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## Charles Dickens and Joseph Parkinson: Disentangling Composite Authorship in *All the Year Round*



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The extent of Dickens's written output is legendary. In his relatively short lifetime he completed fourteen and a half novels, as well as an impressive array of short fiction, travel books, plays, poems, and major and minor works of prose. The complete extent of his published works may never be known, partly on account of the convention of anonymity that dominated early and mid-Victorian publication – especially journalism (see Drew 117–8, 151, 183). The most recent attempt to produce a “Complete listing of Dickens's known journalism” was undertaken by Michael Slater and John Drew, in the final volume of their *Dent Uniform Edition of Dickens' Journalism* (Slater and Drew 436–46). Yet this inventory, featuring 370 items, is only as reliable as the supporting evidence, which comes from a variety of sources, including Dickens's correspondence, the discovery of manuscripts, and the Office Book for his journal *Household Words* (Collins, “Dickens on Ghosts”; Brice; and Lohrli). It is rare nowadays for a new piece of journalism by Dickens to be authenticated; yet such breakthroughs are possible, given the right circumstances and effective modes of investigation.

In the spring and summer of 2015 a set of fortuitous events culminated in a public announcement that the “Rosetta Stone of Victorian Studies” had been found (Dugan). In May of that year a group of academics met a scholar and antiquarian book dealer named Jeremy Parrott, to authenticate a series of carefully inscribed annotations in a recently purchased, handsomely bound set of the first series of *All the Year Round* (Fig. 1), the journal that Dickens edited from 1859 until his death in 1870. The scholars came away convinced that the marginalia, which identified by name the authors of each of the individual pieces, were genuine. These findings were confirmed by Leon Litvack, who observed in an interview with the *Independent* newspaper that

This is probably the most important find for [Dickens] scholars in

my lifetime. It gives us an insight into the links between Dickens and other authors, whose names have been all too often lost in the mists of time. It will be of inestimable value to scholars. (Milmo)

The annotations – not in Dickens’s hand (Parrott, “George Holsworth,” and Litvack, “Letters”) – confirmed the authorship of previously anonymous pieces; among the most notable revelations were works by Elizabeth Gaskell, Eliza Lynn Linton, Lewis Carroll and Wilkie Collins, together with a host of lesser-known figures. The complete story of the discovery was recounted in an article by Litvack in the *Dickens Quarterly*, in December 2015 (Litvack, “Dickens”). Since then Parrott has been working to compile and publish a *Bio-Bibliographical Guide to Contributors to All the Year Round*, based on the marginalia in what has now come to be called the “Parrott set” of the journal (Parrott, “The Annotated Set” 14).

There was further excitement when it was revealed that new writing by Dickens had been uncovered. In July 2015 an article appeared in the *Independent*, carrying the title “The unseen Charles Dickens: read the excoriating essay on Victorian poverty that no-one knew he had written.” It identified Dickens as the lead author of an *All the Year Round* article entitled “What is Sensational?”, a diatribe focusing on conditions in workhouse infirmaries (Wills). The *Independent* boasted that the piece, previously attributed to “one Joseph Parkinson” (1833–1908), had been “presumed to be only a commission from [Dickens]. But from the newly studied margin notes, it now seems that Dickens not only supplied the idea but was chief author of the polemic” (Wills). The previous attribution to Parkinson alone was based largely on a memorandum written by Dickens, which provided Parkinson with a detailed set of instructions about what to include in the article (Figs. 2, 3); now the shared authorship is confirmed by the marginal annotation in the Parrott set (Fig. 4).

Before examining the content of “What is Sensational?”, and whether Dickens was indeed the “chief author,” it would be useful to consider the career of his lesser-known collaborator. Joseph Charles Parkinson (Fig. 5), the eldest son of Joseph Parkinson (a wine merchant) and his wife Mary Ann, was born in Islington on 5 July 1833 (Church of England, entry no. 329). The family lived in Spencer Street, Northampton Square, but by 1841 they had moved to Scarborough (UK Census 1841, HO 107/1266/4). In 1851, by which time his father had died, Parkinson was living with his mother in Lawn Place, Hammersmith (UK Census 1851, HO 107/1470). He joined the Civil Service in 1855, and was working as a clerk in the Inland Revenue’s Accountant and Comptroller-General’s Office at Somerset House when Dickens first encountered him in about 1860, in connection with the assistance Parkinson offered to Helen Dickens in clearing up the

affairs of her husband, Alfred (Dickens's younger brother) who died from consumption and pleurisy on 27 July 1860 (*Letters* 9: 276–7). Alfred had, according to Dickens, “left nothing – worse than nothing,” to provide for his family (*Letters* 9: 279); therefore the author, with the help of his brother-in-law Henry Austin, who had been a colleague of Alfred's on the Board of Health, undertook the responsibility of making appropriate arrangements for Helen and her five children.

Parkinson's offer of assistance was based on a Masonic connection: Alfred was initiated into Freemasonry in 1856, and was Master of Universal Lodge No. 212 (now No. 181) at the time of his death in 1860; Parkinson was initiated into the same Lodge on 28 May 1858, and became Master in 1862 (Fig. 6). Dickens wrote to Parkinson on several occasions to help settle the deceased brother's affairs and clear up his debts (*Letters* 9: 283, 285). The aid Parkinson offered to Alfred's family stretched across several years: on 16 October 1864 Dickens wrote to the civil servant to express his gratitude for the support provided to one of Alfred's daughters:

My Dear Mr. Parkinson

Many thanks for your letter. I had previously heard from Mrs. Alfred of your great exertions in her little daughter's behalf, and I do not doubt that she owes her success to you. (*Letters* 10: 440)

While the name of the daughter does not appear in the letter, it is clear from records in the Library and Museum of Freemasonry that it was Augusta Maud Dickens (1855–1911), who was recommended for admission to the Royal Freemasons' School for Female Children in Battersea Rise (now the Royal Masonic School for Girls; Abbott) by Joseph Parkinson in March 1864; Augusta began her education at this institution (founded for the benefit of the daughters of deceased and distressed Freemasons) on 20 October – just after the above letter was sent, and after her election at a meeting of the Quarterly General Court of the school on 13 October (“Royal Freemasons”). Owing to Alfred's Masonic membership, and his parlous financial state at the time of his death, his children were eligible for this kind of charitable support.

Dickens and Parkinson shared opinions on several social issues, including Poor Law reform, prison conditions, and the abolition of public executions; both also championed the Royal Literary Fund (“Mr. Joseph” and “Obituary”) and the Royal Hospital for Incurables (*Letters* 11: 26, 198; and Parkinson, “The Hospital”). Parkinson published two guides for prospective Civil Service applicants: *Under Government* (1859) and *Government Examinations* (1860). The former was a handbook describing the various offices of state, and including details of age limits, salaries and

allowances; the latter discussed the entrance tests in minute detail, and reproduced sample papers. By 1864 Parkinson had begun to write for the *Daily News*, and on 11 November 1865 he published his first article in *All the Year Round*, entitled “Every Man’s Poison,” on the topic of water supply and sanitary conditions in a slum district. In many of his articles for the first series of Dickens’s journal (43 in total; Appendix A), Parkinson raised matters of public concern, such as the conduct of sporting activities – particularly prize-fighting and horse racing – and the associated issues of gambling and disruptive (sometimes violent) spectators (“Genii of the Ring,” “The Eve of the Battle,” “Against the Grain,” “The Roughs’ Guide,” and “Derby Dregs”); the disgrace of opium dens (“Lazarus, Lotus-Eating”); child labor, in such occupations as match-box making and agriculture (“Lucifer-Box Making” and “Slavery in England”); the ownership of assets by women after marriage (“Slaves of the Ring”);<sup>1</sup> corrupt practices in the Civil Service (“Midges in the Office”); and the preservation of common land in urban areas (“Hampstead Heath,” “Shortened Commons,” and “Common Rights and Common Sense”). He revealed to the public the human cost of providing commonly available resources like coal and gas (“Coal,” “Pit Accidents,” “Called Over the Coals,” and “Men of Fire”). He detailed aspects of regimented instruction for various services, such as the operations of the London Fire Brigade (“London Preserved” and “London Fires”); the induction of new army recruits (“The Queen’s Shilling”);<sup>2</sup> and naval training for young boys (“The Good Ship Chichester”). Parkinson’s observations were largely based on personal visits to various establishments (Fig. 7); thus he delved into railway signal technology and improvements in railway refreshments (“The Hole in the Wall” and “Genii of the Cave”); attended a “Banquet Hippophagique” for which horses were slaughtered and prepared (“Extraordinary Horse-Dealing” and “A Pair of Horse Pictures”); visited a debating society (“Cogers”); and undertook tours round the Tower of London, St. Paul’s Cathedral, and Westminster Abbey (“Sent to the Tower,” “All Round St. Paul’s,” and “Westminster Abbey”). He also defended Freemasonry, by explaining its structure, and by providing examples of its charitable causes, including the Freemasons’ Girls’ School, which Dickens’s nieces attended (“What is the Good of Freemasonry?”).

Despite this great variety, there was one subject that preoccupied Parkinson more than any other: the conditions and plight of the poor, upon whom he focuses in 12 pieces for *All the Year Round*. On this subject he was of one mind with Dickens who, in late February 1866, wrote to the medical journalist and reformer Ernest Hart:

1 For Dickens’s outline of the subject, see *Letters* 12: 127–8.

2 According to the Parrott set, an individual named “Casley” provided the details for this essay.

My knowledge of the general condition of the sick poor in workhouses is not of yesterday, nor are my efforts, in my vocation, to call merciful attention to it. Few anomalies in the land are so horrible to me as the unchecked existence of many shameful sick wards for paupers, side by side with a constantly recurring expansion of conventional wonder that the poor should creep into corners to die rather than fester and rot in such infamous places. You know what they are, and have manfully told what they are, . . . If any subscription should be opened to advance the objects of the association, do me the kindness to set me down for 20*l.* (*Letters* 11: 164–5)<sup>3</sup>

Parkinson had specifically used Hart's *Account of the Condition of the Infirmaries of London Workhouses* (1866) to provide evidence for his article "A New Humane Society," published in *All the Year Round* on 3 March; the fact that this letter was written just before the article demonstrates that Dickens had discussed the subject with Parkinson. Also, certain details in the letter to Hart accord with circumstances specifically examined in "What is Sensational?"

Other Parkinson essays followed, on slum conditions and the need for suitable housing ("Home, Sweet Home"); the imprudent demolition of accommodation for the working poor ("Atilla in London"); casual wards ("Told by a Tramp"); and poor medical care in provincial workhouses ("A Discreet Report"). The prime objects of his invective were the Poor Law Boards of Guardians, who, Parkinson believed, tolerated – and even encouraged – gross abuses ("In Praise of a Rotten Board," "A Workhouse Probe," "Another Workhouse Probe," and "A Country Workhouse"), many of which went unreported in what he considered an inefficient system, overseen by an uncaring, defective Civil Service ("How Not to Do It," a phrase borrowed from chapter 10 of *Little Dorrit*). While he recognized that there were voluntary associations that instigated some effective interventions,<sup>4</sup> Parkinson, who worked in the Inland Revenue Office, believed that the abuses outweighed the improvements. These pieces are distinguished by their substantiation of claims through personal inspection by Parkinson, and often supported by topical publications, including reports in the *Lancet* in 1867 of visits to provincial workhouses with the inspectors on occasions ("A Workhouse Probe" 541), and Dr. Edward Smith's account

3 Dickens's familiarity with reports in the press about workhouse conditions in the 1860s comes across vividly in the comments of Betty Higden, beginning "Do I never read in the newspapers"), *Our Mutual Friend*, Bk. 1, ch. 15.

