

COMPLEX NETWORKS:

AUTHOR-EDITOR RELATIONS AND CULTURAL CHANGE IN THE GOLDEN
AGE OF VICTORIAN PERIODICALS—ELIZABETH GASKELL AND CHARLES
DICKENS; ANTHONY TROLLOPE AND WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY;
GEORGE ELIOT AND JOHN BLACKWOOD

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For Joe, of course

ABSTRACT

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This thesis examines three pairs of author-editor relationships, whose authors published one of their major works through a form of serialization in the Victorian periodical press. The three pairs, their works, and their respective periodicals are Elizabeth Gaskell, author of *North and South*, and Charles Dickens, editor of *Household Words*; Anthony Trollope, author of *Framley Parsonage*, and William Makepeace Thackeray, editor of *The Cornhill Magazine*; and, George Eliot, author of *Middlemarch*, and John Blackwood, editor of *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*. For each of these relationships, I analyze one-to-one correspondence and other primary sources, concluding that in tandem these pairs of authors and editors contribute to the ever-changing cultural growth occurring in the nineteenth century. Elizabeth Gaskell and Charles Dickens notoriously had a tempestuous relationship, but, in spite of their difficulties in serializing *North and South*, their shared legacy should be as the twin social commentators of their time. By contrast, Anthony Trollope and W. M. Thackeray maintained a businesslike relationship, with Trollope offering *Framley Parsonage* as the quintessential English novel to the fledgling *Cornhill Magazine*. In parallel fashion, Thackeray and Trollope worked to promote the new gentlemanly ideal to their middle-class public. Finally, George Eliot maintained a long and robust correspondence with her editor, John Blackwood, relying on him for encouragement to keep writing. With his consistent and abundant affirmation of her true-to-life writing style that is most fully represented in

Middlemarch, Eliot and Blackwood contributed to the establishment of literary realism that was developing towards the end of the nineteenth century. Each of these authors, editors, novels, and periodicals has a story to tell, and, in combination, they helped to create a publishing culture that reflected the dynamic social and literary transformations arising in nineteenth-century Britain.

KEY WORDS: Victorian periodicals, Authors, Editors, Gaskell, Dickens, Trollope, Thackeray, John Blackwood, George Eliot, Relationships

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~ Nadia J. Arensdorf

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CHAPTER I

The Golden Age of Victorian Periodicals: An Introduction

Walter E. Houghton, the Victorian literary scholar known for his editorship of the *Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals*, describes the nineteenth century as “the golden age of the magazine and the review” (554). This body of quarterlies, monthlies, and weeklies served both the “educated” and the “masses” and was concerned with the “serious discussion of ideas” (554). Because the age was advancing so quickly in the fields of science, history, and theology, Houghton explains, people were confused by so many new facts and wanted answers (555). Richard D. Altick, in his seminal work, *The English Common Reader*, which details the growth of the English reading public, explains that as British society entered the 1815 post-Battle of Waterloo era, a new, radical journalism “trenchantly commented on domestic events and prescribed remedies for the desperate state in which the workers found themselves” (324). The Victorian age was also an “age of doubt”: all this new information brought questions—questions about the universe, the nation, the Church—and the content in periodicals, and reviews brought answers. Houghton writes,

[T]he importance of the Victorian periodicals . . . can scarcely be exaggerated. In scores of journals and thousands of articles [the historian] has a remarkable record of contemporary thought in every field, and a full range of opinion, from right to left, on every major question—a range far exceeding what he could find . . . in what books were devoted to the topic being investigated. (557)

Houghton further clarifies that readers did not want “deeper . . . analysis” but “guidance” (557, 556). It was important for Victorians to have an opinion on all this new knowledge,

and not to do so was shameful because it implied that the Victorian was indifferent to the crucial issues of the time (555). Furthermore, Laurel Brake and Marysa Demoor explain that as the century advanced, fiction became more accessible to the public, particularly in periodicals, and the customs and manners depicted in this fiction also educated the middle class (1087; see Phegley 24). These scholars highlight a complicated, dynamic, diverse, searching atmosphere of learning—learning going on among the growing democracy of people as well as with the middle-class readers who wanted the “vener of culture” that the periodicals could provide with their variety of selections of reviews, politics, and fiction (Houghton 555). In this mix of learning, authors and editors flourished and drove the periodical movement forward, working together to create the vibrant literary field that emerged out of the periodical boom and impacted the dynamic changes occurring in the nineteenth century.

But the reading public that voraciously took in the writings of the mid-nineteenth century did not exist earlier in the century. Altick¹ explains that both the “utilitarian” and “evangelical” movements² were “jointly responsible for the early nineteenth century’s veneration of the printing press,” and this veneration translated into a desire on the part of some literary leaders, like Leigh Hunt, to view the book as a “sacred object” that could cultivate the “bookish habit” (*English Common Reader* 129, 139). Newspapers, in particular, reflected the excitement of the times, with its reports of political crises like the demand for parliamentary reform and rumors of war, especially early in the century, and this interest was the “stuff of life of the average Englishman” (328, 322). Although this average Englishman could not purchase these newspapers outright because of the high stamp tax imposed on newsprint,³ individuals could hear the news read aloud in local

coffeehouses where proprietors maintained copies of daily papers (322). Reading rooms also invited middle-class subscribers to access both London and provincial papers from around England for a yearly fee (322-23). Later, inexpensive family periodicals, like the *Penny Magazine*, which began publication in 1832, emerged to accommodate those in the “class that still largely lacked” a literary culture (139; cf. Brake and Demoor 1086, 1455). In addition, although formal education among children contained deficiencies, its strength lay in children’s learning how to read (Altick, *English Common Reader* 172, 166). Altick explains that the “political and social turmoil” of the period between Waterloo and the first Reform Bill of 1832 “greatly enlarged the audience for periodicals” (329-30). As a result, reading spread, and the social habits of Victorians developed into a more literary culture (5). Altick explains, “[A]s cheap printed matter became more accessible, hardly a family in Britain was without its little shelf of books and its sheaf of current periodicals,” and the Victorian middle-class “reading circle was the most familiar and beloved of domestic institutions” (5). Further, the “growth in the number of readers made periodical publishing an increasingly attractive commercial speculation,” and this, in turn, caused the “reading habit” to spread (318). E. E. Kellett adds that an “educational metamorphosis” took place “gradually but rapidly,” and the “immense, but cautious, reforming energy of the time” believed that the “omnipotence of the printed word” would be “the sure means of progress” (3-4). This revolutionary behavior of *reading* became unprecedented and began a “transformation . . . in publishers’ outlook and publishers’ practices” (Altick, *English Common Reader* 293). With a new respect for the press, the availability of reading material, changes in education, and new publishing conventions

becoming ingrained, the incipient reading public took the first step towards cultural literacy, setting the stage for the periodical boom that was to come.

This vibrant periodical publishing culture in which the masses began to read and in which periodicals dominated has roots in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and an examination of these origins is instructive in understanding how the novel developed later in the nineteenth century. In his foundational work, *English Literary Periodicals*, Walter Graham discusses the many-faceted and simultaneous growth of the periodical, whose history involves a variety of admittedly “ill-defined” forms, although each form tended to have its own characteristics and evolution in differing degrees over time (145, cf. 17; Law 3-4). Daily and weekly publications, like newspapers and short essays; magazines, or miscellanies, which tended to be issued monthly (Brake and Demoor 1164); and reviews, published both monthly and quarterly, all made their mark before the Victorian era (Graham 17). Graham explains that Richard Steele and Joseph Addison’s daily *Tatler* and *Spectator* were the best single-essay periodicals before 1750 and Samuel Johnson’s twice-weekly *Rambler* was the most dominant after 1750 (119). Issues of the *Tatler* and *Spectator* were approximately two pages long, with two or three columns of text, maintained a “lightly moralizing note,” and often communicated through a stock character, such as “Isaac Bickerstaff” or, later, “Mr. Spectator” (78). Distinctly different from Steele and Addison’s essay sheet but “especially original,” the *Rambler* developed into four to six pages, with one column per page emphasizing the strength of the single essay, became more heavily didactic with a “gaily bantering tone” and “little or no moralizing,” and generally did not include a literary persona (119-20). Further, the *Rambler* highlighted the “sheer dominating strength” of Johnson’s mind on a variety of

subjects and was characterized by the “elevation of its language” (121). By the end of the eighteenth century, this single-essay form disappeared as it became absorbed into magazines and newspapers that contained a variety of features, but the form’s original content indicates the early and significant literary culture of periodicals previous to the nineteenth century (143).

Magazines, which also developed throughout the eighteenth century, were considered a storehouse of selected literature geared towards instruction and entertainment, and were generally issued monthly (191-92). However, according to Graham, much of the content was not original and was considered “unliterary”: editors desired to “amuse readers with mathematical problems, conundrums, rebuses, dances and songs” and “lists of births, deaths, [and] marriages” (191, 271). In addition, instructive and moral essays, entertainment in the form of riddles, poetry, and fiction, biography, and articles on scientific and political subjects were all featured throughout the eighteenth century (145). Brake and Demoor explain that miscellanies generally contained “lighter and less serious fare,” like those of the past (1164), and Graham explains that the “modern magazine”—a “miscellany of original works of the imagination”—was not conceived before the beginning of the nineteenth century (271). By 1800, these miscellaneous periodicals had begun to slowly incorporate more original works, including novels, and became a necessary part of the literary culture (cf. 271, 192).

The review, the oldest and most noteworthy and dependable literary periodical, contained serious and general reviews and was published monthly in the eighteenth century, evolving into a quarterly issue by the nineteenth century (Brake and Demoor 1471). Early on, abstracts of published books were included in the review, but these

developed into more original articles that directed readers to primary works (Graham 225, 209). By the beginning of the nineteenth century, reviews began to exist as a distinct type of periodical that contained criticisms of books or their authors (225, 226). Graham explains that this “most important agent” in the development of literary criticism in English before 1800 set the stage for writers like William Hazlitt and Thomas Carlyle, who “elevate[d] the substantial Review to a position of foremost literary importance and influence” (226). Graham further claims that this pioneer work anticipated the “two supreme examples” of the review, the *Edinburgh Review* and the *Quarterly Review* (226). These quarterlies, filled solely with reviews, dealt with all forms of literature, including history, philosophy, economics, science, and even travel writing (Brake and Demoor 1471). Indeed, the “great triumvirate” of quarterlies, the Whig-associated *Edinburgh*, the Tory-affiliated *Quarterly*, and the radical-leaning *Westminster Review*, “had clear political agendas” and maintained a powerful influence over the public (1471). Denys Thompson explains that the quarterlies had great influence and that it was said of the *Edinburgh* that to have contributed to its columns was “to command the most direct channel for the spread of opinions and the shortest road to influence and celebrity” (26). Single-essay issues, magazines, and reviews, which all grew up together during the late seventeenth and through the eighteenth centuries, contributed to the vibrant atmosphere of publishing that characterized the revolutionary heyday of periodicals in the nineteenth century.

While essays, political and cultural advice, lighter entertainment, and the ubiquitous book review were all disseminated to the public in both monthly and quarterly publications, the growth of the novel in the early years of the nineteenth century

encouraged a more wide-spread availability of imaginative literature outside of periodicals, and novels were published in a dizzying array of methods (cf. Altick, *English Common Reader* 124, 198). Emerging out of the tendency of the eighteenth century to produce novels ranging between two and seven volumes, the “three-volume” novel, or “three-decker,” consisting of three individually published volumes that made up one complete novel of about 120,000 to 200,000 words, became the standard publishing approach for new fiction (Griest 45, 40). Early in the century, Walter Scott’s popularity and prestige helped to cement the three-decker as standard because he published fourteen books in this format in the span of fifteen years (41). According to J. A. Sutherland, the establishment of this genre in the 1830s was “arguably . . . the most important single development in the history of the nineteenth-century novel” (12). Guinevere L. Griest calls the three-volume novel the “staple of the market” (4), and Sutherland explains that it was the “most stably priced” commodity in the nineteenth century (12). These discrete volumes were sold to the public for ten shillings and six pence (10s. 6d.) per volume, which famously became thirty-one shillings and six pence (31s. 6d.) for the whole work, remaining the same throughout the nineteenth century (Altick, *English Common Reader* 311, 263). Kathleen Tillotson explains that these volumes were convenient for “fireside reading” and to pass along to family members, although it would be “exasperating” to finish one volume without having access to the next volume (“Introductory” 4). Once the three volumes had been available to the public, they were bound together and sold afresh for a standard price of six shillings ([6s.] Sutherland, *Victorian Novelists* 32; Griest 74). This activity of sharing a novel with friends and neighbors was a hallmark of the growing

book culture of the nineteenth century and demonstrated the social nature of the Victorian family mindset.

The three-volume novel was inextricably tied up with another major phenomenon of Victorian society, the circulating libraries. Charles Edward Mudie was the most well-known proprietor of the dominant libraries of the nineteenth century, where the public could exchange an unlimited number of individual volumes for one guinea—or twenty-one shillings—per year, a low rate and one that not only competed with Mudie’s competitors at, for example, six guineas at Bull’s circulating library but also competed with the prices of a three-volume novel purchased outright (Sutherland, *Victorian Novelists* 24; Griest 17-18).⁴ Tillotson explains that very few people bought new fiction in volume form and more commonly read early reviews—especially of new authors—and then borrowed a work from his or her circulating library (“Introductory” 3-4; cf. Griest 29). As Mudie expanded his business, he standardized and enhanced methods and service to the public. For example, responding to the “undignified scramble” of novel selling that characterized the industry and to the “ugly, grey boards” that bound the works, Mudie began to bind books himself (Sutherland, *Victorian Novelists* 24), developed an efficient system for delivering the works throughout England, and became known for the “bright yellow cover imprinted with the Pegasus symbol (Griest 28-29, 18). Further, with the move of his operations to New Oxford Street in December 1860, Mudie increased his customer base and created an organized and dramatic system whereby readers could request books (21). Griest effectively describes the vibrant experience that Victorians encountered upon entering Mudie’s library:

In the main hall of the New Oxford Street building a steady procession of customers approached the semi-circular counters, separating themselves by the initials of their last names, which were emblazoned on signposts set on ornamental stands topped with the familiar bronze Pegasus symbols. Here was housed the main accumulation of approximately one million volumes; . . . The bright bindings of the most popular works decorated iron shelves lining the great hall, where a gallery behind the counters gave access to the upper levels. Less frequently demanded books were relegated to the "catacombs," or cellar, which spread out beneath the great hall under adjacent New Oxford Street. The muffled roar of traffic overhead rumbled through these bookstacks, which were connected with the main floor by iron staircases, some kind of speaking tubes, and lifts. Writers describing Mudie's always pictured the bustle of this great hall. Their customers lined the counters, assistants in their frock coats and striped trousers hurried to and fro on the main floor and the gallery, lifts constantly disgorged their contents, and calls from the tubes rose over the hum of voices. Mudie himself often procured orders, then ceremoniously handed his preferred patrons to their waiting carriages. (28)

Even more significantly than the resplendent physical space he provided, Mudie regularized the pre-purchase of novels and "entered into treaty" with the publishing houses that guaranteed orders (Sutherland, *Victorian Novelists* 24-25). As Sutherland succinctly states, "There were no price wars in new fiction while Mudie's dominated the scene" (*Victorian Novelists* 25). Altick claims that one reason books were expensive was the inherently conservative nature of the publishing trade, which lacked a "bold,

speculative spirit” seen in other industries and adds that publishers told themselves that the public “simply refused to acquire the book-buying habit” (*English Common Reader* 260, 295). Some felt there was a “deliberate conspiracy among the tightly knit London publishers” to keep prices high (261), and Sutherland claims that Victorian publishers were consistently trying to find a way around the barrier of high prices, while simultaneously wanting to underpin the three-decker, creating an “interdependence of expensive and cheaper forms serving an ever expanding and fiction-hungry market” (*Victorian Novelists* 20). By maintaining the high price of 31s. 6d. as the century wore on, publishers forced readers to turn to the libraries to borrow books—bypassing booksellers—and “more firmly establish[ing]” the circulating libraries as the primary customers of the publishers (Altick, *English Common Reader* 263). Finally, both Mudie and his rival, W. H. Smith, also “impose[d] middle-class decencies” on the novels they chose to include in their libraries, and this attention to moral concerns served Mudie’s business model of maintaining a select choice of offerings (Sutherland, *Victorian Novelists* 25; Griest 145, 142). Because the publishers wanted Mudie—with his low-cost subscription rate that encouraged reading among the classes that could afford the one guinea per year—to purchase their books, they succumbed to the pressure of what some called “censorship” and encouraged their authors to write with Mudie’s morality in mind (Altick, *English Common Reader* 296; Griest 142; Sutherland, *Victorian Novelists* 26). As long as libraries continued to purchase from publishers—and publishers produced what Mudie’s wanted—the status quo remained in the publishing world. Griest states, “Publishers had to strike a fine balance between what was to be gained from the virtually guaranteed library circulation and possible profits to be realized from sales to

individuals” (75). Publishers’ willingness to demand a higher price from the public—thus retaining a smaller customer base—highlights their inclination to maintain the guaranteed income that libraries like Mudie’s could offer (Altick, *English Common Reader* 295). Libraries and publishers—and, by extension, editors and authors—were parasitically interwoven in the novel trade. All of these forces were in play throughout the nineteenth century, and they helped to keep the three-volume format in front of the public, albeit at high prices, further cementing the strength and influence of the circulating libraries. At the end of the century, however, these forces crumbled as publishers as a whole began to resist the demands of Mudie and others associated with the libraries and publish novels at a new standard of six shillings per book, “catering to [a] new buyers’ market” and selling books successfully in huge quantities, rapidly sealing the downfall of the three-decker novel as well as the circulating libraries (Altick, *English Common Reader* 312-13; cf. Griest 211, 213).⁵

The serialization of novels burgeoned as another “pre-eminent” form of novel production in the nineteenth century, occurring simultaneously with the establishment of the three-volume novel format and the corresponding growth and expansion of the circulating libraries (Sutherland, *Victorian Novelists* 21; cf. Vann, “Serialized Novels” 81). Serial publication consisted of two forms: first, “parts” publication, that is, publication in discrete fascicles, variously called “part-issues” or publication “in numbers”; and, second, publication in serial installments, or novels divided into small increments and published within magazines that included other features, with both forms generally including two to three chapters per serial (Vann, *Victorian Novels* 1; see 61, 141). Parts publication was not new to the Victorian era, but previously published novels

were being reprinted, and original works published in the past tended to be of inferior quality (Law 3). Sutherland explains that the “better novelists avoided [parts publication] in the 1820s and 30s,” but Charles Dickens and his publisher, Chapman and Hall, deliberately used the form for the original publication of *Pickwick Papers*, which skyrocketed in popularity and cemented publication in numbers as a primary method of publication (*Victorian Novelists* 21; Schlicke 515; Vann, *Victorian Novels* 2).⁶ Parts contained no other features except advertisements for “cheap editions” of other works at the end of each fascicle, were intended to reach a wider variety of socioeconomic classes, and were typically published in twenty installments of thirty-two pages each (Brake, “Star Turn?” 224; Vann, “Serialized Novels” 81).⁷ Each part was sold for one shilling, bringing the total financial outlay for readers to twenty shillings spread over time, much less than the cost of purchasing the three-decker (Sutherland, *Victorian Novelists* 21; Vann, “Serialized Novels” 81). This innovative usage of parts not only established it as a new publication form but also caused the public to develop “the habit of buying novels” in part issue in addition to borrowing them (Tillotson, “Introductory” 7). Catherine Delafield confirms that as the public developed into readers, they were “conditioned to approach the respectable consumption of fiction” through reading in numbers (5-6). Not only was the form inexpensive for the public, but publishers also liked that costs were spread around—which in turn helped increase circulation—and authors appreciated the “large financial rewards” they experienced as they wrote each number (7; cf. Sutherland, *Victorian Novelists* 22). Although Dickens saw publishing in parts as a “craft” and other authors appreciated the “artistic control,” some felt the form neither encouraged creativity nor demonstrated the ability of an author to construct a story with “any really artistic

merit” (Delafield 7). While parts was an important part of the Victorian publishing culture, especially in the 1840s after Dickens popularized it (Law 18), its form declined in the 1850s and 60s and became “virtually extinct” by 1880 (Sutherland, *Victorian Novelists* 23; Altick, *English Common Reader* 311). Sutherland explains that parts publication was probably “overtaken by the increasing efficiency and cheapness of reproduction which made feasible even better bargains for the consumer,” especially the bargain of the magazine serial that made its boom in the 1860s (*Victorian Novelists* 23).

By contrast, serialization of fiction in installments within magazines was a markedly different form. While portions of the novel consisted of two or three chapters—like publishing in numbers—these serialized divisions ran alongside lighter fare, including reviews that were shorter and less complex than those in the quarterlies; entertaining features, like poetry and drama; and articles addressing a wide range of subject matter, including politics (Brake and Demoor 1178). Early in the century, periodicals began deliberately to seek out a middle-class audience, especially with an emphasis on women, and often were sold for a penny, establishing the popularity of the magazine (1177-78, 1086). Brake and Demoor state that the “emphasis on the literary” was a “deliberate antidote” for the political agenda often associated with particular periodicals (1178). Because publishers tended to resist providing books at a cheaper rate, the serial fiction market after the 1830s began to thrive, and this led to a dramatic revolution in serial publication driven by the emergence of a new type of magazine like the immensely popular *Cornhill Magazine* in 1860 (1455, 1591, 1178, 391). Considered a “family magazine,” this new “shilling monthly” prominently featured fiction, particularly by well-known contemporary authors, and generally avoided politics and religion (1178,

1609). The most significant feature of this new monthly was, in fact, its one-shilling price, substantially beating out the two to three shillings per periodical that had been common in the 1820s and 30s (1178).

An important aspect of serialization in periodicals was the anonymity associated with them. Monthlies, especially during the first half of the century, rarely included authors' names on non-fiction features or novels, although pseudonyms were sometimes used (Mays 167). In 1853, Frederick Oakley explained that anonymity was a "benefit of editorial protection" and allowed individual opinion, and E. S. Dallas, six years later, discussed the power of the "great journals" that was a result of the "mystery" of anonymity (qtd. in Mays 188). Delafield explains that at times authors were named based on "prior authorship" (24). For example, "author of *The Woman in White*" was the moniker used in the weekly, *All the Year Round*, to replace "Wilkie Collins" as the specific contributor in Dickens's periodical (23). Delafield claims this use of prior authorship is both a "refinement of identity" and a "halfway point between naming and complete anonymity," highlighting the concealment that anonymity offered (23). By the late 1860s, at the advent of the shilling magazine, anonymity began to fade because of the value placed on contributors, and this decline "weakened publishers' ideological hold" over their magazines by allowing the public more choices, introducing a free market principle to periodical writing (Brake and Demoor 87, 1456). Graham explains that "a change had come over the English reading public," that "the rapid growth of a fiction-reading public had done more to effect this change than any other one thing," and that including authors' names "worked their magic to claim public attention" (259). As a result, monthly shilling magazines like the *Cornhill* contributed significantly to

serialization, supplanting parts publication as the “primary publication format for mid-Victorian fiction” (Brake and Demoor 391; cf. Vann, *Victorian Novels* 15).

All three methods of novel publication—the three-decker, publication in parts, and magazine serials—had two important issues in common that affected methods of publication. First, time is a key component to the discussion, because readers were required to wait an interval of time—weekly, quarterly, or, most often, monthly—to resume a story. As Tillotson has discussed, a reader could complete the first volume of a novel only to not have at hand the next volume for completion, requiring that reader to wait until he or she could secure it (“Introductory” 4). Delafield emphasizes that readers enjoyed a “shared time and . . . experience” as they waited for the next number of a serialized story, and this break in time allowed the public to appreciate the suspense between numbers (10; Tillotson, “Introductory” 7). Authors were also affected by time intervals. Sutherland explains that there was a “singular freshness” available to the public as a storyline emerged ““warm from the brain”” of the author, contributing to a “direct interaction with the audience” (*Victorian Novelists* 21; Brake, “Star Turn?” 224). Paul Schlicke describes how Dickens carefully utilized the passing of the seasons in *Pickwick* by incorporating holiday scenes into both the Christmas number and the issue for Valentine’s Day (445).⁸ Linda K. Hughes and Michael Lund discuss Elizabeth Gaskell’s use of intervening time to introduce “physiological cycles” between the first and second parts of *Wives and Daughters* when Gaskell’s character Molly undergoes puberty, demonstrating the “inherent periodicity and silent spaces between parts” that allowed female authors and readers to “indicate and recognize . . . female bodily experiences” that were not allowed to be directly articulated in print (107-08).⁹ The time factor involved in

publication with the multitude of publishing methods directly affected the reading culture of the nineteenth century.

A second quality of comparison that affected novel publication was the resulting outcome and impact of a work's final form. Just as each volume of a three-decker was bound together to create a unified whole, part-issues and periodicals containing fiction were also compiled into volume form. Once a complete set of twenty months of a novel's discrete numbers was concluded, they were bound and resold as a whole for purchase (Brake, "Star Turn?" 225). Similarly, sets of periodicals with their accompanying articles were also bound together once an annual or biannual volume was complete (Delafield 13). These newly published volumes were then marketed to a different audience and, in what Delafield calls their "afterlife," were subject to "some degree of reinterpretation" by authors or editors (173, 161). For example, in its initial serialization in *All the Year Round*, *The Woman in White*, by Wilkie Collins, contained a "chronological discrepancy" of two weeks. This discrepancy dramatically affected character and plot but went unnoticed and unchanged until the second published volume in which Collins made other changes that "suit[ed] a three-volume edition," as opposed to "the 32 breathless instalments" of the periodical (163). Similarly, constraints in space within periodicals required authors to adapt their writing styles and methods to suit serialization. Tillotson explains that monthly part-issues were longer than an installment within a monthly magazine, which in turn was longer than a weekly installment, and that "the shorter the unit, the greater the emphasis" on the climactic moment, which was expected to be placed carefully near the end ("Introductory" 23, 13). In addition, periodical volumes often were compiled to furnish as gifts, "demonstrations of learning," or even to "showcase [a]

household's investment in reading" (Delafield 173). Laurel Brake claims that these "changes in the spheres of the serial and the book" demonstrate their "interdependent nature (*Print* 3), but Christopher A. Kent cautions that it is "significant that the later Victorian novel severed its links with periodicals, as if seeking greater control of its own form" (2). However, Delafield clarifies that the evolution of parts publication and magazine serialization demonstrates how these two forms were "codependent in popularizing the reading of fiction" (6).

While these various publishing practices dominated the print culture of the nineteenth century, a major force behind the scenes of these texts was the network of individuals themselves who both contributed to and customized the works, and it is the personal and professional dynamics of the relationships between authors and editors that will be investigated in the substantive portion of this thesis. Delafield explains that authors were part of a "multi-vocal discourse," a "group authorship"—along with editor and publisher—and had responsibilities towards editors, publishers, and to the "ideological commitments" of the periodicals themselves and even to the magazine's audience (25; 33; 23). Dallas Liddle argues that a "Victorian periodical writer's virtual resume" demonstrated the ability to produce a text that fit into a specific genre that suited a particular periodical (157). Either an author was creating for a weekly, monthly, or quarterly periodical, each with its own personalities, identifying marks, and expectations of its readers, or he or she was writing for the three-volume method of publication, in which each volume must conform to specific length and content constraints—constraints that were further inspired by and controlled by the circulating libraries of the time, most powerfully by Mudie's Select Library (Griest 4-5, 17). By contrast, editors were

“conductors” of their periodicals, as Charles Dickens famously referred to himself in the headline of his weekly, *Household Words*, and often were the only individuals whose names were stated on the publication (Brake, “Star Turn?” 213). Delafield further states that “[d]ialogues” took place between editors and contributors during the serialization of the novel and that the editor might either valorize a text or “lead the reader” to a text placed later within a periodical (2). These networking relationships could be fraught with drama or remain relatively placid, but the one-on-one interaction could influence the roles of these leaders and was key to producing a serialized product.

