendennis* demands a different kind of reading of the novel's narration, in which a narrator's subjective consciousness, whether distanced or close at hand, cannot be taken for granted. The reader must approach moments of narration keeping in mind that there is much more at play in the selection of voices than a development of consciousness or realistic synthesis. For instance, the narrator of *Pendennis* interrupts an intimate scene between the minor characters Fanny Bolton and Sam Huxter—"I suppose that Fanny and Mr. Sam were on exceedingly familiar and confidential terms by this time" (239, vol. 2)—to call attention to readers' reactions to sentimental memories. Nevertheless, the significance of the episode lies beyond the rhetorical questions about memories raised for the readers: "What has this reference to the possible reader, to do with any of the characters of this history?" The narrator taunts the readers by himself questioning the purpose of his interruption.

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[53] In the later part of the novel, the narrator comments: "This point [about heroes] has been argued before in a previous unfortunate sentence (which lately drew down all the wrath of Ireland upon the writer's head" (148, vol. 2). The sentence alludes to a slightly earlier phrase from the novel in which the text derogatorily characterizes a woman, Miss Catherine Hayes: "Let us admire the diversity of the tastes of mankind; and the oldest, the ugliest, the stupidest and most pompous, the silliest and most vapid, the greatest criminal, tyrant, booby, Bluebeard, Catherine Hayes, George Barnwell, amongst us, we need never despair" (67, vol. 2). Controversy arose over the sentence for Thackeray, who claimed he had produced the line about a murderess he'd previously written on, when his reading public in Ireland took the attack as a slander against the famous Irish soprano of the same name. The rather personal commentary in the sentence qualifies it as a cameo by Thackeray. For more information on this controversy, see page 85 of "W.M. Thackeray and Arthur Pendennis, Esquires" from *Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country*, from January 1851.

Continuing for another half page, the narrator conjectures on human loyalties and regrets and even speculates on other characters' responses, such as Pen's and Warrington's, to the same subject before interrupting his own interruption again with: "so let us imagine that the public steps in at this juncture, and stops the confidential talk between author and reader, and begs us to resume our remarks about this world, with which both are certainly better acquainted than with that other one into which we have just been peeping" (240, vol. 2).

The humor of this long digression comes from juxtaposing what was supposed to be an intimate moment between two specific characters, Fanny and Sam, with multiple other pairings—between the author and the reader, between Pen and Warrington, between the reader and their disparate remembered loved ones—until the scenario loses all intimacy, and "the public" must interrupt to return the text to its rightful focus on the characters and plot of *Pendennis.* Emphasizing "the public's" agency in producing the text again reflects back on the conventions of periodical writing, which in many ways incorporated public response, and it further characterizes the act of literary creation as a predominantly *corporate* one that even includes audience participation. Additionally, the episode detracts from the intimacy between possible pairings of people by confusing subjects grammatically when, again, the narrator presents himself as an "I" and a "we" and an "author," and when he chooses phrases such as "let us imagine" and "begs us resume our remarks." The reader cannot determine whether the "us" and "our" include the author *and* the reader—the kind of intimate pair the entire episode pokes fun at—or if it merely alludes to the falsely plural editorial "we" that is about to subsume all other voices and regain control of the plot once again.

Looking at the digression from one other angle, I question Thackeray's use of the term "the public," which at first indicates simply the broad reading audience of *Pendennis*, as opposed

to the singular ideal "reader" the narrator addresses in this scene. Yet, in many ways, Thackeray's use of "the public" here echoes his comment, as cited in the Gordon Ray biography, that "I can't hit the public, be hanged to them." In that earlier usage, Thackeray positions "the public" in opposition to "the magazines," suggesting that he chooses the term when specifically referring to a novel-reading audience. With that in mind, if "the public" that interrupts the narrator's digression in *Pendennis* is the novel-reading "public," then "the reader" in "confidential talk" with the author is of a different category. In opposition to "the public," Thackeray's "reader" becomes a periodical reader who welcomes and is suited to the intimate experience of sharing the author's experiments into personal memory. As Thackeray's narrator indulges in a lengthy digression reminiscent of his experiments in *Punch* or *Fraser's*, his "peeping" into content more dangerous or stimulating than conventional romance, the threatening novel-reading "public" steps in and forecloses the provocative exchange. If any one pairing survives the ridicule of this episode, it is the pairing of the author and the adventurous periodical reader, with whom Thackeray hopes to reunite in *Pendennis*. Similar in tactic to the *Tickletoby* series from *Punch*, the play of narrative voices in this digression makes a mockery of the conventions of novels that manipulate intimate interludes and pique readers' sentimentality, and it champions instead the chaotic, innovative energy characteristic of Thackeray's periodical work.

Somewhat surprisingly in light of such narrative hijinks later in the novel, *Pendennis* proceeds early in its pages with an unassumingly straightforward presentation of a narrative voice that does not foreshadow the shifting perspectives to come. The narrator openly explains the origins of his information: "As all this narrative is taken from Pen's own confessions, so that the reader may be assured of the truth of every word… it is of course impossible for me to give

an accurate account of his involvements, beyond that… which we have sketched a few pages back" (vol. 1, 188). Several things are of note in this excerpt, the first being the narrator's claim that the story is "truth" inasmuch as it comes from Pen's own "confessions." Episodically throughout the novel, the narrator casts himself as a historian and feigns reality by claiming personal acquaintances with a variety of the characters:

- "If Captain Costigan, whom I have the honor to know…" (47);
- "Mr. Pendennis has given me subsequently to understand…" (50);
- "it is impossible to give a correct account of the letter which the Captain wrote to Major Pendennis, as it was never opened at all by that gentleman;"
- "I found a copy… lately in a dusty corner of Mr. Pen's bookcases…" (177).

In these moments, the narrator employs the first-person singular mode and makes recourse to personal relationships, refusing any claims to omniscience, and specifically points out his sources and evidence. All these efforts add to the sense that the tale is a history and function as recognizable conventions of novel-writing from Thackeray's time as well as from the century before. Such novelistic conventions are bolstered by a preface that promises that "the writer is forced into a frankness of expression, and to speak out his own mind and feelings as they urge him…. this person writing strives to tell the truth" (vii)—the "realist manifesto" of sorts, as Rawlins calls it (87). Yet Thackeray also uses these conventions from the world of novel-writing to poke fun at the parameters of a reality or history that can be presented in a piece of fiction—even preventing the reader from moving into scenes or from receiving information that he cannot explain materially as a historian—coyly waving in front of the readers information that they cannot have as a result of the style.

Of course, the novel never moves into a full mode of history or of realism in which a subtle and distanced narrator allows the reader to get lost in the simulated reality of the text because, in one way or another, the narrator persists in interrupting his "history" with

commentary that rings more of the periodicals—of a critical and excerpting voice—than it does of the mysterious and overloaded omniscience of the realist mode. If the narrator is not interrupting to explain his personal relationships to the characters and to qualify his supply or lack of evidence, then he moves to the more common mode of the editorial "we" that remains in constant dialogue with either the readers or with the silent and invisible partners behind the corporate voice. In addition, his self-conscious parody of "history"-writing hints at the novel's intent to deviate from such conventions for the sake of exploring the potentially more exciting and unpredictable possibilities of narrating the novel *not* as if it were a history but more as if it were a periodical. Evidence of this ulterior design can be found in the same explanation from the narrator about Pen's confessions provided above because, paying close attention to the perspective, the narrator shifts within one sentence from a self-reference in the singular, "it is of course impossible for *me* to give an account," to a self-reference in the plural, "which *we* have sketched a few pages back." Beyond the grammatical inconsistency the narrator chooses to commit by shifting from the singular to the plural self-reference, the appearance of the "we" in the sentence acknowledges the novel's investment in deploying the periodical's corporate voice for any number of purposes. It also delineates the positive ability to create literary work as something the plural subject can accomplish, while it is the singular "me" that is deflated as incapable of "giving an account."

Thackeray's text pinpoints the ludicrous premise of establishing "truthful" parameters of a "history" when writing fiction and acknowledges the range of creative power in which he reveled as a periodical contributor. That Thackeray engages at all in the use of the historian's pose is likely due to his past jaunts with his many endearing pseudonymic characters, as well as to the fascinating possibilities for multiple meaning that could result from shifting between such

singular and plural presentations of voice. Instability of this sort is characteristic of the entire novel, and bears strongly on its overall effect. Yet, this instability is not evidence of a lack of skill and organization in *Pendennis*. These shifts between a pseudonym-like "I" and a corporate editorial "we" coming from an unstable, imposing narrator express the promotion of multiplicity in Thackeray's work.

At times, the novel's narrator becomes more obvious with its playful disruption of the historical frame. Contradicting the mode in which the narrator plays the "sober historian" (202, vol. 1) and the "faithful historian" (244, vol. 1) to Pen's life almost like another stand-in writer figure among Thackeray's many pseudonyms, the narrator occasionally admits to the fictional quality of what he is writing: "as novelists are supposed to know everything, even the secrets of female hearts, which the owners themselves perhaps do not know, we may state that… Miss Amory… had felt tender emotions toward a young Savoyard, organ-grinder at Paris" (227). The narrator both admits to exploiting the conventions of realism, by moving beyond the simulated parameters of a confessed history to a world where every possible detail is recreated for the reader, and at the same time acknowledges his role as a novelist who falsely concocts that reality. In even further testimony to the constructed quality of his story, this self-conscious narrator bolsters himself with the editorial "we" and begs pardon from the reading audience: "We are not pledging ourselves for the correctness of [Pen's] opinions, which readers will please to consider are delivered dramatically, the writer being no more answerable for them than for the sentiments uttered by any other character of the story" (248). This is not the diction of a historian anymore, nor is it even the distanced thoughts of a realist narrator who is synthesizing the many vantage points as presented in the plot. It is the voice of a writer who mocks "novelists who are supposed

to know everything," who delivers "drama" instead of reality, and who persists in the safe and yet self-conscious pose of the periodical "We."

Thackeray did not often employ explicit political agendas (Ray 323), and yet much of his work was devoted to characters, such as Yellowplush, who challenged the ancient but brittle class system. Within *Pendennis*, Thackeray's text bends the role of the periodical "we" by applying it not just to literary narrators but also to social collaborators. The prime example of this can be found in the duo of Major Pendennis and his servant Morgan, who eventually uses the insider tips he overhears in his official capacity as butler to amass a substantial fortune and buy out his employer from house and home. Catherine Peters points out this dynamic between the two characters when she explains how "'Morgan Pendennis'… even speaks with the Major's old-fashioned slang and pronunciation, identifies himself with the Major's toadying and tufthunting, and, to the outside world, speaks of the Major as 'we': 'We've been intimate with the fust statesmen of Europe'" (189). The suggestion is quite believable that Morgan the servant would use Pendennis's name, a common enough practice in the Victorian period, and that he would likewise casually refer to himself and his aristocratic employer as "we" while talking among friends. Yet, I would add to Peters's argument that the means by which Morgan *grammatically expresses* or *narrates* his state of affairs effectually levels the class barriers that define his relationship with Major Pendennis, so that the two become equals both financially and rhetorically.

* * *

Despite the distinctions between respected forms of literature and professional writing that Thackeray makes in *Pendennis*, such as in the aforementioned quote about Pegasus and men

of letters (vol. 1, 359-60), the narrator nonetheless argues for a place for writers of a lower station, for the career path of the "literary hack," whether periodical contributor or novelist. It also argues for the plausible association of genius with the daily labor of the literary hack. The passage reveals a desire to acquire literary notoriety and financial success through realistic means without having to transform one's image into some kind of romantic, effortless artist-author. The passage's subtle playfulness leaves unclear whether the narrator truly believes this position on writing for money over writing for art, but this comment maintains the focus on types of writing and publishing that are at the heart of *Pendennis*. While not rallying for an overhaul of the system of author compensation, Thackeray hoped to encourage his audience to "think better of the Victorian writer," by presenting the aristocratically polished and hard-working literary characters, Pen and Warrington—or Mr. Pennington, as some referred to them (Lund 72).

In order to promote the dignity of his career, Thackeray also often relies in *Pendennis* on the periodical "we" to build a sense of identification between the narrator and audience—"we know how the life of any hack, legal or literary, in a curacy, or in a marching regiment, or at a merchant's desk, is full of routine, and tedious of description" (359). The "we" assumes understanding between the narrator and audience and so helps bridge the gap between genteel readers and writers of less respected forms of literature. Instead of idealizing that lower literature, however, Thackeray also provides analogies of labor in this quote as a way to admit the work that drives the periodical market. He, therefore, makes the humble hack a symbol of commonality with the middle-class reader, as well: "Thackeray, as narrator of the two writers' story, insisted through the use of the first-person plural at the beginning of number 12... that his readers recognize how the literary profession, like all others, involved regular toil" (Lund 69).

True though it is that Thackeray uses the "we" on this occasion, the argument gains even more force when one complements it with a comparison of the role of the periodical "we" *throughout* the text in relation to its appearance in this particular episode. Thackeray was deeply invested in the debate over the dignity of literature, yet he was even more driven to promote periodical literature in particular. Continuing with the excerpt to which Lund calls attention, one can see how Thackeray branches out from the common ground of the "we" to yet other conventions that push the case specifically for the justification of periodical writing: "Do not let us, however, be too prodigal of our pity upon Pegasus…. and I for one am quite ready to protest with my friend, George Warrington, against the doctrine… that men of letters… are not to be made to work and pay like their neighbors" (360). Here again is an instance where the narrator shifts from "us" and "our" to "I for one" and "my friend" in his presentation of his philosophy on writing for a living. Indeed, the "we" enables a sense of unity and identification with the narrator's comments on working writers, but the grammatical shifts also cast the focus back again onto the conventions of periodical narration. In so doing, Thackeray's narrator here makes more of a claim for periodical writing than for just professional writing, or at least for methods of novel-writing that model themselves on the work of periodicals—for writing that produces daily results rather than the artistic airs of an independent novelist.

Therefore, it may be more accurate to conclude that *Pendennis* is not simply a novel that advocates for the dignity of literature but one that advocates for the dignity of periodical literature. Lund mentions that the novel, as well as Dickens's *David Copperfield*, champions writing and yet "the creative process and its products are never described in much detail" (76). This statement focuses "the creative process" on novel-writing alone. But recasting the focus of *Pendennis,* from the coming of age of a novelist to the entry of a young writer into the world of

periodical contributing, reveals a novel that is very much involved in depicting the kinds of collaborations that constitute "the creative process" in the periodical market.

Pen desires to become a novelist and he achieves his goal with the publication of his book, *Walter Lorraine*. Yet Pen's novel comes together as a work of editing, Pen's putting together bits and pieces of juvenile work from years before almost like a miscellany, with an eye to the styles and popular content that he has learned as a periodical contributor. As Warrington explains the process to Pen: "The rubbish is salable enough, sir; and my advice to you is this: … take 'Walter Lorraine'… give him a more modern air, prune away… add a little comedy, and cheerfulness, and satire, and that sort of thing, and then we'll take him to market, and sell him. The book is not a wonder of wonders, but it will do very well" (vol. 2, 22). Playing down the craft of novel writing from these professional writers' perspectives, the narrator likewise plays down the presence of the novel *Walter Lorraine* within the narrative when concluding that:

> there was not the slightest doubt then that this document contained a great deal of Pen's personal experiences…. As we have become acquainted with these in the earlier part of his biography, it will not be necessary to make large extracts from the novel of 'Walter Lorraine,' in which the young gentleman had depicted such of them as he thought were likely to interest the reader, or were suitable for the purpose of his story. (25)

Several characters such as friends of Major Pendennis comment on Pen as a "novel writer" and are impressed by his accomplishment. As well, the infatuated servant girl, Fanny Bolton, fawns over the copy that Pen signs for her, but beyond that, little else is made of Pen's move into novel-writing.

Despite fashioning Pen into a novelist in *Pendennis*, Thackeray does not have that accomplishment as the novel's final goal. Rather, Pen persists in his work as a journalist, while pursuing escapades in courtship and the possibility of entering into politics, which is quickly derailed. The episode of the novel within the novel is a distraction, which, once presented, is

forgotten by the narrator, and the narrative then continues with its focus on scenes from the panorama of Pen's periodical experience: from his deeper ingratiation into the workings of the periodical arena to his urgent need to find replacement contributors for the *Pall Mall Gazette* when he falls ill. Regarding Thackeray's choice to make Pen a novelist, Jack Rawlins argues that as soon as these two periodical writers (Pen and Thackeray) move to the novel format, their similarities end: "Pen's novels are quite conventional and rather bad—they are novels of heroes and villains; whereas Thackeray's novels are less artful but better, and repeatedly assert themselves to disrupt the conventional patterns of Pen's novels" (138). Richard Salmon likewise acknowledges that Thackeray's *Pendennis* is unlike Pen's romantic novel *Walter Lorraine*. By disrupting the patterns of Pen's novels and trumping Pen's prestige as a novelist with depictions of him as the energetic and ingenious contributor to the *Pall Mall Gazette*, *Pendennis* withholds from the novel form importance within its own text. Thackeray's definition of the novel manipulates the context of the periodical market just as it uses conventions of destabilized narrative voices from the periodicals to question and challenge its own form to change. Certainly, Thackeray understood the implications of choosing to publish *Pendennis* in monthly parts, in which shorter format his novel would even further replicate a periodical and compliment its experiments to merge forms.

In addition to detailing the kind of interacting that takes place among editors and contributors at publishers' dinner parties, the narrator of Thackeray's novel keeps attention on the world of periodicals by following Pen to Fleet Prison where, over the course of three chapters, readers learn about the trials of Captain Shandon—Thackeray's stand-in for editor William Maginn—as he reveals the prospectus for his new *Pall Mall Gazette*—a stand-in for *Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country*. Shandon and his cohorts seek to entice publisher

Bungay to pay for Shandon's release from prison and the start of the new magazine, and the narrative provides a detailed excerpt from the prospectus that moves Bungay to action:

> We have said that we cannot give the names of the parties engaged in this undertaking, and that there were obvious reasons for that concealment. We number influential friends in both Houses of the Senate, and have secured allies in every diplomatic circle in Europe. Our sources of intelligence are such as cannot, by any possibility, be made public…. But this we are free to say, that the very earliest information connected with the movement of English and Continental politics, will be found ONLY in the columns of the 'Pall Mall Gazette'….We address ourselves to the higher circles of society: we care not to disown it—the 'Pall Mall Gazette' is written by gentlemen for gentlemen…. (328)

The speech not only positions the *Pall Mall Gazette* as most likely a Tory-backed publication, in support of the aristocracy, but it emphasizes the security that anonymity provides to periodical writers at this point in the history of the market: "we cannot give the names... and there were obvious reasons for that concealment." It addresses Thackeray's pride in his status as a "gentleman" as well as his fear of writing openly as a gentleman; while they "care not to disown" that they are "gentlemen," no sources of their "intelligence" shall "by any possibility, be made public." Although Shandon refers to the *Gazette*'s news reporters and correspondents, Thackeray's words here signify his own desire to remain safe behind the disguises of the periodical world, as well. In some ways, the speech is reminiscent of Disraeli's bold promotion of *The Representative* to Maginn more than twenty years earlier—"we number influential friends in both Houses of the Senate, and have secured allies in every diplomatic circle in Europe"—but unlike Disraeli, Shandon can promise Pen that his publication will be "written by gentlemen for gentlemen." Additionally, the element of anonymity remains a comfort to those collaborating on Shandon's publication, whereas the corporate identity driving anonymity in Disraeli's project eventually threatened his creative production.

Pendennis provides a far closer picture of the corporate identity of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, with all its political and class and critical positions as preached by Shandon from his jail cell, than it provides of the supposed pinnacle of its protagonist's literary achievements: *Walter Lorraine*. Even when at times the scenes become irrelevant to the dramatic plot, the narrator attends to matters of periodical business. Indeed, two long paragraphs are given at different points in the chapters on Pen's illness to describe the work of his replacements. We learn that Jack Finucane "set to work to supply his place, if possible, and produced a series of political and critical compositions, such as no doubt greatly edified the readers of the periodical in which he and Pen were concerned" (124) and that

> Warrington went to work with all his might, in place of his prostrate friend, and did Pen's portion of the 'Pall Mall Gazette' 'with a vengeance,' as the saying is. He wrote occasional articles and literary criticism; he attended theatres and musical performances, and discoursed about them with his usual savage energy…. [yet] there was no hand in all the band of penmen more graceful and light, more pleasant and more elegant, than Arthur's. (145)

What is noteworthy about these passages is not only their detailed, lengthy descriptions of the necessary assignments and unstoppable pace of periodical work but also their illustration that periodical labor is collaborative. Of course, the episodes appear within a *novel*, which again blurs the lines between fiction and reality and, more important, it blurs the lines that separate the two forms of the periodical and the novel.

* * *

Pendennis has fallen out of critical interest in recent years—perhaps given its length, and its light content when compared to the social and political intrigues of *Vanity Fair*. Given the slippery meandering that the narrative voice pursues throughout *Pendennis*, it is understandable

that readers might align Pen with the narrator's position or see Thackeray as undermining that narrator with interruptions in his own voice. One recent addition to the critical discussion on *Pendennis* is a 2004 article by Richard Salmon, in which he pinpoints the centrality of literary form in *Pendennis*, explaining that "Thackeray implies a recognition of the problem of reconciling the narrative form of the Bildungsroman with the alienated mechanical labor of the literary hack" (55). Salmon's reading recognizes the struggle in *Pendennis* between the unity and longevity of the novel and the ephemeral quality of periodical work, and my research builds on his study of this interaction by examining how Thackeray attempts to re-envision periodical technique in the popular novel. Reading the novel through the lens of periodical conventions makes the text's endless moves meaningful, so that the dynamics between the narrative voices in *Pendennis* are not examples of power plays or undermined narrators but illustrate exchange and experimentation in mid-century periodicals.

Reviewers from Thackeray's own time met the novel with somewhat bewildered responses. As a guide for his own reception, Thackeray claimed in his preface to *Pendennis* that his primary interest was to convey a sense of the real world over something that was contrived and "draped" in literary conventions: "You will not hear [in the fiction of today] … what moves in the real world, what passes in society… what is the life and talk of your sons. A little more frankness than is customary has been attempted in this story…. If truth is not always pleasant; at any rate truth is best" (ix). Encouraging critics thus to consider his work within the emerging genre of realism, Thackeray's unpredictable exploration into periodical culture resulted in a hybrid text that gave readers anything but what was expected. One article from the January 1851 issue of *Fraser's Magazine* speaks of the novel with overall approval, tempered with disappointment in its inconsistencies:

> We detect in many small matters a want of fixed purpose…. What is more, we have reason to think Mr. Thackeray has formed no very definite notion of his character either…. We have remarked another defect in the texture of the story, namely, a want of uniformity. (84-86)

Not sure what to make of Thackeray's new venture, the article spends more time simply excerpting from the text and surveying Thackeray's range of aliases than it does in actually critiquing *Pendennis*. This last element proves the strength of the *Fraser's* review, however, because in playfully acknowledging the writer's use of pseudonyms—"fancy Titmarsh a 'name of war' for Thackeray, or Thackeray for Titmarsh, and that these two single gentlemen rolled into one constitute 'the Fat Contributor'" (78)—it keenly observes the relevance of narrative mutations and multiplicity to an analysis of *Pendennis*.