4 See "Other Genii of the Cave," which highlighted charitable initiatives under the patronage of Angela Burdett Coutts.

of conditions in 48 provincial workhouses.<sup>5</sup> Dickens considered these workhouse pieces “very good” (*Letters* 11: 522), and indeed had every confidence in Parkinson’s abilities; this comes across most strongly in a letter of 25 December 1868, in response to a request from Parkinson for a reference for the Commissionership of Inland Revenue:

In expressing my conviction that you deserve the place, and are in every way qualified for it, I found my testimony upon as accurate a knowledge of your character and abilities as any one can possibly have acquired. In my editorship ... you know very well that I have invariably offered you those subjects of political and social interest to write upon, in which integrity, exactness, a remarkable power of generalizing evidence, and balancing facts, and a special clearness in stating the case, were indispensable on the part of the writer. My confidence in your powers has never been misplaced, and through all our literary intercourse you have never been hasty or wrong. Whatever trust you have undertaken has been so completely discharged, that it has become my habit to read your proofs rather for my own edification, than (as in other cases) for the detection of some slip here or there, or the more pithy presentation of the subject. (*Letters* 12: 255)<sup>6</sup>

These comments are particularly intriguing, in the context of an attempt to distil the distinct contributions of Parkinson and Dickens to the article “What Is Sensational?”

While Dickens the editor claimed that he was in the habit of reading this particular reporter’s proofs for his “own edification” rather than to detect errors, it must be recalled that Dickens sought to harmonize the contributions to his journals, so that they would “seem to speak with a single voice” (Stone 1: 14). The extent to which he could potentially edit contributions worthy of inclusion is illustrated in his letter to Mary Boyle in 1851:

I have devoted a couple of hours this evening to going very carefully over your paper ... and to endeavouring to bring it closer, and to lighten it, and to give it that sort of compactness which a habit of composition, and of disciplining one’s thoughts like a regiment, and of studying the art of putting each soldier into his right place, may have gradually taught me to think necessary. I hope, when you see it in print, you will not be alarmed by my use of the pruning-knife.

---

5 See also, “A Discreet Report” 350–2.

6 Parkinson did not obtain the post.

I have tried to exercise it with the utmost delicacy and discretion, and to suggest to you, especially towards the end, how this sort of writing (regard being had to the size of the journal in which it appears) requires to be compressed, and is made pleasanter by compression. This all reads very solemnly, but only because I want you to read it (I mean the article) with as loving an eye, as I have truly tried to touch it with a loving and gentle hand. (*Letters* 6: 297)

In other cases even more substantial emendations were required. Writing to John Forster in 1856, Dickens used the metaphor of the “inky fishing-net” to indicate the level of amelioration he had to apply to a story that he was determined to “hack and hew into some form for *Household Words*” (*Letters* 8: 139).<sup>7</sup> He believed that others should submit to the same ruthlessness he imposed on himself, and in this spirit he would, according to Harry Stone, “rename many of the articles, approve or re-structure the balance and make-up, make comments or suggestions, give orders, and do whatever else was needful” (Stone 1: 31, 39). The revisions had clear benefits, according to sub-editor W. H. Wills, who wrote to Dickens to acknowledge his employer’s invaluable contribution:

When the number *has* the benefit of your revision the touches you have given to it have improved it to a degree that has seemed to me marvellous. ... [A]lthough I have good reason to suppose from the latitude of confidence you give me, that my notions square with your own generally, yet I cannot ... be *always* right; and it would lift a great weight of responsibility from me if everything which passes into the columns of *Household Words* had the systematic benefit of another judgment before publication. (*Letters* 6: 850)

These comments have implications for determining the extent to which Parkinson’s contributions were amended – whether by Dickens, Wills or someone else on the staff of *All the Year Round* – to accord with house style.<sup>8</sup>

Some details of this unified style are enumerated in Stone’s introduction to *Charles Dickens’ Uncollected Writings from Household Words*. He notes, for example, that Dickens loved paradox, alliteration and literary allusion in the titles of articles, and often, in cases of articles submitted by others, penned the introduction and conclusion himself. Dickens imbued his writing with exaggeration, animism and repetition; he also “preferred forced

7 For a sample page of Dickens’s proof corrections, see Collins, “Inky” 121; see also Dickens and Morley for an idea of the immense editorial labor involved in shaping articles for publication.

8 See, however, Dickens’s assessment of Wills’s limitations, in *Letters* 9: 415.



fancifulness to unpremeditated dullness.” Through subtly directive hints, Stone asserts, Dickens forces us to see, move, think and react as he did. He also observes that “Dickens’s eye, voice and sensibility suddenly enter and quicken an essay;” he injects humor, and delights in evocative, somewhat grotesque comparisons (Stone 1: 34, 42, 47, 49, 50, 51). These are striking and significant elements, designed to pique the reader’s interest, and turn what might otherwise be a drily analytical essay into an animated, persuasive diatribe. Dickens was expert at melding his own style with that of another, like-minded writer; indeed he once assured Wilkie Collins that should the younger author be unable to continue with the serial publication of *No Name* (on account of his chronic gout), Dickens could seamlessly substitute for him:

I will come to London straight and do your work. I am quite confident that, with your notes and a few words of explanation, I could take it up at any time and do it. ... at a pinch, so like you as that no one should find out the difference. (*Letters* 10: 143)<sup>9</sup>

All but two of Parkinson’s known contributions to *All the Year Round* are attributed singly to him (Appendix A), and display signs of the application of a house style. Examples of emendations potentially by Dickens include the evocative comparison of the demolition of lodgings for the working poor to the exploits of Atilla the Hun (“Atilla in London” 466), and the association of prize-fighting with King Harold and the Norman invasion (“The Eve of Battle” 571) – both of these occur in the opening paragraphs. There is also the blending of information drawn from factual reports or Parliamentary commissions with passionate invective (“A New Humane Society,” “How Not to Do It,” “Hampstead Heath,” “Slavery in England,” “A Discreet Report,” and “Slaves of the Ring”). Direct Dickensian references are inserted, for example, to Fezziwig’s winking legs (“The Eve of Battle” 573), Smike (“Another Workhouse Probe” 560), Miss Miggs (A Country Workhouse” 20), and the Sexton and the Goblins (“Other Genii of the Cave” 246; from *Pickwick Papers*), as well as to “Mugby Junction” (“Genii of the Cave” 60). Some articles also feature evocative biblical, literary and artistic references, including the parting of the Red Sea (“London Fires” 87); Swift’s Brobdingnag, Gray’s “Elegy,” Dante, Rembrandt and Salvator Rosa (“Men of Fire” 272); George Eliot’s *Mill on the Floss* (“Another Workhouse Probe” 563); Cervantes’s Sancho Panza (“Slavery in England” 585); Shakespeare’s *As You Like It* (“Common Rights and Common Sense” 189); and Benjamin Haydon’s *The Raising of Lazarus* (“Lucifer-Box Making” 353). Finally, there is an evocative account in one of Parkinson’s essays of a visit to an east-end

<sup>9</sup> *No Name* appeared in *AYR* from 15 Mar. 1862 to 17 Jan. 1863.

opium den, which features many elements that seem to serve as prefigurations of the opening chapter of *Edwin Drood* (“Lazarus, Lotus-Eating”). There is, of course, no guarantee that Dickens or his *All the Year Round* staff added any of these touches to Parkinson’s original submissions. Up to now, the best that could be done to identify these emendations was to evaluate the text’s stylistic and intertextual elements against one’s own experience of reading Dickens – and, in this case, reading Parkinson – to determine which is which.

The situation becomes more complicated in the cases of pieces that are known to be what Dickens called “composite articles” (*Letters* 8: 58) – that is, co-authored contributions on which he explicitly collaborated with someone else. When Stone assesses these, and wishes to highlight those portions likely to have been authored by Dickens, he uses such phrases as “Dickens probably wrote,” “Dickens may also have rewritten or added to the following passages,” “Dickens also made the following significant interpolations,” or “Dickens seems to have added touches.”<sup>10</sup> These observations are taken to be reasonable or credible, on account of Stone’s having an educated “feel” for Dickens’s style, diction, punctuation, range of literary reference and other factors. Yet such identification of “new” Dickensian writing lacks a certain precision, and cannot consistently stand up to tests of irrefutability. It would be interesting, therefore, to reassess the methodology for associating previously unidentified prose with a specific author. Given that “What is Sensational?” has recently been identified as a composite article (Fig. 4) – and there is no reason to doubt this claim – the essay might be used as a test case for fresh analysis, in order to ascertain, as far as practicable, who wrote what.

Percy Fitzgerald, a frequent contributor to *All the Year Round*, recalls that Parkinson (or “Joe,” as he was to his friends) was “very useful” to Dickens “for serious and commercial topics” (Fitzgerald 322–3), including “What is Sensational?,” the idea for which originated with the journal’s founder, as recorded in this two-page memorandum (Figs. 2, 3):

#### What is Sensational?

Under this title I want the most ferocious and bitter attack made upon Mr. Hardy of the Poor Law Board, that can possibly be made by a writer who respects himself and his vocation.

In his official capacity Mr. Hardy refers to the case of a wretched pauper (I think his name was Gibson) who died under the most frightful circumstances of disease, neglect and filth in a workhouse. And being quite unable to contradict the facts, Mr. Hardy says the

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<sup>10</sup> Stone 1: 101, 113, 123, 137, 143, 163, 183, 191, 205; Stone 2: 351, 401, 467, 550, 571.

case was the subject of ‘Sensational’ articles in the Newspapers.

What does he mean by Sensational?

Is it Sensational to tell the Truth?

Is it Sensational to call the public attention to a noteworthy example of a costly Board existing under false pretences and showing mankind How not to do it?

Is it Sensational to be poor, abject, wretched, dying?

Is it Sensational in a public officer when he has nothing to say for his Department, basely and meanly to shelter himself under the Miserable Slang of the hour?

Is the commonest humanity – the narrowest charity – Sensational?

What is Mr. Hardy’s opinion of the New Testament? A sensational performance surely! The Good Samaritan. A highly sensational character! The 12 Apostles. What a Sensational dozen! Their Divine Master. Inconveniently and most ably Sensational!

There was a time when men symbolically [The word “unthinkingly” deleted] appended their names in what was called a “Rebus.”<sup>11</sup> Maybe it is the last Sensational effect, for a public Servant to do this in a new way, and thus Mr. Hardy sensationally exhibits himself as the most hardy man alive.

The House of Commons may be all that Mr. D Israeli [*sic*] says it is, or it may be [“that most other men k” deleted] the different thing that most other men know it to be; but in either case it is surely remarkable that there is no man in it to put a notice in the paper ‘to ask the chief of the Bumbles for his definition of Sensational’<sup>12</sup>

Parkinson shared with Frederic Kitton some details of the article’s genesis. He recalled:

The pencil memorandum, beginning ‘What is Sensational?’ [Figs. 2, 3] ... is a remarkable example of Dickens’s vigorous style in private correspondence, when his indignation was aroused. ... Mr. W. H. Wills brought it to me, with a personal message from Dickens, and I wrote an article. ... It duly appeared with, I think, ‘What is Sensational’ as its title. (Kitton 28, 29)

Dickens’s missive to Parkinson gives explicit instructions about how he should treat the subject, which was inspired by a debate in Parliament on 8 February 1867, and reported in detail in the *Daily News* and the *Times* the

11 For the definition of “Rebus” see *Letters* 11: 315, note 3.

12 Transcription of the manuscript in the Free Library of Philadelphia, slightly correcting the version in *Letters*: 11: 314–5.