While authors and editors worked together to produce fiction, their working together could also affect cultural change. This thesis will consider the relationships between Elizabeth Gaskell, author of *North and South*, and Charles Dickens, editor of *Household Words*; Anthony Trollope, author of *Framley Parsonage*, and William Makepeace Thackeray, editor of the *Cornhill Magazine*; and, George Eliot, author of *Middlemarch*, and John Blackwood, editor of *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*—three pairs of authors and editors, whose authors published one of their major works through forms of serialization in the periodical press—and consider what results take effect through their direct communication and interaction. The relational stories of each of these authors and editors will include discussions about authorial identity, editorial control, constraints of composition, and other associative connections. Specifically, a shared impulse between Gaskell and Dickens towards social change, a parallel emphasis by Trollope and Thackeray on the growing gentleman class, and the deeply-held conviction of Eliot and Blackwood regarding a realistic approach to fiction will emerge as a result of

these relationships, emblematic of the multiple facets of change occurring in the nineteenth century.

Chapter Two will consider author Elizabeth Gaskell and editor Charles Dickens, with an emphasis on the composition of Gaskell's *North and South*, serialized in Dickens's weekly miscellany, *Household Words*. Gaskell was born in 1810 and grew up as Elizabeth Stevenson among relatives in Knutsford, Cheshire, England, because of the death of her mother when Gaskell was only thirteen months old (Gerin 6-9). Gaskell's father, also an author, wrote extensively for the great literary periodicals of the day, including the *Edinburgh Review* (4). Gaskell inherited the "country influences of her mother's family" and was a "countrywoman at heart," in spite of living much of her adult life in the large city of Manchester (9). After marrying Reverend William Gaskell, who was "burdened with a conscience" like Gaskell's own, she became known as Mrs. Gaskell and shared a variety of church ministry activities with her husband (cf. 52, 260). As their children were born, three died at birth or in infancy, and it was in her sorrow at the death of her ten-month-old son that William encouraged Gaskell to write a book that would "turn her thoughts from the subject of her grief" (qtd. in Gerin 74). This action propelled her to write *Mary Barton*, the industrial novel published in 1848 that caught the attention of Charles Dickens (74; 98). Gaskell's other important works include *Ruth*, which is concerned with prostitutes and the social order (127), and she published several works in Dickens's *Household Words*, including a series of short stories that became *Cranford*, and her most well-known work, the one emphasized in Chapter Two of this thesis, *North and South*.

Complex Networks: Authors and Editors in the Golden Age of Victorian Periodicals

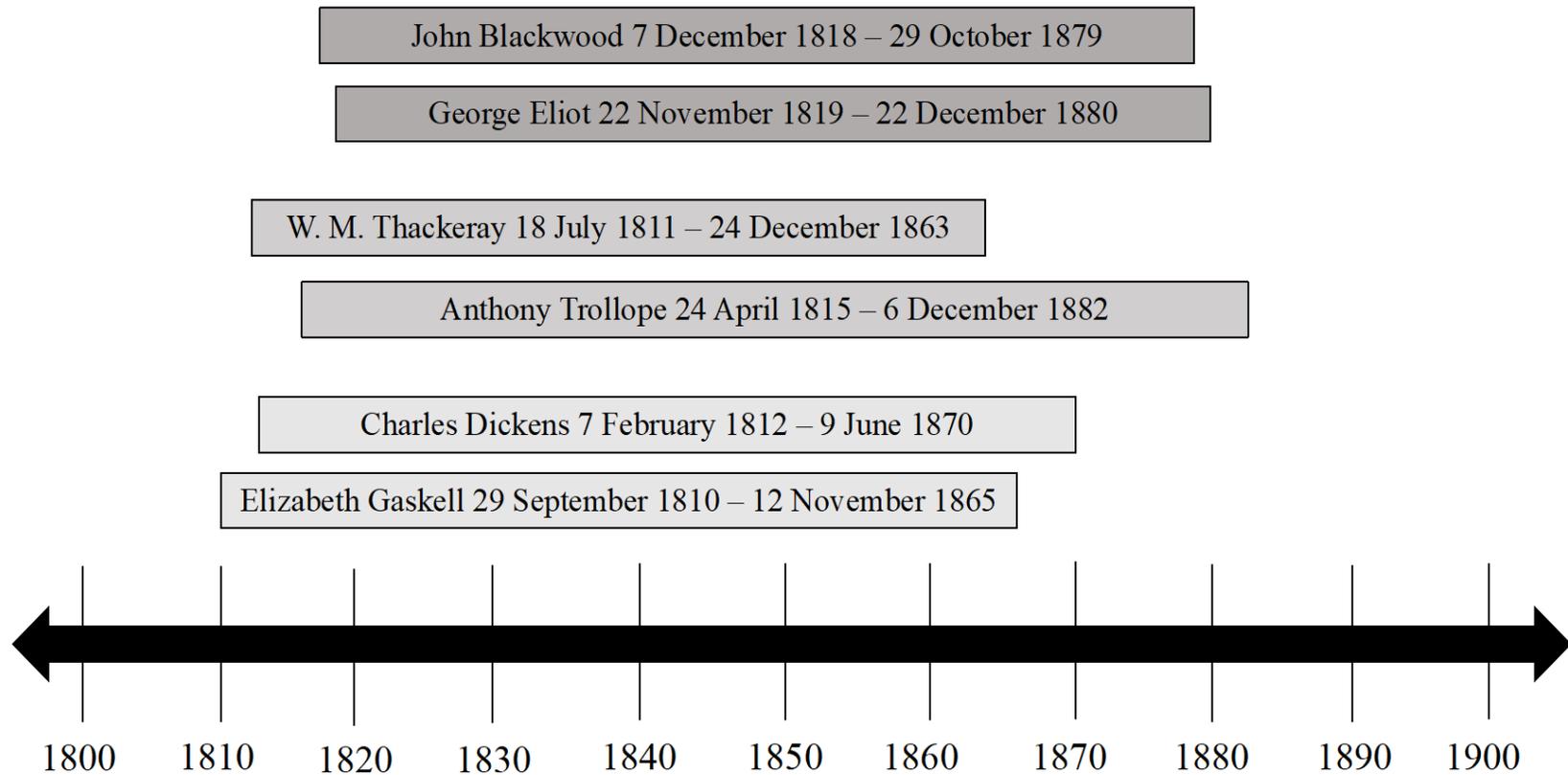


Figure 1. Birth and Death Dates for Authors and Editors. Gaskell, Dickens, Trollope, Thackeray, Eliot, and Blackwood were serendipitously born within nine years of each other, with Thackeray dying first at age 52 and Trollope dying last at age 67.

Dickens is arguably the foremost author of the Victorian era, but after gaining experience in editing *Bentley's Miscellany* and *Master Humphrey's Clock*, he was also editor of two major periodicals, *Household Words* and *All the Year Round* (Tomalin 69, 111, 251, 304). Born in 1812, Dickens was the oldest son of eight children. He spent his childhood in Kent, England, where he became “fully aware of the world around him” and began to “store up impressions,” including the experiences of fear, freezing rooms, angry creditors, and living life managing on what could be “borrowed or begged” as a result of his father’s debt (3-15; 9; 23). Claire Tomalin explains that Dickens’ mother “cherished her son through careful teaching” that “sparked his imagination,” and from then on “words were associated with pleasure and he was set on his path” (10). As a result, Dickens “embarked on his own crash course” of schooling and took advantage of what his father could offer—a “library of books” (10). As a young man, Dickens worked as an office boy for a law firm (33), mastered shorthand to become both a court and parliamentary reporter (40), pursued his passion for theater, and then, in 1833 at the age of twenty-one, successfully published his first sketch anonymously (49). His career began to flourish, and after a stint as a journalist, he published *Sketches by Boz*, caught the eye of Chapman and Hall, who became his primary publishers and for whom he produced *Pickwick Papers* in numbers, and rose to fame (70). In 1850, Dickens launched *Household Words*, for which he commissioned Gaskell to provide a story for his opening issue, because “there was no other writer he was keener to enlist” (Gerin 106; Tomalin 227). In 1854, Dickens published Gaskell’s *North and South* serially in *Household Words*, and it is the great conflict that took place between Dickens and Gaskell regarding the publication of this novel that this pair is known for. However, the strength that

connects Dickens and Gaskell is their comparable conviction that their fiction can impact their society for change. They will be considered in Chapter Two.

Chapter Three focuses on author Anthony Trollope and editor William Makepeace Thackeray, especially as their story collides with the commencement of the monthly periodical, the *Cornhill Magazine*. Born in London in 1815, Trollope was the son of a literary family that included his brother, Thomas, and his mother, Frances. His father was difficult to live with—like Dickens’s—but his difficulty lay in his terrible “irascibility” and temper, which increased as his health declined and debt mounted, causing him to push his sons unmercifully (Hall, *Trollope* 39, 14, 22). Trollope’s education was also problematic because the intense bullying so common in the British public schools of the nineteenth century tormented him, but it was also at Winchester College around the age of twelve that Trollope began to keep a diary in which he confided his “boyish sorrows” (30). Writing over fifty years later in his autobiography, Trollope stated that he was not inclined to study, but “was always going about with some castle in the air firmly built in my mind” (*Autobiography* 36). At age nineteen, Trollope began his long and illustrious career in the post office, while the seed of the novelist grew into maturity (30; Hall, *Trollope* 67). Traveling regularly, Trollope developed the ability to compose as he journeyed by railway, turning him into a prolific writer, and then published several novels, including *Barchester Towers*, which gave him “considerable popularity” and caused his career to take off (145, 154, 152). As an up-and-coming author, Trollope approached William Makepeace Thackeray, editor of the new monthly, the *Cornhill Magazine*, and boldly offered himself as a new contributor (190-91). Trollope’s offer was accepted by Thackeray and George Smith, founder and publisher,

resulting in Trollope's *Framley Parsonage*, the fourth installment of his Barchester Chronicles and the novel of emphasis in Chapter Three of this thesis.

As editor at the outset of the *Cornhill*, William Makepeace Thackeray was nearing the end of his distinguished career, and it was the strength of his reputation that George Smith was looking for when he asked Thackeray to be his editor (Smith 108). Born in India in 1815, Thackeray lost his father—the “supreme local potentate” of Calcutta—as a four-year-old, and, as a result, lavished his affections on his mother, Anne (Elwin 24). At age six, Thackeray was sent to England to start his education, where he demonstrated an inclination to write. He wrote to his mother at age seventeen, “I have not yet drawn out a place for my stories, but certain germs thereof are budding in my mind. . . . I always feel as if I were at home when I am writing” (qtd. in Elwin 32). It was his mother who encouraged Thackeray to confide his “impressions” and “humours” of life to “feminine ears,” and these he put down into emotional and whimsical letters to the women in his life (25). Thackeray also showed an interest in periodicals from a young age. For example, attempting to profit from the reduction of the Stamp Act in 1836, Thackeray participated in the purchase of the *Constitutional*, a “struggling but established” journal, for which Thackeray secured a staff and whose run lasted about nine months; later, he applied to become editor for the *Foreign Quarterly Review*, though this attempt was unsuccessful (67-68; 111-12). Thackeray married, but after the birth of his third daughter, his wife began to suffer from depression that tragically overwhelmed her, and she never fully recovered (98). Thackeray cared for his wife, but the medical expenses associated with her care forced him to work hard to provide for his daughters (98; 163). Thackeray made a name for himself through his satirical writings in *Punch*

(125), rose to fame with the serialization of his most enduring novel, *Vanity Fair*, and, in the sunset of his life, became the much-esteemed editor of the *Cornhill*, where his life coincided with Trollope's, specifically as Trollope became the monthly's first contributor with his *Framley Parsonage*. Together, Thackeray and Trollope built on each other's strengths to communicate a new perspective to the gentleman class. Chapter Three documents their relationship amid the saga of the *Cornhill Magazine*.

Finally, Chapter Four considers author George Eliot and editor John Blackwood of *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*. Eliot was born Mary Anne Evans in Nuneaton, England, in 1819 and grew up in an Anglican home with several elder siblings of her father's first wife, along with her full-blooded siblings, including her beloved brother, Isaac (Hughes 17). Eliot wrote almost nothing about her own mother, but she nursed her father at the end of his life, claiming that with his death, life would "seem as if a part of [her] moral nature were gone" (85). Eliot passionately tried to discover her own religious faith. As a young woman, she searched in the evangelical wing of her father's Church of England, taking on a pious nature "with relish," although she was hampered by a pull towards writing fiction, considered "perilous" in her belief system (22, 23, 36). Later Eliot abandoned this faith after studying Unitarianism, which rejects the doctrine of the Trinity and the divinity of Christ (46). As a result, Eliot's relationships with her family became strained for the rest of her life, and she delved into the "radical" and "avant-garde" lifestyle that was the antithesis of what she had known (56; see 61). Eliot herself began her professional life in 1851 as an "uncredited assistant editor" for the *Westminster Review*, the politically radical-leaning periodical owned by John Chapman (107). Previous to these years, she anonymously translated important works by German

theologians, including D. F. Strauss; it was this translation that circulated among the literati in London and motivated her move to London to begin working for the *Review* (4, 70). Later Eliot would famously be known as “Mrs. Lewes” because of her unconventional relationship with her long-term, live-in partner, George Henry Lewes (163). It was Lewes’s relationship with Blackwood that prompted Eliot to submit her first short stories, *Scenes of Clerical Life*, to the Edinburgh publisher, thus beginning the lengthy author-editor relationship Eliot and Blackwood maintained throughout her career (182). In addition to *Scenes*, Eliot’s most highly-favored fiction includes *Adam Bede*, *The Mill on the Floss*, and her masterpiece, *Middlemarch*, published by Blackwood and Sons and which bears the focus of Chapter Four.

Born just outside of Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1818, John Blackwood was the sixth son of seven sons and two daughters, whose father, William Blackwood, founded the publishing house that bore his name and *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* (Porter 2). Blackwood grew up surrounded by the publishing world, was called “the little Editor” as a child, and was groomed by his father to take on the role as an adult (Tredney 122). He apprenticed in London to learn the “practical details” of the business, including running the “Pall Mall” branch office (Porter 16). Before long, after the death of one of his elder brothers, Blackwood took on the management of the magazine that was headquartered in Edinburgh, editing it for the rest of his life (19). Over his career, Blackwood traveled back and forth from the Scottish capital to London, where he hosted dinners attended by authors, soldiers, politicians, and clergymen, building a reputation for hospitality and facilitating a “continuous stream of bright and amusing talk” that planted “many a seed” of ideas that “first germinated” and bore “good fruit” in new literary works (21-22). A

hallmark of *Blackwood's* was military subjects, and Blackwood continued this tradition, also emphasizing literary criticism, public school conditions, land revenue issues in India, and the state of government (Tredney 117-19). With his brother and then his nephew, Blackwood worked to connect authors to the firm through personal contact and, in his own words, through an “unfailing friendship” with a “succession of authors” (qtd. in Finkelstein, *House* 26-27). Blackwood published works by the adventurer and statesman, Laurence Oliphant, along with fiction by Anthony Trollope, but it is George Eliot who is the most well-known of Blackwood's authors, and he published Eliot's *Middlemarch* in a new form of monthly parts publication. Centering around this uniquely published novel, an examination of Eliot and Blackwood will demonstrate their shared impetus to produce fiction with a true-to-life form. Eliot and Blackwood will be considered in Chapter Four.

Echoing Walter Houghton, J. A. Sutherland has called the Victorian era the “golden age of the English novel” (17). In combination, each of these authors, editors, novels, and periodicals contributes to this golden age, exhibiting the powerful network of literary leaders whose output reflects the dynamic and energetic nineteenth-century publishing culture in which they flourished. Through an analysis of the methods and constraints of composition of Gaskell's *North and South*, Trollope's *Framley Parsonage*, and Eliot's *Middlemarch*, this thesis will examine the relationships between these author-editor pairs and highlight their substantive influence over social and literary transformations in the Victorian era.

CHAPTER II

The Perfect Storm: Gaskell and Dickens

Among the three author-editor pairs examined in this thesis, Elizabeth Gaskell and Charles Dickens began a professional association earliest. Gaskell's first successful novel, *Mary Barton*, was published in 1849, at a time when the novel was in the process of "becoming the dominant form" of literature (Tillotson, *Novels* 13). Dickens had already achieved authorial success with *The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club*, or the *Pickwick Papers*, published in parts in 1836-37, more than ten years before Gaskell wrote *Mary Barton* and while transitioning professionally as a parliamentary reporter for the *Morning Chronicle* to becoming editor for *Bentley's Miscellany* (Schlicke 445). After they came together professionally, over time Dickens and Gaskell became known for their production of Gaskell's *North and South*. This chapter will examine the relationship between these two literary giants through an analysis of the existing correspondence directly between Dickens and Gaskell, allowing for a more careful definition of their association. Letters to other correspondents will be de-emphasized, although these will help to shed light on gaps of time, especially important in the case of Gaskell. Regrettably, she instructed both her daughter, Marianne, and George Smith, her future publisher, to "burn" any letters and added to Smith to "[not] send them to the terrible warehouse" where 20,000 letters per year were collected (cf. Gaskell, *Letters* 274, 426).¹ Although many of Gaskell's letters to other correspondents are preserved, only *three* to Dickens survive. However, because of his own responsive practice, Dickens's letters often include specific clues as to what Gaskell herself wrote to him, so it is possible to recreate situations between them to a certain extent.

Mary Barton is the novel that brought Gaskell to Dickens's attention, and it is important to remember that they each started out reaching out to the downtrodden. However, *North and South*, published serially in Dickens's weekly periodical *Household Words*, is the novel that is most famously—and infamously—associated with Gaskell and Dickens because of the difficulties they experienced during its production. Indeed, many scholars christen the conflict between Dickens and Gaskell in the language of winner and loser.² Given that this novel accentuated a peak in their relationship, this chapter will emphasize this most famous work of Gaskell. Through a focused attention on the letters particularly pertinent to *North and South*, the relationship between Gaskell and Dickens will be examined, highlighting nuances of language, Dickens's editorial practice, and Gaskell's authorial presence, finally taking a brief look at Gaskell's final volume of *North and South*, which offered a significantly different version to her public. This analysis will demonstrate that Gaskell and Dickens's shared legacy should more appropriately be known for their mutual passion to bring to light the deplorable social conditions of nineteenth century England in their fiction.

With the notoriety that emerged out of the successful publication of *Mary Barton*, Elizabeth Gaskell was brought to the forefront of the Victorian literary circle (*GL* 65). Early in 1849, Gaskell was thrust into the social culture by attending several dinner and breakfast occasions, meeting important figures such as Jane and Thomas Carlyle, William Makepeace Thackeray, John Forster, who first read *Mary Barton* and suggested it to Gaskell's publishers Chapman and Hall, and, of course, Dickens (Dickens, *Letters* 5: 532;³ Gerin 82). Later Dickens told Gaskell that her book "most profoundly affected and impressed" him (*Pilgrim* 6: 22). Indeed, Dickens's first mention of Gaskell or her work is

in his February 18, 1849, letter to the poet Samuel Rogers, in which Dickens tells Rogers he not only has a servant who “stands charged” to send him *Mary Barton*, but if Dickens “had a spare moment” he would bring the book to Rogers himself (5: 497). Known as the stalwart defender of the working class, Dickens appreciated *Mary Barton*, whose social challenge paralleled Dickens’s own work (see Palmer 24). Although Gaskell did not relish the lionizing that Edward Chapman warned would follow as a successful author, she felt that she did not “*think* anything could alter [her] from [her] own self” (*GL* 71; ?8 March 1849). Still, as a result of her fame with *Mary Barton* and connections with Dickens, Gaskell became a part of the literary scene of London (Gerin 101).

It was Gaskell who first approached Dickens in what are the first two of her three extant letters to him dated January 8 and 12, 1850, respectively, in which she requests help for a woman named Pasley, a young prostitute who had been imprisoned for theft (104). It is prescient that this shared concern for the downtrodden began their correspondence. Gaskell sought help to send the young girl either to Australia or the Cape of Good Hope, locations known as places of refuge for wayward girls (see Schlicke 468). Through his association with Miss Coutts, the philanthropic friend with whom he ran Urania Cottage, a home for homeless women, Dickens helped Gaskell secure passage for Pasley to the Cape (122-23; see *Pilgrim* 6: 29; 5 February 1850). Given Dickens’s charity work with the disadvantaged, in addition to his celebrated novels that highlight the plight of the working class, and given Gaskell’s heart for the same impoverished community, Gaskell and Dickens are linked in a like-minded camaraderie with their desire to change these social conditions of their culture through their fiction. Larry K. Uffelman states that the “moment was ripe for such fiction” and their works would have

been read “in a context now largely forgotten” (“Elizabeth Gaskell’s *North and South*” 75). This exchange of letters demonstrates that at the heart of who they are is the same desire to help these downtrodden, but it also highlights their early demeanor towards each other. For example, Gaskell boldly requested help. On January 8, 1850, she states, “I am going to give you trouble . . . I am very sorry to intrude . . . in your busy life. But I want some help” (GL 98). She knew that she might be putting Dickens out but directly charges him, “Pray don’t say you can’t help me” because “the message you sent about emigration” is the “mother of all this mischief” (99). Although Gaskell saw this as a large request, she strongly suggested that he must help and didn’t hesitate to speak her mind. She was aware of his concern for women in need and was polite but insistent. Just one day later, January 9, 1850, Dickens graciously responded, offering to talk with Miss Coutts, thus beginning a series of letters in which Gaskell and Dickens, along with the help of Coutts, find a way to help Pasley (Pilgrim 6: 6). In later letters, notably on January 31 and February 5, 1850, Dickens followed up with Gaskell, asking about Pasley and offering advice (cf. 6: 22, 29). This start to their correspondence highlights the societal burden that links them. If Dickens had not been Gaskell’s editor, and if Gaskell had not agreed to intertwine herself to Dickens and his periodical, the two might be remembered only in light of the challenges they both championed in their fiction.

While posterity knows Dickens primarily as an author, his daily responsibility for much of his adult life was as *editor*. As editor for Gaskell for thirteen years, he and Gaskell naturally developed a working relationship through her writing and their correspondence. As “Conductor”—the role Dickens alluded to in his continuous byline for *Household Words*—as well as through his letters, Dickens demonstrated a concern for

his public, the structural makeup of the periodical, and the well-being of his contributors. While Gaskell initiated correspondence between herself and Dickens, it was Dickens who formally launched their professional relationship through his invitation to Gaskell on January 31, 1850, to contribute to his “new cheap weekly journal of general literature” (6: 21). In this first letter, Dickens’s overarching concern with his public is visible. He explained to Gaskell that he desires to “rais[e] up those who are down . . . and “improv[e] the social condition” (6: 22). Alan Shelston states that Dickens’s “sense of mission” for



Figure 2. Dickens in 1854. “We seek to bring into innumerable homes, from the stirring world around us, the knowledge of many social wonders, good and evil, that are not calculated to render any of us less ardently persevering in ourselves, less tolerant of one another, less faithful in the progress of mankind, less thankful for the privilege of living in this summer-dawn of time.” ~ Charles Dickens, “A Preliminary Word,” p. 1. Public Domain.

Household Words “cannot be too strongly emphasized” (13). Lorna Huett talks about this sense of mission as a “specific identity encoded” in *Household Words* and argues that

Dickens “deliberately shaped his periodical in opposition” to older reviews that represented an earlier generation (62, 72). Dickens saw his public as “comrade[s] and friends,” as he stated in his prospectus in his first issue of *Household Words*, and worked carefully to maintain that relationship over the years (qtd. in Jackson 59).

Dickens was also concerned with structural aspects of *Household Words*, both external and internal. For example, on March 9, Dickens detailed to Gaskell his plans for publishing the first two chapters of her story—ending at “when Tom had left the room, he prepared to speak”—demonstrating the particular care he uses with the internal placement of stories (Pilgrim 6: 58). He also felt that eight columns was “just the thing” for the quantity of a story each week and that he became, “by dint of necessity and practice, rather cunning” regarding the division of parts (qtd. in Grubb, “Dickens’ Pattern” 142). In addition, early and often in Dickens’s letters, he emphasized that Gaskell should write in a manner that came naturally to her. On February 9, 1850, Dickens stated that he did not want to put “any constraints” on her writing but that she should “occupy just as many pages” as she thinks her “design wants” (Pilgrim 6: 34). One month later, on March 6, Dickens stresses, “*Let me particularly beg you not to put the least constraint upon yourself, as to space. Allow the story to take its own length, and work itself out. . . . Your design as to its progress and conclusion are undoubtedly the best. The inventor’s, I consider, must be*” (6: 55). Shelston clarifies that Dickens offered Gaskell the “freedom to write . . . on her own terms” (15). For example, on March 14, 1850, Dickens suggested that Gaskell revise “Lizzie Leigh” but emphasized that she, Gaskell, make these changes (Pilgrim 6: 65). However, Paul Schlicke points out that at times Dickens “may have been a difficult editor to work for” (589). Gaskell demonstrated

her own frustration with Dickens as editor when she good-naturedly told a correspondent regarding another story, “[W]retch that [Dickens] is to go and write *my* story of the lady haunted by the face” (*GL* 172; ?17 November 1851). In his choices for his periodical, Dickens was always mindful of the final product, that of “fusing [a novel] together as an uninterrupted whole” (qtd. in Grubb, “Dickens’ Pattern” 143). By starting out giving Gaskell free reign, Dickens planted the view in Gaskell’s mind that her vision for her work will be paramount in serial publication but reserved the right to allow his editorial authority to take over as well.

Finally, Dickens regularly and noticeably was a great encourager of Gaskell in these early years. Dickens’s first letter to Gaskell indicated she was concerned about the “interruptions” to her “domestic life” with her writing (*Pilgrim* 6: 29; 5 February 1850), and Dickens answered this concern by telling her that she would be “far less sensible” to these interruptions if she wrote short stories rather than long ones (6: 29). He told her “Lizzie Leigh” is “excellent” and that the story “made [him] cry” (7: 900; 27 February 1850). He also recognized that she was new to authorship and needed some reassurance, offering constructive feedback as she requested it, and was willing to “exchange opinions” with her “as if [she] had placed [him] under a vow of fidelity” (6: 29; 5 February 1850). Furthermore, he trusted her insight, particularly as their relationship became more settled. On May 23, 1852, Dickens suggested that Gaskell write a paper about a report dealing with a company’s responsibility towards its employees, telling her that a writer of her “tact and feeling . . . can very impressively and sufficiently” handle the subject (6: 681). The warmth with which Dickens began their relationship could only help Gaskell to feel more free to write for him.

In these early letters, before Gaskell and Dickens were embroiled in the tumultuous controversy over *North and South*, Dickens consistently included politeness, a creative flourish, and persuasive language in his correspondence. For example, when explaining his reasons for replacing her mention of his own *Pickwick* in her *Cranford* story, he states, “[T]here *would* be—or at least I *should* feel—an impropriety at mentioning myself” and “I *would* do anything rather than cause you a minute’s vexation” (6: 549; 4 December 51; my emphasis). Paul Simpson explains that the language strategy of using the modals “would” and “should” indicates that Dickens “hedges,” mitigating his requests and softening the impact on his reader (176-77). Dickens also included a clever and humorous flourish in his letters, showing a playful attitude towards Gaskell. Shu-Fang Lai explains that in his novels, Dickens “relish[es] . . . expressive and imaginative language” (46), and this language naturally flowed into his correspondence. For example, he lightheartedly thanked Gaskell for sending along the third installment of *Cranford*: “A golden baby has just arrived at Tavistock House—a perfect Californian little Duncan—his silver skin laced (internally) with his golden blood. We think of calling him, appropriately remembering the enchanting home of his infancy, Tom Tiddler” (6: 625; ?13/14 March 1852). Furthermore, Dickens used this special flourish to attempt to persuade Gaskell to shift her thinking away from her concern that he appropriated her story. On November 25, 1851, in a well-known letter, Dickens responded to Gaskell’s concern that he had “stolen” a story from her (see 6: 545 fn.). He called her “My Dear Scheherazade,” equating her with the storyteller of *Thousand and One Nights*, claiming that Gaskell’s “powers of narrative can never be exhausted in a single night, but must be good for at least a thousand nights and one” (6: 545). He wrote

to Gaskell, “When I received your letter . . . I immediately repaired to my Solicitor and made over to you, for ever, all the plate glass and Californian bullion-fringe on these premises” (6: 545). Dickens continued using this eloquent and deflective humor with a touch of irony that distracts Gaskell—and the reader—from the subject at hand, and, as Elsie B. Michie concludes, refused to take Gaskell’s accusations seriously (89). Michie explains that Dickens clearly “compliment[s] Gaskell by characterizing her as an all-engrossing story-teller” but treated her as if she were a “woman who is compelled” to produce stories for a “masculine authority” (89-90). Winifred Gerin adds that at times Gaskell suspected Dickens of “insincerity and flattery” and tried not to “succumb to his charm” (120). But it would be difficult to resist the charm of Dickens’s persuasive language. While polite, Dickens used his masterful command of language to coerce Gaskell, simultaneously defending himself and lightly scolding her in the process. Dickens’s language also embodied power which he used to persuade and charm, artfully guiding Gaskell to the perspective he wanted her to have.