At the time this *Fraser's* article was published, Thackeray was still publishing with the journal and still held close communications with its other contributors. So it is not far-fetched to imagine that Thackeray pulled the ripple effect of multiple overlapping narrators outside of the novel and into the pages of a contemporary literary review. Despite the piece's fairly serious critiques of *Pendennis* for being too inconsistent, Thackeray knew of or possibly even played a part in writing the article, which at numerous points pokes fun at the newly successful novelist and speaks about him and his opinions as if from a privileged position. Yet, as the article was published with no signature, readers cannot know the degree of Thackeray's involvement. Actually, the narrative voice in the article gestures self-consciously to its reliance on and obedience to the editorial "we," in a manner reminiscent of Thackeray's style, when it jokes:

> Mr Titmarsh, we believe, with the exception of *The Irish Sketch-book*, has never attempted an *ouvrage de longue haleine* (we have caught the habit of French interpolation from 'The Sylphide') unless, indeed, one may so designate *The Yellowplush Papers*, of which, as they appeared in this Magazine, the conventional modesty incumbent upon 'we' forbids to speak. (77)

The article acknowledges the accepted convention and the rhetorical poses of the editorial "we," but it also once again demonstrates its aptitude for usurping voices when it references French and "The Sylphide," which is a term for Thackeray's character Blanche Amory in *Pendennis*. Such coy comments on the narrative voice and the workings of the magazine do lend themselves to a reading of the article that implicates Thackeray's participation.

The historical publishing records contain evidence to support his involvement. Of that time period in Thackeray's career, biographer Gordon Ray says that even after *Fraser's* changed editors in 1841, Thackeray "continued to work steadily" (318) for the journal throughout the following decade. Edward M. White likewise examines Thackeray's ongoing work for Fraser's. He considers the possibility that an article from the journal's January 1853 issue, entitled "Mr. Thackeray in the United States," could have been written by the author himself:

> This brief article begins with some facetious remarks about Thackeray's reputation in the United States, then gives a seven-page parody of a New York newspaper description of his person and manners, and concludes with an excerpt from Thackeray's last lecture in New York (December 6, 1852)—highly complimentary to his hosts. Although the signature "John Small" is an unlikely pseudonym, it is hard to imagine anyone else writing the parody. The internal evidence, then, is very convincing, but without external support, the authorship of the article, must remain in doubt. (84)

While none of this points to the 1851 article in question, "W. M. Thackeray and Arthur Pendennis, Esquires," the facts gathered from biographies confirms Thackeray's continued involvement with *Fraser's* as well as his penchant for writing parodies of critiques about himself. At one point, the 1851 article jokingly lists Thackeray among classical gods—"though we cannot consent to his enthronization as Jupiter in unapproachable pre-eminence, we are quite willing to rank him along with the other gods,—Mars, Bacchus, Apollo, &c., Thackeraius" (77). Thackeray's *Pendennis* uses classical allusions for parodies of contemporary writing, as was seen in the Pegasus excerpt, and it will be easy to see the pattern as a common and favorite tactic

of Thackeray's. Thus, as White says of "Mr. Thackeray in the United States," so too in this case is the internal evidence convincing, but the external support is lacking to safely conclude that Thackeray was behind his own critique, a move which would take the metafictional qualities of *Pendennis* out of the novel form and back into the periodical.

One conclusion that the *Fraser's* article reaches, whether it is Thackeray behind the words or not, is that the upcoming dominant genre of the century, realism, threatens as much as it excites the literary and creative energies of the time: "If we must describe life and nature exactly as they are, all art becomes impossible" (87). Perhaps the speaker simply means that human efforts cannot mimic with exactitude what is created by nature. But one has a sense from Thackeray's inconsistencies and playful chaos that he believes there is truly something to be gained from examining what is unrealistic. In addition, if there is some sincerity behind his vow to provide "a little more frankness" about "what moves in the real world" (ix), then what he registers in *Pendennis* is a reality of multiplicity and overload that is expressed on a daily basis in the bustling pages of the periodical market. He brings a reality that is impossible, perhaps, to unify and at times comprehend, but maybe it gets a little closer to what Thackeray felt was "the truth."

Thackeray retained this need to manipulate the realities he created in his novels through multiple voices throughout his career, and it is worth noting that one technique he used to achieve a mix of voices in his later work was by presenting Arthur Pendennis as the narrator, and peripheral character, in texts such as *The Newcomes* (1853-55) and *The Adventures of Philip* (1861-62). Thackeray allows Pen's story to continue beyond the frame of *Pendennis*, as Pen transforms into a pseudo-pseudonym of sorts and narrates the later novels. The method lacks substantial explanation—Pen does not need to appear in these novels because they do not follow

the story lines set up in *Pendennis*—and it continues to fracture the experience of reading, an effect to which many critics were averse. The *Quarterly Review* of 1855 says of the narration in *The Newcomes*, for instance, that "Pendennis becomes an execresence" that ruins the "appearance of reality" and the "perfect illusion" of the novel because

> when the bulk of the story is related in the ordinary way, and the autobiographical method is too sparingly employed to secure any of its benefits, a pretended editor, thrusting himself from time to time upon the notice of the reader, appears an officious and offensive personage. It has the additional drawback that the fictitious author is quite unworthy to hold the pen of the veritable master. (360)

Casting Pen as a "pretended editor" of *The Newcomes*, the article chastises Thackeray for distracting the audience with the sporadic thoughts and opinions of an unimportant character. The autobiographical frame that Pen presents is, according to the article, an obstacle because it is not central to the tale and is not consistent in its appearances. Nevertheless, Pen's presence in the text enables Thackeray to step in and out of his character and to contrast it with other voices: "under that mask and acting, as it were, I can afford to say and think many things that I couldn't venture on in my own person, now that it *is* a person, and I know the public are staring at it" (Ray, *Letters* IV, 436). Despite his conventional characterization,[54] Pen represents in *The Newcomes* (as he did in *Pendennis*) the fluidity of the periodical world, in which Thackeray can step in and out of varying personas, and in which his "person" is not an author figure at which the "public" of the novel-reading audience are staring. The recurrence of Pen's character in the late novels creates a sense of fictional aging and history in Thackeray's texts that does much to establish a "perfect illusion" of reality, for all the work he does to disrupt that illusion. Thackeray actually reused many characters, often in random and unimportant references, in his

[54] "The voice of Pendennis who tells the story of the Newcome family is now that of a middle-aged fogey, conventional in outlook, and dependent on the judgment of his wife Laura, who is presented as a model of moral rectitude" (Peters 224).

novels (Peters 200) in a way that developed an intricacy of details and an overlapping of stories. *Pendennis* echoes in *The Newcomes*, thanks to Pen's narration, and in that echoing, Thackeray continued to multiply the voices and stories he was sharing in the frame of one novel, expanding its pages the way the frame of a periodical expands beyond its current issue to the issues and volumes past and to come.

Whether other critics were receptive to or put off by Thackeray's attempt at a little more frankness, many reviewing *Pendennis* when it came out in collected book form commented on Thackeray's relation to periodical writing. *The Athenaeum* critic accuses the author in December 1850 of overdoing his portrait of the real world by "a ruthless insistence on the blemishes, incompleteness, and disappointments which canker every human good and happiness" (1273), but most interesting is the writer's source of these dark impressions. Aware of Thackeray's periodical past and his work as a critic, the reviewer claims that "a certain professional causticity" is likely the cause of so much unpleasantness in *Pendennis* because it "may have come to be kneaded, from its having been found on former occasions appetizing rather than unpleasant." Although the *Athenaeum* critic does not speculate as to why such "causticity" would transform from being "appetizing" to "unpleasant," Thackeray's opting for the novel over the periodical, and for the "public" over the critical reviewer as his target audience, perhaps provides the explanation. *The Leader* of the same month offered a different account of Thackeray's *Pendennis*, suggesting it brought tears to the eyes of its reviewer for not being nearly as dark as *Vanity Fair*, but the review aligns itself with that of the *Athenaeum* in pinpointing the periodical mark on Thackeray's fiction. Despite the qualities that make Thackeray great, "truth and style," the *Leader* critic notes that "he is to be separated from the great writers of other days by one peculiarity of our own, and one that endangers the durability of

his renown—we mean want of respect for his art, a want of respect for his public" (929). Given that novel-writing had yet to attain prestige by 1850, as well as the writer's reference to Thackeray's "public," it is possible to interpret "his art" in this section as that of "novel-writing." Yet, the *Leader* critic does not use "the public" in the same sense that Thackeray does to refer to novel readers, and his meaning becomes more pronounced in the following lines in which he comments on Thackeray's having to "discharge his monthly task" and "sacrific[ing] the artist to the improvisatore." For the reviewer, Thackeray's work is definitely marked by its periodical pacing and shifting digressions, but its value lies in its ability to captivate despite these characteristics. Perhaps it is that *Pendennis* captivates because of those characteristics.

Positioning himself broadly throughout the market—across formats, genres, and houses—Thackeray characterizes himself as a *periodical contributor* rather than as an *author*. *Pendennis* seeks to superimpose the conventions of the periodical onto the novel to form a new kind of literary enterprise that uses a multiplicity of voices to depict labor, especially the labor of the narrator-author, and a kind of realism constructed out of diverging perspectives. Thackeray's text demonstrates the essential role that the periodical played in directing the course of the publishing world, including the form of the novel and literary trends, throughout the century. The ubiquitous media that was so commonplace that its presence and influence was often overlooked or taken for granted can be felt in the irregular patterns of narrative perspective and social expression of Thackeray's popular monthly *Pendennis*. Although greatly influenced by the work of Thackeray, Anthony Trollope would campaign in the 1860s and '70s against the free play and disguise of narrative voices that inspired Thackeray's unique range. Suspicious of periodicals' sway over growing reading audiences and of writers' reliance on anonymity policies and collective voices to bolster persuasion, Trollope calls for transparent signature policies in critical

reviews and likewise casts the malleability of the editorial "We" as a physical, almost grotesque irregularity in his 1869 series *An Editor's Tales*.

CHAPTER III

THE WAY "WE" DIED IN TROLLOPE'S *AN EDITOR'S TALES*

In Anthony Trollope's 1875 novel, *The Way We Live Now*, the author depicts a world that thrives on corruption, secrets, and favors. The foreign businessman Augustus Melmotte personifies this world for Trollope, overwhelming the public with his appearance of immense wealth and then misleading them to speculate on the South Central Pacific and Mexican railway scheme, an undertaking he never intends to fund. Rather than creating the conventional villain, however, Trollope seeks to illustrate how many other people can be swept up in the successes and failures of such characters as Melmotte. What is compelling about this portrait of mid-Victorian culture is that parallel figures of power emerge aside Melmotte and reveal themselves to be equally susceptible to the thrill of power and responsible for weighty influence. The parallel figures of interest in the current context are editors, and Trollope features three portraits of editors in the novel: Nicholas Broune of the "Breakfast Table," Mr. Booker of the "Literary Chronicle," and Ferdinand Alf of the "Evening Pulpit." The power of such editors is astutely, if unwittingly, observed by the would-be novelist Lady Carbury as the "creating of a belief" when she asks, "'If a thing can be made great and beneficent, a boon to humanity, simply by creating a belief in it, does not a man become a benefactor to his race by creating that belief?" (245). Trollope pursues the question of what it means to create a belief among people, how it is accomplished, and what its consequences are, pointing his critical eye not just to the obvious criminals like Melmotte but also toward the role of the publishing industry and toward editors in *The Way We Live Now*.

One of the most important techniques editors employed to create belief in the Victorian period was to present ideas through the persona of the collective "We." A decade earlier, during the period when he helped found the *Fortnightly Review*, Trollope crystallized his views of this editorial tactic in a series of stories devoted to the question of editorial power: *An Editor's Tales* (1868). This chapter explores Trollope's history of writing about editorial power[55] and examines how that history developed from a call for signature in periodicals to a questioning of collective voice in multiple formats. Although much critical attention has been brought to Trollope's polemic over signature policies in periodicals,[56] I argue that his suspicion of unsigned work grew into a suspicion of collective voice—of the "We" that was routinely employed when work remained anonymous—in all forms of writing. An appreciation for this interest in and suspicion of the editorial voice enriches his later novel's broad depiction of so many different kinds of corruption and adds another depth of meaning to its title, whose "We" taints a multitude of figures in and out of its pages. By echoing the convention of the periodical "we," the title claims a state of living for anyone who reads it, for everyone. It is a strategy that cleverly requires readers to reflect back on themselves, but it also reflects on a speaker that invokes a collective voice in order to speak for others, whether accurately and justly or not. It is this routine act of editors' speaking on behalf of others, and often without revealing themselves to their audiences, that comes under scrutiny in the novel. When discussing the failure of the one periodical Trollope actually edited, *Saint Paul's*, Dallas Liddle explains that many believed Trollope "just

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[55] As Dallas Liddle notes in his work on journalism and literature in mid-Victorian Britain, "While no single Trollope novel matches *Pendennis* for focused attention to the world of the Victorian press, his collected fiction and nonfiction are probably the most sustained thematic engagement of any British novelist, before or since, with the genres and functions of journalism" (75).

[56] See Nash, Mays, Sutherland, and Liddle ("Salesman") for an introduction to Trollope's participation in signature debate in periodicals.

didn't know how to be a successful Victorian editor (97), but he counters, saying that perhaps it was "rather [due to] his refusal to adopt a discourse he understood all too well." Because Trollope "always remained interested in the way published discourse reaches and circulates within readers' lives" (97), his writing on editors, authors, and readers offers a uniquely perceptive look at the conventions people come to accept, the ways those conventions influence culture, and the ways culture influences those conventions to change.

Trollope's *The Way We Live Now* was not very well received by contemporary reviewers, a fact that many have attributed to its presentation of manipulation in the publishing industry[57] and of the backhanded favors fueling author-editor relations, like those that take place between Lady Carbury and Broune and Booker. In a critique that appeared in the *Saturday Review* on July 17, 1875, the reviewer takes offense at the title of Trollope's new novel, stating:

> *The Way We Live Now*. We must begin by quarrelling with the incivility of Mr. Trollope's title. "The way *we* live!" We will not retort by requesting the author to speak for himself, for we do not for a moment suppose the picture here drawn is based upon close personal experience. The satirist has put all the vices attributed to society into a bag, shaken them together, and made a story out of them, and nothing else. (88)

Although the editors in the novel may at first appear secondary to a persona such as Melmotte, they remain active and often pivotal figures throughout the text. And as the article from the *Saturday Review* testifies, the representation of editors and the publishing industry, and even of the editorial "we," was of interest to the critical readers in the field, who could potentially have sway over the novel's reception.

Of the novel's three editors, Alf proves of most interest as he positions himself in opposition to Melmotte, both as a political and a social rival. Routinely, the novel posits the

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[57] See David Brooks's Introduction to *The Way We Live Now*. The Modern Library edition, xvi, and N. John Hall's *Trollope: A Biography*, 387.

possibility that its editors may prove as influential as the impressive Melmotte: "Others were of the opinion that this was the beginning of a new era in literature, of a new order of things, and that from this time forward editors would frequently be found in Parliament, if editors were employed of sufficient influence in the world to find constituencies" (363). Much of Trollope's use of Broune, Booker, and Alf serves as an exploration of just how much influence editors do have. With the help of characters like Lady Carbury, he plays with conceptions of editorial power, urging his readers to consider their own opinions of the editors to whom they subscribe. For instance, Lady Carbury boasts about "her three editors": "Who would not buy shares in a railway as to which Mr. Broune and Mr. Alf would combine in saying that it was managed by 'divinity'" (245), "'Were I circumstanced as you are [Mr. Booker] I should have no hesitation in lending the whole weight of my periodical, let it be what it might, to the assistance of so great a man [Melmotte] and so great an object as this [the railway]" (246), and "There is hardly a more influential man in London than Mr. Broune" (247). Quite the accolades, Lady Carbury's comments, if a bit exaggerated, cast the editors as wielding influence perhaps even greater than Melmotte's supposed millions. After all, he needs their help in convincing the public to buy shares in the railway. And when Booker says to Alf early in the novel, "'you want a different kind of world to live in,'" it seems fitting that an editor answers "'just so;—and therefore we must make it different'" (93). Alf "wants a different world" because he is against providing reviews as favors to friends and influential people, a type of dishonesty the novel exposes multiple times. Yet, Alf nevertheless proves vulnerable to his own deceptions and misuses of power as the novel unfolds. In order to understand how Trollope sees such editors using their power to "make the world different," it is important to look back six years earlier, to when he was constructing a piece of literature that would be, of all his repertoire, the one most devoted to

the question of editorial power: *An Editor's Tales*. Not only do the stories offer a detailed look at editors and the publishing industry from Trollope's perspective—at the only time in his life when he served officially as an editor—but they signify a substantial contribution to his literary work, in his own eyes, despite their seemingly minor presence in the scope of his career. According to fellow editor John Payn, the tales were "as convincing proof of the genius of the author as anything he ever wrote," and when he shared this opinion with Trollope, the writer "assented to [this] view of the matter, but added, with a grim smile, that he doubted whether anybody had ever read [them] except [him]self" (qtd. in Hall 352).

In 1869, while editing *St. Paul's Magazine*, Anthony Trollope began the series of short fiction with which he intended to lift the curtain on the theater of publishing. According to his *Autobiography*, Trollope got the idea from Thackeray, although not from *Pendennis*. Rather, he credits another of Thackeray's pieces, the essay "Thorns in the Cushion" from *The Cornhill*, July 1860, as the inspiration. In the essay, Thackeray discussed his constant struggle as an editor to reconcile emotional and editorial factors in interactions with contributors. Taking from Thackeray the approach of writing from the editor's point of view, Trollope channeled his anxiety about editorial control and his thoughts about anonymity and signature policies into *An Editor's Tales*. Dallas Liddle claims that in the series "Trollope builds his original insight that editorship both requires and abhors the physical editor into a rich source of humor and pathos" (87). Comparing both the physical and abstract editors in this series, I argue that Trollope displays—in order to destroy—the convoluted convention of the editorial "we" that many writers and readers alike took for granted. To accomplish the goal of undermining such a well-established convention, Trollope expresses the convoluted nature of the first-person-plural point of view by embodying the abstract "We" as a plural voice with a single body in most of the tales.

In an introduction to the collected later short fiction of Trollope, John Sutherland, on the other hand, characterizes the series of *An Editor's Tales* as "in general [portraying] the wretchedness and the pettiness of authorial existence as it is perceived by the godlike figure who has it in his power to accept or reject his subjects' literary offerings" (xiv). Sutherland accurately perceives the "godlike figure" of the editor as crucial to the characterization of authors in the series, and as such, the tales can masquerade in *St. Paul's* as nonfiction drawn from Trollope's experience. Yet by acknowledging the tales' fictional qualities and crafted narrative perspectives, I argue that the tales enact Trollope's growing distrust for the collective voice and enter into the dialogue about editorial power and policy across multiple formats. The *editor* proves the main protagonist of Trollope's collection, more important than the figure of the author, and despite the tales' ability to represent a sympathetic "wretchedness" of authors, they do more to represent the "wretchedness" of editors, who are rendered awkward and absurd by their loyalty to outdated modes and narrative conventions.

From the opening of the first story, "The Turkish Bath," Trollope's narrator calls attention to its own use of the "We" in order to tell its tales. The narrator uses a careful tone to ask for the use of the "We" as if trying to appease its reader through its many commas, pauses, and polite qualifications: "This little story records the experience of one individual man; but our readers, we hope, will, without a grudge, allow us the use of the editorial we" (#). The explicit request for the reader's permission to use the editorial "We" creates the impression that there is an agreement between the narrator and reader. Yet, it is nothing more than an impression because the reader has no real say in the matter. As the narrator begs the reader not to hold a "grudge," the series itself upholds a grudge against the great "We," as can be seen in its relentless, strategic portrayal of the narrative voice as ridiculous and at times even disturbing.

Depicting “We” in very personal and singular physical scenarios, Trollope destroys the weight of the narrative voice through its own awkwardness. His distinct picture of the personified “We,” thus humiliated in a physical state, champions in the age of signature and authorial responsibility.

* * *

Arguments over whether articles in periodicals should be anonymous or signed gained momentum among editors and publishers in the mid 1860s. According to Kelly J. Mays:

> The practice of anonymity, challenged only sporadically throughout the century, began to give way completely as a standard in the 1860s. Where *Macmillian's*, founded in the latter part of 1859, ‘made a practice of signature without proclaiming it as deliberate policy,’ the founders of the *Fortnightly* (1865), *Contemporary* (1866), *Academy* (1869), and *Nineteenth Century* (1877) made such proclamations from the outset, insisting that the policy of signature defined both the character and value of their publications. (168)

Among the founders of the *Fortnightly* that helped to further this trend in periodical policy was Anthony Trollope, who wrangled with co-founders for a time before winning the point for signed pieces.[58] Trollope felt strongly that a critic could not hold any authoritative sway over public opinion if he would not even sign and stand by what he had written like the authors of novels, who printed their names on each of their books.[59] What was at stake for Trollope during this phase of transition in publishing was not just authorial responsibility, however. Creating such new policies that emphasized the role of the author as an individual in the market, rather than as an unknown contributor to a corporate periodical, entailed rethinking the system of the

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[58] See John Sutherland's explanatory notes in *Later Short Fiction*. In note 138, Sutherland explains that the *Fortnightly*'s policy on signed pieces resulted from “Trollope's strong opinion” (586). See also N. John Hall, 271.
[59] See Nash 70.

publishing industry. By wresting authority slowly from the editor or editorial team and giving it to the individual author, innovators supporting signature policies were re-imagining periodicals' internal operating systems, which had functioned for more than half a century on work that was corporate and collaborative, that gained strength from its multiple but often disguised voices. For Trollope, it was a change that the times demanded.

Calling for signature policies in the mid-1860s to promote morally responsible practice among reviewers, Trollope explains his stance on unsigned work in an article from the first volume of the *Fortnightly Review*, "On Anonymous Literature" (1865):

> It may... be that an editor shall think it needful to repress the names of his contributors, because he finds it expedient to employ writers whom he trusts... but as to whom... public recognition has [not] as yet given value to their names.... but the public receives no part of [the value of this decision], nor does the writer. The public will get worse work than it would otherwise obtain because the writer who is made to give his name will be more careful when using it than he is when keeping it concealed. And the writer without his name will work under circumstances which are injurious to himself and repressive of his energy. (494-495).