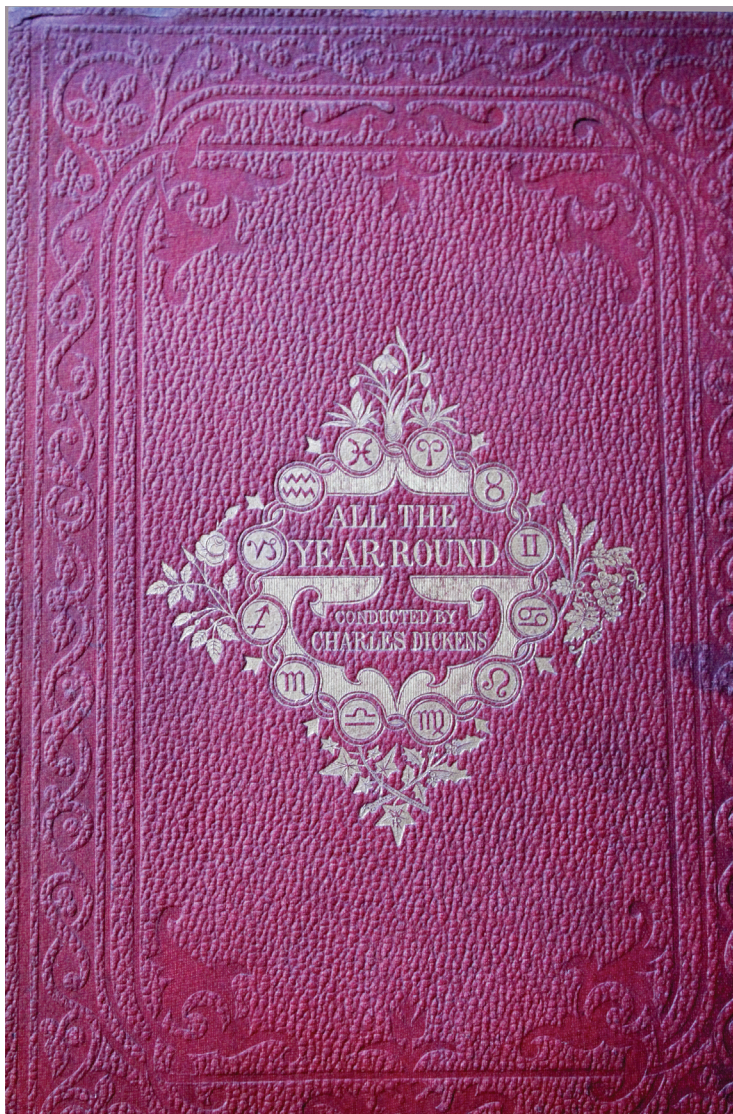


Fig. 1: Front cover of one of the volumes of the “Parrott set” of the first series of *All the Year Round*, in morocco-grained cloth with decorative blind-stamping, a gilt diamond-shaped vignette featuring the twelve signs of the zodiac, and vegetation from the four seasons of the year. The design was by William Harry Rogers, whose initials (“WHR”) are just visible in the ivy leaf at the bottom. Photograph by Jeremy Parrott.

What is Sensational?

Under this title I want the most precious and  
 little attack made upon Mr Hardy of the *Star*  
 down down, etc & can furnish the means for  
 writing his reports himself and his associates.

In his official capacity Mr Hardy refused  
 to be the case of a wretched peasant (I think his  
 name was Gibson) who died under the most  
 frightful and cruel conditions of the gaol, and  
 all that in a workhouse. And being quite  
 unable to contradict the facts, Mr Hardy  
 says the case was the subject of "sensational"  
 articles in the *Star* papers.

What does he mean by "sensational"?

Is it sensational to take the truth?

Is it sensational to call the public  
 attention to a notorious example of  
 a capital case, especially if the  
 justices and clerks manifest their  
 not to do it?

Is it sensational to give a good  
 wretched, etc.?

Is it sensational in a public  
 office when he has nothing to say for  
 his Department, and must be silent  
 himself under the miserable slang of

Fig. 2. First page of memorandum from Dickens to Joseph Parkinson, with instructions for the composition of "What is Sensational?" Dated mid-February 1867.

By kind permission of the Free Library of Philadelphia.



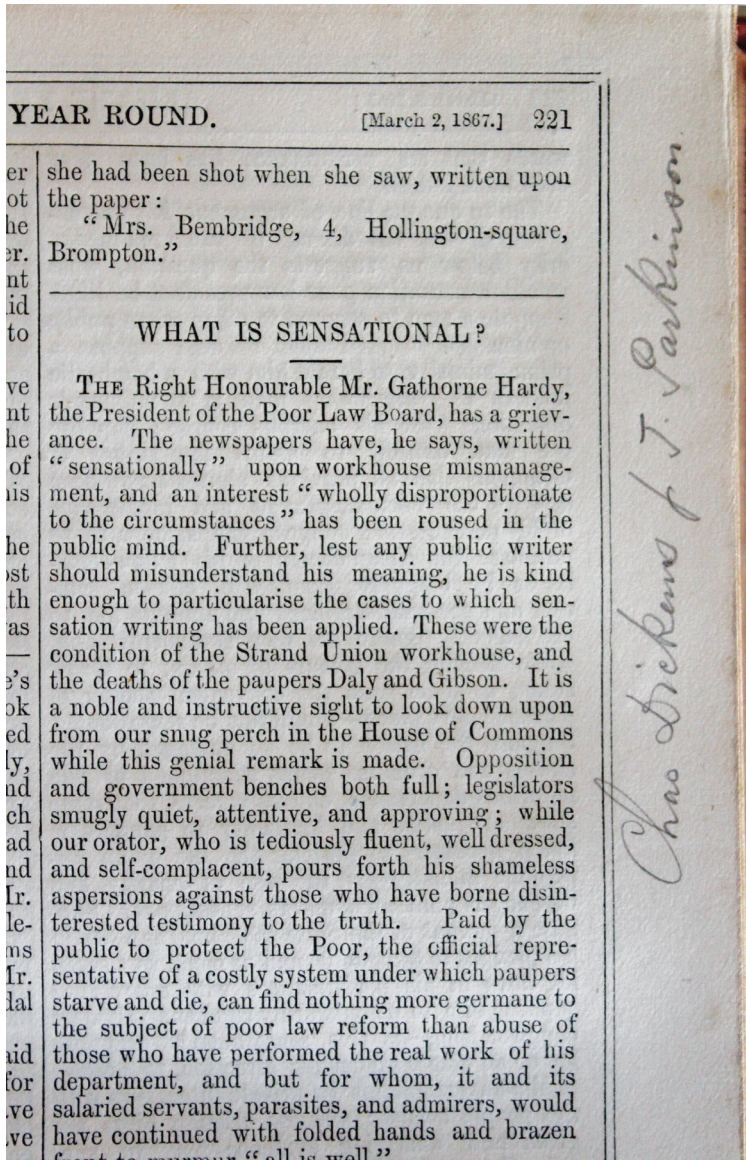


Fig. 4. Marginal annotation in pencil, to "What is Sensational?" in Jeremy Parrott's set of *All the Year Round* 17 (2 Mar. 1867): 221. It reads "Chas Dickens & J. Parkinson." The identity of the author(s) of the annotations is currently disputed. Photograph by Jeremy Parrott.



Fig. 5. Joseph Charles Parkinson (1833–1908); photographic portrait by Oliver François Xavier Saron, *c.* 1865.  
By kind permission of the National Portrait Gallery, London.





Fig. 6: Joseph Parkinson in Masonic regalia; photographic portrait by Henry Van der Weyde, circa. 1880s. Parkinson was a member of several London lodges, and was elected Master on nine occasions, from the 1860s to 1908 (the year of his death). In this image he wears a Grand Officer's apron and gauntlets, as well as a collar with a dependant jewel of a Junior Grand Deacon. By kind permission of the Library and Museum of Freemasonry.



Fig. 7: Joseph Parkinson, posed in travelling dress, with a rucksack on his back and a smaller bag over his shoulder. This studio image gives the impression of the subject's setting off for an expedition, as indeed he did to collect impressions and evidence for his journalistic pieces.

Photographic portrait by Oliver Sarony, *c.* 1863.

By kind permission of the National Portrait Gallery, London.

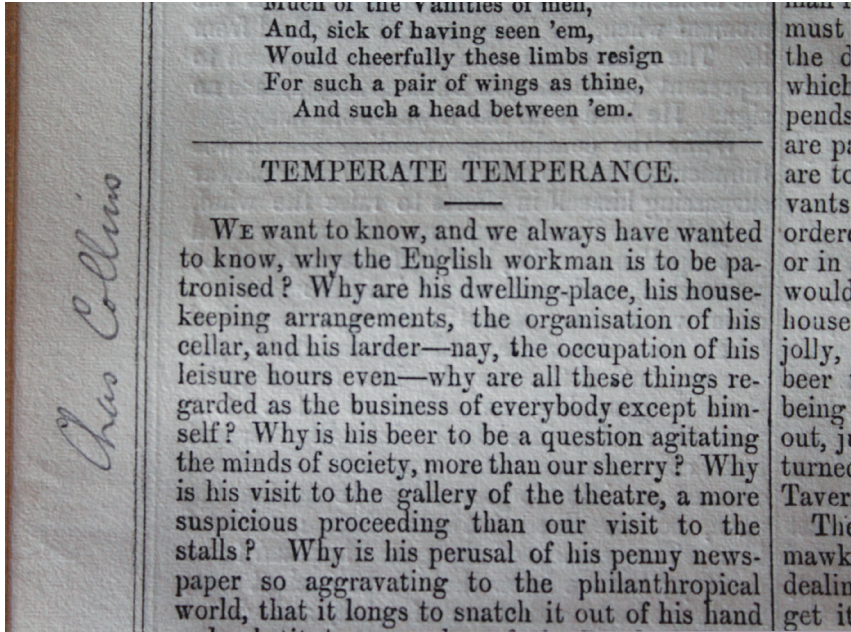


Fig. 8: Marginal annotation in pencil, to “Temperate Temperance,” in Jeremy Parrott’s set of *All the Year Round* 9 (18 Apr. 1863): 188. It identifies “Chas Collins” (Charles Allston Collins) as the author of the piece. Photograph by Jeremy Parrott.

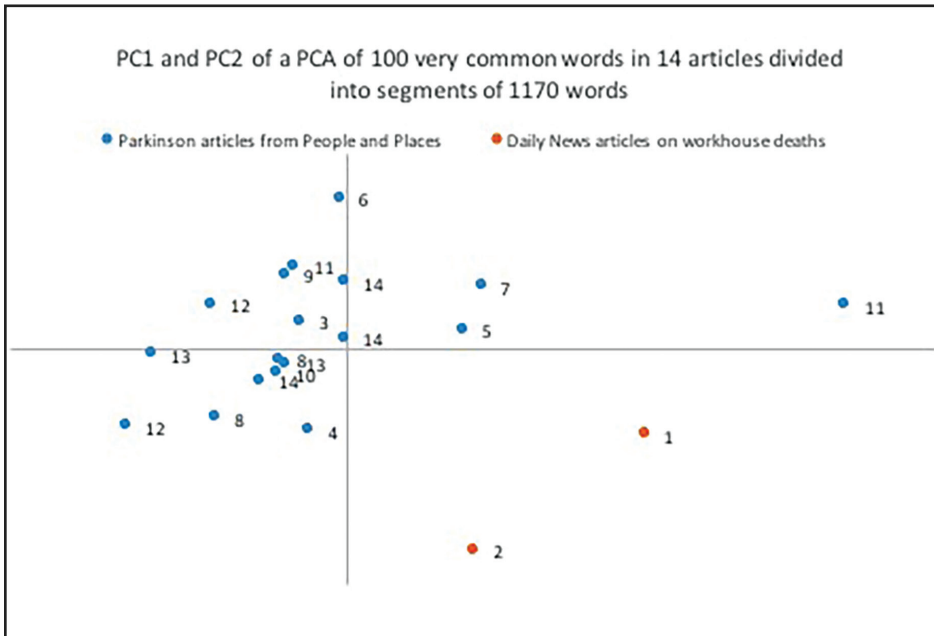


Fig. 9. Experiment 1: scatterplot for Principal Component Analysis, comparing *Daily News* articles of 16 Jan. 1865 (1) and 22 Apr. 1865 (2) with 12 Parkinson articles in *The Daily News*, reprinted in *People and Places*: “A Suburban Fishery” (3), “Aristocratic Pigeon-Shooting” (4), “The Artificial Hair Trade” (3), “Our Pharmaceutical Chemists” (4), “Prisoners’ Friends” (5), “Saturday Night in a Pawnbroker’s Shop” (6), “Sunday Dog-Shows” (7), “Sunday Trading” (8), “The Hospital for Incurables” (9), “The Thames Police” (10), “The Tunbridge-Wells Coach” (11) and “Under the Sea” (12).