As a “celebrity editor,” Dickens maintained control of his periodical, but as author Gaskell played an equally important role in her “responsibilit[y]” to both her editor and her public (Palmer 14; Delafield 23). Gerin explains that Gaskell “placed the humanitarian purpose” for writing first, and that in her early stories of Manchester she treated the working class with “sympathy and receptivity” (77-78). Kathleen Tillotson writes that Gaskell’s *Mary Barton* represents an outstanding example of a novel that transcends the “condition of England” question being considered at that time, because the novel exemplified impartiality, demonstrates a “tenderer humanity,” and shows a “greater artistic integrity” (*Novels* 202). Gaskell’s vision for influencing the social concerns of her

time is highlighted in these early writings, and this common concern connected her to Dickens from the beginning. But as she grew as an author, she began to expand her focus, causing her to have deep convictions about what she wanted to say to her public. J. Don Vann explains that although early in their relationship Gaskell “allowed [Dickens] to have his way,” she later “developed a strong sense of artistic integrity toward her work” and “refused permission” for Dickens’s “editorial tampering” (“Dickens” 70). Indeed, as Gaskell demonstrated in her initial letters to Dickens, she did not fear speaking her mind, and Gerin explains that Gaskell’s authorial voice—specifically in “Libbie Marsh,” an early tale—materialized “authentic[ally]” just as that voice appeared in her correspondence (77).

In contrast to Dickens, when writing to both friends and other acquaintances, Gaskell consistently wrote in a flowing, verbose style, naturally sharing her thoughts, and it is easy to imagine that Gaskell’s creative writing for *North and South* would become



Figure 3. Gaskell in 1854. “[Mrs. Gaskell’s] stories evolved from within with a slow and sometimes imperceptible growth; her effects were finely drawn; she relied much on description to convey the mood for characters; her tales were not quick-moving.” ~ Winifred Gerin, *Elizabeth Gaskell: A Biography*, p. 153. Public Domain.

well-developed once she is caught up in her story. Gerin calls this style Gaskell’s “zig-zag course of reasoning” (46), and Shelston adds that Gaskell’s hand was “not always tidy” (20). She regularly did not use structured paragraphs in her letters but moved from one topic to the next, as if writing her thoughts as they came to her. For example, when she wrote to Forster on May 17, 1854, she stated that she can “still make [her novel] good” and then immediately followed up with “I should like to see that French collection of pictures,” segueing into a new subject (*GL* 290). However, in the three letters Gaskell has written to Dickens, she used clear structure and deliberate prose. She wrote professionally and elucidated clearly. In her first letter to Dickens regarding Pasley, for example, she included three paragraphs, each focused on distinct topics, in direct contrast to letters written to other correspondents (see *GL* 98). Gaskell clearly respected Dickens

as her editor, but she also maintained an aloofness she rarely had with friends and family. At this point, there was little depth of feeling between this author and editor.

Towards the end of 1852, after three years of correspondence, Dickens began to communicate with Gaskell more forcefully regarding revisions to her stories. In her Christmas tale, “The Old Nurse’s Story,” Dickens suggested several times that Gaskell should modify the end to allow only one character to see the ghosts, and Gaskell began to resist this intrusion into her creativity. Gerald G. Grubb explains that Gaskell was “inclined to rebel against Dickens’ editorial methods,” especially in these early long stories (“Dickens’ Editorial Methods” 92). However, according to Dickens’s letters, she did eventually make some changes, but not what Dickens recommended. Dickens warned her, “I have no doubt, according to every principle of art that is known to me from Shakspeare downwards, that you weaken the terror of the story by making [all the characters] see the phantoms at the end” (Pilgrim 6: 815; 4 December 1852). In a later scenario depicted on September 19, 1853, Gaskell had asked for an “outline” from him, presumably regarding the upcoming Christmas issue, but Dickens refused abruptly, adding his expectations of four specific elements to the story, including that it should be narrated by someone at a Christmas fireside and that it didn’t need to have a moral—but then qualified his instructions with a polite comment that Dickens typically included in his letters to Gaskell: “[I]t only needs to be done by you to be well done” (7: 151). Michie argues that Gaskell was in the position of “having her own stories appropriated” and, as a woman writer, must “seek to resist [this] masculine appropriation of her work” (95). However, at this point in their relationship, I see Dickens comfortably challenging Gaskell and trusting his own sense of *story* that compels him to suggest changes, while

consistently encouraging Gaskell in the process. Furthermore, Dickens ended this letter dismissively, referring to his encouragement: "[A]nd if you don't believe that—I can't help it" (Pilgrim 7: 151). This final comment punctuates this period of their relations, demonstrating a more intense tone that foreshadows the notoriously stormy time over the next year.

1854 brought about the consequential episode of conflict over Gaskell's writing *North and South* that she and Dickens are known for, specifically centered in the voluminous amount of material Gaskell wrote for the novel. Through his editorial assistant, Wills, Dickens asked Gaskell if she would provide a longer story for his *Household Words*, which later became Gaskell's most celebrated novel (see 7: 235; 2 January 1854). Within a month, Gaskell responded, requesting "calculations" from Dickens regarding serial installments, and Dickens informed her through a letter to her husband on another matter⁴ that he had those calculations for her and "if she waves her pen as a token that she will like to have them," he will send them (see 7: 265 and fn.; 5 February 1854). This immediate request on the part of Gaskell demonstrates her awareness of the concerns of publishing serially and indicates her desire to conform to those constraints, even planning for them from the start. Ironically, two weeks later on February 18, 1854, Dickens explained to Gaskell, "Don't you put yourself out at all, as to the division of the story into parts. . . . I have no doubt of being able to make such little suggestions as to breaks of chapters . . . easily" and emphasized that she should "write it in [her] own way" (7: 278-79). Although Dorothy W. Collin claims that the "reassuring tone" of these lines is "deceptive," I suggest that Dickens is hopeful but "overconfident" that he will be able to break the divisions "easily" (70; cf. Pilgrim 7: 279 fn.). It is

important to recognize that it is *Gaskell* who took the initiative to request information about divisions, doing so more than six months before her novel was published, although the publication date had yet to be determined.⁵ Gaskell was clearly aware of the constraints imposed on her as author.

There is a minor but important misunderstanding that has been perpetuated in the story of how *North and South* came to be published serially in *Household Words*. Several scholars claim that Gaskell began writing *North and South* in 1853, but there is clearer evidence that it was begun after Dickens offered her the proposal of January 2, 1854. In 1938, Grubb stated that Mrs. Gaskell began the “planning and working out of the story” of *North and South* in 1853 and claimed that she was “actively engaged” in writing it during the winter of 1853 to 1854 (“Dickens’ Editorial Methods” 94). A. B. Hopkins, who thoroughly told the story in her biography of Gaskell and speculated on many aspects of it, claimed that “Dickens had approved the plan of this book”—approved it when Gaskell laid it out before him “sometime in 1853” and “substantiated” that approval by Wills’s business offer in January of 1854 (144). Hopkins further states that Gaskell “had sent a draft of the first chapters at about the same time or shortly afterwards” to Forster, who “heartily and earnestly” urged her to go ahead with the novel (qtd. in Hopkins 144). But there is a discrepancy between two dates for this one letter from Forster. James A. Davies, in his 1983 biography of Forster, dated this letter in his footnotes as November 21, 1853 (273). But the Pilgrim editors, in their 1993 volume seven of Dickens’s letters, placed this identical quotation in a letter to Gaskell from Forster dated January 16, 1854 (see 7: 320 fn.). Hopkins could be presuming either of these dates since she claimed Gaskell told Dickens about the story “sometime in 1853,”

and she didn't date this letter in her text (see 144). Under the scenario Hopkins presented, both dates could support her statements.⁶

In her 1971 article telling this same story of *North and South*, Collin also claimed that Gaskell wrote to Dickens about “writing something on a larger scale than anything she had so far sent to [him]” (69). Collin argued, “Presumably something new in length and intention must have been contemplated [by Gaskell] to cause her to seek reassurance [from Dickens] about its suitability in advance of composition” (69). Collin referenced a letter to Gaskell by Dickens dated April 13, 1853, and used this as a reference point in time for her argument, highlighting Dickens's words: “I do assure you [Mrs. Gaskell] that you cannot write too much for *Household Words*” (69). Collin then stated that three weeks later—on May 3, 1853—Dickens wrote Gaskell again, “assuring her that ‘the subject is certainly *not* too serious,’” asking Gaskell to “send the papers,” and telling her that he will think of a title (69). But these two letters in particular, I suggest, do not reference *North and South*. The Pilgrim editors, in their footnote for the May 3, 1853, letter, state—in reference to this “*not* too serious” subject, “so sensibly treated”—this same reference from Collin—“Perhaps something arising out of *Ruth*; untraced, so probably given up” (Pilgrim 7: 76). These editors do state, in a footnote associated with the April 13 letter, that Dickens did “clearly imply” he wanted a longer “serial novel,” but they reference a completely different part of Dickens's letter: his mention of his “dear friends *Ruth* and *Mary Barton*,” to which he “can put no limitations on” (7: 62). I argue that the discussions of *story* in these two letters have nothing to do with *North and South*.

Finally, Gerin developed the 1853 argument even more than either Hopkins or Collin in her 1976 biography of Elizabeth Gaskell. She also referenced the two letters

Collin discusses. Gerin stated that Dickens's invitation to "future work," mentioned in the April 13, 1853, letter, "had an immediate effect: [Gaskell] sent him the outline for a new book which she was prepared to publish serially with him" (142). Gerin included the full letter of May 3 and concluded that Gaskell's "new work thus early projected" was "left undeveloped several months after" and "was the basis for her next novel *North and South*" (143). But later in her biography, Gerin suggested a mystery. She states that, in response to an offer to write for the publisher Bentley, Gaskell refuses. Gerin quotes Gaskell from a letter dated September 29, 1853: "I have not a line written of anything whatever" and "I . . . hav[e] literally nothing to write about" (150). Gerin herself recognized that this was a "surprise" after Dickens's warm response to her approach the previous year (150). Furthermore, Gerin qualified her statement, declaring that Gaskell had taken time off to head to Paris, "whether or not the book were already begun" and suggested that Gaskell "presumably began" *North and South* after her return to Manchester "at the end of February 1854" (150-51). This acknowledgement of uncertainty from Gerin indicates that her conclusion is questionable. Gaskell herself stated that she had "not a line written" in September 1853, four months after Hopkins, Collin, and Gerin claimed she approached Dickens in May with *North and South*. Furthermore, the Pilgrim editors stated clearly that this potential story in these two letters was "untraced" and "probably given up" (7: 76 fn.). Finally, Jenny Uglow points out in her 1999 biography of Gaskell that Gaskell "was still planning her book" when Charlotte Brontë wrote of her engagement to Arthur Bell Nichols on April 18, 1854 (356), and Vann agrees that Gaskell "began work" on *North and South* in February 1854 ("Dickens" 66). Given that there is clear disagreement as to when Gaskell started *North and South*,

placing the emphasis on Gaskell's own words to Bentley is important. It seems likely that Gaskell neither began *North and South* in 1853 nor offered it to Dickens during that year but did discuss some other project with him that, as the Pilgrim editors stated, was "probably given up" (7: 76 fn.). Instead, Gaskell responded immediately to Dickens's offer in January of 1854 and began to pour out her story in the spring of that year.⁷

A discussion of the date of the genesis of *North and South* is important because the difficulties that Dickens and Gaskell will have over the next year regarding her story revolve around the amount of time Gaskell had to compose the novel, the voluminous amount of content Gaskell provided, and Dickens's and Gaskell's responses to these concerns, especially in light of the tight constraints of a publishing schedule. Considering the precise dating of when Gaskell began her story can more carefully demonstrate how Gaskell used the months preceding publication and comment on Dickens's expectations and reactions to what Gaskell sent him. It would be more difficult for both Dickens and Gaskell to control output with a more compressed time frame if Gaskell began the novel in the spring of 1854.

By May 1854, a full three months before initial publication, Gaskell was beginning to become overwhelmed by the novel she was writing. About May 14, 1854, Gaskell demonstrated mixed feelings about the novel, explaining to Forster that her friend Mrs. Shaen liked *North and South*, "much to [her] surprize" (GL 282). During this time, Gaskell had been "half wonder[ing] whether another character might not be introduced"—a "sort of humble companion & young housekeeper" to her character Mrs. Thornton, who might be "jealous" of Margaret Hale; and she told Forster this (281). But Mrs. Shaen "thinks another character would make it too much," because it is already

“cramfull of possible interest” (282). Indeed, Gaskell told Forster that she has “got the people well on,—but . . . in too lengthy a way” and that the written lines need some “prun[ing],” but she is confident that she “can still make [the novel] good” (290; 17 May 1854). Gaskell’s early effort “writ[ing] every spare moment” with “little relaxation,” as she told her daughter, Marianne, on June 5, 1854, was already becoming a burden (297). The hefty size of the novel this early in the year will cause problems in the summer and fall, coming between her and Dickens as they struggle to serialize. While the author in her wanted to advance her plot and develop her characters, Gaskell recognized the strict need to cut her story considerably but found it a difficult task to do.

As Gaskell and Dickens headed into the summer, tensions began to rise between them. On June 15, 1854, Dickens sent Gaskell a long and detailed letter with which he launched the series of letters that illuminate both the strife of the summer and Dickens’s editorial instincts. First, Dickens pointed out three times that he had carefully set aside time to read this first batch of manuscript she sent him. Next, he complimented her, telling her that if he had “had more to read, [he] certainly could not have stopped” (Pilgrim 7: 355). He elaborately detailed specific calculations “as distinctly as [he] can” for dividing the manuscript and offered to do this himself, explaining that the novel would be “mortally injured” if it was not divided this way—especially when published as a volume of periodicals (7: 355-56). He states that this “last consideration is strong” with him because he knows the demands of the “periodical form of appearance” and does “not apologize . . . for laying so much stress” on it; he felt it was his responsibility to explain to her that the story would not succeed if he did not (7: 355-56). Finally, before he even sent this letter to Gaskell, Dickens checked with his printer at Whitefriars to make sure

his calculations were accurate, and the printer's "estimate exactly accord[ed]" with Dickens's (7: 356). Hopkins explains that this June 15 letter "contains plenty of matter to breed dissatisfaction," matter that will emerge as the summer wears on (145). It is at this point that the loss of Gaskell's letters begins to make a great difference in understanding both perspectives of the situation.

This June 15 letter also demonstrates many aspects of Dickens's editorial practices. First, Dickens complimented Gaskell by emphasizing the time he took to read the text and when he tells her that it is an "admirable story . . . full of character and power" and has the "very best marks of [her] hand upon it" (Pilgrim 7: 355). Second, he was concerned that Gaskell would not understand his divisions, so he enunciated the detail carefully, stating clearly where each number should end (see 7: 355). Although Gaskell had requested calculations to guide her as she wrote, it appears by Dickens's responses that she had trouble adhering to those. As a result, he asked her to carefully watch the divisions. In his emphasis on structural concerns, he had the well-being of his periodical fully in mind. Finally, Dickens had mentioned the "difficult and dangerous subject" of Mr. Hale's leaving the Church of England when he discussed the lengthy dialogue (see 355-56). In his concern for both this important topic and its length, Dickens demonstrated both his interest in the content of the story and his sense of responsibility to his public. Dickens was behaving as an editor would naturally behave. He was intimately acquainted with page needs, column requirements—down to the inch—and especially where a story would break naturally and successfully, both for the weekly need and the final volume form of the periodical. Hopkins agrees that Dickens's "purposes and practices as editor" of his weekly magazine are clearly evident in this letter (145). The

consummate editor, Dickens spoke clearly, concisely, and professionally to his contributor.

Just over two weeks later on July 2, 1854, however, a transitional moment in the summer took place when Dickens, for the first time, showed distinct exasperation towards Gaskell, and Gaskell recognized the need to slow down the serialization process. Once again Dickens emphasized that to “avoid the ‘confusedest’ climax,” he would write as “formally as an Act of Parliament” and then defended himself against claims Gaskell has made (7: 363). Presumably she had resisted his assumption that he would insert content into the endings of her work as he suggested in his June 15 letter, because he explains that he “had not any ambition to interpose [his] own words of conclusion to any of the divisions,” but wanted to “smooth everything for [her] . . . in their easiest light” (see 7: 355, 363). Dickens also emphasized the need for strict division, explaining that he was “under an imperative necessity” which “I can no more change than I can change the weather or my tenure of life” (363). He also reminded Gaskell that the advertising he expects for her will be the same he expects for himself and that he has a “very considerable respect for [his] Art and a very considerable respect” for himself (363). Finally, Dickens also condescendingly responded to her suggestion of a name, claiming that “Margaret Hale is as good a name as any other; and I merely referred to its having a name at all, because books usually have names” (363). From the first line of this letter to the last, Dickens’s tone expressed a touch of irritation clearly evident in his flow of words. He clearly felt that Gaskell had not adhered to the constraints he expected of her, and he also began to become notably impatient.

Referenced in this same letter, however, Gaskell has asked Dickens if he thought it might be better to delay publication until the “entire [manuscript] is in hand” (see 7: 363). But he put off her request for his opinion, claiming that he needed to “have read some more” of her story in order to decide, asking her to send by July 25th “what more of it [she] can spare” (363). Shelston states that Gaskell had “never before committed herself” to the “unrelenting pressures” of planned installment writing and claims that Dickens “warned her about this,” but Gaskell perceptively recognized that the project was becoming too big for them and suggested to Dickens that they wait for publication until she was finished with the manuscript (19). If Dickens had held off on planned publication, another solution could have been devised, such as Dickens publishing *North and South* in monthly parts just as *Pickwick* had been. Advertisements for Gaskell’s novel were not published until August 19—several weeks into the future—so Dickens could have delayed (see Pilgrim 7: 380 fn., 381 fn.). Hopkins claims that Gaskell’s question was “crucial,” Dickens did not answer it “wisely,” and “much ink, paper, and emotional energy” could have been saved if he had (146). By holding off on publication at this point, much strife could have been avoided.

This is a very important point in the relationship of Dickens and Gaskell. Much has been made of their continuous argument over the summer months that resulted in a novel that was not what Gaskell wanted but nominally demonstrated Dickens’s own vision. It was not too late for them to pause and rethink the plan for publication, and Dickens could have stopped it. He told Gaskell that he would give her a response to this suggestion after he had read more of her novel, but his next substantive letter of July 26, 1854, demonstrates that he felt he must move forward with it. Maybe Dickens had no

other serial he felt could be published; or maybe he wanted Gaskell's novel because it promised to communicate at least some of the convictions he had. It is unclear why he continued on the publication path, but by moving ahead, he prepared a difficult path for Gaskell to follow—something Gaskell clearly believed might happen. Furthermore, by pressing ahead, Gaskell's plans for the growth of her heroine in *North and South* will become frustrated.

Dickens's next letter, dated July 26, 1854, six weeks before publication, illustrates that a heightened sense of time is at hand. Here Dickens clarified that he has received the "continuation" of Gaskell's manuscript—a second batch—which he requested in his previous letter, and once again detailed the division of this section of the novel (7: 378). He also very explicitly asked her to "make some curtailment" of the printed proof—and this fact is important in regards to the intensity that continued to develop the rest of the summer. Surprisingly, Gaskell had not made it clear to him how she felt about dividing the story into chapters, so he asked for clarification, but he didn't directly answer the question she had ostensibly asked him in the previous letter—about waiting for the full manuscript. He did, however, communicate that he was ready to publish since he had "so much [manuscript] in hand" and requested Gaskell's approval for this to happen. Finally, he urgently asked her four times to reply to him, emphasizing that "[t]here is no time to spare" (7: 378).

Five days later, on July 31, 1854, Dickens's tone was markedly different, backing off from his earlier intensity. Presumably Gaskell responded with distress over his focus on business matters because here he explained that he "confined [himself] to the business part" in his previous communication because she seemed to resent his doing anything

else (7: 382). Dickens wrote much more expansively about the status of her novel, its start date of September 2, 1854, and its advertisements. Dickens relaxed and communicated in a more friendly manner, sharing with Gaskell about the “immense Camp” that was situated in France near his home and his “dreadfully lazy” behavior after finishing *Hard Times* (7: 383). He continued this conversational dialogue in his next letter of August 17, 1854, discussing the troops in Boulogne even more (7: 397). By taking this new tone, Dickens recognized that in some way he offended Gaskell, and, wanting to rectify that, took his time to communicate relationally. He knew that she would appreciate a letter filled with friendly news—that this would go far to repair any *faux pas* between them. As editor, Dickens also knew that it was important to keep his contributor happy. By communicating to Gaskell in a way that might satisfy her, he was working to keep the relationship strong.

Just three days after Dickens’s friendly letters, on August 20, 1854, in the final extant letter from Dickens to Gaskell before publication of the first installment of *North and South*, Dickens returned to an intense tone: He is angry at finding the proof for the second issue of her story—a portion from the first batch of manuscripts—to be “unaltered” by Gaskell (7: 402). Dickens tells her, “This is the place where *we agreed* that there should be great condensation, and considerable compression” (7: 402; my emphasis). In looking back at Dickens’s letters for an agreement regarding this first batch, the key letter is that of June 15. In this letter, Dickens did not explicitly tell Gaskell he wanted her to make changes but only mentioned his concerns. There are two phrases that indicate his desire for modification on Gaskell’s part, but neither is explicit: “I think there is a necessity for fusing two Nos. into one,” and he can “allow” for “a little

compression here and there” (7: 356). Where Dickens did explicitly ask for a shortening is in his letter of July 26, in which he explained that he received Gaskell’s “continuation” of her manuscript and detailed how he would divide it (7: 378). In this July letter, he states, “I think that portion [of lengthy conversation] . . . would be very materially improved if you would not object to make some curtailment in the printed proof” (7: 378). But this manuscript is her *second* batch, published in numbers eight through twelve, not the first batch, in which he is unclear about shortening. However, when he received the proof of the *first* batch of manuscript, he claimed that “we agreed” to condense and further stated, “What I would recommend—and *did recommend*” was to modify the dialogue pertaining to Margaret’s father’s leaving the Church of England, making it “as short as you can find it in your heart to make it”—and urged her to “do so at once” (7: 402; my emphasis). Dickens was angry at Gaskell for not condensing, but Dickens’s anger seems to have been directed at the wrong batch of manuscripts: Gaskell did not make any changes because she did not understand from Dickens’s first communication with her on June 15 that she was expected to condense the first manuscript.

The Pilgrim editors comment on this situation in three different places. The first and third comments are attached to the June 15 and the August 20 letters, respectively. They both state, in essence, “Mrs. Gaskell apparently agreed to condense the two Nos., but in fact sent Wills the second No. unaltered” (cf. 7: 356, 7: 402). This is true, as long as the assumption that Gaskell “apparently agreed” is true; and she did send Wills the second number unaltered. The second and more significant comment is attached to the July 26 letter, which mentions the second batch of manuscripts (7: 378). The editors state, “Either Mrs. Gaskell agreed to this or Dickens assumed she had, since on her failure to do

so he reacted angrily" (7: 378). But Dickens only became angry when Gaskell did not alter the *first* batch of manuscripts. Yet this comment from the editors is associated with the *second* batch, mentioned in the July 26 letter. It is easy to conflate these two batches: they are both lengthy dialogues that Dickens wanted shortened. However, it is important to demonstrate that, in fact, Dickens was probably the one to have made an honest mistake here and conflated the two manuscripts—although the editors' comments are also misleading. Given that Gaskell's letters are lost, it is impossible to know precisely whether she made such a commitment to Dickens, but Vann agrees that "[f]rom the extant correspondence there is no evidence of an agreement" ("Dickens" 67). Further, in Dickens's letters to Gaskell, he regularly mentions her communications, and none of his extant letters contains language that intimates her agreement.

Another point regarding this letter is interesting. Collin explains—and the Pilgrim editors confirm—that the words "I've not a notion what he means" is written in Gaskell's hand on her original manuscript near the third paragraph (81; cf. 7: 402 fn.). Collin suggests several meanings for this comment, including Collin's own conclusion that it refers to Gaskell's not understanding "the tone and assertiveness of the whole communication as far as it concerned *North and South*," while the Pilgrim editors indicate that the comment alludes to Gaskell's not keeping a draft of her manuscript (81; cf. Pilgrim 7: 402 fn.). I suggest, however, that this hand-written note by Gaskell supports my argument that Gaskell had "not a notion" in June that she was expected to shorten a portion of the first batch of manuscripts. In this letter of August 20, 1854, Dickens had emphasized that they "agreed" there should be condensation, but Gaskell's hand-written comment sheds new light on how this well-known misunderstanding should be

understood. Gaskell did not realize that she was expected to condense her first batch of manuscripts. With Gaskell's recognition in May of the "lengthy" content of *North and South* and even her sense in July that the novel should be delayed, Dickens's anger and mistaken response probably overwhelmed and confused her (see *GL* 290; 17 May 1854). Again, unfortunately, there are no extant letters from Gaskell to Dickens indicating whether from her perspective she agreed to make cuts as Dickens claimed.

While this important misunderstanding between Gaskell and Dickens comments on their interpersonal relations, an equally important issue that is key to this misunderstanding is, in fact, what Gaskell was expected to cut from her batches of manuscript and what those cuts emphasize. Both sections that Dickens wanted shortened at this point in the summer involve dialogues: In his June 15 and 17, 1854, letter, Dickens suggested cutting Mr. Hale and Margaret's dialogue addressing why he left the established Church to become a Dissenter; and in his letter of July 26, 1854, Dickens wanted Gaskell to curtail dialogue surrounding Margaret Hale's conversation with Mrs. Thornton preceding the strike that occurs. Both cuts address important issues for both Dickens and Gaskell. Dickens called Mr. Hale's dissenting a "difficult and dangerous" topic (see 7: 355-56), recognizing that this area of British life was socially stigmatizing, and he clearly felt it would be too polarizing for his readership (Altick, *Victorian People* 32). But Gaskell would have preferred to leave this section in to be able to develop the important reasons her character chose to leave the Church—especially at the beginning of her novel. The scene with Mrs. Thornton is associated with the strike, and, by removing it or modifying it for serialization, it emphasized the strike even more. If Gaskell had been able to leave this section in, the relationship between Margaret and her future mother-in-

law would have been enhanced. What these changes demonstrate are the varying ways Dickens and Gaskell desired to reach out to their public. Dickens wanted to avoid religious conflict, whereas Gaskell broached the topic immediately in her story—and gave a lot of space to it. In the Mrs. Thornton scene, Dickens preferred to remove dialogue that seemed to him unnecessary to the story that he perceived Gaskell was telling—one that emphasized industrial concerns. However, Gaskell needed this section to portray a relational dynamic between Margaret and Mrs. Thornton that was important to her. Although Dickens and Gaskell shared a humanitarian spirit that drove them to highlight social changes in their culture, in the preparation for *North and South*, they demonstrated different emphases: Dickens wanted to highlight industrial concerns; Gaskell focused on relational matters. These changes occurred early in the process of serialization, but they represented and foreshadowed similar modifications that would be required of Gaskell.