As noteworthy in the article as Trollope's blunt dismissal of the tradition of anonymous writing in periodicals is the writer's exception for anonymity in political newspapers. Given the openly partisan nature of the majority of newspapers in the Victorian period, Trollope claims to accept the role of such papers as "instructor[s] or informant[s] in politics, as guide[s]" when he makes the distinction:

> But men do choose to be guided by the Times, the Daily News, or, it may be, by the Morning Herald. It is felt by their different admirers that these are emanations from a certain political focus to which have radiated various political streams of light, all indeed having the same tendency, though coming from various quarters of the political heaven; and the whole is accepted, not as the teaching of one man, but as an expression of concrete wisdom from a condensed mass of political information and experience. The newspaper is not a lamp lighted by a single hand, but a sun placed in the heaven by an invisible creator. (493).

Yet, Trollope makes this exception begrudgingly when he emphasizes the "different admirers" of political papers, not counting himself among them, and describes audiences' loyal adherence to such publications in overly idealized terms: newspapers offer "concrete wisdom" and are "sun[s] placed in the heaven by an invisible creator." Working behind the scenes in multiple publishing venues, Trollope knew this vision of the workings of political papers to be false, albeit popular or useful. But he distinguishes political newspapers from other periodical publications because, from a tactical perspective, it is simply too large a task to challenge the entire industry: "Let it be remembered that there is no such justification for the practice here [in critical writing] as that which political newspapers can plead with truth" (496). Trollope accedes to anonymity in political newspapers in the hopes of winning the point for signature in periodical reviews. Yet, within ten years, Trollope's portrait of newspaper editors in *The Way We Live Now* betrays a decidedly different concept of these figures from the "invisible creators" of "concrete wisdom" in the *Fortnightly* article. Ferdinand Alf is distinctly characterized as a "single hand lighting the lamp" of his political paper and profiting off its persuasive sway. Although the practice of a collective voice was perhaps less noticeable or upsetting when employed to discuss political parties or national trends in newspapers rather than personal writing or social vendettas in reviews, the political "We" could hold just as many and as serious repercussions as the critical "We," as Trollope's novel indicates.

Addressing the issue of signature first in periodicals, Trollope still sensed the complex implications that modes of collective narration and anonymity in other forms of media had on nineteenth-century audiences. In the realm of fiction, omniscient narration created a more benign effect on readers than the condescending "We" of reviewers, but even in fiction Trollope acknowledged a process of normalizing collective voices for readers who encountered those

unidentified voices across multiple formats. Comparing samples of Trollope's work from the first volume of the *Fortnightly Review*, ranging from nonfiction to fiction to reviews, Sarah Nash says of Trollope's take on signature in different publishing formats, "he considered signatures and names work differently when associated with fiction than when affixed to critical writing" (67). Trollope does suggest as much when he separates periodical from political writing. Nash takes this distinction further, positing that Trollope champions the masculine moral authority that the signature symbolizes in critical work but questions its claims of truth and legitimacy in fiction. Because Trollope distinguishes between different kinds of literature in "On Anonymous Literature," Nash sees him as pursuing signature policies as a convention distinctly necessary for critical periodical writing, despite Trollope's introductory claims that the industry already presumes that "literature of a high class which presents itself to the public alone [books as distinguished from periodical writing] ... should present itself accompanied by the name of its author" (491).

Unlike Nash, I see Trollope's fiction and nonfiction as equally challenging a tradition in which audiences accepted narrative voices without questioning the subject or subjects they represented. Thus, as an open "We vs. I" controversy waged on in periodicals (Nash 61), Trollope spread his concern about periodicals into his work in fiction, exploring how anonymous narration in stories could provoke suspicions about collective voice. His strategies to address signature and collective voice in fiction become visible in the series of stories he published in *Saint Paul's Magazine* and collected in *An Editor's Tales*. Trollope uses creative and humorous techniques to translate the intangible presence and power of a narrative "We" into tangible physical characters made ridiculous by their collective narration and physical awkwardness. When a story presents a small, clumsy editor babbling on with an authoritative "We," the

audience becomes aware of the subject behind the "We," the physical body creating the voice, and the collective mode loses its normalcy. This desire to challenge the norm of collective voice also eventually resurfaces in Trollope's *The Way We Live Now*. Although Trollope could appreciate that "[the political] form of guidance was best performed anonymously in newspapers" (Nash 69), audiences risked much by seeking guidance from unaccountable sources.

Given that Trollope was so invested in the debate over signature and the repercussions of policy change it seems strange he opted to make *Saint Paul's Magazine* anonymous when beginning the new publication. N. John Hall observes that "somewhat surprisingly, he abandoned the policy he had so strongly urged on the *Fortnightly*" and imagines Trollope to have done so because "for his own magazine he felt safer with the practice of the successful *Cornhill*" (309). If Trollope was too anxious over the financial success of *Saint Paul's* to adopt the signature policies he had championed for the *Fortnightly*, the work he produced for that magazine nevertheless registers his conflicted feelings over his contradictory decision. Trollope wrote an entire story for *An Editor's Tales* about the inevitable failure of a collaborative effort to found a new, anonymous publication, "The Panjandrum." Interestingly, this fourth story in the series stands out for its conscious disassociation from the "We" voice. The piece begins much as "The Turkish Bath," with an explanation of its own perspective. This time, however, the narrator seeks no claim on the editorial "We": "The great WE was not, in truth, ours to use... We shall, therefore, tell our story, as might any individual, in the first person singular, and speak of such sparks of editorship as did fly up as having created but a dim coruscation, and as having been quite insufficient to justify the delicious plural..." (136). Despite its relinquishing of the "We," the tale fixes a spotlight on the traditionally corporate quality of periodicals, and it frames

the doomed fate of "The Panjandrum" with the inability of its various members to function as one unit: "If we could not forbear with one another, how could we hope to act together upon the age as one great force... how could we have the strength of union?" (154). Supposedly the only thing on which the members do agree is that "no man or woman was to declare himself to be the author of this or that article;—nor indeed was any man or woman to declare himself to be connected with the magazine" (138). This design to maintain anonymity clearly points to the debate over signature policies that Trollope had experienced in the 1860s with *The Fortnightly*, despite the tale's placing the time frame of "The Panjandrum" thirty years earlier. Given the dismal outcome of *The Panjandrum*, Trollope's tale draws a clear conclusion about the continuing feasibility of completely corporate and anonymous publications.

The portrait of the publication in "The Panjandrum" offers a confusion of expectations and market precedents from each of the founding members, filtered through the outspokenly singular voice of the narrator. Though only another nameless contributor within the group, the narrator depicts himself as the collaborator with the most literary and editorially minded qualifications. He explains that "the 'we' here spoken of is not an editorial we, but a small set of human beings who shall be personally introduced to the reader" (136) and goes on to promote his elevated standing in the group: "it was at that time clearly understood that I was to be the editor, and I felt myself justified in taking some little lead in arranging matters" (144). According to the narrator's prospectus, the ideal publication would be one that enabled the editorial team to "have the strength of union" while at the same time enabling him to act as sole editor "pouring out [his] convictions, [his] hopes, [his] fears, [his] ambition" (154). As the story testifies, the contradiction bears too much weight for the founding group, and the project folds before it even begins.

The conundrum of "The Panjandrum" is that the singular narrator takes for granted that the "We" is both a requisite sign of success for any periodical and also merely a guise with which to create the front of collaboration for the genius copy and control of just one lead editor. He says at the introduction, in apology: "We hardly feel certain that we are justified in giving the following little story to the public as an Editor's Tale, because at the time to which it refers... no editorial power was, in fact, within our grasp" (136). Unfortunately, he is not the only one among his colleagues who feels the desire to perform the periodical's "We," and with every member seeking sole control of the "collaboration," the enterprise is hopeless. The narrator believes the kind of ultimate, overseeing power entailed in the editorial "We" is "clearly understood" by the group to belong to one member. Nevertheless, there is no such consensus on who that one controlling member behind the "We" should be. As the narrator relates the demise of "The Panjandrum," he self-consciously repeats "we" throughout his descriptions in a way that painfully emphasizes the distinction between this "we" and that other great "We." What is more, Trollope's narrator speaks of the periodical as "not [yet having] a body of its own," so that "it was hardly necessary to open the earth for the purposes of interment" (172). The reference to the physical body of the periodical registers the motif Trollope sets up from the beginning of *An Editor's Tales* of forcing the abstract editorial We into a grotesque, singular, human form.

The concern among many periodical contributors about the debate over signature policies was that many different voices and names attached to articles would lack the weight or authority that the unifying and imposing editorial "We" could provide in an instant. For instance, in his article "On the Press and the Public," (1850) Thackeray deems the move by the French Assembly to enforce signature policies for all the French papers "a queer decision" because of the role that the editorial "We" plays in so many publications:

> Would Jones or Smith, however, much profit by the publication of their names to their articles? That is doubtful. When the *Chronicle* or the *Times* speaks now, it is "we" who are speaking, we the Liberal-Conservatives, we the Conservative Sceptics: when Jones signs the article, it is we no more, but Jones. It goes to the public with no authority. The public does not care very much what Jones's opinions are. They don't purchase the Jones organ any more—the paper droops; and in fact, I can conceive of nothing more wearisome than to see the names of Smith, Brown, Jones, Robinson, and so forth, written in capitals every day, day after day, under the various articles of the paper. The public would begin to cry out at the poverty of the literary *dramatis personæ*. (702)

Thackeray admits in the article that the change in policy has the potential both to reward every man of letters for his own merits but also to minimize the importance of the creative work of as-yet-unknown writers. What is more, he claims that many writers only write safely in anonymity, and were signature policies to make their way to England "we [would] lose some of the best books, some of the best articles, some of the pleasantest wit we have ever had" (704). Much of Thackeray's stance on the subject comes from his own personal reliance on the anonymity of periodical writing. Given that he built his style out of his many pseudonyms and use of the editorial "We," it makes sense that he would maintain a defensive skepticism for new signature policies. It is worth noting, nonetheless, that he makes his claims in the essay using the singular pronoun "I" instead of the "we": "I can conceive of nothing more wearisome...."

Decades later, Trollope's *An Editor's Tales* demonstrates how times have changed and that the market will now accept, even demands, a place for signature. For the narrator of "The Panjandrum," there is no weight or security in the collaborative "We" because there are simply too many divergent interests, behind the scenes *and* on the page, to allow for one unified presence in the end. In the last stages of the fledgling publication, the narrator claims his voice gets lost, not legitimized, in the process of collaboration: "I myself had become so small among them that my voice would have had no weight" (171). Certainly some collaboration is necessary

to publish periodicals, but the short-lived cycle of "The Panjandrum" renders the "great force" of the editorial "We" an unfeasible ideal, in reality stalled and defunct, for the late-century market.

Mirroring words from the pages of "The Panjandrum," Trollope wrote in his autobiography in the mid-1870s about his participation in the founding and early production of *The Fortnightly*, with the distinct difference that he makes clear *The Fortnightly* chose to adopt a signature policy and proved itself a viable and financially successful publication.[60] Trollope echoes the concerns of his less fortunate narrator from "The Panjandrum" when he says, "I was engaged with others in establishing a periodical Review, in which some of us trusted much, and from which we expected great things. There was, however, in truth so little combination of idea among us, that we were not justified in our trust or in our expectations" (158). The choice of the word "combination" stands out in Trollope's phrasing because, writing just after a decade that saw the Second Reform Bill of 1867 and the growing acceptability of new model unions, Trollope registers the opposite direction in which creative labor begins to move—so little "combination" among us—in the second half of the nineteenth century. As lower and middle-class groups empower themselves financially and politically by combining, creative laborers' support of changes such as signature policies encourage the opposite effect of unions: independent status in the publishing market and individual copyrights in the legal system. Unlike the writers of the *Panjandrum*, who were not even to claim any connection with the periodical, Trollope and the other contributors to the *Fortnightly* were in agreement that "we would let any man who had a thing to say, and knew how to say it, speak freely. But he should always speak with the responsibility of his name attached" (158). Signature appears to be the platform with

[60] See Trollope's *Autobiography* 158-163.

which the founders of that most important Victorian monthly would maintain their commitment to each other and enable the publication to persevere and eventually thrive.

Thorough in his support of the signature policy at the time of the *Fortnightly*'s founding, Trollope later demonstrates in his autobiography that he is, nevertheless, still conflicted about whether there was a time and a place and a cause for the editorial "we" to remain in periodicals. Ever turning to Thackeray for inspiration, Trollope alludes to "On the Press and the Public" when he says: "An ordinary reader would not care to have his books recommended to him by Jones; but the recommendation of the great unknown comes to him with all the weight of *The Times*, the *Spectator*, or the *Saturday*" (160-61). The reference to "Jones" strongly echoes the Jones of Thackeray's essay, and that pestering fear that critics really do need the weight of the "We" lingers even in Trollope, so convincing was its sway for so many decades. Yet, further down the page Trollope quickly reverts to his impulse for change, which he has based on his life's experience in the industry, and again reiterates: "I think that the name of the author does tend to honesty, and that the knowledge that it will be inserted adds much to the author's industry and care.... A man should never be ashamed to acknowledge that which he is not ashamed to publish. In *The Fortnightly* everything has been signed, and in this good has, I think, been done" (161).

Trollope came to the conclusion that such forthrightness was necessary for periodical writers almost despite himself, because he reflects in several instances on the unfair advantage that a famous name can lend to a text: "It seemed to me that a name once earned carried with it too much favour" (170). So strong was his belief in the hypothesis that young writers with equivalent talent were not given the same opportunity for success as were well-established authors, Trollope determined "to be such an aspirant [himself], and to begin a course of novels

anonymously, in order that [he] might see whether [he] could obtain a second identity,—whether as [he] had made one mark by such literary ability as [he] possessed, [he] might succeed in doing so again." The test took place, compliments of *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, which agreed to publish two of Trollope's stories, *Nina Balatka* and *Linda Tressel*, without his name in the late 1860s. The result, as he undoubtedly expected, was "no real success" despite the fact that Trollope felt convinced "the two stories [were] good" (171). As difficult and harshly competitive as the literary market of the nineteenth century had become, Trollope nevertheless concluded that the only way for a writer to gain a presence and power in the market was for his or her name to appear in print, time and again, as often as possible. For his second attempt at fame, he says, "with all the increased advantages which practice in my art must have given me, I could not at once induce English readers to read what I gave to them, unless I gave it with my name" (172) and "when, with all my experience in my art, I began again as from a new springing point, I should have failed again unless again I could have given years to the task" (177). The bleak outlook that Trollope's experiment cast over the hopes of so many young writers in the end only reiterated the injustice performed by the editorial "We," whose mask of anonymity only prolonged inevitable failure and thwarted a new talent's entry into the public's view every time it withheld a writer's signature.

* * *

Of all Trollope's *Editor's Tales*, the one most pertinent to the writer's attack on the editorial "We" is the fifth and longest of the six stories, "The Spotted Dog." In it, the narrator depicts an editor as he deals with the final episodes in the life of a struggling writer who is

making one last attempt at his literary career. It is what Trollope described in his *Autobiography* as "the best" of his stories from the series for *St. Paul's Magazine* (280). The narrative perspective in this tale, as in several of the others, does not enforce a strict use of the editorial "We" but shifts very occasionally into "I," which are moments worth examining themselves. For the majority of the tale, however, the voice presents itself as a "we," strangely characterizing itself as a pointedly plural voice in a singular body. At the beginning of the tale, the editor submits a piece of correspondence, "we received the following letter" (174), from Julius Mackenzie, who proclaims of himself to "Dear Sir":

> I write to you for literary employment, and I implore you to provide me with it if it be within your power to do so.... I am a poet;—at least I so esteem myself.... I am at present employed on the staff of two or three of the "Penny Dreadfuls."... I will do any work that you may impose upon me. I write this letter as a last effort to rescue myself from the filth of my present position, but I entertain no hope of any success. (175)

Despite the singular "Sir" with which Mackenzie appears to address a specific, individual editor, the narrator remarks of the letter: "*We* did read it, probably twice, and then put ourselves to work to consider how much of it might be true and how much false" (175, emphasis mine). Like Alfred's initially weary attitude toward Simcoe, this editor demonstrates direct suspicion for Mackenzie. Despite such misgivings, however, the editor is convinced enough of Mackenzie's caliber as a writer of letters and then commiserates: "We know what it is so well, and can fathom so accurately the degradation of the educated man who, having been ambitious in the career of literature, falls into that slough of despond by which the profession of literature is almost surrounded" (176). The position of camaraderie, "We know... so well," foreshadows the potential for sympathy between editor and writer, as well as a successful re-launch of Mackenzie's career. Yet, it also misleads the reader to anticipate a story intent on portraying the

"wretchedness" of lowly contributors who have succumbed to the cruelties of the market, instead of the wretchedness of editors.

Like the scenario from Thackeray's "Miss Tickletoby's Lectures on English History," Trollope's narrator here presents the tale of a down-and-out writer looking for a new start, albeit with higher professional qualifications and more dire personal circumstances than those Simcoe presented. Unlike Thackeray's series, however, Trollope's tale presents the narrator, not the struggling writer, with an ambiguous face. The text offers no hint as to the narrator's name, no "Halfred" to indicate the commanding voice. Moreover, unlike several others of the *Editor's Tales*, "The Spotted Dog" makes no point to explain its own perspective. The narrative voice writes with the editorial "We" and assumes the weighty role and responsibility of that convention from the very onset of the tale, despite his vague physical description. The text's emphasis on physical depiction heightens the effect of what will prove to be the narrator's lack of a detailed physical presence in the story, illustrating the problematic figure that the abstract collective "We" thus poses to Trollope's project to present a realistic portrait of the dynamics of the publishing industry. According to the physically detailed narration in the tale, judgment of people and circumstances in the story is not based on evidence and experience but on appearance and description. That being the case, the fascinating crisis of the tale is that readers are denied the ability to judge or even conceive of the character of the narrator, whose self-portrayal withholds any specific conception of his *own* appearance in the text.

"The Spotted Dog" itself is a title intent on misleading readers as to any hint of its tale's content. In its concise but vivid image of a dog with spotted fur, the title suggests a physical picture of an animal with a unique characteristic in the mind of the reader. However short-lived that picture proves to be—the letter from Mackenzie explains that "The Spotted Dog" is simply

the name of a public-house where he accepts mail and other enticements—the title enacts the mental process of visualizing physical representations described in a text. It more accurately foreshadows the focus of the tale, as the literary representation of physical subjects and the problematic figure that the abstract editorial "We" thus poses.

To illustrate the tale's interest in physically detailing every major character except the narrator, I point to the editor's first encounter in person with Julius Mackenzie, who is called to the publication's office to clarify his circumstances and possibly gain an assignment. "We well remember his appearance, which was one unutterably painful to behold" (177), says the editor, who then proceeds to divulge more than thirty-five lines of description on Mackenzie, which are here much abbreviated:

> He was a tall man, very thin,—thin we might say as a whipping-post, were it not that one's idea of a whipping-post conveys erectness and rigidity, whereas this man, as he stood before us, was full of bends, and curves, and crookedness. . . . He carried an infinity of thick, ragged, wild, dirty hair, dark in colour, though not black, which age had not yet begun to grizzle. He wore a miserable attempt at a beard, stubbly, uneven, and half shorn,—as though it had been cut down within an inch of his chin with blunt scissors. He had two ugly projecting teeth, and his cheeks were hollow. His eyes were deep-set, but very bright, illuminating his whole face; so that it was impossible to look at him and to think him to be one wholly insignificant..... His nose was long and well shaped,—but red as a huge carbuncle. The moment we saw him we connected that nose with the Spotted Dog. (177)

The narrator starts his description by clarifying what "one's idea of a whipping post conveys," reminding the audience that this tale explores the very nature of what "one's ideas" of different physical objects and beings described in literature are. Beyond this sort of conceptual frame with which the narrator begins his visual picture of Mackenzie, the paragraph is conspicuous for its never-ending and rather mesmerizing list of adjectives. So detailed is the editor's memory of this stranger that the narrative voice imagines Mackenzie to have lied about his age because, while he looks worn, his hair has yet to "grizzle." It is the writer's "deep-set eyes," however, that impress

the editor and suggest, despite appearances, that Mackenzie was not "one wholly insignificant." Toward the end of his long digression on Mackenzie's appearance, the editor tellingly alludes once more to the Spotted Dog: "The moment we saw him we connected that nose with the Spotted Dog," says the editor. The text remarks on its own metafictional strategy to depict the process of language itself, the mental process readers undergo when picturing vivid physical representations of abstract, symbolic words on the page. First with the title of "The Spotted Dog," and now with the lengthy digression on Mackenzie's carbuncle nose and whipping-post frame, the reader's attention has been occupied by a pattern of detailed physical description rather than by moments of sympathetic concern for a degraded and dejected literary artist.

The work that the editor deems suitable for Mr. Mackenzie is the correction of an index to accompany a three-volume manuscript by a Dr. _______, whose name remains a mystery throughout the tale. A secondary character whose concerns over his own manuscript serve as the main conflict driving the tenuous relationship between Mackenzie and the editor, the Doctor nevertheless marks a second occasion for elaborate physical description. During the inevitable interview in which the editor introduces the Doctor to his new assistant, Mackenzie, the editor once again elaborates in detail on his appearance: "The Doctor was a gentleman of the old school, very neat in his attire,—dressed in perfect black, with knee-breeches and black gaiters, with a closely-shorn chin, and an exquisitely white cravat.... He was a well-made, tall, portly gentleman.... His well-formed full face was singularly expressive of benevolence...." (193). The description presents the Doctor's clothes, facial hair, stature, and expression, suggesting to the reader the editor's preoccupation with the importance of physical representation of characters. It is through such remembered portraits that the editor surmises what to think of people, of the

Doctor's "singular expression of benevolence" or of Mackenzie's "nose which almost assumed an air of authority as he carried it" (179).

The motif of physical representation only continues to build as the story progresses and the editor encounters more people connected to his main interest, Mackenzie. Determined to make his own investigations and satisfy himself that the writer is fit to take hold of the Doctor's manuscript, the editor travels first to the Spotted Dog, to investigate what he can of Mackenzie's daily surroundings. The proprietors of the public-house, Mr. and Mrs. Grimes, pose for the editor's next portrait:

> Had we ventured to employ our intellect in personifying for ourselves an imaginary Mrs. Grimes as the landlady of a Spotted Dog public-house in Liquorpond Street, the figure we should have built up for ourselves would have been the very opposite of that which this lady presented to us. She was slim, and young, and pretty, and had pleasant little tricks of words... which made us almost think that it might be our duty to come very often to the Spotted Dog to inquire about Mr. Julius Mackenzie. Mr. Grimes was a man about forty,—fully ten years the senior of his wife,—with a clear gray eye, and a mouth and chin from which we surmised that he would be competent to clear the Spotted Dog of unruly visitors after twelve o'clock.... (181).