Graphic by Hugh Craig.

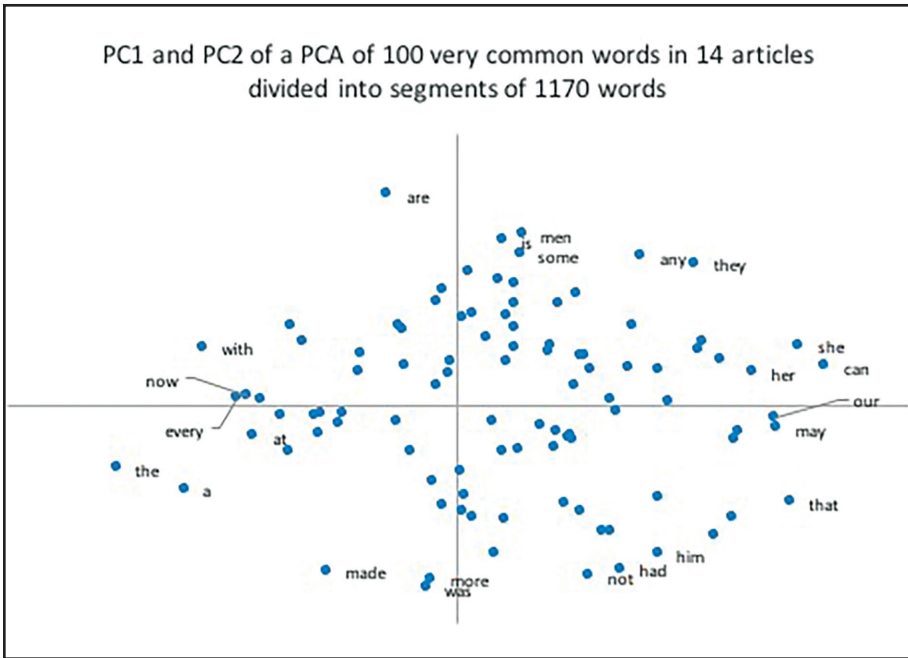


Fig. 10. Experiment 1: word-variable weighting distribution for two unattributed *Daily News* articles, 16 Jan. & 22 Apr. 1865, and 12 *Daily News* articles by Parkinson. The most heavily weighted words in the two unattributed pieces appear on the right; the most heavily weighted words in Parkinson appear on the left.

Graphic by Hugh Craig.

<b>"Dickens Words"</b>			
<b>Word</b>	<b>Zeta index (max score = 2)</b>	<b>Dickens segments with one or more instance</b>	<b>Parkinson segments with one or more instance</b>
me	1.380	46	88
never	1.311	41	83
am	1.308	24	28
she	1.304	25	32
uncommercial	1.300	15	0
manner	1.297	21	20
set	1.278	24	33
nothing	1.258	31	59
even	1.253	32	63
head	1.249	29	54
my	1.242	44	104
any	1.237	45	108
yet	1.229	28	54
her	1.221	27	52
young	1.220	30	62
got	1.219	26	49
also	1.216	20	30
done	1.213	26	50
I	1.213	49	125
think	1.206	25	48
<b>Total of segments</b>		50	163

Fig. 11. Experiment 2: top 20 Dickens words, from the list of 1000 words that appear regularly in 34 Dickens segments from 18 articles, and rarely in 163 Parkinson segments from 54 articles.

<b>"Dickens Words"</b>			
<b>Word</b>	<b>Zeta index (max score = 2)</b>	<b>Dickens segments with one or more instance</b>	<b>Parkinson segments with one or more instance</b>
our	1.456	22	146
we	1.389	29	158
us	1.342	24	134
just	1.307	15	99
it's	1.296	3	58
given	1.287	16	99
each	1.272	22	116
told	1.271	7	67
you	1.265	26	128
don't	1.265	7	66
give	1.260	10	75
men	1.242	25	121
seems	1.239	8	65
there's	1.238	1	42
law	1.233	4	51
different	1.227	0	37
I'm	1.221	0	36
your	1.217	10	68
visit	1.212	2	41
labour	1.207	1	37
<b>Total of segments</b>		50	163

Fig. 12. Experiment 2: top 20 Parkinson words, from the list of 1000 words that appear regularly in 163 Parkinson segments from 54 articles, and rarely in 34 Dickens segments from 18 articles

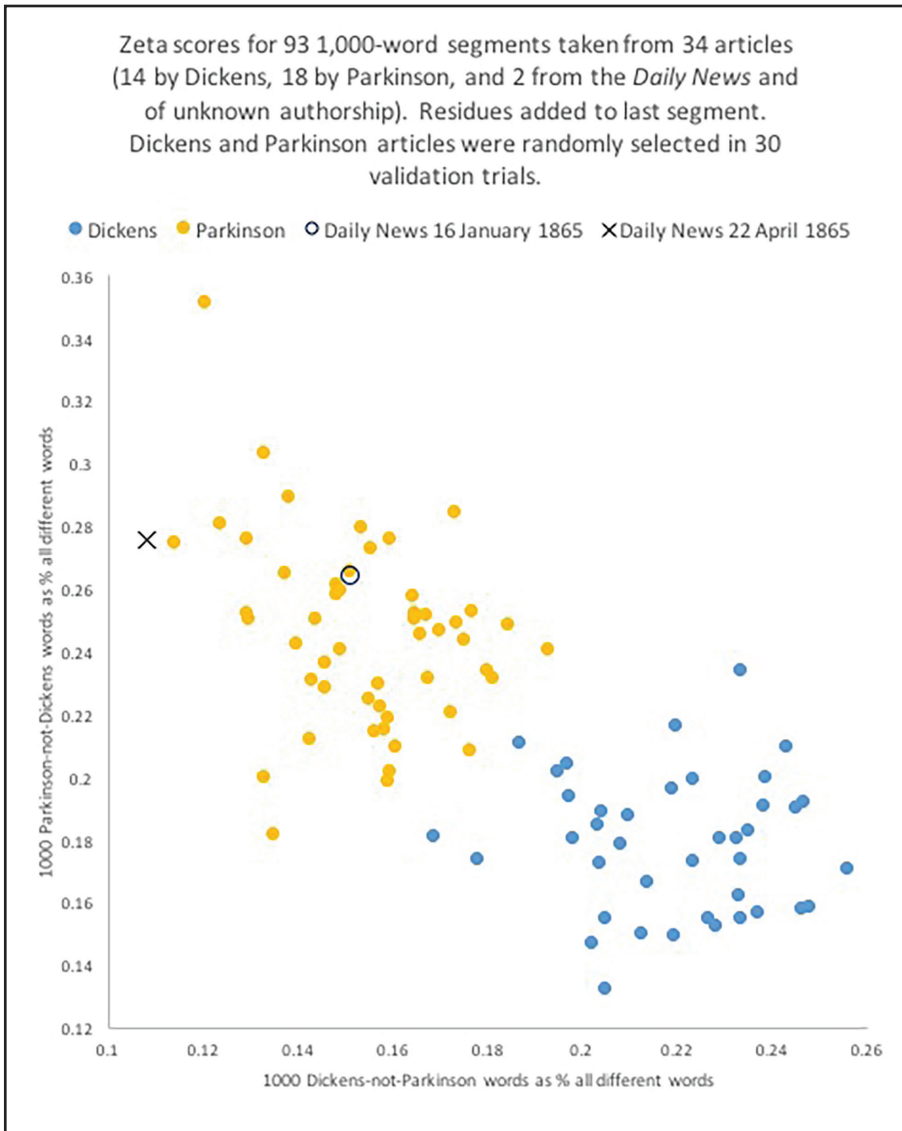


Fig. 13. Experiment 2: Zeta scores of 18 Parkinson articles in *The Daily News* and 14 Dickens articles in *All the Year Round*, treated as test samples, with the two *Daily News* articles (16 Jan. and 22 Apr. 1865) quoted in “What is Sensational?”  
Graphic by Hugh Craig.



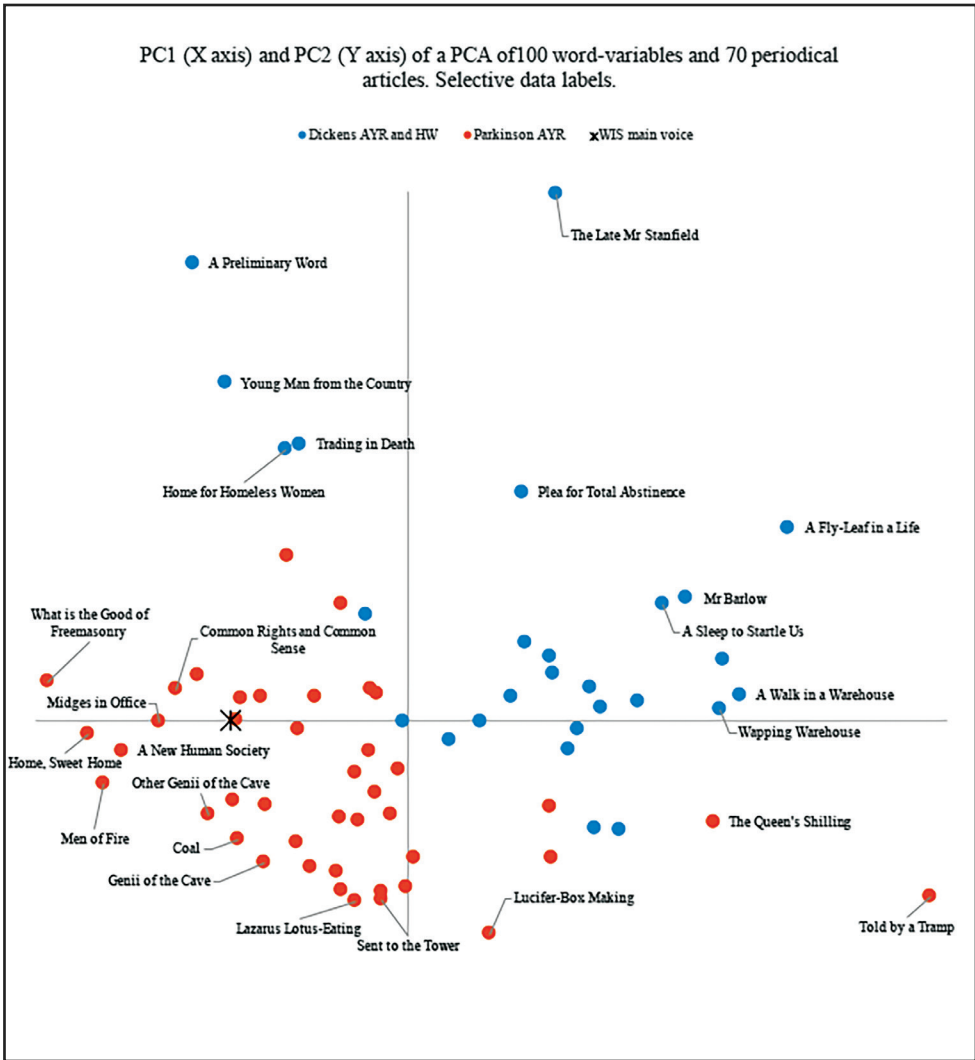


Fig. 14. Result of Experiment 3, to distinguish between Dickensian style (blue) and Parkinsonian style (orange), using articles of known authorship in *All the Year Round* and *Household Words*. The collaborative piece “What is Sensational?” (marked with an asterisk) seems, on initial analysis, to subscribe more to Parkinsonian style. For fuller titles and publication details of these articles see Appendices A and C.  
Graphic by Hugh Craig.