Simultaneously with his letters to Gaskell during the summer of 1854, Dickens also wrote regularly to his assistant editor, Wills, adding to the picture of how the publication of *North and South* was progressing. Lai explains that “not all contributions were seen by Dickens in advance” but were often passed through Wills’s hands first, and, given the intensity of the summer communication with Gaskell, it is important to consider Dickens’s correspondence with Wills (43). Two concerns that emerge out of these letters to both Wills and Gaskell are Gaskell’s ambiguity in correspondence and her delay in sending proofs. Much of the communication regarding lack of clarity is directed to Gaskell. For example, when he wrote on June 15, Dickens emphasized that he “distinctly” will show Gaskell the divisions he suggests and says he hopes he “will not

confuse” her and that his remarks “will come out tolerably clear” (7: 356). Indeed, Collin suggests that Gaskell’s manuscript sheets contain a “large flowing hand [that continued] steadily on with little correction and no indication of any kind of division” (73). On July 2, he wanted to avoid a “confusedest” climax, and on July 26 he emphasized his desire to be “better understood” (Pilgrim 7: 363, 378). Finally, to Wills on August 3, Dickens wrote that he had settled a matter with her, “*as far as it is possible to settle anything with her*” (385; my emphasis). Dickens was also concerned about Gaskell’s delays. In July he told Gaskell to write “as soon as [she] can” because “[t]here is no time to spare”; and, in his August lament over her *unaltered* chapters, demanded that she send them altered “at once” (7: 378, 402). Throughout August this need for speed was also prominent in Dickens’s communication with Wills. Dickens told Wills four times, in essence, that he hoped that Gaskell will send Wills her manuscript “immediately” (cf. 7: 394, 398, 403, 405) and that Wills should “*decidedly*” place the advertisement about *North and South* in an upcoming issue (see 7: 394 fn. 6). Over and over in these summer letters, Dickens complained about Gaskell’s ambiguity as well as her delays, adding greatly to the frustration Dickens felt over *North and South*.

During late summer and early fall, Dickens also dealt with communications regarding *North and South* with others besides Gaskell, and it is here that it is helpful to peruse those letters that fill some gaps in time during which no correspondence took place between Dickens and Gaskell. On August 24, 1854, Dickens told Wills, “As to Forster, put him entirely out of the question and leave the settlement of any such dispute with me” (7: 405). As friend and reader, Forster seemed to be communicating to Wills on behalf of Gaskell, who was also writing to Dickens and Wills; and Dickens firmly

instructed Wills to remove Forster from the communications, giving him the freedom to blame Dickens for any repercussions. Furthermore, William Gaskell, Elizabeth's husband, communicated with Dickens at least twice through Wills, asking questions about American copyright issues and, more significantly, requesting extra time for his wife's serialized novel (see 7: 427; 29 September 1854; 7: 448; 29 October 1854).

Dickens advised William Gaskell on copyrights and communicated that "the quantity [of time] shall be increased by all means," but continued to emphasize the "vital importance of faith . . . with the public" (7: 449). In addition to these personnel concerns, on October 14, Dickens told Wills he was not surprised sales for *Household Words* had dropped, because "Mrs. Gaskell's story, so divided, is wearisome in the last degree" (7: 439). Significantly, in August, Dickens had discovered that his printers miscalculated their estimate of Gaskell's writing and furiously told Wills that if he had known that the printers meant "white" when they said "black," he "could not, in [his] senses, have accepted [Gaskell's] story" (7: 406; 24 August 1854). However, Dickens did not blame Gaskell for these printers' errors but told Wills, "Mrs. Gaskell is so far free from blame . . . And of course they put her, as they put me, utterly wrong" (7: 449; 30 October 1854). Not only was Gaskell feeling overwhelmed by the breadth of her novel as evidenced by her husband's request for more time, but Dickens was anxious as well, especially as the novel was divided in *Household Words*.

Fortunately, there is one extant letter from Gaskell to Dickens during the publication period of *North and South*, and it is emotionally forceful. The letter is dated December 17, 1854, just five weeks before the final installment will appear in *Household Words*, and Gaskell opened her heart to Dickens regarding her story. She was very

grateful to Dickens for his recent note, clearly appreciating his encouragement, and tells him, “I dare say I shall like my story, when I am a little further from it” and even felt that in the five deaths included in the work, “each [was] beautifully suited to the character of the individual” (*GL* 324). But Gaskell did not feel the satisfying effects of the completion of such an enormous undertaking and lamented *North and South*, telling Dickens she only felt “depressed about it,” regretfully explaining that she “meant it to have been so much better” (324). Indeed, Gaskell repeatedly used language indicating her unhappiness. She expected what she was sending him in this post to be “too large a batch” of pages; implied a hopelessness regarding this bulk as she anticipated the ending numbers; “never wish[ed] to see it’s face again”; and felt it was a “dull piece” (323). She also gave Dickens and Wills the freedom to “shorten” the manuscript she was sending as they “think best” (324). It seems as if Gaskell gave up control of where this novel had gone and gave up control to her editor, Dickens. The stress of the writing and furious, constant pace over the previous months took their toll, and, as a result, she resigned herself to accepting—for now—the final, serialized version of her novel. Gaskell ended her letter by stating again that Dickens should not consult her “as to the shortenings” but to “only please [himself]” (*GL* 323-24). Gaskell recognized that her book was not what she anticipated, and, at this point five weeks before completion, resigned herself to the story as it was.

Once the challenging episode of the serialization of *North and South* was complete on January 27, 1855, both Dickens and Gaskell responded to its end as an editor and an author would. On the same day the final installment appeared, Dickens sent Gaskell a letter commending her: “Let me congratulate you on the conclusion of your

story; not because it is the end of a task to which you had conceived a dislike[,] . . . but because it is the vigorous and powerful accomplishment of an anxious labor” (Pilgrim 7: 513). Dickens recognized that Gaskell’s overwhelming sensation was not positive and appealed to Gaskell to prevent that “interval of dissatisfaction” with herself—and him—to “linger in the shape of any disagreeable association with *Household Words*” (7: 513-14). Dickens entreated Gaskell to not associate her personal disappointment with the work with him or with his publication, *Household Words*. His words and tone attempted to gain her approval and indicated his desire to be “forgiven” for any wrongs on his part or in relation to the reputation of his business, including financially (see 7: 514). About a week later, Gaskell does tell him unhappily of her overall financial arrangements with the upcoming two-volume publication of *North and South* by Chapman and Hall and mentions her previous arrangement with Dickens. Dickens insisted on sending her a larger fee and then urged her to meet with him in France (7: 519-20; 1 February 1855; 7: 521; 3 February 1855). As editor, Dickens followed through with business concerns for both his contributor’s needs and those of his periodical.

For her part, Gaskell was most concerned with publishing the final, volume version with the story she intended. In her preface to the volume edition she emphasized to her readers that she “found it impossible to develop the story in the manner [she] originally intended” (Gaskell, *North and South* 5). She explained that she added “various short passages” and “several new chapters” to “remedy [the] obvious defect” of the limitations of its development in the periodical (5). In those chapters, Gaskell took her heroine Margaret Hale to her childhood home to contrast her life there with her new life in the industrial north. By adding this key experience, Gaskell intertwined the personal

growth Margaret will experience with her new respect for trade and commerce. Shelston explains that Gaskell's changes in her volume edition are "now totally fixed upon the career of her heroine" and that Gaskell wrote with "considerable force on the psychology" of Margaret's situation (23). The story that highlights this psychological force is the story that Gaskell wanted to be called *Margaret Hale*. By contrast, the story Dickens preferred in his periodical emphasized industry, and this novel was called *North and South*. These two complementary social novels highlight two aspects of the same cultural changes going on in Britain: the dynamic power of the newly formed commercial environment and individuals' acceptance of it. Uffelman concludes succinctly, "For [Gaskell] the story centered on the changing character of Margaret Hale. For [Dickens] the center of interest was the economic and cultural division between *North and South*" ("Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South*" 74). The conflict surrounding these two powerful Victorian voices came as a result of a larger-than-life scenario in the form of a great, big novel that told a story that was too hefty for weekly publication. As Shelston states, once *North and South* got under way, "there could be no going back" (22).

The final nine years of personal and professional relations between Dickens and Gaskell after *North and South* included at least thirteen more stories published in *Household Words* or *All the Year Round*, Dickens's second periodical (see Uglow 618-19). Although Gaskell didn't hold a grudge regarding her novel, there was some bitterness in her feelings towards Dickens himself. Gaskell told her friend and American scholar, C. E. Norton, on March 9, 1859, that *Household Words* overpaid her for two stories, expecting that she would later write a third story for this payment, but Gaskell did not like feeling indebted to them (*GL* 534). She was also "extremely annoyed & hurt" by

Household Words, believing she was misquoted from her past story, “Disappearances,” which was published in *Household Words* years before (534).⁸ Gaskell also explained to Norton that she heard a further complication: in the course of Dickens’s separating from his wife, he will be starting a new periodical she describes denigratingly as “Dickensy,” and she was concerned that “Mr. Wills” expected her to write for this periodical and she “would *much* rather . . . *not*” be a contributor (535). Months later, Gaskell explained to George Smith, the publisher to whom she had slowly become attached, that although she had one good story that was “*not good enough*” for Smith’s *Cornhill Magazine*, it “might be good enough” for *Household Words* (595). This comment suggests that she seemed to see her fiction as deserving a better public than Dickens’s readership. Given that Gaskell’s frustration with the *North and South* experience stemmed from her limitations in producing the novel with the plot lines she desired as author, in addition to her concerns with Dickens personally, it is clear that Gaskell has less respect for Dickens in these final years.

For Dickens’s part, although his world completely transformed through his separation from his wife, he still appreciated Gaskell’s stories. He complimented her on a story she provided for the Christmas issue of *All the Year Round*, claiming it had “force and beauty” (Pilgrim 9: 176, December 8, 1859). He also asked her one more time if she would provide a major story that would “occupy about five months” or twenty-two weekly installments, by the next June, but Gaskell did not provide this story (see 9: 179 and fn.). This letter of December 20, 1859, is the last substantive letter Dickens wrote to Gaskell regarding her literature. However, Dickens did write a famous missive in response to a letter by author Wilkie Collins on March 24, 1855, just a short time after

the completion of the serialization of *North and South*. He discussed a ghost story presumably by Gaskell, stating, among other things, that she “particularly stipulate[d] not to have her proofs touched, ‘even by Mr. Dickens,’” suggesting that if she saw his proof of the published work, she would know which version was better (7: 575-76). But the Pilgrim editors include two important footnotes associated with this letter that explicitly name Dinah Mulock as the author to whom Dickens refers. In essence, they state that Collins had “clearly referred to *Dinah Mulock’s* ‘A Ghost Story’” in his original letter to Dickens, not one by Gaskell (575; my emphasis). Significantly, Hopkins quoted the full pertinent section of Dickens’s letter in her biography of Gaskell without naming Gaskell definitively as the subject, but she carefully speculated that Collins’s letter had “revived some of the old antagonism” on the part of Dickens (150). Assuming the Pilgrim editors are correct in their footnotes, the antagonism Hopkins inferred could not have been directed at Gaskell. In her discussion of this letter, Hopkins also stated that in spite of this memory of the “long struggle,” Dickens was “definitely anxious to retain Mrs. Gaskell as a contributor” (150). After *North and South*, Dickens continued to value the power in Gaskell’s authorial voice.⁹

The final extant letter Dickens wrote to Gaskell, dated April 22, 1861, highlights what *should* be the legacy that binds the Gaskell-Dickens relationship together. This letter demonstrates that Gaskell wrote asking Dickens to return to her a letter she sent to Miss Coutts, that benevolent philanthropist with whom Dickens had worked for so long, and Dickens promised to return it (Pilgrim 9: 405). After the long, tortuous, and emotional journey of correspondence and serial publication, this last letter from Dickens represents themes that originally brought them together: a yearning to help the people

who have suffered the most from the social ills of their time. Indeed, Dickens considered Gaskell's work a "feminine and domesticated version of his own" (Schlicke 247). It was the combination of many factors—Dickens's important editorial needs and tightly scheduled weekly constraints; Gaskell's flourishing prose and burgeoning story; printers' errors; even apparent interference by interested observers—that created a controversial connection between these two important literary figures. Instead of being known as the author-editor pair that was embroiled in a turbulent dispute, seemingly at cross-purposes in the publication of *North and South*, they should be known as two powerful social commentators—one man, one woman—addressing cultural afflictions in their fiction. Whether it was through their first correspondence Gaskell initiated seeking help for Pasley, the former prostitute who desired to do better, or the last letter Dickens wrote to Gaskell just four years before her death that evidenced his passion to improve society, Gaskell and Dickens possessed a profound drive to rescue the downtrodden. This is the legacy that they—as a pair—should be remembered for: a dual voice for good.

CHAPTER III

Convergence: Thackeray, Trollope, and the *Cornhill Magazine*

The commencement of the *Cornhill Magazine*, the enlistment of the famed author-cum-editor William Makepeace Thackeray, and the advent of the up-and-coming novelist Anthony Trollope serendipitously collided in 1860, and together they illuminate the relationship between Thackeray and Trollope, especially in light of the Victorian culture encircling them. Indeed, the *Cornhill Magazine* initiated a trend in publishing that changed the face of the periodical culture. A new type of monthly was created—the “shilling monthly”—that was inexpensive and accessible to a new breed of audience, and it became a vehicle through which fiction was featured to a much greater extent. Andrew Maunder states that in 1860, the *Cornhill* was the “representative magazine, [a] symbol of the commercial literary marketplace” and the “current sensation of the book shop and circulating library circuit” that “quickly assumed almost mythic status as a cultural signifier” (“Discourses” 239). An examination of the relationship between Thackeray and Trollope begins with the genesis of the *Cornhill*, leads through the available correspondence between the editor and author, and concludes with Trollope’s ample writings on his illustrious editor. Although Thackeray and Trollope maintained professional business dealings as editor and author during Thackeray’s brief time editing the *Cornhill*, it was Thackeray’s skill as the author of works like *Vanity Fair* and *Henry Esmond* that Trollope most admired when he placed Thackeray as “first” in line of English novelists in his own time, and through his relationship with Trollope while he was his editor, Thackeray developed respect for Trollope (Trollope, *Autobiography* 203). As a result of their work and writings, Thackeray and Trollope encouraged the changing

quality of “gentlemanliness” that was emerging out of the dynamic transformations that were occurring in the Victorian era.

Into the vibrant literary culture that was flourishing in the middle of the nineteenth century, George Smith of Smith, Elder publishers appeared and conceived the idea of the *Cornhill Magazine*, the idea for which “flashed upon [him] suddenly” (Smith, “Our Birth”¹ 106). The story of the commencement of the *Cornhill*² offers an exciting glimpse into the mid-Victorian transformation of periodical publishing, and the *Cornhill Magazine* is “inseparably linked to the career of perhaps the most important Victorian publisher,” George Smith (Eddy 1). To understand the impact of the convergence of all these forces, it is important to consider the founding publisher’s role in the enterprise, especially in his securing Thackeray as the primary draw to his magazine. Known as a “highly-talented entrepreneur,” Smith was fully committed to the publishing trade (1), and Spencer L. Eddy, Jr. explains that “Smith’s success as a publisher may be attributed to his financial acumen, his instinct for identifying public taste and publishing trends, and his genuine personal interest in books and their writers” (2). This interest and business acumen led Smith to seek new ways of developing literary awareness in the publishing world, and, as a result, he developed the idea of the *Cornhill* (6). He felt that a novel from Thackeray as part of his proposed periodical was crucial to the success of his endeavor (7). Smith had first met Thackeray when Charlotte Brontë, whose *Jane Eyre* became Smith, Elder’s first major publishing venture, requested to meet her literary idol—Thackeray—while she was being fêted in London in 1849 (Eddy 3-4). Smith called on Thackeray personally, inviting him to meet Brontë, and through this hospitable connection, the two men established a personal and professional rapport. Smith then

published several of Thackeray's works, including *Henry Esmond*, and Thackeray relied on Smith for financial advice (4-6). When the *Cornhill* began, Thackeray was nearing the end of his authorial career, having written for *Fraser's Magazine* and *Punch*, which started him towards success (Ray, *Uses* 349). In 1847-48, he published *Vanity Fair* in parts, contributing to his "years of prosperity" (387). Famously his wife became mentally ill, and her medical needs forced him to seek to provide carefully for her and his daughters, and Smith's offer allowed him to earn some of the wealth he needed for their provision (Elwin 100, 346). By securing Thackeray first as author and then as editor of the *Cornhill Magazine*, Smith sought to take advantage of both Thackeray's name recognition and his "fine literary judgment" ("Our Birth" 106, 108). Thackeray was the first important addition to the *Cornhill* that Smith made as he started out.

After securing Thackeray, Smith and the new editor worked together to build up the *Cornhill*. They gathered a "superior class of writers"—geologists, lawyers, chemists, for example—who would set a sophisticated tone to the periodical and who could communicate intelligently about their specialties (Eddy 19; "Our Birth" 110). Thackeray suggested the name *Cornhill* after the magazine's location headquarters and then hired a young artist, Godfrey Sykes, to design the elaborate cover for the magazine (Eddy 15). Smith recognized that the *Cornhill* would fill a gap in periodical publishing: the few magazines available were high-priced and narrow in literary content, and this gap could be filled by a magazine with a serial novel by Thackeray and other literary matter that cost just a shilling—the price the public normally paid for just one monthly part of fiction ("Our Birth" 106). John A. Sutherland points out that in Smith's initial contract with Thackeray, the publisher notably employed him to produce two consecutive novels for

the magazine. “No other magazine played one card as strongly as this,” claims Sutherland, who adds that “Smith intended to rivet Thackeray” to his new magazine (“Thackeray-Smith Contracts” 175). With Thackeray at its helm, fiction prominently featured, and with the variety of innovations the duo incorporated, Smith felt the *Cornhill* would succeed (see “Our Birth” 106).

Into this confluence of Smith, Thackeray, and the *Cornhill Magazine*, Trollope entered and offered himself as a contributor to the periodical, resulting in his celebrated novel, *Framley Parsonage*. *Framley Parsonage* is the fourth offering in the Barchester Chronicles series that highlighted what Smith claimed as Trollope’s “genius . . . in delineating clerical life and character” (Huxley 97). Recollecting how he came to initiate this offer in his 1882 *Autobiography*, Trollope explains,

[E]ven in Ireland, where I was still living in October, 1859, I had heard of the *Cornhill* magazine, which was to come out on the 1st of January, 1860, under the editorship of Thackeray. . . . On the 23rd of October, 1859, I wrote to Thackeray, offering to send him for the magazine certain [short] stories. In reply to this I received two letters,--one from Messrs. Smith and Elder, the proprietors of the *Cornhill*, dated 26th of October and the other from the editor, written two days later. (116)

Thackeray sent encouraging words back to Trollope, stating that he was “very glad indeed” Trollope would become a new contributor (qtd. in *Autobiography* 116). Upon meeting Trollope for the first time in London on November 3, 1859, Smith clarified that he and Thackeray were interested in “an English tale, on English life, with a clerical flavor” from Trollope’s pen and offered Trollope the unexpected sum of £1000, asking

for the beginning of the story by December 12 (120, 117). Trollope was stunned that at such a late date these proprietors had not secured the primary novel they would highlight, but he humorously explained that given the “interesting little details as to honorarium”—the £1000— “had a couple of archbishops been demanded, [he] should have produced them” (*Thackeray* 51; cf. *Autobiography* 117). He immediately composed the plot and the first few pages of *Framley Parsonage* on the way home to Ireland on the train. The first three chapters of the novel were given “the place of honour” as the leader for the first issue “by Thackeray’s own arrangement and on the grounds of pure courtesy,” according to Smith (120; “Our Birth” 112). The novel “enjoyed a tremendous vogue,” although Trollope himself claimed that he could not say that the story he wrote was good but that “it was received with greater favour than any [he] had written before or . . . since,” adding self-deprecatingly, “I think almost anything would have been then accepted coming under Thackeray’s editorship” (Skilton 19; *Thackeray* 52). Eddy relates Lady Anne Thackeray Ritchie’s story of her first realization of the “privileges of an editor’s daughter” at being able to enjoy Trollope’s popular serial when, “instead of having to wait a month for the second number of *Framley Parsonage*, her father sent her upstairs to fetch the further proofsheets which were lying on his table” (39). N. John Hall states that *Framley Parsonage* “made Trollope a star novelist” and “changed him permanently into a serial novelist” (“Glue and Daydreams” 90). Trollope entered into the lively combination of a partnership that already included Smith and Thackeray working at high speed towards producing the *Cornhill Magazine*. The convergence of all these forces fashioned an exciting adventure that Trollope later claimed was “well remembered” and “talked about and thought of before it first appeared” (*Thackeray* 50).

The primary association between Thackeray and Trollope was as editor and author, so it is crucial to consider each of them in light of these roles. Thackeray had always wanted to work in an editorial role, but most of his attempts at getting involved in periodicals in a leadership position were not successful (Elwin 56; cf. 31-32). As a young man, he wrote verses for a school magazine called the *Carthusian* and as an undergraduate helped establish the weekly *Snob* and a more serious work, the *Chimera* (38). But a more important early influence on Thackeray was “the great lion of literary journalism,” Dr. William Maginn, who took Thackeray to the offices of the *Standard* and



Figure 4. Thackeray, 1860-63. “[Thackeray’s] knowledge of human nature was supreme, and his characters stand out as human beings, with a force any truth which has not, I think, been within the reach of any other English novelist in any period.” ~ Anthony Trollope, *An Autobiography of Anthony Trollope*, p. 203. Watkins, Herbert. [Portrait of William Makepeace Thackeray.] National Portrait Gallery. CC-BY-NC-ND 3.0. <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/>

showed him the “mysteries of printing and writing leading articles” (46, 48). Thackeray also became involved in the business side of periodicals when he and his stepfather, Major (later Captain) Henry Carmichael-Smyth, invested in the *National Standard* (51). Thackeray became editor after the first editor failed but became overwhelmed with the job, and at six weeks he handed over his editorial responsibilities to an assistant and departed for Paris, where he focused on contributing to the periodical (54-55). Even after Thackeray renamed the magazine *Literary Standard*, raised the price, and added literature to its offerings, the magazine was not popular and ceased publication just thirteen months after it began (57-58). Later Thackeray also helped establish the *Constitutional and Public Ledger*, which gave him a consistent salary and allowed him to marry, but this enterprise lasted only nine months, because the politically Radical writers geared their articles to the illiterate class of people whose members were not a viable reading public (69). Still later, in 1854, Thackeray discussed with George Smith the idea of a periodical called *Fair Play* that he would edit, but Peter L. Shillingsburg explains that Thackeray didn't follow through on this plan because of an incident in 1855 when he unintentionally insulted contributors to *Punch*, causing him to doubt his ability to be an editor without “inadvertently making enemies” (102). Still, when the *Cornhill* commenced just a few years later, Thackeray found in *Cornhill* “the belated fulfillment of an ambition he had expressed in his paradoxical fashion early in life to head ‘a slashing, brilliant, gentlemanlike, sixpenny aristocratic literary paper,’” as Robert A. Colby describes it (“Goose Quill” 205). Thackeray eagerly anticipated working on the new shilling magazine, and he told Smith on September 7, 1859, “As I think of the editing business I like it” (Thackeray, *Letters*, 4: 149).

Although Thackeray agreed to be named as editor of the *Cornhill*, he and Smith shared the daily work. Smith and Thackeray agreed that Smith would do what was necessary “to supplement any want of business qualifications on [Thackeray’s] part” (“Our Birth” 108). Writing in 1910 in the *Cornhill* for the jubilee issue, Lady Ritchie confirms that the role of editing “did not lie within [Thackeray’s] scope” and clarifies that Smith would “undertake all business transactions,” and her father would write, criticize, and suggest ideas (2). She remembers the “stream of notes and messengers . . . of consultations [and] calculations” that took place between Smith and Thackeray and shares how Smith met with her father on a daily basis:

My father would go to Wimbledon, where the young couple Mr. and Mrs. George Smith were then living. Later on it was Mr. Smith who used to come to see my Father, driving in early, morning after morning, on his way to business, carrying a certain black bag full of papers and correspondence, and generally arriving about breakfast-time. (2)

The two discussed manuscripts and subjects together, and Thackeray and Smith agreed that each had veto power over content and contributors, and this strengthened the magazine (“Our Birth” 124; Ray, *Age* 300). Each week Thackeray received more than a hundred contributions by dilettantes who wanted to be published, and these were the most distressing to Thackeray. Thackeray often “tinker[ed] with hopeless offerings from persons for whom he felt a kindness” and had trouble ignoring the “wide variety of charitable appeals” he received (320). To help lighten the load of work, Smith held monthly dinners with relaxing conversation among literary acquaintances at his home in Gloucester Square in London (“Our Birth” 119). Thackeray worked hard to keep one-

sided political aggression to a minimum, and, although he told Smith in November 1859 that “[i]t will be the greatest of pities if we give up [reviews] of good books,” Smith did not concur, and they were not included (Ray, *Age* 301; Thackeray, *Letters* 4: 162). In spite of his desire to play an editorial role, Thackeray struggled: he lacked orderliness, misplaced manuscripts, and delayed correcting proofs (Ray 320). Even Smith recognized that Thackeray was “far too tender-hearted to be happy as an editor” (“Our Birth” 124). The daily grind of detail that an editor must accomplish did not utilize Thackeray’s strengths.

What Thackeray could offer to the *Cornhill* and its readers, however, was his gentlemanly status. As Gordon N. Ray highlights, Thackeray’s “birth assured him a good social position, . . . an easy fortune,” and “the education of a gentleman” (*Uses* 13). It was Thackeray’s desire for “the ideal of the middle-class gentleman [to be] held up for imitation” in the *Cornhill*, and this gentlemanly tone was infused into the periodical from the start (Ray, *Age* 301). Robin Gilmour states, “Like many men of his generation, Thackeray was steeped in the eighteenth century, and he found a powerful creative stimulus in its literature”—a literature that emphasized images of gentlemanliness (20). According to Gilmour, land owners, men of noble birth and good families, clergymen, army officers, or members of parliament were all eligible for gentleman status, but inclusion required more than rank or family position: a moral component was also necessary, and Thackeray brought this ideal to the *Cornhill* (13). In his prospectus of November 1859, Thackeray introduced the magazine, making it clear that the focus would not be on him but that he planned to invite “pleasant and instructed gentlemen and ladies” to contribute to the conversation “good-humouredly” and “not in a manner

obtrusively didactic” (qtd. in “Our Birth” 110). He was looking for all kinds of contributors—foxhunters, geologists, members of the House of Commons, engineers, manufacturers—but wanted these to “have good manners, a good education, and write in good English” (110). Indeed, Thackeray spent much time using his influence to secure the best contributors he could find,³ and Smith claimed that “[n]o other group of writers equally brilliant had ever before been brought together within the covers of one magazine” (Huxley 100). As editor, Thackeray offered his “Roundabout Papers,” a series of “informal chats” between himself and his readership, considered to be Thackeray’s best writing in the *Cornhill* (Schmidt, “In the Shadow” 77-78; cf. Colby, “Goose Quill” 209). These essays allowed him to “merge wisdom with nostalgia . . . as he would at a dinner party, telling anecdotes, frankly admitting his prejudices, [and] making moral and social pronouncements,” and these pronouncements became guidance to his readers (Schmidt, “In the Shadow” 78). Thackeray himself set a friendly tone in his prospectus: “The kindly fruits of the earth, which grow for all—may we not enjoy them with friendly hearts?” (qtd. in “Our Birth” 111). The gentleman training inherent to Thackeray’s upbringing, his concern for his readers, and his desire for like-minded contributors shaped the early tone of the *Cornhill* and allowed him to communicate an old-world perspective to his public.