Needless to say, the narrator does venture to "personify an imaginary Mrs. Grimes," in a sense presenting her both as she is in the story and as she might have been in the story, "the very opposite of that which this lady presented to us." The description focuses more on the concept of imagining Mrs. Grimes than on describing her in too much detail. Really all that the editor says is that she is "slim, young, and pretty," but the emphasis on "personifying" characters reiterates the other acts of personification, or physical depiction in the text.

As for providing a physical depiction of an editor, the narrator does not provide a self-portrait because describing his own singular physicality would undercut the power of the abstract collective "We." The closest he comes to describing an editor is detailing an encounter he has with the staff of the 'Penny Dreadfuls' for whom Mackenzie already writes, and even this

portrait proves obscure. Endeavoring to "assum[e] in our manner and tone something of the familiarity of a common pursuit" (184), the narrator explains that "after much delay we came upon a gentleman sitting in a dark cupboard, who twisted round his stool to face us while he spoke to us. We believe that he was the editor of more than one 'Penny Dreadful,' and that as many as a dozen serial novels were being issued to the world at the same time under his supervision" (184). Casting this "editor" as such an obscure figure, tenuous in his authority—"we believe that he was the editor"—and shady in his physical depiction—"a gentleman sitting in a dark cupboard"—the narrator infuses the world of Penny Dreadfuls with much suspicion. The cheap periodicals serve here as a scapegoat for the editor's sarcasm, "the great development of literature which latter years have produced" (185), but they also distract the reader from the narrator's inability to provide his own self-depiction. The image of "the gentleman in the dark cupboard," albeit sketchy and almost taboo, provides a more precise image of the singular person editing the penny dreadfuls than the narrator provides of himself and his own supposedly authoritative and respectable figure.

What the narrator does depict of himself—note how awkward it would be to talk about the narrator in the plural, to say "narrators" and "they" in a manner that reflects the plurality of the editorial "we"—registers an awkward self-consciousness of his own contradictory physical presence. Each moment of self-depiction presents scenes of action or expression meant for just one person, though they are constantly claimed by the plural "we" voice. At first, on meeting Mackenzie, the editor describes what are figurative or mental actions that serve well enough with the "we": "When we looked at him we could not *but ask ourselves* whether this man had been born a gentleman" (178, emphasis mine). Quickly the comments shift, however, to display physical actions more suggestive of just one person: "we blew the breath out of our mouth with

astonishment" (180) and "we felt that a weak, vapid, unmanly smile was creeping over our face" (179). The singular "mouth" and "smile" and "face" juxtaposed next to the persistent "we" and "our" intensify the "creepiness" of the description and de-personalize the narrator in a manner that even outdoes the impersonal "gentleman in the cupboard." Immediately after capturing this awkward smile, the narrator continues to self-critique, saying, "We were smiling as a man smiles who intends to imply some contemptuous assent with the self-depreciating comment of his companion. Such a mode of expression is in our estimation most cowardly, and most odious. We had not intended it, but we knew that the smile had pervaded us." When the narrator claims "we were smiling as a man," once more the awkward concept of the plural voice coming from the single face elicits displeasure, if not disgust. The "mode of expression... most cowardly" thus transforms from smiling to narrating with the editorial "we"—a mode equally calculated to disguise ulterior mechanisms at work. Additionally, as the narrator concludes stating "the smile had pervaded us," the plural voice admits to this awkward slippage in the text where a simple smile calls into question and renders quite fragile the authoritative presence that a "we" narrator is meant to maintain.

The scene with Mackenzie continues, and the narrator's self-conscious awkwardness only grows stronger, so that the reader becomes witness to more than just telling facial expressions but to actual physical clumsiness from the narrator. When Mackenzie's meeting is about to come to an end, the narrator is suddenly put on guard because of a physical disparity in height when his penniless contributor rises to leave. With a nervous tone, the narrator remarks Mackenzie's natural height as impressive and worries about the man's subsequent power over the conversation: "He seemed to overshadow us, and to have his own way with us, because he was enabled to look down upon us" (180). From this panicked word choice, the narrator builds

this scene of paranoia to a climax of pure physical awkwardness when he describes that "There was a footstool on our hearth-rug, and we remember to have attempted to stand upon that, in order that we might escape his supervision; but we stumbled, and had to kick it from us, and something was added to our sense of inferiority by this little failure" (180). This is a strange shift of characterization for the narrator, who only pages before had boasted: "we think we believed [all of Mackenzie's assertions]...—with the exception of the one in which he proclaimed himself to be a poet" (175) and "we had our own doubts whether [the doctor's text] might ever assume the form of a real book" (178). Now, he once more portrays himself as some kind of strange synchronized pantomime of multiple voices in one body, narrating about himself as "inferior," as "falling," and as a "failure." The "we" voice gives anything but strength to the editor in this close-hand encounter with a single contributor. His tangible hysteria over Mackenzie's "supervision" cannot wholly be explained, as it seems to lack any significant origin in the scene. All the reader can point to is the admittedly tall stature of Mackenzie and, perhaps, the very precision of his physical presence on the page in opposition to the amorphous and abstract "We." The reader could also infer that Mackenzie's advantage in height and the threat of his supervision imply the shifting dynamics of authors and editors in the publishing world. As single authors gained more legal rights and greater fame, their influence on the market most assuredly could be felt as encroaching competition for, if not supervision over, traditionally vested editorial staff. What is clear, however, is that the narrator stands small, awkward, barely visible among the many other physical depictions he presents in the tale.

One of the most interesting elements of "The Spotted Dog" is that amid this slow self-destruction of the "we" narrator, moments of a singular "I" voice appear in the narration and require consideration, as well. In the middle of the editor's interview with Mackenzie—prior to

the climax on the stool—the contributor inquires directly if there is any work actually available for him, and it is an "I" who responds: "Then I explained to him that I had something he might do, if I could venture to entrust him with the work.... I had been grievously afflicted when he alluded to his former habit of drinking... but I entertained no hesitation in raising questions as to his erudition. I felt almost assured that his answers would be satisfactory" (179-80). After these lines, the narrator quickly recommences with the "we" voice and his intention to question Mackenzie's scholarship. One could speculate that the change in pronouns is just a subtle slip in the narrative perspective set by Trollope, and as incidents of the "I" only occur sporadically throughout the text, which is clearly driven by "we," error is a possibility. Yet, considering how closely Trollope constructs and then sabotages the strength of the collective "we," with comments such as "we were also married, and what would our wife have said...," in which the plural pronoun comes across as either outrageous or just silly, it seems unlikely that he would have made such slips into "I" merely out of carelessness. If anything does stand out about these brief passages in the singular voice, it is that the verbs and adverbs register more emotional responses than those the reader witnesses from the "we." In trying to explain his position toward Mackenzie, the narrator tells the reader "if I could venture to entrust," "I had been grievously afflicted," "I entertained no hesitation," and "I felt almost assured." The personal tone in this word choice is notable, and yet it does not last ten lines. It is a strange flicker of personal feeling from the narrator, and its appearance serves two purposes in Trollope's narrative. First of all, it adds a modicum of plausibility to the sympathy that the narrator claims to feel for Mackenzie during the story, an effect which would be difficult to achieve with only the creepy, smiling, depersonalized "we." Yet, more important, when it appears, it emphasizes the more typical election of the plural voice over the singular one throughout the story. By testing the "I" from

time to time, Trollope mimics the tentative experimentation that many periodicals were undergoing in determining how to introduce signature policies and how to transition from the tradition of the editorial "we." His narrative shifts display the anxiety over the "I's" vulnerability as he only allows it to appear for the briefest moments. What is also telling about the strategy of narration here is that although Trollope casts the "I" as emotional and incapable of holding the text for long periods, it is yet the "we" that goes on in the same scene to prove vulnerable to "inferiority" and "failure," albeit mostly self-inflicted. As Trollope illustrates the editorial "we" failing to maintain its pose of authority and calm balance in the scene, the text begs the question, why not just maintain the more natural "I"?

As the tale has progressed, the "we" narrator has taken on more confidently the sympathetic role of benefactor to Mackenzie—"we felt that we should have a pleasure in arranging together with Mrs. Grimes any scheme of benevolence on behalf of this unfortunate and remarkable man" (188). The editor, in this moment so self-assured, enjoys contemplating a visit with the lovely Mrs. Grimes and even proves capable of complimenting Mackenzie as a "remarkable man." Yet this confidence is called into question when the narrator arrives for his second visit to the Spotted Dog pub. The physical state of the public house is so debased that the narrator reflects "it was a wonder indeed that any one should be able to compose and write tales of imagination in a place so dreary, dark, and ill-omened" (189), and upon seeing there "three draggled, wretched-looking women" and "carters... eating enormous hunches of bread and bacon, which they cut and put into their mouths slowly, solemnly, and in silence," the "I" voice reappears in the tale. The editor thinks to himself, before appealing to Mrs. Grimes, "It was quite clear to me that the man could not manipulate the Doctor's manuscript... in the place I had just visited." So intense is the physical depiction of the scene at the Spotted Dog that the "we"

voice is shaken from its own realm of abstraction, and the more personal "I" must take over. Not only does the narrator remark on the dreary setting, the draggled women, and the strangely slow, almost vulgar chewing by the carters, but he even details the narrow width of the bar tables—"perhaps eighteen inches wide"—as well as the pathetic awkwardness of a drunk man who endeavors to "swallow[ ]... three square inches of bread... but fail[s]." The visual exactness is emphasized by the obscurity of any sound—all the proprietors drink or chew or stare in silence—so that what is most threatening about the place for the editor is its detailed physical vividness, as grotesque as it is, in opposition to his own physical obscurity. "'How are we to get a place for him?' said I appealing to the lady," says the editor to Mrs. Grimes, and on this occasion, the "we" rings more natural as it appears in dialogue addressed by one specific person ("said I") to another ("appealing to the lady"). The recurrence of the "I" thereafter becomes even more sporadic, appearing occasionally in lines that shift back to the plural voice before the end of the sentence, such as with "I do not know why we had thus clung to the purlieus of the law" (199) and "I hardly know who first discovered the sight which we encountered, or whether it was shown to us by the child" (207). The final instance of narration in the singular voice comes toward the end of the tale, when the editor discovers that Mackenzie has succumbed to the pains of poverty and begun to drink again: "Oh – when should I see the last of the results of my imprudence in having attempted to befriend such a one as Julius Mackenzie" (210).

Throughout all these shifts, the reader follows along with the editor as Mackenzie attempts to re-launch a career only to fail, eventually "lying a wretched corpse at the Spotted Dog, with his throat cut from ear to ear, till the coroner's jury should have decided whether or not they would call him a suicide" (211). The desperation Trollope invests in Mackenzie's downfall undoubtedly aligns itself with Sutherland's reading that the tales are meant to portray

the agonizing lives of individual men and women trying to make their way as writers. Sympathy is an inevitable result of scenes in which Mackenzie lays drunk across his bed with "an uneasy twitching as of pain about his face" while his children sit for hours in the next room watching the Doctor's manuscript burn in the fire and "knowing the condition of their parent whom they most respected, but not even endeavoring to do anything for his comfort" (205). If it be the case, however, that Trollope intends to produce sympathy for Mackenzie and the bleak outlook for young writers, the narrator maintains a strange distance from such a perspective. Rather, the editor describes sifting through the ashes of the burned manuscript as "undignified and almost disreputable work" and he deems Mackenzie "a being so degraded" (208). Additionally, he describes Mackenzie's episode of drunkenness as "but a periodical misfortune" in the eyes of the children, a commonplace occurrence. The pun adds a kind of inappropriate humor to the scene while it also alludes directly to the narrator's business affairs and the contributor's unfortunate status as a mere casualty of the profession. At one moment late in the text, the narrator does directly address the reader in a call for sympathy, but even then, his worries are over the Doctor's lost manuscript and not his all-but-lost contributor. He says:

> No doubt each individual reader to whom we address ourselves has at some period felt that indescribable load of personal, short-lived care, which causes the heart to sink down in the boots. It is not great grief that does it;—nor is it excessive fear; but the unpleasant operation comes from the mixture of the two. It is the anticipation of some imperfectly understood evil that does it,—some evil out of which there might perhaps be an escape if we could only see the way. (208)

How flat the sentiments fall when the reader notes that these words are written in reference to the narrator's having to tell the Doctor that his manuscript is lost. They are not for the wretched contributor; they are not for his wretched children. This gap between the text's potentially sympathetic depiction of Mackenzie and the editor's colder feelings toward him realigns the

focus of the tale toward the responses of the narrator-editor more so than toward the harsh realities threatening the contributor.

Only when faced with Mackenzie's suicide does the editor acknowledge a change of "our feelings" for the man who, he admits, was "poor, overburdened, struggling, ill-used, [and] abandoned" (210). The narrator is antipathetic toward Mackenzie until it is too late, despite how much he describes the contributor as "abandoned" and in need of sympathy. Toward the end of the tale, when the editor regrets Mackenzie's death, the "we" portrays an awareness of its own culpability: "The world had been so hard upon him, with a severity which almost induced one to make complaint against Omnipotence" (210). What at first reads like an appeal to God, or some higher religious power, reveals more when read within the context of the publishing world, as a plea to the seeming "omnipotence" of the hidden and all-powerful editorial "we." But the narrator only alludes to his possible guilt and never fully claims responsibility. Rather he persists in the belief that "the sin of drunkenness" is the culprit of Mackenzie's demise and only says that his loss "*almost* induced one to make a complaint." As well, he goes on to bemoan Mackenzie's constant desire for liberty as having led to his careless death: "liberty as against his father and family; liberty as against his college tutor; liberty as against all pastors, masters, and instructors; liberty as against the conventional thralldom of the world!" (211). To be sure, there is one figure missing from the series— liberty from the editor or the editorial "we" does not occur to the narrator.

Trollope uses this duo of the editor and the contributor throughout "The Spotted Dog" to enable, through the narrator's displacement of self-criticism onto Mackenzie, "We" to begin to articulate its own awkwardness and essential contradiction. For instance, when the narrator accompanies the writer to his past places of employment, as proof of his eligibility to work on

the index, the editor remarks "it was odd to see how in his converse with us on that day he seemed to possess a double identity. Though the hopeless misery of his condition was always present to him... yet he could talk about his career and his own character as though they belonged to a third person" (199). Needless to say, "We" does not have a "double identity,"—rather a plural identity—but his manner of noticing Mackenzie's choice of an alternative perspective most definitely addresses, however latently or displaced, the narrator's own practice of discussing "his career and his own character as though they belonged to [more than one] person." In complement to such self-conscious comments on perspective, the narrator continues to act out awkward physical scenes in the tale—moments that highlight the physically superfluous nature of the plural voice through expressions of physical clumsiness. The mode of narration and the physical scenarios of "The Spotted Dog" make evident that it is time for the editorial "we" to make way for singular authors, their fresher forms of narration, and perhaps even signature policies.

The tale's need to emphasize physical representations of characters in juxtaposition to the nameless, abstract voice of the narrator reaches a tragic climax at the end of "The Spotted Dog" when the editor sees Mackenzie's dead body at the bar. The editor's final lines on the contributor stall due to an inability to see his face once more: "We gave one glance along the table at the burden which it bore, but we saw nothing beyond the outward lines of that which had so lately been the figure of a man. We should have liked to see the countenance once more. The morbid curiosity to see such horrid sights is strong with most of us. But we did not wish to be thought to wish to see it" (213). Because Mackenzie is now dead, every piece of the narrator's word choice references a kind of obscurity. Between the nouns, "nothing," "outward lines," and "the figure of a man," the pronoun, "that," and the modifier, "so lately," the word choice

expresses a state of vague abstraction, in which ”We” self-consciously reflects on its own abstraction. The sort of amorphous and self-conscious “we” then says of Mackenzie’s dead body, “But we did not wish to be thought to wish to see it, —especially by our friend the Doctor,—and we abstained from pushing our way to the head of the table.” The awkwardness of his narration is palpable in the very syntax of this clause, and the words enact a strange shifting between active and passive voice, where the editor imagines his companions’ thoughts, in which they then presume to imagine his thoughts. Not only the syntax, but also the repetition of both “wish” and “to” creates an awkwardness in the words that expresses anxiety. Due to this tension, the editor finally relegates himself to the background, presenting himself either as incapable of or unqualified to dominate the scene and the narration.

Although the narration at the end of the tale does not revert back to “I,” the text does give the predominant position of the end to the Doctor’s voice, which uses a natural “I” in a letter to the editor. A match to Mackenzie’s introductory letter to the editor, the Doctor’s letter marks the pair of correspondences that open and close the tale. Although not an ally of trust or encouragement for Mackenzie, the Doctor serves in a parallel position because he steps into Mackenzie’s part of would-be writer. Yet, he distinguishes himself from his unfortunate predecessor by removing himself and his contributions cautiously from the editor’s grasp and the market. He reminisces over his lost pages that were burned by Mackenzie’s fire and explains, “I have determined to relinquish the design [to publish].... but will console myself with the memory of my grievance, knowing well, as I do so, that consolation from the severity of harsh but just criticism might have been more difficult to find” (214). Given this epistolary frame, the tale commences with an encouraging, hopeful possibility of young literary success and ends with a recommendation to retire or remove oneself from the market altogether.

The reader might question the sincerity of a message not to publish from a writer so prolific as Trollope, and yet he echoes the sentiment in his *An Autobiography*. In it, he ponders who can tell young aspirants whether they have "qualities necessary for such a career" (176) and answers in direct address to "my young aspirant," saying, "if ever such a one should read these pages,—be sure no one can tell you.... This, however, I think may be said to you... that if it be necessary for you to live by your work, do not begin by trusting to literature" (176). More specifically, he recommends a lifestyle much like his own in which one may work for a living in an office and experiment creatively in leisure time. If the writer's plight is of concern to Trollope in his *Editor's Tales*, as clearly it is in the *Autobiography*, then this is no light whim of the Doctor's with which he chooses to end the tale. But, as has been the case throughout "The Spotted Dog," the text does not fully promote a channel of sympathy between the reader and poor Mackenzie because it maintains its pattern of undercutting such emotion with more selfish or superficial comments, usually from the editor, but even from the Doctor in this final letter. For he continues to say, "When I think of the end of my efforts as a scholar, my mind reverts to the terrible and fatal catastrophe of one whose scholarship was infinitely more finished and more ripe than mine" (214). These words, coming only a page after Mackenzie's corpse appears sprawled on a table at the Spotted Dog pub, suggest a reference to the contributor's death. This is not, however, the Doctor's meaning, as indicated by the end of the phrase, which refers to one whose scholarship was "infinitely more finished" and "ripe." As the reader well knows, Mackenzie did not have the physical stability or time to complete anything "finished." Rather, the reference alludes to Sir Isaac Newton—many of whose manuscripts supposedly burned when he left a candle lit on a table—to whom the Doctor previously refers when trying to console himself about his lost manuscript: "that idea of suffering as the great philosopher had suffered

seemed to comfort him. 'If Newton bore it, surely I can'" (213). Mackenzie's participation in the Doctor's efforts is completely forgotten, or at least overlooked in penalty for his role in damaging the manuscript. This lack of sympathy for the young aspirant is something the Doctor and editor have in common. More important than any light of sympathy these characters could shed on the fate of the young aspirant, however, is the critical light they shed on both the business of publishing and on the unnatural impersonal nature of the editorial "we."

The other strategic similarity that the Doctor shares with Mackenzie is his ability to drive the editor to the "I" voice. Forced to take responsibility for the lost pages, the editor shifts from the plural to the singular perspective when he explains, "he stood looking at us. 'I need to tell you, Doctor, what my feelings are, and how great my remorse,'" (209). The shift occurs in dialogue, but it is nonetheless a pivotal shift because the editor usually avoids the singular pronoun even in scenes that require some minimal personal dialogue. Adding to the marked change is the "us" that appears directly before the editor's "I." As the scene continues, the text stresses the necessity of the personal singular voice as the editor must take responsibility for what has occurred and as the Doctor reacts to the news that his manuscript has been destroyed. The narrator describes how "Before I could explain anything, [the Doctor's] hands were among the fragments of the box. 'As I am a living man, they have burned it!' he exclaimed. 'I—I—I—' Then he turned from us, and walked twice the length of the room, backwards and forwards, while we stood still, patiently waiting the explosion of his wrath" (209). Conscious of his responsibility, the editor nervously shifts back and forth, following the Doctor's movements, from the single voice to the plural voice. The transitions come randomly and often in this scene. "I—I—I—," the Doctor stammers, and the effect of Trollope's punctuation here is striking. The dashes work to create the impression of bewilderment on the part of the Doctor. Yet, the repeated

word also draws the eye to the pronoun, distinguishing it among the print on the page and insisting on its integral presence there. The scene, which helps bring "The Spotted Dog" to a close, displays the narrator and the characters lobbing pronouns at each other and at the reader. It becomes a sort of game in which the reader must call into question the role each pronoun plays in the text and the implications behind each different choice. The story ends with a final reflection on the Grimeses of the Spotted Dog pub: "Who followed Mr. and Mrs. Grimes at the Spotted Dog we have never visited Liquorpond Street to see" (215). It is no coincidence that the narrator concludes this tale reflecting on an inability "to see" and depict the person or persons to replace the previous publicans. That inability to see and depict the narrator itself has been the primary endeavor of "The Spotted Dog," and perhaps of the *Editor's Tales* altogether.

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With this upbraiding of the collective voice in *An Editor's Tales* in mind, I return to *The Way We Live Now*, whose opening chapter commences with a nod back to Trollope's collection of literary editors with a chapter entitled "Three Editors." Like so many of the frames for the tales, especially "The Spotted Dog" and "Josephine de Montmorenci," a character corresponds with an editor, or this time three editors. The letters make up the bulk of the chapter, as Lady Carbury seeks friendly support for her newest book, "Criminal Queens." More like a prologue to the novel than an opening of the plot, the first chapter foreshadows the corruption to come, but for any readers familiar with Trollope's work from *Saint Paul's*, it also flashes back to the various abstract editors in *An Editor's Tales*. How will these three editors deal with their contributors and their propositions, like those of Lady Carbury? How much weight will it hold

for the course of the novel? One major difference in *The Way We Live Now* is that the first chapter accomplishes precisely that which each of the tales avoids: it identifies its editors as specific characters, with names, descriptions, and uniquely individual characteristics. Mr. Broune, the reader quickly learns, is "a powerful man" and "fond of the ladies" (4). Booker, however, is "hard-working" but can "hardly afford to be independent" (6-7). Of Alf, much is reported as the text sets him up to be an important figure, including that "he was supposed to be a German Jew" and yet that he "knew England only as an Englishman can know it" (8). Critics interested in Trollope's prejudices against Jews have explored the significance of his characterization and vilification of Alf; an additional interest lies in his supposedly un-English pedigree and his portrait as another possible outsider, like Melmotte.[61] These features depict editors distinctly as people and as rounded characters in the novel instead of as abstract literary entities. Why might Trollope have taken such a different approach to editors in *The Way We Live Now*? First of all, a novel told wholly from the perspective of one of his more abstract "we" editors would not have provided the range necessary to portray so many corrupted characters. But, as well, the century was progressing and periodicals were adopting signature policies with more and more willingness; therefore, the text reflects changing conceptions of editors, who were starting to present themselves in their publications with signatures, as real people and not just as great "We"s. Using individuals, the text has equal opportunity to portray the vulnerabilities and duplicities of Broune, Booker, and Alf, just as it displays Melmotte's thorough downfall. Though only a few pages, the opening chapter of *The Way We Live Now* is significant because it makes editors human.