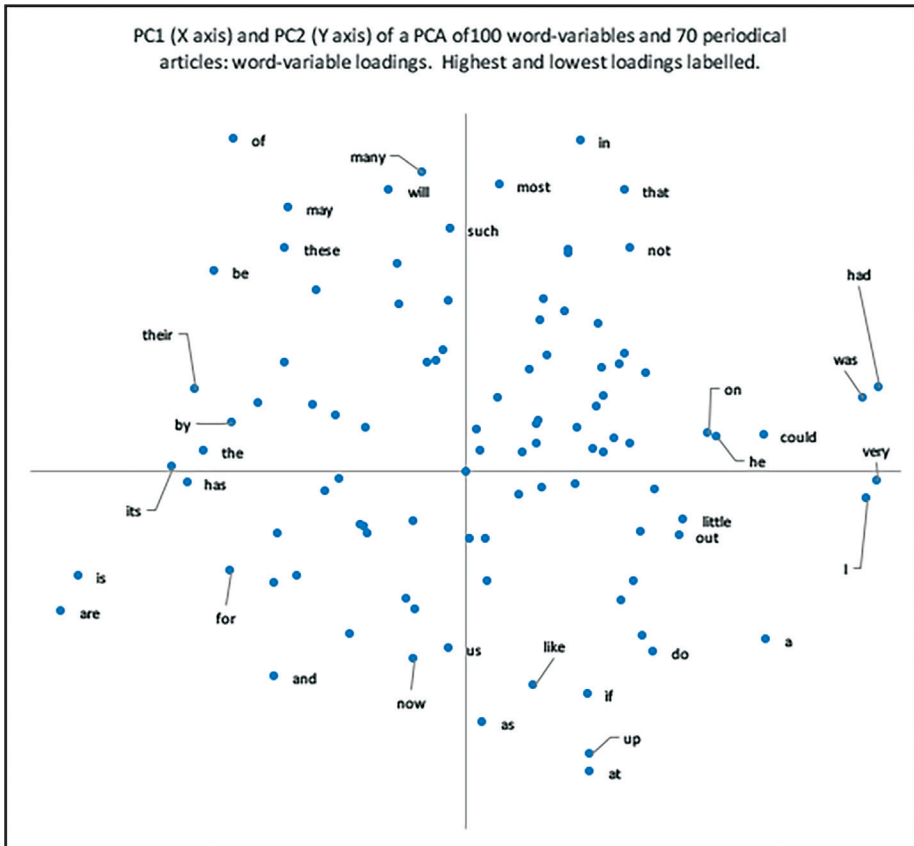


Fig. 15. Word-variable loadings in Experiment 3. The positions of the labels relating to particular words on the X-axis, such as *had*, *very*, *I* (on the right) and *is*, *are*, *its* (on the left) match up with the titles of the articles by Dickens and Parkinson plotted in Fig. 5; thus in this graph, words used by more Dickens appear higher and towards the right, and words used by Parkinson appear lower and to the left. The Y-axis reveals interesting results relating to tense: *is* and *are* feature at the lower (Parkinson) end, while *had* and *was* feature more at the Dickens end. The “main voice” portion of “What is Sensational” falls to the left-lower quadrant of the chart: an area where Parkinson articles dominate.  
Graphic by Hugh Craig.

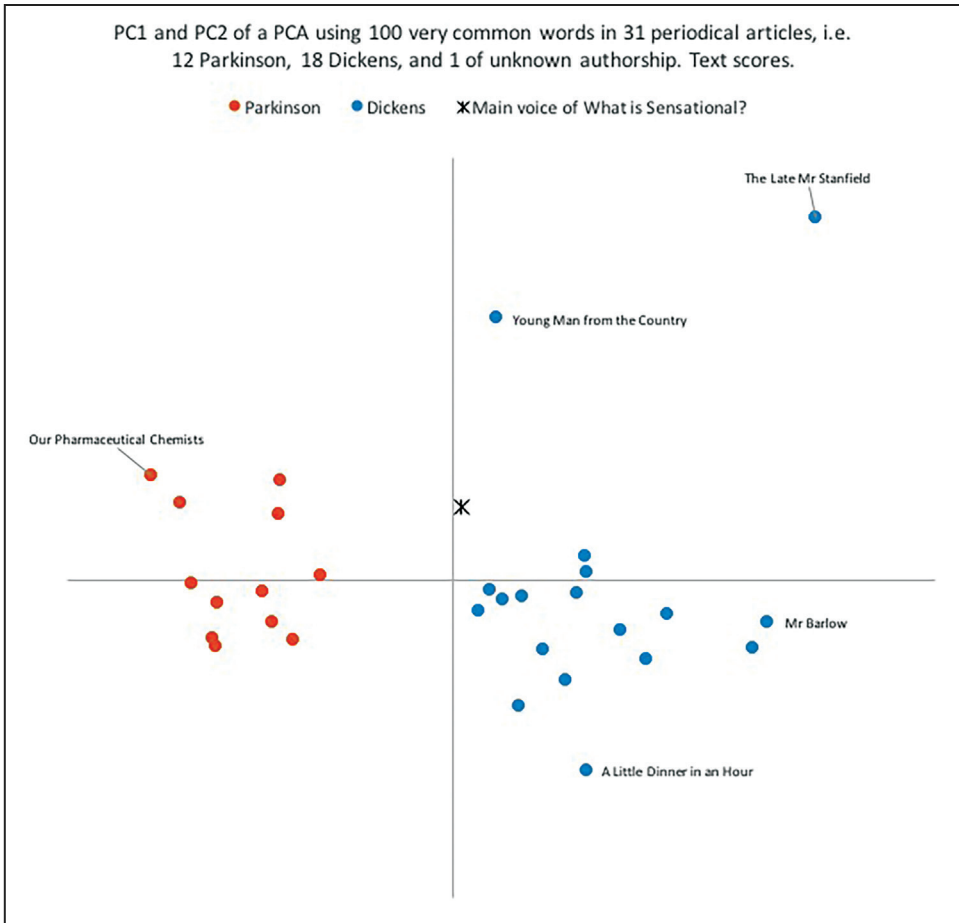


Fig. 16. Experiment 4: Principal Component Analysis of 12 Parkinson articles from *The Daily News*, 18 Dickens articles from *All the Year Round*, and the composite piece “What is Sensational?”, with portions quoted from other sources excised, to leave only the “main voice”. The Dickens clusters (blue) and Parkinson clusters (orange) separate well, while the main voice of “What is Sensational?” (represented by the asterisk) appears on the edge of the Dickens cluster.  
Graphic by Hugh Craig.

following day. Parkinson concludes his reminiscence for Kitton by noting, "About this date I wrote many of the articles on poor-law matters and pauperism, both in 'All the Year Round' and the 'Daily News'."

These topics were indeed the central focus of "What is Sensational?", in the form of a harsh, relentless condemnation of Gathorne Gathorne-Hardy,<sup>13</sup> President of the Poor Law Board, whose Metropolitan Poor Bill sought to extend the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act by providing for the separate management of certain categories of the destitute sick in London.<sup>14</sup> The bill proposed the establishment of a system of medical care, that would not fall entirely within the remit of individual workhouses or Boards of Guardians (for whom a *laissez-faire* attitude often prevailed), but rather would be the responsibility of boards of management for the proposed new state infirmaries – separate from workhouses – with resident medical officers, independent matrons, and paid nurses (Ayers 17–30).<sup>15</sup> The situation in 1867 was dire: of nearly 27,000 inmates in London institutions, about 21,000 were sick, old, or disabled (Ayers 18–19), and Ayers demonstrates that Hardy's Act "proved to be the most important poor law measure for London between 1834 and 1929 and a significant step towards the socialization of medical care" in the United Kingdom (Ayers 30). Given the widespread and enduring effects of this key piece of legislation, it seems surprising that Dickens – and, through him, Parkinson – objected so strongly to the measure.

From the set of instructions relayed to Parkinson, it would appear that Dickens's heated reaction was prompted by newspaper reports of Hardy's speech that appeared in *The Daily News* and *The Times* – particularly the use of the words "sensation" and "sensational" ("Metropolitan Poor," and "The Metropolitan Poor"). These words also appear in the verbatim record in *Hansard*:

Towards the end of 1864, the case of Timothy Daly occurred in the Holborn Workhouse; it was the first of those cases which so much attracted the attention of the country; it was followed by that of Gibson in the workhouse of St. Giles, in 1865. In April of the same year, a letter written by one of the nurses at the Rotherhithe Workhouse called attention to a very painful state of circumstances there; and finally, in 1866, the same nurse called attention to the state of the Strand Workhouse, where she had been lately engaged as a nurse. Inquiries took place with reference to Daly and Gibson's cases, and in 1865 the Rotherhithe guardians inquired into the statements made by that nurse. No action was then taken by the

13 1814–1906, later First Earl of Cranbrook.

14 *Hansard* 3rd ser, 185 (8 Feb. 1867), cols. 150–79.

15 For a summary of Hardy's Act, see Ayers's Appendix I, 259–68.

Poor Law Board on the evidence taken by those guardians; but in 1866, upon the requisition of the Workhouse Infirmary Association, official inquiries were made respecting the condition of the sick in the Strand, Rotherhithe, and Paddington Workhouses by inspectors, whose reports were exceedingly adverse to the management of the sick in these workhouses and caused a great sensation throughout the country – perhaps a greater sensation than was justified by all the circumstances. (*Hansard* 3rd ser. 185 [8 Feb. 1867], cols. 152–3)

Both cases drew detailed attention in the press. Daly was admitted to the Holborn workhouse on 29 October, suffering from acute rheumatic fever. He was in the sick ward for over six weeks, during which time he developed pronounced bed-sores; these were not effectively treated, and he showed signs of significant necrosis of skin and muscle. On 14 December he was removed to a lodging house by his wife; then on 22 December he was admitted to St. Bartholomew's Hospital, where he died the following day.<sup>16</sup> Richard Gibson, the second victim, was admitted to St. Giles and St. George workhouse on 9 June 1864, suffering from an ulcerated leg. When the limb became infected, he was moved on 29 October to a poorly ventilated subterranean ward, where, denied adequate nourishment and a change of bedding and clothes, he eventually died of an "effusion of serum on the brain, accelerated by neglect," on 10 February 1865 ("The Sick Pauper"). At the subsequent inquiry, Dr. Craig (the assistant medical officer) and Elizabeth Elson (the only professional nurse), were found negligent and consequently dismissed.<sup>17</sup> As Matilda Beeton noted in evidence she gave at the Rotherhithe workhouse, as the only paid nurse in that institution (see above), "On the whole it did not seem to me that a pauper's life was regarded in any other light than the sooner they were dead the better" (*Report of Inquiry* 9; Richardson 21).

The constant repetition in "What is Sensational?" of the emotive adjective (used 43 times) carefully manipulates the reader's reactions to Hardy's statement. What is missing from the contemporary reports – and indeed from the *All the Year Round* article – are such considerations as Hardy's desire

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16 The subsequent inquiry resulted in the censure of the medical officer, Mr. Norton, for ineffective record-keeping. See *Times* 24 Dec. 1864, 7; 28 Dec. 1864, 10; 29 Dec. 1864, 6–7; 9 Jan. 1865, 10–11; 10 Jan. 1865 10–11; 11 Jan. 1865, 10; 13 Jan. 1865, 10; 14 Jan. 1865, 12; 16 Jan. 1865, 6; 4 Feb. 1865, 5; 6 Feb. 1865, 9; 9 Feb. 1865, 6; and 16 Feb. 1865, 8. Coverage in the *Daily News* of Daly's case was far less frequent; see 16 Jan. 1865, 4, and 7 Feb. 1865, 4.