While Thackeray’s name and gentlemanly social status augmented the weight of the new shilling magazine, Thackeray himself also served as a transitional figure for the middle-class audience the *Cornhill* reached. Ray states that Thackeray attained a “high position among his contemporaries chiefly by redefining the gentlemanly ideal to fit a middle class rather than an aristocratic context” (*Uses* 13). As a young man, Thackeray

squandered his patrimony, and it was through this disastrous loss as well as through growth and maturity that he “began to free the central and timeless qualities of gentlemanliness from its outmoded aristocratic trappings” (14). In turn, this maturity freed Thackeray to seek a variety of contributors and a large number of readers across class divides, allowing the *Cornhill* to draw in and influence a broad array of citizens. Gilmour explains that the Victorians debated this issue of gentlemanliness, attempting to define it and redefine it (13). They recognized that the “rank of gentleman was the point of entry for those seeking to penetrate gentry society,” and they also knew that this entry point was accessible (15). Jennifer Phegley explains that a “newly defined ‘professional gentleman’ . . . was emerging” as leader in Britain (24), and Maunder adds that this new kind of audience was not “genteel in the traditional sense” but “genteel in the new sense”—engineers, merchants, and manufacturers (“Discourses” 247; cf. Phegley 28). Furthermore, as a family literary magazine, the *Cornhill* became an affordable educational tool for lower and solidly middle-class readers, particularly women (Phegley 22-23). Phegley describes the *Cornhill*’s fiction as “factual fiction,” realistic novels with an educational quality, and explains that its non-fiction articles used narrative techniques like dream sequences and dialogues to help promote a more palatable form of education (25). Emphasizing that these new gentlemen needed wives who were also “upwardly mobile,” Phegley argues that the *Cornhill* conveyed the worldview that women not only were educable but also “should be educated for the good of the middle-class family and the British nation,” thus preparing them to fulfill their roles as wives (24, 23). This educational quality that the *Cornhill* provided helped the Victorian middle class understand and respond to their new roles in the professional atmosphere that was

forming, but, more importantly, it served to define more carefully the expectations of the emerging gentleman class that evolved as a result of the societal changes going on around them. This new type of gentleman to which Thackeray reached out responded positively to the sophisticated tone he planted into the *Cornhill*'s roots, educating and stimulating this new Victorian middle class.

Just as Thackeray as editor served as an agent for change in the role of the gentleman, so did Trollope demonstrate gentlemanly values in his fiction as an up-and-coming author at the dawn of the *Cornhill*. In *Framley Parsonage*, Trollope tells the stories of an ambitious English clergyman who incurs large amounts of debt, and of a young lord pursuing the clergyman's sister. Often considered "vintage Trollope," this novel vividly depicts English country life and the communities of the landed gentry for which Trollope was known (Terry 210). This novel represents Trollope's firm belief in the values that English society possesses in the form of the gentleman class. In a realistic

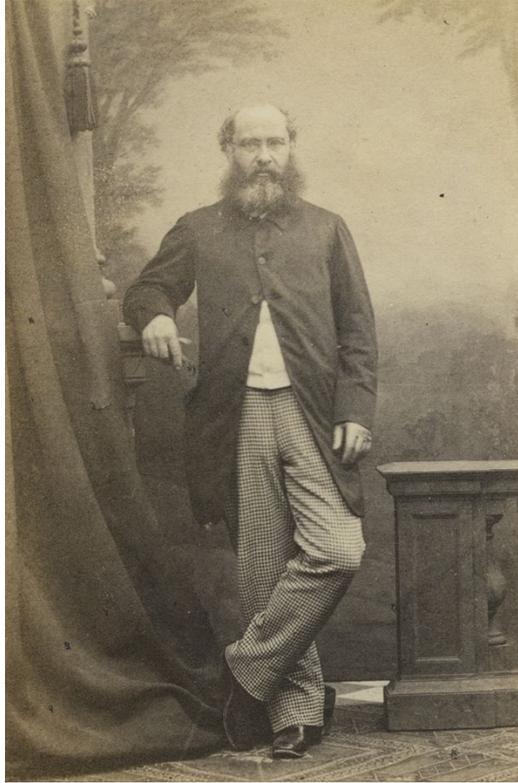


Figure 5. Trollope in 1860. “I thought I might succeed in impregnating the mind of the novel-reader with a feeling that honesty is the best policy; that truth prevails while falsehood fails; that a girl will be loved as she is pure, and sweet, and unselfish; that a man will be honored as he is true, and honest, and brave of heart.” ~ Anthony Trollope, *An Autobiography of Anthony Trollope*, p. 123. Public Domain.

way, Trollope illustrated the world that his middle-class readers knew. As Trollope noted, the readers who enjoyed *Framley Parsonage* were those “in England who were living, or had lived, the same sort of life” (*Autobiography* 121). Trollope felt his novels could be “agreeable” sermons, and it was a “matter of deep conscience” to him as an author how he handled the characters and plots he created (124, 184). He wanted to consistently demonstrate gentlemanly standards in his novels—that “honesty is the best policy; that truth prevails while falsehood fails; that a girl will be loved as she is pure, and sweet, and unselfish; [and] that a man will be honoured as he is true, and honest, and brave of heart” (123). This is the essence of gentlemanliness, with its quest for morality and decency and

the recognition that no matter what social rank, an individual can move into this class of life because of excellent character. Indeed, Gilmour claims that Trollope is very much “at ease” in depicting the idea of the gentleman, and this ease translated into Trollope knowing his characters well (136). In his *Autobiography*, Trollope challenged the young novelist to intimately know his or her characters so that they are “speaking, moving, living, human creatures” (194). According to David Skilton, this “intimacy” expected of the novelist’s relationship with his or her characters is typical of “mid-Victorian orthodoxy” and was an important part of the “inner world” that Trollope created for himself at “all stages” of his “vivid imaginary life” (133, 132). This familiarity allowed Trollope to fulfill his goal of crafting for his middle-class readers the gentlemanly character of English country life.

Trollope not only produced a substantial volume of fiction that reflected middle-class values, but he also worked full time for the British postal service, and this work ethic permeated his perspective of what a gentleman looked like. He wrote seventy books, including forty-seven novels, dramatically more than either Dickens or Thackeray, who wrote fifteen and eight, respectively (Hall, “Glue and Daydreams” 79). He wrote continuously as he traveled by train around England, devising a writing table for himself to do this and adopting a working diary for each novel that contained columned record keeping with the page count of how much he wrote, his goal being forty pages per week (85; cf. *Autobiography* 87). Mary Hamer explains that Trollope’s diary for *Framley Parsonage* indicates that “he wrote with fluency . . . in the early weeks, managing twelve pages a day” of the novel (157). However, Trollope famously did not start off this industriously; in fact, he “hated the office, . . . hated [his] work,” and “hated [his]

idleness” above all, and he attributed much of his success to his diary, claiming, “[I]f at any time I have slipped into idleness for a day or two, the record of that idleness has been there, staring me in the face, and demanding of me increased labor, so that the deficiency might be supplied” (*Autobiography* 44, 101). In contrast to Thackeray, Trollope worked diligently, and this attitude towards work caused him to later claim, “A capability for grinding, an aptitude for continuous task work, a disposition to sit in one’s chair as though fixed to it by cobbler’s wax, will enable a man in the prime of life to go through the tedium of a second day’s work every day; but of all men Thackeray was the last to bear the wearisome perseverance of such a life” (*Thackeray* 36). From Trollope’s perspective, Thackeray embodied the old-fashioned view of the gentleman who did not need to work hard, whereas Trollope himself emphasized a strong work ethic in his own daily life and challenged his middle-class readers to acquire this important trait that was a part of the new gentlemanly standards.

In spite of the differing origins of their views, Trollope and Thackeray were parallel in their desire to communicate these gentlemanly standards in their work for the *Cornhill*. By securing Trollope as first contributor to the magazine, Thackeray launched a new mindset to his middle-class readers through Trollope’s pen. For example, in *Framley Parsonage*, Lucy Robarts, the daughter of a doctor, flaunts the traditional goal of the heroine’s claiming the rich and aristocratic mate when she refuses the offer of marriage by Lord Lufton, the aristocrat who loves her. She stipulates that his mother, the Lady of the manor, must reach out to her and accept her before she accepts *him* as her husband, and Lucy’s wishes take place. Lucy’s choice to remain true to her convictions portrays a strength of character that can be emulated. Trollope was demonstrating to his middle-

class readers that this internal strength can transcend social boundaries; Lucy succeeded in the end to secure what she wanted. As Maunder clarifies, *Framley Parsonage* promoted a “particular world-view” through the *Cornhill* and was part of a “blending of literary, historical and social discourses” (“Monitoring” 54). Phegley explains that in Lucy Robarts, Trollope has demonstrated that this “intellectual heroine” would have “strongly suggested to readers that educated women are admirable and attractive” and that this intellectualism can be tempered by a “willingness to care selflessly for others,” all the while embodying the “ideal wife of the traditional family” (27). This traditional family is the same family Thackeray sought to reach in his initial vision for the *Cornhill*—those of every “rank, age, [or] sex” that he talked about in his prospectus (qtd. in “Our Birth” 110-11). Supporting Thackeray’s vision to highlight the gentleman ideal in the *Cornhill*, Trollope’s novels, particularly *Framley Parsonage*, thoughtfully communicated the same values to the middle-class readers Thackeray deliberately drew in to the magazine.

A critical component to understanding the relationship between Thackeray and Trollope is their one-to-one correspondence. There are eight available letters⁴ between the men, seven of which will be emphasized because they were written during the key period of the men’s concurrent association with the *Cornhill*. The letters are dated from the beginning of Thackeray’s involvement with the *Cornhill Magazine* in February 1859, when Smith first approached him about contributing a major novel, and his acceptance of the editor’s role later in the year; through March and April 1862, when Thackeray resigned and his farewell article was published in the *Cornhill*; and, finally, through just a few months later to August 1862, when Trollope signed an agreement for his *The Small*

House of Allington to be serialized in the *Cornhill*. These dates reflect the time when Thackeray, Smith, and Trollope were simultaneously active with the periodical, ending at a natural point professionally between Trollope and Smith. This series of letters between Thackeray and Trollope highlights three important episodes in their association: the onset of their relationship; Thackeray's rejection of one of Trollope's stories; and the end of their combined connection with the *Cornhill*. The first episode is the commencement of the *Cornhill*. As the only three existing letters between them at that pivotal time, they offer a unique glimpse into how the men interacted. Trollope famously began the correspondence. Writing on October 23, 1859, from Dublin where he lived, he wrote asking about becoming part of "the staff of [Thackeray's] new periodical" (Trollope, *Letters* 1: 89). Trollope was very polite, as befitting their incipient relationship, starting off by saying, "Perhaps you will excuse my taking the liberty of offering to make one of the number" (89). Trollope also plainly stated that he will tell his exact views to Thackeray and expected Thackeray to respond "frankly" whether they suit him or not (89). Then Trollope described the series of stories he is offering, called *Tales of All Countries*, which were promised to *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* and that would highlight the countries Trollope had visited (Terry 236). However, as Trollope explained to Thackeray, he was willing to allow the editor to publish one every other month in the *Cornhill* to correspond with Harper's plan or "would send them all" to Thackeray if he wished (Trollope, *Letters* 1: 89). Trollope further stated that if Thackeray were interested, he "would probably let [him] know [his] rate of pay"—and proceeded to name Harper's rate at £2 per page for ten pages, Trollope's average page length (89). Trollope concluded by once again politely requesting that Thackeray "excuse [his] writing to [him] in this

manner” (89). In a post script, Trollope added that the publisher Harper was awaiting a response from him and Trollope would appreciate a reply “as soon as may be convenient” (89).

Inherent in this letter is Trollope’s growing confidence in his own abilities as a writer. As a burgeoning author, Trollope boldly offered his current writing project and also used language demonstrating what he expected from Thackeray, including his expectations that Thackeray would inform him of his rate of pay and that Thackeray would “frankly” tell Trollope whether his terms suit him. But still there was a tenor of polite courtesy that indicates Trollope’s regard for the well-known novelist-turned-editor. This letter is also interesting because it demonstrates that Trollope first reached out to Thackeray—not Smith, with whom he will correspond more often as time passes. Trollope assumed that Thackeray was head of management and wrote accordingly.

The second letter between the two men is Thackeray’s response dated five days later, on October 28, 1859. To address Trollope’s offer properly, Thackeray and Smith had agreed to write to Trollope separately, each communicating different things. Thackeray told Smith, “I will write to Trollope saying how we want to have him—you on your side please write offering the cash” (qtd. in Sutherland, *Victorian Novelists* 142). Smith communicated about finances, but Thackeray told Trollope, “Smith & Elder have sent you their proposals” and now that the business part is done, he will “come to the pleasure” of telling Trollope “how very glad indeed I shall be to have you as co-operator in our new magazine” (Thackeray, *Letters* 4: 158). He also told him to look over the “annexed programme”—presumably the prospectus he advertised that explains the plan for the *Cornhill*—and “see whether [he] can’t help [them] in many other ways besides

tale-telling” (158). Thackeray told Trollope that if he has other writings that are not fiction, he would be interested in them for the magazine, acknowledging Trollope’s breadth of knowledge of the world: “You must have tossed a good deal about the world, and have countless sketches in your memory and your portfolio” (158). Interestingly, Thackeray told Trollope that “[o]ne of our chief objects in this magazine is the getting out of novel spinning, and back into the world” (158). Thackeray emphasized with Trollope his desire to style the magazine with more non-fiction. While Thackeray recognized that he was a pastry-cook—the one who created the sweets—he didn’t prefer what he created; in fact, he preferred the “bread and cheese”—substantive prose—but realized that the “public love[s] the tarts” (158-59). He concluded by graciously telling him that he did not want to disparage their craft—“especially [*Trollope’s*] wares” (158).

Thackeray wanted to feature non-fiction articles in the *Cornhill*, and this letter demonstrates his respect for Trollope’s experience as a man of the world. Thackeray welcomed contributions from Trollope and trusted him to provide interesting material for the *Cornhill*, recognizing that Trollope had recently traveled to the West Indies on postal concerns and wrote a book on that experience. Trollope’s contribution would support Thackeray’s goal of educating the public with articles dealing with global concerns, something he discussed in his prospectus (see “Our Birth” 110). More importantly, this letter demonstrates Thackeray’s regard for Trollope as an equal. He saw something in Trollope that told him Trollope could speak with authority to his middle-class readers.

Two months later, on December 28, 1859, immediately after the *Cornhill* is published, Trollope wrote to Thackeray again, this time to congratulate him on the first number that has just come out. Playing down his own contribution of *Framley*

Parsonage, Trollope emphasized that “nothing equal to it of its kind was ever hitherto put forth,” referring to the new periodical (Trollope, *Letters* 1: 93). Trollope boldly related his feelings about the purpose of the magazine, namely, that the “great aim in such a work should be, I think, to make it readable” and that this aim “has been so constantly lost sight of in a great portion of the pages of all magazines”—and then encouraged Thackeray that in *his* first issue, “there is nothing that is not readable”—with the lone mention of his own contribution (95). He emphasized that, in fact, there is “very little that is not thoroughly worth reading” (95).

Trollope placed a great importance on the ability of the middle-class readership to appreciate the new magazine, and he demonstrated that sentiment in this letter. He recognized the power of “readability,” that first goal of Thackeray’s and Smith’s when the editor communicated in his November prospectus that his goal was to “amuse and interest” his readers (qtd. in “Our Birth” 110). As Eddy explains, “Most remarkable is the refined personal voice which speaks from these pages—each writer, as Thackeray had urged him to do, telling those things he knew best” (45). In other words, the clarity of voice in the periodical was able to communicate what Thackeray intended, and Trollope recognized Thackeray’s responsibility in producing a great first issue, even while humbly downplaying his own role. Trollope maintained a complimentary tone with his editor that demonstrated his appreciation for the influence that Thackeray had over the periodical.

After these first three letters, eleven months passed in 1860 during which no letters were recorded between Thackeray and Trollope. However, during that span of time Trollope wrote to Smith over thirty times, and after the final letter between Thackeray and Trollope, at least fifteen more were exchanged between Trollope and

Smith. Taking the Trollope-Smith letters in the aggregate will demonstrate the overall business relationship that the three men had during the heyday of the magazine. Although Trollope discussed financial aspects of his agreements with Smith, including pay rates and copyright affairs, he also spent time discussing new works he could provide for the *Cornhill*; his concerns about illustrations that were being associated with his works, specifically with *Framley Parsonage*; as well as printing errors he saw on proofs that he had received—all concerns that would normally be an editor's purview. However, some of his communication regarding new serialization was included with a discussion of pay. For example, on July 3, 1860, Trollope explained to Smith that he could write a book on India and stated precisely how he would design it: two volumes in octavo format of approximately four hundred pages each, which can also supply three papers in the magazine for £3000, with the book to come out in October of 1861 and the papers as soon as possible (Trollope, *Letters* 1: 107). Although technically some aspects of this project should have been handled by the editor Thackeray, the financial details of it were wrapped up together in the plan and discussed more efficiently together. But the key here is that Trollope was becoming comfortable writing to Smith, and that they seemed to be communicating well and understanding each other, even though many of these details should have been discussed with Thackeray. This familiarity also showed up in other ways. For example, N. John Hall, the editor of Trollope's *Letters*, attributed the year 1860 to an undated letter to Smith and provided a footnote that explains that the letter can be dated to before September 1860 because Trollope includes the honorific "Mr." only until that month (119). This same letter also shines a bright light on the deficient communication between Trollope and Thackeray. Trollope writes to Smith: "Do you

know where your Editor is--& whether [he] is get-at-able.” Trollope told Smith he wanted to see Thackeray and Smith together—and playfully informed him they would “have a séance and a medium” together (119). Thackeray seems to have been inaccessible during the first year of the *Cornhill*. Trollope not only had attempted to communicate with Thackeray, but in the same span of time also cemented his friendly relations with Smith.

The second series of letters between Thackeray and Trollope involves hard words from Trollope to his editor because of Thackeray’s rejection of one of Trollope’s stories, “Mrs. General Talboys,” over what Thackeray deemed as inappropriate content. Trollope began his November 15, 1860, letter graciously acknowledging the important role the editor had, namely, that “an impartial Editor must do his duty” (Trollope, *Letters* 1: 127-28). He recognized that “[p]ure morals must be supplied” to the periodical and acknowledged that a contributor “makes himself subject to this judgement by undertaking such work” but must not allow that judgment to irritate him or he will be considered “an ass” (128). But in the bulk of this long letter, Trollope defended himself: “I will not allow that I am indecent” and “I of course look back for examples to justify myself in alluding to a man with illegitimate children, and to the existence of a woman not as pure as she should be,” referring to the concerns Thackeray had (128). He then recounted examples in works from the “five greatest names” of literature of his time, including Thackeray, Walter Scott, George Eliot, Charlotte Brontë, and Charles Dickens, whose characters demonstrated a lack of purity (128). He firmly but humbly claims, “I do not approach [these five greatest names] in naughtiness any more than I do in genius” (128). Trollope went on to challenge Thackeray with more ostensibly questionable content and asked,

“Are you not magnanimous enough to feel that you write . . . for the best & wisest of English readers; and not mainly for the weakest?” (128-29). Trollope then shifted his pen towards humor, claiming he would create his own magazine called *The Marble Arch* and include his story in it and “confound [Thackeray] by the popularity of Mrs. Talboys” (129). He concluded by restating that although he disagrees with Thackeray’s criticism, he believed Thackeray’s intentions are good and that he has been impartial (129).

This is a powerful letter from Trollope and demonstrates his great ability not only to craft an argument carefully against a differing view but also to communicate his recognition of the difficult but important role Thackeray as editor plays. He began diplomatically, made his case forcefully, and concluded with characteristic musings on editorial and authorial principles. What he did not include was the rest of the story as he told it in his biography of his editor, *Thackeray*:

I had once made an arrangement, not with Thackeray, but with the proprietors [Smith, Elder], as to some little story. The story was sent back to me by Thackeray—rejected. *Virginibus puerisque!* That was the gist of his objection. . . . Thackeray’s letter was very kind, very regretful,—full of apology for such treatment to such a contributor. But—*Virginibus puerisque!* I was quite sure that Thackeray had not taken the trouble to read the story himself. Some moral deputy had read it, and disapproving, no doubt properly, . . . had incited the editor to use his authority. That Thackeray had suffered when he wrote it was easy to see, fearing that he was giving pain to one he would fain have pleased. I wrote him a long letter in return, as full of drollery as I knew how to make it. (55)

Although he didn't lay his concerns out explicitly in his letter, Trollope here demonstrates more fully his frustration with both Thackeray's editorial behavior as well as the process that he experienced over that initial year of engagement with Thackeray and the *Cornhill*. In that duration Trollope had communicated with Smith over thirty times, and through that correspondence, Trollope not only became more comfortable with Smith but also clearly began to expect more editorial control from his publisher.

Two days later, on November 17, 1860, Thackeray tactfully responded to Trollope, acknowledging that the question of the rejected story was a "delicate subject" (Thackeray, *Letters* 4: 208). But he explained to Trollope that he could only respond after he urged "one of the girls"—Thackeray's daughter—to read Trollope's letter, admitting that he did not have the courage to read it until she did (208). Thackeray then gave Trollope a heartening response: "She says after reading the letter 'He is an old dear and you should write him an affectionate letter'" (208). Another important aspect of this letter is that Thackeray was ill, "just out of bed after one of [his] attacks," which left him "very nervous and incapable of letter writing or almost reading for a day or two" (208). With a note of humor, Thackeray concluded by telling Trollope he had a "months mind" to take on the fictitious name of *The Marble Arch* for a periodical as his own because it was "such a good name" that he would like "it for [his] own story" (208).

This letter highlights several aspects of Thackeray's character, particularly as he relates to Trollope. First, he is ill. Thackeray spent much of his adult life with many forms of illness, and Ray claims that these "disorders" often brought "disordered spirits" (*Age* 367). Second, his daughters are revealed here as sweet and comforting. Not only did they help, read to, and advise their father, but they—or at least the one who read the

letter—recognized the honest spirit of Trollope and encouraged their father to respond to that. Finally, the humor and irony that his contemporaries recognized as inherently “Thackeray” are evident in the final lines he wrote to his contributor—a tit-for-tat that demonstrated Thackeray’s respect for the author. This second episode, while dealing with difficult editorial decisions, was handled graciously by both Trollope and Thackeray, a testament to their mutual affection.

The final two letters during this important period are both from Thackeray to Trollope. First, in a tentatively dated letter,⁵ Thackeray responded to Trollope’s request to present a lecture, informing Trollope apologetically that although he had “the greatest desire” to do what Trollope asked, he could not (Thackeray, *Letters* 4: 363). Secondly, in an important letter dated May 27, 1861, Thackeray reflected his awareness that Trollope’s *Framley Parsonage* had a marked influence on the success of the *Cornhill*. He writes, “I don’t know whether you ought to be pleased or sorry to hear that since the sad end of *Framley Parsonage* our Magazine has dropped a thousand or more” (Thackeray, *Supplement* 2: 1042). Thackeray then prompted Trollope to provide another offering for the magazine, either Trollope’s *Orley Farm* which he knew would be completed soon or even an article highlighting Trollope’s travels to the United States. He ended the letter by telling Trollope that he expected that they could “come to some terms” about anything Trollope had to offer (1042).

This series of letters in which Thackeray and Trollope disagreed on content of a story and communicated honestly about what concerned them portrays two confident men who see the world similarly but react differently. Thackeray had big goals for the *Cornhill*, but he recognized that he needed Trollope’s worldly perspective to

communicate to his public. As a result, he invited him in to the new sphere of the *Cornhill*. Acknowledging that his readership wanted training and improvement, Thackeray saw that Trollope had the ability through his fiction to highlight those important aspects of society that the *Cornhill* sought to address. Thackeray recognized that Trollope had the down-to-earth knowledge of what the new gentleman should look like and that he was able to communicate this image clearly to the *Cornhill*'s middle-class readership. Unfortunately, when Thackeray rejected Trollope's story, he missed an opportunity to communicate some of these goals. The world was changing—becoming more open to progressive ideas—and this openness became a part of the message of the magazine, and, while Thackeray desired in theory for that message to go forth, he held off to a certain extent. As evidenced by Trollope's request of Thackeray to speak, Trollope saw Thackeray as one who could influence those around him. He appreciated the prestige Thackeray offered and saw in him the creative force who could depict the true gentleman. Finally, by acknowledging the clear success of Trollope's first offering to the *Cornhill*, Thackeray demonstrated his own gentlemanly character that he sought to communicate to his public. These men had mutual respect, and together they worked towards the common goal of communicating new standards to their readers.

In the years following the correspondence between Thackeray and Trollope, Trollope delved more deeply into leadership roles in periodical publishing, which gave him insight into the running of a periodical. In 1864, he was offered what he termed disparagingly as a "mock Editorship" for *Temple Bar*, which he refused, and he served on the Board of Directors of the *Fortnightly Review*. But it was for *St. Paul's Magazine* that Trollope became full-time editor at the "apex of his prestige and popularity" as a novelist

and at a key moment in his postal career: he had just decided he could earn enough money as an author, allowing him to retire, albeit reluctantly, from the postal service (Colby, "Goose Quill" 206; *Autobiography* 232). James Virtue, an associate from the *Fortnightly Review*, recognized that Trollope's name would be an impressive draw to readers and persuaded Trollope to accept the role ("Goose Quill" 221). Colby claims that the "lack of experience" of both Trollope and Virtue "did not bode well" for the periodical (221), but Patricia Thomas Srebrnik effectively argues that both men had ample experience to manage a periodical, highlighting Trollope's practical knowledge and Virtue's upbringing and publishing background (450; 444-45). Trollope himself claimed in his *Autobiography* that at this time he "had known something of magazines" and stipulated to Virtue that above all, he wanted to "put whatever [he] pleased into the magazine, or keep whatever [he] pleased out of it, without interference" (*Autobiography* 238). Trollope wanted to emphasize politics, calling himself a "Conservative-Liberal," and his lead novel for the first issue of *St. Paul's*, *Phineas Finn*, reflected his political considerations (*Autobiography* 207, 243). As an "active, involved editor" who read every submission, Trollope regularly wrote his articles in the form of letters to the editor, providing a modicum of freedom to write naturally (Terry 476; Booth, "Part One" 54), but Barbara Quinn Schmidt claims that Trollope lacked the sense of "fun, novelty and nostalgia" that Thackeray had employed ("Novelists" 151). This new venture for Trollope allowed him to infuse *St. Paul's* with his own brand of values. By emphasizing politics in this shilling magazine, Trollope communicated new ideas to his middle-class readership, something other shilling magazines avoided (Terry 475). Times were changing, and the offerings in a shilling could change, too, and Trollope reflected that

sentiment. Taking advantage of his name recognition—as Thackeray had done—Trollope was able to saturate the public with the perspective that the new gentleman in British society should interact with politics and bring his—or her—opinion to the discussion. Trollope took his editorial duties seriously and attempted to make an impact on the professional gentleman that was emerging in British culture.

On Christmas Eve 1863, Thackeray passed away in his home at Onslow Square, London. Because he died before Trollope, there is less from his pen that indicates his sentiments towards Trollope compared to what Trollope wrote about Thackeray later in life. However, several images emerge and provide a glimpse into Thackeray’s mind regarding Trollope. For example, it was Thackeray who gave Trollope the “honors of *Violono primo*” in that first issue of the *Cornhill*, as he told Charles Lever (qtd. in Ray, *Age* 303). Additionally, Thackeray spoke proudly about both his and Trollope’s novels in his first Roundabout Paper, describing them as “two novels under two flags, the one that ancient ensign which has hung before the well-known booth of ‘Vanity Fair’; the other that fresh and handsome standard which has lately been hoisted at ‘Barchester Towers’” (*Roundabout Papers* 7). Thackeray also entertained Trollope and his wife “from time to time,” and Trollope confirmed that he “had grown into much intimacy with him and his family” (Colby, “Trollope” 263; *Autobiography* 155). This familiarity is also evidenced in a letter cautiously dated 1862-63—possibly Thackeray’s last letter to Trollope—in which he wrote a playful pun addressing a small debt between himself and Trollope, demonstrating their comfortable and informal relations (Thackeray, *Supplement* 2: 1324). Finally, Thackeray concluded his first momentous letter to Trollope with words that probably cheered Trollope at that important juncture of his life: “I’ve no doubt [Chapman

and Hall publishers] have told you with what sincere liking your works have been read by yours very faithfully, W. M. Thackeray” (159). Throughout the limited correspondence between Thackeray and Trollope, even in heated circumstances and the rise and fall of the literary preferences of the public, Thackeray maintained respect for Trollope and his work.