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[61] See Cheyette, Carter, Delaney, Freedman, and Levine.

Although the novel makes the three editors mortal, they nevertheless promulgate the traditional editorial tactics of the Victorian press and are thus rendered as suspicious as Melmotte and the editors from *An Editor's Tales*. Mr. Alf's publication, for example, provides both reports and "prophes[ies]" of the most current news "with an air of wonderful omniscience" (8), and Mr. Broune still prints the editorial "we" when his paper tries to safely comment on rumors of Melmotte's political failure before the election has been fully tabulated: "'We know not how such an opinion forms itself,' the writer said;—'but it seems to have been formed. As nothing as yet is really known, or can be known, we express no opinion of our own on the matter'" (528). Keeping in mind the novel's interest in how people "create a belief" and in what kinds of people are capable of "creating beliefs," irony colors this quote from the "Breakfast Table," which disassociates itself from all agency and responsibility for the very business it is in, creating beliefs. It speaks in an abstract plural voice that safely distances "the [singular] writer" from any accountability, and additionally it denies having an opinion on the news or even on how opinions form. Interestingly, the paper will not express an "opinion" because "nothing as yet is really known," suggesting the accepted conception that a paper's "opinion" is equivalent to knowledge. The disingenuous claim by the "Breakfast Table" portrays in this instance, as do many other moments in the novel, that the conventions that have served for decades to formalize periodical narration for audiences are self-serving, not natural or self-evident.

Likewise, the text shows characters often registering uncertainty regarding the authorship of articles throughout *The Way We Live Now*. When the "Evening Pulpit" first breaks the early story on Melmotte and the South Central Pacific and Mexican Railway, readers of the "Pulpit" must speculate on multiple levels, about its meaning and about its author. The paper's story creates decidedly incompatible readings when "according to [Mr. Splinter's] view it was

intended to expose Mr. Melmotte and the railway" while "Lady Carbury was sure that the article was intended to write up the railway" (244). As far as the article's authorship is concerned, that matter is unclear, but characters seem undisturbed by the lack of a signature: "It was generally said at the clubs that Mr. Alf had written this article himself." In periodical style, as it is presented in the novel, ambiguity takes the place of individual perspective so that words can mean potentially anything to anyone. Moreover, with an anonymous format, rumor and speculation take the place of signature. Editors and periodicals disguise themselves, manipulate information, and promote speculation through their very conventions, regardless of their association with or support of suspicious schemes such as Melmotte's.

Numerous times, Mr. Alf's authorship is specifically called into question, often in relation to his handling of Lady Carbury's "Criminal Queens." When she asks him why the review had been so harsh, he explains:

> You see, Lady Carbury, I don't write all these things myself.... To tell the truth, I never write any of them. Of course we endeavor to get people whose judgments we can trust, and if, as in this case, it should unfortunately happen that the judgment of our critic should be hostile to the literary pretensions of a personal friend of my own, I can only lament the accident and trust that my friend may have spirit enough to divide me as an individual from that Mr. Alf who has the misfortune to edit a newspaper. (94)

Alf's request for Lady Carbury to "divide [him] as an individual from that [other] Mr. Alf" who edits is as unnatural as the narrator's request for deference for the abstract collective "We" that stumbles and hides as a physical contradiction in "The Spotted Dog." Interestingly, this quote implicates Alf as behaving deceptively as much as it implicates Lady Carbury. Trollope was known for condemning puffery and favorable reviews for friends and charitable cases,[62] and certainly Lady Carbury is guilty of pursuing every avenue for advancement she can, legitimate or

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[62] See *An Autobiography* 218-225, and "Mrs. Brumby" from *An Editor's Tales*

not. So the reader cannot blame Alf for striking down her complaint and distancing himself from her designs. Yet, when he speaks to his supposedly "personal friend" using the editorial "we"—"we endeavor to get people... we can trust"—Alf's ability to hide behind anonymity and his claim that he does not write any of the reviews Lady Carbury reads in his paper appears quite convenient to his placating motives. He does not have to take responsibility for anything he prints, not even when he is running for Parliament and his paper reports on the possible corruption of his opponent: "Mr. Alf explained that [an allusion to the affair] had been put in by the sub-editor, and that it only afforded such news as the paper was bound to give to the public" (514). The novel alludes to the kind of repercussions and responsibility even an anonymous periodical could face if accused of libel—"A very long purse, or else a very high courage is needed for the exposure of such conduct as the 'Evening Pulpit' attributed to Mr. Melmotte" (362)—but that kind of blatant slander does not appear in the novel. What seems more of interest in *The Way We Live Now* is how editors and writers should take responsibility for the small, everyday messages they print and the beliefs they create among the public.

Though drawing far less attention to his manner of operation, Alf rivals Melmotte in inducing others to do his bidding. While Melmotte is busy arguing with Paul Montague about how to run the board of directors of the railway scheme—"Unanimity is everything in the direction of such an undertaking as this.... Unanimity should be printed everywhere about a Board-room.... [the directors] should be unanimous. They should make themselves unanimous" (331)—Alf in comparison appears already in full control of his many underlings at the paper. The narrator says of Alf and his paper's review of Lady Carbury's book,

> One of Mr. Alf's sharp-minded subordinates... had pulled it to pieces.... He must have been a man of vast and varied erudition, and his name was Jones. The world knew him not, but his erudition was always there at the command of Mr. Alf—

> and his cruelty. The greatness of Mr. Alf consisted in this, that he always had a Mr. Jones or two ready to do his work for him. (86-87)

In effect, the system of the anonymous periodical with endless Joneses at the command of the great editor Alf enforces unanimity, of the editor's agenda at least, among the many contributors actually compiling the publication. As when Alf said to Lady Carbury "we endeavor to get people... we can trust," the novel presents an editor who actually enforces judgment and leaves nothing to trust; the collective voice is *his* voice. The choice of "Jones" as the name for the generic contributor echoes Trollope's *Autobiography*—and Thackeray's "On the Press and the Public," as well—and acknowledges in *The Way We Live Now* the industry's long history of debate over anonymity versus signature policy. The *Saturday Review* critic certainly recognized the reference as alluding to the debate when it said of the descriptions of Alf's Joneses:

> We can only see in Mr. Alf's staff an argument rather in favour of an anonymous press. It being a feature of the day that people write worthless books, wholly indifferent to their quality, solely to get money, it is well that there should be Mr. Joneses to analyse their worth and tell the truth about them; if it *is* the truth, that is all the public has to do with the matter. (89)

In many ways, the novel promotes both sides of the argument, by presenting authors like Lady Carbury as meritless and dishonest and depicting editors like Alf as heartless and equally profiteering. Most interesting, though, the novel calls into question the distinction Trollope half-heartedly made a decade earlier about exceptions for anonymity in different kinds of literature because Alf's publication prints both political *and* critical material. Therefore, as Alf's own self-serving policies show, editors looking to justify anonymity and collective voice for certain kinds of writing promoted more clear-cut resolutions to the signature debate than the reality of the market afforded, and that kind of gray space often fell in their favor. As a result, *The Way We Live Now* develops a portrait of the publishing world, like that of *An Editor's Tales*, with all its

varied and conflicting factors and proponents for policy change, with the full complexity it deserves.

In considering the array of corrupted figures the novel presents, it is difficult to choose just one that stands above the rest in its level of dishonesty. Melmotte, who is so willing to gain from others' losses and presents such little sympathy even to his daughter Marie, is perhaps the easiest choice. Yet, the novel makes clear that other powerful figures give cause for lingering concern, and more even than the rich, editors appear capable of great power because they can sway the multitudes. Trollope may critique authors like Lady Carbury who court their editors like eligible bachelors to be won, but their power very often is negligible or nonexistent. That is why they clamber so much for editors' praises. What is more, the consequences of their actions usually do not prove detrimental to great numbers of people. Even Melmotte's influence is limited, and he is made to face the consequences of his swindling, if only to commit suicide. But the novel prods the reader to look to other figures of power who linger in its pages, among them, people who work under the radar and whose influence has become so accepted, so naturalized, that it is no longer noticed: editors. Alf himself says of his trade toward the end of the novel: "Dishonesty is not the general fault of the critics, Lady Carbury.... It is incapacity" (732). Perhaps Trollope himself would make this argument as, at various times in his life, he claimed to be ill-qualified for the job of editing.[63] The point, however, is that when periodicals appear on the market in anonymous formats, the public cannot know whether the people editing and writing criticism are capable or not. Without signatures, no one is held accountable, and without accountability, dishonesty may grow as an attraction for any number of distinctly human editors.

[63] Trollope says in *Autobiography* of the failure of *St. Paul's Magazine*: "I do not think that the failure—for it did fail—arose from bad editing. I was too anxious to be good, and did not enough think of what might be lucrative" (240).

In the denouement, Alf tells Lady Carbury that he has had to relinquish his role with the "Evening Pulpit" in order to take Melmotte's place in Parliament, though he feels it is an unnecessary sacrifice. He explains to her, "'I have given it up, and I suppose I have now satisfied the scruples of those gentlemen who seemed to think that I was committing a crime against the Constitution in attempting to get into Parliament while I was managing a newspaper. I never heard such nonsense.... It seems to me that no man can be better qualified to sit in Parliament than an editor of a newspaper" (732-33). To him, "no man can be better qualified" than an editor because an editor already speaks for the people—for those in its audiences as well as those contributors also working behind the scenes. To him, it is only natural that an editor would move from representing his periodical to representing his constituency. The novel prods the reader to look to the figures of power who linger in its pages, among them, the people who work under the radar and whose influence has become so accepted, so naturalized, that it is no longer noticed. When Alf vacillates about the decision to quit the "Pulpit," ("I almost regret it"), the words sound like a warning, especially because to Lady Carbury Alf "must still have influence" even without his periodical, only now "his heavy sense of responsibility would no longer exist" (732). The question is, did it ever?

CHAPTER IV

"LITERARY TRICKS" IN GISSING'S *NEW GRUB STREET* AND THE *RYECROFT PAPERS*

Trollope's catalogue of villains in *The Way We Live Now* includes politicians, businessmen, and editors, but he does not go so far as to implicate the average writer or literary hack in his indictment of Victorian social systems. George Gissing, on the other hand, is willing to take this step as he evaluates the rank commercialism and frivolity at the turn of the century. The anti-hero of Gissing's 1891 novel *New Grub Street*, Jasper Milvain, is described by a critic of the time as "a man whose style is flashy, attainments mediocre, and principle conspicuous by its absence" (C.H. 170). He is said to be "meanly selfish and treacherous" (C.H. 176) and to have "succeed[ed] by combined meanness and audacity" (C.H. 173), by "dogged, unsensitive, unscrupulous pushing," (C.H. 178) and by "snaky wrigglings" (179). Far from a symbol of "brotherly love and charity" (C.H. 179) to Gissing's readership, Jasper nonetheless embodies one of the central messages of the novel, that "success comes with selling out, with artistic vulgarity," (Halperin 343). As his novels, letters, and diaries attest, Gissing was dismayed that "the most commercially successful writers of the day... were businessmen rather than artists" (210). Yet, what if Jasper symbolizes more than just selling out? What if he symbolizes the opposite possibility as well: the fantasy that succumbing to commercialism does not destroy a writer's chance at becoming an artist? Gissing was deeply invested in portraying the literary world as it really existed, as an artistic subject but also as a means to understanding his own livelihood. Was it possible for an artist to exist in the current literary world *and* to succeed in it? If the entrepreneur Jasper had written the artistic, noncommercial volumes of *New Grub Street*, the answer to that question could be yes.

Gissing, whom critics often note did not write to please audiences, was forced at times to seek commercial outlets to sustain his funds and his ability to write what he wanted. Biographer John Halperin says of the period when Gissing was producing lackluster short stories in quick succession, "it was more lucrative and less exhausting than writing novels; and it enabled him to take his time with the novels he did write—one reason why he produced some of his best longer fiction during this period of his life" (190). Given the desperate state of Gissing's finances throughout most of his career and his desire to pursue ironic messages (288) and "unheroic" subjects (145) in his writing, Jasper is more accurately a symbol of conflicted optimism, rather than pessimism, in *New Grub Street*. He embodies the commercial writer who, though cynical and self-conscious of his tactics, goes on to use his success to become an artist. At the very close of the novel, a part where many readers and critics have condemned Jasper as basking smugly in his own success,[64] he sums up his character as follows: "I like to be generous, in word and deed. Trust me, there's many a man who would like to be generous, but is made despicably mean by necessity..... I have much of the weakness that might become viciousness, but I am now far from the possibility of being vicious" (424-25). So how does Jasper become an artist and show generosity in word and deed?

Jasper achieves the status of artist by narrating Gissing's novel through a disguised point of view, creating *New Grub Street* as if it were his own crowning production, his own first artistic novel. Thus, Gissing's *New Grub Street*, in presenting Jasper's open-eyed account of what the New Grub Street has become, explores the price one has to pay for being good, generous, and artistic, and it is not the ideal self-sacrifice made by other characters. Rather it is

[64] Critics such as Simon James and Adrian Poole have deemed the book's ending a discontinuity, in that Jasper's happy ending with Amy counters the text's critique of commercialism (Severn 156). Stephen Severn responds to this perplexity by questioning the premise that the novel is antagonistic to Jasper and his desire to be commercially successful.

through "snaky wrigglings" that one becomes generous and earns the "privilege of being independent" (424) and becoming an artist. Jasper Milvain achieves this vision of the literary world for Gissing not by acting as the antihero but by acting as the narrator *disguised* as an antihero, struggling to forget or at least accept the despicable steps one has to take on the path to success.

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In 1906, writing for *The Speaker*, Stephen Reynolds concocts a term illuminating an experimentation of form that he identifies as popular in various nineteenth-century texts and, consequently, that helps to explain the disguising of the narrator that Gissing pursues in *New Grub Street*. Reynolds calls the term "autobiografiction" (28), and with a playful tone describes the need to coin this word to represent "a minor literary form... which is of late growth and of a nature at once very indefinite and very definite." According to him, the form is so amorphous that he must look to a scientific analogy to explain it:

> At one particular temperature, combined with one particular pressure, the solid, liquid, and gaseous states of sulphur are in equilibrium. Alter by ever so little the temperature or the pressure, and immediately the sulphur liquefies, vaporises, or solidifies. But so long as the very definite temperature and pressure are unchanged, the sulphur remains in that indefinite state of neither solid, nor liquid, nor gas, but something between the three. So with autobiografiction. It is so indefinite and shades off so gradually into better marked, well-known forms, that its existence as a distinct literary *genre* appears disputable. At the same time it is the outcome of definite tendencies and has a very definite position on the literary chart. Where the three converging lines—autobiography, fiction, and the essay—meet, at that point lies autobiografiction. (28)

Reynolds gives four examples of the indistinct genre, including the most successful book of Gissing's career, *An Author at Grass: Extracts from the Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*, better

known as the *Ryecroft Papers* and first published serially in *The Fortnightly Review* in 1902 as a "found" collection of diaries from a late, failed author and under the pretense of being edited by Gissing. Although Reynolds does not mention *New Grub Street* in this article, further examination of the concept of autobiograficiton will suggest *New Grub Street* as a candidate. Looking past how the critic's definition of the genre seems to equate Gissing's late work with an amorphous mass that smells like rotten eggs, the quirky essay accurately registers both the shifting between forms at play in the examples he gives and also the relevance of that shifting to their content and thematic significance. The reason, Reynolds argues, that writers craft texts of such an odd nature is that authors seek to portray genuine spiritual experiences—meaning their "inner life" or "introspective nature"—through fictitious autobiographies because "spiritual experience is an awkward thing to deal with in bulk." Reynolds's claim that writers must develop hybrid forms to accommodate this material stems from novels being too long and plot-driven, autobiographies being too long and chronology-driven, and essays being too disconnected and "scarcely [admitting] of an attitude frankly egotistical enough." The limitations Reynolds points out in each genre illustrate, as much as an explanation of autobiografiction, the kind of prescribed genre expectations audiences held and for which they were willing to pay in the late-century market.

Not casting the kindest of portraits on Gissing's work—which now appears to be an *egotistical* amorphous mass that smells of rotten eggs—the article nevertheless bestows the odd genre and Gissing's book with one compliment, and it is an important one: Reynolds concedes the form is "more direct and intimate probably than any to be found outside poetry" (29). At several other moments the article's tone becomes serious, such as when it cites Charles Lamb's "Dream Children" as a "beautiful short example," but the article's own strange mixture of humor

and pathos limit a completely ingenuous reading. Reynolds does not take the concept seriously enough to pursue further study of other autobiografictional texts, although he names at least seven other specific titles worth close examination. Whether rigorous or humorous, Reynolds's article emphasizes the complex overlapping layers of forms in his selected texts as well as their purpose as "missals of a new ceremonial arisen on the other side of doubt and trouble." The drama Gissing writes into the *Ryecroft Papers* and *New Grub Street* is about the process of their having been written at all, their being published, marketed, and sold, as much as it is about the characters and sentiments in the texts. The layered forms distract from and disguise the voice and trace of the authors (Gissing and Jasper), hiding them because they are successful and persevering. They express the frustrated artistic mess that results from turning literary tricks to make one's way as a modern man of letters.

Whether or not Reynolds takes his own hypothesis about autobiografiction seriously, critic Max Saunders sees in the article a worthwhile theory on the development of modern literature and provides an open framework for analyzing texts acknowledged to be written by a name other than the author's, such as I am claiming of *New Grub Street*. He pursues Reynolds's premise by examining the works he notes require further study, among others, and argues "that the pressures of secularization and psychological theory unsettled categories of biography and autobiography... stir[ring] up a proliferation of fictional experiments with the forms of life-writing" (16). He interprets autobiografiction and what he sees as the genre's prime texts as questioning the intelligibility of the self and the ability to represent the self in either autobiography or biography. Saunders questions the concept of the autobiographic contract (18) and explores what he calls "fictionally authored texts" or "any first-person narrative in which the narrator is identified by a name other than the author's.... because it is a text purportedly written

by a fictional character or ... a text in which the authorship is fictionalized" (134). This chapter's reading of Jasper as the narrator of *New Grub Street* is an experiment to categorize Gissing's definition of the novel as one of Saunders's fictionally authored texts, adding another example to the period's experimentation with forms of life-writing. My work is distinct from Saunders's in that I am unconcerned with *New Grub Street*'s potential status as autobiography but pursue it as a novel featuring a *disguised* point of view. Evidence exists that it is fictionally authored, although the text nowhere admits this, and thus *New Grub Street* becomes a novel about a fictional character writing an autobiographical work as if it were fiction. It is a key specimen of the period's response to writing about the self and life-writing, and it is key in the early development of what Saunders and Reynolds term autobiografiction.

* * *

Knowing one's market is the key to success for the literary man of 1882, Jasper tells his mother and sisters as well as many other characters throughout *New Grub Street*: "Your successful man of letters is your skilful tradesman. He thinks first and foremost of the markets; when one kind of goods begins to go off slackly, he is ready with something new and appetizing" (8). The novel presents a multitude of these markets, in which various characters struggle to make their way: at the prodding of their brother, Dora and Maud Milvain write children's histories for a girls' magazine; Edwin Reardon and Harold Biffen wrestle with lofty ideals for the three-decker novel; Alfred Yule and his daughter Marion patch together critical studies at the British Museum for journal after journal; and Whelpdale seizes his niche jotting two-inch items of chit-chat, "bits of stories... bits of scandal... bits of statistics, bits of foolery" (380), for a paper

made specifically for the "quarter-educated." Gissing stretches the concept of form to the extreme with this last incarnation of the popular press—even Jasper says people cannot call such writing "articles" (381)—yet he accurately depicts an awareness of the specializing and diverging commercial markets of the late-Victorian period.[65]

Of all the many writers in *New Grub Street*, the self-defining and straightforward Jasper proves most compelling because he claims to understand the principles of the publishing world better than all the others, but he never appears to follow his own advice in diversifying his repertoire. The story focuses on Jasper's career as a periodical writer; he concocts articles, portraits, and reviews while climbing the periodical ladder. But he never ventures into the realm of scholarly critical studies, like the Yules, and though he finds Whelpdale's idea for chit-chat "a stroke of genius" (379) he does not seek a spot for himself in his friend's new literary endeavor. As for writing novels like Reardon and Biffen, Milvain claims routinely that he is incapable of writing in that form. He explains: "My line won't be novels; I have failed in that direction, I'm not cut out for the work" (8) and "If I only had the skill, I would produce novels out-trashing the trashiest.... For my own part, I shan't be able to address the bulkiest multitude; my talent doesn't lend itself to that form" (12). Nevertheless, he reiterates just as often the value of writing novels, "it's a pity, of course; there's a great deal of money in it" (8), and he encourages other characters to maintain their interest or begin ventures in novel-writing. He attempts to aid Reardon, for example, in shifting to a more lucrative one-volume format when he would quit writing altogether: "'let it be something rather sensational. Couldn't we invent a good title.... How would this do: 'The Weird Sisters'? [reminiscent of Gissing's own later novel *The Odd Women*]

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[65] For more information, see Altick (348-364) and Stephen Severn's "Quasi-Professional Culture, Conservative Ideology, and the Narrative Structure of George Gissing's *New Grub Street*" (2010).

Devilish good, eh? Suggests all sorts of things, both to the vulgar and the educated. Nothing brutally clap-trap about it, you know'" (64). Likewise, he suggests a trial at romance novels for his brief fiancée Marian: "'With very moderate success in fiction you might make three times as much as you ever will by magazine pot-boilers.... Try your hand at a novel, dear.... Put me in it, and make me an insensible masculine. The experiment is worth a try, I'm certain'" (346). So why does Jasper, the self-proclaimed "literary man of 1882," appear not to take heed and write a novel, producing "new and appetising goods" for so lucrative a market?