17 *Times* 7 Apr. 1865, 12; 8 Apr. 1865, 8–9, 10; 20 Apr. 1865, 12; 21 Apr. 1865, 8; 17 May 1865, 13; 18 May 1865, 11. As in the case of Daly, coverage of the Gibson case in the *Daily News* was less frequent: see 16 Feb. 1865, 2; 21 Apr. 1865, 7; 22 Apr. 1865, 4, 25 Apr. 1865, 4–5; and 10 Aug. 1865, 4.

to abolish the system whereby large workhouse parishes in London were able to defy central authority, because they were administered under Local Acts by independent governing bodies. The workhouse in which Gibson – singled out by both Hardy (in Parliament) and Dickens (in his memorandum to Parkinson) – had died was just such an institution, and the Local Act by which St. Giles workhouse was governed was, Ayers asserts, “among the greatest impediments with which the Poor Law Board had to contend” (Ayers 20–1).<sup>18</sup> Hardy encountered other obstacles as well, including the need to keep Charles Pelham Villiers (his predecessor as Poor Law Board President) on his side, despite this Liberal MP’s claimed satisfaction with the medical treatment of the poor.<sup>19</sup>

Dickens’s reaction to a small number of highlights of the debate was in itself sensational – or at least highly selective – and did not fully take into account the difficult circumstances under which Hardy was trying to convince his fellow MPs that this legislation was worth supporting. For Dickens to call him “chief of the Bumbles,” with its snide allusion to the workhouse master in *Oliver Twist*, seems particularly unwarranted – especially in light of the positive effects the Act had on centralized health care for the poor.<sup>20</sup> Parkinson clearly took on his editor’s campaign concerning workhouse infirmaries with vigor (as he had done earlier, in “A New Humane Society,” considered above), and, with his collaborator’s sanction, used as evidence the report of the debate in *The Daily News* (“Metropolitan Poor”), as well as the investigative reports published in 1865 by the *Lancet* Sanitary Commission for Investigating the State of the Infirmaries of Workhouses.<sup>21</sup> To these were added extensive verbatim quotations from the letter by Joseph Rogers to the Guardians of the Strand Union, documenting his experiences over ten years as medical officer.<sup>22</sup>

There are certain phrases in “What is Sensational?” that are taken verbatim from two pieces in *The Daily News* in 1865. It might appear – at first – that these articles were written by Parkinson, who, as noted above, intimated to Frederic Kitton that he “wrote many of the articles on poor-law matters

18 For the changes required to bring the institution up to standard see “The Lancet Commission” 73, 74.

19 *Hansard* 3rd ser., 185 (8 Feb. 1867), col. 158; see also Ayers 17. Villiers finally lent his full support.

20 Hardy later recalled that the Bill “worked well” (Gathorne-Hardy 1: 195). Ayers notes that over the next decade 20 poor law infirmaries were established in London, with a capacity of 10,000 beds (28).

21 Dickens refers specifically to reports in *The Lancet* in his “Postscript, in Lieu of Preface” to *Our Mutual Friend*; see “Reports of the Commissioners” 14–22.

22 *Letters, July 1866* 1–3; the passages are reproduced in “What is Sensational?” 223. On Rogers’s influence on the passage of the Metropolitan Poor Act see Richardson and Hurwitz.

and pauperism” for the *Daily News* at this time (see, however, the analysis below). The first, published on 16 January 1865, concerns the Daly case, and features the lines from Goldsmith’s “An Elegy on the Death of a Mad Dog” (1766): “The dog, to gain his private ends, / Went mad and bit the man;” it also features the satirical comment about Daly’s having an “eye to posthumous celebrity” (for these passages compare *Daily News*, 16 Jan. 1865, 4, with “What is Sensational?” 223). In addition, “What is Sensational?” repeats the phrase “until that vague period ‘three or four days’ has elapsed,” used to describe the period during which the doctor had not examined Daly’s bed-sores (“What is Sensational?” 224). The second piece from the *Daily News* in which identical phrasing is found was published on 22 April 1865, and concerns the Gibson case. The writer satirically proclaims, “Let an invalid’s body be encrusted in corruption and filth, cover him with vermin;” in *All the Year Round* Gibson is depicted as “encrusted with corruption and filth, covered with vermin.” The accusation in *The Daily News* which reads “the drunken pauper nurses who were bribed with pence, and who finished GIBSON’S earthly misery by mercifully killing him off with gin” is slightly altered in Dickens’s journal, to proclaim that Gibson was “mercifully killed off with gin, surreptitiously administered by a drunken pauper nurse.” The “boldness of the pauper Magee in writing to the sitting magistrate at Bow-Street” is rendered in *All the Year Round* as “an audacious pauper named Magee, who wrote to the sitting magistrate at Bow-street.” The *Daily News* writer also ironically observes that “a parochial coffin would have permanently concealed all traces of the dead man’s sufferings and wrongs;” in *All the Year Round* this appears as “a parochial coffin would have concealed Gibson’s sufferings and wrongs.”<sup>23</sup>

“What is Sensational?” also fills in gaps left by official Parliamentary reports, such as the one presented by Richard Basil Cane, after an inquiry conducted in June 1866 into the purported failings at the Strand Union Workhouse (*Report made by R.B. Cane* 362). In an article in the *Daily News*, the report is accused of “bias in favour of the guardians and against their medical officer.” Cane’s report is also found wanting in its failing to mention the abuses carried out by a pauper nurse who stole gin from the terminally ill, and a weak-minded potboy who contributed to the worst cases of neglect. The report also misrepresented the circumstances under which a carpet-beating business, carried on at the workhouse, was suspended (“The Strand Union”). These circumstances are recalled in the *All the Year Round* article, in order to add to the growing body of evidence against Gathorne Hardy. They are rendered as follows:

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23 For these passages compare *Daily News*, 22 Apr. 1865, 4, with “What is Sensational?” 224.

Carpet-beating carried on as a trade among its infirmary wards; the dust and flue settling upon the sick and dying, aggravating their sufferings and hastening their end; a broken-down potboy employed as nurse, who trembled from sheer debility when spoken to; patients unable to move in bed without assistance, and help refused them by the guardians in defiance of the entreaties of their own medical officer; the beer, wine, and spirits provided to keep body and soul together, habitually stolen from the wretched patients by pauper wardsmen and nurses, an emporium for their sale, known as 'the Brimstone Hotel,' flourishing within the workhouse walls. ("What is Sensational?" 222–3)

It seems clear from such detailed investigation of the sources for "What is Sensational?" that Parkinson was responsible for providing the documentary evidence for the piece. Parkinson uses the same technique in other contributions to *All the Year Round* about conditions in workhouses, such as "A New Humane Society," "How Not to Do It," "A Workhouse Probe," "Another Workhouse Probe," "A Country Workhouse," and "A Discreet Report." Some of these feature personal visits to the locations described – a technique he employs in some of his confirmed contributions to the *Daily News*, including "The Thames Police" and "The Hospital for Incurables" (Appendix B). Taken together, these pieces attest to the great strength of the campaigning impulse in *All the Year Round*.

At least one Dickens attribution in "What is Sensational?" can be absolutely confirmed from the memorandum he sent Parkinson (Figs. 2, 3): these words, beginning "Is it sensational to tell the truth?," are repeated, almost verbatim, at the close of the piece ("What is Sensational?" 224). This accords with the pattern identified by Stone, concerning Dickens's often penning the conclusion; the lines also feature repetition, exaggeration and paradox (Stone 47, 34, 42). What are more difficult to pin down precisely, however, are the exact words, phrases and sentences in the piece for which no intertext can be found; thus they may have been written by Dickens – or indeed by Parkinson – or, as indicated above, may be quotations from other sources, such as Parliamentary papers. The phrasing may also originate in an editorial effort on the part of W. H. Wills, or another member of the journal's staff, to regularize the prose in order to give the piece a more cohesive, single authorial voice.

In order to instil greater confidence into pronouncements about authorship, it is now possible to employ the techniques of corpus linguistics and computational stylistics, which have in fact already been used, by Hugh Craig and John Drew, to test Dickensian authorship of another article in *All the Year Round*: "Temperate Temperance." In that particular case, while the



authors concluded that the piece was “a perfectly genuine piece of vintage Dickens editorial” (Drew and Craig 284), the author identified in the Parrott set is Charles Allston Collins (Fig. 8); but such a bold, unqualified attribution does not sufficiently account for Dickens’s editorial interventions, or the imposition of a house style, as discussed above.<sup>24</sup>

Work in stylometry by Craig and others over the past three decades has demonstrated that patterns of use of function words (such as *you*, *and*, and *the*) provide insight into many dimensions of style, including authorship, genre and historical time period. In an analysis of six authors in the *Saturday Review* Craig and his co-author explain:

They are easily recognised and counted, unlike higher-order stylistic features, such as figures of speech, which need to be identified by hand. They can also be expected to appear in large numbers even in short passages, offering almost sentence-by-sentence signals to the reader. (Craig and Antonia 69–70)

In that analysis the authors identify elements of house style that made it distinctive, through an examination of over 200 pieces from the *Saturday Review* on social or moral subjects (used in the tests in order to compare like with like), measured against a similar-sized set of articles from other journals. Their main statistical method is Principal Components Analysis (PCA), which identifies a few components that account for most of the overall variation in the original data set. PCA functions as a statistical data reduction technique, designed to uncover a few important underlying factors in a dataset with a large number of variables. For each component, each word-variable has a weighting much like a stock market index, which offers a single score incorporating dozens of individual prices, each with a weighting that reflects volume. The specimens have a score for each component, calculated by multiplying the frequency by the weighting for each variable, and then finding the sum of these counts. These weightings and scores can then be shown in charts, to reveal which specimens are clustered together or dispersed, and which variables have played the largest part in determining these outcomes. It first finds the most important component (the first Principal Component, or PC1) in a table of variables and specimens – in this case, word frequencies in articles or parts of articles – and then the second most important independent component (PC2), and so on. The use of PCA in combination with word frequencies has formed the basis of numerous stylistic studies – for example, to compare the different ways characters speak in novels and plays, to show the minute progression

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<sup>24</sup> For a consideration of “Temperate Temperance” in light of the Parrott set, see Litvack, “Dickens” 324.

of Henry James's early and late works, and to determine the chronological order of dramatic works.<sup>25</sup> These methods have also been used extensively to categorize authors and eras. The fact that these results can be checked for reliability gives scholars greater confidence in situations where the method is used to argue for broader stylistic patterns. For the research on "What is Sensational?" four separate experiments were conceived.

The first experiment was designed to test what Principal Component Analysis could offer concerning the similarities (or otherwise) between the two *Daily News* articles of 16 January and 22 April 1865, and the 12 Parkinson pieces published in the same newspaper (Appendix B). The 100 words chosen for the experiment were those that occur commonly in Victorian periodicals, as determined by Craig's colleague, Alexis Antonia, in the course of her research; they are as follows:

a	all	an	and	any	are
as	at	be	been	but	by
can	could	do	even	every	first
for	from	good	great	had	has
have	he	her	him	himself	his
how	I	if	in	into	is
it	its	life	like	little	made
man	many	may	men	might	more
most	Mr	much	must	no	not
now	of	on	one	only	or
other	our	out	own	same	she
should	so	some	such	than	that
the	their	them	there	these	they
this	those	time	to	two	under
up	upon	us	very	was	we
were	what	when	which	who	will
with	without	would	yet		

In order to compare, as far as possible, like with like, some preparation of the texts was required. Because the two unattributed *Daily News* articles are shorter than the Parkinson contributions, the 14 texts were divided into blocks of 1170 words, to match the length of the shorter unattributed piece (the length of the other is 1776 words). Shorter samples always tend to be more lopsided, since local idiosyncrasies are less likely to be balanced

25 See Craig, "Speak"; Craig, "The Date"; Burrows; and Hoover.

out than in longer ones. It should be borne in mind, however, that the two sets of pieces are fundamentally different in terms of approach and content. A close reading of the unattributed *Daily News* articles demonstrates that they are highly polemical, and each focuses on a particular individual: Daly (16 January 1865) and Gibson (22 April 1865). The 12 Parkinson texts of confirmed authorship, on the other hand, are broadly descriptive, abundantly detailed, and more panoramic and inclusive.