Upon hearing the news of Thackeray’s death, Trollope wrote to Smith on Christmas Day 1863, having intended to write him on another matter but instead was “stopped in that, as in every thing” by Thackeray’s death—he “felt it as a very heavy blow” (Trollope, *Letters* 1: 244). He also wrote to make sure Smith had someone who would write a “short notice” of Thackeray in an upcoming *Cornhill* and offered to write it if there was “no one better,” emphasizing it would be a “work of love” (244). Indeed, Trollope did write that obituary, in addition to the biography of Thackeray that is a part of the English Men of Letters series, as well as important comments about him in his own *Autobiography*. Above all, Trollope viewed Thackeray as the finest novelist of his own time, most notably ahead of Charles Dickens (*Autobiography* 203; cf. 205-06). He stated, “I myself regard *Esmond* as the greatest novel in the English language”: he admired the excellent language, the individuality of the characters, the historical accuracy regarding its setting and time period, and its “great pathos” (156). Because Trollope valued high character displayed in fiction, he felt that Thackeray did his “duty of showing to his readers the evil consequences of evil conduct” (156). Trollope also explained that although Thackeray had “no great power of conversation,” there always were “falling from his mouth and pen those little pearls” of “impromptu lines” (*Thackeray* 31, 30). Furthermore, while Trollope felt Thackeray was “hardly fitted either by his habits or

temperament” to be an editor, he emphasized that Thackeray was simply not “hard-hearted” enough for the job (*Autobiography* 155; *Thackeray* 54). He states, “I regard [Thackeray] as one of the most tender-hearted human beings I ever knew” (*Autobiography* 155) and claims that he was as “sweet as Charity itself, who went about the world dropping pearls, doing good, and never willfully inflicting a wound” (*Thackeray* 61). As evidenced in his ample writings on Thackeray, as well as his attitude during the throes of their concurrent involvement with the *Cornhill Magazine*, Trollope recognized many of Thackeray’s weaknesses but respected and cared for him as Britain’s premier man of letters.

As two of the preeminent literary leaders of the Victorian era and specifically during the historic time of the genesis of the *Cornhill Magazine*, Trollope and Thackeray played an important role in each other’s lives as well as in the culture around them. Not only were they able to share in the success of the magazine, both financially and professionally, but their work also impacted their world. In the throes of a “highly unsettled state” of periodical publishing, there was also a “sense of upheaval inherent in the world” that was developing around the readership of the *Cornhill Magazine*, and the *Cornhill* offered help for those seeking knowledge regarding how to respond to this upheaval that saturated the environment (Ray, *Age* 293; Maunder, “Discourses” 247). An important legacy that both Trollope and Thackeray left behind in their writings is their desire for their culture to respect “gentlemanly” ways—whether demonstrated in Trollope’s “most natural English girl” Lucy Robarts in *Framley Parsonage*, in whom “there was no pretence” in her love for Lord Lufton, or in Thackeray’s challenge in his Roundabout Paper, “On Ribbons,” to honor “gallant, accomplished, high-spirited,

enterprising” sailors of the royal Navy (*Autobiography* 121; *Roundabout Papers* 27-28). Schmidt claims that both Trollope and Thackeray “believed that the social stability of England depended on social change being controlled or managed by leaders who were gentlemen whose consciously moral behavior provided a way of living that was challenging and consoling” (“In the Shadow” 79). As contributors to this mission, Trollope and Thackeray spoke to men and women of every class, challenging them in the freshly developing Victorian culture.

CHAPTER IV

The Butterfly Effect: John Blackwood and George Eliot

Central to the relationship between author George Eliot and editor and publisher John Blackwood is Eliot's early and long association with Blackwood over the span of her career. In 1857, George Henry Lewes, Eliot's live-in partner and literary agent, contacted Blackwood and offered him her first story, "The Sad Fortunes of the Reverend Amos Barton." Blackwood was impressed with Eliot's story, telling Lewes, "If there is any more of the series written I should like to see it" (Eliot, *George Eliot Letters 2*: 272).¹ By the time she wrote "Amos Barton," Eliot was already an accomplished journalist, having contributed to and edited the *Westminster Review* under the direction of publisher John Chapman, after beginning her writing career by translating theological and philosophical texts from both German and Latin. But, as John Rignall points out, Eliot's new phase of fiction emerged distinct from her earlier work, which served as a "literary apprenticeship" (418). By contrast, Blackwood spent a lifetime learning the book and publishing trade as part of his father's publishing firm, William Blackwood and Sons. William Blackwood² started *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, or *Maga*, as the monthly periodical became known, in 1817, and John Blackwood showed an interest in becoming editor from a young age (Porter 4-5). As part of his training, Blackwood managed the London office at Pall Mall and assumed the role of editor after the deaths of his two older brothers, Alexander and Robert. When Lewes approached him, Blackwood had twelve years of experience under his belt working with authors. Thus this enduring relationship between author and editor commenced, with Lewes engineering their initial correspondence, Blackwood becoming intrigued by the potential of this new author, and

Eliot taking hesitant steps towards transforming into the celebrated author for which she later would be known. Donald Gray explains that this “collaboration among Lewes, Blackwood, and George Eliot was remarkable in its durability” and the “complicated complementarity” of the three literary leaders involved (198). An examination of Blackwood’s role as editor, Eliot’s roots in her early career as editor for the *Westminster Review* and her authorial views, their robust correspondence,³ and the unusual circumstances surrounding the publication of *Middlemarch* will demonstrate that the strong bond that developed between Eliot and Blackwood resulted in a shared conviction that life can be depicted authentically in literature. Through this unified purpose, Eliot and Blackwood contributed to the developing concept of literary realism that was emerging in fiction, which found its fullest fruition under the auspices of Eliot’s 1872 novel, *Middlemarch*.

The publishing house of William Blackwood and Sons embodied a deep conservatism in its politics and its loyalty to its contributors. When John’s father, William Blackwood, began *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, he wanted simultaneously to challenge the dominant, Whig-leaning *Edinburgh Review* and to create a Tory-supporting organ from a more youthful perspective than that of the *Quarterly Review* (Tredrey 22-23). All of the editors of the magazine, from John’s father William to John himself to William Blackwood III, John’s nephew and editorial successor, were “sound Tor[ies]” (154), but Laurence Lockhart qualified John’s conservatism, describing it as “enlightened and progressive” and which subordinated party politics for the needs of the country (775). This conservatism translated into a commitment to the men and women who wrote for *Blackwood’s*. John Gibson Lockhart, John Wilson, and possibly James

Hogg—differing accounts exist on who was involved—placed *Blackwood's* on the map of periodicals with their “Chaldee Manuscript,” a satirical narrative of the beginnings of *Maga* (Tredrey 25-26). John Wilson’s fictitious persona, Christopher North, became a staple for the magazine, contributing the “Noctes Ambrosianae,” a series of dialogues by local folk discussing books, people, and the affairs of life (47). Robert Morrison explains that the persona of Christopher North brought a sense of cohesion to the magazine and “enshrined the conversational intimacy that was so foundational to the magazine’s success” (187). Blackwood continued this tradition of dedication to his contributors, and he “took pride in . . . establishing personal relationships” with them (Finkelstein, *House* 25). This house identity reflected a business perspective that existed from *Blackwood's* beginnings.

Blackwood took over the publishing company as editor and publisher in 1845 at age twenty-six. He generally spent his mornings reading manuscripts and corresponding and often “carried his work with him wherever he went” (Lockhart 770). He “energiz[ed] and expand[ed]” the firm’s list of authors, increased its profits by five times during his thirty-four years of leadership, and successfully ventured into new publishing areas, including educational markets, as the century wore on (Finkelstein, *House* 3, 47). In 1865, Joseph Langford, Blackwood’s London manager, urged Blackwood to take on the forceful author Charles Reade as contributor, because Reade had “never yet met his match” in a publisher (qtd. in Finkelstein, “*Woman Hater*” 335). Twelve years later, Langford felt the same about Blackwood’s ability to lead the wayward Reade, telling Blackwood, “You know that I have always believed that [Reade] would prove . . . amenable to management under your direction than in the hands of any publisher . . . and

you could approach him in a way that would bring him into harmony” (335). Lockhart also highlighted Blackwood’s diplomatic skill in working with authors, claiming he had a “tranquil career” that was “undisturbed by those stormy episodes which light the page of history and biography” (777). When he spoke at the Walter Scott Centenary banquet in 1871, Blackwood discussed his high acclaim for authors, remarking that much was made of quarrels between authors and publishers, but he was happy to say that authors had been his dearest friends all his life (*GEL* 5: 182-83). Indeed, Blackwood worked very hard to secure contributors to the magazine and was especially careful about cultivating relationships with experienced authors from a variety of social spheres (Patten and Finkelstein 159).

The most well-known author Blackwood worked with was George Eliot. It was the qualities of care and diplomacy in Blackwood that helped Eliot grow confident as a fiction writer, but her authorial career started out much differently. As a young woman, she was curious and thoughtful about religious concerns and developed her “vigorous prose” from her study of the King James version of the Bible (Haight 9). Eliot struggled to find her own sense of identity with her faith, finally rejecting the “old-fashioned high-and-dry” sort of Anglican beliefs of her father, as well as the “gentle benevolence” of her mentor as a young girl, Maria Lewis (cf. 8, 19). Kathryn Hughes explains that after the “high drama of the holy war” with her family that transformed her belief system, Eliot turned into a “combative free-thinker” (63). This new perspective fit well with her work of translating D. F. Strauss's *Life of Jesus* in 1846 from German, although by the end of her task, she “found it totally uninteresting” (Rignall 403). However, this translation led to the publisher John Chapman’s asking her to review a recent work by Robert William

MacKay, which was included in the *Westminster Review* and “reveal[ed] for the first time the extraordinary grasp of her massive intellect” (Haight 80). This beginning of contributing to the *Westminster Review* cemented for a time her relationship with Chapman, with whom she maintained intimate relations, although he was married and also had a mistress (Rignall 48). Chapman recognized that Eliot had the “intelligence and literary ability needed” to develop the magazine into a “first rate liberal quarterly of real distinction” and asked her to be the nominal editor (Haight 89, cf. 91). Even readers who “disagreed strongly with the opinions of the *Westminster* conceded that its intellectual level was high” (108). This experience of editing the *Review* gave Eliot the critical ability to recognize quality writing, fine-tune her own work, and learn the day-to-day functions of publishing a periodical. These experiences established Eliot’s intimate knowledge of the editorial role, allowing her to interact purposefully with Blackwood in the future. As Gray states, Eliot’s editorship of the *Westminster Review* “brought a useful sum of pertinent experience to the beginning of her career as a novelist” (182-83).

When Eliot tired of her complicated relationship with Chapman, she extricated herself to a new home and subsequently became involved with and lived with George Henry Lewes as his wife until his death. This relationship with Lewes marked an important turn in her life because Lewes grew to have confidence in Eliot’s skill as a writer and affirmed her constantly (cf. *GEL* 2: 269; Hughes 143). Lewes himself was a veteran periodical contributor, with articles “appear[ing] everywhere” except the *Quarterly* (132). Hughes explains that Lewes had the “journeyman’s ability to get quickly to the heart of any subject from philosophy to theatre, opera to zoology” and to “turn in the required number of words tailored exactly to his audience” (132). He was

also a “seasoned and tough negotiator” and served as Eliot’s literary agent (131). But Lewes’s situation precluded his marrying Eliot because he was already married. With him and his wife Agnes agreeing that monogamy was an “unnatural obligation” that “they could not follow” (139), Agnes took Thornton Hunt as a lover, having four children with him, the first of whom Lewes registered as his own, eliminating the possibility of divorce from Agnes (141). Hughes explains that by this “fateful step” of legally acknowledging Thornton’s children as his own, Lewes would “condemn Marian Evans to a life as a sexual and social outcast” (141). Although Eliot had found her “soulmate,” she and Lewes had to socially transcend the gossip about their living situation (143). Indeed, their home, The Priory, became a hive of activity on Sunday afternoons with literary folk visiting regularly, including Blackwood and his wife, and other notable leaders (McCormack 543). While Hughes states that “male writers, intellectuals, academics, doctors and politicians were increasingly happy to visit the unofficial ‘Mrs. Lewes,’ they felt quite differently about allowing their wives and daughters to do the same” (114), but Kathleen McCormack argues that Lewes’s lists of attendees included married couples and individual women, most of whom had “unimpeachable respectability” (543). It took a long time of living with Lewes and growing as an author before Eliot could be more socially free in Victorian society.

On November 6, 1856, Lewes wrote to Blackwood on behalf of Eliot and offered him “Amos Barton,” first in a series of three short stories that would become *Scenes of Clerical Life* (2: 269). This famous and important letter sparked the enduring relationship that would grow between Eliot and her editor Blackwood. In his letter, Lewes introduced the manuscript and explained that while he had doubts of his “friend’s power as a writer

of fiction,” after reading “Amos,” those doubts were changed into “very high admiration” (*GEL* 2: 269). He told Blackwood that the “humour, pathos, vivid presentation and nice observation” have not been seen since the 1766 *Vicar of Wakefield* and that the story highlights “country clergy about a quarter of a century ago . . . in its *human* and *not at all* in its theological aspect” (2: 269). Significantly, this emphasis on the human angle of the familiar country clergyman contains the seed of the potency in Eliot’s fiction that she would continue to exhibit as she matured. Given this high quality of writing, Lewes added, he was “quite pleased” to negotiate on behalf of his friend (2: 269). Importantly, Lewes withheld his friend’s name and referred to Eliot as “he” (2: 269). In fact, it would be sixteen months later, in February 1858, when Blackwood meets Eliot and learns that she is a woman and another two years before the public knew (Rignall 29, 232).

Blackwood responded to Lewes’s letter on November 12, 1856, with quiet aplomb that this story about clerical life “will do” (2: 272). He did not rave over it but made it clear that he would like to read more to confirm the quality of the series, even though he thought “Amos Barton” was “unquestionably very pleasant reading” (2: 272). Blackwood also suggested several ways the author could strengthen it, including allowing the characters to “evolve in the action of the story” (2: 272). Blackwood made it clear he planned to publish the story because he congratulated the author for his “being worthy of the honours of print and pay” (2: 272). Although Blackwood responded naturally as an experienced—and savvy—editor by elucidating both strengths and weaknesses in the story, he did not realize that Eliot desperately needed encouragement to keep her writing, especially at this early stage; and when she heard Blackwood’s response, she was “somewhat discouraged by it” but decided to take Lewes’s advice and submit it for

publication (2: 273). Correspondence between Lewes and Blackwood continued for about six weeks, during which time Lewes told Blackwood that his friend was “unusually sensitive,” emphasizing he was more concerned about “*excellence* than about appearing in print” (2: 276). These early letters between Lewes and Blackwood conclude with “Amos Barton” being set into proofs to be published at the beginning of 1857.

When Eliot and Blackwood began to communicate directly, their correspondence was actually *indirect*, with Blackwood initiating three letters and Eliot responding to two of them, but addressing her remarks to Blackwood’s brother, Major William Blackwood, John’s partner in the publishing firm. Why Eliot did not write directly to John is unclear, but Hughes describes Eliot’s writing to William as a “strangely sideways and snubbing step” of communication (184). But Blackwood’s letters to Eliot were highly complimentary. He sent Eliot a copy of the January number in which “Amos Barton” opened in first position and told Eliot that the story was positioned first because “his merits will entitle him to it” (*GEL* 2: 283). While he informed her that he was concerned about her naming the children so distinctly at the end of the story, he also made it clear that his brother William told him not to “advise the author to touch anything so exquisite” (2: 283). He also mentioned that he praised her to Thackeray, telling him she was an author who was “uncommonly like a first class passenger” (2: 291). Finally, he told Eliot it would be a “monstrous pity” if he could not publish her next story, “Mr. Gilfil,” in the February number and “will not allow grass to grow” under his heels until he had read it (2: 293-94). Fair-minded and encouraging, Blackwood filled his letters early on with words that speak to Eliot.

Eliot's indirect correspondence to the Blackwood brothers is intriguing, and her reasons for not responding directly to John could be as simple as not realizing he was the appropriate leader to communicate with. However, Blackwood did write her directly several times, and Lewes was also communicating with him regularly. I suggest Eliot took so long to write directly to Blackwood for two reasons: First, Eliot truly did lack confidence as an author. *Scenes of Clerical Life* was her first attempt at fiction, and she was not confident. Given that in his role as editor, Blackwood ostensibly controlled the fate of her publication, it is understandable that she might feel the need to tread lightly as she moved slowly forward. Second, and more importantly, Blackwood clearly proved himself through his letters both to her and to Lewes that he would be an editor who understood her, respected her craft, and affirmed her work. Indeed, much later in their correspondence, Eliot tells Blackwood how satisfying it is that she has "made [herself] understood" to him, and this perception is evident in these early letters (4: 247). Further, his detailed critique paralleled Eliot's realistic prose, bringing to light their shared values. After two-and-a-half months of heartening words sent from Edinburgh to London after Lewes's initial offer, Eliot caught a glimpse of who Blackwood was. His discussion of the finer points of her fiction impressed her, and she began to relax, and as her comfort level rose, it became natural for her to address him directly. These early letters are key to demonstrating how the two were finding their feet as they began their professional author-editor relationship.

Although Eliot was new to writing fiction, she had strong convictions that fiction needed to reflect everyday life. Eliot's passion about this is evident from early on in both letters to Blackwood and in essays from the time she began to write creatively. Eliot

clarified her deepest concern for her fiction in her first letter directly to Blackwood, dated February 18, 1857. She thanked him politely for his suggestions regarding editorial changes to her use of French phrases but made it clear why she could not make the other changes he suggested: “I am unable to alter anything in relation to the delineation or development of character as my stories always grow out of my psychological conception of the *dramatis personae*” and emphasized that her desire was to “call forth tolerant judgment, pity, and sympathy” (2: 299). She did encourage him to correct her when he saw anything “untrue to human nature” but pointed out that “inconsistencies and weaknesses” were not necessarily mutually exclusive (2: 299). She extended this discussion of her art in a letter dated July 12, 1857, explaining to Blackwood that her stories were “real and concrete,” in contrast to stories that could be “ideal and eclectic”: “I undertake to exhibit nothing as it should be; I only try to exhibit some things as they have been or are” (2: 362). In her well-known essay, “Silly Novels by Lady Novelists,” Eliot also demonstrated her clarity of vision for fiction. Eliot lambasts women who attempt to write “frothy,” “prosy,” “pious,” and “pedantic” fiction (442), emphasizing that novels must contain “the right elements—genuine observation, humour, and passion” (461). She claims that there is “no species of art which is so free from rigid requirements” but that “it is precisely this absence of rigid requirement which constitutes the fatal seduction of novel-writing to incompetent women” (461). Eliot felt strongly about what constituted quality writing and had high expectations for her own writing. As Carol A. Martin states, “While [Eliot] was attentive to the narrative structures necessary in a successful serial, she refused to compromise on matters she thought were essential to her artistic vision” (94).

Eliot's artistic vision incorporates elements of literary realism that began to manifest themselves in the middle of the nineteenth century in fiction. Margaret Drabble and Jenny Stringer explain that realism "insisted on accurate documentation and sociological insight," with an emphasis on everyday life (467). Ian Watt also recognizes the influence of the French school of realists which emerged out of similar trends in painting, for example, Rembrandt's "vérité humaine" versus neo-classicism's "idéalité poétique" (10). Its associated term, "Réalisme," began to be used in 1856 specifically to pertain to literature (10). These contrasts are reflected in Eliot's comments to Blackwood in her declaration that she yearns to exhibit life as it is or has been—not as it ideally should be (see 2: 362). Eliot defined realism in 1856 as "the doctrine that all truth and beauty are to be attained by a humble and faithful study of nature" (qtd. in Rignall 324). Furthermore, she also wanted to show, "with real, emotional force, how the moral and social world are fully integrated and ruled" by the same laws that govern the natural world (365). According to Rignall, her fiction was profoundly influenced by "scientific thought and culture" (367). For Eliot, this scientific element to realism was a moral aesthetic in which the beauty of everyday life was depicted in fiction. As Bernard Weinberg explains: "Realism . . . aims to attain truth. Now truth is attainable only by the observation (scientific and impersonal) of reality—and hence of contemporary life" (126). With her emphasis on "genuine observation," Eliot demonstrated her adherence to the deliberate study of nature, situating herself squarely in the realistic nature of fiction.

Eliot continued to write for Blackwood, and over the next year, they became more comfortable with each other. They communicated regularly about her next novel, *Adam Bede*, but in 1859, they had their first conflict that almost derailed their relationship.⁴ It

was a complicated “misunderstanding,” as they each called it after it was settled, and it centered around Eliot’s growing sense of identity. This misunderstanding involved Eliot, Blackwood, Lewes, John’s brother William, Joseph Langford, the London manager, and George Simpson, the Edinburgh manager. A careful study of the pertinent letters demonstrates that it was not a misunderstanding directly between Blackwood and Eliot, but instead resulted from words spoken by other parties and even because of something completely out of anyone’s control. The stress was heightened because at least two difficult and dividing issues were going on simultaneously and seemed tangled and difficult to extricate from each other.

First, after *Adam Bede* was produced, the notorious publisher, Thomas Cautley Newby, presented a work entitled *Adam Bede, Junior*, claiming that Eliot had written it (Haight 313). Newby was known for publishing the first novels of Emily and Anne Brontë, *Wuthering Heights* and *Agnes Grey*, filled with uncorrected errors, but only after their sister, Charlotte, successfully published *Jane Eyre* (Arbuckle 1). Lewes wrote to Blackwood in “hot indignation” asking him—as publisher—to “see to this matter at once” (*GEL* 3: 189). Eliot was still reeling from defending her name against Joseph Liggins, who claimed to be the author of *Scenes of Clerical Life*, and this new threat brought added stress (Ashton 1). Blackwood responded to Lewes’s request by discussing the situation with his legal advisors, but he also attempted to “tone [Lewes] down” by reminding him of other, similar “felonies on popular authors,” including Charles Dickens (*GEL* 3: 191). This did not satisfy Lewes and Eliot, and Lewes complained to Blackwood that if he were simply going to respond to Newby with “silent contempt,” Blackwood could have at least informed him so he could take his own steps to prevent the work from

being wrongly attributed to Eliot (3: 212). Blackwood relented and reluctantly placed an ad in the *Athenaeum* on November 26, 1859, stating that *Adam Bede, Junior* was not by Eliot (3: 218).

Second, Eliot was beginning to have success that attracted her to other publishers. She and Blackwood had been discussing for several months the possibility of serializing her next book, *Mill on the Floss*, in *Maga*, but Eliot was concerned that given her recent success, this method would dissipate potential sales from the three-volume novel form (cf. 3: 161-62, 206). She had recently received offers from both Dickens and Bradbury and Evans, which threatened to lure Eliot away from Blackwood (3: 205). Above all, Eliot was distressed that Blackwood planned to omit the name George Eliot from the serial if *Mill* was published in *Blackwood's*, and this concern became a major point of disagreement between them (3: 218).

This situation came to a head after a month of silence between Eliot and Blackwood from October 28 to November 26, 1859. However, during that month, letters were sent back and forth from Blackwood to his brother William, from Lewes to Blackwood, and from both Blackwood and Simpson to Langford—who regularly communicated with Lewes. Finally, on November 26, 1859, Eliot wrote Blackwood directly:

As the time for the publication of my next work is not very far removed, and as thorough frankness is the condition of satisfactoriness in all relations, I am induced to ask you whether you still wish to remain my publishers, or whether the removal of my incognito has caused a change in your views on that point.

But she clarifies that she has

never myself thought of putting an end to a connection which has hitherto not appeared inauspicious to either of us, and I have looked forward to your being my publishers as long as I produced books to be published; but various indications, which I may possibly have misinterpreted, have made me desire a clear understanding in the matter. I remain, my dear Sir, Always yours truly
 Marian Evans Lewes. (3: 215)

This letter exhibits a formality that has not existed in a letter from Eliot since the beginning days of her acquaintance with Blackwood. For one month no communication took place between these two, and now, it seems, after hearing second-hand information and experiencing much of the drama herself, Eliot felt it was time to face the situation with Blackwood. Although there is a touch of self-pity in her formal language, it is to Eliot's credit that she admitted that she "may possibly have misinterpreted" something. In all her past letters she was open, forthright, and not self-aggrandizing, and this most recent one is no exception.

Eliot's letter opened up a flow of honest communication between herself and Blackwood. Blackwood responded two days later by immediately addressing her question about continuing to publish: "I beg to say I cannot recollect any expression of mine which implied anything like disinclination to continue to act as your publisher" (3: 216). He also told her he was "hurt" by her response to his offer for *Mill* and by the "very dry way" she acknowledged his offer of doubling the payment for *Adam Bede* (3: 216). He argued that removing her "incognito" might prove disadvantageous, but he felt that her "genius and confidence in the truly good, honest, religious, and moral tone" of

everything she had written or will write “will overcome any possible detriment from the withdrawal of the mystery which has so far taken place” (3: 217).

Eliot then responded with a long letter of November 30, 1859, in which she described this break as a “misunderstanding” and explains her part in it. She informed him that *she* was hurt when he did not respond fully to her deep concerns about publishing serially in the magazine but only said that he would give “at least as much” financially for publishing in *Maga*, as if this were her main concern (3: 217-18). Further, she was hurt by his plan to publish the story “without the name of George Eliot,” claiming that this added to the “depreciatory view that ran through [his] whole letter”—but recognized that this was “in contrast with the usual delicacy and generosity of [his] tone” (3: 218). Significantly, she stated that she never considered leaving for another publisher, echoing Blackwood’s claim: “In fact, I had not dreamed that there was any doubt in your mind as to my expectation that you would publish [*Mill*] until Mr. Langford, a short time ago, in conversation with Mr. Lewes, appeared to presuppose that you would *not* publish it” (3: 218). She also reiterated her and Lewes’s concern over Blackwood’s indifference regarding Newby’s claim on her authorship, and concluded by telling him she “sincerely regret[s]” that her acknowledgement of his financial bonus for *Adam Bede* was “curt and unresponsive” but emphasized that “the simple ‘thank you’ seems the most natural thing between people who understand each other” (3: 219). This letter is long and detailed about all these issues, and Eliot effectively explained her feelings and communicated her arguments.

On December 2, 1859, Blackwood acknowledged that there had been a “misunderstanding on both sides” and that he was glad she had written to clear the air

(3: 222). He emphasized that he was “much vexed that anything I may have said or left unsaid” should have hurt her feelings and explained from his perspective the reasons behind the issues she mentioned (3: 222). He told her that he did not address more fully her concerns about publishing because he simply did not have her letter in front of him when he responded. He explained that he truly felt that publishing her work anonymously in the periodical was the “wisest plan” and was standard for *Maga*. He stated that he cannot imagine what he said in his letter would be considered “depreciatory” because his proposition itself demonstrated his confidence in her work. Blackwood also forcefully addressed her worries about Newby: “I think Lewes and you might give the Major and me more credit for knowing when it is worth while to speak on a matter of business affecting your interests or our own” (3: 223). He then proceeded to relate how he came to place the ad in the *Athenaeum*:

You have no idea what a bitter pill it was to me to write a civil note to that hound the editor of the *Athenaeum*, and I do not think you could have refrained from laughing had you heard the expletives with which the composition of the note was accompanied. I wrote it because I thought it might satisfy you and, the advertisement giving the ground, it seemed the most natural place for attaining the object without causing a fuss which I am sure it was desirable in every way to avoid. (3: 223)

At this point in his letter, Blackwood suggested they get together when he arrives in London in the next few days. He also told her that it “gives me pleasure to know . . . that I was mistaken as to the spirit of your reply to our offer” and that she, like him and his brother, felt that their relationship “should not be broken” (3: 223). Just as Eliot did in her

initial communication after the long month of silence between them, Blackwood demonstrated humility towards her and further indicated a desire for reconciliation. In a succinct punctuation to this series of conciliatory letters, Eliot responded to Blackwood by offering him lunch when he arrives in London and stated that “[i]t will be a great comfort to see you, and exchange our ‘winged words’ in a less blind and ambiguous fashion than by letter” (3: 224).