My argument is that he does and that *New Grub Street* is that novel, written as a third-person omniscient tale, which is really Jasper's first-person narrative in disguise. Considered as an example of the kind of novel Jasper Milvain would have written if he had felt able to write a novel, Gissing's book enacts the strange mixture of forms, styles, and markets that deface late-Victorian publishing so unforgivingly for writers unable to adapt and experiment along multiple lines. What better way to prove himself the literary man of the age than by taking his oft-repeated advice, doing the work he claims he cannot, and writing the artistic and yet *successful* novel that Reardon and Biffen fail to create. To clarify, I am not making a claim about whether Gissing deliberately or intentionally wrote the novel from Jasper's point of view in disguise, especially as there is no historical evidence to suggest he did so. But despite the immeasurable influence Gissing's personal life held over his work,[66] autobiographical support is not essential or even useful in constructing such an interpretation. Through close-reading, I show substantial evidence that the novel is focalized through Jasper's observations and relations, which constantly position him as a protagonist (even one capable of artistic thought), justifies his decisions, and

[66] See John Halperin, (1-10).

refuses to apologize for the shortcomings of a person representative of the successful modern man of letters.

One important question to ask is why the text offers evidence that Jasper is the narrator-novelist only to disguise this information with what appears to be predominantly third-person omniscient narration. The element of disguise acts as a means for Jasper, and Gissing, to express a frustrated self-consciousness. For Jasper, he is self-conscious of having artistic things to say as a commercial man in a commercial world; he equally revels in and is embarrassed by the money he will make on his carefully crafted portrait of literary lives. After all, at least two of his friends have died trying to achieve the very same goal. For Gissing, evidence of a disguised narrative perspective in his novel registers the self-consciousness of needing, or at times wanting, to have a commercial thing to say as an artistic man in a commercial world. A willingness to experiment with the boundaries of form (novel, biography, critical essay, eulogy, etc.) and the utility of disguise provide both writers, fictive and real, with outlets for artistic complexity in work that must be accessible to audiences and monetarily rewarding. It is a method of writing that Gissing explores through Jasper but then replicates again with the *Ryecroft Papers*.

Because Gissing was such a conscientious writer, determined to write as an artist instead of simply for a living, it is important to preface this reading of Jasper as narrator with evidence that the character, too, has an artistic eye and could lend his point of view to the creation of the world of *New Grub Street*. Most of the characters in the novel, including himself, speak of Jasper as a unashamed entrepreneur, describing him as “the kind of man to make himself agreeable to a girl for the fun of the thing” (83), someone “who laughingly made his way among men” (185), a person “shameless and cruel beyond words” (400), in short, a man “utterly unworthy” (417) of regard from others. Yet, he nevertheless presents artistic characteristics in

moments throughout the text. For instance, the narrator digresses early in the novel, remarking on Jasper's tendency toward introspection and observation. Twice the reader encounters descriptions depicting Jasper as an artist-observer—moments the narrator rarely provides for other characters, except occasionally for Reardon and Biffen. Walking the countryside near his mother's home, Jasper "occasionally... became observant of wayside details—of the colour of a maple leaf, the shape of a tall thistle, the consistency of a fungus. At the few people who passed he looked keenly, surveying them from head to foot" (13). On another occasion walking at home, Jasper:

> strolled idly hither and thither, now and then standing to observe a worn-out beast, all skin and bone, which had presumably been sent here in the hope that a little more labour might still be exacted from it if it were suffered to repose for a few weeks. There were sores upon its back and legs, it stood in a fixed attitude of despondency, just flicking away troublesome flies with its grizzled tail. (29)

As the text pauses over Jasper's observations in these early pages, the reader experiences not the callous flippancy of a conniving commercial hack but instead the "colour of a maple leaf" and the "grizzled," pathetic "despondency" of an overworked farm animal.

Not only does Jasper take note of such natural subjects of sympathy, but he reflects on the image of a beast that foreshadows the degradation that poverty and desperate labor will eventually effect on his friend Reardon. Later in the novel, reacting fearfully to plans he and his wife have made to separate so that he may go to the seaside and work in quiet for the summer, Reardon wonders: "what was to be the end of this weakness if the summer did not at all advance him? He knew better than Amy could how unlikely it was that he should recover the energies of his mind in so short a time and under such circumstances; only the feeble man's temptation to postpone effort had made him consent to this step" (185). Like the worn-out beast, Reardon must "suffer to repose" in the hopes of "exacting more labour" from himself. Such a parallel

image is not coincidental, and as the text testifies, the reader owes this artistic analogy to Jasper's observation and implicitly his narration. Ironically, Jasper also proves one of the few characters interested in helping Reardon out of his dismal circumstances and state of mind, though Reardon believes Jasper's constant writing advice has led to his wife's dissatisfaction and does not want his help. (Well-to-do friend Carter offers Reardon a job as a clerk, but himself a middle-class businessman, he cannot relate to or understand Reardon's desperate abandoning of all his literary hopes.) Jasper finds out that Reardon has separated from Amy and is going mad in his solitude and writes a letter on Reardon's behalf, urging Amy's rather unsympathetic family to help him:

> 'it is very certain that those of his friends who have the power should exert themselves to raise him out of this fearful slough of despond.... he is past helping himself. Sane literary work cannot be expected from him. It seems a monstrous thing that so good a fellow, and one with such excellent brains, too, should perish by the way when influential people would have no difficulty in restoring him to health and usefulness.' (222)

Despite the façade of the uncaring money-maker, Jasper displays through actions such as writing this letter that he both feels sympathy for Reardon and understands his plight as a drained, desperate writer.

In terms of practical qualifications, Jasper has the ability and the emotional identification with the subjects of *New Grub Street* to make him a capable focalizer for the narrative. What is more, he has the motivation, which is hinted at early in the novel when he is visiting his sickly neighbor John Yule. Yule rails against the modern popular press, expressing a desire to see "the business of literature abolished" (20-21). Entertained by the old man's extreme opinions, Jasper contemplates the energy his companion has mustered over the literary market and declares:

> 'Do you know, Mr. Yule, that you have suggested a capital idea to me? If I were to take up your views, I think it isn't at all unlikely that I might make a good thing of writing against writing. It should be my specialty to rail against literature. The reading public should pay me for telling them that they oughtn't to read. I must

think it over.’ (21-22).

The remark is only Jasper’s joke; yet, while *New Grub Street* does not quite tell its audience not to read, it certainly critiques much of the material on the popular market and it unapologetically casts the darkest of shadows over the world of literature. If that is not writing against writing, what is? One must be careful not to disregard such a statement from Jasper, however sarcastic the tone, because he spends so much of the novel giving other people practical advice and urging them to follow through with his ideas. It is hard to believe he would let such a captivating idea pass out of his mind without giving serious thought to how it might actually be applied for gain. He is, after all, “learning the business” (9) and “collecting ideas” (62), as he tells Reardon.

One reason why many critics have dismissed Jasper as a writer of lesser importance in the novel when compared to Reardon[67] is because *he* is so openly dismissive of himself. He admits, “Never in my life shall I do anything of solid literary value; I shall always despise the people I write for” (62). Without doubt, Jasper characterizes himself as a commercial profiteerer, but his words also reveal dissatisfaction in common with the artistic struggle of Reardon and Biffen. He articulates “solid literary value” so his friends know that no matter how commercial his articles become, he recognizes the difference between them and literary art. He chooses words like “despise” and “rubbish” (150) in an off-hand way, but they register an awareness of low expectations and a desire for more. He has even told his family that he has “failed in [the] direction” (8) of novel-writing. He would have his friends believe he is content biding his time learning the periodical business, but his words indicate that he has had his own artistic novel in the past but apparently “failed” at it and cannot bring himself to try his hand at a “trashy” one. These bits of Jasper’s character easily go unnoticed because Jasper wants them to, in general.

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[67] See Coustillas and Partridge 169-87.

But they are nonetheless recorded as evidence that Jasper's standards and aspirations have been at times in line with the acknowledged artists of the novel, Reardon and Biffen. Repeatedly, Jasper tells his friends and family "I have plenty of scope" (8), "every month I feel surer of myself" (12), and "I have always said [my path will be that of success], and now I'm sure of that" (62). Readers should consider his claims as given at his word—Jasper admits that he does not lie but only avoids telling or facing the truth when it is inconvenient (399)—and carefully interpret how the text reveals what his "success" entails.

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What makes Jasper unique in the light of Reardon and Biffen is his periodical work, which also plays an important role in his ability to perform as narrator of *New Grub Street*. In the late-nineteenth century when Gissing was struggling to build a literary career writing pieces for publications like the *Temple Bar*, the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and *The Illustrated London News* among his independent projects in fiction, the dynamics of the market were undergoing a transformation. Policies still varied widely across the board, but many periodicals were still transitioning from anonymity to signature, taking advantage of the shift to profit off the signatures of big-name authors while continuing to demand low-level hacks work without credit. Much of the content of *New Grub Street* weaves in commentary on this period of transition, in connection to Jasper and other characters. Alfred Yule, for instance, often submits his daughter Marian's work unsigned and receives payment for it. This is not a deception on his part because the father and daughter mutually agree to this arrangement as a kind of "apprenticeship" for her. At one point, Yule finally begins to feel self-conscious about Marian's hard work and success

and tells her of her latest piece, "I couldn't feel justified in sending it in as my own work. I think it is altogether too good to appear anonymously. You must sign it, Marian, and have the credit that is due to you" (328).

The issue of signature changed significantly throughout the century: in Disraeli's time, editors chose to hide signature for the sake of building corporate identities *or* they used signature as a means of political maneuvering or feuding; for Thackeray, a lack of signature meant collaboration and play with pseudonyms; with Trollope, the use of signature meant embodying the voice of a nonfiction narrator and claiming responsibility for one's words. In Gissing's late century, earning a signature was still a rite of passage but it was also predominantly about *marketing* and getting the highest sales for a product. Jasper, ever conscious of the business of literature, knows this. He changes with flexibility to suit the task at hand, sometimes signing and sometimes not signing his work. What it teaches him is how to disguise himself in a text, a practice that proves crucial to his narrative perspective in *New Grub Street*.

Most interestingly, the text underscores the question of signature with Jasper's work throughout the novel. A common topic of conversation, characters routinely ask Jasper about his signed and unsigned pieces. Amy Yule notes in one conversation with him, "'I don't see your name in any of this month's magazines'" (299), and Jasper responds: "'I have nothing signed this month. A short review in *The Current*, that's all.'" Still curious as to his current workload, Amy persists, "'but I suppose you write as much as ever?'" and he asserts, "'Yes; but chiefly in weekly papers just now. You don't see the *Will-o'-the-Wisp*?'" Whether based on keen observation or simple flirtation, Amy answers, "'Oh, yes. And I think I can generally recognize your hand.'" Near the end of the novel, shortly before she and Jasper decide to wed, she repeats this assertion: "'I don't think I miss many of your articles. Sometimes I believe I have detected

you when there was no signature'" (410). If Amy can detect his hand is a matter of interest to Jasper, who seeks a knowledgeable, clever audience that can identify his tone and style behind the mask of anonymity. It is a task at which Alfred Yule fails, and Marian comes close to doing so, as well. When Yule's periodical rival and Jasper's editor, Clement Fadge, writes a scathing review of Yule's latest book, Marian's father believes wrongly that "it was Milvain who had caught so successfully the master's manner" in writing the harsh review (141). The girl retorts that Jasper would be incapable of writing such a review, but when her father reminds her that "'Milvain will do anything that's asked of him, provided he's well enough paid'" (142), she is forced into doubt: "had he not himself said to her that he might be guilty of base things, just to make his way?" (143). Confronting Jasper, Marian shyly begins, "'Shall I be doing wrong, Mr. Milvain, ... if I ask you about the authorship of something in this month's *Current*?'" (152). As the conversation unfolds, Jasper appears amazed that "anyone [would suggest] that another than Fadge was capable of that masterpiece," and so Marian withholds her doubt, stating instead that she did not believe the rumor "for a moment," although it is evident that she did.

Various characters concern themselves with identifying Jasper's hidden voice in published articles, and he likewise concerns himself with signature because he knows that acquiring the privilege to sign will realize his long-sought rewards. In several scenes, he explains why it is so crucial for him to make a name for himself, whatever the means, in order to succeed in publishing: "If I am an unknown man, and publish a wonderful book, it will make its way very slowly or not at all. If I, become a known man, publish that very same book, its praise will echo over both hemispheres" (318). Making a name means gaining the right to sign and *market* himself as an author. That is why he repeats things such as "men won't succeed in literature that they may get into society, but will get into society that they may succeed in

literature" (25), words that cast him as driven by greed instead of art. The sentiments actually echo those of Trollope in *An Autobiography* when he describes failing to publish successfully without the use of his name, and like Trollope, Jasper is savvy enough to realize that if an author cannot get published, it matters little if he or she values the integrity of art. Knowing how to work the system enables Jasper to be the kind of person who could tell the story of *New Grub Street* in place of others who might appear more worthy of the task. Constantly justifying his unfeeling decisions, Jasper alludes to examples of other writers wrestling with the practical problem of writing literature as art: "It's the old story of the French publisher who said to Dumas: 'Make a name, and I'll publish anything you write.' 'But how the *diable*,' cries the author, 'am I to make a name if I can't get published?'" (319). In typical fashion, self-promoter Jasper quickly offers his solution to this old dilemma, strategizing for men who seek fame before they grow old and die: "'The question is: How can I get the eyes of men fixed upon me? The answer: By pretending I am quite independent of their gaze'" (319). He speaks these words to his sisters in relation to his decision to marry Marian, a girl without money or society connections. The choice goes against everything Jasper has always said about courting society, and as it turns out, he does not really mean it because he abandons Marian for brighter prospects, specifically with the widow Amy Reardon. Nevertheless, his "answer" to the problem of gaining notoriety—"by pretending [he is] quite independent of [men's] gazes"—lingers with implications of how Jasper positions himself in the text as a side character who slowly reveals his centrality in connection to the different sub-plots, groups of characters, and the point of view. Jasper "pretends" to be unaware of the gaze of his audience, all the while serving as focalizer and consciously constructing the world of *New Grub Street* as he sees it. For him, as perhaps for Gissing, the demeaning commercialism of the market is despicable but undeniable and

unavoidable, and in dealing with that reality, one outlet for creative experimentation lies in the fluidity of perspective and the possibility of disguise created by a market that accepts *both* anonymity and signature. By focalizing *New Grub Street* but appearing just as a character, Jasper's narrative can exist in between anonymity and signature. In addition, he can create mystery around the point of view and the narrator's opinions and associations. Likewise, he can say things without direct acknowledgment that otherwise would be difficult to say; and like a riddler leaving clues, he can revel in the clever reader's seeing through the charade to identify his voice in the narrator's.

Possibly the clearest example of Jasper's desire to camouflage himself in the writing occurs when Reardon has died and Jasper determines to eulogize his friend in one of his regular publications. As he reads his article "The Novels of Edwin Reardon" to his sisters and friends, the narrator explains, "It was an excellent piece of writing (see *The Wayside*, June 1884), and in places touched with true emotion. Any intelligent reader would divine that the author had been personally acquainted with the man of whom he wrote, though the fact was nowhere stated" (382). This instance of narration is difficult to analyze because it comes from a point of view that seems both intimately connected with Jasper's sentiments and also distanced from them. The lines almost read like free indirect discourse from Jasper's perspective because they defend the article's "true emotion"—a gesture the often-accused Jasper would want to emphasize—and because the clause "any intelligent reader would divine that the author had been personally acquainted with the man" suggests informed knowledge of the composition likely to come from the article's author himself. Yet, free indirect discourse is supposed to mimic a character's thoughts from the position of the third-person narrator, and two features of the excerpt interrupt a reading of the lines as Jasper's thoughts: When the narrator inserts a reference—"(see *The*

Wayside, June 1884)"—into what might have been internal thoughts, the language quickly reverts back to an external state, mimicking more a kind of printed, formal language or citation that one would encounter in a periodical review. The same can be said of the words at the end of the excerpt "... of whom he wrote, though the fact was nowhere stated." That kind of clarification and tone again alludes to critical writing from journals rather than Jasper's mental processes. He is not that formal when he talks to others, often using casual words and structures like "by the by" (28), "you know" (150), " never get on, I'm afraid" (226), "to be sure" (253) or "by Jove, no" (254) with friends. The proper grammar ("of whom he wrote") and modifying clause based on textual evidence ("though the fact was nowhere stated"), however, sound like language of a more formal, even professional kind of writing. That is to say, it does not function as free indirect discourse; these are not Jasper's inner thoughts simulated in the narration.

This distinction does not negate the excerpt's connection to Jasper's point of view, though. Even the fact that Jasper chooses to write about Reardon in *The Wayside* echoes the early depiction of Jasper as the artist-observer who "occasionally became observant of wayside details." And by shifting Jasper's position from character to narrator, the analysis begins to make sense. Jasper the professional writer *narrates* here with the conventional language of reviews and with it emphasizes his informed, sympathetic relation to Reardon and, the good salesman that he is, he plugs his own work with the *Wayside* reference. Tellingly, Jasper reveals himself as narrator in this moment when his character boasts of his periodical tribute to Reardon. The metaficitonal moment makes Jasper self-conscious of his role as Jasper the periodical writer, and the style bleeds into his role as Jasper the novel writer. Additionally, this moment displaying Jasper's article captures an important key to decoding the narrative strategy of *New Grub Street*. As the excerpt says, the *Wayside* article is an unsigned piece but "any intelligent reader would

divine that the author had been personally acquainted with the man of whom he wrote, though the fact was nowhere stated." The inclusion of Jasper's *Wayside* eulogy for Reardon enacts in short form what he does for Reardon and others in large form in *New Grub Street*, and it guides readers on how to interpret the narration of both the article and the novel.

The path to unraveling how Jasper disguises himself as a character but at times reveals himself as the narrator also emerges by comparing the moments when Jasper sounds so heartless to those when he betrays sympathetic motivations. The novel abounds with these contradictions because often Jasper the character and Jasper the narrator are at odds with each other. When self-critical Whelpdale questions whether, despite his new-found success, he could ever compare with the late Reardon, Jasper scoffs at idealizing the memory of his dead friends: "both Reardon and Biffen were hopelessly unpractical. In such an admirable social order as ours they were bound to go to the dogs....." (419). How Jasper can casually state, even with irony, that his lost friends "were bound to go to the dogs" and still claim that "it [was his] duty" to help his friends with kind reviews (376) is bewildering. Jasper himself tries to explain his inconsistencies in writing so many laudatory reviews for Biffen when he "knows" in time Biffen will fail by stating superficial excuses like "half-believing what [he] has written" and "delighting to be generous, whenever [he could] afford it" (377), but his repeated efforts and investment of time speak to more than convenient displays of charity. Such dismissive explanations are attempts to depict his character as an "insensible male" and literary antihero, as he advised Marian to paint him in her own work (346).

The narration repeatedly shows evidence of these diverging interests of Jasper's. About thirty pages before Jasper writes his eulogistic articles for Reardon, and before either of the artist

figures dies, the narration turns a sharp eye on these characters in a direct address to the reader. The tone becomes distinctly personal in these lines:

> The chances are that you have neither understanding nor sympathy for men such as Edwin Reardon and Harold Biffen. They merely provoke you. They seem to you inert, flabby, weakly envious, foolishly obstinate, impiously mutinous, and many other things. You are made angrily contemptuous by their failure to get on; why don't they bestir themselves, push and bustle, welcome kicks so long as halfpence follow, make a place in the world's eye—in short, take a leaf from the book of Mr. Jasper Milvain? (351)

The paragraph teems with forceful assumptions about the reader's opinion of these two writers. It is a confusing passage because the reader knows Reardon and Biffen have been brought to the brink of destitution, and even Jasper has professed it would be a "monstrous thing" if Reardon were to perish because it is avoidable. So the novel makes available many more options for sympathy than this list of "contemptuous" adjectives would lead one to believe. The intense emotion and subjectivity evident in the passage raise the question: why would the narrator create a novel that both portrays these writers sympathetically and rants against their failure to get on, again unless the narrator "had been personally acquainted with the men of whom he wrote"? This bit of narration is another self-conscious moment in which Jasper compares different styles of writing, his versus those of Reardon and Biffen, and the context leads him to betray himself with his angry words. He envies the artistic regard Reardon and Biffen have earned and wants equivalent accolades for his practical approach to writing, the method that enables *New Grub Street* to be written and published. He also betrays himself with a simple hint: When the narrator says that Reardon and Biffen should take a leaf from the book of Mr. Jasper Milvain, it is a sly admittance that they already have, as characters in Jasper's *New Grub Street*.

Despite knowing the important role signature and a famous name play in a literary career, Jasper also understands the advantages of maintaining anonymity. In a conversation with Marian

shortly after their first encounter, Jasper asks her if she has any signed pieces and she bashfully explains that she only "helps" her father. Because Jasper has also accidentally mentioned Reardon as a fellow writer—who happens to be the husband of Marian's estranged cousin—he feels he should apologize for the awkward course of the discussion. How he does so, interestingly, keeps the focus of his apology within the context of literary signature. He says of his blunder in mentioning Reardon: "'I remember doing just the same thing once when I came home from school and had an exciting story to tell, with preservation of anonymities. Of course, I blurted out a name in the first minute or two to my father's great amusement. He told me that I hadn't the diplomatic character. I have been trying to acquire it ever since'" (27). The choice of "anonymities" is unusual here because it appears just after a question about signature in periodicals, and yet it actually refers to withholding the names of players in a real-life story, not to withholding the teller's identity, which is already known. This shift blurs two different understandings of a narrator's responsibility: Jasper the boy "lacks the diplomatic character" and fails in his responsibility to his schoolmates because he reveals their names; Jasper the man, however, writes for a market in which men take responsibility not by withholding their subjects' names but by providing or withholding their own names.

The key difference, when comparing each version of anonymity in the scene, is that a character requiring discretion remains vulnerable to the storyteller whereas the storyteller remains at his or her own discretion and thus maintains power. Consider Jasper's anecdote and where it casts him in such a dynamic: he "had an exciting story to tell" and then "blurted out a name" when "preservation of anonymities" were to be maintained. He is a narrator here, but is he not also possibly a character? The evidence suggests that Jasper has inside details of his story, perhaps because he himself was involved. The awkward phrasing of "with preservation of

anonymities"—again more formal than Jasper's typical style—indicates his self-conscious distancing from the others in the story and demonstrates how he can separate himself as a narrator of a story in which he plays a part.