The PCA (Fig. 9) found that the greatest general pattern of difference in the set was indeed between the two unattributed *Daily News* articles (in the lower right quadrant of the figure), and those authored by Parkinson (clustered fairly close together, on the left, near the convergence of the X- and Y-axes, but with some variation). The word-variable weightings (Fig. 10) give some indication about which words contributed most to the divergence. The most heavily weighted at each end are labelled: *she, her, can, our, may* and *that* feature significantly in the unattributed *Daily News* pieces, while *with, now, every, a, the,* and *at* are less common in those two pieces, and more often used by Parkinson. The degree of difference between the two sets of journalistic pieces, particularly as evidenced in Fig. 9, leads to the conclusion that the two *Daily News* articles quoted in "What is Sensational?", which provide evidence concerning the cases of Timothy Daly and Richard Gibson, diverged significantly from the others known to be penned by Joseph Parkinson, and might not be by him, although, as noted above, the combative tone and focus of the two invectives might well account for some of the divergence.

Experiment 2 was conceived to test whether unassigned or disputed samples of writing could be attributed to one writer or the other. The first stage involved assembling a corpus of 18 pieces by Dickens from *All the Year Round*, and 54 articles by Parkinson: 42 from *All the Year Round*, and an additional 12 from Parkinson's volume *Places and People* (1869), an anthology of journalistic pieces from *All the Year Round*, *The Daily News*, and *Tinsley's Magazine*.<sup>26</sup> Where possible, each sample was divided into 1000-word blocks; articles of less than 2000 words were kept as wholes; the residue of any divided article was added to the last block.

A list was then made, consisting of 1000 words that appear regularly in the Parkinson articles and segments, and rarely in the Dickens articles and segments; a second list was made, of 1000 words that appear regularly in the Dickens samples, and rarely in the Parkinson ones. The mechanism for selecting the words for the lists was to make an index score for each word that occurs in the corpus, adding the proportion of samples with one or

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<sup>26</sup> The *Tinsley's* articles were not in fact used, because they are first-person narratives written in character, and in dialect, hence not a useful guide to a characteristic Parkinsonian style.

more instance of the word in one author's collection to the proportion of samples in the other author's collection with no instance. The maximum score possible is 2, which is achieved when 100% samples in the first author have at least one instance, and 100% of samples in the other author have no instance. Fig. 11 provides a list of "Dickens words" – that is, those that occur most commonly in his work when compared to Parkinson's. It is interesting to note in this table that a number of the words are functions of the first person singular: *I*, *me*, *am*, and *my*. Dickens, in the sample, uses these words proportionately more often than does Parkinson. *Me* appears in 33/34 (or 97%) of the Dickens segments, but only in 88/163 or (46%) of the Parkinson ones. In the zeta index column (which compares the two authors), *me* is converted to 0.97 for Dickens and 0.46 for Parkinson (75 segments out of his total of 163 have no instance), thus giving a total of 1.38 for the personal pronoun *me*, making it the most distinctive Dickens-not-Parkinson word.

Fig. 12 gives the corresponding "Parkinson words" – that is, those that occur most frequently in his work, rather than in Dickens's. Parkinson uses a group of second-person and plural forms more than Dickens: *our*, *you*, *we*, *your* and *us* appear in the table. Two elided forms, *it's* and *don't*, are also there. The difference between these two authors in pronoun use might indicate something about their relative positioning in relation to the issues they treat in *All the Year Round*. Whereas Dickens, in a journal that was in many ways "his" – that is, in terms of property, financial and intellectual investment, readership, and stance on social and political issues – could by rights use the personal pronoun to lend force to his pronouncements,<sup>27</sup> this does not hold true of Parkinson, who was Dickens's subordinate, and a freelance employee of *All the Year Round*. In those pieces in which Parkinson undertakes investigative visits to workhouses, slum dwellings, mines and other locations, he generally depicts himself as a member of a group, thus sharing responsibility for what he observes with others – real or imagined – in order to lend force to the veracity of his observations and conclusions. Yet it must also be borne in mind that all of these pieces by Parkinson were published without attribution.<sup>28</sup> The next steps in experiment 2 were to count the number of different words from each authorial word list in the samples – whether segments or wholes; to count the total number of different words in each sample; and to calculate the proportion of authorial words in the vocabulary of each sample. This can be thought of as the degree to which a given sample has a Parkinson, or a Dickens, vocabulary (it must be

27 Especially in the case of the 15 first-person *Uncommercial Traveller* contributions examined (Appendix C).

28 In Dickens's case, only the seven "New Uncommercial Samples," published in 1868–9, identified him as the author.

borne in mind, however, that the results are, more precisely, a “Parkinson-not-Dickens” vocabulary, or a “Dickens-not-Parkinson” vocabulary). The purpose of the exercise was to assign anonymous or disputed samples to one author or another; for this to work, a method is required for classifying samples, and for providing verification of how reliable the method is. The usual procedure is to test any method with samples of known authorship, in order to estimate how well it will perform with anonymous ones. To accomplish this, tests were performed, in which one article from each set was withdrawn, and treated as though it were anonymous; new lists of authorial words were then worked out, based on the reduced sets.

In each validation run, the segments from one whole article from the Dickens set, and the segments from one whole article from the Parkinson set, were excluded from the “training” sets used to select the 1000 marker words, and hence were treated as though they were anonymous. Meanwhile, new scores for the two *Daily News* articles were calculated each time, based on the different marker sets – that is, sets which naturally vary a little, as one article is withdrawn from each training set. The choice of the test articles was random, and sometimes the same article was chosen. In compiling results for a summary of the trials, only the score for the first time a given article was chosen was counted, and repetitions were discarded. In all, 25 validation runs were carried out; in these, 10 of the 12 Dickens articles were selected one or more times, and 19 of the 54 Parkinson articles were selected one or more times. Thus 2 Dickens articles and 25 Parkinson articles were never withdrawn as test samples. There were 25 scores for each of the *Daily News* articles: one for each validation run. An average was then calculated for each of these articles.

Two scores were calculated for vocabulary proportions for the segments of the test sample and the target samples only. The idea was to reproduce as closely as possible the situation with the disputed texts, only with texts of known provenance. In each of those tests, proportional scores were also worked out for two target texts: the articles from the *Daily News*, published on 16 January and 22 April 1865 (discussed in detail above), and quoted in “What is Sensational?” The ultimate aim was to test whether or not Parkinson was the author of the *Daily News* pieces. Fig. 13 shows the various proportional scores for test segments from the two authors, and average scores for the *Daily News* articles.

As might have been expected – but could not necessarily be guaranteed – the Dickens test segments tend to have higher “Dickens-word” scores (appearing further to the right on the horizontal axis) and lower “Parkinson-word” scores (appearing further down on the vertical axis), and vice versa. This creates a Dickens area (in blue) and Parkinson area (in gold) on the chart, thus allowing for attribution of target segments to one author or the

other. The two *Daily News* articles appear in Parkinson territory: they both have higher “Parkinson word” scores and lower “Dickens word” scores than any Dickens test segment. The Dickens and Parkinson segments that appear in Fig. 13 are treated in the same way as the *Daily News* articles, and play no part in the process for selecting the word lists. The vocabularies of the *Daily News* articles are much closer to Parkinson’s typical word choices than to Dickens’s. Parkinson is, therefore, a much better candidate for authorship of these articles than Dickens; this conclusion gains some support from Parkinson’s own claim (noted above) that he frequently wrote on Poor Law-related topics for the newspaper.

By this point in the study, greater clarity has been achieved concerning the distinctions between a “Dickensian voice” and a “Parkinsonian voice;” these voices could now be tested against the content of “What is Sensational?” to assist in unravelling who wrote what. For experiment 3, 27 periodical articles known to be by Dickens (from both *Household Words* and *All the Year Round*), and 42 known to be by Parkinson (from *All the Year Round*, First Series), and the one now thought to be a collaboration between the two (“What is Sensational?”) were compared. First, however, several portions of “What is Sensational” needed to be removed from consideration: the confirmed contribution of Dickens, extracted from the two-page memorandum dated mid-February 1867; the extracts from the letter by Joseph Rogers to the Guardians of the Strand Union; and the quotations from the *Daily News* articles of 16 January and 22 April 1855, whose authorship has not been firmly established. The remaining body of 2,083 words – that is, what constitutes the “main voice” of “What is Sensational?” – was then suitable for testing.

The “main voice” was compared to sets of Dickens and Parkinson articles of known authorship. As before, a set of 100 very common words was used; the percentages of these words in each article were then calculated. A Principal Components Analysis was performed on the resulting 100 X 70 table of values; the results are mapped in two different ways in Figs. 14 and 15. Fig. 14 illustrates how the components array the articles, so that Dickensian style (in blue) is scattered across the right-hand and upper portion, and Parkinsonian style (in orange) is grouped across the lower left portion. PC1 (along the X-axis) arrays the texts in such a way that Parkinson’s “What is the Good of Freemasonry?” (a defence of the Craft) is at one extreme, and the same author’s “Told by a Tramp” (describing a visit to non-metropolitan workhouses) is at the other.

Fig. 15 displays loadings of the word-variables that underlie the two principal components, PC1 and PC2. In this case it is expected that texts with high scores on a component should have high counts of words with high loadings on the same component, and low counts of words with low

loadings. Thus in the case of Parkinson's "Told by a Tramp" it is expected that there would be high percentages of *very*, *had*, *I* and *was*, and relatively low percentages of *are*, *is*, *its*, and *has*. When considering the word loadings, PC1 (which follows the X-axis) appears to be a contrast between more descriptive and narrative articles (at the low-scoring end) and articles with more direct speech and more first-person singular narration (at the high-scoring end). PC2 (which follows the Y-axis) is a contrast between detailed description (*at*, *up*, *as* – lower end) and more deliberative and discursive expression (*of*, *in*, *many* – upper end). Parkinson articles tend to cluster to the left and lower down the chart – an area can be associated with present tense and detailed description – and Dickens articles to the right and higher – evidently tending to be more in the first person, more deliberative, and more in the past tense. The "main voice" portion of "What is Sensational" falls to the left-lower quadrant of the chart, an area where Parkinson articles dominate. The style of this portion of the article follows the tendencies of Parkinson articles, rather than those of Dickens.

Experiment 3 demonstrates that there is a marked and consistent difference between the two authorial groupings (shown in blue and orange, in Fig. 14), in terms of style. The most frequently occurring 100 words were collated without bias, or any predetermined selection. It is clear from the results that there is a contrast in authorial styles between Dickens and Parkinson. While the divergence does not represent an extreme contrast – and it is also evident that there is middle ground where the differences are less pronounced – it is interesting to discover that within the parameters of this experiment the "main voice" portion of "What is Sensational" subscribes more to Parkinsonian style.