This episode in the relationship between Eliot and Blackwood demonstrates a healthy association of two strong individuals who know their own roles as author and editor and who also recognize the importance of communication to alleviate tension and misunderstanding. But the month of silence between them in November 1859 was filled with “winged words,” as Eliot described them, that flew from Edinburgh to London through indirectly involved individuals. Eliot and Blackwood were either busy communicating with others regarding this complicated situation, or others were communicating with each other to the detriment of the relationship between the author and editor. As Eliot explained to Blackwood, she never considered leaving Blackwood’s as a publisher *until Langford mentioned it to Lewes*. Significantly, a series of letters from Simpson to Langford is filled with gossipy content from the perspective of Simpson that indicated “disgust” on the part of Blackwood towards Eliot and Lewes. However, a careful consideration of the letters indicates Blackwood was more disgusted with both Eliot’s seeming ingratitude and Simpson’s pressing the issue with him repeatedly, rather than the sense that Blackwood was ready to part ways with Eliot as her publisher. Blackwood did state in a letter of October 30, 1859, that he was in a “fit of disgust” resulting from a “*cool* note from George Eliot,” but his emphasis was on Eliot’s tone in

her letter (3: 192).⁵ Although Langford's available communication regarding this situation is relatively thoughtful, Simpson's gossip could easily have influenced him, because Simpson surmised to Langford that as a result of Blackwood's "disgust," he felt the publishers "would now decline the new book if it were offered them" (3: 194). Furthermore, just ten days before Eliot wrote to Blackwood, Simpson discussed Eliot's "accepting the offer of another party" with Langford (3: 205). Clearly this is incorrect because Eliot explained to Blackwood in her letter of November 30, 1859, that she needed clarification about Blackwood's continuing to publish her work because she would "necessarily be in a different attitude towards proposals which [she had] hitherto waived" (3: 219). Embedded in his letters, Simpson also told Langford three times that Eliot is "inordinately greedy," further coloring Langford's view as he communicated with Lewes in London (cf. 3: 194, 200, 210). These third parties seem to have caused some trouble—not just Langford, whom Eliot mentions, but Simpson as well. This complicated episode served as a bridge for Eliot and Blackwood relationally, and fortunately they managed to emerge from it stronger as an author-editor pair.

Notwithstanding the complicated and gossipy nature of this episode, the most important issue for Eliot is what she called her "incognito" (see 3: 215). In June 1859, Eliot was forced to reveal her identity because Joseph Liggins attempted to claim authorship of *Scenes of Clerical Life* (GEL 3: 106; Schlicke 228, 232). When Eliot and Blackwood had their misunderstanding in November of that year, she was still getting over having to prove her own authorship of this first work. Newby tried the same ploy by associating Eliot's name with his 1859 *Adam Bede, Junior*. But when Eliot and Lewes implored Blackwood to legally fight against this incursion and he wavered, they felt that

he was not protecting her name. Furthermore, in their discussions about potentially printing her next novel, *Mill on the Floss*, in *Maga*, Blackwood told Eliot that he would not include her name, explaining later that serials were published anonymously by custom. But at this point, Eliot's name was known, and she wanted her name attached to any work she published; this is one reason she was so unhappy with the idea of her next work being published in *Blackwood's*. This situation brings to light how Eliot's identity was so intimately intertwined with her fiction. With these many forces impacting Eliot at the same time, she felt her sense of individuality being threatened, and, in spite of Blackwood's declaration of her "genius," she felt unusually diminished by him. Her character and reputation were wrapped up in her identity, so after months of struggling for her name to be both connected to *Scenes of Clerical Life* and *not* be connected to Newby's work, she felt that Blackwood was not taking the proper steps to support her. Blackwood defended himself in this, claiming that he would do what he felt best for both Eliot and his publishing house, but this was small comfort to Eliot. Still, Eliot graciously forgave these offenses and willingly restored her relationship with Blackwood.

What clearly emerged out of this many-sided scenario is that Eliot was now a popular and sought-after author. There was potential for her being poached by another publisher, and during the months of this "misunderstanding," October through December 1859, times were chaotic in the publishing world. *Macmillan's* began publication of its new shilling monthly in November 1859, and the *Cornhill Magazine* published its highly anticipated first number in January 1860. Langford even commented on this excitement to Blackwood in the midst of this situation on November 18, 1859, stating, "I am pleased to hear that you have good things in prospect for *Maga*—the opposition is strong just

now” and discussed his perception of how things were going amidst the commencements of these two new magazines (3: 207). Lewes exclaimed something similar—also to Blackwood: “What days these are for furious speculation in the periodical world!” (3: 208). Blackwood had to keep up, but he also remained steady, refusing to offer any “wild sum” that anyone “trying to start a periodical” would offer (3: 233).

With this vibrant publishing world pressing in on all sides, and the new author emerging successfully at the same time, it is no wonder that the publisher George Smith and Eliot would collide so soon after Smith’s *Cornhill Magazine* skyrocketed to fame. Although Dickens tried to hire her before publication of *Mill on the Floss*, the weekly format would never have worked for Eliot’s methodical development of character—but the monthly *Cornhill* could do as an alternative to *Blackwood's*. Indeed, Eliot was approached for her next work, *Romola*, not by one, but by two publishers. When she decided to accept Smith’s offer of £10,000 for the serialization of *Romola* in the *Cornhill*, later decreased to £7000 because of the final, shortened length, she informed Blackwood on May 19, 1862, after the fact, and did not give him the details (4: 34). She told Blackwood that the terms were “hopelessly beyond your usual estimate of the value of my books” and “there would be an indelicacy in my making an appeal to you” regarding payment before she made a decision (4: 35). She also informed him that she retained copyright of this work after six years.

An important point about *Romola*, however, is something that Eliot ignored in her letter to Blackwood—that she had already told Blackwood about this work almost two years before, in 1862, when she was in Italy with Lewes (cf. 3: 307, 339). In fact, she tantalizingly mentioned to her editor that she had a secret that she could not tell him

about in a letter, implying that discussion about the work would take place back in England (3: 307). *Romola* was a unique offering by Eliot, a historical romance, the idea for which came to her in Italy. She was planning *Silas Marner* and tied *Romola*'s serialization to the publishing of *Silas*, telling Blackwood explicitly that she wanted to serialize *Romola* once it was further along and after publication of *Silas* (3: 339). This fact is crucial to the point of relationship because, given that Blackwood had encouraged Eliot consistently and carefully and had published *Scenes*, *Adam Bede*, and *Mill on the Floss*, this deep attachment over the years could have prevented Eliot from "going over to the enemy without giving me any warning," as Blackwood bitterly phrased it to Langford (4: 38). Furthermore, Eliot had ostensibly committed *Romola* to Blackwood when she expounded her publication plans, although a contract had not been agreed upon. But—and this is also important—it appears that Eliot was overtaken by Smith and his money, and there was simply no way she could refuse such a sum.

Blackwood responded as expected, telling Eliot that he was "sorry [her] new Novel is not to come out under the old colours" but was glad she had made "so satisfactory an arrangement" (4: 35). He was more forthright, however, with his London manager, telling Langford on May 25, 1862, "The conduct of our friends . . . is certainly not pleasing nor in the long run will they find it wise however great the bribe may have been" (4: 38). He also asserted that he was "fully intitled to calculate upon" this story and that this situation "sticks in [his] throat," but he would not quarrel because quarrels, "especially literary ones are vulgar" (4: 38). Furthermore, Blackwood emphasized that although the story is a "fine thing," he believed it was not suited to serialization and, most importantly, "would not suit the readers of the Cornhill" (4: 38). Anthony Trollope, in a

letter to Eliot after having read the first installment, echoed this concern, advising Eliot not to “fire too much over the heads of [her] readers” (qtd. in *GEL* 4: 45). In other words, *Romola*, as a Renaissance-themed novel, would be too intellectual for the readership of the popular shilling monthly, according to what Blackwood knew about the book and what Trollope had read. Indeed, contemporary reviews, though diplomatic, tended to have “serious reservations about the novel,” and Smith claimed that the novel did not increase sales of the *Cornhill* during its run (Rignall 343; Huxley 103).

This professional break between Eliot and Blackwood lasted four years, an eternity given how often they communicated earlier in their relationship. But their relationship was restored when Lewes offered Blackwood *Felix Holt, the Radical* in April 1866 (*GEL* 4: 240). Smith had been offered this work but rejected it after reading it to his wife. He claimed that Lewes intimated that Eliot expected £5000 for it, and he and his wife concluded it was not a “profitable venture” (Huxley 103). By contrast, Blackwood loved *Felix Holt*, calling it a “perfect marvel” (*GEL* 4: 247). He later urged Eliot to write a challenging article to the workingman of Britain, the subject of *Felix Holt* and the social class that would be most affected by the upcoming reform bill of 1867 (see 4: 398). Blackwood's positive response to *Felix Holt* and Smith's rejection of the story highlight the expectations of these publishers' readers for their own monthly magazines. The *Cornhill*'s policy was to avoid politics (Smith 111), whereas *Maga* was definitively Tory—and Blackwood even told Eliot how he appreciated her politics: “As far as I see yet, I suspect I am a radical of the Felix Holt breed, and so was my father before me” (*GEL* 4: 246). After all that time, Eliot went back to her long-time publisher in 1866.

Once reconciled, Eliot and Blackwood renewed their consistent communication, which was often daily. Their letters initially contain bittersweet sentiments, with Eliot acknowledging the “old days” and Blackwood mentioning the joy in resuming “old relations” (4: 243, 244). Blackwood told her that he hoped this resumption “may be a

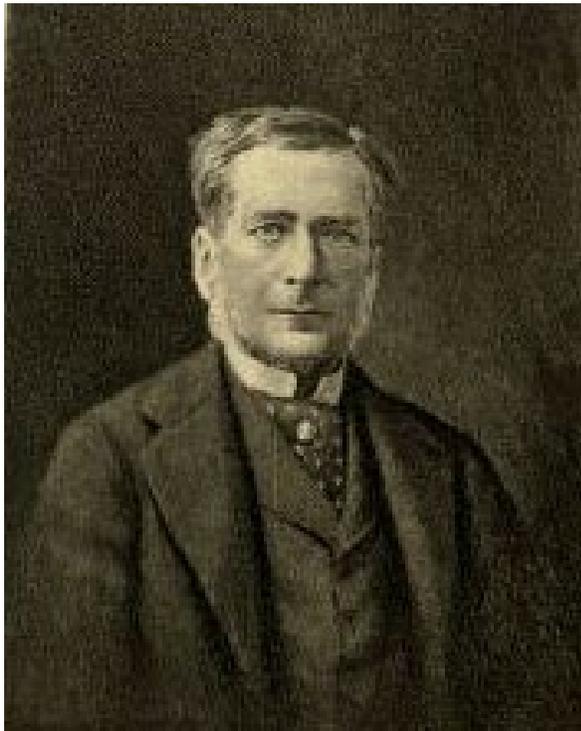


Figure 6. Blackwood, undated. “[John Blackwood] has been bound up with what I most cared for in my life for more than twenty years and his good qualities have made many things easy to me that without him would often have been difficult.” ~ George Eliot, *George Eliot Letters*, October 27, 1879, volume 7, p. 217. Public Domain.

source of pleasure and profit to all concerned,” and she responded with gratitude that he understood her (4: 246, 247). Blackwood also told Langford that it was a “great publishing triumph her returning to us,” and Lewes confirmed that Eliot was “cheered” by the renewed relations (4: 247). The correspondence is filled with friendly and chatty content, often not even touching on publishing concerns. Furthermore, in November of 1866, Eliot offered Blackwood the copyrights to *Romola*, which he accepted. The temporary break resulted in an even stronger bond between the two once they reunited,

not only sealing Blackwood as Eliot's sole publisher of all her novels but cementing a ten-year-old friendship. When Eliot wrote to Blackwood and his nephew, William, on the final day of 1868, sending them “sincere good wishes” for the coming year, she added that she hoped “that we should all in common look back next Christmas on something achieved in which we share each other’s satisfaction,” presciently predicting that their greatest triumph was still ahead of them (4: 502).

On January 1, 1869—that first day of the year to which Eliot referred when she sent “good wishes” to the Blackwoods—Eliot penned a hopeful note in her journal: “I have set myself many tasks for the year—I wonder how many will be accomplished?—A Novel called *Middlemarch*, a long poem on Timoleon, and several minor poems” (5: 3). By the end of that year, the novel had taken “warm possession” of her, as Blackwood described it, and the beginnings of what would become *Middlemarch* had been written (5: 15-16). Over the year 1870, Eliot’s novel “[crept] on,” and by the end of December, she had begun a different novel—one she planned to call “Miss Brooke” (5: 81, 127). These two novels were destined to be combined by Eliot, forming her masterpiece, *Middlemarch*. While Eliot and Blackwood began their association in 1857, this hefty book is the one most often associated with the pair because of Eliot’s merging of the stories and its unique composition of having been published in eight discrete parts. The story of Eliot’s compilation process is fully detailed in Jerome Beaty’s seminal and still-foundational work, *Middlemarch from Notebook to Novel*, and Beaty examines Eliot’s manuscripts, journal, correspondence, and notebook—called her *Quarry*, in which organizational plans are recorded—to reconstruct Eliot’s joining of the two novels. Beaty demonstrates that Eliot was not a “slave to her own plans” but followed the revelation of

“new relationships and developments” that emerged which were “impossible to anticipate” (123). While known for its unique composition, *Middlemarch* seemed to make an impression on everyone who read it, and each treated it with tender care



Figure 7. Eliot, circa 1858. “[This] second portion of *Middlemarch* . . . is a most wonderful study of human life and nature. You are like a great giant walking about among us and fixing every one you meet upon your canvas. In all this life like gallery that you put before us every trait in every character finds an echo or recollection in the reader’s mind that tells him how true it is to Nature” ~ John Blackwood to George Eliot, July 20, 1871, *George Eliot Letters*, volume 5, p. 167. Public Domain.

throughout the writing process and production. Blackwood called it a “precious M.S.,” and Lewes often asked for an acknowledgement of receipt when he sent a portion of the manuscript by post (*GEL* 5: 168; cf. 5: 185, 303, 308, 313). Even Langford commented that of all Eliot’s books, this one “displayed [most] strikingly her deep insight into character and human nature” (5: 207). It is through this work that the true-to-life nature of

Eliot's work and the culmination of fifteen years of relationship between Eliot and Blackwood came to fruition.

Eliot composed much of *Middlemarch* during 1871, at the end of which Blackwood began the novel's publication. In March, she was already fearing its length and was concerned she had "too much matter, too many 'momenti'" (5: 137). Hughes explains that during the summer, Eliot and Lewes moved to the country for peace and quiet, and in the surroundings, Eliot wrote "fluently and well" (293). On May 7, 1871, Lewes offered to Blackwood a suggestion for a unique method of publication for *Middlemarch*: publishing in half-volume parts every two months. In proposing this method, Lewes argued to Blackwood that Eliot would need four volumes for publication, as opposed to the normal three and claimed that the "story must not be spoiled for want of space" (*GEL* 5: 146). He claimed that the income for this method would be comparable to publishing in volumes, endeavoring to persuade Blackwood by using a long-held wish of the editor: to invent some "mode of circumventing the Libraries and making the public buy" instead of borrow (5: 146). Lewes concluded by telling Blackwood daringly, "Ponder this; or suggest a better plan!" Although this was not the first time Blackwood had considered this method of publication—he ultimately decided against it for Edward Bulwer-Lytton's 1850 *My Novel*—it was the first time it seemed viable, and over the ensuing months the publisher agreed to Lewes's terms (Sutherland, *Victorian Fiction* 119). In the fall, Eliot became desperately ill, but in spite of the ups and downs of writing, the first part of the novel was published December 1, 1871 (Hughes 293; cf. *GEL* 5: 191).

Throughout the writing of *Middlemarch*, Blackwood continued to encourage Eliot directly, and this appreciation heightened as Eliot wrote this crowning work. For example, on June 2, 1871, after his first reading of the manuscript for Book One, he told Eliot, “I must write a line to tell you how intensely I am delighted with Miss Brooke—it is filled to overflowing with touches of nature and character that could not be surpassed. . . . Every character stands out clear and distinct” (5: 148). After Blackwood’s reassuring response later in the year, on October 11, 1871, Lewes emphasized to Blackwood the astonishing response Eliot had to his words: “Talk of tonics, you should have seen the stimulating effect of your letter yesterday respecting ‘Miss Brooke’! She who needs encouragement so much, to give her some confidence and shake the ever-present doubt of herself and her doing, *relies* on you, and takes comfort from you to an extent you can hardly imagine” (5: 201). Blackwood often reread Eliot’s pages, and on January 26, 1872, he explained to her that he “was seated amid a sea of unanswered letters and unread M.S.S., but on the false pretext to myself that I should look to see what alteration you had made, I passed most of the morning reveling in it again. It is beyond praise” (5: 240-41; cf. 5: 248). He also told Lewes on February 21, 1872, that *Middlemarch* was selling well and that he was indulging his wife and daughter by allowing them to read the manuscripts of Book Three. He states, “It is a chorus among us of wonderful, perfect, etc. and each commentator is anxious to allude to *points* as if being the first to mention any of them gave a share in the merit” (5: 248). Finally, on March 12, 1872, Lewes begged Blackwood to write to Eliot because she was convinced that her editor had an “unfavorable opinion of her work” because she hadn’t heard from him; Lewes knew Blackwood was just overwhelmed with work but asked for “[j]ust one

line . . . to disabuse her” (5: 254-55). The next day, Blackwood wrote, taking time out of his schedule of reading other authors’ proofs to relate his thoughts on how “[e]very individual character stands out as clear and finished as can be” (5: 255). The bond between Eliot and Blackwood was inordinately strong during the publication of *Middlemarch*, and Eliot reveled in his words and was spurred on to more writing as a result.

Eliot’s reaction to Blackwood, however, was more subtle and generally unrelated to her literary offerings, but she communicated warmly to him about the things that concerned him. On New Year’s Day, always a thoughtful day for Eliot, she told Blackwood, “I am glad to think that in desiring happiness for you during this new year, I am only desiring the continuance of good which you already possess” (5: 231). In thanking him for his sending photos of himself, she reminisced: “This likeness will always carry me back to the first time I saw you, in our little Richmond lodging, when I was thinking anxiously of ‘Adam Bede,’ as I now am of ‘Middlemarch’” (5: 236-37). She also remembered Blackwood’s family when they were on vacation in August 1872, telling Blackwood that she imagined both he and Mrs. Blackwood having “great happiness in taking that bright lovely daughter abroad and watching her fresh impressions” (5: 296). Finally, Eliot wrote to Blackwood from Germany on October 4, 1872, two days after she completed the finale of *Middlemarch* and after she and Lewes sent the manuscript to Blackwood for publication. She told him, “My dear Mr. Blackwood, At last I begin a letter which is intended not as a payment but as an acknowledgment of debt” (5: 314). Eliot had completed her novel, and she recognized the debt of encouragement and affirmation Blackwood offered her throughout the many

months of writing, illness, and stress that the book demanded. This letter is filled with descriptions of her and Lewes's visit to Germany, but in this indirect way she identified the crux of her weakness: her need for the stimulating and supportive words of the significant people in her life. She knew that she owed Blackwood a debt and told him. The warmth between them elicited through the *Middlemarch* years demonstrates the peak of their relations since their paths crossed fifteen years before.

The warmth between Eliot and Blackwood, however, was not simply a natural result of an author and her editor getting to know each other over a long period of time. Their appreciation of each other was rooted in their shared response to the realistic quality and nature of her fiction. Throughout his association with Eliot, Blackwood critically examined her work and, at the same time, praised her for it. In *Middlemarch*, this criticism found its highest fulfillment. For example, in his letter dated July 20, 1871, after reading the second portion of the novel, Blackwood told her, “[This section] is a most wonderful study of human life and nature. You are like a great giant walking about among us and fixing every one you meet upon your canvas. In all this life like gallery that you put before us every trait in every character finds an echo or recollection in the reader's mind that tells him how true it is to Nature” (5: 167). He went on to express his disappointment over not encountering any of “[his] old friends” from the first part—because of Eliot's combining of two novels, some characters do not appear for many chapters—and then asked, “Where did you hear those horsey men talking? Willie's room at George St. opens from my room and I often hear the mysterious words of wisdom flowing between him and his horsey yeomany friends. You have caught the very tone” (5: 167). When he read the part when Mr. Brooke appears again in the novel, Blackwood

exclaimed, “I *knew his voice* the moment he came into the room” (5: 167). Comments like these that emphasized the lifelike character of people and nature of society are strewn throughout Blackwood’s letters to Eliot. He told her the capture of the doctor Tertius Lydgate is “*so true*” and that “Part 4 is graphic to a degree in every sketch and detail. Every individual character stands out as clear and finished as can be” (5: 245-55). Finally, Blackwood became very personal in his letter to Eliot dated July 29, 1872. The novel was coming along well, and he told her that “[e]very book seems to go on becoming what one could not have thought possible—better than its predecessor” (5: 293). He related his recent activity regarding Book Six:

I dallied for days over this Book, pausing and reading and rereading . . . I find myself . . . looking at the different points and wondering what is most perfect, until if I do not take care the morning will be gone and no letters written at all, as has happened to me more than once before. When things please me particularly I sit back in my chair and begin dreaming. . . . There are some truly exquisite touches in those two interviews with Will Ladislaw. (5: 293)

Blackwood ended his discussion of this section by stating, “That scene in the Garth family is famous. One feels almost uncomfortably in the thick of it, rather afraid of sticky fingers on one's garments. I have assisted at such scenes” (5: 293).

Blackwood not only appreciated the true-to-life nature of Eliot’s fiction, but he recognized that her novels communicated a morality that he could approve of and that society approved of as well. George Levine explains that the “energizing principle of George Eliot’s art was realism,” and further argues that although Eliot did not explicitly believe that her art was *only* “accuracy in representation of things as they are,” her art

was “always that, too” (7). According to Levine, Eliot had “strenuous moral and aesthetic standards” that infused her work, standards that extended to “the world of individual consciousness” (7, 9). It is this internal and perceptive awareness of nuances of character that, for Blackwood, were the heart of Eliot’s work and what made him admire her so much. He told Eliot that “Dorothea is better than any sermon that ever was preached by man” (*GEL* 5: 307), and, when he discussed her “dissect[ion]” of Bulstrode’s feelings, he stated, “It is a terrible picture of the attempt to love God and Mammon,” because Eliot included a “touch of reality in the wretch’s religion which removes him from the ordinary religious hypocrite of his school” (5: 306). These powerful character studies Blackwood described underscore Eliot’s ability to communicate the morality Levine discusses. Sutherland discusses Eliot’s ability to reach the “self-improving reader” and argues that Blackwood’s perspective of Dorothea’s functioning as a sermon places a “social seal of approval” on Eliot—an approval that allowed Blackwood confidently to send copies of Eliot’s novels to prominent, aristocratic Tories (*Victorian Novelists* 188). This combination of Eliot’s realistic depictions of life that touched a nerve with Blackwood and the acceptance of Eliot’s works by her contemporary public expresses the striking significance Blackwood placed on Eliot and how she communicated truth to her public, and this approval and societal endorsement reached its crescendo as a result of *Middlemarch*.

Once *Middlemarch* was complete, communication between Eliot and Blackwood became more distinctly personal. Eliot would complete one more novel, *Daniel Deronda*, and when Blackwood had the opportunity to read a large portion of it, he told her that his privilege of reading her work “is a thing to be proud of” (*GEL* 6: 137). Through their

letters now, they each communicated more freely, more about family, and less businesslike—especially Blackwood, because over the years in her letters in response to his, Eliot more thoroughly addressed each topic Blackwood brought up (cf. 5: 230, 231). As both of them feel the creep of age, their letters demonstrate that the strength of their association was past them but memorable. Unfortunately, an important letter dated October 8, 1876, in which Eliot shared her regards for Blackwood, is lost, but with gratitude, Blackwood told his nephew about it: "[S]he had been looking over my old letters and cannot resist writing to say how much she owes me. . . . It is the greatest compliment a man in my position could possibly receive" (6: 293). When he replied to her directly on October 12, 1876, he told her that tears came into his eyes when he read the letter to his wife and that he would "keep the letter for my children as a memorial that their father was good for something in his day" (6: 294). Seven days later on October 19, 1876, Blackwood reminded Eliot reminiscently, "We have a long career of successive triumphs to look back upon and I hope there is much yet before us. It must be some 21 years since *Amos Barton* was published" (6: 297). At the end of 1877, Eliot recorded in her journal, "Many conceptions of works to be carried out present themselves, but confidence in my own fitness to complete them worthily is all the more wanting because it is reasonable to argue that I must have already done my best" (6: 440). Eliot and Blackwood recognized that they have led full lives, much of them intertwined together, and remained sober but hopeful about their futures.

The final three years of Eliot's life were painful ones, although an important turning point her final year was her marriage to John Cross. However, the two most important men for the bulk of her professional career—the ones who were daily available

for help and encouragement—preceded her in death. Lewes, her beloved and the one she called her “greatest of blessings,” died November 30, 1878, and, according to Hughes, “there could have been no George Eliot” without George Henry Lewes (Eliot, *Journals* 122; Hughes 327). Lewes understood Eliot's deep emotional needs as well as her varied written works, and his own professional life as an author himself was “extraordinary” (327). When Blackwood heard of Lewes’s death, he was distressed because Eliot was left all alone (*GEL* 7: 85). He wished to visit her because he felt he was the “oldest and truest” friend she had, but he had to postpone this visit and write her instead; unfortunately, this letter is lost as well (7: 85). Just one year later, on October 29, 1879, Blackwood followed in death after a series of heart attacks (Hughes 334). When she heard that he was “dangerously ill,” Eliot wrote to Lewes’s son, Charles, telling him there was little hope: “He will be a heavy loss to me. He has been bound up with what I most cared for in my life for more than twenty years and his good qualities have made many things easy to me that without him would often have been difficult” (*GEL* 7: 217). Indeed, in her last letter to Blackwood, Eliot encouraged him to be a “good, good patient, and cherish your life wisely” for the sake of his wife (7: 207). The following year, after the death of Blackwood, on May 6, 1880, Eliot married John Cross. They lived together almost seven months before Eliot herself became ill for the last time. Cross wrote to Elma Stuart, one of Eliot’s “most devoted admirers,” that Eliot died at 10 p.m. on December 22, 1880 (Rignall 404). Cross noted poignantly, “All the world is an infinite loser by this most untimely catastrophe” (*GEL* 7: 351).

Although Eliot and Blackwood held differing belief systems, the power of their relationship is evident in their shared vision for the authentic nature of Eliot’s work and

its ability to challenge individuals to a better life. While Eliot was a quasi-radical, albeit most impassioned during her younger days, Blackwood was a staunch Tory (Rignall 438; Tredrey 154). While Eliot had rejected her childhood religion and the fundamental beliefs of Christianity, Blackwood remained an adherent to Christian principles (Rignall 52; Porter 207). Hughes explains that to all who asked Eliot the question, “How shall we live now?” she responded the same: “[R]esign yourself to suffering, wean yourself off the hope of a future life and nourish your fellow feeling towards the men and women you encounter every day” (279-80). Blackwood, in a rare moment of candid discussion about religion, explained to Lewes why he could not publish his work on metaphysics, *Problems of Life and Mind*: “The assumption . . . that those are the most weighty thinkers who believe that the world would be better without religion to me is an impossibility,” but he qualified his statement by explaining that Lewes’s writings had done him good by “making me feel how innate is the belief in God” (*GEL* 5: 411). Blackwood also declared to Lewes, “To me you seem to give no weight to mind and feeling in the matter. Why do you believe in or love anybody? You can give no scientific reason for so doing” (5: 411). Lewes reacted heatedly to Blackwood’s characterizations, declaring that Blackwood misunderstood his clear principles, but the explanations Blackwood included in his letter to Lewes do demonstrate Blackwood’s belief about God and religion: it is inherent to human nature to believe, and an earthly, scientific belief system is not enough to originate love for others. In contrast to Blackwood, Eliot found “in science the basis of a moral vision” (Rignall 369). Rignall states, “In Eliot’s secular world-view, science was to offer the moral framework once supplied by religion” (365). Blackwood’s deeply rooted belief elevates hope, including a hope for the future, widely straying from the material and

earthly focus Eliot had. And yet Blackwood's and Eliot's individual beliefs intersected in a shared space—that space where realism in literature demonstrates life as it exists on earth—today, true-to-life—and in which humans can contemplate sin, hope, and experience in order to develop and seek to understand what life is really about. While Eliot and Blackwood diverged on many critical themes of life, they came together with a united focus to communicate to a public who yearned to learn and grow in knowledge of their world and what lies ahead.