This ability to project more than one point of view or voice, such as one of a character and one of a narrator, can also be seen in Jasper's periodical range. Not only is he constantly accumulating projects and journals and genres to add to his repertoire, but he has mastered writing with many different and at times competing voices. For instance, when he directs his sisters to commence a literary career by way of children's literature, without any difficulty with the task he explains, "I myself shall write the specimen chapter, and send it to the girls to show them what I propose" (63). As well, when he decides to help Biffen's *Mr. Bailey, Grocer* by reviewing the naturalist novel enthusiastically, he does so anonymously for multiple journals, adjusting his voice accordingly for the different versions. Reading to his sister Dora a review for *The West End* that is "frankly eulogistic," Jasper then happily produces and shares another incarnation, this time of "more cautious writing" for *The Current* (376). Encouraged by this outlet for his periodical prowess and the chance to help his friend as much as possible in the harsh critical field, Jasper boasts to Dora: "'You wouldn't expect they were written by the same man, eh?'" and she replies, "'No. You have changed the style very skillfully.'" Jasper's ability to "change the style" is what renders him commercial when compared to Biffen, who crafts all his writing around the naturalist trends and his "ignobly decent" (119) subjects. Reardon, as well, has an artistic quality to his work that, while undoubtedly diminished due to the strain of poverty, always demonstrates his "aesthetic sensibility" (171). One of the few occasions when the reader gets to see this sensibility in print is when Reardon describes his memory of a sunset in Greece to Biffen: "Of a sudden, the sun's rays broke out ... gleaming on the nearer slopes of

Aigaleos, making the clefts black and the rounded parts of the mountain wonderfully brilliant with golden color ... [shooting] glory in every direction; broadening beams smote upwards over the dark clouds, and made them a lurid yellow" (305). As aesthetically sensitive as Reardon's description sounds to Biffen and the reader, the classical setting and lofty diction do not fit well in the contexts and more realistic style of *New Grub Street*. Rather it is Jasper, the periodical man, whose shifting and contemporary styles best suit the novel and who turns his skill at disguising voices into the art that captures so many different tales of the poverty that demeans and the commercialism that buffs and shines literary "rubbish of a very special kind."

Considering that many of the stories unfolding in the novel are only minimally connected to each other, beyond their frame of the literary world, the anchor that pulls them all together is Jasper. The novel opens with a scene between him and his family; through his connection the reader meets Alfred and Marian Yule; and the mutual friend or at least acquaintance of every other writer in the novel is Jasper. Despicable as his treatment of Marian is, and pale as his published efforts shine next to the heroic struggle for literary ideals by Biffen and Reardon, Jasper is the character around which the novel rotates. The reason he serves so well to ground the novel is that he fully understands the stakes and games of the market, which is the heart of *New Grub Street*:

> The struggle for existence among books is nowadays as severe as among men. If a writer has friends connected to the press, it is the plain duty of those friends to do their utmost to help him. What matter if they exaggerate, or even lie? The simple, sober truth has no chance whatever of being listened to and it's only by volume of shouting that the ear of the public is held. (376)

One cannot assume that Jasper's sentiments here are Gissing's, and yet it still speaks to the changing climate of the literary world to hear even a character so boldly defend his right to "help" friends on the market. Compare those sentiments with the philosophy of another equally

commercial writer only a few decades earlier: Trollope reiterates in his *An Autobiography* what he condemned in his fiction with characters such as Mrs. Brumby and Lady Carbury. He argues, “but that critics should be honest we have a right to demand.... when [the critic] tells us what he does not think, actuated either by friendship or by animosity, then there should be no pardon for him” (219). Would Gissing have agreed with Trollope? Possibly he would have, for he often felt overlooked and misunderstood by a press that always favored the same people (Halperin 178). But Jasper would not, and it is his perspective that tells the reader so much about modern Grub Street. Likely, he would respond to Trollope with the words of his friends, on whose quotes he relies to build the many layers of realism into his narrative. He would recall Biffen’s words to Reardon (as he imagines them) on the way to rejoin Amy: “What right have we to make ourselves and others miserable for the sake of an obstinate idealism? It is our duty to make the best of circumstances” (364).

The crushing blow of the novel is that Reardon and Biffen cannot make the best of circumstances; only a man like Jasper can do so. Reardon and Biffen are cast as missing or wasting their opportunities while Jasper is the only one who earns the right to tell *New Grub Street*, becoming a kind of unlikely hero who even earns an epithet: he is “Jasper of the facile pen” (375). If anyone comes close to making Jasper apologize for his methods and success it is his brief fiancée Marian, but even she fails to shake his confidence in playing the literary game. When she asks why he so easily resigns himself to decisions based on financial stimulation, Jasper asks, “‘You had rather I lamented my fate in not being able to devote myself to nobly unremunerative work?’” She responds that his failure to ever make decisions from an artistic perspective alone makes her wonder, and here Jasper interrupts her: “‘That I neither care for good work nor am capable of it?’” (270). This accusation may cross the mind of many a reader

regarding Jasper and his role in *New Grub Street*, and it is not an easy one to dispel. In fact, Marian and Jasper welcome a distraction when someone else enters the room because they do not really wish to pursue each other's responses. But Jasper never apologizes for his path in the publishing world. While he often does not produce writing above the status of rubbish, he is unwilling to say that he does not care for or is not capable of more.

Because Jasper is not concerned with avoiding the commercialism of writing, he can focus on playing with the conventions that feel so limiting to other writers. He has to write reviews, so he will write reviews incognito and revel in donning voices and teasing those of his more educated readers with some "special cleverness" (12) and dropped hints as to who is writing. He has to write sketches with "the tone ... up to date" and the "articles... short" (62), so he "shall rise to the occasion" with literary portraits of "typical readers of each of the principal daily and weekly papers ... [making] a sensation ... [making] it a perfect piece of satire." Just as Jasper transforms his typical fare of critical reviews into an anonymous eulogy for his friend Reardon, promoting a renewed interest in his novels, he transforms many of the forms and styles he learns in periodicals—bits of criticism, sketches, romance, eulogies, gossip, writing instructions, etc.—into the novel he never thought he could write. Considering how Jasper is ever eager to present his broad expertise in the field, it is not surprising that many parts of *New Grub Street* read like a writer's manual: "'just take two lines of some good prose-writer, and expand them into twenty, in half a dozen different ways. Excellent mental gymnastics!'" (151), "'a man who has to live by miscellaneous writing couldn't get on without a vast variety of acquaintances. One's own brain would soon run dry; a clever fellow knows how to use the brains of other people'" (136), "How the gossip column can be used for hostile purposes, yet without the least overt offense.... Sometimes the mere omission of a man's name from a list of

authors can mortify and injure. In our day, the manipulation of such paragraphs has become a fine art, but you recall numerous illustrations" (81), "'Get together half a dozen fair specimens of the Sunday-school prize; study them; discover the essential points of such composition; hit upon new attractions; then go to work methodically, so many pages a day'" (12). Even the casual use of the second-person perspective in the narration, "you," sounds like the assertive address of a self-help guide or at least of a writer who knows his readership well. Two other characters, Whelpdale and Biffen, also serve as teachers of sorts to aspiring writers and scholars. Whelpdale advertises "advice given on choice of subject, MSS. read, corrected and recommended to publishers. Moderate terms," and Biffen tutors low-class workers preparing for examinations in things like "the art of compersition" (173).

Unlike the other writers, Reardon does not offer himself as a guide. Nevertheless, Jasper maintains the novel's agenda to instruct by turning Reardon into another case study for the would-be writer, even for himself, when he describes how Reardon slowly took on novel-writing (years prior to the beginning of the plot). In this section, the reader encounters another example of direct address appropriate to the manual style: "then he bought his books... between twopence and two shillings.... A strange time, I assure you.... he desired to procure a reader's ticket for the British Museum. Now this was not such a simple matter as you may suppose; it was necessary to obtain the signature of some respectable householder" (49). The narrator not only addresses the reader as someone with suppositions about reading tickets—the narrator believes the audience, or maybe the ideal audience, has an amateur interest in the writing world, if not a specialized one—but it also reveals that Reardon has to *become* the artist-novelist; he is not *born* one. Reardon writes to a successful novelist seeking a sponsor for his reading ticket and informs his potential benefactor that he specializes in critical essays on literary subjects. When the

successful writer warns Reardon that "that kind of thing is supplied either by men of established reputation, or by anonymous writers who have regular engagement on papers and magazines.... that such work is indifferently paid and in very small demand," he redirects the young man's attention to fiction, a much more profitable form. Reardon's response to this is striking because although he has appeared throughout the novel as the devoted artist of the three-decker tradition, he claims: "'I am afraid I have no talent for that'" (50). Just like Jasper tells his family and friends, so too, only years earlier, does Reardon scoff at his ability to write novels. With time, however, "he continued to practise himself in that art, and by degrees came to fancy that, after all, perhaps he *had* some talent for fiction. It was significant, however, that no native impulse had directed him to novel-writing." It is another potential hint that Jasper includes about his own path as a writer and the pattern of development he has followed from Reardon.

The difference between Reardon's and Jasper's metamorphoses into novelist and novelist-narrator is that Reardon starts out a scholar and Jasper a business man. The novel is explicit on which type of man proves most successful in literature, but what it emphasizes even more than the business of writing are characters' efforts to mold the work at which they really excel from one form into another more profitable one. Even when over-worked Marian fantasizes about a "literary machine" to take over the drudgery of writing, "some automaton to supply the place of such poor creatures as herself" (89), she envisions the work it will do as taking old writing and transforming it from an old form into a new inventive one: "only to throw in a given number of old books, and have them reduced, blended, modernized into a single one for to-day's consumption." Because none of the writers in *New Grub Street* claim to be natural writers, they all seek to reshape their strengths into new desirable forms, and Jasper excels most

at this because of his experience in periodicals, which thrive on packaging an array of different forms for their competing markets.

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Although there is no explicit connection between Gissing's *New Grub Street* and the most successful of his books in his lifetime, *An Author at Grass: Extracts from the Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*, the former is nonetheless a forerunner and early experiment leading to the latter. Gissing plays with repackaging forms and disguising perspectives through Jasper's narration in *New Grub Street*, later adapting those techniques for the *Ryecroft Papers*. Gissing felt, like Reardon, that he was more of a scholar than a writer (Halperin 325). He therefore did not embrace the whole-hearted experimentation that Jasper welcomes, but he was nevertheless driven at times to look for ways to incorporate what for him were more comfortable forms into his longer fiction. Halperin portrays Gissing as writing novels out of desperation, but throughout the course of his career, he vented frustration over his chosen format. The biographer quotes Gissing on this subject in a letter he wrote to friend Eduoard Bertz in 1893, in which he says "I wish I could do something more than write 3-vol. novels," (181), and at various points in his career he tried to do just that and "indeed [proved] himself... adaptable in the new literary market-place" (211). In 1895, Gissing made his biggest foray into short-story writing, producing "approximately three dozen" stories for periodicals, though neither he nor the critics were pleased with his work in this line (223). Again writing to Bertz, though much later, in 1898, he says of his critical book *Charles Dickens*: "I shall be glad in general if people recognize the fact that I am not confined to novel-writing" (269). Unlike his short stories, Gissing's critical work

met with very solid reviews, and he was urged by publishers to attempt similar projects on Thackeray, Fielding, and Scott, though he did not in the end complete these.

In the mid-1890s, when Gissing was beginning to win acclaim for his books but had yet to earn much money for them, he began to speculate about how much notoriety he could eventually earn with the critics and the public, wondering if he "could ever be the subject of a serious study in one of the leading periodicals—as Meredith and Hardy and Marion Crawford—and all the rest of them—have been again and again? It is doubtful: probably not before my death...." (178). The subsequent promotion writers enjoyed from critical essays about themselves as well as eulogistic work about writers in periodicals fascinated Gissing, as he was for a long time concerned that his work would always go unnoticed (though this did not prove the case). Not only did Gissing enjoy writing that kind of scholarly minded work, but he could also appraise it from a business perspective and appreciate the real marketing effect that such public discussions of one's work had on a writer's career. That is why, in 1898, when in need of still more money than his famous name was starting to bring in, he proposed a plan to friend and fellow writer H. G. Wells: "Could it be given out that I am *dead*? Then, with comfort and half a dozen intimates, I might work steadily for a year or two, preparing posthumous books" (273). Part of his desire to appear dead was the fact that he was hiding from his estranged wife and trying to regain his health away from the chaos of the London publishing world; but Gissing understood that his "posthumous" texts could very well bring in more monetary rewards simply for their being "posthumous."

All of these little experiments with the various forms for which the market would pay (pursuing periodical short fiction, writing critical biographies, considering writing under the pretense that he was dead) led Gissing to a somewhat odd conclusion. If he wanted to write

eulogistic, autobiographical, posthumous texts, he could combine all of these forms through fiction and actually find a venue for the kind of text that interested him. He seems to have taken an example from Jasper's creative deceptions when writing on Reardon with a project that came late in his career and filled this creative void: the *Ryecroft Papers*. Halperin notes that "sometimes Gissing took a cue from characters he created and imitated them himself" (6) and he "used his fiction as a sort of testing-laboratory for actuality" (202); therefore, in *Ryecroft* Gissing follows the same approach as Jasper in *New Grub Street*, by supposedly eulogizing a dead friend to create renewed interest in his literary work, all the while disguising his role in the composition of the piece. Jasper writes anonymously, both the article "The Novels of Edwin Reardon" and (arguably) *New Grub Street*, and Gissing writes anonymously as "editor" and under the cloak of retired author Henry Ryecroft. Gissing published what he claimed were diary extracts of a late writer and friend, along with a eulogizing preface, in four issues of *The Fortnightly Review* in 1902. Reversing Jasper's scenario, in which he obscures his friendship with Reardon under the guise of an objective critical essay and a seemingly omniscient narration of *New Grub Street*, Gissing admits to his friendship with Ryecroft and the desire to publish his extracts in memoriam, but the set-up is merely a guise to publish and laud his own conglomeration of material, some fictional and some autobiographical.

Many writers and editors in the field knew all along that Gissing's "findings" were a ruse, but he also leaves clues enough in the preface for those who did not. For instance, he begins, "A year ago obituary paragraphs in the literary papers gave such account of [Ryecroft] as was thought needful: the date and place of his birth, the names of certain books he had written, an allusion to his work in the periodicals, the manner of his death" (891). These lines refer to the false premise of the piece: Gissing does not say that *one or two* journals remembered Ryecroft—

in which case it could be understandable if a well-read audience member had overlooked the mention—but he says "the literary papers," implying *all* of them, memorialized Ryecroft with numerous factual details of his life. Any number of professionals would have known no such tribute took place for this "well-published" man of whom they had never heard. Those same lines, with their recourse to "the literary papers" and the listing of so much referential information, offered Gissing's somewhat less knowledgeable readers the semblance of reality, especially as they were coming from an accredited author and within the pages of *The Fortnightly Review*.

Proof of audiences' belief in Gissing's friend Ryecroft can be found in letters to Gissing: for instance, "a clergyman... wrote to inquire if by chance the late Mr. Ryecroft's housekeeper needed employment" (Halperin 398). In addition, a short article published in *The Academy and Literature* a year after *The Ryecroft Papers* were serialized offers an elaborate first-hand account of one reader's belief in the supposed author. In "A Fabrication of Mr. Gissing's," reader John Bland writes,

> I am one of those who... straightway fell in love with the writer.... Then, after Henry Ryecroft, the man, had entered most completely into our thoughts, we learn that he never existed at all; that the whole—man, preface, books, diaries—is a fabrication of Mr. Gissing's; that we have been the victims of a literary trick. (543)

He continues to say that as Gissing's readers trust him, the novelist should not have mocked them "upon matters of life, death, and sorrow." Underneath the reader's frustrated comments, a footnote from the editorial staff appears, distancing the publication's interpretation of Gissing's experiment from the reader's: "We cannot share our correspondent's indignation. It is the privilege of the writer to choose whatever format he likes to express his thoughts.... They are his own thoughts, whether he writes them under his own name or puts his personal criticism of life

into the mouth of a fictitious character." What confounds the reader, and what makes Gissing's work so interesting, is that he manages to both provide a signature and write anonymously in the *Ryecroft Papers*, just as Jasper exists both as an anonymous and a latent narrator in *New Grub Street.*

The privilege to choose whatever form he liked was of particular importance to Gissing when writing the *Ryecroft Papers* because he wanted it to be such a hybrid mixture, describing it himself to a friend as "a strange miscellany" (306) and "a great rest to my mind after so much fiction of the ordinary sort." Although many contemporary critics quickly acknowledged the "veil of biography" (C.H. 420) under which Gissing presented so many personal sentiments, the distinct balance or "curious blend... of truth and fiction," as friend Morley Roberts put it (Halperin 339), remained significant to the author. The book is not just edited biography, not just autobiography; not just nonfiction essays, not just fictional diary entries. It is a careful combination of all these things, and as a reviewer of the *Pilot* noted in 1903, "it imposes a certain form within the limits of which discursiveness may have free play" (C.H. 422). The critic elaborates on the unique complexity of voice in the *Ryecroft Papers*:

> Whatever of actual experience may add persuasiveness to the narrative or opinions of the supposed writer can be incorporated, and where autobiography no longer serves any useful end the author may at pleasure resume his disguise and speak through the mask he has chosen. And indeed to the novelist part born and part made it is the most natural way of addressing the public. For the artist's own personality is a thing of uncertain boundaries. (C.H. 422)

The critic's acknowledgement of "the novelist part born and part made" is perceptive of the internal struggle Gissing underwent and represented in much of his work. Although similarly underscoring the author's investment in fabricating Ryecroft's papers, another critic from *The Athenæum* infuriated Gissing by denying all pretence of Ryecroft's existence and claiming that Gissing wrote completely of himself as pure nonfiction: "If we are right in identifying Ryecroft's

opinions with [Mr. Gissing's]" (C.H. 417). Many reviews pointed to elements of autobiographical material, but this particular one Gissing felt to be a "treacherous and malicious attack." It equivocates Ryecroft's self-deprecating appraisal of his literary career—"never a page of my writing deserved to live. I can say that now without bitterness" (894)—with Gissing's and others' summation of his own: "No, it is quite clear that the man who treasures rare volumes of the classics, who remembers with a thrill, after twenty years, the purchase of Heyne's *Tibullus*, and who spends his leisure in versifying the *Odyssey*, was by nature intended for something else than a novelist. A man of letters, yes, but not a novelist" (C. H. 416-417). Gissing felt these comments to be "seizing the opportunity of running down his books in praising one, ... to make him say that he ought not to have written them" (C.H. 416). Yet, the last thing he wanted with the *Ryecroft Papers* was to admit himself a failure as a novelist; the character who had struggled as a writer and all too willingly withdrew from the market was an essential frame of fiction in the book, which nonetheless presents much personal experience and spiritual confession (Halperin 315). Even this offensive review from *The Athenæum*, however, qualifies the book as a "miscellany of rambling reflections and arguments," recognizing the heterogeneous mixtures of forms in it. The critic also notes that, in his role as "editor," "Mr. Gissing has supplied us with an index of the subjects treated in the course of these rambling remarks, from which we gather that he wishes them to be taken seriously" (C.H. 418). Each distinct element, such as the index, the preface, the organization of entries, as well as the highly literary content of the "diary," contributes to the book, rendering it something wholly different from Gissing's other work or the typical fare. The combination made the *Ryecroft Papers* "a gift... which one is quietly aware that one will read... when twenty Marches have stormed over roof and field" (C.H. 422), and to Gissing it was "more to [him] than anything else [he had] written" (Halperin 333).

The preface of the *Ryecroft Papers* speaks directly to Gissing's desire to play with form in his new book, and it also directs the reader's attention to the importance of point of view in his work. Speaking as the editor and well-known author, George Gissing, he writes in the preface of finding Ryecroft's papers and deliberating over why they had never been published before and how to handle their current presentation: "this writing was not intended for the public, and yet... I seemed to perceive the literary purpose.... he seems never to have attempted the arrangement of these fragmentary pieces, probably because he could not decide on the form they should take. I imagine him shrinking from the thought of a first-person volume; he would feel it too pretentious" (893). The comment about writing from a first-person perspective acknowledges how self-conscious Gissing felt about how his literature was both marketed and received by the public. As already stated, he was aware of the advantages that marketable tags such as "memoirs"[68] or "posthumous" could lend to the work of well-known writers, among whom he could now count himself. And it is not difficult to believe that the idea of writing his autobiography tempted Gissing's ego, especially as he continued to feel, even in his later and more secure career, that "[his] fame [brought him] no money, [his] books [had] only the smallest sale" (Halperin 336) and that critics persisted in accusing him of distorting reality to make it far more grim than it really was (C.H. 175-177, 183-185). Yet, because he was so self-conscious of himself as an artist in the field, he felt the same concerns over being "pretentious" with which he credits Ryecroft.[69] By skewing the perspective through the ruse of the *Ryecroft Papers*, Gissing

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[68] Max Saunders discusses the "glut of memoirs" that existed in the publishing industry in the late nineteenth century as well as the "reaction against life-writing" many writers, including Gissing's friend J. M. Barrie, subsequently portrayed in the press. See Saunders 15.

[69] Writing on an excerpt from the *Ryecroft Papers*, Saunders explains "such an expression of self-satisfaction—however mitigated by the acknowledgment of faults—is exactly the kind of thing it would be hard for a writer of the period to voice in his or her own person." Writers'

not only is able to broach lucrative and cathartic autobiographical material but to do so in a way that casts the gaze of the public away from the figure of the author. To survive as a writer needy of money and yet artistic and sensitive to the public's scrutiny, Gissing's manipulation of point of view to deflect the audience's gaze from one voice to another is crucial. It harks back to Jasper's move to skew the point of view in *New Grub Street*, gaining men's attention by pretending to ignore their gaze. It also marks a sense of creative of experimentation in the work of a writer known far more for his realism, albeit grim, than for his innovations of style. Irving Howe delineates Gissing as one of the last Victorian realists instead of one of the first modernists because "[his] writing lacks ... foreshortening of plot to allow for dramatic concentration, placing biased and implicated observers close to the center of the action in order to make for complexity of perspective, jumbling narrative sequence to involve the reader in a struggle for the meaning of events—these do not figure in Gissing's books" (xvi). Yet, if one interprets Jasper as the narrator of *New Grub Street*, then he is a biased and implicated observer placed close to much of the action. If one seriously questions the significance of the complex form and perspective explicit in the *Ryecroft Papers*—if not in Gissing's other works—then his writing does take on many of the techniques adopted by modernists, though perhaps with a more subtle hand. Gissing found himself frustrated with critics and the public because "[his] motives [were] too subtle" (Halperin 287). He said in a letter to his brother that he objected to the Victorian omniscient narrator, preferring "the method of merely suggesting... hinting, surmising, telling in detail what *can* be told and no more... it approximates... the dramatic mode" (58). While Howe points to this same passage from Gissing's letters to show that the writer was aware of changing influences in

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opting for the role of editor in a ruse about fictional diaries, however, is according to Saunders, "another kind of self-satisfaction," though a more engaging and accessible one. See Saunders 130.

literature, he claims “in his own work... Gissing seldom approached this ‘more artistic’ method” (xvi). Yet, in both *New Grub Street* and the *Ryecroft Papers*, Gissing shows himself fully capable and willing to experiment with the artistic method. By complicating and deflecting the voice of the narrator (and even the author), Gissing builds into these books a subtle but tangible psychological analysis not just of a character but of the figure of the author. These texts explore how one comes to separate oneself (or not) from the characters presented, how one comes to polish and sell oneself (or not) as marketable and engaged with the readership, how one elicits acclaim (or not) for artistic fireworks in a money-driven market of rubbish. That is the struggle and the dramatic mode at the heart of these two Gissing texts. They craft elaborate performances of literature, of the author writing, struggling to be natural in a self-conscious world, oscillating between caring and not caring about the artistic integrity of the “copy” he creates.