A fourth and final experiment was conducted, to determine if anything more definitive could be established concerning the balance of authorship between Dickens and Parkinson, in the composite piece "What is Sensational?", if works of less "diluted" or "influenced" authorship could be compared – that is, works by the two authors for which no cross-fertilisation was evident. Thus the "main voice" of "What is Sensational?" was compared against 18 Dickens articles from *All the Year Round*, and the 12 Parkinson articles from the *Daily News* (because the latter were written for a newspaper over which Dickens had no editorial control in the 1860s, they could be considered "purer" Parkinson). The results (Fig. 16) are fascinating: the Dickens clusters (represented in blue) and Parkinson clusters (represented in orange) separate well; this is to be expected, particularly since Parkinson was not conforming to any *All the Year Round* editorial intervention, or to any need to subscribe to a Dickensian house style. There may well have been a degree of editorial control exercised by the *Daily News*; but such oversight was clearly divorced from any Dickensian scrutiny. It is also noteworthy

that the main voice of “What is Sensational?” (represented by the asterisk, in the upper right quadrant) appears on the edge of the Dickens cluster, rather than near the Parkinson cluster. This leads to the ultimate conclusion that there is more Dickensian influence in the main voice of the piece than Parkinsonian, and thus in the order of attribution of the piece to the two authors, Dickens’s name should by rights precede Parkinson’s: he would seem to be the “chief author,” as the *Independent* claimed in 2015, though without the evidence presented here. The experiment may also demonstrate the degree of influence that Dickensian house style exercised on – or wielded over – other contributors to the journal.

This study has uncovered some of the many difficulties encountered in the quest to establish the “shares” in composite authorship for a particular journalistic contribution to *All the Year Round*. It was inspired by the new possibilities for research into Dickens’s journalism offered by the revelation of the Parrott set to the scholarly world in 2015. The research has encompassed historicist methods, to document the full extent of the working relationship between Charles Dickens and Joseph Parkinson, and to describe the subject matter and methods of treatment by this civil servant, journalist and committed Freemason, who made the plight of the sick and destitute his special area of concern. The study has used intertextual research to reveal how key sources, including Parliamentary reports, inquiries by medical professionals, and newspaper investigations, contributed to Dickens’s own views on the perceived abuses in workhouse infirmaries, and in turn to his efforts to bring these issues to the attention of his reading public, through specially conceived pieces in the journal of which he was proprietor and chief editor (whilst bearing in mind the significant contributions of the sub-editor and joint proprietor, W. H. Wills, and others). Intertextuality also demonstrates how key passages from documentary sources were incorporated into a particular article in *All the Year Round*, to lend weight to pronouncements that otherwise would have been relegated to the realm of personal (though unattributed) invective – a style of writing of which Dickens was highly critical.<sup>29</sup> Finally, this study has attempted to distinguish between the contributions of Dickens and Parkinson, by employing more systematic and comprehensive methods than those used by Harry Stone in his ground-breaking research in the 1960s.

While there is no adequate replacement for experience and carefully exercised human discernment on the part of scholars, the use of Principal Component Analysis can enhance our understanding of authorial style and content, through its potential for scrutinizing every single word of text in a corpus, and for evaluating authors and their output using statistical

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<sup>29</sup> See, for example, Dickens’s critique of Harriet Martineau’s style, in *Letters* 11: 10.



methods that would be nigh impossible to reproduce through manual effort. Taken together, this broad range of strategies casts new light on composite authorship, and has the capacity to untangle further the “dreadful spectacle” of the “inky fishing-net” (*Letters* 8: 139), to reveal a textual richness, inventiveness, and thoughtfulness over which we continue to puzzle, deliberate, investigate, and, above all, marvel.

**Appendix A**  
**Articles by Joseph Parkinson in *All the Year Round*,**  
**First Series, 1865–8**

Title	Publication details
Every Man's Poison	<i>AYR</i> 14 (11 Nov 1865): 372–6
Against the Grain	<i>AYR</i> 14 (2 Dec 1865): 442–5
The Roughs' Guide	<i>AYR</i> 14 (16 Dec 1865): 492–6
A New Humane Society	<i>AYR</i> 15 (3 March 1866): 177–80
Genii of the Ring	<i>AYR</i> 15 (17 March 1866): 230–5
Home, Sweet Home	<i>AYR</i> 15 (7 April 1866): 303–6
The Queen's Shilling (with Casley)	<i>AYR</i> 15 (7 April 1866): 306–12
Told by a Tramp	<i>AYR</i> 15 (28 April 1866): 371–4
Lazarus, Lotus-Eating	<i>AYR</i> 15 (12 May 1866): 421–5
Attila in London	<i>AYR</i> 15 (26 May 1866): 466–9
Derby Dregs	<i>AYR</i> 15 (2 June 1866): 487–9
The Eve of the Battle	<i>AYR</i> 15 (23 June 1866): 571–6
What is the Good of Freemasonry?	<i>AYR</i> 16 (14 July 1866): 14–17
How Not to Do It	<i>AYR</i> 16 (22 Sept 1866): 253–5
The Hole in the Wall	<i>AYR</i> 16 (13 Oct 1866): 325–9
In Praise of a Rotten Board	<i>AYR</i> 16 (20 Oct 1866): 342–6
London Preserved	<i>AYR</i> 17 (12 Jan 1867): 61–6
London Fires	<i>AYR</i> 17 (19 Jan 1867): 84–8
Hampstead Heath	<i>AYR</i> 17 (23 Feb 1867): 198–202
What is Sensational? (with Charles Dickens)	<i>AYR</i> 17 (2 March 1867): 221–4
Men of Fire	<i>AYR</i> 17 (16 March 1867): 271–5
Lucifer-Box Making	<i>AYR</i> 17 (6 April 1867): 352–6
Shortened Commons	<i>AYR</i> 17 (27 April 1867): 414–17
Slavery in England	<i>AYR</i> 17 (15 June 1867): 585–9
The Good Ship Chichester	<i>AYR</i> 18 (29 June 1867): 10–14
Common Rights and Common Sense	<i>AYR</i> 18 (17 Aug 1867): 189–92
A Workhouse Probe	<i>AYR</i> 18 (30 Nov 1867): 541–5

Another Workhouse Probe	<i>AYR</i> 18 (7 Dec 1867): 558–64
A Country Workhouse	<i>AYR</i> 19 (14 Dec 1867): 16–20
Midges in Office	<i>AYR</i> 19 (21 Dec 1867): 31–4
Genii of the Cave	<i>AYR</i> 19 (28 Dec 1867): 60–64
Called Over the Coals	<i>AYR</i> 19 (11 Jan 1868): 112–16
Cogers	<i>AYR</i> 19 (15 Feb 1868): 231–4
Other Genii of the Cave	<i>AYR</i> 19 (22 Feb 1868): 246–50
Extraordinary Horse-Dealing	<i>AYR</i> 19 (22 Feb 1868): 252–5
A Pair of Horse-Pictures	<i>AYR</i> 19 (29 Feb 1868): 270–4
Coal	<i>AYR</i> 19 (14 March 1868): 327–31
A Discreet Report	<i>AYR</i> 19 (21 March 1868): 350–4
Sent to the Tower	<i>AYR</i> 19 (28 March 1868): 378–81
All Round St. Paul's	<i>AYR</i> 19 (4 April 1868): 389–93
Westminster Abbey	<i>AYR</i> 19 (25 April 1868): 462–6
Pit Accidents	<i>AYR</i> 19 (23 May 1868): 568–72
Slaves of the Ring	<i>AYR</i> 20 (4 July 1868): 85–8

Parkinson's authorship, and collaborations (above in bold), confirmed by information from Jeremy Parrott, who supplements the details in Oppenlander 285–7. Parkinson also wrote "Riding for Health," *AYR* NS 2 (9 Oct. 1869): 444–50; this is not documented by Oppenlander, but see *Letters* 12: 413. After Dickens's death Parkinson contributed five articles on his sojourn in the Middle East to *All the Year Round* NS 4 and NS 5 (Nov.–Dec. 1870, all carrying the main title "Six Months in the East"; for Dickens's agreement to publish these pieces see *Letters* 12: 412).

**Appendix B**  
**Articles by Parkinson in *The Daily News***

<b>Title</b>	<b>Publication Details</b>
Sunday Dog-Shows	<i>Daily News</i> 15 Sept. 1864: 2
The Thames Police	<i>Daily News</i> 28 Aug. 1865: 2
Saturday-Night in a Pawnbroker's Shop	<i>Daily News</i> 6 Sept. 1865: 2
Aristocratic Pigeon-Shooting	<i>Daily News</i> 10 July 1868: 5
The Artificial Hair Trade	<i>Daily News</i> 10 Aug. 1868: 5
Sunday Trading	<i>Daily News</i> 16 Feb. 1869: 5
Prisoners' Friends	<i>Daily News</i> 8 Mar. 1869: 5
Our Pharmaceutical Chemists	<i>Daily News</i> 20 Mar. 1869: 5
The Hospital for Incurables	<i>Daily News</i> 10 May 1869: 5
The Tunbridge-Wells Coach	<i>Daily News</i> 10 June 1869: 5
A Suburban Fishery	<i>Daily News</i> 17 Aug. 1869: 5
Under the Sea	<i>Daily News</i> 2 Sept. 1869: 5

Parkinson's authorship confirmed through republication of these pieces in his collection *Places and People, Being Studies from the Life* (1869).

**Appendix C**  
**Articles by Dickens in *Household Words* and**  
***All the Year Round*,**  
**Used for Experiments**

Title	Publication details
A Preliminary Word	<i>HW</i> 1 (30 Mar. 1850): 1–2
A Sleep to Startle Us	<i>HW</i> 4 (13 Mar. 1852): 577–80
Bill-Sticking	<i>HW</i> 2 (22 Mar. 1851): 601–6
Home for Homeless Women	<i>HW</i> 7 (23 Apr. 1853): 169–75
Lying Awake	<i>HW</i> 6 (30 Oct. 1852): 145–8
Our Watering Place	<i>HW</i> 3 (2 Aug. 1851): 433–6
Trading in Death	<i>HW</i> 6 (27 Nov. 1852): 241–5
A Walk in a Workhouse	<i>HW</i> 1 (25 May 1850): 204–7
Where We Stop Growing	<i>HW</i> 6 (1 Jan. 1853): 361–3
The Poor Man and His Beer	<i>AYR</i> 1 (30 Apr. 1859): 13–16
Wapping Workhouse (Uncommercial Traveller)	<i>AYR</i> 2 (18 Feb. 1860): 392–6
Refreshments for Travellers (Uncommercial Traveller)	<i>AYR</i> 2 (24 Mar. 1860): 512–16
The Young Man from the Country	<i>AYR</i> 6 (1 Mar. 1862): 540–2
Boiled Beef of New England (Uncommercial Traveller)	<i>AYR</i> 9 (15 Aug. 1863): 588–91
Chatham Dockyard (Uncommercial Traveller)	<i>AYR</i> 12 (29 Aug. 1863): 12–16
In the French-Flemish Country (Uncommercial Traveller)	<i>AYR</i> (12 Sept. 1863): 61–5
Medicine Men of Civilisation (Uncommercial Traveller)	<i>AYR</i> (26 Sept. 1863): 108–11
Titbull's Alms-Houses (Uncommercial Traveller)	<i>AYR</i> (24 Oct. 1863): 205–10
The Late Mr. Stanfield	<i>AYR</i> 17 (1 June 1867): 537
The Ruffian, by the Uncommercial Traveller (Uncommercial Traveller)	<i>AYR</i> 20 (10 Oct. 1868): 421–4

New Uncommercial Samples: Aboard Ship (Uncommercial Traveller)	AYR NS 1 (5 Dec. 1868): 12–17
New Uncommercial Samples: A Small Star in the East (Uncommercial Traveller)	AYR NS 1 (19 Dec. 1868): 61–6
New Uncommercial Samples: A Little Dinner in an Hour (Uncommercial Traveller)	AYR NS 1 (2 Jan. 1869): 108–11
New Uncommercial Samples: Mr. Barlow (Uncommercial Traveller)	AYR NS 1 (16 Jan. 1869): 156–9
New Uncommercial Samples: On an Amateur Beat (Uncommercial Traveller)	AYR NS 1 (27 Feb. 1869): 300–03
New Uncommercial Samples: A Fly-Leaf in a Life (Uncommercial Traveller)	AYR NS 1 (22 May 1869): 589–91
New Uncommercial Samples: A Plea for Total Abstinence (Uncommercial Traveller)	AYR NS 2 (5 June 1869): 13–15

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