CHAPTER V

In Conclusion: Author-Editor Relations and Cultural Change

The nineteenth century, particularly during the age of Queen Victoria, experienced dramatic changes, not the least of which was the explosion of the periodical culture. A profusion of magazines appeared in all stripes, from the radical *Westminster Review* and the Tory *Quarterly Review* to the feminist *English Woman's Journal* and the Anglo-Catholic *Church Times*. Dickens's *Household Words*, Smith's *Cornhill Magazine*, and *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* all fit into this broad spectrum, and each of these had its own identity and goals to reach a readership that was either sympathetic to its perspective or amenable to change. Furthermore, the editors who ran these periodicals and the authors who wrote for them directly controlled what appeared on the page and influenced the burgeoning middle class in uniquely different ways. Specifically, Dickens and Gaskell sought to challenge the rising middle class to help the downtrodden; Thackeray and Trollope endeavored to transform the middle class into true gentlemen and women; and Blackwood and Eliot worked to expand the true-to-life nature of literature through their one-on-one relationships. Through these associations, literary and social change occurred, reflecting the ongoing transformations in nineteenth century British culture.

Dickens and Gaskell deserve to be known as the pair who early championed the plight of the working class. Gaskell began her writing career with *Mary Barton*, the novel that highlights the disparities of class structure that attracted her attention to Dickens. Simultaneously, Dickens was immersed in his own fiction, seeking to comment on cultural conditions such as wealth, urbanization, and public health concerns, having

depicted these conditions throughout his fiction. As the celebrity editor of *Household Words*, Dickens met readers where they were—in their "innumerable homes"—to challenge them, among other things, to be faithful to help mankind progress (Dickens, "Preliminary Word" 1). This perspective was the impetus behind Dickens's seeking out Gaskell to write for his weekly, because in her he recognized a kindred spirit who had the overarching desire to rectify in a practical manner many of those social ills they both abhorred. Dickens made strategic choices for his middle-class readers, and, in Gaskell's *North and South*, attempted to control the emphasis of that work by modifying Gaskell's text to highlight the cultural differences between the north and south of England. But Gaskell had a broader perspective with her desire to emphasize not only the same social reform Dickens wanted but also the character growth of her great heroine, Margaret Hale. Through the difficult months of back-and-forth correspondence, each became frustrated with the other, but it was the formidable novel with consequential implications for social and class standing that imposed the need for special care in the magazine. This work poured forth from the pen of the woman, like Dickens, who wanted to demonstrate a benevolent charity with a humanitarian purpose. *North and South* was too big for *Household Words* because it not only physically grew beyond the space limitations available, but because it underscored both the vast social upheaval resulting from the industrial revolution and the maturing character of the protagonist who learned to respect both of the societies she claimed. When Gaskell prepared her novel for volume publication, she modified it with fresh chapters and episodes to communicate the story she wanted to tell. In spite of their being at odds on some of the emphasis of *North and South*, both Dickens and Gaskell deliberately highlighted the downtrodden, the poor, the

fallen woman, and the families living in squalor in their works. The power of their social conviction is evident, and, instead of highlighting their infamous dispute over *North and South*, their legacy as a pair is their social challenge to the up-and-coming middle class.

The newly-formed gentleman class that began to prosper in the nineteenth-century was redefined by the parallel influence of Thackeray and Trollope. Thackeray came from the class of administrators and military officers who not only achieved wealth and status in India but attained the gentlemen's education that later allowed him to balance the idealized image of the aristocrat with the subtle reshaping of the middle class. As a transitional figure, Thackeray maintained the perspective that these ideals were valuable and could educate this new professional class. In accord with this goal, Trollope paired well with Thackeray as his first author of the *Cornhill Magazine*, setting the tone with his *Framley Parsonage* and effectively depicting this view of life to the same middle class Thackeray wanted to influence. At the commencement of the *Cornhill*, Thackeray deliberately sought contributors who had the same conception of the world—gentlemen and ladies who would serve the monthly's purpose naturally and with authority. While Thackeray voiced the goals of the magazine, Trollope put feet to those goals by creating communities that the middle class not only was comfortable in but aspired to. Trollope successfully demonstrated that people of all ranks in British society could interact candidly and progress morally. He developed characters who fostered the growth of the gentleman and gentlewoman among the middle class. Women were not excluded from this rank, but, as Trollope especially emphasized, could also maintain an inordinate strength for them to hold their own. The *Cornhill* served as a wellspring of knowledge for men and women, both of whom were learning and advancing in the midst of the

transformations occurring in British society. Combined, Thackeray and Trollope communicated that the world had become refashioned with a new type of gentleman, one who was not born to the rank, but was the happy man or woman who lived a life of high moral character.

Blackwood and Eliot formed a uniquely different relationship compared to the relationships of the other editors and authors. The familiarity that existed at the end of their lives was nonexistent at the beginning of their association but advanced inexorably from those first circuitous letters through their break in professional and personal connections, only to become stronger and more stable after that temporary separation. For Eliot, Blackwood's consistently encouraging comments regarding the characters and themes of her novels nurtured her growing confidence in her early career and sustained her as she gained her stride. *Middlemarch* was fashioned during a year of ups and downs in Eliot's life, and the gentle and steady remarks by Blackwood served to aid Eliot in creating her classic, monumental work. Blackwood, while he consciously—and, as editor, conscientiously—spurred Eliot on with his words, was inspired himself by Eliot's work. From Eliot's short stories compiled in *Scenes of Clerical Life* to the pro-Zionist themes of *Daniel Deronda*, Blackwood consistently admired the depth of character and realistic nature in the everyday details of life she portrayed. It was this value Blackwood placed on her work—his respect for the realistic force she incorporated—that endeared him to her. Above all, Eliot wanted to be known as a writer who had lasting value; the ephemeral was anathema to her. With this esteem that both Blackwood and Eliot placed on her writing, it is not surprising that as a pair, they concurrently advanced the literary realism that was coming to fruition in the latter part of the nineteenth century. This true-

to-life style is key to the development of literature in the Victorian era, and, together, Blackwood and Eliot helped it accelerate. As literary figures, both Blackwood and Eliot were strategically living at a time when literature was taking a turn towards consistently reflecting the daily life of individuals. Eliot and Blackwood were on the vanguard of this movement towards realism and played an important role in ushering it in.

As pairs these authors and editors reflected significant shifts in culture, but the role of editor in the thriving publishing culture was undergoing its own transformation at the same time. Early in the century, the “gentleman amateur” filled the position, and journalism in general and editorships in particular were considered only mildly respectable trades (Shattock, “Showman” 165). As the century continued, the role became more progressive in that the traditional view of the unpaid gentleman evolved into a more comfortable acceptance of the position as worthy of aspiration, a salary, and the trade of journalism (165). Indeed, as the manager of the periodical, the editor wielded power. He—or she—controlled content and viewpoint and served as the center spoke of the wheel through which the goals of the magazine were conveyed.

Dickens, Thackeray, and Blackwood manifested very different modes of editorships. Dickens’s style was dictatorial: he had his finger on the pulse of every aspect of his magazines. He controlled content through his own writings and acceptance of other authors’ contributions, claimed ownership through his "conducting" banner headline, and ran his office through an assistant with whom he had constant contact. Thackeray’s style was diametrically opposed to Dickens’s. He was a free spirit who only reluctantly pored over manuscripts, although he produced a popular monthly shilling for over two years, and at times he rejoiced over the prospect of both the novelty of the *Cornhill Magazine*

and its potential for financial remuneration. That his editorship allowed him to provide for his wife and daughters was a huge motivation for him, and he was successful in this goal. Unique to Dickens and Thackeray was their role as the celebrity editor, although their positions played out differently. Dickens enjoyed fame simultaneously with working as an editor, whereas Thackeray's editorship came as a result of his fame as an author. When the time came for Thackeray to lead the *Cornhill*, his gentlemanly background brought a grace to the role that Dickens did not have. Blackwood, finally, was the only editor of these three who was not known as an author as well. As the sole editor who did not write creatively, Blackwood's focus was on reading manuscripts, correcting proofs, choosing expert writers, making financial decisions, and building relationships with authors and contributors. His creative energies were put into managing a magazine and publishing works, some of which would become long-time, phenomenal bestsellers, while Dickens and Thackeray continued to write fiction on top of their editorial duties. This heightened image of the editor paved the way for the rise in regard for journalism as a whole. The editor's job was unique to each individual and his or her own periodical, and the role, along with other aspects of the culture, changed with the times.

In a similar way, the role of author changed as the nineteenth century advanced. Although anonymity was standard in periodicals earlier in the century, signed articles and fiction in periodicals became much more common as the century progressed, although this shift was controversial and uneven in its development (Brake and Demoor 86-87). Authors also began to be associated with certain styles—or brands—that readers counted on. By the end of the century, the author had become a professional commodity, in whom the public was more intimately interested (Easley 11). Biography and autobiography

became much more common, as in Mary Porter's 1898 *Annals of a Publishing House: John Blackwood*, which focused on her father, and George Smith's 1885 Dictionary of National Biography.¹ This growing desire of the public for deeper knowledge of its favorite authors fueled a British nationalism that encouraged social progress (11). This professionalization occurred slowly but steadily throughout the century, culminating with a marked emphasis on the author as a known and popular figure independent of a periodical or publishing house.

Just as the editorial styles were remarkably different among Dickens, Thackeray, and Blackwood, Gaskell, Trollope, and Eliot diverged widely in their emphases, values, and results from their fiction. Naturally conversant, Gaskell communicated to her public the impressions around her—those elements of social unrest that concerned her the most—and fused them into her novels. Unique to these novelists, Gaskell was the only one who was never an editor. Emphasizing her family and her writing, Gaskell focused her energy on creating stories, growing steadily into her craft as she published more. Trollope's goal of conveying purity in virtue and goodness emerged in his realistic representations of life that gently portrayed a refined elegance to the new class structures that were appearing mid-century, and his brand of authorship included a form of metafiction in which he communicated directly to his readership, often in a humorous way. Like Trollope, Eliot consistently regarded the value of realistic form above the ideal or the romantic, but she went further by incorporating the psychological element of characters, far surpassing Trollope. Some of these authorial differences were a result of individual experiences that inspired them, as in the case of Eliot in Italy developing the genesis of *Romola* or Gaskell's placement of scenes from her home in Manchester

directly into *Mary Barton*; but some are those convictions of life that became a part of the author's own psyche and begged to cascade out of his or her mind to the page. The immense body of work from these three authors represents the changing social and literary dynamics occurring through the respective decades in which they wrote and can be seen as markers of the shifting cultural phenomena over that time: Gaskell in the eighteen-forties and -fifties writing for social change, particularly in *North and South*; Trollope in the eighteen-sixties emphasizing the gentleman ideal through his English countryside novels, especially in *Framley Parsonage*; and in the eighteen-seventies, Eliot producing the essence of psychological and historical realism in her works, most famously in *Middlemarch*. This sequence of works spanning almost thirty years of time offers a means of viewing and shining a light on these changes in Victorian society.

The novels of Gaskell, Trollope, and Eliot were published in remarkably different ways, a consequence of the exciting and varied publishing culture of the nineteenth century. Trollope was the most diverse, with at least ten publishers taking on his work during his long career, although once *Framley Parsonage* was published, the form of his works became consistently serialized. He is most often associated with Chapman and Hall, although Longman, Bentley, Colburn, Chatto and Windus, and the notorious Newby all published Trollope. Blackwood published two works of Trollope serially and became a friend as well (Terry 451-52). Eliot, by contrast, was the least varied. Blackwood published all of her novels except *Romola*, usually in volume form, with the notable exception of *Middlemarch*. *Romola*, of course, was serialized in the *Cornhill* by George Smith. Gaskell seemed to strike a balance. Chapman and Hall—Trollope's long-time publisher—published *Mary Barton* and other novels in volume form; Gaskell then

serialized short stories and *North and South* for Dickens; and, towards the end of her life, she also published with George Smith, both serially and with his publishing house, Smith, Elder (Uglow 618-19). This wide variety of publishing patterns highlights the flexible and accessible system that characterized the Victorian publishing culture.

This adaptable system was also a network—a network of dozens of authors, editors, publishers, illustrators, and critics who interacted with each other regularly. While this thesis examines three pairs of authors and editors with an emphasis on specific moments and novels in time, each of these literary men and women could have been paired at a different moment in time. What would happen, for example, if Gaskell had written *North and South* five years later, in 1860, for Thackeray? With his hands-off approach and his advertised mission for the *Cornhill* that specifically noted that he was not a "great reformer," Thackeray would have allowed Gaskell the freedom to simply write the hefty book she envisioned—and emphasize the character growth of Margaret Hale in addition to her social convictions without interference ("Our Birth" 109). Furthermore, given the monthly occurrence of the magazine—as opposed to the fast-paced weekly under Dickens—Gaskell could have found a natural home under Thackeray's editorship. In a similar example, what would have happened if Trollope had worked under Dickens? Trollope's style included writing without the intention of revising, and, given Dickens's desire to control content, he would have demanded changes. Additionally, Trollope's emphasis was to depict middle-class characters who worked through middle-class difficulties, rather than highlighting the downtrodden, which was Dickens's passion. If Trollope had connected with Blackwood earlier in his career, the monthly format could have served him well, and his creative emphases would

have suited Blackwood's traditional readers. Even Eliot's stable relationship with Blackwood could be reconsidered under a different editorial banner. If she had permanently switched to Smith, who was known as a generous and agreeable publisher—or had written for Thackeray just a few years earlier—Eliot might have continued to develop fully as an author, but most likely without the underpinnings of the consistent encouragement she desperately needed. If these authors had paired with one of the other editors at these key moments in their lives, the results, both personally and professionally, would reflect a differing set of emerging values and results because of the uniquely dynamic interactions that would occur. It is interesting to surmise various scenarios, but the fact remains that Gaskell worked with Dickens demonstrating their shared care for the needy; Trollope's life collided with Thackeray's to emphasize the changing role of the gentleman; and Eliot cultivated her skill under Blackwood to cement the realistic nature of fiction. Each pair contributed to these social and literary shifts that coincided with the overall political and social changes occurring in the nineteenth century.

The golden age of the Victorian periodical movement was the vehicle through which attention was given to the oppressed, encouragement to the newly emerging professional gentleman was promoted, and the expansion of a new focus on literary realism was disseminated throughout Britain. The nineteenth century was a transformational century that paved the way to fresh global impressions of life in the twentieth century. Periodicals were key to spreading knowledge to a middle class that was ripe for these new views of life. Just as the railroad represents the industrial transformation during the nineteenth century and literally brought new ideas, new people, and the world to tiny hamlets in England, so did the periodicals bring fresh perspectives

to the remotest parts of the country—north to Manchester, south to London, and even to the farthest boundaries of the British Empire (Brake and Demoor 456). The literary leaders who flourished in the robust years of this great century contributed to this vibrant movement that was a hallmark of the Victorian world.

NOTES

Chapter I - The Golden Age of Victorian Periodicals: An Introduction

1. Much of my discussion on the growth of the reader in the nineteenth century emerges out of Richard D. Altick's still-foundational work, *The English Common Reader*, but it is also a helpful and colorful commentary on many aspects of Victorian culture.

2. Altick explains in *The English Common Reader* that the goal of utilitarianism was “the diffusion of useful knowledge,” which included a “set of economic and political principles” that could help safeguard the nation from “social anarchy and economic catastrophe” (130-31). Utilitarians used print—specifically newspapers—to, in the words of Henry Brougham, utilitarian leader, “diffuse the best information” to “allure all classes, even the humblest, into the paths of general knowledge” (qtd. in Altick 131). Similarly, evangelicals stressed reading as an important aspect of “the truly enlightened life” (99). According to Altick, they spread “the barest rudiments of reading among the humble,” with the intention of encouraging Bible and tract reading (100, 107). The effect was a relative distrust of fiction reading, but as the century wore on, this view softened (114, 124). In fact, to evangelicals, reading became an important Sunday activity (128).

3. The Stamp Act of 1819 was one tax that was part of Parliament's “Six Acts” legislation (Altick, *English Common Reader* 321, 327). The act invoked a tax on newspapers or any “periodical containing news or comments on the news that was published oftener than every twenty-six days, printed on two sheets or less, and priced at less than 6d. exclusive of the tax” (327-28). It was an attempt by the government to place a “formidable barrier” between the public and the “cheap press” and to “wipe out

antigovernmental, antireligious papers” (321, 328). The tax was initially successful because many radical papers died out, but this suppression motivated a demand for the newspaper, in spite of cost (328). Over the course of the next thirty-six years, reformers and conservatives battled back and forth for removal or continuing of the tax, respectively, but in 1836, the stamp tax was reduced, newspaper prices were lowered, and, in 1855, this “tax on knowledge”—in the words of the *Times*—was finally abolished (341, 354). As a result, daily newspapers were more easily available to the “great body of middle-class buyers” (355). The final piece to the puzzle was the repeal of the “paper duty,” which took place in 1861, and, according to Altick, the combination of lower costs and this “greatly expanded mass audience” sent the publishing and printing trades into a “happy uproar” (357).

4. Mudie offered many different types of subscriptions that served the differing needs of his customers (cf. Griest 28, 38-39). Furthermore, while not explicitly stating this, Griest demonstrates that in order to read a complete novel of three volumes, library customers needed to purchase two subscriptions for a total of two guineas per year (see 40). Although Mudie allowed customers to exchange an infinite number of volumes, he allowed customers to borrow only up to two volumes of *one novel* per year per subscriber, ostensibly requiring two subscriptions in order to complete a novel in a timely manner. Comparing, for example, Griest’s statement of “three volumes weekly at two guineas a year” (28) with her statement about an alternative subscription rate of “fifteen volumes . . . *at one time* for five guineas a year” (39, my emphasis), Griest indicates that only through multiple subscriptions could a subscriber borrow a complete work. Graham Law recognizes the need for the two-guinea membership and states clearly: “The basic

annual subscription was a guinea, which allowed only a single volume to be borrowed at a time, but the most popular was the two-guinea subscription which permitted the taking out of four volumes simultaneously, and was thus geared to the form of the multi-volume novel” (12). Even at the rate of two guineas per year, a subscription was a bargain compared to purchasing a three-decker outright at thirty-one shillings and six pence (see Griest 18).

5. Guinevere L. Griest is still the best source for the complete story of the circulating libraries. Containing an excellent index, *Mudie’s Circulating Library and the Victorian Novel* nevertheless at times does not include specific sources for specific detail, as in the paragraph on the physical space of the New Oxford Street building. However, in chapter eight, Griest handles well the final downfall of Mudie’s in 1894, and throughout her work incorporates a multitude of detail that brings the story to life. Richard D. Altick, while his emphasis is on the growth of the “mass reading public”—and stresses this in his chapters on the book trade—also includes a unique perspective on the circulating libraries (1). See, especially, chapter thirteen in *The English Common Reader*.

6. Kathleen Tillotson clarifies in her chapter entitled “Introductory” that parts publication was also used for non-fiction. See page 23, note 22. For the great story of *Pickwick* and its initial publication, see both Tillotson, pp. 6-7, and Paul Schlicke, especially pp. 444-45.

7. Schlicke clarifies that although *Pickwick* started with twenty-eight pages, Dickens and Chapman and Hall decided to increase the number of printed pages to thirty-two (444), which became standard for other novels published in parts (see 118). Schlicke specifies, however, that there were “many variations on the format” and discusses other

aspects of the form, including binding methods and the common practice of issuing the final installment as a double part issue (515). Delafield also demonstrates a variety of installment frequency. See pp. 186-87.

8. Schlicke explains that from issue six onwards (August 1837), Dickens “synchronize[d]” *The Pickwick Papers* to coincide with the season in which an individual serial appeared. See, for example, numbers ten, published January 1, 1837; and twelve, published in March 1837, respectively, by Chapman and Hall (445).

9. *Wives and Daughters* was published in the monthly *Cornhill Magazine* from August 1864 to January 1866. The two installments discussed are from August and September of 1864.

Chapter II – The Perfect Storm: Gaskell and Dickens

1. Hereafter “GL” for “Gaskell, *Letters*.” This compilation of Elizabeth Gaskell’s letters is often cited as “Chapple and Pollard,” referencing the editors, in other sources. Chapple and Pollard have organized Gaskell’s letters by numbers, but my citations refer to page numbers. When I quote from one of her letters, I indicate the date either in the text or in the appropriate citation.

2. For example, in 1952, A. B. Hopkins claims that the conflict between Gaskell and Dickens was a “little battle of wills, in which the palm of victory, apparently, went to [Gaskell]” (135). Linda K. Hughes and Michael Lund argue that traditionally, accounts of the Gaskell-Dickens feud concluded that Dickens was the “success story” and Gaskell “an (apparent) . . . failure,” but they explain that this failure has been “shaped by issues of gender” that are highlighted by the structure of the serialized novel (96-97; see 108-09). Furthermore, Elsie B. Michie suggests that Dickens’s “function as editor” is as a

“disciplinarian” whose goal is to ensure Gaskell remains “within the limits of what is proper” in the public arena (86-87), and Jerome Meckier calls Dickens’s *Hard Times* and Gaskell’s *North and South*, serialized in *Household Words* within weeks of each other, “rival[s]” that “challenged the other’s truthfulness” (91). Melissa Schaub claims that “the letters have generally been read as depicting a Gaskell who lost her battle with Dickens” and that, “[c]ontrary to the expectations of today’s reader, Gaskell very likely ‘won’ this battle of authorship” (195). Finally, Jenny Uglow states, “In [Dickens’s] view she had won; she had had her own way. In [Gaskell’s] view she had lost: he had ruined her novel” (368).

3. Hereafter “Pilgrim” for the “Pilgrim Edition” of Dickens’s letters. This standard and exhaustive edition of Dickens’s letters consists of twelve volumes spanning almost forty years of scholarship, several volumes of which are referenced in this chapter. Since those volumes are edited by several editors, for simplicity I will use “Pilgrim” in my citations. I will also reference the “Pilgrim editors” in my text, but each citation clearly states volume and page number. As often as is practical and because timing of letters is so crucial to my research in this chapter, I also include dates of letters in the text. In those cases where I do not cite them in the text, I place dates within the in-text citation for clearer reference and in the form of the Pilgrim edition.

4. The Pilgrim editors explain, “No doubt [William Gaskell asked Dickens] to address the Manchester and Salford Sanitary Association” as Gaskell had probably done the year before as well (7: 265 fn; 5 February 1854).

5. *North and South* was serialized in *Household Words* in twenty installments from September 2, 1854 to January 27, 1855 (Vann, *Victorian Novels* 79).

6. Davies notes that his source is a “transcript,” while the Pilgrim editors note that theirs are “[c]opies.” Both sources come from the Brotherton Library, University of Leeds (Davies 273; Pilgrim 7: 320 fn.).

7. Both Collin and Gerin had Chapple and Pollard’s 1967 *Letters of Mrs. Gaskell* available to them, but Grubb and Hopkins did not. None of the authors had available to them the Pilgrim Edition of *The Letters of Charles Dickens*, including the appropriate volume seven, which was published in 1993. Instead, each author—Grubb, Hopkins, Collin, and Gerin—used the “Nonesuch” edition, edited by Walter Dexter in 1938, or, in the case of Gerin, 1928, as his or her source for letters, which Paul Schlicke describes as “careless” and with notes “virtually non-existent” (330). The goal of the Pilgrim Edition was to be accurate and contain “thorough annotation,” and today it is the “standard” edition (330, 327).

8. Gaskell’s “Disappearances” was published in *Household Words* on June 7, 1851 (Shattock, “Disappearances” 197). The essay dealt with “individuals who vanished under mysterious and inexplicable circumstances,” with its “underlying point [being] that the recently-established Detective Police would have solved the mysteries” (197). Several subsequent essays followed her story, some challenging her veracity and research. Given that Gaskell’s brother John had disappeared around 1827 serving the East India Company, this was an important topic to Gaskell, and, when she complained to Wills about it, he “failed to understand her irritation” (198). Shattock provides a thorough discussion of this controversy.

9. Once again, as discussed in Note 7, it's important to recognize that Hopkins did not have the Pilgrim edition of Dickens's *Letters* available to her when she wrote her biography of Gaskell.

Chapter III – Convergence: Thackeray, Trollope, and the *Cornhill Magazine*

1. For clarity in this chapter, I will hereafter cite George Smith's work as "Our Birth."

2. Spencer L. Eddy Jr.'s 1970 *The Founding of the Cornhill Magazine* contains an excellent discussion of the beginnings of the periodical. George Smith's "Our Birth and Parentage," available in Elizabeth Smith's 1902 compilation, *George Smith: A Memoir, with Some Pages of Autobiography*, tells some of the story from the publisher's point of view. Leonard Huxley, editor of the *Cornhill* in 1916, wrote *The House of Smith, Elder* and highlights the story of the *Cornhill's* publishers and includes some discussion of the magazine. See also John A. Sutherland's "The Thackeray-Smith Contracts" for a glance at the beginnings from a unique perspective that emphasizes some aspects of behind-the-scenes financial details.

3. See, for example, in Thackeray, *Letters* 4: 143, to Charles Lever; 149-50, to George Smith; 151-53, to Tennyson; and 165, to Mr. Cupples.

4. Thackeray's letters are compiled in two sets of volumes: Gordon N. Ray's four-volume standard edition and Edgar F. Harden's two-volume supplement. N. John Hall's two-volume edition contains Trollope's letters.

5. Thackeray's editor, Gordon N. Ray, provides a broad range of time for this letter with a span of 1861-1862. N. John Hall, Trollope's editor, who also includes this letter in Trollope's compilation, dates it at an uncertain date of "?December 1860."

Correct dating can affect the specific working relationship between Thackeray and Trollope as Thackeray resigned as editor in March of 1862. See specifically Thackeray, *Letters* 363, and, especially, Trollope, *Letters* 136, n. 1, for Hall's discussion.

Chapter IV – The Butterfly Effect: John Blackwood and George Eliot

1. Hereafter, *The George Eliot Letters* will be designated as *GEL*.

2. Denoting the various Blackwood names can be confusing. There are three “Williams”: William Blackwood, the founder of the publishing company and periodical; Major William Blackwood, the son of the founder, brother of John, and partner until his death in 1861; and William Blackwood III, son of the Major, nephew of John, and partner after the death of his father in 1861. Generally, “Blackwood” in the text will refer to John, unless the reference is clearly attributed to the relevant William—and at times it is necessary to clarify communication using first names.

3. Editor Gordon S. Haight included Blackwood's correspondence to Eliot in his *George Eliot Letters*. He also included pertinent letters from and to George Henry Lewes, Major William Blackwood, William Blackwood III, and the Blackwood firm's managers, George Simpson and Joseph Langford.

4. This account is discussed from the perspective of the serialization of *Mill on the Floss* in Carol A. Martin's *George Eliot's Serial Fiction*, pp. 106-22.

5. Simpson claimed three times in his letters that Blackwood was disgusted. He first used this term when he told Langford on November 3, 1859, how “utterly disgusted” both John and William Blackwood were regarding the conflict surrounding Eliot's new book, *Mill on the Floss* (3: 194). The second mention occurred when Simpson told Langford just over a week later, on November 12, 1859, that after a remark of his suggesting that

Langford should be informed of this situation, Blackwood responded “very impatiently as if he were disgusted with the affair and did not care to have anything more to say about it or the parties” (3: 200). Finally, Simpson explained to Langford on November 19, 1859, that he “urged [Blackwood] till he got obstinate” to write Langford again and claimed that Blackwood was “indeed so disgusted that it was natural he should be unwilling to approach the subject” (3: 210). I suggest here that, in fact, the disgust results more locally from Simpson pressing in on Blackwood. Interestingly, Haight’s index in *The George Eliot Letters* includes a reference to Blackwood being “disgusted” with Eliot, but Haight’s reference was written by Simpson to Langford on November 12, 1859; Haight did not reference the letter of October 30, 1859, in which Blackwood’s comment appears (see 7: 406).

Chapter V – In Conclusion: Author-Editor Relations and Cultural Change

1. Biographies of publishing houses were also prevalent in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Porter’s biography was the third volume in a set that included volumes one and two of Margaret Oliphant’s 1897 *Annals of a Publishing House: William Blackwood and His Sons* that told the Blackwood story. See also, for example, Thomas Hughes’s 1882 *Memoir of Daniel Macmillan* and William Chambers’s 1872 *Memoirs of Robert Chambers*. All are discussed in David Finkelstein’s *House of Blackwood: Author-Publisher Relations in the Victorian Era*, pages 113-28. Additionally, see editor John Morley’s 1878-1919 English Men of Letters series. George Smith’s 1885 Dictionary of National Biography was later published by Oxford.

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