A prime example of this undercurrent of the author’s process comes to the fore in the *Ryecroft Papers* as Ryecroft questions his own expectations as a writer throughout his career. He reflects:

> And why should any man who writes, even if he writes things immortal, nurse anger at the world’s neglect? Who asked him to publish? ... If my shoemaker turn me out an excellent pair of boots, and I, in some mood... throw them back... the man has just cause of complaint. But your poem, your novel, who bargained with you for it? If it is honest journeywork, yet lacks purchasers, at most you may call yourself a hapless tradesman. If it comes from on high, with what decency do you fret and fume because it is not paid for in heavy cash? ... But you don’t care for posthumous glory. You want to enjoy fame in a comfortable arm chair. ... Have the courage of your desire. Admit yourself a merchant....” (895).

Even here, Gissing through Ryecroft doubly displaces a discussion about a writer’s expectations first onto a generic “any man” who writes and then onto the reader, “you,” echoing the self-help address employed in *New Grub Street*. Moreover, when Ryecroft finally adopts a first-person voice and inserts himself into the scenario, it is as a consumer, of boots no less, “and I... throw

them back." The figure of the author constantly redirects what are first-person reactions when the content focuses on the role of the writer. Gissing and Ryecroft want to discuss literature as a career but only from a distance, behind multiple masks of perspective. In this same pattern, the *Ryecroft Papers* as a published piece of fiction deflects attention from Gissing's own diary, which he kept from 1887 until 1902, and at the same time redirects audiences back to it. Editor Pierre Coustillas explains that "it is no less certain that [Gissing]... conceived his diary to be a document for the scholars of generations yet unborn.... an object which would testify in his favor" (13). Comparing this diary to the supposed diary of Henry Ryecroft, portions of it read as sensitive and descriptive as the pages of the *Ryecroft Papers*, but much of it is filled with a heavy, repetitive chronicle of the number of pages written or abandoned. It also logs money won or lost, storms anticipated or passed, arguments fought or put off. A painfully direct perspective withheld from the pages of the *Ryecroft Papers*, the monotonous recording served as both a memento for Gissing of his trials as well as that object of posterity, which Coustillas describes as showing "better than any writer's diary I know of, what it is like to be a novelist—'trade of the damned' [Gissing] himself said" (1).

When read in the light of the *Ryecroft Papers*, the same kind of deflected perspective emerges from Jasper's narration in *New Grub Street* when he lingers over his heartless treatment of Marian, who is a casualty of his behavior. Although these sections do not focus specifically on Jasper's own writing, they are complicated by his having to represent himself and his actions in the narration. Unable to write himself into the novel without editing his behavior, or wishing to edit it, Jasper creates scenes with Marian that carefully register his presence in the narration and his conflict with himself as he writes. Donning the role of observer and reliable recorder of the demeaning struggles of *New Grub Street*, Jasper pursues Marian's character in the novel as a

figure representing both literary fatigue and emotional distress. He captures in several instances the psychological torment and forced hardening she undergoes such as when, after telling her mother there is not much to be expected in this world, she is described in solitude as "physical weariness brought [Marian] a few hours of oblivion.... [but then she] lay neither sleeping nor awake in blank extremity of woe... at times her body was shaken with a throe such as might result from anguish of the torture chamber" (349). Yet, Jasper's narration becomes most self-conscious and awkward about Marian when he strangely narrates a scene at the Reading-room of the British Museum in which Marian is observing him, while his character pretends not to see her. The scene creates a complicated scenario in that Marian seems to focalize the episode, not Jasper. Yet, I argue that certain oddities in Marian's focalization, along with precedents in the novel of Jasper's watching Marian at the museum (instead of the reverse), recast the scene from her point of view—which would mean that the novel has *variable internal focalizers* (Genette 191)—back to Jasper's point of view embellished with an imagined version of Marian's experience—meaning that the novel has one *fixed internal focalizer*, Jasper. Twice before this strange episode, Jasper admits to having seen Marian at the museum. On their first meeting, he tells Marian: "I have seen you several times, Miss Yule... though without knowing your name. It was under the great dome" (17). When Jasper and Marian explain to a friend that the "great dome" refers to the Reading-room, Jasper adds that "people who often work there necessarily get to know each other by sight. In the same way I knew Miss Yule's father when I happened to pass him in the road yesterday" (18). Not only has Jasper observed Marian at the Reading-room, but visitors to the museum who routinely work there "necessarily" recognize each other. This comment foreshadows the scene to come in which Jasper will narrate about watching Marian once again in the Reading-room, this time while she watches him and fears he does not recognize

her, and it likewise foreshadows the scene's continuation into the street outside. Later, just one chapter before the strange encounter, Jasper gives Amy and Reardon a detailed description of Marian's current looks: "Wears her hair short.... Oh, I don't mean the smooth, boyish hair with a parting.... Curly all over. Looks uncommonly well, I assure you" (59), and then he explains that he knows this from observing her at the British Museum, "Oh, I knew her by sight quite well—had seen her at the Reading-room. She's the kind of girl that gets into one's head, you know" (59). Twice Jasper has established Marian as a person he has recognized and watched specifically while at the Reading-room.

When the episode in question begins, the opening line of the chapter places Marian once more into this established position of a person who can be observed at the Reading-room: "Three weeks after her return from the country—which took place a week later than that of Jasper Milvain—Marian Yule was working one afternoon at her usual place in the Museum Reading-room" (67). Not only does the narrator interject a comment establishing Marian's movements in relation to Jasper's, but he specifically points out that Marian was "at her usual place" in the Reading-room. Rather than emphasizing Marian's favorite desk, which itself is not described, "her usual place" alludes back to Milvain's comments about "people who often work" at the Reading-room and the regularity with which he can find Marian at "her usual place" and observe her. Once the action of the scene begins, the text appears to focalize Marian's point of view at the museum, but several odd characteristics of that focalization qualify Marian as one who is *still being observed* rather than just observing others, and they call into question who is narrating the scene. When taking a break from her unending labor, Marian sees two young men talking and "engaged, as their faces showed, in facetious colloquy" (68); the narrator then adds that "as soon as she observed them, Marian's eyes fell, but the next moment she looked again in that direction.

Her face had wholly changed; she wore a look of timid expectancy." Although the narrative focalizes Marian's point of view ("she observed them") and her awkwardness as she watches the faces of the two young men ("engaged, as their faces showed"), the narrator also describes Marian's face in a similarly visual way ("her face had wholly changed; she wore a look of timid expectancy"). Through the parallel depictions of the facial changes of Marian and the young men, the narrator positions Marian as another person who *is being observed*, just like the men. If Marian were focalizing the episode, she would not likely note her own face changing. The text provides external descriptions that render Marian one of the observed in this scene, however much the narrative here attempts to focalize her point of view during the experience in the Reading-room.

When the men move toward her talking and laughing, "one of them was well known to her." Once they have passed by, Marian identifies one of the men and questions herself about him: "Was it possible that Mr. Milvain had not recognized her? She followed him with her eyes, and saw him take a seat not far off; he mustn't have passed without being aware of her." It is important to distinguish that the narrator does not identify Jasper, to whom he previously refers only as one of "two young men." Only Marian identifies "Mr. Milvain" after he passes her by. This difference between the narrator's and Marian's reporting will be repeated again later in the scene. Despite the internal doubts from Marian's point of view ("he mustn't have passed without being aware of her"), the text continues to cast her as the object of someone else's observation: "When she made a show of resuming work, it was evident that she could no longer apply herself as before" (68). The combination of "made a show" and "it was evident" refer to external, observed deductions about Marian's behavior, not internal sentiments. Additionally, the narrator continues to observe Marian as she collects her books and then turns around twice to answer

voices ("a voice spoke close behind her" (68) and "again a voice made demand upon her attention" (69)), which perhaps she hopes will be coming from Milvain, though they are only the voices of her father's awkward and unattractive literary friends, Mr. Quarmby and Mr. Hinks. These paragraphs focus on external descriptions of Yule's friends; there are no instances of Marian's internal thoughts and nervous emotions being focalized during these conversations. Rather, it is as if the narrator spends so much time presenting these paragraphs in which Marian must politely suffer through mundane conversations with her father's friends because he enjoys watching her encounter such poor substitutes for the person to whom she really wishes to talk, Jasper.

At the end of these conversations, Marian comes close to encountering a third man, whose anonymity in the narration links him to the first two men, who are introduced as just "voices" calling on Marian's attention: "And [Mr. Hinks] backed into a man who was coming inobservantly this way" (70). Although this "inobservant man" does not use his voice to speak to Marian, as might be expected from the pattern of the past two conversations, his mere mention in the narration serves no other purpose than to suggest that perhaps finally Jasper is coming to converse with Marian. Then, as soon as the narrator mentions the man, raising the possibility that this person is Jasper, the suggestion is seemingly discarded because the man is not identified and does not interact with Hinks or Marian. Immediately thereafter, Marian heads to the cloak room, and the narrator says that an unknown "someone passed out... of the cloakroom before [her]," (70) but the narrator makes no effort to distinguish if this "someone" is the same "inobservant man" who walked into Hinks; there is no clarification that "*this same man*" then passed out of the cloak room before Marian. The level of anonymity is magnified by the narrator's refusal to clarify the "inobservant man" in relation to this "someone." The oddity in

this episode grows as Marian appears to begin focalizing again, "and as soon as she had issued beneath the portico, she saw that is was Jasper Milvain; she must have followed him through the hall, but her eyes had been cast down" (70). Although she has not been a very attentive observer ("her eyes had been cast down"), Marian *can* identify Jasper Milvain when she sees him, and yet the narrator persists in speaking of him as an anonymous person even after she recognizes him: "the young man was now alone." The paragraph's strange shifting in which Jasper's character is obscured and then identified and then obscured again marks Marian's focalization with suspicion, as if the narrator is at odds with Marian's focalization and her desire to recognize Jasper and have him recognize her. The narrator wishes the man to remain anonymous because not only is it awkward for Jasper to narrate so directly about his own physical character being observed by another person, but he also wishes the distance that anonymity creates between Marian and the man to somehow lessen the offense of his pretending not to see her—he has already admitted that such a failure to recognize Marian would not be possible, unless it were a cruel gesture on his part to ignore her. The harshness of his treatment of Marian is a truth he does not wish to admit, and thus he describes himself in this episode in the anonymous form, only rarely identified out of guilt by the imagined focalization of Marian.

The rest of the scene emphasizes the odd dynamic in which bashful Marian resumes the role of observer and even becomes a bold pursuer following Jasper, though she cannot be certain that Jasper is unaware of being trailed. Marian takes on an independent, almost masculine role like that of a stalker as she begins to follow Jasper out onto the street: "as he descended the steps he looked to left and right, but not behind him." The narrator's mention of these particular movements, which stop Jasper from turning around to find Marian, indicate that Jasper *is* possibly aware of her presence. The narrator, by including "but not behind him," casts that look

back at Marian that Jasper the character refrains from obtaining. Tension rises as Marian continues her pursuit: "[She] followed at a distance of two or three yards. Nearing the gateway, she quickened her pace a little, so as to pass out into the street almost at the same moment as Milvain. But he did not turn his head." The narration becomes painful as it reiterates both Jasper the character's refusal to see Marian as well as Jasper the narrator's record of seeing her, in all of her sensitive, pathetic vulnerability on the street. The contradiction is realized in the narration's fluctuation between mentioning "Milvain" and then repeatedly opting for the anonymous pronoun. The chase continues: "He took to the right. Marian had fallen back again, but she still followed at a little distance. His walk was slow, and she might easily have passed him in quite a natural way; in that case he could not help seeing her." This moment when Marian wishes to pass Jasper and force his attention to her recalls Jasper's own mention of passing Mr. Yule in the street and recognizing him. The hesitation on Jasper's part again indicates an awareness of Marian's presence, but the question is whether Jasper the character walks slowly to coax Marian into pursuing him, forcing her to do the difficult work of early courting, or whether Jasper the narrator simply slows his character down as a sign of regret for his treatment of her, wishing to give her the opportunity to communicate that he had denied in reality.

When the episode ends, Marian's doubt overcomes her and she ceases to follow Jasper: "But there was an uneasy suspicion in her mind that he really must have noticed her in the Reading-room.... She allowed the interval between them to become greater. In a minute or two Milvain turned up Charlotte Street, and so she lost sight of him." It is a pitiful anticlimax to the bizarre scene of unacknowledged recognition, and most interestingly, just as soon as Marian quits her pursuit and focalization, she exchanges positions and becomes pursued once again by

the narrator, "In Tottenham Court Road she waited for an omnibus that would take her to the remoter part of Camden Town; obtaining a corner seat she drew as far back as possible, and," just like Jasper before, "paid no attention to her fellow-passengers." As the narrator Jasper follows Marian home, he provides an explication and scene of her family's domestic unhappiness that stems, the narration claims, from differences of education and class between husband and wife and mother and daughter. It is both Jasper's excuse for later rejecting Marian, so that he will not "reproach the poor woman with her ignorance, her stupidity, her low origin" (78) as Yule does his own wife, and his attempt to sympathize with Marian at the sight of her family's unhappiness. The negative portrait Jasper paints of himself with Marian and others, and the complex perspective he uses to construct that portrait, show Jasper as struggling mostly with himself in *New Grub Street*. Truly employing the dramatic mode in pretending to be only a character, Jasper the narrator must fight with the character version of himself in building his story. The dynamic exemplifies writers working for *and* against themselves in the market. Only on becoming conscious of one's strengths and weaknesses can a writer find the right angles from which to take advantage of both tendencies, and that is what Jasper does.

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Reading Jasper as the narrator of *New Grub Street* helps to explain what critics such as Simon James and Adrian Poole have called the "discontinuity" of the novel's ending. The final scene ends with a look at the calm domestic "rewards" of Jasper and Amy: "So Amy first played, and then sang, and Jasper lay back in dreamy bliss" (425). How does that kind of peace resolve the pain and loss of almost all the other characters of the novel? Stephen Severn examines this

question and attempts to explain the discontinuity unsettling critics by applying to Gissing's novel a historical analysis based on the "culture of professionalism" emerging in the 1880s in Britain. Severn says that not only the unexpected happy ending but the "disconnection [existing] between the implicit moments of 'showing' and the explicit moments of 'telling'" (162) in the novel's narration require an interpretation that looks beyond the general idea that Gissing sympathized with the artists and outcasts of his novel. Severn concludes that with his ending, "Gissing attempts to construct a social space where the literary man can stand alone, protected from the social group that he mistrusted and feared - the lower class - and distanced from the others that he loathed - the middle classes" (185). As "distasteful" as it may be for readers and scholars, Severn says, "when the explicit and implicit rhetorical elements of [the] narrative are considered in relation to the specific socio-economic landscape... and the diction that it employs... it becomes clear that the text casts its lot - at least in part - with Jasper and Amy" (185). To build off of Severn's concept that Gissing's novel does cast its lot with Jasper and Amy, I argue that it best accomplishes this goal and best promotes the social space of the literary man standing alone by enabling Jasper to write *New Grub Street*. The final scene becomes an even more logical conclusion to the text when it reads as the moment of inspiration and creation for the novel that precedes it. Amy, who is Jasper's "nightingale" or muse, plays for her husband, the one character in the novel who has earned the independence to lay back in "dreamy bliss" and "talk about [his] blessedness." That privilege to write the artistic novel and to "pity the poor devils" who perished before him belongs to Jasper alone, and it is the necessary end to the novel because it marks the beginning of its composition.

CONCLUSION

"We think that as a rule editors should be impalpable" (81), recounts the narrator in Trollope's "The Turkish Bath" of an embarrassing episode in which he is put on the spot by a stranger, and would-be contributor, in the awkward environs of a public bathing house. This desire to salvage his prestige and "impalpability" is the reason why the narrator, one of the many editors telling stories in Trollope's series *An Editor's Tales*, posits that his particular story must be told in the first person plural: "We doubt whether the story could be told at all in any other form" (75). The "We" distances the narrator from the awkward details of the tale, which he appears to share merely as a means of proving his respected reputation by the ridiculous manner in which it is accosted. In order to do so, however, the narrator must reflect on sitting half-naked in the public bath-room, holding a second towel because he cannot arrange a turban to stay on his head, and listening to a stranger who is also half-naked talk about impervious English editors who accept work only from "old stock-writers, who are sure of the market let them send what they will,—padding mongers, who work eight hours a day, and hardly know what they write about" (81).

The very physicality of the scene—which is highlighted by the sensory sights, smells, and feel of sitting in the bath house—wounds the "impalpable" narrator so that he cannot unfeelingly turn away from the desperate writer (Mr. Molloy) and his request for an "interview" (82). In effect, the narrator grants the interview and in it, "the editor [breaks] down, and the man [speaks] to the man. 'I need not tell you, Mr. Molloy, that the heart of one man of letters always warms to another'" (87). This show of common feeling, of humanity from the editor, is a mistake, and the narrator confirms that it is by providing his account in which the fellow "man of

letters" to whom he reaches out, in the end, is revealed to be a "madman" from Saint Patrick's Hospital (93). The narrator's desire to correct this error of sympathy is evidenced in the adamant "We," despite claims that he has "often called on" Mr. Molloy and "even helped to supply him with the paper which he continues to use,—we presume for the benefit of other editors" (94). The narrator would have his audience believe that his role as editor especially prepares him to be sympathetic to others, even madmen, because editors are well "acquainted with the tattered glove [of struggling contributors] and have known the sadness which it produces" (75) and because their duties to "cater for the public" require that they "observe the public in all its moods" (78). But more important than this supposedly sympathetic, all-observing eye, however, is the illusion that the editor be not human, or as the narrator of Trollope's "Josephine de Montmorenci" (who is of like mind with the other narrators of *An Editor's Tales*) explains, "it is almost essential that they who are ambitious of serving under [an editor] should believe... that he is to be approached only with difficulty,—and that a call from him is a visit from a god" (118).

Comments about "impalpability" and "god"-like qualities from Trollope's narrators echo William Hazlitt's thoughts on editors more than thirty years earlier in a piece for the *Monthly Magazine* of November 1830: "An Editor, then, should be an abstraction—a being in the clouds—a mind without a body—reason without passion.—But where find such a one?" (244). According to both Trollope and Hazlitt, it is actually an *imperfect* impalpability that marks editors, but *the myth* of the ideal editor in the clouds, of the "great WE," itself proves real and has a tangible effect on the world. Among those effects was a desire among the public for information and stories alike to originate from unknown, almost other-worldly sources, and for which a person could not solely be responsible. Likewise, with belief in a god-like "We" editor, periodicals created in the public mind (of other writers and other readers) something against

which to fight and struggle, to distinguish oneself as equally capable of understanding the principles and production of meaning. The fluctuations between plural and singular voices on the periodical market *and* in certain definitions of the novel register the experience in Victorian culture of shifting back and forth between these opposing yet mutually enabling interpretations of knowledge.

The perpetuation of texts in the nineteenth century that exist in hazy, indeterminate categories of perspective—between collective "We"s and independent "I"s and distinct third-person voices—mark fictional narrators with the same kind of imperfectly impalpable attributes with which Trollope characterizes the periodical editor. Such narrators are similar to minds without bodies in that they are like minds with changing bodies, and their refusal or inability to stabilize their positions as story-tellers—either in the clouds or on the ground—suggests that reading audiences refused or were unable to decide which interpretation of knowledge they wished to encounter in the texts they read.

While it is possible to distinguish different kinds of writing and try to align each type with a complementary form of narrative voice—concluding that newspaper readers primarily wanted authoritative information from politically driven corporate engines, and that periodical readers wanted bold, well-supported critiques from acknowledged sources, and that novel readers wanted the latest creative innovations of style and form in fiction, having little to do the with the "real-world" methods of periodicals—such ideal separations of audiences do not hold up. Not only did readers cross lines to read content from many formats on the market, but as important, the writers and editors molding that content also crossed lines to read many formats, and their literary heterogeneity shows in the continuing range of narrative modes apparent across the nineteenth-century publishing market.

Therefore, the "We" in this study does not mean any *one* thing. For Disraeli in the 1820s, it meant the overbearing pressure to lead a corporate initiative that detracted from his strengths in improvisation and bold personality. The "We" was an opportunity missed that eventually served as a backdrop against which Disraeli's more empowering "I" could stand in relief in *Vivian Grey*. For Thackeray, the "We" was a mask to slip on and off as suited each moment and his desires to portray in *Pendennis* a world not less manufactured than that of romances but, like periodicals, more revealing of multiple, divergent perspectives. He created a "franker" version of reality not by showing "real rascals"—"To describe a real rascal, you must make him so horrible that he would be too hideous to show; and unless the painter paints him fairly, I hold he has no right to show him at all" (viii)—but instead by developing a temperamental narrative structure that expressed the fun *and* frustrations of a writer who needed both his audience *and* the "truth" it did not wish to hear. In Trollope's changing market of the 1860s and '70s, the "We" had become a suspect signifier that spoke the beliefs of a few powerful editors on behalf of masses of readers accustomed to accepting what they were told without knowing from whom it came. The "We" was a convoluted construction that Trollope, in *An Editor's Tales*, had to render an awkward physical body, embarrassed by its meaningless plurality, in order to demonstrate the ridiculousness—and danger, in *The Way We Live Now*—of making narrative voices appear greater than they are. And although Gissing's late-century *New Grub Street* only reveals a shadow of the disappearing "We," Jasper Milvain's disguised point of view articulates the continuing struggle for individual authors to speak openly with "I" perspectives in quick-to-label markets without recourse to some narrative trick with which to cloak their vacillating self-constructions.

By looking at narrators in periodicals and novels together, as so many readers in the nineteenth century did, I offer a view of Victorian culture that interprets the world by both collective and singular voices and that is dependent on the ability to fluctuate between the two. I show how the dialogues about argumentation and self-representation in periodicals expanded from their formal bounds in nonfiction reviews, essays, and news stories to influence articulations of selfhood and knowledge in fiction. This method of reading such distinct literary formats together illustrates many of the specific means by which periodicals influenced Victorian literature and culture, as evidenced in their unique mark on the work of Disraeli, Thackeray, Trollope, and Gissing. It also helps readdress the haunting questions that linger when a narrator speaks as both an "I" and a "We."

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